



# Keeping a pet

## Information for residents of council housing

As a landlord, we understand that keeping a pet has many benefits. We are committed to supporting pet ownership and encouraging owners to act responsibly when looking after their pets and their homes.

We work closely with the RSPCA and the dog warden to support our tenants, and our pet policy has once again been awarded the RSPCA's Gold Pawprint award.

### This leaflet tells you about:

- Asking for permission to keep a pet
- The types of pet we allow in our properties
- The types of property where dogs and cats are not permitted
- Your responsibilities
- What isn't allowed in a council home
- What to do if your neighbour's pet is causing a nuisance
- Where to find advice about keeping a pet



GOLD HOUSING 2021

### Asking for permission

If you live in a council home, you must ask for permission from your Tenancy Management Officer before you bring a pet into your home. (The only exception to this is keeping goldfish or other fresh water fish.)

Where permission is granted, tenants are responsible for the health and welfare of

their pets. Tenants must sign an undertaking committing them to responsible ownership and provide a photograph of their pet, which will be kept on file along with the animal's microchip number (if applicable).

## **What type of pets am I allowed to keep?**

Council tenants are normally allowed to keep domestic pets such as:

- Dogs\*
- Cats
- Birds (such as budgies and cockatoos)
- Tropical/marine fish\*\*
- Small caged rodents
- Small non-poisonous caged reptiles
- Non-poisonous contained insects or amphibians
- Chickens/bantams (female birds only)
- Guinea pigs
- Rabbits

If the type of animal you would like to keep is not on this list then you will need to speak to your Tenancy Management Officer to discuss whether your home is suitable.

\*Excluding a dog to which Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 applies (such as a Pit Bull Terrier type) unless the dog has been exempted from the prohibition.

\*\*Other types of fish do not require our permission.

## **The types of property where dogs and cats are not permitted.**

If you live in a supported housing scheme and your only entrance door opens onto an internal communal area, then we would not give permission for you to keep dogs or cats, except one 'house cat'. (A house cat is one that must not be allowed out of your home).

If you live in a flat then we would take advice from the Dog Warden and/or RSPCA before giving permission for a dog (except Assistance dogs) as some breeds are not suitable for small flats. We do allow all specially trained assistance dogs, regardless of property type. Assistance dog owners should keep their Assistance dog identification book and follow the training they were given in the safe and effective use of their dog.

## Your responsibilities if you own a pet.

- You must not keep any pets without our permission
- You must not allow your pet to cause a nuisance to your neighbours or visitors
- You must look after your pet, making sure that it has the right amount of food and fresh water and that it has veterinary care when sick or injured
- You must give us details of someone who would be able to look after your animals if you are unable to do so for any reason.
- All animals must be checked at least once in every 24 hours. If we become aware that an animal has been left unattended, we may force entry and you must pay all associated costs.
- All animal owners in the UK must abide by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and other legislation available to download on the Gov.uk website.

If you own a dog, you have extra responsibilities:

- You must ensure that your dog is microchipped and wears a collar and tag with the owner's name and address whenever it is in a public place
- You must ensure that your dog is under control whenever it is in a public place
- If you allow a dog into your garden then you must ensure that it cannot escape. Please see our [Fencing](#) factsheet for more information
- You must not allow dog waste to accumulate in your garden
- You must pick up your dog's waste from any public place or communal areas and dispose of it responsibly
- Dogs must be restrained or kept in a different room when a member of council staff, repairs and maintenance contractor, Councillor or any other agency working with the council visits your home.

Dacorum Borough Council now has a borough-wide Dog Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) that sets out the responsibilities for everyone who takes a dog into a public place: [www.dacorum.gov.uk/pspo](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/pspo)

## What isn't allowed in a council home.

Tenants are not allowed to breed or offer for sale any animal from a council-owned property. If your pet becomes pregnant, you must inform your Tenancy Management

Officer and explain how you intend to re-home its babies responsibly when they have reached a suitable age (e.g. no younger than eight weeks old for puppies and kittens).  
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You must not install a cat or dog flap without first obtaining our permission, because it is an alteration to your home within the meaning of your Tenancy Agreement. However, if we install a new composite back or side door then you would be able to pay for a cat flap to be installed during the manufacturing process.

## **What to do if your neighbour's pet is causing a nuisance.**

We understand that if your neighbour's pet is causing a nuisance, it can affect your relationship with them. If you are friendly with the animal's owner then you may wish to talk to them in the first instance. They may not realise that their pet is causing you a problem.

If you feel that you can't talk to your neighbour then you can report it to us either by telling your Tenancy Management Officer or, if the pet is a dog, you can report it to the dog warden.

## **Where to find advice about keeping a pet**

For more advice about keeping pets, please contact one of the organisations below.

- RSPCA: 0300 1234 999
- Appledown Dog Rescue: 01525 220383
- National Animal Welfare Trust: 0208 950 0177
- Dogs Trust: 0207 837 0006
- Cats Protection: 01442 251536
- Chiltern Dog Rescue: 01296 623885
- Blue Cross for Pets: 0300 777 1897
- The Cinnamon Trust: 01736 757 900



For more information about our **Pet Policy**, to ask our permission to keep a pet, or to report nuisance caused by a neighbour's pet, please contact the Housing team by email: **Housing@dacorum.gov.uk** or telephone **01442 228000** and ask for **Housing**.

To make an appointment to have your dog microchipped free of charge (Dacorum Borough Council tenants only) please email **DogWarden@dacorum.gov.uk** or telephone **01442 228000** and ask for **Dog Warden**.