



Pet

Policy



Document Title	Pet
Version number	V3
Version date	August 2023
Author Title & Issuing Department	H&N Managers Head of Communities Communities
Target Audience	Colleagues with-in the Communities, Property Services & Customer Experience Teams. Residents.

Approved By	Two members of EMT
Date Approved	TBC
Review Date	August 2026

Links to Regulatory Standards – Economic/ Consumer Standards	<p>Tenant Involvement and Empowerment</p> <p><i>Customer service, choice, and complaints</i> - Registered providers shall provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants.</p> <p><i>Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants</i> - Registered providers shall demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants</p>
Outcomes for Customers	<p>Residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Will understand when and what type of pet they may keep ▶ Will understand when they must request permission to keep a pet ▶ Will understand their responsibilities as a pet owner
How were tenants, residents and service users involved in the review/development of this document	Online policy readers group
Training Provision	The Heads of Communities, Customer Services and Responsive Repairs will be responsible for cascading the policy to their teams.
Links to the Business Plan	<p>Communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensure the highest standards of safe working practices, ensuring our homes and communities are safe places to live and work. ▶ Review service delivery structures and accountabilities in response to the Social Housing White Paper.
Links to Key Values	Openness: This policy sets what emh considers pet owner responsibilities and lists potential enforcement action that may be taken to ensure the wellbeing of the pet and other residents living in the community.



Accountability: The policy sets out the responsibilities of the teams across emh who are involved in administering our approach.

Clarity: The policy clarifies the circumstances when residents are entitled to own a pet.

Version Control

Version	Revision Date	Author: Job Title	Change Description
V2	090823	LM	To include staff consultation regarding the permission of guide dogs prior to customer consultation



1. Introduction

- 1.1 We want customers to own and enjoy pets in their homes and agree pets have a significant positive impact on their owner's physical and mental health. We also want customers to be responsible pet owners.
- 1.2 This policy sets out our approach to managing pet ownership and the standards we expect of pet owners. Our policy aims for a consistent, and fair approach to pet ownership and outlines our approach to dealing with any nuisance caused by customers and their pets as well as any related issues like reports of neglect or maltreatment.
- 1.3 We recognise the importance pets have for owners in terms of companionship as well as the positive impacts on mental and physical well-being. There has been an increase in pet ownership since the increase in home working. This needs to be balanced with the potential for nuisance to other customers if pet owners are not responsible in the way they care for their pet and manage their pet's behaviour.

2. Definitions and Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all households living in homes owned or managed by emh including, general needs, leasehold, and shared ownership.
- 2.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, Tenancy Policies, and our Complaints Policy.
- 2.3 This policy is relevant to all emh colleagues, particularly those working in communities, the contact centre, property services team and customer experience team.
- 2.4 Where residents require guide dogs, assistance dogs or animals for medical conditions such as deafness or impaired vision, these animals will be exempt from this policy. We may ask that evidence is provided from a profession body to support the request for permission to keep a pet.

3. Specifics of the Policy

3.1 Permission and notification

- 3.1.1 Households have our permission to keep the following pets:
 - A caged bird or small caged mammal
- 3.1.2 If a customer wants to keep any additional pets, they must seek our permission in writing. We will decide on a case-by-case basis according to the circumstances of the household and nature of the property. Decision making will rest with Housing & Neighbourhood Officer.
- 3.1.3 The existing tenancy agreement or lease will set out if the customer can keep a pet in the property. There may be local lettings criteria applied to specific schemes, for example those that are sheltered housing, or particular estates.

- 3.1.4 A pet request form will be completed by the customer and will be assessed by the housing team.
- 3.1.5 Permission for a pet will not unreasonably be withheld. Where permission is not given and the customer is not satisfied with the decision, the customer should follow the complaints procedure.
- 3.1.6 We retain the right to withdraw permission where the pet has caused nuisance, or we believe the owner to be showing signs of animal cruelty or neglect.

3.2 Banned Animals

- 3.2.1 Under no circumstances are households permitted to keep the following as pets:
- Animals listed under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 (including large mammals, carnivores, larger or venomous reptiles, dangerous spiders and scorpions)
 - Any endangered species
 - Any hybrid between a domestic and a wild animal
 - Bees
 - Livestock (including poultry, horses and cattle)
 - Dogs listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (i.e., Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino, or Fila Brasileiro) - except for dogs registered on the Index of Exempted Dogs. In these cases, although the dog is a banned breed, the dog will have undergone an assessment to determine that it is safe, and the owner will be legally bound to comply with certain conditions. Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/control-dog-public/banned-dogs>
- 3.2.2 Enforcement action will be undertaken, in dealing with any breaches of the above unless the dog has been exempted from the prohibition and the terms of the exemption are fully complied with, including being registered on the Index of Exempted dogs.

3.3 Pet Owner Responsibilities

- 3.3.1 We expect all pet owners to behave responsibly by upholding the following standards:
- All pets must be cared for responsibly, and in line with Section 9 (2) of the Animal Welfare Act 2006:
 - (2) For the purposes of this Act, an animal's needs shall be taken to include—
 - (a) its need for a suitable environment,
 - (b) its need for a suitable diet,
 - (c) its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns,
 - (d) any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals, and
 - (e) its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

- 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 including when emh employees or contractors attend a property.
- No fouling in communal areas or balconies. 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).
- If a pet is excessively noisy, a veterinary surgeon should be consulted for advice, as this could be a symptom of behavioural problems which will also need investigation.
- Animals must not damage any emh 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.
- All dogs over the age of eight weeks must be microchipped and wear a collar and tag in public.
- Animals must not be kept for the purposes of breeding or sale.
- Owners must have suitable arrangements in place for looking after their pet during periods of absence. For example, if you go away for a weekend or a holiday you should either place your pet in a cattery or kennels or arrange for someone to visit daily.
- Cat or dog flaps (or similar devices) must not be installed without our prior consent as these can compromise the fire safety of a property. And they are not permitted on doors that open onto shared areas.
- In situations where a resident is temporarily looking after a pet for a friend or family member, all the above requirements apply. They also apply if you have friends of family visiting your home with their pet.

3.3.2 If the pet passes away, it must be buried or disposed of in a responsible and safe manner and cannot be buried in communal gardens.

3.3.3 We suggest that pet owners consider taking out pet insurance to help meet costs should their pet need medical attention.

4. Implementation

4.1 Nuisance, neglect or concern

4.2 We will work with households to address pet-related issues or any circumstances affecting the owner which have led to such issues. This may include referrals to specialist animal welfare organizations for information, advice, and guidance.

4.3 Where a pet owner fails to engage with such efforts, or if the level of nuisance, cruelty or neglect is significant, we will consider further action. This may include making a referral to the local authority and/or police, requesting the rehoming of the animal, or in some cases where there is substantial evidence of nuisance, seeking possession of the property or

taking injunctive proceedings. Where a decision has been made to rehome an animal, we will allow this to take place within what we consider a reasonable timeframe.

- 4.4 It is illegal for a pet owner to allow their dog to be dangerously out of control in a public place. This includes any incidents where injury occurs or there is a fear that an injury might occur. We will report all such incidents to the police, and this may result in sanctions or criminal prosecution.
- 4.5 We will encourage the reporting of animal cruelty to the RSPCA and the reporting of any stray animals to the relevant local authority.
- 4.6 We will investigate all issues relating to nuisance or anti-social behaviour in line with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. Enforcement action will be taken in line with the ASB policy, based on evidence and considering reasonableness and proportionality.

4.7 Enforcement

- 4.8 If we consider the nuisance to be serious or persistent then appropriate enforcement action can be taken against the pet owner. This may involve the following:
 - Contacting the local Environmental Health Department to take action under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (e.g., incidents involving noise, fouling and smells).
 - Contacting the Local Authority Dog Warden Service who have responsibility to ensure animal health and welfare.
- 4.9 • Contacting the Police if the pet is believed to be dangerous and/ or covered under the Dangerous Dogs Act.
- 4.10 • Contacting the RSPCA or RSBP if the pet is being ill-treated or suffering.
- 4.11 • Charging customers where pets have caused damage to emh property.
- 4.12 • Seeking an injunction to prevent customers from keeping a pet in a particular property or taking pets to specific areas. This will be based on evidence and on legal advice, on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.13 • Seeking possession of a customer's home for serious and persistent breaches of their tenancy or lease.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years to ensure compliance with national best practice and legislation. This review may take place earlier if a significant change in legislation or policy occurs.
- 5.2 Responsibility for reviewing this document sits with the Quality and Performance Team.

6. Associated Documents

- ▶ ASB procedures