



Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Pet Policy

Scope:	This policy applies to all tenants of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC).
Effective Date:	TBC
Review Date:	4 years from effective date.
Author:	Lydia Bradbury, Housing Portfolio Manager
Policy Owned by:	Neighbourhood and Enforcement

Pet Policy

1 Scope

- 1.1 This document sets out how tenants can ask permission to keep a pet in our Council Housing property, the information we require to make our decision and the circumstances under which it may be denied or revoked.
- 1.2 This scheme applies to all tenants who have a Secure Tenancy, a Non-Secure Tenancy, a Decant Licence, or a Flexible Tenancy with the council.

2 Policy Statement

- 2.1 This policy is intended to outline the conditions under which residents may keep pets in accommodation managed by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council. It is not exhaustive, and the council reserves the right to refuse requests or withdraw permission, where the conditions within the policy are not being met.

Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and we will not unreasonably refuse requests, but will take action where pet ownership is causing a breach of tenancy.

- 2.2 The specific objectives of the Pet Policy are to:
 - Ensure tenants know how to request permission to keep a pet in their home.
 - Ensure tenants are aware of their responsibilities when keeping a pet in their home.
 - Ensure tenants are given the opportunity, wherever possible, to own a pet.
 - Demonstrate when and why permission to keep a pet may not be given or may be withdrawn.
 - Ensure our properties are not detrimentally affected by tenant pet ownership.
 - Ensure that our residents are not disadvantaged by our tenant's pet ownership.

3 Our Approach

- 3.1 Our priority is to ensure where possible tenants can experience pet ownership should they wish to. The council appreciates that keeping a pet can offer significant health and well-being benefits to residents living in our accommodation. Unfortunately, we also have to acknowledge 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 living in our accommodation with pets. Your tenancy agreement also sets out tenancy conditions in relation to pet ownership.

- 3.2 We will regularly review this policy and ensure that it continues to meet its objectives. We will continue to work with colleagues within the council and other external agencies to ensure the welfare of our residents, support pet ownership and animal welfare. Examples include the Street Wardens, the Police and the RSPCA and animal welfare charities.

4 If you want to keep a pet in your home:

- 4.1 If you want to keep a pet in your home, you must:
- 4.2 Make an application to the council. This must be received before you house any animal, including, but not limited to, cats, dogs, livestock, and reptiles in your property or garden.
- 4.3 This request can be sent to neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk or Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Campus East, Welwyn Garden City AL8 6AE.
- 4.4 Only once this application has been received, and all conditions met to the satisfaction of the council, written permission from us will be granted for a pet to be kept.
- 4.5 We may need to review your request if you move to another WHBC home via transfer or mutual exchange, please also be aware that other housing providers may have different views on keeping pets in their homes.
- 4.6 If you already have a pet in your home, and did not seek our permission, you should apply for this retrospectively to comply with the terms of your tenancy agreement.
- 4.7 We do not require tenants to ask permission to look after someone else's pet temporarily, for a short period of two weeks or less, in their home. However, if the pet causes any problems or complaints which constitute a tenancy breach it could put your tenancy at risk, you will be asked to remove the pet from your home, and may be asked to provide proof of the pet's ownership to satisfy us it does not belong to you.

5 How we decide on whether to allow you to have a pet in your home:

The following factors will be considered when deciding whether permission for a pet is granted:

- The size and type of animal - Dogs listed in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and any animal listed in the Schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 may not be kept. This is to protect the health and safety of any residents and employees of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council who may come into contact with them.
- The size and type of property.
- Proximity to outside space.
- The health and ability of the resident to provide the level of care required for the animal.
- Any other animals already in your home.
- The impact of the animal on neighbouring residents.
- The impact on the condition or safety of the home, including overcrowding and fire safety.
- Any previous problems within your household relating to pet ownership or anti-social behaviour which may give rise to concerns about your ability to look after a pet in an appropriate manner.

6 Additional conditions to be met:

For permission to be granted, the council would also expect the tenant to provide confirmation that the following conditions could be met:

- A contingency plan is in place whereby a family member/friend will re-house your pet should you have to leave the property on a temporary basis (e.g. holiday, hospitalisation etc.) or you become incapable of providing the level of care required for the pet.
- You agree to make good any damage caused to the property by your pet. (Most damage caused by pets is due to lack of supervision or control of the pet and therefore residents must act responsibly to prevent this). Failure to remedy damage will result in you being recharged.
- If appropriate to the animal, residents will be required to ensure that their pet is micro-chipped and registered with a local veterinary surgery, PDSA or animal welfare centre. To comply with current legislation dogs must be micro-chipped and wear a collar and tag with the owner's contact details, outside the home.
- Residents are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, this is called a duty of care. This requires proper day-to-day management and care of the pet. If residents have any questions about the care of their pet, they should contact their vet or a suitable advisory body. Routine healthcare must include regular control of parasites (fleas and worms), vaccination and neutering where appropriate.
- You must ensure that your pet is appropriately trained to be suitable for their accommodation (i.e. Cats must be litter trained and dogs house trained).
- The control of your pet and any animals visiting the property are your responsibility.

- Dogs must always be kept under control and on a lead when in public areas. They must never be allowed outside the boundary of your property on their own - this includes communal balconies, gardens, stairwells, and corridors.
- If your pet fouls in the communal gardens or outside communal space, you must clear up after it immediately and responsibly dispose of the waste.
- A pet should never be allowed to foul on communal stairways, corridors, or balconies. If an accident should occur within the premises, faeces or urine must always be removed and the area cleaned immediately.
- In accommodation designated for 60yrs+ pets are not allowed in our communal socialising areas e.g. communal lounges, kitchens, craft areas and exercise rooms etc. Trained Guide Dogs and Assistance Dogs will be permitted in all areas.
- Animals should not cause harm or concern to a visiting member of WHBC staff or any of their contractors. If you refuse to allow access to a staff member or refuse to secure your pet in another room while they visit you could be in breach of your tenancy.
- If we give permission for a pet and you do not obtain this pet within 6 months, you are required to make a fresh request.

7 Before permission is given to keep a pet:

Details of the pet and substitute pet carer must be provided to the council on request. The details required include:

- Type of animal
- Breed
- If a caged/tanked animal - the location within the home it will be kept, and whether it requires mains electricity.
- Details of pets already in your home.
- Any others on the pet policy

To gather these details, the council will provide a 'Request to keep a Pet' form for you to complete. See appendix A.

8 How long will it usually take to approve your request?

- Permission for a pet in your existing home – we will aim to provide an answer to your request within 10 working days, in more complicated cases it could take up to 28 days.
- Permission for a pet in a new home you have been offered via our choice-based lettings system – we will provide an answer to your request within 3 working days, in more complicated cases this may take up to 10 days.
- If you feel we have not dealt with your request fairly and you are dissatisfied with the way you were dealt with you can follow our complaints policy.

9 Permission to keep your pet may be withdrawn by the council if:

- We receive complaints about your pet from neighbours or staff which is evidenced as nuisance, such as a dog barking excessively, and which cannot be resolved satisfactorily. You will be required to re-home the pet. Serious cases of anti-social behaviour is a breach of your tenancy and enforcement action could be taken against you.
- You are found to be keeping animals for commercial breeding purposes, or you allow your property to be used for such purposes.
- You are found to be in breach of any of the tenancy conditions around the keeping of animals set out in your tenancy agreement.
- Your animal harms or presents as harmful to other residents, the general public or a member of WHBC staff or their contractors.
- You fail to secure your pet in another room, if requested, to allow a member of WHBC staff or contractor to visit.
- You have too many pets in your home.

It is important to note that the breach of any tenancy conditions could result in the council taking enforcement action, including repossession of your home.

10 Review of Decision and Complaints

- 10.1 If you are unhappy with our decision and would like us to review it, you must request this in writing to your Neighbourhood Housing Officer within 21 days of the decision being made.
- 10.2 The review will be conducted by more senior officer, who was not involved in the original decision, and you will receive the outcome within 28 days of our receipt of the request.
- 10.3 Any tenant who is not satisfied with the way the council or its contractor(s) has dealt with the service they have received regarding permission to keep a pet has the right to have their case investigated.
- 10.4 The tenant should follow the council's complaint procedure if they wish to make a complaint.
- 10.5 Tenants also have the right to take their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

Related Documents

Document	Link
Pet Policy 2023	

Connected Policies:	Tenancy Policy
Forms and Letters:	Appendix A – Pet Registration form
Leaflets:	N/A

Version history

Version no.	1	Date effective:	Date
Full / partial review?	Full		
Brief summary of changes:	This is a new policy		
Staff consultation (teams):	Neighbourhood and Enforcement Team, Resident Involvement Team.		
Resident consultation:	Residents Panel		
Author:	Lydia Bradbury – Housing Portfolio Manager		

Appendix A

Request to keep a pet



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Please be aware that this is a request to keep an animal in your home and until you have received written consent, usually by email, you will not be allowed to keep it there. Permission may also later be withdrawn if, in keeping the animal at your home, you are in breach of your tenancy agreement, or the conditions set out in our pet policy.

Please note you must not breed animals or sell animals from your home.

Tenant address & Telephone number & email	Tenant name	Joint tenant name

If you already have a pet/pets in your home please give details below: Do you have permission to keep this pet? Y/N (please delete as appropriate)

Type of Animal	Breed	Where is the animal kept?	Do you/will you have a licence (if required) to keep the animal? Y/N	How long has the animal lived with you?	Is the animal trained assistance? e.g. hearing dog

Provide details for the pet/pets for which you are requesting permission today:

Type of Animal	Breed	Where will the animal be kept?	Do you/will you have a licence (if required) to keep the animal? Y/N	Is the animal trained assistance? e.g. hearing dog

If you are requesting to keep a dog or cat, please advise of the following:

- 1) Has/will the animal been neutered/spayed? Y/N (delete as appropriate)
- 2) Is the animal/will the animal be microchipped? Y/N

Note: The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015 states that all dogs over 8 weeks old should be microchipped, breeders should do this before selling a dog.

I/We do hereby declare that details provided in this form are true and correct and confirm that if permission is granted to keep an animal I/We acknowledge that I/We have read and fully understand the conditions of the Pet Policy and agree to be bound by them and any obligations as a pet owner in a Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council housing property.

If approval is given I/We agree to tell my/our Neighbourhood Officer once we have the pet at the home so that records can be updated.

I/We also acknowledge as part of this application Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council may share and continue to share relevant information provided to any relevant organisations such as: the RSPCA, the Police, Local Veterinary Clinics, Animal Welfare Organisations etc.

I/We understand that information given in this form will be used and stored by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 and our Privacy Notice.

Signed:.....
(Tenant)

Signed:.....
(Joint Tenant)

Date:.....