

Northwards Housing's Policy on Keeping Animals

This policy provides additional information to that of the Tenancy Agreement in relation to keeping animals.

Purpose:

To provide clear minimum standards in relation to keeping animals.

Scope of the policy:

The policy sets out how Northwards Housing requires tenants to keep and care for animals.

Responsibility:

Overall responsibility for the policy is with the Director of Neighbourhood Services. Each Head of Neighbourhood Services is responsible for their geographical area of responsibility.

Performance Standards:

Not applicable.

Equality /Diversity considerations & Equality Impact Assessment:

This policy is available in large print, Braille, DVD, CD and in languages other than English. It is also subject to the translation policy for Northwards Housing. This policy and its related procedures have been Equality Impact Assessed and a summary of this is detailed below

EIA screening undertaken 25th January 2010: no adverse impacts.

Generic Impact and risk assessments:

The policy does not affect any primary risk or create any new risks.

Information sources and reference documents:

Manchester City Council Tenancy Agreement.
Guidelines on Pet Management for Housing Providers – Pet Advisory Committee.
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
Animal Welfare Act 2006

Policy information:

This policy is linked to:	MCC Tenancy Agreement
This version:	16 February 2011
Approved by:	M Stevens
Next review:	15 February 2014
Lead Officer:	J Wilson
Covalent reference number: To be completed by Business Improvement Team	

NORTHWARDS HOUSING'S POLICY ON KEEPING ANIMALS

1 Introduction

This policy outlines Northwards Housing's approach to the keeping animals by its tenants. We recognise the benefits that responsible pet ownership can bring. However controls must be in place to prevent irresponsible pet ownership which can cause suffering to animals, a nuisance to neighbours or damage to property.

This policy covers the following issues:-

- What animals can be kept and in what circumstances
- The actions Northwards Housing will take where animals are kept inappropriately or cause a nuisance to neighbours or damage to property.

2 Applicants for Housing

Applicants for housing are asked to indicate on their application form if they intend to keep a pet. This will not prejudice their application unless they plan to keep a pet for which permission would not be granted. If this is the case then this matter must be resolved before an offer of accommodation is made.

3 Tenancy Agreement

The Tenancy Agreement sets out the basic rules regarding the keeping of animals. They are as follows:

Section 4: Community Responsibilities:

- 4.2 You (or anyone living with you, or visiting your home) must not cause a nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to any other person. Examples of nuisance, annoyance or disturbance include – loud music, arguing and door slamming, **dogs barking and fouling**, offensive drunkenness, selling drugs or drug abuse, rubbish dumping, playing ball games close to someone else's home.
- 4.8 You (or anyone living with you, or visiting your home) must not break any of the City Council's bye laws.

- 4.10 You (or anyone living with you) must not keep a dog if:
- You live in a multi storey block or
 - Your home shares a common entrance and there is a 'no dog' agreement between the tenants and the local housing office. To find out whether your home is part of a 'no dog' agreement, or how to set up an agreement, contact your local housing office.
- 4.11 You (or anyone living with you) must not keep any animal that the City Council decides is unsuitable for your home or garden. If you are in any doubt at all please contact your local housing office. Your pet or pets must not annoy or frighten other people.
- 4.17 You (or anyone living with you) must not put up structures such as sheds, garages or pigeon lofts anywhere on your property without the City Council's agreement in writing.

4 What animals can be kept?

An animal cannot be kept if this is likely to lead to a breach of the tenancy agreement: this includes causing a danger, nuisance or alarm to neighbours or damage to the property (including any communal areas).

The following animals are not suitable in any circumstances:

- Livestock – for example, sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, horses.
- Animals registered under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976; examples of animals registered under the Act are certain types of venomous snake, certain types of spider and various breeds of monkey.
- Dogs specified in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991

Permission to keep an animal may also not be granted where there is an ongoing problem with pet ownership in the household or there has been a problem in the past.

Chickens, ducks or geese may only be kept if written permission from Northwards Housing has been secured in advance. In deciding whether to grant permission, consideration will be given to the suitability of the property and garden, the accommodation in which the birds are to be kept, and any other factors considered to be relevant in determining whether the birds are likely to cause a nuisance.

Permission will be subject to conditions relating to the number of birds to be kept and the accommodation in which they are to be housed. Permission can be withdrawn if such conditions are breached or if the birds cause annoyance. Birds cannot be kept in communal gardens or other communal or public areas. Cockerels cannot be kept.

Responsible pet ownership

- Tenants must ensure that the size and number of animals is appropriate for the type of property in which they live.
- Tenants must ensure that all animals are homed in a secure and clean environment and are required to meet any costs associated with this.
- Pets must not cause damage to the property and residents will be charged for any damage caused to Council property.
- Tenants are responsible in ensuring the health and welfare of their pets.
- Dogs should be exercised on a lead if on communal areas of the estate or scheme.
- Tenants are responsible for the control of their pets and any other animals visiting their home.
- A person responsible for a dog must keep it on a lead in designated areas. This includes all roads, pavements and footpaths including gated alleyways, as well as designated small parks, planted flower beds and horticultural centres.
- If an animal fouls on any public or communal area, the mess should be cleared up immediately. This applies also to any garden of a property owned by Manchester City Council, including the dog owner's own garden.
- If an animal muddies or makes a communal area dirty, then the area should be cleaned immediately by the person responsible for the animal.
- Pets must not cause nuisance to neighbours, staff and visitors. This includes noise nuisance and allowing animals to stray.
- If you wish to construct any outside accommodation for your dog, including a kennel or pen, you must first secure permission in writing from Northwards Housing. All kennels or pens must be removed at the time you terminate your tenancy

- A person responsible for a dog must put the dog on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised officer of the Council. This applies throughout the city of Manchester.
 - Dogs must not be allowed into play areas in parks or on to land used for sports.*
 - Dogs are also excluded from cemeteries and crematoria.*
- * *This is not applicable to registered blind persons or to persons who rely on an assistance dog trained by Dogs for the Disabled, support dogs or Canine Partners for Independence with a disability affecting mobility, manual dexterity, physical coordination or ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects.*

6 Nuisance Animals

Northwards Housing will take action in relation to any breach of the Tenancy Agreement in relation to the keeping of animals. Over and above this, the penalty in relation to any offence in any dog control order is, on summary conviction, a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale (£1,000). A person may be offered the opportunity to discharge any liability to conviction for any offence under any dog control order by payment of a fixed penalty. The specified amount of the fixed penalty is £80 if paid within fourteen days (or £50 if paid within ten days).

7 Dealing with cruelty and neglect

Where a member of staff witnesses cruelty to or neglect of an animal they will report this to the RSPCA. Where cruelty or neglect is reported to Northwards Housing by a third party they will also report this to the RSPCA.