



# **Pet Policy**

**Issued by Housing & Communities**

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# **Pet Policy Quality Record**

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**This Policy is available in larger print.  
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assistance.**

## **1. Objectives**

- 1.1 This policy outlines Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Councils approach to the keeping of pets by its tenants. The Council recognises the benefits that responsible pet ownership can bring. However, controls must be in place to prevent irresponsible ownership, which can cause suffering to animals and nuisance to neighbours.
- 1.2 This policy aims to ensure that pets are kept in line with the terms of this policy; complaints about nuisance are dealt with efficiently and effectively; advice and support is offered to tenants about responsible pet ownership.

## **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:
  - ensure that Nuneaton and Bedworth Council's Housing and Communities Team adopt a consistent, fair and transparent approach in the way it deals with permissions for pet's within its housing stock.

## **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This Policy explains how Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council's Housing and Communities Team will manage permissions for pets within its General Needs and Independent Living accommodation.

## **4. Responsibility**

- 4.1 The Landlord Services Manager retains the overall responsibility for the implementation of this Policy
- 4.2 The Landlord Services Team Leader, Independent Living Co-Ordinator and Housing Officers are 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.

## **5. Policy Statement**

- 5.1 Anyone wishing to keep a pet must ask permission from the Council and permission must be granted in writing.
- 5.2 The Council take a positive view about residents keeping pets, not particularly cats and dogs but also, rabbits, budgerigars and fish. The type of pet the Council consider suitable include, but is not necessarily restricted to:
  - domesticated dogs, subject to 5.5 bullet below;
  - domestic, non-feral cats;
  - domesticated rabbits;
  - budgerigars and other similar caged birds;
  - fish suitable to be kept in domestic aquariums;
  - domesticated rodents such as rats, mice, gerbils and hamsters;
  - fish in garden ponds;

- non-poisonous insects and spiders;
  - non-poisonous snakes and reptiles under two feet in length fully grown;
- 5.3 The Council recognise that some of the Council's properties are more appropriate for keeping certain types of pets than others.
- 5.4 There are certain overriding terms and conditions that must be satisfied in order that consent to keep a pet will be given. They are:
- that, unless explicitly agreed otherwise, no more than two domestic pets will be allowed in any one property; but there may be properties where size and/or layout means that only one may be kept;
  - that any dog kept is not a breed that is prohibited by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991;
  - that the animal is considered suitable for the property.
  - no wild, dangerous, endangered or poisonous creatures, or livestock, including horses, ponies, fowl or game birds or similar or animals covered by the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 will be allowed;
  - that the pet will not be the subject of any breeding or business activity from the property or locality;
- 5.5 There are certain properties where consent to certain pet ownership (cats and dogs) will **not** be given, permission may however be given for registered guide or assistance dogs. These are:
- Flats and maisonettes that do not have direct access to outside space via their own front door;
  - Independent Living Accommodation that does not have its own front door;
  - Permitted for flats and maisonettes and Independent Living Accommodation include:- budgerigars and other similar caged birds, fish suitable to be kept in domestic aquariums, domesticated rodents such as rats, mice, gerbils and hamsters, non-poisonous insects and spiders and non-poisonous snakes and reptiles under two feet in length fully grown.
- 5.6 All tenants seeking permission to keep a pet will be required to complete an application form and sign a declaration and undertaking. This will include the following conditions:
- All pets, with the exception of caged birds, insects and fish are expected to be registered with a local vet or the PDSA;
  - The pet will not be the subject of any breeding or business activity from the property (this includes outside and inside);
  - The owner will look after their pet in compliance with the principal terms of the Animal Welfare Act 2006;
  - The owner must ensure that they clean up immediately and thoroughly after their pet, in internal and external communal areas and within one day in a private garden area and will be responsible for the cost of cleaning the fouled surface if they do not do so;
  - The pet will not be allowed to be kept or wander unaccompanied or out of control and/or unrestrained in the communal parts of where they live, inside or outside;
  - With the exception of house cats that will never leave the internal property, cats must have access to the outside through a door. Owners must provide the cat with a litter tray inside the dwelling, which must be cleaned out regularly, emptied, securely bagged and placed in their dustbin or communal bins;

- The pet is properly house-trained (if applicable) and must not be allowed to foul communal areas, inside or outside. If any incident of fouling occurs the owner must clean it up and disinfect the area immediately;
  - Cat flaps may only be fitted to external doors or, exceptionally, windows leading directly to the outside and only after seeking and being given permission by the Council. When the tenant leaves they must reinstate the door or window as it was originally. Cat flaps will not be permitted to be fitted in UPVC doors or where the cat flap opens into a communal area (inside or outside the property);
  - That owners must not allow their pets to create unreasonable levels of noise;
  - Relevant licences are obtained and shown to our satisfaction in the case of rare or exotic creatures. The Council must be satisfied of the proper security of the animal;
  - That dogs must wear a collar with a contact tag at all times other than when inside the property;
  - That dogs and cats must be microchipped and details kept up to date. A fine of £500 in relation to dogs can be issued if this law is not complied with;
  - That all Dogs and Cats must be neutered or in the case of kittens or puppies neutered as soon as it is safe and possible to do so.
- 5.7 If the pet owner refuses to behave responsibly in complying with relevant conditions above, permission will not be given for the pet to be kept; and the tenant will be liable for enforcement action for breach of tenancy if they go ahead and acquire the animal without our written consent.
- 5.8 Similarly if permission is sought and given and subsequently the Council find that reasonable responsibility as set out above have not been complied with the Council may take enforcement action after giving the tenant reasonable time to comply.
- 5.9 If a tenant acquires a pet without first seeking and being granted permission:
- they will be required to find an alternative permanent home for the animal if it falls outside acceptable groups of pets as set out in 5.2, 5.4 and 5.5 above; or
  - they will be required to complete a pet application retrospectively and be shown to have complied with all the conditions set out in 5.6, failing which they may be required to find an alternative permanent home for the animal.
  - If the pet owner subsequently breaks any of the conditions set out in 5.6 above and, after a reasonable period of time, does not remedy that breach they will render themselves liable to enforcement action in breach of tenancy. Enforcement action may include an injunction or possession proceedings. This could also involve reporting any alleged cruelty or neglect to the RSPCA or police.
  - Anyone found guilty of mistreating or neglecting a pet will be denied permission to keep pets in the future.

## **6. Right of Appeal**

- 6.1 In the event that a tenant is either refused permission to keep a pet or that permission is withdrawn they have a right of appeal to the Landlord Services Manager. Any appeal is to be submitted within 14 days of permission being refused or withdrawn.

## **7. Visiting Pets**

- 7.1 Friends and relatives are allowed to visit tenants with their pets. These visitors and pets will be expected to comply with all points above. However, any tenant wishing for a pet to visit them on a regular basis must seek permission from the Council in the first instance. Registered guide/assistance dogs are the exception in this case.

## **8. Existing Tenants (prior to the approval date of this policy)**

- 8.1 The Council recognise that there will be many tenants who have acquired pets without seeking or obtaining the proper permission. Our position on this will be as follows:
- Subject to the second bullet point in this section. The Council will grant an amnesty to all pet owners who notify us of their pets and are prepared to comply with the conditions as set out in 5.6 above, upon which point we will grant retrospective permission:
  - In cases where pet owners have acquired more than the maximum number of pets for the accommodation that they occupy, or are keeping dogs or cats in maisonettes, we may place extra conditions on any permission granted-for example that upon the death of some or all of the animals concerned, they are not to be replaced. In exceptional cases, where in the opinion of the Landlord Services Manager, the number or type of animals already acquired without seeking our permission is unreasonable or inappropriate we may require the pet owner to rehome some or all of the animals concerned.
  - This amnesty will last for six months, after which time any pet owner who has not come forward will be liable to enforcement action if they either refuse to comply with the conditions in 5.6 above or if they are keeping prohibited pets under this policy as set out in 5.4 above. Enforcement action may include an injunction or possession proceedings.

## **9. Isolation & Loneliness**

- 9.1 Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council recognise that some customers may experience isolation and loneliness due to the restrictions placed by this Policy. Where staff identify a customer who may be suffering from isolation and/or loneliness then staff will make the necessary referrals for external support, e.g., befriender services.

## **10. Damage to property caused by pets**

- 10.1 Where a pet has caused damage to Council property, the tenant responsible will have to pay for the damage as outlined in the Council's Recharge Policy.

## **11. Right to Buy – including Covenant to restrict pets**

- 11.1 If any property that is mentioned in point 5.5 is being purchased through the Right to Buy Scheme, the Council will endeavour to ensure that any lease includes a covenant to restrict pets from residing at the property after purchase.

## **12. Equality & Diversity**

- 12.1 This policy and associated procedures will apply to all. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and to eliminating

unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, belief, class, financial status and any other difference that can lead to discrimination or unfair treatment.

**13. Related documents**

- ASB Policy
- Tenancy Agreement
- Tenancy Handbook
- Recharge Policy

**14. References**

- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 s.3
- Tenancy Agreement

**15. Review date**

- 15.1 Every three years or on the introduction of new legislation, regulation or good practice guidance.