

Policy And Procedure Area	Pets Policy and Procedure
Date Created	December 2018
Policy Holder	Group Director of Business performance
Date Approved by ET	9/1/19
Date Approved by the Board (if required)	n/a
Date of next review	December 2023
Target Group	All Housing Staff
Training/Dissemination	
Location of policy/procedure	Insight
Related external documents	
Related Internal Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Tenure management policy and procedur › Antisocial behaviour policy and procedur › Incident policy and procedure › Pet contract

1. Objective

- 1.1 YMCA St Paul’s Group (YSPG) is committed to supporting the responsible ownership of pets within its schemes. The organisation recognises that the companionship animals provide to vulnerable people can be very therapeutic and does not see that denying this is in keeping with its values.
- 1.2 YSPG recognises that it is important to ensure that any pets kept are treated with respect and care, and that each scheme may need to approach this in a way that is appropriate to the service and its clients.

2 Policy statement

- 2.1 This policy and procedure covers the development of local policies regarding pets, the assessment of an animal’s suitability for the scheme the client lives in, and the responsibilities the owner has towards their pet.
- 2.2 It does not cover how to deal with incidents relating to the pet, please refer to Incident policy and procedure.
- 2.3 This policy and procedure applies to all service delivery staff and managers. It refers to all clients within services that may have pets.
- 2.4 It is the responsibility of service delivery staff and managers to implement this policy and procedure and develop appropriate local pets policies.
- 2.5 It is the responsibility of all clients with pets to abide by this policy and remain aware of the impact their pet may have on others, as well as ensuring that they care for their pet.

3 Diversity impact assessment

- 3.1 It is recognised that some sections of society, including rough sleepers, rely on pets for security, companionship and affection. Often, relationships with pets can be very productive and positive for vulnerable clients.
- 3.2 It is also recognised however, that other sections of society, and some religious groups, find some pets unclean or unacceptable in a residential setting.
- 3.3 This policy ensures that an assessment of the appropriateness of pets is conducted and that we are not denying access to our services inappropriately based on pet ownership.

4 Guidance

- 4.1 Services will develop a local policy detailing whether clients can acquire pets, or if pets will only be considered for people being referred.
- 4.2 Allowing dogs and other pets may be a condition of the service contract. Managers are advised to check this before deciding on their local policy.

5 Procedure

- 5.1 Staff should assess the suitability of the pet.
- 5.2 Projects will retain the right to refuse any pet, but should give any reasons for this in writing and the client should have the right to appeal using the formal complaints procedure.
- 5.3 Dogs must comply with the Dangerous Dogs Act (1991), and animals which are classified as dangerous by the Dangerous Wild Animals Act (1976) cannot be kept.
- 5.4 When considering whether to accept a pet staff should consider:
 - 5.4.1 Is the layout of the building suitable to accommodate the animal (bearing in mind how they might grow)?
 - 5.4.2 Is the animal likely to cause a nuisance?
 - 5.4.3 Will any other clients be affected, and if so do they object or have an allergy or phobia? If the property is shared it may be necessary for all residents to agree.
 - 5.4.4 Are there already other animals and might this be a problem? Projects may wish to set a limit to the number of dogs for example.
 - 5.4.5 Some projects may feel that it is only okay to accept animals of a new client who already has a pet – so residents should not be acquiring animals.
 - 5.4.6 How will the project cope with the animal if something happens to the service user (e.g. hospital, prison, etc)?

6 Owner responsibilities

- 6.1 All pet owners must sign a contract (see Pet contract) that is countersigned by staff. This will act as written permission from the project. Clients will also be given a copy of the local policy regarding the keeping of pets in the project.
- 6.2 Owners will not be entitled to an extra food portion if food is provided by the project.
- 6.3 Pets should be included in client risk assessments.
- 6.4 A contingency plan should be agreed in advance in case of the owner not being able to look after the pet.
- 6.5 In urgent and exceptional circumstances of being unable to care for their pet, other clients or staff with the authorisation of their line manager may be able to help, but this should only ever be for a period of a day or two. It may be appropriate in some

circumstances for YSPG to agree to meet the cost of boarding a pet in kennels/cattery etc.

- 6.6 The client is responsible for all aspects of the animal's care and maintenance and cleaning of any equipment (e.g. bedding, cages, fish tanks, etc). The project may be able to offer limited assistance with food for a very limited period when there are problems with income.
- 6.7 Owners are responsible for the behaviour of their pet. Refusal to deal with aggressiveness, hygiene or other problems could lead to formal warnings and sanctions.
- 6.8 By law all dogs should have a collar and tag and it is a criminal offence to allow a dog to injure or frighten people in a public place.
- 6.9 If a dog is in any way aggressive it should be muzzled when in a communal area.

7. Risk Assessment

Financial Implications	None
Reputational Risk Implications	None
Staffing Implications	None