

## **The importance of community supports**

In addition to having a pet-friendly building, Adrian talks about his friends offering to help take care of his cat occasionally.

Adrian:

I've been here for about, in this building for about 13 years. And the last 7 years, the summer they changed hands and a couple of years later my friend moved out, taking her 2 cats with her. And, but there was a young woman who moved in downstairs and she had a small dog and a cat. And as long as people are responsible I guess, the landlord doesn't mind. At the present time, I don't think anybody else in the apartment, in this building, has animals except me. But he doesn't bother anybody obviously. He's a cat so he doesn't bark. He's clean. He just goes out in the balcony. He doesn't go, you know, and roam around and bother any neighbors. So I think as long as you're very responsible, I don't think they really mind. But there used to be more animals, yes, in this building, but not now.

Margaret: I'm wondering if there's anything in your community that makes having a pet easier. Like you mentioned that you have a friend who's gonna come and take care of your cat. Is there anybody who you rely on who helps you with your cat?

Adrian:

This person who is also neurodivergent, yes, they will help come over as I say, they don't live that far away. And they are very happy to come over and sit out on the balcony and you know, relax here with my cat. And then I have another friend who lives, more out towards Woodroffe area and he will come over often, he doesn't have any pets but sometimes he looks after other people's pets, well not dogs but cats. And so he would come over if this other friend could not. But he's farther away so it's a lot more bother for him. But, I've got 2 friends, I'm fortunate that way. They both like my cat and they're willing to come over and help if I'm away, you know. But other than that, I obviously don't need any help with the cat. One thing I know they do have is at the Humane Society, I think it's the Farley Foundation, and that is money for people who have a pet, a dog or a cat, and they are over 65. And maybe they have unexpected medical expenses for the cat or dog and they will help them if they need it, if they can afford to, if they have enough money. And I think that's an excellent idea. I think there should be some kind of an emergency subsidy, money, for people who are older and live alone and this pet is their only companion. I think that's important for quality of living for older people and especially I think neurodivergent people because often we don't have a whole pack of people around. I have these 2 friends, they come over to my apartment. Other than them, almost nobody comes over because I don't invite them. I don't want them. I don't have parties. I don't have bunches of people over. It's very quiet. But, yeah, I think, people, especially neurodivergent people, I think it's very important to have a pet because many of us are not going to be living with somebody else. I'm quite happy to live by myself.