



Pet Policy

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1 Accessibility of Document

Our aim is to make our services easy to use and accessible for everyone.

We will take steps to make any reasonable adjustments needed for you to contact us, access our policies, or any requests to provide responses in other formats.

Depending on the individual's needs, these might include:

- Using larger print, or a specific colour contrast
- Giving more time than usual to provide information or comments on a complaint
- Using the telephone rather than written communication
- Communicating with a person through their representative or advocate
- Arranging a single point of contact
- Having an 'easy read' version of the document

If you would like to contact us about reasonable adjustments or alternative formats, please email edi@dacorum.gov.uk or call us on **01442 228000**

If you prefer to write to us, send your letter to:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team Dacorum Borough Council
The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire
HP1 1DN

You can find information on Advocacy support here: <https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/do-it-online/contact-us/advocacy-support>

2 What is the goal of the policy?

The aim of this policy is to:

- Ensure all pet owners living in DBC properties are responsible for their animals
- Ensure all pet owners maintain their property and repair any damage caused by a pet
- Ensure that pets are only kept in appropriate DBC properties
- Protect staff and the wider community from any nuisance as a result of a pet living in a DBC owned property

3 Introduction

Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) housing service recognises that keeping pets can offer significant benefits to their owners. However, irresponsible ownership can cause nuisance and affect the quality of life for other residents in an area. 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'.

For the purpose of this policy, DBC defines the following as domestic pets:

- Dog (excluding any breeds highlighted by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991)
- Cat
- Bird (such as a budgie and cockatoo)
- Fish
- Small caged rodent
- Small non-poisonous caged reptile
- Non-poisonous contained insect or amphibian
- Chicken/Bantam (female birds only)
- Guinea pig
- Rabbit

4 How does the policy comply with the law and other requirements?

The legislation and policies listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
- Housing Act 1985, Schedule 11 (Ground 2 - nuisance ground for possession)
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Control of Dogs Order 1992
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Equalities Act 2010

5 Supporting Policies or Procedures

For Author: Any policy/strategy is likely to have supporting documents. Please list them below, so that the reader understands dependencies. Add/delete points as appropriate.

Procedures / Guidance / Impact Assessments	Dependent policies / strategies
Tenancy Agreement Licence Agreement Tenants Handbook	Tenancy Management Policy Temporary Accommodation Policy (to be written)

6 EDI Statement

The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity. The Council has procedures in place to ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

7 Policy Statement

We will support good pet ownership and encourage owners to act in a more responsible manner, including maintaining pets' welfare (see 2.1).

Pet owners are expected to ensure their properties are well kept when keeping pets and restore or repair any damage caused to the property as a result of them (see 2.2).

Pet owners must request permission to keep a pet. We will review all applications for keeping pets and apply restrictions appropriately (see 2.1 and 2.3).

We will enforce and take action where pets are causing a nuisance to neighbours and/or the wider community (see 2.4).

The Council is required to respond to any local or national restrictions imposed by central government. The administration of this and other Council policies could, therefore, be impacted by a pandemic or other emergency for the period that such restrictions are in operation.

8 Policy content

8.1 Responsible pet ownership

All pet owners have an equal opportunity to apply for pet permission. DBC encourages all pet owners to take responsibility for their welfare.

Anyone wishing to keep a pet in a DBC property must seek prior permission from the relevant Officer (usually Tenancy Management Officer or Temporary Accommodation Officer), except in the case of goldfish and other fresh water fish. Where permission is granted, pet owners are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets under the Animal Welfare Act (2006). Pets not listed in the definition will require further permissions from the relevant Housing Officer. Once permission is granted, owners must sign and return an undertaking committing them to responsible ownership and provide a photograph of their pet(s).

The control of pets and any pet visiting the property is the responsibility of the tenant or licensee. All dogs must be micro-chipped and wear a collar and tag with the name and address of the owner.

Under no circumstances are pet owners allowed to breed or offer any animal for sale from DBC owned property. Doing so is a breach of your Tenancy Agreement or Licence.

DBC will work in partnership with all relevant organisations, such as the Dogs Trust, Cats Protection, RSPCA and PDSA and support pet owners as far as possible to maintain their pet's welfare. This includes helping older people and those living with a terminal illness to arrange care for their pet(s).

All pets must be kept in a clean and safe environment.

DBC members of staff will be required to visit properties over a tenancy period. Dogs must be restrained or kept in a room during the visit.

8.2 Maintaining the property

The tenant or licensee must ensure any damage to the property or garden caused by a pet is repaired and that their properties and communal areas are kept clear of fouling.

Poultry must be kept within a coop which may have an attached 'run' and not be allowed to roam freely around a garden unsupervised. All government restrictions and guidance with regard to domestic fowl must be adhered to.

Pet owners living in houses and bungalows can, at their own expense, choose to install a cat flap. Cat flaps can only be installed at the rear of a property. Dog flaps are not permitted.

If a door is replaced as part of our repairs and maintenance service, the Council will reinstall a cat flap free of charge.

Pet owners are not required to pay for a replacement door when vacating the property.

8.3 Restrictions to pet ownership

Pet owners living in flats who wish to keep a pet must be conscious of the welfare of their animal and the potential for noise to be transmitted to their neighbours. Some breeds of dog may not be suited to living in a flat. Pet owners must consider the type of property they occupy and the needs of the pet before applying for permission. Examples include pets in high-rise flats, sheltered housing, large dogs and/or 'outdoor' cats.

When granting permission, DBC is required to consider any possible impact a pet may have on neighbours. Those living in sheltered housing may be limited. Exceptions such as 'house' cats may be considered.

In the case of applications from licensees in temporary accommodation, pet owners may be able to keep a domestic pet in temporary accommodation; this will be at the discretion of the Temporary Accommodation Manager and will depend on the suitability of the property. Pets cannot be kept in emergency accommodation such as a hostel, bed and breakfast or hotel.

8.4 Banned Dog Breeds

As a landlord, we expect tenants to request and receive permission from us before taking a

new dog into their homes. Retrospective permission refers to tenants who have already taken a pet without our knowledge. Retrospective permission will not be given for banned breeds.

However, we will permit banned breeds with permission already on file before any ban came into place, provided their owners have completed the necessary actions to exempt them and adhere to all relevant requirements, such as using a muzzle, keeping the dog on a lead in public, microchipping, and preventing the dog from straying. If complaints are received and substantiated regarding any breaches of these requirements, we will revoke pet permission. The police will enforce regulations concerning banned breeds, but concerns can be reported to our Animal Welfare and Tenancy Management teams. They will liaise with the Dog Legislation Officer at Hertfordshire Police to determine the best course of action on a case-by-case basis, considering potential welfare issues.

8.5 Pets causing a nuisance

Dacorum Borough Council's Housing Service will not tolerate a nuisance being caused to members of the public or DBC staff by domestic pets or any other animals kept on Housing property.

Enforcement action will be taken against any pet owner who fails to control their pets. This could include withdrawal of permission. Owners are expected to take appropriate action to avoid pets causing a nuisance in communal or public areas. They must not be used to threaten or intimidate any member of the public, including DBC staff and / or the police.

Pet owners are responsible for the removal and disposal of fouling, particularly in communal or public areas. In addition to any other enforcement, breach of this condition is a criminal offence which could lead to a fine of up to £5,000. Should DBC be required to return a pet to its owner for any reason, any costs associated must be paid.

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8.6 End of tenancy/licence

If for any reason the pet owner vacates a property, they are expected to take any pets with them and ensure that the property is left free from animal parasites, faeces and all waste such as bedding materials. This includes evictions.

8.7 Pest Control

The pet owner is responsible for ensuring that their pets and property are free from fleas, ticks or other pests that could be transferred onto carpets or furnishings within the home. Any infestation of fleas or other pests will be the tenant's responsibility to treat.

DBC is responsible for controlling pests in communal areas of buildings such as flat blocks and sheltered housing schemes.

8.8 Complaints

Any concerns relating to pet ownership in a Council-owned property should be raised with the relevant Tenancy Management Officer/Temporary Accommodation Officer in the first instance.

8.9 Absent Owners

All pet-owners must provide details of an emergency contact who will be able to take care of their pet if they cannot.

- If a pet is left unattended in a property for more than 24 hours, Council officers will force entry if access cannot be given.
- Our Animal Welfare Officer would remove the pet and arrange temporary care through Herts County Council.
- The pet owner will be liable for all associated costs.

9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1

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Service: Housing Operations

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Directorate: Housing & Property Services

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