

Pet Policy

VERSION [1.0]

Version Control

Note: minor updates increase version number by 0.1, major updates increase version number by 1.0.

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1.0	New Abri Policy in new format.	15/11/21	CL

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1. Introduction

1.1. This policy outlines Abri's approach to allowing customers to keep pets in their homes.

2. This policy applies to...

2.1. This policy applies to all customers of Abri.

2.2. Certain Tenancy Agreements, Leases, Covenants and similar may outline specific terms relating to pets e.g., pets are not allowed. We will review each Pet Permission request in line with the customer's Tenancy Agreement and relevant documents.

3. Policy

3.1. The aim of this policy is to ensure our customers are clear on what is expected of them when keeping pets and to improve animal welfare and our role in supporting this.

3.2. We recognise the benefits of customers being able to have a pet. However, this needs to be balanced with their ability to be a responsible pet owner and ensuring this does not adversely impact on the property or the lives of the community.

3.3. We encourage our customers to be responsible pet owners and ensure they take adequate care of their pets. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, customers are legally obliged to care for pets by providing five basic needs:

- A suitable environment,
- A suitable diet, including fresh water and appropriate food,
- The ability to express normal behaviour,
- Any need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals,
- Protection from and treatment of pain, suffering, injury, and disease.

Guiding Principles

3.4. When considering a customer's request for permission we will review:

- Customer Behaviour
- Environment
- Number of Pets
- Exceptional Circumstances (please see our Pets Permission Procedure for further information).

3.5. In addition, to promote good pet responsibility and play our part in ensuring pets are adequately taken care of, we will:

- Make the customer aware of their legal responsibilities for being a pet owner,
- Signpost to relevant pet care information,
- Have a clear approach to pet nuisance,

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- Prohibit breeding within the Terms and Conditions,
- Request all dogs and cats are microchipped,
- Request pets are neutered or spayed,
- Encourage customers to have adequate pet insurance,
- Encourage customers to ensure dogs and cats wear a collar and identification tag,
- Ensure customers agree to our Terms and Conditions before granting permission,
- Arrange for front facing Teams, e.g., Housing or Supported Housing, to have training on promoting positive pet ownership.

Requesting Permission

- 3.6. We require all customers to request permission before getting a pet. This is to ensure they meet the relevant criteria, confirm their agreement with the Terms and Conditions, understand the consequences if pet nuisance occurs and we are promoting good pet responsibility.
- 3.7. We will record all pets on the Customer Relationship Management system, this will enable us to ensure a proactive approach, especially in blocks of flats where nuisance is occurring, and we are unsure of the perpetrator.
- 3.8. Permission requests can be made via the Customer Portal, by telephone, in person or in writing.

Processing Requests for Permission

Criteria

- 3.9. We promote responsible pet ownership which means we have a set of criteria customers must meet for permission to be granted. The customer (or member of their household) must not have:
- Arrears on their rent or other accounts,
 - Outstanding antisocial behaviour against them,
 - Previous history of neglect and/or poor ownership and control of pets.

Type of Animals

- 3.10. In addition to the criteria set out in 3.9, when granting permission consideration will be given to the type of animal.
- 3.11. Subject to the criteria set out in 3.9 we will generally give customers permission to keep the following types of pets:

Category	Type of Pets
Large Domestic Pets	Cats Dogs
Small Domestic Pets	Kept within the garden:

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	<p>Small mammals such as Rabbits and Guinea Pigs</p> <p>Kept within the property: Small mammals such as house Rabbit, Hamsters and Mice Large birds e.g., Parrots and Cockatiels Small Birds e.g., Budgies and Canaries Fish* Non-Poisonous Insects and Spiders* Non-Poisonous Snakes and Reptiles under two feet in length (fully grown)*</p>
Other	<p>6 chickens in suitable gardens (Cockerels are not permitted)</p> <p>Birds within an aviary in suitable gardens**</p>

*Tanks must not exceed 90cm in length, 45cm in depth and 45cm in height and be no more than 120ltrs in capacity. Tanks are not to be bottom drilled.

**Aviaries must not exceed 8ft x 10ft.

3.12. We do not allow the following animals to be kept:

- Cockerels,
- Those classified under:
 - the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or
 - the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976,
- Farm animals such as horses, pigs, and cattle,
- Venomous or poisonous animals.

3.13. Customers are encouraged to contact us if they are unsure whether their prospective pet meets the criteria.

Types of Accommodation/Tenure

3.14. We recognise there are different types of accommodation or tenure which would not be suitable for pets (e.g., due to health and safety). When considering whether to give permission for a pet, the following guidance will generally be applied:

Accommodation Type	Permission Status
General Needs	Customers require approval to keep a pet and are bound by the Terms and Conditions of this Policy and relevant documents.
Shared Ownership	
Market Rent	
Supported Housing	Customers require approval to keep a pet and are bound by the Terms and Conditions of this Policy and relevant documents.
Temporary Accommodation	Pet permission is generally not granted however permission requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If

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	approved customers are bound by the Terms and Conditions of this Policy and relevant documents.
Extra Care Accommodation	Pet permission is generally not granted however permission requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If approved customers are bound by the Terms and Conditions of this Policy and relevant documents.
Leasehold	Each Lease will be different and may set out certain clauses in relation to pets. Therefore, Leasehold customers are required to review their Lease as any breach may result in enforcement action from Abri.

Number of Pets

3.15. The above is only a guide and the number of pets permitted will also depend on the size of the property and garden. This will be evaluated by the relevant Team e.g., Housing or Supported Housing.

Exceptions

3.16. Permission for pets based on medical grounds e.g., Assistance Dogs will be granted independently from the criteria outlined in this Policy.

3.17. In circumstances where the pet has presented a Health and Safety concern or risk for the customer or other people, we will work with them and the relevant agencies to resolve the matter.

Granting Permission

Terms and conditions

3.18. Customers that have approval to keep pets in their home must agree and follow these terms:

- You will adhere to the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and any other relevant legislation.
- You will not breed from your pets.
- You will microchip and vaccinate pets as required by law.
- You will be responsible for the behaviour of your pets, and should they cause any nuisance, annoyance, danger, or distress to anyone in the community this will be a breach of your tenancy and appropriate action may be taken which could affect the security of your home.

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- You will move your dog(s) or other pets, as appropriate, to a separate room or safe outside space whilst an Abri employee or representative is working or carrying out any type of visit in or around your home, including outside spaces and outbuildings.
- You will register birds under the voluntary registration process to enable the government to keep owners informed of future outbreaks e.g., Avian Flu.
- You will keep dogs on a lead in communal areas.
- You will make sure faeces is promptly cleared and responsibly disposed of.
- You will ensure pets undergo routine healthcare that includes vaccinations, parasite, and flea control.
- You acknowledge you will incur any costs for cleaning up or repairing damage due to your pet.

3.19. Additional terms are required for customers who have permission to keep a dog in a flat or bungalow with direct access to a communal area:

- Dogs must be kept on a lead when being walked through communal areas including gardens.
- Dogs are not allowed to stay in the communal area other than being walked through.
- Dog fouling is not permitted in communal areas including gardens.
- Underlay and carpets must be laid throughout the flat to reduce noise nuisance.
- We will operate a three-strike rule, if three occurrences of nuisance occur, we will proceed with working with the customer to rehome the pet or start legal proceedings such as seeking an Injunction.

Pet Caretaker Agreement

3.20. We may also find it appropriate to grant permission for a pet on the basis that a Pet Caretaker Agreement is in place e.g., for Supported Housing customers.

3.21. A Caretaker Agreement outlines that in the event the customer is unable to care for the animal than a third party will take responsibility for the pet.

3.22. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions or those of a Caretaker Agreement may lead to us withdrawing permission to keep a pet. Please see Pet Nuisance Procedure for further information.

Pet Nuisance and Neglect

Dealing with cruelty and neglect

3.23. Where a colleague witnesses' cruelty or neglect they will report this to the RSPCA or Police. Where cruelty or neglect is reported to us by a customer, we will advise the customer to report this to the RSPCA directly.

Nuisance Animals

- 3.24. A range of behaviours can cause a nuisance to neighbours, for example:
- Pets fouling in the communal area or in neighbour's gardens and not being cleared immediately.
 - Pet fouling not being cleared within the pet owner's garden or boundaries.
 - Over population of animals within the household.
 - Excessive noise.

3.25. We will encourage customers to discuss any nuisance with their neighbours in the first instance with the aim to resolve the matter informally and without involvement from us.

- 3.26. There may be cases where Abri need to be involved and the following actions may be considered:
- Restricting the number of animals,
 - Involving organisations such as the RSPCA or Local Authority,
 - Withdrawing permission to keep the animal/s,
 - Encouraging the customer to rehome the animal/s.

3.27. Please see our Pet Nuisance Procedure for more information.

Advice and Support

3.28. Where appropriate we will signpost our customers to external agencies such as the RSPCA and PDSA for advice and support on pet welfare. Further information can be found on our Customer Portal.

4. Legal & Regulatory Framework

- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Social Housing White Paper - January 2021
- Dogs and Domestic Animals (Accommodation and Protection) Bill

5. Related Policies

- Breach of Tenancy Policy

6. Related Procedures

- Pet Permission Procedure
- Pet Nuisance Procedure
- Pest Procedure