

Cernach Housing Association

Pet Policy



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reference to domestic pets is contained in the Association's tenancy agreement. It has been agreed that, in view of problems caused by dogs, a separate policy be produced to make residents aware that the Association expects responsible ownership of dogs.

1.2 Reference is made to Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and our Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement Section:-

(a) **Keeping of Pets**

“Tenants to obtain prior written permission from the Association to keep any domestic pet namely Cat or Dog within the house, gardens or common parts, which permission may be refused. As per our Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement permission will be refused to all requests to keep fowl, pigeons and livestock”

1.3 Tenants are required to abide by the terms of Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement.

1.4 The Association will ensure that 'No dog fouling signs are located at strategic points throughout the Association area.

2. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

2.1 The Association's Equality and Diversity policy, which was approved by the Committee in April 2012 following community consultation, outlines our commitment to promote a zero tolerance to unfair treatment or discrimination to any person or group of persons, particularly on the basis of any of the protected characteristics¹. This includes ensuring that everyone has equal access to information and services and, to this end, the Association will make available a copy of this document in a range of alternative formats including large print, translated into another language or by data transferred to voice.

2.2 We are also aware of the potential for policies to inadvertently discriminate against an individual or group of individuals. To help tackle this and ensure that it does not occur, best practice suggests that organisations carry out Equality Impact Assessments to help identify any part of a policy that may be discriminatory so that this can be addressed (please see section 6 of the Equality and Diversity Policy for more information).

¹ The Equality Act 2010 identifies the “protected characteristics” as age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

- 2.3 In line with section 6.3 of the Equality and Diversity Policy, the Association will apply a screening process based on that recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to ascertain whether each policy requires an Impact Assessment to be carried out. The screening process was applied to this policy and it was decided that an impact assessment is not required.

3. REGULATORY & LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 This Policy meets The Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcome No. 6: Estate Management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes. Social landlords working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure that:

“Tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe”.

4. AIMS OF POLICY

- 4.1 To enable all tenants of the Association to enjoy a clean, peaceful and safe environment
- 4.2 To reduce the numbers of unsupervised animals in the Association area and address the increasing dog nuisance issues being experienced by tenants.
- 4.3 To ensure that all tenants and prospective tenants are aware of their responsibilities under the terms of their tenancy agreement in relation to pet ownership.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

- 5.1 The Association wishes to encourage responsible pet ownership but at the same time recognise that pets can cause difficulties for other residents and tenants.
- 5.2 The Association wishes to restrict the number of cats and dogs within flatted accommodation. To this end there will a restriction of one dog per landing in closes.
- 5.3 If an applicant for housing is a dog owner and is being considered for a let within a tenement block where the maximum quota for dogs has been met, the applicant will be advised that their application will be by passed and kept on hold until an appropriate property becomes available.

6. POLICY GUIDELINES

- 6.1 The Association will keep a Pet Register and it is the responsibility of the Housing Officer to keep this properly filed, maintained and updated on a monthly basis.
- 6.2 Permission to keep hamsters/guinea pigs, fish and budgies and similar small animals will be covered by a general consent and written permission will not be necessary. The overriding principle being that a maximum of two pets may be kept in any one household.
- 6.3 Under the terms of the Association's Scottish Secure tenancy and this policy, all tenants require written permission from the Association to keep a pet however the Association has relaxed this condition for small animals as per 4.2 above however written consent must be obtained to keep a cat or dog.
- 6.4 Tenants must obtain this written permission by completion of a Pet Registration form (Appendix One) The Dog Registration form can be requested either verbally or in writing and the form will be issued immediately upon the request. Completed forms will be acknowledged within **7** days of receipt and a permission letter issued (appendix two). Refusal letter will be issued within **21** days of receipt. Refusal letters shall include reference to a right of appeal in accordance with the Associations complaints policy. (Appendix 3).
- 6.5 The Association will maintain a register of all tenants with a dog/cat and a tag will be given for each animal, providing, an identification number. The tag number is exclusive to one pet, if the pet is lost, dies or can no longer be kept, the office should be informed and details deleted from the register and the tag destroyed. The dog/cat tag will be issued with the approval letter to complete the registration process. **Only one dog per household** will be permitted. The number of dogs allowed in any one close will be limited to **one per landing**
- 6.6 Permission will not be unreasonably withheld by the Association to keep a domestic cat or dog however the Association will withdraw permission and require removal of the pet if it causes nuisance or damage. The tenant will then be required to make alternative arrangements for the pet.
- 6.7 Tenants are not permitted to keep more than one dog or breed dogs. Existing tenants who have permission to keep two dogs prior to date of this policy 28th October, 2008 will be allowed to retain both dogs however on the death or loss of one of the dogs, permission will not be given to replace this dog.

- 6.8 The following constitutes nuisance and annoyance:
- (a) Proven excessive noise
 - (b) Roaming and unattended animals
 - (c) Fouling in common areas
 - (d) Fouling in gardens (including owners own garden, if not removed)
 - (e) Destruction to neighbouring gardens
 - (f) Aggression
 - (g) Neglect
 - (h) Odour
- 6.9 Applications to keep a pet will require to meet the following criteria:
- (a) No complaints have been received with regard to the animal in the past 3 months.
 - (b) The size and breed of existing dog is suitable for the property where it is to be kept.
 - (c) If the property is a flat, there is no other dog in other flats on the same landing.
 - (d) The Dog is not prohibited under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or by any other law.
 - (e) Under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 all such dogs as defined under the Act require to be registered with the Police. Permission to keep such a pet will only be granted where the tenant can provide proof of registration and a certificate confirming the dog has been neutered.
- 6.10 Current legislation would define Dangerous Dogs in this country as an American Pit Bull and Japanese Tosa and Dogs de Bordeaux however we would advise that although all dogs have the potential to be dangerous we advise that no dog must ever be allowed to roam the area and should always be with Adult Supervision:-
- 6.11 Consent will not be granted to transferring tenants who have a dog if they are transferring to a close which already has a dog within the landing in question.
- 6.12 Housing List applicants will be informed of the Pet policy during their housing visit and the requirement to seek written approval to keep a dog or a cat. Checks should be taken during the house visit to ascertain if the applicant currently keeps a dog or a cat. The housing officer will assess suitability of the pet against the property under selection.

- 6.13 The Associations Pet Register must not be used as an alternative to Pet-identity Micro - Chips Scheme, which is a nationwide requirement for registering and keeping a domestic animal and is available at any Veterinary Centre and SPC Animal Welfare Centres including Milton Dog Home (telephone number listed on Guidance attached to this Policy).
- 6.14 Any tenant who is considering obtaining a dog should in the first instance contact the Housing Officer to advise of the type/breed of dog prior to purchase to ensure appropriateness for property. This is of particular relevance for flatted accommodation.
- 6.15 All Tenants requesting permission to keep a Cat or Dog will be given a copy of 'Guidance for Pet Owners' (Appendix Four) of this Policy.

7. PIGEONS, FOUL AND LIVESTOCK

- 7.1 The Association's Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement does not allow tenants to keep pigeons, foul or livestock.
- 7.2 Residents may telephone or contact the office during office hours to clarify or obtain further information on this or any of Cernach Housing Associations Policies.

8. BREACH OF POLICY

- 8.1 Permission to keep a pet will only remain whilst the tenant adheres to the terms of this policy.
- 8.2 The tenant must keep the pet under supervision and control at all times, thus ensuring that no nuisance is caused to other residents, nor deterioration in the condition of the property, or common parts. This includes fouling, odour or noise from the animal, as per Section 6.8 above.
Should such nuisance occur, then proceedings will follow as set out in Section 9.
- 8.3 Tenants found to be keeping pets in their home without the Association permission will have to remove the animal within **28** days.

9. PROCEDURES FOLLOWING BREACHES OF POLICY

9.1 Pet owners who have no permission to keep a pet.

- a) If it is found that a tenant is keeping a pet without permission, the Housing Officer should contact the tenant in order to confirm the situation.

- b) The tenant will be given **14** days to seek permission to keep the pet.
- c) If permission is refused or the tenant fails to apply for permission to keep the pet, then the tenant will be given 28 days in order to remove it. (Appendix Three)
- d) If the tenant fails to remove the pet within the specified time limit, the Association will inform the tenant that legal proceedings will be instigated, possibly against their tenancy.
- e) The Property Management Sub Committee will be consulted on any legal action and a decision will be taken on what course of action to be taken i.e.
 - i. to remove the pet by 'specific implement'
 - ii. to remove the tenant

9.2 Pet owners whose pet is causing a nuisance

- a) Complaints against pet owners will be accepted both verbally and in writing.
- b) The Housing officer will interview the complainant and ask them to complete the pet policy complaints form. (appendix five)
- c) The Housing Officer will also interview all other tenants in the close/immediate area to ascertain extent of the problem
- d) The Housing officer will then write to the tenant and call them into the office to discuss the situation.
- e) Where appropriate, inform other agencies of the problem SSPCA/Dog Warden.
- f) The Property Management Sub Committee will be consulted on any legal action and a decision will be taken on what course of action to be taken.
 - i to remove the pet by 'specific implement'
 - ii to remove the tenant

The Housing officer should inform complainants of action being taken at all stages.

10. COMPLAINTS

10.1 Any tenant or applicant who feels they have been unfairly treated or affected by the implementation of the Pet Policy may pursue their grievance through the Association's complaints policy.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT

11.1 Failure to control the Pet Population in this area via this Policy would impact greatly on Estate Management problems with regard to Dog Fouling and Neighbour Complaints with regard to Aggressive Dogs.

12. POLICY REVIEW

12.1 The Association's Pet Policy will be reviewed and amended as necessary due to changes in Legislation or Regulations or at least every three years.

13. OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

OUTPUT	OUTCOMES
Clear guidance on the Responsibilities of Pet Owners	Reduction in Complaints with regard to dog fouling and neighbour nuisance.
Register of Dog and Cat Owners	Awareness of the dog and cat population
Statutory obligations and legal requirements	Confidence that the Association is meeting legal obligations



APPENDIX ONE – PET REGISTRATION FORM

1. RESIDENTS NAME: _____
2. ADDRESS: _____

3. TYPE OF PET: _____
4. BREED: _____
5. COLOUR: _____
6. AGE: _____
7. PET'S NAME: _____
8. DATE: _____

I Hereby state that I have noted the contents of Section 2.5 (Page 6) of my Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement and now apply for permission to keep a dog/cat (Please circle)

It is understood that, if permission is granted to keep the dog/cat stated above it must be kept under control and not cause nuisance or annoyance to other neighbours or workpeople carrying out Association duties. I understand that I must not allow the animal to foul the garden, or any common areas of ground, stairways or paths within the Associations buildings. I also understand that failure to comply with the aforementioned will result in such permission being withdrawn.

Residents Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signed on Behalf
Of Cernach Housing
Association: _____ Date: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RETURNED TO RESIDENT

TAG Number: _____

APPENDIX TWO

Dear

PET REGISTRATION

Thank you for registering your dog/cat with us and we have pleasure in returning your completed Pet Registration Form and exclusive number tag for your Pet.

The tag should be worn at all times and if this number is reported to the Associations office we will be able to identify your pet. Please contact us if you no longer have the pet and we shall delete the number from our records.

We have also attached a copy of our **Guidance For Pet Owners**. This includes useful telephone numbers for further information if required. A full copy of our Pet Policy will be provided on request.

May we stress that it is an offence not to clean up after your pet or allow your pet to cause nuisance or annoyance to neighbours. The Association will take appropriate action if any of these offences are brought to our attention. This action also applies where a Tenant has not registered their pet with the Association.

Please note that permission to keep the pet is on the understanding that you do not allow the pet to cause a nuisance. If the pet causes a nuisance this permission will be withdrawn and formal notice will be given to remove the pet from the property within 28 days.

Should you have any questions or problems with regard to Pets please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Yours faithfully

**Name
Housing Officer**

APPENDIX THREE

Dear

PET REGISTRATION – REFUSAL

Thank you for registering your dog with us.

I regret to inform you that under the terms of our pet policy permission cannot be granted. The reason/s for this refusal is outlined below.

(amend as appropriate)

The breed/size of dog is inappropriate for the size/type of property

The policy limits the number of dogs allowed in any one close to one per landing. According to our records there is a dog registered at the same landing. (dog tag number)

The Association has previously received complaints from residents regarding nuisance caused by your dog in the last 3 months.

(amend as appropriate)

I must therefore advise you to remove the dog within 28 days of the date of this letter.

You may reapply to keep a pet in the event of your neighbour ceasing to keep a dog or ending his/her tenancy.

If you feel you have been unfairly treated or affected by the implementation of the Pet Policy you may submit your grievance through the Association's complaints policy and procedure.

I trust this clarifies the position for you

Yours sincerely,

**Name
Housing Officer**

APPENDIX FOUR – Guidance for Dog/Cat owners

1. PIGEONS, FOUL AND LIVESTOCK

- 1.1 **The Association's policy does not allow tenants to keep pigeons, foul or livestock.**

2. CATS AND DOGS

- 2.1 Obtain permission to keep a pet and register your pet with the Association, also, have your pet identity chipped. For further information contact the Association, Local Vet and any SPC Animal Welfare Centre.
- 2.2 Ask a vet or the RSPCA about having your pet neutered/dressed in order to avoid unwanted puppies or kittens.

3. LOOKING AFTER YOUR DOG

- 3.1 Give your dog plenty of exercise but keep him under control. If he strays he may cause a road accident or damage property. You are legally responsible for your dogs conduct.
- 3.2 Never leave your dog alone all day. It's unfair to him and your neighbours if he's always barking.
- 3.3 When you are away arrange for your pet to be looked after. Ask for addresses of boarding kennels from your Local Vet or SPC Animal Welfare Centre.
- 3.4 Train your dog to come, sit and stay. Ask about Dog Training Classes which are usually held locally details may be found at Drumchapel Library or similar Community Venue.

4. DOG FOULING

- 4.1 It is an offence under Glasgow City Council Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003 not to clean up after your dog. Under this Act fixed penalty fines can be issued to offenders of up to £40 and £60 if no payment is made within 28 days.
- 4.2 If dog owners regularly allow their dog to foul without cleaning it up they can be reported to Environmental Protection Services and action will be taken.
- 4.3 Cernach Housing Association expects all dog owners to take a responsible attitude to dog fouling and must always clean up after their pet.

5. LOOKING AFTER YOUR CAT

- 5.1 You must take all reasonable steps to prevent your cat from causing nuisance and annoyance to your neighbours and their property, including gardens.
- 5.2 Do not feed stray cats as this will encourage more if you are worried about stray cats contact any SPC Animal Welfare Centre.

REMEMBER! CONSIDER YOUR NEIGHBOURS – THEY MAY NOT SHARE YOUR LOVE OF PETS

Information, assistance and advice on pets can be obtained from the following agencies:

Cernach Housing Association	0141 944 3860
SSPCA Local Inspector	0131 339 0111
Environmental Health	0141 287 2000
Milton Animal Welfare Centre (SPCA)	01389 761208
Drumchapel Police	0141 532 3600
Glasgow Animal Rescue Centre	0141 882 1688
PDSA	0141 332 6944
Boyce and Houston (Local Vet)	0141 952 4477
Glasgow Community And Safety Service	0141 276 7552
Dog Warden/Enforcement Officer	0800 027 7027



APPENDIX FIVE

PET POLICY – COMPLAINTS FORM

Name of Complainant _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Name of dog owner complaint against _____

Address _____

1. Description of Dog

2. Tag number (if known)

3. Nature of complaint - please tick

Fouling garden

Fouling common areas

Barking/noise

Roaming unsupervised

Attack upon tenant/visitor

4. Details of complaint _____

5. Has the dog owner ever been approached

Yes No (please circle)

6. If yes, please advise of the outcome _____



7. RESPONSE EXPECTED FROM THE ASSOCIATION

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED _____ Date acknowledged _____

ACTION TAKEN _____

Date Complainant informed of action _____

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is further action required? **Yes** **No**

Is the action achievable? **Yes** **No**

Timescale for action **May 2015**

1. Aims of the policy

a) What is the purpose of the policy?

- To enable all tenants of the Association to enjoy a clean, peaceful and safe environment
- To reduce the numbers of unsupervised animals in the Association area and address the increasing dog nuisance issues being experienced by tenants.
- To ensure that all tenants and prospective tenants are aware of their responsibilities under the terms of their tenancy agreement in relation to pet ownership.

b) Who is affected by the policy/who will benefit from the policy and how?

- Cernach tenants and others who live in our properties
- Owners
- Housing applicants
- Staff and Management Committee
- Partner agencies

With clear guidelines the policy shall be followed easily and used to remedy breaches.

c) Who is be responsible for delivering the policy?

The Housing Services Manager on a day-to-day basis and ultimately the Management Committee.

d) How does the policy fit into our wider or related policy initiatives?

The Policy fits into the Estate Management Policy, Tenant Participation Policy and Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

2. What do we already know about the diverse needs and/or experiences of our target audience?

Do we currently have information on:

Age	Yes	✓	No	
Disability	Yes	✓	No	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Yes	✓		
Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes		No	✓
Race	Yes	✓	No	
Religion and Belief	Yes		No	✓
Gender	Yes	✓		
Gender Reassignment	Yes		No	✓
Sexual Orientation	Yes		No	✓

- Cernach tenants and others who live in our properties
- Owners
- Housing applicants
- Staff and Management Committee
- Partner agencies

Tenants and other residents

2.1 Whilst we require to update and broaden the information we have on tenants and other residents, we would expect all of the protected characteristics to be represented within this target audience. One of the main barriers to equality in service provision is likely to be inaccessibility. The policy outlines our commitment to addressing this and, further, it requires us to be proactive in seeking out and responding to all the communications and access needs that may exist.

2.2 The policy helps us ensure that we are providing services that are responsive to the requirements of all groups.

Owners

2.3 As at 2.1 and 2.2, above.

Housing applicants

- 2.4 As at 2.1 and 2.2, above.

Staff and Management Committee

- 2.5 The policy ensures that we observe equality and diversity issues in employment and in the recruitment of Management Committee members. The office and Committee areas are accessible and the policy allows information to be provided in any format that would make it possible for staff or Committee to better fulfill their roles.
- 2.6 All staff and Committee are made aware of theirs and the Association's rights and responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity and receive periodic training. They know about the Association's zero tolerance approach and are aware of how to raise any concerns.

Partner organisations

- 2.7 The policy requires the Association to observe equality and diversity issues in the procurement of consultants and contractors and our relationships with partner organisations.
- 2.8 Any contractors or consultants working for or representing the Association are made aware of our commitment to equality and diversity and are advised of our expectations in terms of how we require them to observe our policy at all times. Any consultants/contractors or anyone representing a partner organisation who feel they have been discriminated against are aware of how to raise these concerns.
- 2.9 The policy requires action to be taken against any consultants or contractors found to be in breach of our policy.
3. **What does the information we have tell us about how this policy might impact positively or negatively on the different groups within the target audience?**

3.1 We have some information on age, disability, gender and race/ethnicity but this mainly relates to tenants and housing applicants and requires to be updated regularly in order to remain accurate. We have not yet collected information on sexuality and religion/belief, but this is being introduced and, over time, we will begin to build up a picture of sexuality and religion/belief of our tenants and other stakeholders. This information will be analysed and we will consider setting targets by June 2014.

3.2 The Equality and Diversity Action Plan, which is due to be approved by the Management Committee in April 2012, will address in more detail what the impact may be on the different groups within our target audience.

4. Do we need to carry out a further Impact Assessment?

4.1 Not until the next policy review.

5. How will we monitor and evaluate this policy to measure progress?

5.1 Ongoing monitoring by staff and an annual written report Management Committee and annual revision of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan (any issues or concerns highlighted by the ongoing staff monitoring will be reported to the Committee via an exceptions report). We will also produce an article in the Annual Report which is sent to tenants and members.