

PET POLICY

Lead Officer: Emma Morgan, Head of Housing & Support

Last Review: 2017

Next Review: 2026

DRAFT PET POLICY NOVEMBER 2023

Policy Owner	Emma Morgan, Head of Housing & Support
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Approved by	

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Version 1 - Date December 2017
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Changes Made	Section	Date
Whole policy has been redrafted	All	November 2023

DRAFT PET POLICY NOVEMBER 2023

Introduction

Caredig is a pet-friendly organisation and recognises the importance and benefits of responsible pet ownership, Pets can provide companionship, a daily routine, opportunities for exercise , responsibility and can encourage social interaction.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that Caredig provides a consistent approach in responding to requests for pets.

We aim to ensure that there is clear guidance for tenants on responsible pet ownership, which does not impact on the rights of others to the peaceful enjoyment of their home.

The accompanying procedure will provide clear guidance on the process for tenants to request a pet and details when and how Caredig will intervene in the event or irresponsible pet ownership.

Our Values

In applying this policy/strategy, we will be guided by our values. Our values determine how we behave towards our customers, our colleagues, our partners and our work: -

Kind - We recognise that relationships are at the heart of everything we do, at the heart of good relationships is kindness

Innovative – we continuously strive to be the best we can whilst seeking creative ideas to improve and grow

Trusting – We trust people to do the right thing, because good relationships are built on mutual trust and respect

Accountable – we accept the responsibilities of our role and are accountable for our actions and for doing what is right.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

- A pet is defined as any domesticated or tamed animal that is kept as a companion and cared for responsibly.
- A pet is classified as a 'dog, bird, cat, fish or some Reptiles (depending on equipment and size)
- Assistance animals such as dogs for the blind, deaf or disabled are not considered 'pets'.

For the purpose of this policy, tenant is used to describe the contract holder.

What is covered by the policy/strategy?

DRAFT PET POLICY NOVEMBER 2023

The key Acts and regulations that have been taken into consideration are listed below:

- Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016
- The Microchipping of Dogs (Wales) Regulations 2015
- Housing Act 1985 and 1988 (as amended 1996)
- Control of Dogs Order 1992
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1989 and 1991
- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976

Roles and Responsibilities

Community Housing Officers, Service Coordinators, Team Leaders and Extra Care Managers are responsible for responding to requests for pets and any related actions such as responding to poor pet ownership complaints. The Operational Managers for Housing Management, Supported Living and Extra Care are responsible for the overall performance management.

Equal Opportunities

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

References to other relevant policies and Procedures

- ASB & Community Safety
- Disrepair
- Concerns, Complaints & Compliments

Pets in Extra Care

There are restrictions for Tenants in Extra Care regarding pet ownership.

Pets that are not permitted:

- Dogs
- Cats

Permission to keep an assistance dog will be approved in line with the Equality Act 2010 on receipt of the correct proof of registration.

Pets that are permitted, pending approval from the Extra Care Manager:

- Birds
- Fish
- Reptiles

Schemes are encouraged to work with partners to have regular Pets as Therapy visits for all tenants to enjoy.

Dogs are welcome to visit the schemes, when doing so, owners must adhere to the following guidelines:

- The dog must be on a lead at all times in communal areas
- The dog must not enter internal restaurant / café areas
- The dog must not pose a nuisance whilst visiting
- The dog must not foul in any communal areas

DRAFT PET POLICY NOVEMBER 2023

- The dog must not be left alone in a flat for any period of time
- The dog must not stay overnight and are not permitted in the guest suite

Reports of Anti-Social Behaviour caused by visiting dogs to a tenants' home will be investigated in line with the Caredig ASB & Community Safety Policy.

Pets in Supported Living

There are further conditions for Tenants in Supported Living regarding pet ownership.

Requests for cats and dogs will be considered on a case by case basis. When responding to a request, over and above the conditions of having a pet, staff will also take into account the following:

- Shared living areas
- The impact on and the considerations of other tenants in the scheme
- The impact on support

Permission to keep an assistance dog will be approved in line with the Equality Act 2010 on receipt of the correct proof of registration.

Pets that are permitted, pending approval from the scheme Team Leader:

- Birds
- Fish
- Reptiles

Schemes are encouraged to work with partners to have regular Pets as Therapy visits for all tenants to enjoy.

Dogs are welcome to visit the schemes, when doing so, owners must adhere to the following guidelines:

- The dog must be on a lead at all times in communal areas
- The dog must not pose a nuisance whilst visiting
- The dog must not foul in any communal areas
- The dog must not be left alone in the home or at the scheme for any period of time, the owner must remain with the pet and take responsibility for the pet whilst visiting the scheme
- The dog must not stay overnight

Reports of Anti-Social Behaviour caused by visiting dogs to a tenants' home will be investigated in line with the Caredig ASB & Community Safety Policy.

General Homes & 50+ Schemes

Under the Caredig contracts, tenants must not keep any pets in their home without first obtaining permission from the Community Housing Officer.

There are no restrictions based on property type. This means tenants in houses, flats and bungalows can apply to have a pet in their home.

DRAFT PET POLICY NOVEMBER 2023

Reports of Anti-Social Behaviour caused by pets will be investigated in line with the Caredig ASB & Community Safety Policy.

Conditions of having a pet

Requests that will not be considered

Requests will not be considered or approved for any animal or breed under the following circumstances:

- Non-domestic animals for example horses, poultry and livestock
- The tenant or a resident living at the property has any convictions or past history of abandonment, cruelty, neglect or mistreatment of animals, or convictions for any offences under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or has been disqualified from keeping animals due to a conviction.
- Animals noted in the following legislation (including any subsequent amendments to the legislation):
 - Dangerous Dogs Act 1989 and 1991
 - Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976

Action will be taken as per the ASB & Community Safety Policy if a tenant is found to have an animal under the above categories including reporting all concerns to the relevant authorities for further investigation.

Requests that can be considered

Caredig promotes responsible pet ownership. There are certain conditions that tenants will be required to demonstrate if they wish to have a pet in their home.

Conditions include:

- A maximum of 2 pets per property
- The pet is suitable for the property size and type
- The pet will not be bred at the home
- Pets must be vaccinated and microchipped
- Pets will not be left for long periods of time alone
- An emergency contact be provided for care of the pet in the eventuality that the tenant can no longer provide care
- There are no concerns regarding capability of the tenant to be a responsible of pet owner e.g. poor home condition or ongoing Anti-Social Behaviour
- The property is suitable e.g. fencing (it is the tenants' responsibility to ensure the fencing is adequate to prevent the pet from escaping)

Permission will not be unreasonably withheld. Tenants can expect a written response to their request within 30 days.

Policy Effective Date

This policy will be effective as of the 01st January 2024.

Caredig will not review existing pet ownership in line with the above conditions unless the tenant has demonstrated poor pet ownership.

Procedure & Appendices

1.	<p>Receiving a request for a pet</p> <p>A tenant has the right to request a pet and may do so through a variety of ways and any frontline member of staff may receive the initial report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By phone.• Face-to-face interview: home visit or office.• In writing: by letter, email or online report.• Through a third party: friend, support service etc <p>At first point of contact, the key information required to consider the request are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there any pets in the home currently• What type of pet, breed, age is being requested• Is the pet vaccinated and microchipped• Is there an emergency contact for care of the pet in the eventuality that the tenant can no longer provide care <p>Requests in Extra Care, General Homes and 50+ schemes will be logged onto the Housing Management system Appendix 1. Contact Management – Logging a request video. The Housing Management system will notify the allocated officer via Email.</p> <p>The tenant will be advised that the allocated officer will be in contact to discuss the details of the request within 14 days and can expect a decision within 30 days. A written (email or letter) acknowledgement Appendix 2 Acknowledgement of Pet Request is to be sent. The allocated officer is to be cc'd into the email.</p> <p>Requests in Supported Living should be directed to the Team Leaders of the scheme and documented within the support notes.</p>
2.	<p>Considerations of the allocated officer when determining permission for a pet</p> <p>The allocated officer is to consider the following when making a decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the tenant live in Supported Housing / Extra care / General Homes & 50+ Schemes• A maximum of 2 pets per property• The pet is suitable for the property size and type• The pet will not be bred at the home• Pets must be vaccinated and microchipped• Pets will not be left for long periods of time alone• An emergency contact be provided for care of the pet in the eventuality that the tenant can no longer provide care• There are no concerns regarding capability of the tenant to be a responsible of pet owner e.g. rent arrears, poor home condition or ongoing Anti-Social Behaviour• The property is suitable e.g. fencing (it is the tenants' responsibility to ensure the fencing is adequate to prevent the pet from escaping)

DRAFT PET POLICY NOVEMBER 2023

	<p>The allocated officer should consider if a home visit is necessary to determine any of the above information.</p> <p>The allocated officer should consider the use of tools such as an Acceptable Behaviour Contract if appropriate to do so.</p> <p>Under Renting Homes legislation, the following timescales must be adhered to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request further information from the tenant within 14 days (Appendix 2) • Provide decision to tenant within 30 days (Appendix 3 & 4) <p>Should the allocated officer fail to respond within these timescales, consent is considered deemed.</p> <p>The allocated officer will provide a response in writing (email or letter) noting the decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 3 Pet request granted • Appendix 4 Pet request declined
3.	<p>Appealing the decision</p> <p>The tenant has the right to appeal the decision by requesting a review within 14 days of receiving the written response.</p> <p>The appeal will be heard by the Operational Manager for the area and a response provided within 14 days of receipt.</p>
4.	<p>Withdrawing permission</p> <p>Caredig reserve the right to withdraw permission and require the removal of the pet where the conditions of this Policy and Procedure have been breached.</p>
5.	<p>Damage and Alterations to Property</p> <p>Any modification to the property (for example, installing cat/dog flaps, reinforcing fencing) must first have the permission from Caredig. All costs incurred by Caredig for correcting any modifications made will be charged back to the tenant.</p> <p>Enforcement actions will be taken in line with the ASB & Community Safety Policy and all costs to rectify damages caused will be charged to the tenant responsible.</p>
6.	<p>Reporting to relevant authorities</p> <p>Staff have a duty of care to report the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns of cruelty, neglect or welfare of the pet to the RSPCA • Concerns of potentially dangerous or vicious pets to the Police
7.	<p>Care of pet in the instance the tenant cannot</p> <p>Caredig recognises that life circumstances can change, and sometimes, tenants may find themselves unable to continue to continue caring for their pets. In such situations we encourage the tenant and families to connect with the team at Caredig to work on the best solutions. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSPCA Home for Life project Home for Life scheme - to protect your pet's future RSPCA • The Cinnamon Trust Cinnamon Trust – The Cinnamon Trust • Cats Protection Thinking about giving up a cat Cats Protection • Dogs Trust Need to Give Up Your Dog? Dogs Trust <p>Projects above are correct at time of publishing. Officers should research including</p>

DRAFT PET POLICY NOVEMBER 2023

	contact the RSPCA and local animal welfare organisations.
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Appendix 2 Acknowledgement of Pet Request

Dear [Tenant name]

Thank you for your request for a pet at your home. [Name of allocated officer and role] will be in touch within 14 days to discuss what happens next.

In preparation, please can you get the following information together as this will be needed in order to consider your request:

- Do you have any other pets in your home
- What type and breed of pet are you thinking of getting and is it suitable for your home
- Pets must be vaccinated and microchipped
- Are there any existing concerns regarding your home or tenancy
- Do you have an emergency contact that can care for the pet in the eventuality that you can no longer provide care
- Is your home safe and secure for a pet

For more information visit our website Caredig.co.uk.

Many thanks
[Name and Role]

DRAFT PET POLICY NOVEMBER 2023

Appendix 3 Pet request granted

Dear [Tenant name]

Further to your request dated ****. I am pleased to inform you that permission has been granted for you to keep a *** at your home. The permission is granted conditional upon the following:

- As required by law all dogs must be microchipped
- Any animal(s) should not be allowed to cause a nuisance or annoyance and is not used in an anti-social manner, otherwise you may be required to remove them from your home.
- You must ensure that your home is kept in a clean and orderly condition by not allowing pets to foul or cause any damage in your property, on the boundaries of your garden or in any communal area or in any other way breach the tenancy. You will be responsible for ensuring any fouling in communal areas is cleaned and disinfected to a high standard. Any soiling to communal areas that requires cleaning by Caredig may be recharged to you.
- Dogs must be kept on a lead when in any internal or external communal area including walkways and gardens.
- When a member of staff or a contractor visits you, you would be expected to put your dog/cat in a separate room, if requested. This is for the health and safety of our staff.
- You will abide by all applicable terms of the Pets Policy.
- You are also encouraged to take out insurance for your pet, keep up to date with vaccinations and have your pet neutered.
- Any modification to the property (for example, installing cat/dog flaps, reinforcing fencing) must first have the permission from Caredig. All costs incurred by Caredig for correcting any modifications made will be charged back to the tenant.

For more information on responsible pet ownership, visit our website Caredig.co.uk.

Please contact me via the information below if you have any questions.

Many thanks
[Name and Role]

Appendix 4 Pet request declined

Dear [Tenant name]

I write with regard to your request dated *** to a keep a *** at your home.

Having considered your application, I regret to inform you that you have not been granted permission to a keep a *** at your home. The decision has been made on the following grounds:

***Link to conditions in section 2 of the Procedure*

You have 14 days from the date of this communication to appeal the decision. You can do so by the following methods:

- Ringing the Housing Services Team on 01792 460192
- Emailing info@caledig.co.uk
- Writing to Caredig, 43 Walter Road, Swansea SA1 5PN

Please contact me via the information below if you have any questions.

Many thanks
[Name and Role]