



**HOUSING**

A guide to  
good practice

**COMMUNITY ANIMAL  
WELFARE FOOTPRINTS**

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## To find out more:

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[www.politicalanimal.org.uk/cawf](http://www.politicalanimal.org.uk/cawf)

## Celebrating good practice

**The RSPCA's Community Animal Welfare Footprints (CAWF) awards scheme celebrates and promotes local authorities, housing providers and local resilience forums in England and Wales that demonstrate good practice in animal welfare services. The scheme focuses on four key areas: stray dogs; contingency planning; animal activity licensing; and the one that inspired this publication – housing.**

Since the scheme's launch in 2008, housing entries have increased substantially. Local authorities, arms length management organisations (ALMOs), housing associations and other housing providers have earned bronze, silver and gold Footprints – as well as the prestigious Innovator in Animal Welfare – for clear and positive pets policies, useful information for tenants, clear enforcement, good partnership working, innovative education work, and more. This booklet gives guidance on what makes a good pets policy and highlights some of the good housing practice demonstrated by our Footprint achievers. It is our hope that this guide will inspire other housing providers – in both the public and private sectors – to review and improve their current pets policies and practices.

As part of the RSPCA's commitment to key stakeholders who directly affect the welfare of animals, the Society has set up a dedicated 24-hour Local Authority and Housing Association Line to report concerns of cruelty or to receive advice. This number is only for council and housing association staff and must not be given out to members of the public. The number is: 0300 123 8007.





## A pets policy: Why is it so important?



**Research shows that animals that are well cared for and responsibly kept can be a positive attribute to any community, as pet ownership often satisfies the need for companionship, daily routine and exercise.**

Pet ownership can enhance the owner's mental and physical health and encourage exercise, plus pets make great companions. However, while pets can have a very positive impact on their environment, irresponsibly owned pets can be the cause of much misery and suffering to the animals themselves, to those who live around them and to those who own and manage the properties in which they live.

The challenges – ranging from high-profile issues of animal hoarding and irresponsible ownership to the lower level but equally problematic issues of cat spraying and barking dogs – can be improved by having a clear and well-enforced pets policy.

A pets policy is a document that outlines the expected behaviour of tenants with regard to pets, which includes their legal obligations, what is required of owners, and the potential consequences of failing to observe the policy. It is also recommended that the pets policy is linked to the tenancy agreement. Some of the most effective pets policies have been tied in with larger strategies that tackle wider issues, such as anti-social behaviour (ASB) and noise, both of which are issues that housing providers and local authorities are obliged to address.

It is important that housing providers do not feel alone when dealing with animal-related problems, as many of these issues are best tackled in partnership, whether it is with the local authority, the police or the RSPCA.

## A pets policy: The basics

**The RSPCA believes that housing providers should not discourage pets where facilities exist for their proper care. Controls are necessary, however, to prevent irresponsible pet ownership, which can cause suffering to animals and a nuisance to neighbours, and so many housing providers are now including clauses about pet ownership in their tenancy agreement.**

In all written policies, the key questions to address are whether the policies or conditions are enforceable, and whether they will be enforced. It is also important to ensure that pet owners are not vilified through policy. While there may be a need for greater conditions on some pets, they need to be proportionate to the problem and explained clearly to the residents.

The following information should be included in a basic pets policy, and included in the tenancy agreement where possible.

### **Clear guidance on which pets are allowed, where they are allowed, where they are not, and how many pets a tenant can have**

State whether pets are allowed in the accommodation and, if so, how many and which species. The RSPCA is not able to specify exactly how many animals of what type can be kept as this depends on the size and style of accommodation, but we believe that some species, such as primates, should not be kept as they cannot have their needs met in a household environment. Local authority animal welfare officers, environmental health staff or vets experienced in the animals concerned may be able to provide help and support in defining a specific policy, as well as the training of housing staff in assessing the suitability of accommodation for keeping pets.

You may wish to prohibit the keeping of any animals listed under the schedule to the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 on safety grounds. If you allow some animals named under this Act, then you must ensure the owner has an up-to-date licence to keep these animals, which covers the number kept and any offspring that may be bred.

You should also state whether or not tenants are allowed to replace their pets when the animal dies.

Whatever guidance you choose to introduce, it is important that it has the flexibility to assess individuals' requests on a case-by-case basis.

### **A clear statement that the owner is responsible for their pets' welfare by law, as defined under the Animal Welfare Act 2006**

You should base this on the 'duty of care' in section 9 of the Act, which makes it an offence for the person responsible for an animal to "...not take such steps as are reasonable in all circumstances to ensure that the needs of an animal for which he is responsible are met to the extent required by good practice". The needs outlined are: a suitable environment; a suitable diet; the ability to exhibit normal behaviour patterns; to be housed with or apart from other animals as appropriate; and to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

You will also need to include a clear process for dealing with any welfare or cruelty complaints as well as nuisance (including hygiene and noise) complaints that arise, which includes, where applicable, working with other agencies such as the police and the RSPCA

### **Conditions that tackle indiscriminate breeding and accidental ownership**

The breeding and sale of animals should be prohibited on premises that housing providers manage, including the dwelling and other areas such as garages. This will help encourage responsible pet ownership and reduce the number of 'accidental owners', i.e. those who acquire pets from friends and neighbours without being aware of the animal's basic welfare needs. It will also help avoid environmental nuisance and health and safety problems for neighbours. The RSPCA, along with other welfare charities, regularly runs schemes to help people on low incomes to pay for neutering and spaying. Please contact us for up-to-date contact information on the schemes available.

### **A clear policy on pets left behind**

This policy must make it clear that a pet must not be left unattended for a period of time that will result in the owner being unable to meet their welfare needs as defined under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (s9).



Please note: If a tenant is taken into care or hospital temporarily, under the Care Act 2014 for England (s47: Protecting property of adults being cared for away from home) and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (s58) the local authority must “...take reasonable steps to prevent or mitigate the loss or damage” to that person’s property, following the requirements of that section. Property in this case includes pets and procedures should reflect this.

All empty properties, especially those recently vacated, should be checked by the landlord for abandoned pets. Procedures should be put in place to ensure that pets are considered when evicting a tenant and arrangements should be put in place to ensure that the welfare needs of any animal left behind are met.

### Provision of pet care information

It is useful to have a list of local contacts available to residents and pet owners, which would include local vets and animal welfare organisations that may be able to assist and advise them. If people know where to go for advice, animal welfare issues are far less likely to become a problem.

You should also provide written information on pet ownership, produced or approved by a recognised animal welfare source, to all residents who keep pets in your properties. The RSPCA can provide leaflets, while detailed information is available to download from: [www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets](http://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets)

### Housing officer training

It is important to ensure that housing officers dealing with animal-related problems are aware of the basic legislation surrounding pets and are comfortable around the animals they come into contact with. Some landlords have arranged for behaviourists and dog handlers to provide basic dog handling and behaviour training. Please note that the RSPCA believes it is essential for behaviourists to be certified clinical animal behaviourists. More information can be found at: [www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/general/findabehaviourist](http://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/general/findabehaviourist)

## CLWYD ALYN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

### Positive community engagement

Clwyd Alyn Housing Association was launched in October 1978 to cover the County of Clwyd and the District of Aberconwy in North Wales. In 2017 the association now manages in excess of 5,400 units with properties across the whole of North Wales from Anglesey to Wrexham and down to Powys.

Clwyd Alyn have so far won two bronze housing Footprints for 2016 and 2017, going further with their standard pets policy to include Extra Care homes, which covers specific criteria such as visiting pets and animals used for therapy. The Association also actively promotes responsible pet ownership to their tenants through community events with other animal welfare charities, such as:

- Working with Dogs Trust to encourage residents to attend dog microchipping events across North Wales, leading to many residents taking advantage of free microchipping so they comply with new laws
- Having Cats Protection attend several community events to encourage responsible cat ownership
- Supporting residents to volunteer to help animal charities, including North Clwyd Animal Rescue, by carrying out dog walking. One volunteer created an arbour seat to enhance the new sensory garden for dogs in the care of North Clwyd Animal Rescue
- Having Ysgol Bryn Coch pupils develop colourful posters to encourage residents to clean up after their dogs in an area where dog fouling was an issue.

Clwyd Alyn’s positive and proactive community engagement with their tenants helps to not only improve animal welfare, but can also help towards maintaining the conditions of their properties and the surrounding area, by working to reduce dog barking and fouling.

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# A tenancy agreement: What to include

**A tenancy agreement should be completed and signed after the housing provider has supplied the tenant with information on owning a pet.**

This should include the obligations of the owner and issues to be considered before acquiring a pet, for example whether they can meet the welfare needs of the pet, whether their lifestyle is suitable, whether the pet is suitable for their family and compatible with existing pets, and whether they have the means to ensure the pet is looked after if they go on holiday.

In our opinion, a good tenancy agreement will include the following information.

## About the owner

**Contact details:** Details of the applicant, with address and contact numbers, and a named individual who would look after the animal in an emergency.

**Accommodation information:** Details of the type of accommodation in which the pet is to be kept and whether it has direct or shared access to a garden. This will help establish a general picture of whether the pet(s) are suitable for the accommodation.

**Pet history:** Has the applicant been given permission to keep a pet in the past? Have they ever been prosecuted for any offence against an animal, or for being irresponsible with an animal in their care? This will provide important information on whether the tenant is suitable for pet ownership.

## About the pet

**Numbers:** Details of how many and what types of animals the tenant is allowed to keep. This will reduce potential welfare, noise and environmental health issues relating to keeping too many animals in a dwelling. You may wish to ask for a description or picture of the animal(s).

**Vaccinations:** an obligation on the owner to ensure that the pet has an up-to-date vaccination card and that other necessary treatments, such as de-fleaing and worming, have been administered (if appropriate to the species). This should reduce the chance of diseases and parasites spreading.

**Permanent identification:** An obligation on the owner to ensure that the pet is microchipped, as appropriate to the species. It is a legal obligation for owners to microchip their dogs, and to keep their details on the microchip up to date, and anyone who fails to do this is liable to a £500 fine.

**Breeding prevention:** An obligation on the owner to ensure that the pet has been neutered or spayed, or males and females are housed apart, to prevent them from breeding, as appropriate to the species.

**Security:** An obligation on the owner to house the animals securely to avoid any escapes, where appropriate to the species.

**Animal Welfare Act:** Confirmation from the owner that they are able to meet the welfare needs of the pet(s) as stated in the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (s9).

## Declaration

This is to be signed by the pet owner and should state clearly that they understand their obligations as pet owner and tenant and will be a responsible owner. The declaration should also include confirmation by the tenant that they are aware of the consequences should they fail to meet their obligations. It should clarify that any pets of children under 16 years of age are legally the responsibility of the parents.

## Prohibited types<sup>1</sup> of dog

Some housing providers have asked what they should do regarding dogs that are prohibited types under section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 but have been exempted by the courts and placed onto the Index of Exempted Dogs (IED).

<sup>1</sup> Those prohibited under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991: pit bull terrier, dogo Argentino, fila Brasileiro, Japanese Tosa.





In deciding whether to exercise their discretion in allowing a prohibited-type dog to be entered onto the IED and returned to the owner, the court must be satisfied the dog poses no threat to public safety. This would be in relation to, amongst other things, the dog's temperament, behaviour and characteristics, the owner's history and suitability as well as the suitability of the home environment.

If a dog is permitted entry to the IED, a housing provider could take the lead from the court in deciding that the dog, having undergone a scrutiny process the majority of other dogs do not undergo, does not pose a danger to public safety. The housing provider could therefore allow exempted dogs to be kept within properties as long as the owner continues to comply with the exemption conditions listed below.

- **The dog must be neutered and microchipped.**
- **The owner/keeper must take out (and renew each year) third party insurance for the dog.**
- **The dog must only be taken out in public by someone over the age of 16, kept on a lead and muzzled when in public.**
- **The dog must not be bred from, gifted or otherwise disposed of.**
- **The dog must be registered on the IED.**

Housing providers can play a key role in ensuring public safety and animal welfare by having proportionate policies and procedures concerning pet ownership, which deal with each case on its merits, and by providing advice and support for people with pets in their properties. If you are concerned about a dog's behaviour (or as is sometimes the case, the behaviour of the owner) you should work closely with your local authority and the police to ensure animal welfare and public safety are protected.

## HOUSING SOLUTIONS

### A clear and positive pets policy

**Berkshire-based Housing Solutions own, manage and maintain over 7,500 properties, which include specialist accommodation for older people and people who need support and care to live within the community. They entered the CAWF awards for the first time in 2017 and walked away with a silver Footprint for their excellent pets policy for their first over 55s extra care scheme.**

Housing Solutions' entry recognised the importance of pet ownership and the fact that allowing pets in the community can provide comfort and companionship, enhance well-being and improve the quality of life for many of their residents. Their policy and procedures ensure and encourage responsible pet ownership, provide guidance to staff and residents and outline their approach in managing pet-related nuisance or complaints.

The policy and their accompanying guidance document, on which they consulted with the RSPCA at an early stage, are clear and user friendly and, crucially, easy for residents to understand. The policy places emphasis on making it easy for residents to obtain a pet with a clear and robust application process and substantial written guidance provided to all residents with pets as a matter of course.

The policy also addresses some of the more complex issues that landlords struggle with in writing their pets policies. It contains a clear, flexible and evidence based approach to dogs placed on the Index of Exempted Dogs which recognises that such dogs are subject to a greater level of scrutiny than many other animals and uses this as part of the risk assessment in considering any tenancy applications from owners of such dogs. It also provides a straightforward and enforceable procedure in emergency situations which minimises stress for owner and landlord alike.

Housing Solutions provides a great example of how recognising the benefits that pets can bring to a community, whilst ensuring that both human and animal welfare is protected, can be achieved with a clear and enforceable pets policy. It is also an example of the benefits that consulting with animal welfare experts at an early stage in the policy development process can bring.

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# A pets policy: Going beyond the basic standard

**The provision of a basic pets policy, which is both enforceable and enforced, is essential if there is to be a consistent and effective approach to the issues arising from pets in housing. In order to tackle the root of the problem before it takes hold, however, a more proactive approach must be taken and preventative measures put in place.**

## Registering pets

Pet registration for tenants provides many benefits for landlords and local residents alike. One of the most effective forms of registration is to require all tenants to request permission to keep a pet, with a policy stipulating that no request will be unreasonably denied. This means landlords know which pets live in the dwellings they manage.

While failing to register their pet may not in itself be grounds for action to be taken against a tenant, it does strengthen the case if there are anti-social behaviour, nuisance or welfare complaints made about a pet in a dwelling. Responsible pet owners will also find that there are benefits to registration, e.g. if their pet strays nearby, there is a greater chance of them being returned.

Registration also helps in emergency planning. By having a registration system in place, staff are protected in emergencies as they will know which animals they may encounter if they need to enter a premises. Residents are also protected as staff can organise the removal of a pet if the owner is out, ensuring that the owner doesn't risk their own safety by returning to an evacuated building.

Registration does not directly tackle all animal-related issues, but is a useful tool for monitoring and addressing problems and can reduce the likelihood of issues such as hoarding occurring in the first place.

## Microchipping and neutering

The RSPCA, along with other charities that rehome dogs and cats, routinely microchips and neuters animals in our care. Housing providers should promote both to their residents. At the very least, you must require new pets to be microchipped, if appropriate to

the species and particularly for pet dogs for whom microchipping is now a legal requirement. Microchipping has been used with registration by some landlords to make traceability easier and, in turn, to help tackle welfare, straying, nuisance and ASB issues.

Promoting these procedures allows housing officers to interact with pets and their owners, helping housing providers better understand some of the issues that arise for pet-owning tenants. And, as part of a wider plan or policy, microchipping and neutering can help address some of the root causes of welfare and ASB issues.

As both procedures have a cost attached to them, some landlords have set up deals with local vets or animal welfare charities to provide a number of them at a discounted rate. It is worth talking to local animal welfare charities, including your local RSPCA branch or centre, veterinary surgeries and local authority dog and/or animal warden services about helping to raise awareness of neutering and microchipping.

**To find out more about both procedures go to:**  
[www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets](http://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets)

## Education

Housing officers play a vital role in educating tenants. Face-to-face contact is an effective but often underrated method of dealing with a complaint. RSPCA inspectors, for example, issue warning notices to pet owners who are failing to meet their pet's needs by handing them to the owner personally so that problems and solutions can be discussed and explained. This ensures that the owner is in no doubt about their responsibilities and how they could improve the situation, and these notices consistently have compliance rates of over 90 percent.

Local animal welfare charities may be able to help you raise awareness among the local community. The RSPCA has leaflets on responsible pet ownership – please call the dedicated

**Local Authority and Housing Association Line on: 0300 123 8007** for copies (please only use this number for employees of the council or housing association and do not promote it to members of the public).





### Multi-agency working

At a time of shrinking budgets and increasing workloads, working in partnership with other organisations is essential when tackling some of the issues surrounding pets in housing. It is important to liaise with your local authority dog warden and/or animal welfare officer to ensure that everyone is clear as to who is responsible for ensuring that dogs straying on housing property will be picked up.

It is also important to build good, local working relationships with safer-neighbourhood teams, the local authority and the RSPCA's Inspectorate. These relationships will help you formally or informally agree which circumstances other partners need to be involved with and what they can provide within their remits. Such close day-to-day working will provide housing officers with resources and expertise that they would not otherwise have, greatly improving the effectiveness of work in this area.

### Individuals taken into care or hospitalised

A local authority has a responsibility for the temporary protection of the property, including pets, of individuals taken into hospital or care<sup>2</sup>. Under the legislation you also have powers to seek reimbursement from the owner for any reasonable costs incurred.

<sup>2</sup> In England, the Care Act 2014 (s47) and, in Wales, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (s58).

## LAMBETH HOUSING MANAGEMENT

### Reaching out to residents and partners

Lambeth Housing Management (LHM) are long-term supporters of the CAVF awards and have seen their pets policy and procedures greatly improve as a result. They were first awarded a bronze Footprint in 2014, improved to gold in 2015 and have maintained this standard ever since. They collected their third consecutive gold Footprint in 2017.

As well as an excellent, enforceable and enforced pets policy, the strength of LHM's applications is their proactive work with residents and collaboration with animal welfare charities. Over the last seven years they have been working with Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, their local RSPCA branch and inspectors, and Dogs Trust to increase awareness of animal welfare in the estates they manage and have done fantastic work to promote microchipping. They have organised many community events, in conjunction with their own animal welfare team as well as charities, promoting animal welfare and offering free microchipping to their residents. These events have also offered residents free tag engraving for their dogs' collars.

Housing officers are proactive in engaging with residents and promoting the services and events that LHM and their partners are running, as well as offering verbal and written pet care advice backed up by information from their charity partners. They use regular face-to-face contact with residents to promote animal welfare as well as involving other partner agencies, such as the NHS, to promote human health and welfare as well, thus providing their residents with an holistic service.

They have also done specific work with properties that are managed by Tenancy Management Organisations – independent boards of residents rather than LHM directly – to ensure that their pets policies and proactive animal welfare promotional activities do not neglect any Lambeth residents who live in social housing.

LHM provides an excellent example of how an organisation with sufficient will can improve their pets policy without undertaking an unmanageable amount of work. It also demonstrates the value and importance of collaboration and multi-agency working in providing a five star service to pet-owning residents.

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# A pets policy: A new approach



**Leeds City Council (Housing Leeds) manages 57,000 properties in the second largest local government and metropolitan district area in England. In Leeds, they have developed an approach to animal welfare that does not require additional resources or any dedicated budget, just a real commitment at a strategic and operational level that they will consider animal welfare as part of their everyday tenancy management practices. They have also recognised that effective partnership working with animal welfare charities is essential to achieve real positive change.**

## An evolving policy

Housing Leeds developed their pets policy in consultation with tenants, housing management officers, and animal welfare charities and have continued to improve the policy, making further changes in response to feedback from tenants and partners. However, despite holding the RSPCA bronze housing Footprint for eight years, they found that both they and animal charities in Leeds were still facing barriers in addressing animal welfare issues. In November 2015, they held a Pets Forum with their partners to identify what needed to change – a key barrier facing everyone was communication.

From this starting point, they put in place their Pets Action Plan, based around working collaboratively with all partners and ensuring an effective communication strategy on animal welfare issues and legislative changes.

## Pets Champions

One of the simplest but most effective innovations to come out of the plan was the creation of Pets Champions roles in each of their 21 housing offices. Sharing these key contact details and agreeing roles and responsibilities around intervention has significantly improved communication. Through Pets Champions events, held twice a year, Housing Leeds remain committed to identifying new and creative solutions to the challenges they face.

The Pets Champions initiative began with a 'call to action' to their frontline workers; with officers who are passionate about animal welfare stepping forward to volunteer to take on the role in each housing office.

The Pets Champions are supported by key resources, including a Pets Policy Toolkit (a compilation of essential forms, letters and guidance). They created a Pets Champions Charter to outline the core responsibilities of the role and created a map of key contacts to share with partners.

## How it works

The Pets Champions are the key contacts in each of their offices who have developed a citywide network with partners including the Dog Warden Service, Police Dog Legislation Officers, the RSPCA and other animal welfare charities. This has been supported through effective staff training and communication around key messages so that the workforce is engaged and equipped to deal with issues quickly.

Partnership events are held on a regular basis and have supported significant policy developments. Examples of discussion topics include animal licensing legislation, Royal Mail dog safety awareness and a review of animal neglect cases to identify good practice and learning outcomes.

## The impact

In a landscape of shifting priorities and demands Housing Leeds have maintained their focus on continuing to drive improvements that positively impact on tenants and their pets, and address increasing pressures on their service in relation to animal welfare.

Pets Champions are proactive in arranging partnership events; for example an event in one local area with the Dogs Trust successfully microchipped 29 dogs. This is complemented further by a link with Cats Protection to offer free neutering to eligible tenants, a voucher scheme that is administered by Housing Leeds.

The Pets Champion scheme is unique in England and Wales, delivered despite a challenging external environment and with no additional budget or staff; in fact, earlier and more effective interventions and better multi-agency working has actually saved Housing Leeds money and time.

**Housing Leeds – Lettings & Tenancy Management Team**  
**Email: [LandTM@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:LandTM@leeds.gov.uk)**

## A pets policy: Other considerations

### Pets of vulnerable clients placed in self-contained accommodation

Landlords responsible for placing individual clients in self-contained accommodation will need to introduce a pets policy that not only encourages responsible pet ownership wherever possible but also ensures that the welfare of any pets is not compromised.

In the majority of situations it is hoped that pet ownership is encouraged and doesn't form a barrier to an individual being allocated an overnight hostel or temporary accommodation. For homeless people or those seeking refuge, e.g. victims of domestic abuse or refugees, their pet is a valued companion and can often provide a link with 'normality'. Organisations providing this type of accommodation are therefore urged to introduce procedures and policies that enable owners and pets to remain together, while ensuring the welfare of the animal concerned as well as the smooth running of the service.

The RSPCA's PetRetreat provides an information, advice and pet fostering service for families fleeing domestic abuse. Through its network of animal fosterers, PetRetreat takes care of pets belonging to families who are going into a refuge. Once the owner has a new, safe place to live, they can be reunited with their pets. The Freedom Project run by Dogs Trust and Cat Protection's Paws Protect are similar schemes for those fleeing domestic violence.

### Evictions, abandonment and debt recovery

It may be necessary in certain situations for landlords to evict tenants and it is important that pets are considered during the eviction process, as well as in other situations where they may be left behind or removed. The RSPCA strongly advises landlords to seek arrangements with local boarding establishments or reputable charities to house pets that may come into their care as a result of evictions or abandonments. This should be properly planned and not left to the last minute. Landlords can contact the RSPCA's Local Authority and Housing Association Line for help with animal care when they have an eviction date; we will not always be in a position to help, and are under no obligation to, but where resources and facilities allow we will do what we can.

**Eviction:** Any pets left behind by a tenant are regarded as 'property' under the law (just like any other items left behind) so the landlord is responsible for removing them, arranging for their care (ensuring that the animal's needs are met, as defined under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 [s9]) and then recouping any costs from the former tenant. Where possible, suitable arrangements for the animals should be made before the eviction. In this situation, the landlord should contact the RSPCA immediately, which will, with the landlord's cooperation, attend to the immediate welfare needs of the animals. However, it should be noted that the RSPCA cannot guarantee the presence of an officer at the time of an eviction.

If the landlord wishes the animals to be removed from its property while the RSPCA attempts to locate the owners, the Society will seek written acceptance of boarding and veterinary liability from the landlord.

**Abandonment:** In cases other than those outlined above, if the housing provider genuinely believes that a tenant has left a property and any pets kept within it with no intention of returning, the local authority should contact the RSPCA. In these situations, there may well be a case for further action under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

**Debt recovery:** The RSPCA has received calls regarding pet owners being told by bailiffs that their pets could be seized as part-payment for rent arrears. The additional stress that this puts on the owner and potentially on the pet is of great concern. It is, therefore, recommended that a landlord seeking to seize property in payment for rent arrears stipulates that pet animals are not to be seized as property.





# The RSPCA: A resource for housing providers

The RSPCA is the largest, oldest and best-known animal welfare organisation in the world and we have a wealth of knowledge and experience for you to tap into.

RSPCA

## 24-hour

**Cruelty Line:**

**0300 1234 999**

This is the RSPCA's dedicated line for reporting cruelty and welfare concerns that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

**RSPCA Local Authority and Housing Association Line:**

**0300 123 8007**

This number is for use by local authority and housing association staff only. Please do not promote it to the public, who should always be advised to use our Cruelty Line number.

## Online information and advice

Our website offers non-emergency advice and welfare information:  
[www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets](http://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets)

Cruelty and welfare concerns can also be reported online:  
[www.rspca.org.uk/utilities/contactus/reportcruelty](http://www.rspca.org.uk/utilities/contactus/reportcruelty)

Additional information for landlords in the private rented sector can be found here: [politicalanimal.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/RSPCA-Homes-for-All-Report-English-HiRes.pdf](http://politicalanimal.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/RSPCA-Homes-for-All-Report-English-HiRes.pdf)

## For more information, please contact:

**England:** [politicalaffairs@rspca.org.uk](mailto:politicalaffairs@rspca.org.uk)  
**0300 123 0371**

**Wales:** [externalaffairscymru@rspca.org.uk](mailto:externalaffairscymru@rspca.org.uk)  
**0300 123 8910**



**Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**

Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 9RS  
0300 1234 999 [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)

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