

Pet Request / Ownership Guidance – Market Rent Customers (Renters’ Rights Act)

Introduction

Futures Housing Group understands that pets can be an important part of home life, providing companionship, well-being, and support. This guidance explains how market rent customers affected by the Renters’ Rights Act can request permission to keep a pet in their home, what we consider when making decisions, and the responsibilities of pet owners.

This guidance **applies only to Futures Housing Group market rent customers whose tenancies fall within the scope of the Renters’ Rights Act**. It does not apply to social rent, affordable rent or leasehold customers, which are covered by separate tenancy agreements and guidance. Where there are specific lease, head-lease or management restrictions, these may still limit whether pets can be kept.

Assistance animals (including guide dogs and support animals) are protected by equality legislation and are not treated as pets.

We may review and update this guidance based on learnings and customer feedback.

Our approach to pets

We will not unreasonably refuse permission for a market rent customer to keep a pet, in line with the Renters’ Rights Act. Every request will be considered individually, taking into account:

- Your circumstances
- The type and layout of your home
- Your market rent tenancy conditions or where Futures doesn’t own the freehold of the property any conditions the leaseholder places on us.
- The potential impact on neighbours, visitors and our colleagues

Our aim is to support responsible pet ownership while making sure everyone can enjoy their home safely and comfortably.

How to request permission to keep a pet

Market rent customers must request permission before:

- Bringing a pet with you when you move into your property, or
- Getting a new pet during your tenancy

If a pet request cannot be agreed as originally requested, we will aim to work with you to identify a reasonable alternative that still works for you and your home. This may include discussing compromises, where appropriate, rather than refusing a request outright.

For example: if a larger pet is not suitable for a smaller property, we may be willing to consider a request for a smaller pet that better suits the size and layout of the home.

What happens next

- We will acknowledge your request within 28 days.
- We will give you a written decision once we have received all the information we need.
- If we ask you for more information, we will respond within 7 days of receiving it.
- Permission is given only for the specific pet or pets approved. If you want an additional pet or a different animal, you must make a new request.

What types of pets can be considered

Common household pets that may be considered include:

- Dogs
- Cats
- Small mammals
- Birds

Requests for multiple pets or animals not usually kept in homes will still be considered on a case-by-case basis.

What we consider when deciding

When assessing a request under the Renters' Rights Act, we may consider:

- The type, breed and size of the pet
- The number of animals
- Your ability (or a named person's ability) to care for the pet
- Feeding, exercise, cleaning and toileting arrangements
- The size, layout and access arrangements of your home
- Whether there are shared or communal areas

Your responsibilities as a pet owner

If permission is given, market rent customers are responsible for:

- All aspects of the pet's care, including health, hygiene, feeding, exercise and veterinary costs
- Making sure dogs are microchipped where legally required
- Cleaning up after the pet and safely disposing of waste
- Ensuring the pet does not cause damage (charges may apply for repairs or cleaning)
- Keeping the pet under control at all times
- Securing gardens and boundaries where relevant
- Preventing aggression towards people or other animals
- Moving the pet to another room when Futures Housing Group colleagues or contractors visit
- Complying with animal welfare and control laws

When permission may be refused

We will only refuse a pet request from a market rent customer if there is a clear, evidence-based reason, such as:

- Another resident has a serious allergy
- The home is not suitable for the size or number of pets
- The animal is illegal to keep in the UK
- Where the freehold owner isn't Futures and our lease agreement with them does not permit pets.

Any refusal will be explained in writing.

When permission may be withdrawn

Permission can only be withdrawn where there is a clear breach of your market rent tenancy conditions or this guidance, for example if:

- The pet causes nuisance or distress
- The pet shows aggression
- Damage is caused to the home or communal areas
- The pet is not being cared for properly

We will always write to explain the reasons and next steps. Where possible, we will try to resolve issues informally with you first. In serious cases, we may ask for the pet to be re-homed or take legal action as a last resort.

Appealing a decision

Market rent customers can appeal if:

- You believe this guidance was not applied correctly
- Important information was not considered
- Your circumstances have changed

How to appeal

Appeals must be made in writing within 10 working days of the decision. Please explain why you are appealing and include any supporting information. Your appeal will be reviewed by managers who were not involved in the original decision, and we will write to you with the outcome within 10 working days.

Complaints

If you are unhappy with how your pet request was handled, you can use Futures Housing Group's formal complaints process.

Need help or advice?

If you are unsure whether you need permission or need help submitting a request, please contact Futures Housing Group. We are happy to discuss your situation and explain your options as a market rent customer affected by the Renters' Rights Act.