

Pets and Emergency Accommodation

April 2016 Updated December 2018



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Pets are allowed in some, but not all types of emergency accommodation, so you may need to find temporary homes for them. This leaflet explains the types of emergency accommodation where permission may be granted to keep pets.

Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

It is not possible to keep pets in emergency bed and breakfast and nightly stay units that are run by private providers. Where this accommodation is offered you will be expected to rehome your pet(s) on either a temporary or permanent basis at your own cost.

Emergency Accommodation made available to the Council by Housing Associations

It will be the decision of the housing association as to whether they will allow pet(s) within these units. Where this accommodation is offered to you and the housing association does not grant you permission to keep your pet(s) you will be expected to rehome your pet(s) on either a temporary or permanent basis at your own cost.

Emergency Accommodation Owned by the Council

The Council owns and leases a number of units of self contained accommodation. Allocation of these units is made following the Council's Policy on the Suitability of Emergency Accommodation for Homeless Applicants (January 2016). Permission may be requested to keep small caged animals such as fish, birds, rodents and reptiles at these properties, because they are unlikely to impact on neighbours and the condition of the property. Keeping large reptiles, including snakes and larger rodents such as rats is not permitted.

Uncaged pets such as dogs and cats are not allowed at some of the properties because there is no access to a yard or garden and some have shared communal hall ways. Properties where you may request permission to keep cats and dogs are listed below.

Mill Lane, Dorking

Electricity Cottage, Dorking

Ground floor flat Edenside, Bookham

Recreation Bungalow, Ashted

Groundsman's Bungalow, Clare Crescent, Leatherhead

Holmbury Drive, North Holmwood

Falkland Gardens, Dorking

Ground floor flat Cressall Close, Leatherhead

You may also request permission to keep a rabbit or guinea pig in the garden/yard of the above properties provided they are kept in the garden or yard and in a secure hutch provided by you.

We will not allow 'weapon dogs', dog breeds specified in the Dangerous Dogs Act or animals which need to be registered under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act.

The Council reserves the right to limit the number of pets it allows. It also reserves the right to refuse pets should there be concerns over the safety and welfare of your pet(s).

Permission may only be requested at the time you apply as homeless. Requests for permission to keep new pets after you have moved into the accommodation will be refused.

How to Request Permission

You may make a request in writing or by email to the Temporary Accommodation Officer, who will consider your request. You will either be granted permission or refused permission and if refused you will be given the reasons why.

Guide and Hearing Dogs

If you keep a guide dog, provided by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, or hearing dog, provided by Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, to assist you day to day you will be offered one of the Council owned properties where permission may be granted to keep a dog. If there are no vacancies or these properties are not suitable an exception will be made to allocate you an alternative.

Can the Council withdraw Permission to keep Pets?

Where permission has been given for a pet to be kept the Council reserves the right to rescind such permission should your pet(s): cause significant damage to the property; cause a nuisance to neighbours or other nuisance; or you have not responsibly cared for your pet(s). Should your permission be withdrawn you will be given 14 days to rehome your pet(s) and failure to do so may mean that the Council will ask you to leave the accommodation.

Keeping Pets without Permission

If you keep a pet(s) in the Council's owned emergency accommodation without first requesting permission from the Council it will be a breach of your nonsecure tenancy conditions. You will first be issued with a warning to rehome your pet(s) within 14 days and failure to do so may mean that the Council will ask you to leave the accommodation.

Responsible Pet Ownership

If you are granted permission to keep your pet(s) the tenancy conditions of your nonsecure tenancy agreement require you to be a responsible pet owner. This is because keeping pets comes with responsibilities, both towards the animal and to your neighbours. Irresponsible pet ownership can cause nuisance and potentially pose a risk to the welfare of people, your pet and other animals.

Some important points about keeping a pet include:

- Pets must be kept under control at all times
- You must clear up any dog and cat mess immediately in and outside of the property
- Pets must not cause nuisance or danger to persons or other animals and this will be treated as anti-social behaviour

The RSPCA provides a wealth of information on taking care of pets and being a responsible owner.

<http://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare>

Microchipping Dogs

If you own a dog it is the law that it is microchipped. The Council provides a free microchipping service and to make an appointment for your dog to be chipped, please contact the animal warden on 01306 885001.

Damage Caused by your Pets

If you are granted permission to keep a pet(s) at one of the Council's owned emergency accommodation units, it is your responsibility as the tenant to ensure that no damage is caused to the property by your pet(s). Where any damage is caused to the fixtures and fittings by your pet(s) it will be your responsibility to put this right before the end of the tenancy. Should this not happen the Council will carry out the required repair and charge you for the full cost of the work.

Carpets

If you are granted permission to keep a cat or dog at the Council emergency accommodation you will be responsible at the end of the tenancy for ensuring that all the carpets are professionally cleaned. You must give a receipt for this work to the Temporary Accommodation Officer when the keys are returned to the Council. Should this not be done, the Council will arrange a professional carpet clean and charge you for the full cost.

Rehoming your Pets

It is your responsibility to rehome any of your pets which are not allowed within accommodation arranged by the Council under Sections 188 or 193 of the Housing Act 1996 Part VII. The Council cannot accept the cost of rehoming any pets either temporarily or permanently.

If you are unable to rehome your pet(s) with family or friends you will be advised of private kennels, catteries and other pet homes that you can approach independently. You are responsible for the cost. The RSPCA also offers advice and more information can be found at the website link below.

http://www.rspca.org.uk/findapet/rehomeapet/-/articleName/EM_Rehoming

A list of licenced animal boarding establishments in Mole Valley can be found at the link below.

<http://www.molevalley.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=16861>

Is your Homelessness Application Affected?

Having a pet(s) will not influence the Councils policy on accommodating you under Sections 188 and 193 of the Housing Act Part 1996 VII. It will not be considered an unsuitable offer of accommodation under Section 193 if you have a pet(s), but are offered a unit of accommodation where keeping pets is not possible. You will not be denied assistance under the homelessness legislation as a result of having a pet(s).

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