



PET POLICY

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Pride. Quality. Integrity. Innovation.

DOCUMENTATION MASTER SHEET

Amendments to this Document are Detailed Below.

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
01	1/7/2010	Initial version.	28/07/2010	RSH	Services & Operations Committee
02	30/11/2010	Redraft following comments from S & O Committee members	2/3/2012	RSH	Customer panel
03	3/3/2012	Redraft following suggestion from Customer project Group	15/3/2012	RSH	Customer Panel
04	01/02/17	Policy reviewed and updated for presentation to Tenant Panel in Feb 2017	09/02/2017	AH/JH	Tenant Panel
05	February 2020	Routine 3 year Policy Review – no changes	06/02/2020	BR/JH	JH
06	June 2023	3 year review – updated to reflect tenancy agreement wording	25/07/23	NB	SLT
07	November 2023	Amendment to reflect updated Dangerous Dog legislation	24/11/23	NB	
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Pet Policy

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OVERALL AIM/INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out GCH's approach to dealing with requests for keeping a pet. The policy recognises the positive effect pet ownership can have on the general health and wellbeing of individuals. However, irresponsible pet ownership can cause nuisance and affect the quality of life for other residents in an area and we must ensure that measures are in place for those cases in which pet ownership causes nuisance which requires intervention. 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'.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This Policy applies to customer living in our General Needs, Independent Living and Homeless properties.

The policy aims to:

- Ensure a consistent approach to pet ownership, enabling customers to enjoy the benefits of owning pets
- Ensure that pet ownership does not impact on the right of others to enjoy their homes and neighbourhoods
- Provide information about what GCH sees as appropriate concerning pet ownership

LEGAL AND REGULATORY EXPECTATIONS

- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- Control of Dogs Act 1992
- Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) / Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (CNEA)
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Police Act 2014
- Tenancy Agreements

SERVICE STANDARDS

Customers who have an Enhanced Assured, Assured or Starter Tenancy agreement starting before January 2023 have a clause to say that residents are not to keep any animal other than a normal common domestic pet/and a small caged animal without its written consent in writing.

Customers who have a tenancy agreement starting from 3 April 2023 will have to ask GCH's permission to keep a pet.

When considering permission for a pet GCH will take into consideration the type of pet and accommodation type.

For example we may refuse permission for pets on maisonettes and flats without their own entrance and private garden.

We will not unreasonably withhold permission and will not withhold permission for a guide dog or assistance animal.

Customers who are in our temporary homeless accommodation will have to ask GCH's permission to keep a pet. Nova House, Greyfriars and our dispersed homeless accommodation have a no pet policy and customers there are not permitted to keep any pets. While our Citadel House shared accommodation site is accredited for pets by the dogs trust we will work with the local authority for appropriate referrals and may refuse to accept a pet if it is not suitable for the accommodation or the customers who are living in the property.

Dangerous Dogs

GCH will not give permission for a customer to keep any breed of dog banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. Customers who own an XL Bully dog, will need a certificate of exemption to legally keep their pet beyond 31 January 2024

Assistance Dogs

Assistance dogs aren't pets, they're relied upon to help with daily activities. They're trained to help people with disabilities, including sight impairment, hearing difficulties, epilepsy, diabetes, physical mobility and more. Assistance dogs have important rights under the Equality Act 2010.

Therapy dogs are different, so if you want to keep a dog for therapeutic reasons, you may need to provide supporting medical information for us to consider.

GCH will not allow permission for any of the following animals:

- Any breed of dog banned under the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act
- Any animal that would require a licence under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Cattle, horses, livestock

Pet Policy

We will also not give permission to a customer where there has been a history of animal neglect or cruelty or where there is a history of nuisance caused as a result of pet ownership.

You must ask us for permission to keep poultry on your property. You must also check with your local council about any rules that may prevent you from keeping poultry, such as by-laws and planning restrictions.

We'll need to see the council's written permission before we can consider giving you permission to keep poultry. If your property is suitable, we may give permission for you to keep up to six birds.

Where permission is granted, customers should be advised of the terms of the permission that has been granted and ensure that they are aware of the responsibilities of being a good pet owner.

This could include:

- No fouling in communal areas
- Pets not allowed to be off the lead or roam in communal areas
- Not to allow pets to cause an annoyance, nuisance or disturbance to neighbours
- Not to allow pets to cause damage to the property
- Not to neglect or maltreat pets

We will not give permission to breed or offer any animal for sale from a GCH property.

Reports of nuisance will be dealt with in line with GCH's Anti-social Behaviour Policy and Procedure.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SCHEMES

Communal Areas - internal

Pets are not allowed in internal communal areas.

Communal areas - external

Dogs must be exercised on the lead around the external scheme areas and taken off site to be exercised off the lead. Any fouling must be picked up and disposed of.

Guest flats on sheltered schemes

Pets are not allowed in the guest rooms/flats.

Arrangements if the tenant is no longer able to care for their pet

Inevitably there may be occasions where the tenant is unwell or needs to go into hospital where they will not be able to continue to look after their pet. In these circumstances each tenant will be asked to identify arrangements in advance; either through family or friends or through a charity.

HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION

There are identified properties within our homeless accommodation that may be suitable to house pets but it is on a case by case basis and permission must be sought from GCH.

TENANCY ENFORCEMENT

It's our primary objective to seek to provide support to customers in addressing issues or responding to incident reports surrounding their domestic pets. In this way enforcement action will usually be taken as a last result, where other options and engagement with the customer have proved unsuccessful in ensuring the pets are not causing a nuisance, do not present as a welfare concern or are associated with hoarding.

GCH will only consider an injunction or possession regarding Pets when all other options have been exhausted. For this type of intervention GCH will consider the impact and vulnerability of the customer, alongside reasonableness and proportionality of bringing a claim for possession.

GCH may report incidents to the Police or RSPCA.

CONSULTATION

Homes & Neighbourhood, Lettings, Independent Living & Homeless Teams were consulted.

APPEALS

Any customer who is not satisfied with our approach in the application of the Pet Policy or providing clear guidance in relation to keeping Pets can lodge a complaint.

If the customer is dissatisfied with actions and decisions made under this policy it will be dealt with under our Customer Complaints Policy.

REVIEW

This policy will normally be reviewed triennially to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, unless an earlier review is required due to regulatory, statutory or other requirements.