



PET (HOUSING) POLICY & PROCEDURES

**Effective from:
18 August 2025**

APPLICATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

YMCA St Paul's Group (the Charity) is committed to supporting the responsible ownership of pets within its schemes. This document covers the development of local policies regarding pets, the assessment of an animal's suitability for the scheme the resident lives in, and the responsibilities the owner has towards their pet. It does not cover how to deal with incidents relating to the pet, please refer to the Anti-social Behavioural Policy and Procedure.

This document applies to all service delivery staff and managers and refers to all residents within services that may have pets.

The Policy applies to all legal entities within the Group. This Policy shall operate alongside YMCA's Strategic Plan and other policy documents.

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 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 The Charity 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 residents.
- 1.3 It is the responsibility of service delivery staff and managers to implement this policy and procedure where the decision is made that pets are allowed. The decision on whether pets are allowed will be made on a service-by-service basis as set out in this document.
- 1.4 It is the responsibility of all residents 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.

2. Equity Impact Statement

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 It is also recognised however, that other sections of society, and some religious groups, find some pets unclean or unacceptable in a residential setting.
- 2.3 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.

3. Guidance

- 3.1 Services will carry out an assessment, detailing whether residents can acquire pets, or if pets will only be considered for people being referred, or if pets cannot be allowed at all.
- 3.2 Allowing dogs and other pets may be a condition of the service contract. Managers are

advised to check this before deciding on this for their service.

4. Procedure for services where pets are allowed

- 4.1 Staff should assess the suitability of the pet.
- 4.2 Service managers will retain the right to refuse any pet, but should give any reasons for this in writing and the resident should have the right to appeal using the formal complaints procedure.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 When considering whether to accept a pet, staff should consider:
 - 4.4.1 Is the layout of the building suitable to accommodate the animal (bearing in mind how they might grow)?
 - 4.4.2 Is the animal likely to cause a nuisance?
 - 4.4.3 Will any other residents 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.
 - 4.4.4 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.
 - 4.4.5 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.
 - 4.4.6 How will the project cope with the animal if something happens to the resident (e.g. hospital, prison, etc)?

5. Owner Responsibilities

- 5.1 All pet owners must sign an agreement (see Pet Agreement in Appendix 1) that is countersigned by staff. This will act as written permission from the project. A copy of the contract will be kept on the resident file on INFORM.
- 5.2 Pets should be included in client risk assessments.
- 5.3 A contingency plan should be agreed in advance in case of the owner not being able to look after the pet.
- 5.4 In urgent and exceptional circumstances of being unable to care for their pet, other residents 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 the Charity to agree to meet the cost of boarding a pet in kennels/cattery etc.
- 5.5 The resident 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. This could include referral to a pet food bank.

- 5.6 Owners are responsible for the behaviour of their pet. Refusal to deal with aggressiveness, hygiene or other problems such as noise could lead to formal warnings and sanctions.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 If a dog is in any way aggressive it should be muzzled when in a communal area.

6. REVIWING & REPORTING

- 6.1 The Housing Senior Management team will monitor at least annually:
 - ▶ The number of pets registered against each site
 - ▶ Feedback from residents on the impact of this policy against their needs
- 6.2 The Housing Senior Management team will review this document and its implementation at least every three years and ensure that it still meets the needs of the residents.
- 6.3 This review should involve consultation with the resident representative committee.

APPENDIX 1

Pet Agreement

PET AGREEMENT

Resident name:

Room number:

Name of pet:

Brief description of pet:

I agree that my pet and I will adhere to the following conditions:

1. I will be responsible for my pet at all times.
2. My pet is only allowed in my bedroom and the communal areas with the consent of other residents.
3. I must feed my pet in my room or other area designated by staff.
4. I will be responsible for any type of mess and damage made by my pet and will repay any costs incurred.
5. I must not leave my pet unattended without consulting with staff and discussing the reasons why and how the pet will be cared for in my absence.
6. I must ensure that my pet does not cause a nuisance or is aggressive towards others.
7. Neglect of a Pet: I understand that if I neglect my pet staff may take further action if I fail to rectify the problem. This could include contacting the RSPCA or police.
8. It will be my responsibility to maintain the health and wellbeing of my pet.
9. I understand that failure to comply with any of these conditions may result in sanction being taken against me. I agree to and will abide by the above conditions

Resident signature:	
Staff signature: (Print name)	
Date:	