

PET AND ANIMAL POLICY



Policy Title	Pet and Animal Policy		
Version	6.5	Status	Final
Date	July 2026	Author	Head of Housing Management
Next Review Date:	2 July 2029	Approved by	ELT
Responsible Officer:	Regional Housing Manager (South-East)	Date Approved	24 July 2026 (Updates)
Associated documents	XXXXXX	EIA Completed by	XXXXXX

This policy was with tenants and officers from East and West service areas.

Legal influences on this policy

Housing Act 1985, 1989, Pitch and Tenancy Agreement

Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Environmental Protection Act 1990

Consumer Rights Act 2015

Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998 (Article 8)

Animal Welfare Act 2006

Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (as amended in 1997), Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976

The Dangerous Dogs (Designated Types) (England and Wales) Order 2023

Housing Act 2004, HHSRS

Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

Renters Rights Act 2025 (emerging)

Non-legal influences on this policy

This policy has been developed following feedback from animal welfare agencies, and incorporates good practice outlined in the Pets Advisory Committee guidance and Royal Society for The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).

Tenancy Standard, Regulator of Social Housing

Complaints, Housing Ombudsman Learning/Case Publications

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1. INTRODUCTION

CHL recognises the importance that owners place on keeping a pet or pets. However, we need to balance this with the potential for nuisance to be caused to other members of the community if pets or animals are inappropriate for the size of the property or are not responsibly managed.

CHL must also consider how the law, in particular The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and amendments such as The Dangerous Dogs (Designated Types) (England and Wales) Order 2023 defines the Policy and approach. These acts for example, added XL Bully Dogs to the list of banned breeds and placed specific rules on the management of these dogs.

Therefore, this Policy sets out the pets or animals that Tenants in different types of properties are allowed to keep with implied permission, the situations where permission will not be granted, and expectations for the management of pets/animals.

2. DEFINITIONS

There are specific terms which are used in the management of pets and animals which are outlined below:

- ‘Animal hoarding’ involves keeping a higher than usual number of animals as pets without having the ability to properly house or care for them.
- ‘Noise nuisance’ is ‘an unreasonable and significant emission of noise that causes significant and unreasonable interference with the use and enjoyment of your premises’.

CHL defines pet ‘nuisance’ to include (but not limit to) the following activities:

- Fouling in communal areas.
- Excessive noise due to volume, duration or time of day.
- Attacks on people or other animals, and the use of animals for harassment or intimidation.
- Causing a person to believe they could be injured due to an out-of-control pet.
- Failing to keep a pet controlled in open spaces or communal areas e.g., ensuring dogs are kept on a lead.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy sets out Cornwall Housing’s approach to managing pet ownership within our properties and the standards we expect of pet owners. It covers all households living in homes owned or managed by CHL and includes households who are moving into a CHL home via transfer, decant or a mutual exchange and prospective tenants.

Permission is required to keep pets, but CHL recognises the practical implications of managing this for every new pet, change of pet or an additional animal. Therefore, CHL provides implied permission for most pets through this Policy (see ‘Pets with Implied Permission’ below).

Implied permission is not granted where this Policy states these pets/animals will not be allowed, or for pets outside of those generally permitted (see Appendix 1). In this case, permission must be requested and confirmed by CHL before the pet/animal is housed.

Implied permission will also be withdrawn if complaints are received that the pet is causing a nuisance and following investigation this is confirmed.

4. PETS WITH IMPLIED PERMISSION

Generally households in most properties have implied permission to keep the following pets.

- Up to two dogs, of a size appropriate to the property.
- Up to two cats.
- Small mammals (e.g. hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, mice): normally limited to 2–4 animals, housed within no more than two cages.
- Caged birds (e.g. budgies, canaries): normally limited to 1–4 birds, subject to appropriate cage size and acceptable noise levels.
- Larger caged animals (e.g. rabbits): normally limited to 1–2 animals, unless there is adequate outdoor space.

For residents in temporary, shared, supported or Independent Living accommodation (designated for older persons), prior written permission must be obtained to keep a pet. Permission will normally be restricted to one pet per household, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the resident's ability to adequately care for the animal in scenarios such as:

- Arrangements for the animal's care in the event of hospitalisation, relocation, or a decline in health.
- The potential impact on neighbours and the wider environment.
- The suitability of the property, including size, layout, and household circumstances.

CHL places no restrictions on recognised assistance or accredited support animals, such as guide dogs, hearing dogs, or other formally registered support animals. Owners must ensure their animal is appropriately trained or managed and does not cause nuisance.

For emotional support animals, CHL will carry out a risk assessment to balance the tenant's needs with health and safety requirements and the potential impact on neighbours.

Evidence of formal registration or recognised accreditation must be provided to confirm the animal's status. General letters from medical professionals (e.g., GP notes) are not sufficient; formal documentation is required to demonstrate recognition as an assistance or emotional support animal.

5. PETS WITHOUT PERMISSION

This Policy is written with knowledge that the Animal Welfare Act 2006, Section 4 advises animal owners that they are committing an offence to allow unnecessary suffering, and the Animal Welfare Act 2006, Section 9 which advises animal owners that an animals need includes:

‘its need for a suitable environment, its need for a suitable diet, its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns, any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals, and its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease’.

Under no circumstances are households permitted to keep the following pets:

- Animals listed under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
 - Large mammals and primates
 - Carnivores
 - Larger or venomous reptiles
 - Dangerous spiders and scorpions
- Any endangered species
- Any hybrid between a domestic and a wild animal
- Dogs listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and The Dangerous Dogs (Designated Types) (England and Wales) Order 2023
 - Pit Bull Terrier
 - Japanese Tosa
 - Dogo Argentino
 - Fila Brasileiro
 - XL Bully Dogs

Any CHL tenant or household who own those dogs listed above will be reported to the Police to ensure that there is full compliance with the law. This includes insurance, neutering, microchipping and relevant exemption certificates. Recognising the breed of dog, and defining it as one of the banned breeds, should there be any doubt or question, is undertaken by the Police.

Households who own an XL Bully or other dog classified under the Dangerous Dogs legislation and are moving into a CHL property through transfer, decant, or mutual exchange, may be permitted to keep the animal in their new home, provided all required legal documentation, checks, and compliance measures are in place and verified by CHL. There are specific laws also linked to the XL Bully breed which are outlined later in this Policy.

There are other pets and animals where permission will not be granted:

- Keeping bees/hives or chicken and poultry on CHL properties or land, unless by exception in more remote or rural areas and this must be with permission.

6. PROPERTY TYPES AND ALTERATIONS

To ensure property suitability and safety, implied permission to keep a pet may be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account:

- The type, size and number of pets
- The size, layout and location of the property
- The presence of communal entrances or shared spaces
- Fire safety and security considerations

Residents must not install cat flaps or make any alterations to doors (including entrance doors) without prior written consent. Alterations that compromise fire safety, security or building integrity will not be permitted.

In communal area, pets must be managed so that they do not compromise the safety or security of communal areas. Residents must not prop open communal doors or allow pets to roam unsupervised.

When allocating a home, where a property is identified as unsuitable for pets, this will be stated in advertisements. Requests will still be considered but may be refused where risks cannot be appropriately managed.

7. PETS WHERE PERMISSION IS WITHDRAWN

There are situations where any previous permission or implied permission granted will be immediately withdrawn. These are:

- Where the breeding of any animals for financial gain or as a business is identified. CHL will work in partnership with the RSPCA and other agencies to ensure animals are protected when breeding is discovered.
- Where a pet has caused nuisance, harm, or damage, or there are concerns or evidence that the owner is failing to provide appropriate care, including signs of cruelty, neglect, or mistreatment.
- Where a tenant or another household member has any convictions for, or past history of abandonment, cruelty, neglect or mistreatment of animals, or convictions for any offences under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or subsequent legislation, or the Animal Welfare Act, or has been disqualified from keeping animals or a particular type of animal due to a conviction.

8. SPECIFIC LEGISLATION – XL BULLY

Legislation such as The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, and amendments such as The Dangerous Dogs (Designated Types) (England and Wales) Order 2023 defines part of Cornwall Housing's Policy and the approach linked to banned breeds that Tenants already own. The law changes for XL Bully owners came into force in two stages.

From 31 December 2023, it is illegal to sell, abandon or give away an XL Bully dog, to breed from an XL Bully dog, or to have an XL Bully in public without a lead and muzzle.

CHL will not ask anyone to rehome a banned breed such as an XL Bully, because giving away or selling these animals is a criminal offence. However, this law does impose additional constraints on these pets.

From 1 February 2024, it is a criminal offence to own an XL Bully in England and Wales unless you have a Certificate of Exemption for your dog. There are also required conditions for owning this pet which CHL have adopted in this Policy, alongside a recommendation that these dogs are neutered.

Conditions for keeping an XL Bully include:

- Microchipping your dog.
- Keeping it on a lead and muzzling your dog in public.
- Neutering your dog – if the dog is less than one year old on 31 January 2024, it must have been neutered by 31 December 2024. If it is older than one year old on 31 January 2024, it must have been neutered by 30 June 2024.

What do I do if I am a CHL Tenant and I own a XL Bully?

You must ask for permission in writing to keep this dog at your tenanted address and provide CHL with a copy of the Certificate of Exemption, and a copy and details of public liability insurance from 1 February 2024. This provides evidence that you are complying with the law.

CHL will consider permission on a case-by-case basis, which includes a review of the tenancy history and property type. CHL also requires a clear photograph of the dog to aid identification and to ensure if permission is retrospectively granted that this is given specifically for the dog in the photograph.

Households with XL Bullies which have been established by the Police as being compliant with all aspects with the requirements of the law, are certified only to the owners address and must not be kept at another CHL address (with a 30-day temporary exemption). It is not permissible for a CHL Tenant to look after an XL Bully temporarily for another household for safety reasons.

CHL will not grant permission for the keeping of any animal of a similar size, build or breed to an XL Bully type dog to avoid disputes around breed. Tenants are therefore urged to seek advice from CHL before acquiring any dog which has similar characteristics. If CHL is made aware of an XL Bully without these conditions or implied permission, this will be reported to the Police. The Police have powers to seize dogs and prosecute owners. Any prosecution or Dog Control Order will be treated as a breach of tenancy (see Section 10).

9. PET OWNERS RESPONSIBILITIES

CHL expects all pet owners to behave responsibly and uphold the following standards:

- All pets must be kept under proper control and not cause a nuisance to other households. This includes dogs being kept on a lead in communal areas, not entering play areas and being under control when CHL employees or contractors attend a property.
- No fouling in communal areas. Where fouling has occurred, the responsible owners must clean up immediately.
- Owners must actively seek to prevent unpleasant odours being emitted from their property due to their pet(s).
- Animals must not damage any CHL property, including communal parts of the building and neighbouring properties. Owners may be recharged for any repairs which are needed as a result of such damage.
- Animals must not be kept for the purposes of breeding or sale.
- Any resident wishing to operate a pet care, grooming, or similar business from their home must first seek permission from CHL. This will allow us to assess the proposal and ensure that it does not have an adverse impact on neighbouring residents or the property.
- Owners must not keep an excessive number of animals. The number of pets should not exceed the limits set out in this policy. Where the number of pets exceeds these limits prior to the introduction of this policy, this may be tolerated; however, animals must not be replaced until numbers fall within the permitted limits.
- Owners must have suitable arrangements in place for looking after their pet during prolonged periods of absence.
- Residents must abide by the guidance outlined within property types and alterations when considering the management of pets in their home.
- Dead pets must be buried or disposed of in a responsible and safe manner.
- All cats are to be neutered or 'spayed'.

Any Tenant with a Dangerous Dog that is compliant with the law must be in a property that has a suitable private garden. The tenant must provide robust fencing to prevent escape and ensure the safety of others. This cannot be post and wire type. CHL will not fund the provision of this fencing. Tenants must keep the dog away from representatives of CHL during visits at all times; in a separate room, not just held by hand.

Tenants are expected to ensure visitors to their home uphold the same standards for any animals who accompany them.

10. RESPONDING TO REPORTS OF PETS AND NUISANCE

Where the pet is causing a nuisance CHL will contact the owner, investigate and decide on the outcome. These outcomes could include:

- Asking you to rehome your pet*

- Asking you to obtain an appropriate pet for the size/nature of the property.
- Referral to another agency e.g., local authority, police or animal protection.
- Warnings and legal proceedings against the Tenant for a breach of tenancy.
- No further action.

* We will not ask anyone to rehome a banned breed, for example XL Bully dogs, because giving away or selling these animals is a criminal offence.

CHL will work with residents to address pet-related issues or any circumstances affecting the pet owner which have led to such issues. This may include referrals to specialist animal welfare organisations for information, advice and guidance or a referral to the local authority and/or police, demanding the rehoming of the animal. Where a decision has been made to rehome an animal, we will allow this to take place within a reasonable timeframe.

CHL will also report any complaint of animal cruelty to the RSPCA and will report any stray animals to the relevant local authority animal warden. Where any animal is left in a property which has been repossessed, we will act in the immediate best interest of the animal.

11. TENANCY CONDITIONS, PETS AND NUISANCE

CHL will respond to reports of pets causing nuisance or concern in accordance with the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, Good Neighbour Policy, and the Terms and Conditions of the Tenancy Agreement.

Reports of pet-related issues including noise, fouling, property damage, neglect, or cruelty will be assessed and investigated to determine the appropriate course of action.

- Where issues are evidenced as anti-social behaviour (ASB), they will be managed in line with CHL's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
- Where concerns do not meet the threshold for ASB, they will be addressed under the Good Neighbour Policy to manage expectations, resolve concerns, and reduce tensions between residents.

Actions taken may include:

- Issuing warnings
- Offering or recommending mediation
- Referrals to relevant agencies such as the local authority, police, or the RSPCA
- Legal action where breaches are serious or persistent

Permission to keep a pet may be withdrawn where nuisance, neglect, or cruelty is evidenced. Where breaches are not remedied, this may result in tenancy enforcement action, including possession proceedings.

CHL will act in the best interests of animal welfare where concerns such as cruelty, neglect, or abandonment arise, and will report matters to the appropriate authorities.

Any breach of Dog Control Orders or other statutory requirements will be treated as a breach of tenancy and managed accordingly.

The Conditions of Tenancy allow CHL to take action where any pet is considered unsuitable for a property or where nuisance or annoyance is caused.

Paragraph 4.11 of the Secure Tenancy Conditions states:

“You or any other person living in or visiting your home must not keep any animal that we consider unsuitable for your home. Your pet or pets must not annoy or frighten other people. In cases of cruelty to animals, permission to keep animals will be withdrawn and cases may be reported to the RSPCA or the Police.”

Paragraph 4.3 of the Secure Tenancy Conditions states:

“You or any other person living in or visiting your home must not cause nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to any other person. Examples include (but are not limited to): loud music, arguing, door slamming, dog barking and fouling, rowdy or offensive behaviour, rubbish dumping, making false or malicious complaints, or extremely untidy gardens.”

Failure by pet owners to behave responsibly or to engage with reasonable steps to resolve nuisance, cruelty, or neglect concerns will be treated as a breach of tenancy. This may result in enforcement action, including:

- Tenancy warnings
- A Notice of Intention to Seek Possession
- Legal proceedings through the County Court
- Other proportionate legal remedies, including injunctions

Where a Dog Control Order or similar legal restriction is issued, this will be treated as a tenancy breach. Failure to comply may result in enforcement action, which could ultimately place the tenancy at risk.

In summary, all pet-related nuisance or tenancy breaches will be managed through CHL's ASB, Good Neighbour, and tenancy enforcement frameworks, ensuring both community wellbeing and animal welfare are protected.

12. RIGHT TO REVIEW

CHL recognise that at times Tenants may not agree with decisions made. There is a review process for any Tenant who feels:

- They have been incorrectly refused an animal or pet
- That permission has been incorrectly withdrawn.
- There is evidence that the Pet Policy has not been correctly followed.

The request for a review must be submitted in writing less than 21 days from the date of any decision to CHL at Info@CornwallHousing.org.uk or be registered by calling (0300) 1234 161.

The review will be completed by a member of the senior management team who was not involved with the original decision, and timescale for a response will be set based on the level of investigation required and the complexity of the appeal. CHL will aim to complete all reviews within 56 days of date of receipt.

Where a review is found in the Tenant's favour, reasonable action will be taken to rectify the situation. Decisions regarding what is reasonable will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the senior management officer in consultation with the Tenant.

Where legal action has commenced there is no Right to Review, and such matters will be concluded through legal processes.

13. PET PERMISSION FORM

Name of Resident	
Address	
Type of Pet: Breed: Age:	
Description of pet if cat or dog	
Vet and healthcare details	
If the cat/dog microchipped? (this is mandatory by law)	

I am applying to CHL to keep the above pet(s) and by signing this form I am agreeing to the following:

- To be responsible for and supervise the pet(s) at all times and to adhere by the terms of CHL's Pet and Animals Policy.
- To care for the pet(s) and their health, safety and overall welfare.
- To ensure the pet(s) do not cause a nuisance to neighbours.
- To meet the requirements of Pet Owners Responsibilities and ensure that any mess/fouling is cleared up immediately.
- To ensure that the pet(s) do not cause any damage in the property or communal areas
- To meet the requirement of specific legislation as applicable (e.g. The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, and amendments such as The Dangerous Dogs (Designated Types) (England and Wales) Order 2023 for XL Bully's).

I am aware that CHL may take action against me if my pet(s) cause a nuisance which could include the removal of the pet or my eviction.

If I vacate the property, I understand that I must take my pet(s) with me and ensure that all items relating to the pet are removed and the property is thoroughly cleaned.

Signed..... Date.....

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We are committed to treating all people with fairness and respect. We aim to create an inclusive environment where people are treated with dignity, inequalities are challenged, and we anticipate and respond positively to different needs and circumstances to enable individuals to achieve their potential and foster good relations within the communities we serve. We want to be recognised as an organisation delivering fair, inclusive, accessible services and an employer and partner of choice.

When applying this policy, we act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and to reduce discrimination and harassment by making reasonable adjustments such as:

- eliminating discrimination – by providing support to those who need it and information in accessible formats and languages on request.
- tailoring the policy to meet both the specific needs of the individual, including those with additional support needs, and the diverse needs of the wider community.
- advancing equality of opportunity – treating all tenants fairly.
- fostering good relationships – listening to customers and responding appropriately.
- compliant with all aspects of Equality & Diversity legislation, and specifically the Equality Act 2010.

Contact us:

Email: info@cornwallhousing.org.uk

Telephone: **0300 1234 161**

By letter: **Cornwall Housing, Chy Tревail, Beacon Technology Park, Bodmin, PL31 2FR**
allhousing.org.uk

Alternative formats:

If you would like this information on audio CD, audio tape, Braille, large print, any other format or interpreted in a language other than English, please contact info@cornwallhousing.org.uk

