



# Pet Policy

Updated November 2021

# Policy for keeping pets

This policy is managed and adhered to by the housing service. This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with best practice and government legislation.

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## 1.1 Introduction

Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) housing service recognises that keeping pets can offer significant benefits to their owners. However, irresponsible ownership can cause nuisance and affect the quality of life for other residents in an area. It is also recognised that some buildings may not be suitable for pets such as cats and dogs and in some circumstances may be designated 'pet free'.

For the purpose of this policy, DBC defines the following as domestic pets:

- Dog (excluding any breeds highlighted by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991)
- Cat
- Bird (such as a budgie and cockatoo)
- Fish
- Small caged rodent
- Small non-poisonous caged reptile
- Non-poisonous contained insect or amphibian
- Chicken/Bantam (female birds only)
- Guinea pig
- Rabbit

## 1.2 Aim of the policy:

The aim of this policy is to:

- Ensure all pet owners living in DBC properties are responsible for their animals
- Ensure all pet owners maintain their property and repair any damage caused by a pet
- Ensure that pets are only kept in appropriate DBC properties
- Protect staff and the wider community from any nuisance as a result of a pet living in a DBC owned property

## 1.3 Links to Council's corporate aims:

This policy supports the council's corporate priorities which are set out in '[Delivering for Dacorum](#)' – [Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025](#) In particular:

- A clean, safe and enjoyable environment

## 1.4 Equality and diversity

The council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services and has procedures in place to ensure that all Applicants and Tenants are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

## 1.5 Policy statement(s):

We will support good pet ownership and encourage owners to act in a more responsible manner, including maintaining pets' welfare (see 2.1).

Tenants are expected to ensure their properties are well kept when keeping pets and restore or repair any damage caused to the property as a result of them (see 2.2).

Tenants must request permission to keep a pet. We will review all applications for keeping pets and apply restrictions appropriately (see 2.1 and 2.3).

We will enforce and take action where pets are causing a nuisance to neighbours and/or the wider community (see 2.4).

*The Council is required to respond to any local or national restrictions imposed by central government. The administration of this and other Council policies could, therefore, be impacted by a pandemic or other emergency for the period that such restrictions are in operation.*

## 1.0 Policy overview

## 2.0 Keeping a pet detail

### 2.0 Pet Policy Detail

#### 2.1) Responsible pet ownership

All tenants have an equal opportunity to apply for pet permission. DBC encourages all tenants that own a pet(s) to take responsibility for their welfare.

All tenants wishing to keep a pet must seek prior permission from their Housing Officer, except in the case of goldfish and other fresh water fish. Where permission is granted tenants are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets under the Animal Welfare Act (2006). Pets not listed in the definition will require further permissions from the relevant Housing Officer. Once permission is granted tenants must sign an undertaking committing them to responsible ownership and provide a photograph of their pet.

The control of pets and any pet visiting the property is the responsibility of the tenant. All dogs must be micro-chipped and wear a collar and tag with the name and address of the owner.

Under no circumstances are tenants allowed to breed or offer any animal for sale from DBC owned property.

DBC will work in partnership with all relevant organisations, such as the Dogs Trust, Cats Protection, RSPCA and PDSA and support tenants where possible to maintain their pet's welfare. This includes helping older people and those living with a terminal illness to arrange care for their pet(s).

All pets must be kept in a clean and safe environment.

DBC members of staff will be required to visit properties over a tenancy period. Dogs must be restrained or kept in a room during the visit.

#### 2.2) Maintaining the property

Tenants must ensure any damage to the property or garden caused by a pet is repaired. Tenants must ensure their properties and communal areas are kept clear of fouling.

Chickens must be kept within a coop which may have an attached 'run' and not be allowed to roam freely around a garden unsupervised.

Tenants living in houses and bungalows can, at their own expense, choose to install a cat flap. Cat flaps can only be installed at the rear of a property. Dog flaps are not permitted.

If a door is replaced as part of our repairs and maintenance service, the council will reinstall the cat flap free of charge.

Tenants are not required to pay for a replacement door when vacating the property.

#### 2.3) Restrictions to pet ownership

Tenants living in flats who wish to keep a pet must be conscious of the welfare of their animal and the potential for noise to be transmitted to their neighbours. Some breeds of dog may not be suited to living in a flat. Tenants must consider the type of property they occupy and the needs of the pet before applying for permission. Examples include pets in high-rise flats, sheltered housing, large dogs and/or 'outdoor' cats.

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## 2.0 Keeping a pet detail



### 2.3) Restrictions to pet ownership (continued)

When granting permission, DBC is required to consider any possible impact a pet may have on neighbours. Those living in sheltered housing may be limited. Exceptions such as 'house' cats may be considered. Tenants may be able to keep a domestic pet in temporary accommodation; this will be at the discretion of the Housing Officer. Pets cannot be kept in emergency accommodation such as a hostel, bed and breakfast or hotel.

### 2.4) Pets causing a nuisance

Dacorum Borough Council's Housing Service will not tolerate a nuisance being caused to members of the public or DBC staff by domestic pets or any other animals kept on Housing property.

Enforcement action will be taken against tenants who fail to control their pets. This could include withdrawal of permission. Owners are expected to take appropriate action to avoid pets causing a nuisance in communal or public areas. They must not be used to threaten or intimidate any member of the public, including DBC staff and / or the police.

Pet owners are responsible for the removal and disposal of fouling, particularly in communal or public areas. In addition to any other enforcement, breach of this condition is a criminal offence which could lead to a fine of up to £5,000. Should DBC be required to return a pet to its owner for any reason, any costs associated must be paid.

### 2.5) End of tenancy

If for any reason the tenant vacates a property, they are expected to take any pets with them and ensure that the property is left free from animal parasites, faeces and all waste such as bedding materials. This includes evictions.

### 2.6) Pest Control

Tenants are responsible for ensuring that their pets and property are free from fleas, ticks or other pests that could be transferred onto carpets or furnishings within the home. Any infestation of fleas or other pests will be the tenant's responsibility to treat.

DBC is responsible for controlling pests in communal areas of buildings such as flat blocks and sheltered housing schemes.

### 2.7) Complaints

Any concerns relating to pet ownership in a council-owned property should be raised with the relevant Tenancy Management Officer in the first instance.

### 2.8) Absent Owners

All pet-owning tenants must provide details of an emergency contact who will be able to take care of their pet if they cannot.

- If a pet is left unattended in a property for more than 24 hours, council officers will force entry if access cannot be given.
- Our Animal Welfare Officer would remove the pet and arrange temporary care through Herts County Council.
- The tenant will be liable for all associated costs.

## 3.0

### Links to other corporate strategies and policies

This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and other documents:

- Tenancy Management Policy
- Tenancy Agreement
- Tenants Handbook :
  - [Pets fact sheet](#)
  - [Fencing fact sheet](#)

## 4.0

### Legislation

The legislation and policies listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
- Housing Act 1985, Schedule 11 (Ground 2 - nuisance ground for possession)
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Control of Dogs Order 1992
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Equalities Act 2010