



# Promoting responsible pet ownership

Our Pet and Animal Policy states that “no pet or animal may be kept without first obtaining our written permission. We will not unreasonably withhold permission to keep a pet or animal and will give a reason for our decision not to allow permission. Our permission may include a limit on the number of pets which may be kept.”

Pets and animals that Magna consider suitable are:

- domestic cats and dogs
- other small domestic animals such as rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, mice
- small birds such as budgerigars and canaries
- fish.

The following breeds of dogs are banned in this country under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and will not be allowed to be kept on our premises under any circumstances: Pit Bull terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino or Fila Brasileiro.

## Your responsibility as owner

You are responsible for the care and behaviour of any pet living in your home and have a clear obligation to ensure your pet does not cause a nuisance to others – nor cause damage - both inside or outside your home and in the wider locality.

Caged animals live in a totally controlled environment, but animals allowed access to public areas can cause problems. Injury through bites from dogs, scratches from cats are all causes for concern.

Before bringing home a new pet you must ask permission from Magna by contacting your housing officer or completing an ‘application to keep a pet’ form; you can find this online at [www.magna.org.uk](http://www.magna.org.uk). This includes any pet you are looking after on a temporary basis. We will need details of the type of animal, and if a dog, the breed and age plus micro-chip registration.

Magna will normally give permission for you to keep a pet or other animal that we consider reasonable for the size and type of property.

Some of our properties may be considered unsuitable for certain sizes or types of pet, for example, flats above ground, properties with shared communal areas and facilities, properties without an enclosed garden and properties where there are restrictive covenants concerning pets and animals.

You are legally obliged under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to care for your pet by providing five basic needs:

- somewhere suitable to live
- a proper diet, including fresh water
- the ability to express normal behaviour
- any need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
- protection from pain, suffering, and treatment of illness and injury.

Make sure you have arrangements in place for looking after your pet before you go away on holiday or to hospital or should an unexpected emergency arise. No pet should be left in the property alone when you are away. Small caged pets or fish can be looked after by family, neighbours or friends, but other pets will need more suitable arrangements.

If you live in sheltered housing, let your sheltered housing adviser know of your arrangements so that we can help in an emergency.

## General advice on pet ownership

Providing good welfare conditions for animals involves looking after their health and this applies as much to birds and fish as it does to dogs or cats.

## Neutering

Dogs, cats and rabbits are all routinely neutered. Neutering is important both to keep the animal healthy and to prevent unwanted breeding. Advice on neutering can be obtained from your veterinary surgeon or animal welfare organisation. Many charities subsidise neutering services if you are in receipt of any benefits.

## Vaccinations

Preventative healthcare is important for your animal's welfare. The care should be based on routine treatments.

Where vaccinations are available (for dogs, cats and rabbits), you should consult a local veterinary practice and have them carried out. Vaccinations are essential to protect against some particularly distressing and serious illnesses. Vets carry out health checks during vaccinations and this is also a useful part of disease prevention. They will also give advice on treating or preventing parasites.

Dogs and cats should be regularly treated for intestinal worms and fleas as both cause health problems. Toxocara (dog and cat roundworm) can cause blindness and other health hazards, particularly in children.

Rabbits, which have access to a garden, should also be treated for external parasites as they may carry rabbit disease, especially myxomatosis.

## Identification: micro-chipping

Magna's Pet and Animal Policy states that every dog must be micro-chipped before approval will be granted for it to be kept in a Magna home and evidence will be required.

Micro-chipping is compulsory by law as of April 2016 alongside the current law which states that all dogs must wear a collar and tag. The law has changed as it is believed this would be the most effective way of reducing stray dog numbers in the long term, be a deterrent to your dog getting stolen, alongside education and neutering.

## Insurance

We encourage those of you who are dog owners to consider third party insurance as a sensible precaution in cases of

damage to your property or injury to another person, their property or pets. Many household insurance policies will include this as long as the dog is in your control at the time. Membership schemes such as the one the Dogs Trust offers for £25 a year, (£12.50 if you're over 60) will offer third party liability insurance up to £1 million per claim.

## If pets are causing a nuisance

Any nuisance caused by pets is a form of anti-social behaviour (ASB). This can include noise, fouling, a violent attack and so on. Problems should be reported to your housing officer or the community safety team.

**Tenancy management:** 01305 216060 or [tenancy@magna.org.uk](mailto:tenancy@magna.org.uk)  
**Community safety:** 01305 216090 or [communitysafety@magna.org.uk](mailto:communitysafety@magna.org.uk)

## Fouling

Under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, failure to clean up after a dog defecates in a public area is an offence subject to a fine of up to £1,000.

If you do not clean up and dispose of the faeces safely and hygienically after your dog has defecated on land on our estates, footpaths or areas out of bounds to dogs, we will see this as anti social behaviour.

Whilst cats tend not to foul public areas, they do foul in private gardens which can cause a problem to neighbours. Providing a regularly cleaned litter box should help prevent this behaviour.

## Noise

Persistent barking by dogs, usually as a result of being left alone for long periods of time, is a nuisance to neighbours and should be investigated as soon as possible. If you are unable to solve this problem on your own, contact a veterinary surgeon or animal welfare organisation for advice.

If after advice and intervention from Magna still doesn't solve the problem, permission will be revoked for you to keep the dog(s).

Under the Environment Protection Act 1990, a local authority can serve you with an abatement notice if your dog barks consistently and excessively. Failure to comply with an abatement notice can result in a fine of up to £5,000.

## Damage

Insurance policies, such as contents insurance, may not cover any damage caused by pets to properties and furnishings, so it's important that you do everything you can to prevent it from happening. As part of your tenancy agreement, you must make good any damage caused to your home or any communal areas by your pets.

Dogs that are bored or left at home for long periods of time are more likely to cause damage to property and furnishings. If a dog must be left at home for a long period, leave plenty of toys and other distractions to occupy him. Try not to leave your dog at home for any more than 4 hours at a time.

Cats claw as part of their natural behaviour so they should always be provided with a scratching post and toys to occupy them while they are indoors. This should prevent them from clawing at the carpets and furniture.

Small mammals can cause problems by escaping and chewing electrical wiring, causing a potential fire hazard. The noise and smell of animals can also disturb neighbours.

## Dealing with cruelty and neglect

Where there is evidence or concerns regarding cruelty, neglect or abandonment of a pet and these are brought to our

attention, we will contact an appropriate animal welfare society.

If these are proven, permission will be withdrawn for the keeping of pets. There may be a case for further action under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

## Useful information:

**\*\*Contact the warden services below for advice and details of micro-chipping services\*\***

### **Dorset Dog Warden Services and Environmental Health:**

Tel: 01305 251010

[www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk](http://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk)

### **West Somerset Dog Warden Services/ Environmental Health**

Tel: 01643 703704

[www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk](http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk)

### **The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)**

The RSPCA has a wide range of general pet care leaflets. It provides a 365 day, 24 hour response service to report cruelty or request advice. Their national telephone number is 0300 1234999.

### **The Dogs Trust**

The Dogs Trust is a charity running re-homing centres; they provide welfare advice and free/low cost micro-chipping and neutering.

Address: The Dogs Trust, 17 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7RQ

Tel: 0207 837 0006

Web: [www.dogstrust.org.uk](http://www.dogstrust.org.uk)

### **The Blue Cross**

The Blue Cross provides low cost veterinary services to owners on low incomes.

Tel: 0300 7771897

Web: [www.bluecross.org.uk](http://www.bluecross.org.uk)

### **People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA)**

The PDSA provide veterinary treatment to the pets of people on the lowest of incomes.

Tel: 0800 731 2502

Web: [www.pdsa.org.uk](http://www.pdsa.org.uk)

### **Cinnamon Trust**

A charity that assists elderly people who are hospitalised or terminally ill and their pets (daily help or fostering of pets).

Tel: 01736 757900

Web: [www.cinnamon.org.uk](http://www.cinnamon.org.uk)

## Help and advice

If you have any questions, need help understanding this leaflet or would like it in another format, for example in large print or on audio CD, contact us.