



HOUSING PETS POLICY

June 2025



Tendring District Council (TDC) recognise that pets can provide a range of benefits to owners including companionship and a positive impact on mental and physical wellbeing. The Council therefore want to support our tenants to be responsible pet owners and offer pets a happy and healthy life. This policy details the Council's standards for keeping pets and recognises that some buildings and properties may not be suitable for animals and are designated 'pet free'.

Purpose of this Policy

A clearly defined pet policy with flexibility to consider requests for pet ownership on a case-by-case basis whilst ensuring the welfare needs of the animals are met.

Policy aims

The Council aim:

- To provide a balance between the benefits to a person that pet ownership can bring and managing the Council's homes and estates to ensure that pet ownership does not infringe on the right of others to the peaceful enjoyment of their home.
- To provide residents with clear guidance on how to be a responsible pet owner where suitable care facilities exist, how to apply for permission to keep a pet and how permission may be revoked.
- To provide residents with an understanding of which type of animals are acceptable as pets and in what type of property.
- To provide residents with an understanding of what is prohibited such as breeding, boarding, selling and animal sitting in any council homes.
- To have a transparent procedure for addressing complaints and concerns raised by both pet owners and neighbours regarding issues such as nuisance animals, welfare, health and cruelty.

Scope of Policy

The policy applies to requests for existing, new or replacement pets in Council properties and provides guidance of the Council's expectations of pet owners and how pet management issues may be resolved. The Council do not intend to proactively target households who already have pets or revoke historical permissions unless any management issues are raised.

Policy Detail

The Council's priority is to ensure, where possible, tenants can experience pet ownership should they wish to because the Council appreciate that keeping a pet can offer significant health and well-being benefits to residents. Unfortunately, it is acknowledged that irresponsible pet ownership can cause a nuisance to others living nearby and, in some cases, present a health and safety or fire risk. It is therefore necessary to have guidelines to ensure residents are not adversely affected by their neighbours' pets. Emergency contact details are asked for

in case a resident is unable to take care of their pets should they have to go into hospital or away from their home.

The Council's definition of domestic pets is:

- Dogs (excluding any breeds highlighted by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or any other UK legislation).
- Cats.
- Birds (such as budgie and cockatoo).
- Fish.
- Small caged rodents.
- Small non-poisonous caged reptiles.
- Non-poisonous contained insects or amphibians.
- Chickens/bantams (female birds only).
- Guinea pigs.
- Rabbits.

Tendring District Council's tenancy agreement sets out tenancy conditions in relation to pet ownership:

Keeping animals

- *"If you live in a house, bungalow or ground-floor flat with access to your own garden you can keep one dog or cat, or one of each, without asking our permission, on the terms set out below.*
- *If you live in any other type of property, you must get our permission to keep a pet.*
- *If you ask our permission to keep more than one dog or cat (or one of each) we will judge each request on its own merits. This means we will consider such things as the type of home you live in and the size of your garden, as well as the breed, size and number of pets you want to keep.*
- *If you live in one of our sheltered housing schemes, you are not allowed to keep any cat or dog, unless it is a registered guide or hearing) or you live in one of the selfcontained bungalows in these schemes.*
- *You are not allowed to keep in your home, garden or any shared communal area any animals (including cats, dogs, farm livestock, reptiles, insects or birds) that, in our opinion, may cause nuisance or disturbance to anyone in the local area, including our employees and contractors.*
- *You must get our written permission to keep livestock such as horses, donkeys, goats, pigs, ducks, geese, chickens or any other reptiles in your home or on any land owned by us.*

- *You must not allow any animals that you keep to foul any shared areas of your property or on roads, footpaths or play areas in the local areas. You must remove and dispose of any pet droppings hygienically.*
- *You must not keep any animal that is prohibited by law (Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 and the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991).*
- *Whether or not you have our written permission to keep an animal, you must make sure that no animal you keep causes a nuisance or annoyance to others or damages our property”.*

Applying for Permission to keep a Pet

A pet application form can be completed in writing or via the Tendring District Council website [Living in your home \(tendringdc.gov.uk\)](http://Living in your home (tendringdc.gov.uk)). If permission to keep the pet is granted pet support information will be provided.

Factors we consider when permission is requested to keep a pet or pets

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, there are five specific welfare needs of animals:

- Need for a suitable environment
- Need for a suitable diet
- Need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- Need to be housed with, or apart, from other animals
- Need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury, and disease.

The Five Domains Model is a welfare assessment framework that helps the evaluation of animal welfare risks and opportunities for welfare improvement. The Five Domains as defined by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 UK are:

- Nutrition
- Environment
- Health
- Behaviour
- Mental state

As well as considering the welfare needs above, specific consideration will also be given to:

- The type of property and the facilities available.
- The size of the garden or whether there is suitable open space nearby.
- The type, breed, size, number and temperament of the pets.
- Can the welfare needs of the animal be met.
- For applications to keep pets in flats all of the above and:

- Whether the request is appropriate to the size of the flat, the block and the facilities available.
- Whether there is good access to a safe and suitable exercise area outside of the home and away from communal areas.

Keeping dogs

If permission to keep a dog is granted it will be subject to compliance with the following conditions and any additional conditions deemed appropriate.

- Dogs are usually only allowed to be kept in accommodation with direct access to an outside space.
- Dogs must be microchipped in line with legislation and proof of this MUST be provided to the Council.
- Dogs must not be allowed to breed.
- In most cases the Council will allow replacement of the dog as long as the home is suitable.
- Anyone mistreating or neglecting their dog will be refused permission to keep ANY pet and will be reported to the RSPCA.
- The dog must be kept under control at all times and not cause a nuisance or distress to others.
- Dogs must be kept on a lead when passing through any communal area.
- Dogs must not be exercised or allowed to foul in any communal areas.
- The Council usually limit the number of dogs to one.
- All health and welfare needs of the dog must be met.

Tenants must never:

- Keep any breed of dog banned under the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act or any other UK legislation.
- Breed or board dogs on Council property.
- Keep dogs on balconies or in communal walkways.
- Chain or tether dogs on any Council-owned land.
- Leave the dog alone or unattended overnight or for long periods of time.

RSPCA guidance in caring for dogs is provided to all applicants:

[How To Look After a Dog - Dog Facts | RSPCA - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk](https://www.rspca.org.uk)

Keeping cats

If permission to keep a cat is granted it will be subject to compliance with the following conditions and any additional conditions deemed appropriate.

- Cats are usually only allowed to be kept in accommodation with direct access to an outside space.

- Cats must be microchipped in line with legislation and proof of this MUST be provided to the Council.
- Cats must not be allowed to breed.
- In most cases the Council will allow replacement of the cat as long as the home is suitable.
- Anyone mistreating or neglecting their cat will be refused permission to keep ANY pet and will be reported to the RSPCA.
- Cats must be kept under control and not cause an unreasonable amount of nuisance or distress to others.
- All health and welfare needs of the cat must be met.

Tenants must never:

- Breed or board cats in Council property.
- Keep cats on balconies or in communal walkways.

RSPCA guidance in caring for cats is provided to all applicants:

[Cat Care Tips, Advice & Health Information | RSPCA - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk](https://www.rspca.org.uk/care-tips)

There are also online courses available free from the Cats Protection league for pet owners to understand their cat(s) needs.

[Online learning | Cats Protection](https://www.catsprotection.org.uk/online-learning)

Keeping small mammals

If permission to keep a small mammal is granted it will be subject to compliance with the following conditions and any additional conditions deemed appropriate.

- Small animals such as rats, mice, gerbils and hamsters must be limited to manageable numbers and suitable for their living conditions.
- Rabbits and guinea pigs should normally be kept outside the home. They must have access to a secure outside space, safe from predators and away from prolonged direct sunlight.
- Breeding must be avoided by keeping only same-sex or neutered animals.
- The home must be kept free from excess droppings.
- All health and welfare needs of the pet must be met.

RSPCA guidance in caring for small mammals is provided to all applicants:

[Keeping Rabbits As Pets | RSPCA - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk](https://www.rspca.org.uk/keeping-rabbits)

[Caring for Pet Rodents - Rodent Care Advice | RSPCA - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk](https://www.rspca.org.uk/caring-pet-rodents)



Keeping small caged birds

If permission to keep a caged bird is granted it will be subject to compliance with the following conditions and any additional conditions deemed appropriate.

Small caged birds can be kept in the home provided their cage is large enough to allow them to spread their wings fully in any direction and they have enough space to perch.

- Caged birds should be able to exercise outside the cage, provided they cannot escape.
- Their home must be kept clean and free from excess droppings.
- All health and welfare needs of the small caged bird must be met.

Guidance in caring for small caged birds is provided to all applicants:

[How to Take Care of a Pet Bird: 12 Vet-Approved Tips & Tricks | Pet Keen](#)

From 1 October 2024 all birds must be registered on the link below within one month of acquiring them, and failure to register is breaking the law. Birds such as budgies, parrots, cockatiels and finches do not need to be registered if they are both:

- Fully housed in a dwelling, i.e. your home or other indoor structure, AND
- They have no access to the open air.

Unregistered birds may be taken to the vets, otherwise if the birds are taken outside at any time, for example to be exercised, trained, taken to bird shows or gatherings, then they must be registered – see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-as-a-keeper-of-less-than-50-poultryor-other-captive-birds>

Keeping aviary birds outside

If permission to keep aviary birds is granted it will be subject to compliance with the following conditions and any additional conditions deemed appropriate.

- There must be adequate outside facilities for the birds and assurances made that the birds care needs can be met.
- An undertaking must be provided detailing how nuisance will be prevented to people living nearby, for example early morning noise, or rodent infestation.
- All health and welfare needs of the aviary birds must be met.

Guidance in caring for aviary birds is provided to all applicants:

[Birds and the law - Birdline Parrot Rescue](#)

[And see notes and link above regarding registration of birds](#)

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Keeping chickens or other fowl and other livestock

The Council does not encourage the keeping of this type of livestock however if permission is granted it will be subject to compliance with the following conditions and any additional conditions deemed appropriate.

- Appropriate facilities and care and welfare needs must be met, with assurances provided that the animals will not cause nuisance or distress to any other person.

The Council will limit the number of chickens or fowl kept.

- The Council will not allow cockerels to be kept at Council property.
- The Council will consult the RSPCA about any other livestock.

RSPCA guidance in caring for chickens is provided to all applicants:

[Keeping Chickens As Pets | RSPCA - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk](https://www.rspca.org.uk/keeping-chickens-as-pets)

[Keeping Farm Animals As Pets | RSPCA - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk](https://www.rspca.org.uk/keeping-farm-animals-as-pets)

And see link above regarding registration of captive birds

Keeping reptiles, spiders and exotic animals

The Council does not encourage these types of animals being kept because they need specialised care and living conditions, however if permission is granted it will be subject to compliance with the following conditions and any additional conditions deemed appropriate.

- That all reptile, spider or exotic animals care and welfare needs are met, including providing a suitable environment.

RSPCA guidance in caring for reptiles, spiders and exotic pets is provided to all applicants:

[Caring for reptiles and other exotic pets | RSPCA - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk](https://www.rspca.org.uk/caring-for-reptiles-and-other-exotic-pets)

Special circumstances

Unless the animal helps an individual to overcome a disability, pets are not allowed in our Sheltered Housing Schemes. The Council will also not allow extra animals, more exotic or larger animals in our general stock homes. However, if unique or exceptional circumstances suggest a departure from the Council's normal guidelines, the application will be considered on its merits.

These considerations will include the following:

- Location such as whether urban or rural area.
- If an emotional support pet is required.
- Circumstances around the acquiring of the pets such as inheriting from a deceased family member.

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- The impact permission may have on property or land the Council manage.

Should permission be denied, you may ask for a review of the decision in line with the Councils Housing Complaints Procedure.

Nuisance and enforcement

If a pet causes nuisance or if concerns have been raised that the animal's care needs are not being met, the Housing Tenancy Management Department will investigate the complaint and will take appropriate action, which may include permission to keep the pet being withdrawn.

This includes if a pet is seen to be a threat, has been aggressive, if the property has fouling within or if repairs are unable to be carried out due to environmental problems caused by pets. The Council has the right to refuse to carry out any works until the property is clear and / or the pet is under control. If a pet is being deliberately mistreated concerns should be reported to the RSPCA Animal Cruelty Hotline – 0300 1234 999 or via their website [Report Cruelty | RSPCA - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk](#).

Where a pet owner fails to work with the Council, and the nuisance is considered to be serious or persistent, then the Council will take appropriate enforcement action against the pet owner in accordance with the tools and powers available, as detailed in the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy [Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.pdf](#).

Making a complaint

Complaints regarding a pet will be acknowledged in writing with notification on how quickly the matter will be investigated (in most cases this will be within 21 working days). The Council's Housing Complaints Policy is available to any tenant or prospective tenant who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the housing services the Council provide. Further information can be obtained from the Council's Housing Complaints Policy [Making a complaint](#).

The following section sets out the action the Council will take against any tenant who:

- Does not have Council permission to keep their pet or pets,
- Has Council permission, but there are doubts if the care needs of the pet are being met, ○ Has allowed their pet to cause nuisance or distress to people living nearby.

Straying and fouling

If pets are allowed to roam unattended or foul and the mess is not immediately removed and disposed of, then a written warning will be given to put things right. Failure to comply may result in formal action being taken against the owner for breach of tenancy conditions and may result in the pet owner being asked to re-home the animal.

Excessive noise and / or Aggression

If pets, in particular dogs, cause noise nuisance by barking, howling or scratching or display aggression towards residents, visitors, contractors or neighbours then the owner will be expected to take steps to stop the problem. Help and advice should be sought from a vet, dog warden or other appropriate expert. Failure to comply may result in formal action being taken

against the owner for breach of tenancy conditions and may result in the pet owner being asked to re-home the animal.

Flea and vermin infestation

All tenants must keep their home clean and tidy so as not to cause a nuisance or endanger health. When a problem is identified the tenant must take steps to put things right immediately and this may involve seeking professional help. Failure to comply may result in formal action being taken against the owner for breach of tenancy conditions and/ or may result in the pet owner being asked to re-home the animal.

Partnerships

The housing service works with the Environmental Services Team and the Dog Warden service to provide advice, support and where necessary enforcement action. The Police and the RSPCA are also the Council's partners in sharing information and collaborating on cases where there is criminal or welfare concerns. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Stray or abandoned dogs on our estates,
- Reports of dangerous or out of control dogs,
- Dog fouling,
- Noise complaints
- Welfare concerns around the safety and care of any animal in the care of our tenants,
 - Criminal prosecutions.

The Council will provide tenants a list of local, reputable animal welfare and veterinary organisations, offering information on reduced-cost or free veterinary services.

Safeguarding

Concerns for children, young people and vulnerable adults will be handled in line with Tendring District Councils Safeguarding Policy which sets out how the officers should respond to a report of abuse or neglect to a child, young person, or adult with unmet care and support needs. It is not uncommon for safeguarding concerns to arise at the initial report stage or during an investigation. The requirements of the Safeguarding Policy take primacy over this policy.

How the Council will monitor the success of its service

The Council will gain customer feedback through surveys of users of the tenancy management service to rate their satisfaction with the service, act on any negative feedback and to improve its service when appropriate.

Complaints Procedure

The Council's Housing Complaints Policy is available to any tenant or prospective tenant who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the housing services we provide. Further information can be obtained from the Council's Housing Complaints Policy [Making a complaint](#).

General Data Protection Regulations

All reports that include identifiable personal information will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations. The council will only disclose or share personal information where required to do so by law or where a lawful exemption applies; for example, for the purposes of a prosecution, a safeguarding concern, where it is in the public interest or with the person's consent. Personal information is processed by Tendring District Council for a number of purposes. These can be found in the Privacy Notices which are available on the Council's website at www.tendringdc.gov.uk/privacy or on request at our public reception areas.

Equalities Statement

The Council is committed to treating all customers fairly and with respect and professionalism. To this end the council will ensure that no individual is discriminated against on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (including political opinions), sex or sexual orientation and that, in the application of this pets policy, the Council will comply with their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and specifically its Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) under which a public authority must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by this Act and, in summary, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with differing characteristics..

To enable customers to have clear information and equal access to this pet policy, information will be made available in a range of appropriate languages and formats, when requested.

Legal and regulatory context

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 Housing requires all registered providers to publish a policy, setting out how, in consultation with their tenants, they will maintain and improve the neighbourhoods associated with their homes.

One aim of the legislation is to ensure that providers of social housing keep their properties and estates safe and clean. These new standards aim to give tenants a stronger voice and ensure they feel safe and secure in their homes, can get problems fixed before they spiral out of control, and see exactly how well their landlord is performing. Of the seven chapters within the charter for social housing tenants: social housing white paper, several are particularly relevant to the aims of this policy:

- To be safe in your home (Chapter 1),
- To know how your landlord is performing (Chapter 2),
- To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly (Chapter 3),
- To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in (Chapter 6).

The Regulator of Social Housing has introduced 22 mandatory Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) creating a new system for assessing social housing landlords in England. These measures include building safety, as well as tenant perception surveys of landlord performance including responsibility for neighbourhood management.

The TSM measures linked to neighbourhood management include:

- TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained,
- TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods,
- TP12: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour, ○
NM01: Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord.

References

Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963

Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and 1987

Housing Act 1985, 1988, 1996, 1998 and 2004

Equality Act 2010

General Data Protection Regulation 2018

Animal Welfare Act 2006

Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023

Housing and Regeneration Act 2008

The Environment Protection Act 1990

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act) 1976

The Charter for Social Housing Residents

Legislation as detailed in TDC's Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Related Documents

Tendring District Council Introductory and Secure Tenancy Agreement

Tendring District Council Non-Secure Tenancy Agreement

Tendring District Council Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Tendring District Council Housing Complaints Procedure

Tendring District Council Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Tendring District Council Housing Neighbourhood Management Policy.

Review of policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years in consultation with tenant representatives, staff, the Portfolio Holder responsible for Housing and other stakeholders unless there are any reasons, such as legislative or regulatory changes, requiring that it be reviewed earlier.