



Housing services pet policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out Medway Council Housing Services (the Council's) approach to allowing tenants to keep pets by its tenants. Housing Services recognises the benefits responsible pet ownership can bring. However, controls must be in place to prevent irresponsible ownership, which can cause suffering to animals and a nuisance to neighbours.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The aim of the Pets Policy is to ensure that;
- 2.1.1 pets are kept in line with the terms of this policy;
 - 2.1.2 complaints about nuisance are dealt with efficiently and effectively;
 - 2.1.3 advice and support is offered to tenants about responsible pet ownership.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all tenure and occupancy types.

4. Legislation and Guidance

4.1 External

- 4.1.1 Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 s.3
- 4.1.2 Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA)/ Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (CNEA)
- 4.1.3 Animal Welfare Act 2006

4.2 Internal

- 4.2.1 Tenancy Management Policy
- 4.2.2 ASB Policy
- 4.2.3 Medway Council tenancy agreement(s)

5. The Policy

- 5.1 Housing Services allows tenants to keep pets in line with the conditions set out in this policy.
- 5.2 Tenants are not allowed to keep pets within the boundaries of their property until it is formally registered with Housing Services and written permission has been granted.
- 5.3 **Getting permission to keep a pet**
- 5.4 Applicants for housing are asked to indicate on their Homechoice application form if they currently keep/intend to keep a pet. This will not prejudice an application unless the applicant intends to keep a pet for which permission will not be granted.
- 5.5 Tenants need to seek permission in writing from Housing Services to keep pets in all circumstances. This allows Housing Services to ensure animals are being kept within the terms of the Council's pet policy.
- 5.6 New tenants should register pets during the tenancy sign up. Existing tenants

are required to complete and submit a pet registration form when requesting permission for a new pet.

5.7 Tenants must register each individual pet that they wish keep in their property.

5.8 In regards to all pets, once given, permission may be withdrawn by the council without notice if the animal causes a nuisance or annoyance.

5.9 **Types and number of pets allowed in a property**

5.10 There are different levels of permission for pets dependent upon the type of property and this is divided into the following categories:

5.10.1 Homes for Independent Living.

5.10.2 Bed sits/one bed flats/bungalows.

5.10.3 2/3 bed flats/maisonettes/bungalows and houses.

5.11 However, Housing Services will always take into consideration the suitability of an individual property before granting permission to keep a pet. A Housing Officer may visit a property to determine its suitability and whether the number of pets being registered at the property is appropriate and in the pets best interest.

5.12 **Permitted pets for Homes for Independent Living**

5.12.1 Small caged birds

5.12.2 Fish in an aquarium

5.12.3 Care dogs (for example, guide dog for the sight impaired or a hearing dog)

5.13 **Permitted pets for 1 bedroom bed flats/maisonettes/bungalows.**

5.13.1 Small caged birds/small mammals (excluding rabbits and guinea pigs unless the tenant is subject to the sole use of a garden)

5.13.2 Fish in an aquarium

5.13.3 Caged reptiles (not venomous)

5.13.4 Caged insects/spiders (not venomous)

5.13.5 Dogs max 1 subject to sole use of garden

5.13.6 Cats max 1

5.14 **Permitted pets of 2/3 bed flats/maisonettes/bungalows.**

5.14.1 Small caged birds/ small mammals (excluding rabbits and guinea pigs unless the tenant is subject to the sole use of a garden)

5.14.2 Fish in an aquarium

5.14.3 Caged reptiles (not venomous)

5.14.4 Caged insects/spiders (not venomous)

5.14.5 Dogs max 2 subject to sole use of garden

5.14.6 Cats max 2 subject to sole use of garden or max 1 if no use of a garden

5.15 **Permitted pets for houses**

5.15.1 Small caged birds/ small mammals (excluding rabbits and guinea pigs unless the tenant is subject to the sole use of a garden)

5.15.2 Fish in an aquarium

5.15.3 Caged reptiles (not venomous)

5.15.4 Caged insects/spiders (not venomous)

5.15.5 Dogs max 2 subject to sole use of garden

5.15.6 Cats max 2 subject to sole use of garden or max 1 if no use of a garden

5.15.7 Pigeons and birds of prey subject to conditions.

5.16 Permission to keep the following animals will not be granted under any circumstances

5.16.1 Dogs listed on the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991

5.16.2 Livestock

5.16.3 Endangered species

5.16.4 Animals listed on the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976.

5.17 Rules for keeping pets

5.18 Where permission is given for any type of pet, tenants must fulfil the following conditions:

- 5.18.1 Pets must be kept in proper care in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006.
- 5.18.2 Control of pets and those visiting the property are the tenant's responsibility.
- 5.18.3 Pets must not cause nuisance to neighbours, staff and/or visitors (see 5.22).
- 5.18.4 Pets must not be kept in communal areas, including stairwells.
- 5.18.5 Pets must not be allowed to foul in public or communal areas. If in any circumstance this does occur the person responsible for the pet must clear up any fouling immediately.
- 5.18.6 Pets must not damage the property. Any damage caused by a tenant(s) pet to their own, or another tenants property will be the responsibility of the pets owner. The cost of repair may be recharged to the pet's owner.
- 5.18.7 Relevant animals must be micro chipped to aid identification.
- 5.18.8 Animals must not be used for commercial breeding purposes and it is recommended that animals are neutered to prevent breeding.
- 5.18.9 Tenants must not leave any pet alone or unattended overnight or for long periods of time.

5.15 Additional rules for keeping dogs

5.19 Dogs may only be kept in a house or flat/maisonette/bungalow if the property has sole use of a garden. Permission for a dog will not be given if the property does not have a garden or has a shared garden. Tenants who are registered blind/disabled and who need a care dog are the only exception to this rule.

5.20 Tenants that keep a care dog are required to register the dog with Housing Services.

5.21 Where permission for a dog is granted the following applies:

- 5.21.1 Tenant must not keep a dog in a Council property if the dog is a dangerous dog as defined in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991s3.
- 5.21.2 Dogs must be kept on a lead in communal areas and must not enter children's play areas.
- 5.21.3 Dogs must never be allowed outside the boundaries of the tenant's property on their own, this includes communal balconies and stairwells.
- 5.21.4 Tenants must not chain or tether dogs on any Council owned land.
- 5.21.5 To comply with current legislation dogs must wear a collar and nametag.

5.22 Pet nuisance

5.23 Pet nuisance includes a range of behaviours including the following situations (this is not an exhaustive list):

- 5.23.1 Roaming and unattended animals
- 5.23.2 Pets fouling in neighbour(s) gardens or communal areas
- 5.23.3 Excessive noise
- 5.23.4 Over-population of animals in a household
- 5.23.5 Unpleasant odours
- 5.23.6 Aggressive animals (threatening or harmful behavior directed toward another individual, including dog on dog aggression, aggression toward people, and aggression toward other animals. Aggression can include threat displays, lunging, growling, snarling, snapping, and biting).

5.24 Tenants who experience nuisance from a neighbours pet, or consider that a neighbours pet is not being adequately cared for are encouraged to report their concerns to their Housing Officer.

- 5.25 Complaints made will be dealt with through the Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) procedure in accordance with Housing Services ASB policy.
- 5.26 In the case that an ASB complaint is made the Housing Officer will attempt to remedy the problem. However, if the policy and/or tenancy agreement continues to be breached, this could ultimately lead to legal action which may result in eviction.
- 5.27 If Housing Services consider that a pet is not being adequately cared for, it will be reported to the proper authorities.
- 6. Role, Responsibilities and Authority**
- 6.1 The Assistant Director of Physical and Cultural Regeneration retains overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- 6.2 The Housing Manager is responsible for the operational delivery of this policy and the associated procedures. This includes responsibility for monitoring and reviewing, staff awareness and training, policy development and communication to tenants.
- 7. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation**
- 7.1 Regular monitoring will take place to ensure that Housing Services is dealing with pet registrations in line with this policy.
- 7.2 In cases where ASB complaints are made, in relation to pets or otherwise, performance will be monitored each month to ensure that complaints are responded to on time: resolved appropriately and that the complainant is satisfied with the outcome.
- 7.3 This policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis or in line with legislative or regulatory changes.

Policy Version Control Sheet

Policy Title: Pets Policy

Policy Author(s): Business and Partnership Officer, Housing Manager

This Version: May 2017

Projected Date of Review: May 2019

Cross References: Tenancy Management Policy, Tenants Handbook.

Amendments Made:

This Version: May 2017 – Changes made to policy – for consistency with other property types 1 cat is allowed in 1 bedroom bed flats/maisonettes/bungalows. No further changes have been made to the policy regarding the number of animals allowed in a property.