

WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PET POLICY



April 2018

1.0 Aim

- 1.1 To outline West Lancashire Borough Councils approach to the keeping of pets by new and existing tenants. We understand that people often enjoy the companionship of a pet, and recognise the health and well-being benefits that pet ownership can bring. Where possible we aim to accommodate request to keep pets when people are moving into council housing.
- 1.2 Being able to have or keep a pet can be a deciding factor for people when considering moving into their new home. We believe that tenants moving into our homes should not be forced to make the decision to give up a pet or risk missing out on the housing they need.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy explains how West Lancashire Borough Council will manage the ownership of pets within its homes. The policy covers the following issues:
 - What type of pets can be kept and in what circumstances.
 - What types of pets will not be considered
 - Responsibilities of owning a pet in
 - The actions which the Council will take where pets are kept inappropriately or cause nuisance to neighbours.

3.0 Requesting permission to keep a pet

Applicants for accommodation will be expected to keep their Homefinder application updated in regard to pet ownership. This information will be considered and discussed with prospective new tenants as part of the offer of accommodation process.

Existing tenants will not be expected to request permission to keep pet as long as the type of pet is considered suitable for the type of home in which they live as outlined in 5.0 of this policy.

4.0 Definitions

Any domestic animal can be a pet. Dogs and cats are the most obvious but there are also those which are kept purely indoors such as tropical and gold fish, budgies.

5.0 What type of pets can be kept and in what circumstances.

This list provides a guide to applicants and residents about the numbers and types of pets may be considered, it is not exhaustive.

Caged Pets

- birds

Are permitted to be kept in any property type

Tanks

- Coldwater fish
- Tropical fish
- Reptiles

Are permitted to be kept in any property type

Un-caged Pets

- One dog
- One or two cats

Are permitted in

- All houses
- All sheltered flats and bungalows
- Flats that do not have enclosed communal areas

Assistance dogs – such as guide dogs, hearing dogs or dogs for the disabled will always be permitted.

6.0 What types of pets will not be considered

6.1 Dangerous Dogs Act 1991

According to the dangerous dogs Act 1991 it is an offence to keep specific breeds of dogs.

- Pit Bulls
- Japanese Tosas
- Dogos Argentinos
- Filas Brasileiros

Therefore, these breeds will not be accepted.

6.2 Wild or Farmyard animals

The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 prohibits individuals from keeping wild animals as pets, such as: Venomous Snakes, etc; therefore these will not be permitted.

Permission will also not be granted for farmyard animals. Exceptions may be agreed for keeping chickens in areas where this would not cause a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours.

7.0 Responsibilities of owning a pet

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 states that anyone who owns a pet must care for their animal in a proper manner. In addition any tenant keeping a pet has to act as a responsible pet owner and to ensure that any pet owned, does not cause a nuisance to the quiet enjoyment of other residents living within the scheme.

7.1 Responsibilities include ensuring that

- Faeces is picked up and disposed of correctly, in an appropriate bin suitable for animal faeces
- Litter trays and cages should be cleaned out regularly and disposed of in an appropriate manner
- Excessive noise (such as dog barking constantly) will not be tolerated. If the owner is unwilling to cooperate, then he/she will be given the option of either rehoming the pet or giving up their tenancy.
- For the consideration of other tenants, pets must not be left on their own for any long periods of time for example overnight; as this can cause excessive behaviour problems.
- Pets are not left in a property when the tenant is away. The pet should be taken with them or boarded elsewhere. Pet owners are responsible for making arrangement to have their pet cared for in the event of ill health, hospitalisation, holidays or emergencies.

8.0 Additional responsibilities for pet owners in Older Persons Housing

- There must be a named responsible person who will take responsibility for the pet in an emergency or should the tenant be incapacitated in any way. In the event of the tenant becoming incapacitated and the responsible named person is not able to take responsibility for the pet then the Council will arrange for the pet to be taken care of in an appropriate manner, any costs incurred will be recharged to the tenant.
- Tenants will be responsible for notifying the Sheltered Housing Team of any changes to these details.
- Pets are not allowed to roam in internal or external communal areas. Dogs must be kept on a lead when outside the tenants home and in communal areas
- Communal rooms such as lounges (residents lounges would be used for access to gardens / footpaths only where applicable), communal kitchen, laundry and other residents' apartments are out of bounds and pets are not allowed.

If these responsibilities are not adhered to then tenancy enforcement actions will be taken.

The Council encourages any tenant who owns a pet to:

- Take out appropriate insurance for their pet
- Ensure cats and dogs are neutered
- Ensure cats and dogs are micro-chipped
- Ensure pets are vaccinated and treated appropriately to prevent fleas

9.0 Visiting Pets

Tenants will not be permitted to look after other pets whilst their family or friends are on holiday etc.

10.0 Withdrawing Permission

West Lancashire Borough Council reserves the right to withdraw permission for a tenant to keep a pet under the following circumstances:

- You have failed to comply with the obligations set above.
- Persistent complaints, which have been substantiated have been made about your animal's behaviour.
- There is evidence of cruelty to the animal or lack of responsibility.
- You become unable to look after the pet due to physical or mental frailty.