

Gloucester City Homes



Pet Management Policy



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You can also contact us using our online reporting forms.

Please note our website is speech enabled and you can adjust the size of the text and translate it to other languages.

Gloucester City Homes Document Format Information

If you would like any part of this document explained, translated or provided in another format such as large print, audio or Braille, please contact our Customer Services Team on 0800 408 2000.

Bengali

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান অথবা যদি আপনার একজন ইন্টারপ্রেটারের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Chinese

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજ બીજી ભાષા અથવા રચનામાં જોઈતો હોય, અથવા જો તમને ઈન્ટરપ્રિટરની સેવાઓ જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક સાધો.

Polish

Aby uzyskać ten dokument w innym języku lub formacie, albo jeżeli potrzebujesz usług tłumacza, skontaktuj się z nami.

Urdu

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

[Translation reads: If you would like this document in another language or format or require the services of a translator, please contact us.]

STATUS (Draft / Approved / Updated / Archived)	REFERENCE
APPROVED	H:\Master Documents\Templates\GCH Policy & Procedure Template.doc
<p>Important Notice: Printed paper copies of this procedure are uncontrolled. The current version of this procedure is available on the Intranet</p>	

Documentation Master Sheet
Amendments to this Document are Detailed Below

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
1	1/7/2010	Initial version.	28/07/2010	RSH	Services & Operations Committee
2	30/11/2010	Redraft following comments from S & O Committee members	2/3/2012	RSH	Customer panel
3	3/3/2012	Redraft following suggestion from Customer project Group	15/3/2012	RSH	Customer Panel

Summary of most recent changes:

Version 3 – see above comments.

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GLOUCESTER CITY HOMES PET MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Pets provide people with companionship, comfort and love; bringing enjoyment to residents and communities. Gloucester City Homes (GCH) recognises the benefits that responsible pet ownership can bring to our residents and where appropriate will support residents in becoming pet owners.

However as a responsible social housing provider, we need to have measures in place to prevent irresponsible pet owners which can cause a nuisance to others living in the community.

2. PURPOSE

This policy is intended to provide residents with clear guidance on the following:

- What pets can be kept in our properties and in which circumstances
- How residents can apply for permission to keep a pet in their property
- How we will review applications and how a decision is made
- What actions can be taken against irresponsible pet owners
- How information on responsible pet ownership is communicated to our residents

3. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

There are many laws concerning keeping animals. Some are specific to certain exotic species, some related to dogs only and others relate to animals generally. As part of our commitment to excellent neighbourhood management we will work in accordance with relevant laws and legislation.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006, places a duty of care on any person keeping an animal to ensure that they care for their animal(s) properly. It is now a legal requirement for animal owners to ensure their pet has:

- A proper diet (food and water)
- Protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease
- The ability to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- A suitable environment to live in (with or apart from other animals)

4. PETS

In line with the tenancy agreement GCH will only allow residents to keep pet(s) in their properties that are considered reasonable to the property size and type. Pet(s) we consider reasonable are:

- Domestic cats and dogs
- Small animals such as rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs
- Small caged animals such as budgies and canaries
- Fish (not including large aquarium's)
- Non-poisonous insects and spiders (if appropriately tanked)
- Non-poisonous snakes and reptiles under two feet in length when fully grown (if appropriately tanked)

The number of pets residents can keep in their properties will depend on several factors, including:

- Size and type of property
- Resident's personal circumstances
- Resident's ability to adequately care for their pet(s)

We make the recommendation that a tenant keep only 1 dog and 1 cat at the agreement of Gloucester City Homes. This could be 2 small dogs but permission would need to be granted by Gloucester City Homes in accordance to section 4 of this policy.

Residents must not commercially breed any animal kept in GCH properties or advertise any animal for sale from the property under any circumstances.

4. REQUESTING PERMISSION

Residents who wish to keep a pet must ask our permission to do so. In the first instance residents are required to make a request by completing a **Pet Application Form** providing details of the pet they would like to keep and their individual circumstances. We will provide written consent and this will not be unreasonably withheld. We will look to withdraw this consent should the animal cause nuisance

Residents do not need to apply for permission for the following animals:

- Fish (with the exception of large aquaria's)
- Small animals such as rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs
- Small caged animals such as budgies and canaries

An assessment will be carried out by the Housing Officer and a decision will be made based on the suitability of the request, permission will then be either granted or declined. A copy of the assessment will be passed to the resident with an explanation of the decision.

Permission will always be granted in the following circumstances:

- Assistance dogs, such as guide dogs or hearing dogs

Permission will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- If the pet is livestock (for example farm animals)
- If the pet is poisonous insects, spiders, snakes and reptiles
- Dangerous Dogs (as detailed in Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976)
- Residents that already have existing pets and do not have the appropriate property type or space to accommodate additional pets.

We may decline permission if a resident has been unable to care for their pet previously or where they have been subject to criminal proceedings for crimes against animals.

We will work with residents moving within GCH properties or considering downsizing property to accommodate pet(s), wherever possible. In making a decision we will consider all circumstances and consult with the resident. In exceptional circumstances the Tenancy Services Manager may allow residents to have pet(s) outside of these guidelines.

5. NUISANCE PETS

Whilst most pets are well behaved, owners have a responsibility to ensure that their pet(s) do not cause a nuisance to others. In accordance with the tenancy agreement, residents are responsible for ensuring their pets do not:

- soil or damage GCH's property; or
- cause a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours

GCH consider animal nuisance to include:

- Roaming or unattended pets
- A pet fouling in communal areas, resident's gardens or property (without being cleared up immediately.)
- Pets fouling in neighbours' gardens
- Excessive noise, such as dog barking
- Too many pets kept in a property
- Unpleasant odours caused from pets

- Aggressive or dangerous animals
- Attracting other animals and vermin by leaving food outside a property

(This list is not exhaustive)

GCH work in partnership with other agencies, such as; Environmental Health and Police to investigate complaints of animal nuisance and/or animal welfare. In the first instance, we will try to resolve the situation without the need for legal action as we recognise that early intervention can stop a problem from escalating.

We will work with residents to resolve the situation by:

- Arranging a mediation session to resolve neighbour conflict
- Providing education and information to residents on responsible pet ownership
- Referring residents to support agencies
- Restricting the number of animals kept in a property
- Involving voluntary organisations such as the RSPCA
- Issuing a voluntary agreement such as an Acceptable Behaviour Contract or voluntary undertaking (which is a formal contract signed by the person causing the problem and ourselves agreeing to a set of commitments)
- Withdrawing permission for the resident to keep a pet(s)
- Serving the resident with a Notice of Seeking Possession, which is the first stage of legal action against their tenancy

Where informal actions have not been successful or where we deem an incident to be serious, we will work in partnership with other agencies and may seek enforcement action against the resident and/or their tenancy.

Enforcement actions we may take can include:

- An injunction
- A fixed penalty notice (issued by Environmental Health)
- A noise abatement notice (issued by Environmental Health)
- Demotion of tenancy
- Possession of tenancy (resulting in eviction)

Pets should not be left in properties when their owner is away from the property for long periods of time (including overnight) unless clear arrangements have been made to provide adequate care. In general this will require the pet to be kept away from the property, however close supervision by a neighbour may be adequate for some animals such as cats, birds and small domestic pets.

Residents should ensure that they take all reasonable steps to care for their pets and comply with legislation. Dog owners must ensure that their dog wears a collar and tag clearly identifying their owner. GCH encourages pet owners to microchip or tattoo their animal to help permanently identify them.

In addition to any non-legal remedies or enforcement action taken, GCH will seek to recharge residents for any damage to their properties as a result of animal nuisance.

5. DANGEROUS ANIMALS

GCH will not grant permission for residents to have any dangerous animals in their properties and where residents do not comply with the terms of this policy will take steps to enforce their tenancy conditions which could result in legal action being taken against them and/or their tenancy.

In the interest of public safety GCH will notify other agencies such as the Police and the RSPCA where there is any suspicion or evidence a dangerous animal is being kept in our properties and will provide any supporting evidence to them for action to be taken.

Animals we consider to be dangerous include:

- Poisonous insects, spiders, snakes and reptiles
- Dangerous Dogs

Dangerous Dogs

Under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 it is a criminal offence to keep specific breeds of dogs. These breeds include:

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

It is also an offence to sell, breed or exchange any of these breeds or allow them to be out of control.

In addition, this Act makes it a criminal offence to allow any dog (not just the breeds listed) to be dangerously out of control in a public place. This includes incidences where there is simply fear that an injury may occur.

Owners found guilty of these offences under this Act can receive up to six months in prison, destruction of their dog and/or a fine of up to £5000.

Tenancy action will be taken where any offences occur under the Dangerous Dog Act 1991.

6. UNAUTHORISED PETS

GCH recognise that some owners will have pets without requesting permission or despite having been denied permission. In these circumstances GCH will:

Pets without permission

Where residents have pets without permission GCH will work with residents to assess their situation and the suitability of their pets in accordance with this policy. In the majority of cases responsible pet owners will meet the criteria for having a pet(s) and therefore permission will be granted.

In instances where resident's accommodation is unsuitable for their pet(s) and they are not causing an immediate problem, GCH will work with residents to review their housing options. We will not move people automatically to meet their pet(s) needs, however will work within our Choice Based Lettings processes to offer advice to residents on moving.

If unauthorised pet(s) are causing a nuisance to other residents and remedial actions are not appropriate to resolve the situation, GCH will deny permission and request for the resident to re-house their pet(s). We will offer advice on re-homing pet(s) and provide details of agencies that can help and support residents.

Pets in properties after permission has been denied

Where GCH have denied permission for residents to keep a pet(s) following a thorough assessment, this will be upheld unless there has been a significant change in circumstances.

Residents will be notified in writing to re-house their pet(s) with 28 days, unless it is deemed a dangerous animal and will be required to re-house the animal immediately.

If residents ignore the terms of this policy action may be taken against them and/or their tenancy.

7. PETS IN SHELTERED ACCOMODATION

Residents are able to have a pet in our Sheltered Accommodation providing that the pet they are requesting is suitable for the accommodation they are living in. A Pet Application will need to be completed.

Residents who have existing pets when they move into Sheltered Accommodation are able to keep them in most cases. Large pets will be accepted initially however

further large pets may not be approved if the residents pet was to die or they wish to get additional animals.

GCH will need to consider the following when approving a pet application in Sheltered Accommodation:

- Whether the resident is able to care for their pet
- The size and type of property
- The size and type of pet

Residents who have pets in Sheltered Accommodation must comply with Scheme rules which will include the following:

- Pets need to be kept under control at all times and not allowed to wander freely around the sheltered scheme.
- Residents must be responsible and clean up after thier pets and ensure they do not foul communal or public areas.
- Pets are not allowed into communal lounges or kitchen/dining areas (with the exception of assistance dogs, such as guide dogs or hearing dogs)

(This list is not exhaustive)

GCH have a current Incentive to Move procedure which encourages our tenants living in properties too large for their needs to take a financial reward in order to move to a smaller property (often sheltered accommodation) in these case we will also take into consideration the size of the pet and the size and type of property but the pet would be allowed to move and only further review will be taken if the pet was to die or additional pets were required or the tenant were to not be able to look after the pet once the move has taken place.