

Policy name:	
Pets Policy	
Section:	Housing
Exec responsible:	Director of Housing
Review by:	Housing, Customer & Communities Manager,
Tenant review:	Yes – Resident engagement panel
Authority to amend:	CEO
Frequency of review:	Every three years
Last review:	January 2024
Next review:	January 2027
Responsibility for delivery:	Housing team
Strategy:	Housing strategy
Associated risk ID:	Injury to employee / resident ASB arising from behaviour of pet etc
Health & safety:	
Equality & diversity:	A consistent and fair approach to handling requests for pets.
Associated costs and value for money:	
Associated documents:	ASB policy, Tenancy policy and Lettings policy

VERSION CONTROL			
Version number:	Sections amended:	Date of update:	Approved by:
1.0	First issue in new template	Oct 12	Retrospective
1.1	General update	April 2016	CE
2.0	Full review with amendments throughout	October 2020	CE
2.1	Exception review re XL Bully dogs	January 2024	

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1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to clearly outline our approach to tenants keeping pets. Allowing a tenant to keep a pet is at our discretion as there is no statutory right to keep pets.

We want to ensure that when allowing tenants to keep pets this is not adversely affecting others, for example by causing a nuisance. We will ensure that cruelty or neglect are dealt with quickly and effectively and outline in which circumstances we may withdraw this permission.

2. AIMS

This policy will provide reasonable, fair and clear guidance for tenants and our staff and refer to the following:

- Terms under which tenants will be granted pet permission
- Instances where permission will not be granted
- Encourage responsible pet ownership
- Ensure animal welfare is maintained
- Meet legislative requirements
- Set out clear guidelines on how we deal with breaches of this policy and the law

This policy should be read alongside our ASB policy and the Lettings policy.

3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

There are several pieces of legislation relating to the main laws for keeping animals

- Protection of Animals Amendment Act 2000– Persons found guilty of cruelty or neglect may be imprisoned and/or fined. They may also be banned from keeping an animal for life
- Animal Welfare Act 2006 amended on 1st October 2018 – Owners have a legal duty to meet the welfare needs of pets. Welfare needs include a proper diet (including water), somewhere

suitable to live, any need to be housed with – or apart from – other animals, allowing animals to express normal behaviour, and protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease. Anyone who is cruel to an animal, or does not provide for its welfare needs, may be banned from owning animals, fined up to £20,000 and/or sent to prison.

The new Regulations that came into force in 2018 are for activities involving animals which changed the previous licensing regime for businesses involved in dog breeding, dog and cat boarding including home boarding, dog day care, the selling of pet animals, and the exhibiting of animals.

- The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 – Under the Act, it's illegal for a dog to be 'out of control' or to bite or attack someone. The legislation also makes it an offence if a person is worried or afraid (the term is 'reasonable apprehension') that a dog may bite them

The act specifically made four breeds of dog illegal to own, breed from, abandon or sell: the Pit Bull terrier, Japanese Tosas, Dogo Argentino and the Fila Brasileiro. This was amended to include XL Bully dogs from 1st February 2024. Residents who own these dogs or have them in their home must have an exemption certificate and be prepared to show this when asked.

- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 - The Act's schedule designates the species covered, such as many primates, carnivores, larger or venomous reptiles, dangerous spiders and scorpions. Keeping such animals without a licence is unlawful and the state is also allowed to specify where and how the animal is to be kept.
- The Equality Act 2010 – it is a legal requirement of this act that the Association cannot discriminate against a disabled person, and this includes discrimination against a person with an 'assistance dog'. Examples of assistance dogs can be: guide dogs and hearing dogs for people with sensory loss; dogs to support people with disabilities; and they must be allowed under the terms of his act.

4. PET PERMISSIONS

Tenants sign the Pets Restriction at the start of their tenancy. This outlines whether they have permission or not to keep a dog or a cat.

Permission is only granted if tenants have their own private entrance door. Tenants will have permission to keep two pets in total i.e. two dogs or two cats or one of each. However, on schemes where there is a mix of internal communal areas and properties with private entrances pets will be excluded for all on that scheme.

This permission is granted on the basis that your pet(s) are kept under control at all times, and they do not cause annoyance or a nuisance to other persons in the neighbourhood. If you wish to keep more than the specified number, you must have Cornerstone written permission in advance.

If you have a dog or a cat you must adhere to the following:

- You must not mistreat the animal.

- If you have a private garden, you must ensure that there is adequate fencing. You are responsible for keeping your dog under control and in your garden. Your neighbours are not responsible for keeping your dog out of their gardens.
- Dog owners must act responsibly and make sure they regularly clean up any dog faeces from their gardens.
- Do not allow your dog to foul any communal areas, pathways or grass verges.
- Keep your dog on a lead in shared areas.
- Never leave your dog alone if it causes a nuisance by barking. It is unfair to your neighbours and your pet if it is continually barking.
- They do not cause a nuisance to other residents.
- They do not cause a risk to other residents' health or safety.
- They do not cause a risk to Cornerstone staff or their contractors.

Other provisions of pet ownership are:

- The breeding and sale of animals is not permitted from our properties
- Permission for the installation of a dog or cat flap at the property must be agreed with Cornerstone prior to any work commencing. Should you leave the property you must remove the flap and return the door to how it was before.
- Pets must not cause a nuisance or prevent any maintenance work being carried out by Cornerstone staff or their contractors.
- We will ask for dogs to be secured away from members of staff during visits to your home, this could be in another room, in a crate/pen, behind a gate, outside in the garden or to be controlled by you on a lead. Any dogs named in the Dangerous Dogs Act will also need to be muzzled whilst our staff are in your home. We may refuse to complete your repair or conduct the visit if this isn't done.
- Pets must not pose a health or safety risk to other residents', Cornerstone staff or their contractors.

The rules specified in this policy apply to pets kept on the premises or visiting the premises.

5. GROUNDS FOR REFUSAL

If you live in a property which has communal entrance doors and corridors, you would not as a general rule be allowed to keep a cat or dog. This is because there is an increased chance of an animal causing a nuisance and distress to other tenants as well as possible safety issues. Tenants will not be permitted to keep pets where there are previous convictions for cruelty to animals.

Animals which are not allowed

- Animals registered under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976.
- Dogs that are specified in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.
- Any animal considered unsuitable by Cornerstone.

6. OTHER TYPES OF PETS

If tenants want to keep another type of pet other than a cat or dog, permission is granted for the following pets:

- Bird
- Fish
- Small caged rodent e.g. guinea pigs, rabbits, hamsters etc.
- Small non-poisonous caged reptile
- non-poisonous contained insect or amphibian

The pet must be an appropriate animal for the home in which you are living in and adequately housed e.g. fish in tanks or hamsters in cages. There must not be an excessive number of them. Each case will be considered on its merit, but it is at the discretion of the Housing Manager to decide what is an acceptable pet or an acceptable number.

Animals to be kept outside the property

If you want to keep an animal outside the property e.g. livestock including chickens, birds in an aviary, dogs in a kennel etc., you must have Cornerstone's written permission in advance. All requests will be looked at individually and decided by the Head of Housing.

Assistance Dogs

By definition, assistance dogs are not regarded as pets and therefore do not come under the general provisions of this policy. By assistance dogs we mean dogs that have been specifically trained by an accredited organisation to assist people with a disability.

7. RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP AND THEIR WELFARE

The Association will encourage tenants to consider what animal would fit in with their lifestyle and be realistic about their physical abilities when considering pet ownership.

The Animal Welfare Act places a duty of care onto tenants for their animals to ensure their needs are met. Tenants may face prosecution if they do not.

If a tenant or member of staff witnesses or suspects any cruelty or neglect this needs to be reported to the RSPCA. If this is reported by a third party, then they need to be encouraged to contact the RSPCA themselves.

8. DEALING WITH TENANCY BREACHES

If any of the conditions within the Pet Restrictions are broken or we receive complaints regarding a noise nuisance or concern for welfare of the animal(s), appropriate action will be taken as detailed below.

We will investigate any issues raised in line with our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy. Where a complaint is upheld following investigation, the tenant will be given the opportunity to rectify the situation, and undertake remedial action as agreed.

We will aim to ensure that tenants receive advice and support on pet management issues necessary to help them keep their pet and resolve any problems to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

However, we reserve the right to withdraw its permission and require the removal of a pet where remedial action fails to resolve an issue, and no other solution is available. In such cases, the tenant must make arrangements for the pet's permanent removal from the property within two weeks of the permission being withdrawn.

Legal action, in the form of an Injunction requiring a tenant to stop or start certain actions or for the removal of the animal, would only be taken as a last resort where a tenant refused to cooperate to address concerns in relation to a pet; or where a problem could not be managed and no other course of action was available.

If pets are found to have been left behind in a property when a tenancy has ended, we will contact the appropriate authorities to arrange for their safe removal and care and any associated costs recharged to the outgoing tenant.

If it has been found that a tenant has neglected a pet's welfare, or mistreated or caused unnecessary suffering to a pet, then we will notify the appropriate authorities. Where this is brought to our attention by a third party, then they will also be advised to report it to the appropriate authorities. In such cases, permission to keep a pet in one of our properties will be withdrawn and not granted again.

9. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We aim to promote equality and diversity and operate equal opportunities policies. We will ensure that we adhere to the Equality Act 2010 by being committed to equal and fair treatment for all and opposed to any form of unlawful discrimination.

As such, when considering requests to keep a pet in a property, no one will be treated differently or less favourably than others because of any of the protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010:

- Disability;
- Gender.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race, colour or nationality.
- Sexual orientation.
- Religion or belief

or because of any other condition or characteristic which could place someone at a disadvantage were it to be considered, unless this can be objectively justified in terms of the legislation.

10. MONITORING AND RECORDING

Any complaints regarding pets will be recorded and monitored in accordance with our ASB Policy and Procedure. Any complaints will be recorded on Pyramid, our ASB recording system and these will be reviewed regularly by the Senior Housing Officer and Head of Housing.

Any issues or trends which are identified will be used in the policy review process along with other feedback to ensure the policy remains appropriate and effective.