



Town & Country
Housing

Peabody Group

PET POLICY 2023

1. Scope

1.1 This policy sets out the approach of Town and Country Housing (TCH) to pet ownership within our properties and what we expect of pet owners.

1.2 TCH will always start from the position of allowing a pet to be kept unless there is evidence to support a refusal. TCH recognises that pet ownership can be very beneficial for the wellbeing of our residents, contributing positively to improving mental health, reducing loneliness and can help maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

1.3 This policy covers all households living in properties owned or managed by TCH including general needs, market rent, intermediate market rent, keyworker housing, leasehold, and shared ownership.

1.4 Decisions about pet ownership in independent living will be made on a case-by case basis by the scheme manager as outlined in section 9 of this policy. Decisions about pet ownership in leasehold or shared ownership properties will be guided by section 10 of this policy.

1.5 Households should review the terms of their tenancy or lease to identify if there are any provisions which take priority over this policy. We will advise you at the start of your tenancy if any such provisions are in place.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 The aims of this policy are:

- To promote responsible pet ownership across TCH communities in recognition of the benefits this may have for a household's health and wellbeing.
- To ensure effective enforcement is in place to manage any issues concerning nuisance or safety arising from pet ownership.

3. Key terms and definitions

3.1 'Animal hoarding' involves keeping a higher than usual number of animals as pets without having the ability to properly house or care for them.

3.2 'Noise nuisance' is 'an unreasonable and significant emission of noise that causes significant and unreasonable interference with the use and enjoyment of your premises'.

3.3 We consider nuisance to include (but is not limited to) the following activities:

- Fouling in communal areas/ failure by the owner to promptly clear up fouling within their own property/garden
- Excessive noise due to the volume, duration, or time of day

- Attacks on people or other animals
- Causing a person to believe they might be injured due to an out-of-control pet
- Failing to keep a dog on a lead in communal areas

4. Pets you do not need to request permission for

4.1 You do not need permission to keep a reasonable number of caged house birds and small caged animals like hamsters, rabbits etc. However, breeding and selling is not permitted and if you are not looking after your home well, we may prevent you from having any caged animals or birds. Any food stored outside for your pets must be in a sealed container to deter vermin. Please check your tenancy agreement or lease to see if any restrictions apply.

5. Permission to keep a pet in general needs housing and private rent properties

5.1 Permission to keep a pet must be requested in writing. This can be done by completing and submitting the online form Application to Keep a Pet. In general needs housing, you do not need to request permission for:

- one housecat cat or one non-housecat cat if you have a garden,
- one dog if you have a secured private garden.

5.2 We will give permission to keep a pet if the property is suitable for the size and type of pet and you are able to take on the responsibilities of looking after the pet. We will also take into consideration whether your tenancy has been breached in any way, for instance, rent arrears, no access, anti-social behaviour or not looking after your property. We will not object to the request to own a pet without good reason and we will confirm this in writing.

5.3 If we grant permission for you to keep a dog or cat we will ask you to sign a Pet Contract and confirm that they have been neutered and microchipped.

5.4 If your property requires changes to accommodate a pet, you must request permission in writing before making the changes. We will usually give consent to changes such as a cat flap, if you agree to remove and make good the changes if you move away, and the changes do not affect fire safety. You cannot have a cat flap if your door opens onto a communal hallway in a block of flats.

5.5 Assistance dogs, including guide dogs, are permitted in all circumstances. The owner of the assistance dog is responsible for ensuring that their dog is properly trained.

5.6 Where appropriate, we will give permission to keep a limited number of chickens (but not cockerels) or birds of prey. Permission will be dependent on the size of the garden, location of the property, storage of food, bedding and licensing

requirements. In general, we will not give permission for outdoor farm animals in built up areas or where keeping them is likely to impact on others.

5.7 Snakes or reptiles which are permitted by local authorities are permitted but must be kept in a secure and appropriate sized tank at all times.

6. Pets NOT Permitted

6.1 Under no circumstance are households allowed to keep the following as pets:

- Animals listed under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 (including large mammals, carnivores, larger or venomous reptiles, dangerous spiders, and scorpions)
- Any endangered species
- Any hybrid between a domestic and a wild animal
- Bees
- Dogs listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (i.e., Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino, Fila Brasileiro, or American Bully (XL Bullies))
- Guard dogs
- Livestock (including horses and cattle)

6.2 Permission for breeding or selling animals will not be allowed in any TCH property. Animals must not be kept for the purposes of breeding or sale. Any offspring must not be kept for a period longer than eight weeks following birth.

6.3 We retain the right to withdraw permission to keep a pet where the pet has caused nuisance, the lack of care and inadequate storing of food is attracting vermin, or we believe the owner to be showing signs of animal cruelty or neglect.

7. Responsibilities for pet owners

7.1 We expect all pet owners to behave responsibly by upholding the following standards:

- All pets must be kept in proper care, including a proper diet, protection from pain, suffering, injury, or disease; the ability to exhibit normal behaviour patterns and a suitable environment to live with or apart from other animals, and are not left unattended for a significant amount of time.
- All pets must be kept under proper control and not cause a nuisance to other households. This includes dogs being kept on a lead and not being left alone in communal areas and not entering play areas. Pets must be kept under control when TCH employees or contractors attend a property. Staff and contractors

reserve the right to kindly request that pets are kept in separate rooms or the garden when requested.

- No fouling in communal areas. Where fouling has occurred, the responsible owners must clean up immediately. If a communal area is repeatedly littered with dog fouling and sufficient evidence links the fouling to a resident, TCH may apply a recharge to the dog owner for any cleaning undertaken to restore the area to an acceptable standard.
- Owners must actively seek to prevent unpleasant odours being emitted from their property due to their pet(s).
- Animals must not damage any TCH property, including communal parts of the building and neighbouring properties. Owners may be recharged for any repairs which are needed because of such damage.
- All dogs over the age of eight weeks must be microchipped and wear a collar and tag in public.
- Owners must not hoard animals in their property.
- Owners must have suitable arrangements in place for looking after their pet during prolonged periods of absence.
- Cat or dog flaps must not be installed without our prior consent as these can compromise the fire safety of a property.
- Dead pets must be buried or disposed of in a responsible and safe manner.

7.2 Households are expected to uphold the same standards for any animals which are visiting their property.

7.3 We strongly recommend that residents insure their pets. Insurance will cover vet bills along with public liability (should your pets cause an accident or any damage).

8. Handling pet-related issues

8.1 We will work with households to address pet-related issues or any circumstances affecting the owner which have led to such issues. This may include referrals to specialist animal welfare organisations for information, advice and guidance.

8.2 Where a pet owner fails to engage with such efforts, or if the level of nuisance, cruelty or neglect is significant, we will take more serious action. This may include making a referral to the Local Authority and/or Police, requiring the rehoming of the animal, or in some cases seeking possession of the property. Where a decision has been made to rehome an animal, we will allow this to take place within a reasonable timeframe.

8.3 It is illegal for a pet owner to allow their dog to be dangerously out of control in a public place. This includes any incidents where injury occurs or there is a fear that an

injury might occur. We will report all such incidents to the police, and this may result in sanctions or criminal prosecution.

8.4 We will report any complaint of animal cruelty to the RSPCA and will report any stray animals to the relevant local authority. If the RSPCA become involved they may enforce immediate rehoming of a pet.

8.5 We will investigate all issues relating to nuisance or anti-social behaviour in line with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, including any excessive noise created by pets.

8.6 We recognise that residents may have difficulty in keeping a pet relating to age, disability or mental health condition. Staff will handle pet-related issues taking into consideration any support needs of residents in recognition of the health and wellbeing impacts of owning a pet and act in accordance with the safeguarding policy.

9. Pets in Independent living

9.1 Residents in independent living schemes must also seek approval to keep any pet. This can be done by completing the Application to Keep a Pet (Independent living).

9.2 Permission will be restricted to **one pet per customer** unless there are exceptional circumstances for incoming customers. We will assess if the property is suitable for the size and type of pet and that the resident is able to take on the responsibilities of looking after the pet.

9.3 Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis with consideration of:

- the customer's capacity to care for the pet.
- the nature of arrangements for taking care of the pet in the event of a change of circumstance, such as hospital stay, move to other accommodation or a decline in health or wellbeing.
- any potential impact the animal may have on other customers or the environment within the scheme.

9.4 If the customer is dissatisfied with the outcome, they should make an appeal to the relevant Team Leader or Service Manager.

9.5 Residents in independent living schemes are expected to follow the responsibilities for pet owners as per the above policy. Any pet-related issues will be addressed as outlined in this policy.

9.6 When washing pet products such as a dog bed, pet owners are expected to clean any leftover hair from the machines. Pet owners may be recharged for any cleaning required to the communal washing facilities.

9.7 Guest rooms in our independent living schemes are considered a communal facility. Pets will not be permitted in guest rooms at any time.

10. Pets in Leasehold and Shared Ownership properties

10.1 Residents in leasehold and shared ownership properties must seek approval to keep a pet. You do not need to request permission to keep a pet if you have your own secured private garden.

10.2 We will charge a fee for consideration of keeping a pet at the property.

10.3 We will ask you to sign a Consent Form to agree to the conditions of keeping a pet.

10.4 You must request permission for making alteration to accommodate a pet.

11 Resident consultation

11.1 Residents were consulted on a draft of the policy. The policy has been updated to reflect resident feedback and include specific reference to noise-nuisance and pet insurance. We have included hyperlinks to the Pet Permission Form to ensure ease of access.

12 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

12.1 This policy will be implemented in accordance with TCH's equality and diversity policy. An equalities impact assessment has been completed to ensure that the policy is inclusive. The assessment identified that age and disability including mental health conditions may impact on an individual's ability to keep a pet. This impact has been mitigated by ensuring that staff identify support needs and signpost individuals to support in recognition of the health and wellbeing benefits of keeping a pet.

13 Monitoring and continued improvement

13.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years – unless legislation, business or sector developments require otherwise – to ensure that it continues to meet the stated objectives and take account of good practice developments.

14 Legislation and regulation:

- Model Tenancy Agreement 2021
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Dogs Act 1871

- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Equality Act 2010

15 Related Documents:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Hoarding Policy
- Safeguarding Policy