



Pet Policy

Board Approved: August 2023
Next Review: August 2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This policy lays out how Homes for Life (HfL) deals with tenant who request to keep a pet.

The following principles govern the operation of this policy:

- Adherence to legislation
- Fairness and transparency

HfL acknowledges that keeping a pet can offer significant health and social benefits to the owner. This policy is to facilitate the effective management of pets being kept in HfL properties.

2.0 APPROACH AND METHOD*

The Board of HfL in its formal approval of the policy acknowledges that it accepts full responsibility for its implementation.

HfL aims to encourage responsible pet ownership within its properties and to provide a clear framework for dealing appropriately and effectively with issues associated with pets.

Day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this policy lies with the CEO and appropriate Managers of HfL.

All relevant employees have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied as instructed. The policy will be implemented using the following objectives:

- Tenants who keep pets do so in such a way as to prevent adverse impact on other residents' enjoyment of their homes
- The keeping of pets within HfL's properties has no detrimental effect on either a particular tenancy, common area or neighbourhood
- The welfare of the animal is considered when making any decision
- All tenants are treated equally, and no groups are discriminated against in relation to the operation of this policy.

3.0 LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAME WORK

There are a number of pieces of legislation which inform HfL's Pets Policy. The main legislation is listed below:

- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Control of Dogs Order 1992
- Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010

- Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006
- Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- The Microchipping of Dogs (Scotland) Regulations 2016

4.0 APPLYING FOR PERMISSION TO KEEP A PET

Tenants, both new and existing, must request written permission from HFL to keep a domestic pet. This applies to both new pets and replacement pets (those that have been rehoused or which have died) as well as looking after a pet for a limited period, for example while a relative is in hospital.

Definition of a Domestic Pet The term domestic pet covers the following types of animal:

- Dog;
- Cat;
- Fish;
- Bird (caged);
- Rodent (e.g. hamster, gerbil, rat or mouse);
- Small non- venomous reptile (e.g. terrapin, tortoise);
- Non-venomous insect or amphibian (e.g. newt);
- Rabbit.

5.0 NUMBER AND TYPE OF PETS

The normal standard will be no more than 1 or 2 pets (depending on type, size etc) Each request will be looked at individually considering the needs of the tenant, size of property, surrounding area and species of pet. There are certain properties that HfL will not allow dogs to be kept, tenants will be notified at the allocation stage if the property is not suitable.

Requests for pets which would normally be housed externally such as rabbits, will be assessed on its merits and may be granted depending on local circumstances and the size of the hutch required in relation to garden ground.

Requests to erect a larger structure, for example a dog run, kennel/aviary, will be considered in relation to garden size and possible neighbour nuisance. HfL may discuss such proposals with adjacent neighbours prior to consent being given.

Permission must be requested for large fish tanks. The size and weight of the fish tank when full of water will be taken into consideration, especially where the tenant lives in flatted property.

6.0 APPLICATION ASSESSMENT

6.1 **Tenants, both new and existing, must request permission to keep any uncaged domestic animal (such as a cat or dog) or any exotic species of animal or reptile. HfL will then:**

- Assess the request and decide if permission will be granted;
- Keep a record of what animals are being kept by the tenant;
- Issue the tenant with a standard agreement on pet ownership which will be signed by the tenant;
- Remind tenants of their responsibilities in relation to keeping a pet.

6.2 HfL will assess any application to keep a pet under the following criteria:

- Any potential for disturbance, nuisance or distress that the pet may cause to neighbours;
- The size and type of accommodation where the pet is to be kept;
- The number and type of pets already in the property;
- Any history of pet-related anti-social behaviour within the property or within the relevant locality;
- Whether the tenants have had pets before and has been unable to look after them properly without causing a nuisance or annoyance to others;
- Whether the pet will be kept for breeding purposes.

7.0 RESTRICTIONS THAT APPLY

Tenants will not be granted permission to keep a dog which is prohibited by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or by any other Statute or Regulation. The current list includes:

- Pit Bull Terrier;
- Dogo Argentino;
- Fila Brasileiro;
- Japanese Tosa.

Permission will not be granted for a tenant to keep livestock or farm animals, for example sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, horses, chickens, ducks etc.

Permission will not be granted if a tenant already has the maximum permitted number of pets.

Permission will not be granted for a tenant to keep a pet where HfL receives advice that the environment is unsuitable.

If HfL considers a tenant to be unfit to look after the welfare of a pet and fulfil their responsibility for keeping it under control, permission will only be granted where the tenant can evidence that alternative arrangements will be put in place. Permission will not be granted if HfL is of the opinion that the pet would be at risk of suffering.

HfL will consider any history of pet ownership the tenant may have, either in a HfL tenancy or that of another landlord, when reaching its decision. Permission may be refused where records show a previous history of neglect or cruelty; or instances of irresponsible pet ownership, such as failure to control an animal.

8.0 SUPPORT DOGS

Permission to keep a support dog will be granted where a disabled tenant requests it and the animal has been provided by a recognised agency (such as Guide Dogs for the Blind, Support Dogs or Dogs for the Disabled). Where the property is not usually suitable for keeping a dog, a transfer to an appropriate property may be offered. In some circumstances a tenant may be given permission to keep a support dog in a property which would not usually be suitable for keeping dogs.

9.0 REMOVAL OF A PET

HfL may request a pet to be removed from the property where:

- Permission has not been sought or it has been refused;
- Conditions applied to the written consent have not been adhered to;
- The pet has caused nuisance, distress or annoyance to any owner or occupier or property adjoining or within the locality of the property or has caused damage or destruction to any part of property owned or leased by HfL.

10.0 TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Tenants will be held responsible for the behaviour of any pets owned by or living with them. Tenants will be expected to take all reasonable steps to supervise and keep such pets under control and ensure that they do not cause nuisance to neighbours or deterioration to the condition of the property, common parts or the vicinity of the house. This includes fouling, noise or smell from the animal.

HfL may recharge a tenant for any costs incurred as a result of damage or cleaning up any mess left by a pet.

If walking your dog in the vicinity of a HFL property it must be kept on a leash at all times and dog faeces must be cleaned up immediately.

All dogs must be microchipped and have a collar displaying their owners name and address. Tenants must also ensure pets are vaccinated and regularly treated for fleas and worms (if necessary) and not left unattended in balconies or closes.

Tenants will be required to sign a formal agreement confirming they are aware of and will abide by these conditions.

11.0 APPEALS

Tenants have the right to appeal against any decision made by us using our Complaints Handling Procedure.

12.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

We will not discriminate in the operation of this policy on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We aim to promote equal opportunities and comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

13.0 STAFF TRAINING

All relevant staff will receive training for them to understand and apply our policy appropriately.

14.0 COMPLAINTS

Any complaint relating to any aspect of HfL Tenancy Management will be dealt with in accordance to HfL's Complaints Handling Policy.

15.0 MONITORING OF THE POLICY

The Housing Manager is responsible for monitoring through performance reporting and review process. Any matter which demonstrates a serious failure of internal controls should also be reported immediately to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will report such matters to the Board.

16.0 REVIEW OF POLICY

The CEO is responsible for making sure that this policy is reviewed every five years and that any changes required are submitted to the Board for approval.