



Pets and Animals Policy Summary 2023

1	Introduction	3
2	Aims and Objectives.....	3
3	Definitions.....	3
4	Consent to keep pets and animals.....	4
5	Terms of consent	4
6	Refusing or withdrawing consent	5

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy outlines Mid Devon Housing's (MDH) approach to keeping pets and animals by its tenants and their households. Mid Devon Housing (MDH) understands the benefits that responsible pet ownership can bring. Owning a pet or animal can be life enhancing and we recognise that it can have a positive impact on physical health and mental well-being.
- 1.2 Our aim is to provide a pet-friendly and common-sense approach to tenant requests to keep a pet or animal. We will review all applications to consider if a tenant is able to responsibly and safely keep a pet or animal without causing nuisance or anti-social behaviour to other residents living in the community.
- 1.3 It is also recognised that some buildings may not be suitable for certain pets and animals such as cats and dogs and in some circumstances may be designated 'pet or animal free'. Tenants will be informed at the application stage if the property has been designated as 'pet or animal free' in order that they can decide if they wish to take on a property with this restriction.

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Aim

The aim of this policy is to:

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

2.2 Objective

The objective of the Pets and Animals Policy is to provide tenants with clear instructions and expectations when they wish to keep a pet or animal in a MDH home.

3 Definitions

3.1 A pet is defined as an animal that a customer has homed inside their property or garden.

3.2 For the purposes of this Policy MDH 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; or
- Rabbit.

4 Consent to keep pets and animals

- 4.1 While MDH aim to approve all reasonable pet and animal requests, there may need to be some exceptions, therefore our tenants are required to seek permission, using the Pet Application Form. In doing so, they will be required to provide information in support of the application. We encourage responsible pet and animal ownership and certain terms and conditions may apply to approved pets and animals.
- 4.2 Service animals (e.g. guide dogs for the blind, hearing dogs) are not classified as pets. Service animals should not be included as a pet on Devon Home Choice applications. Evidence of the need for a service animal is required from secondary health services or the charity that provided the animal. Feedback from a GP would generally not be seen as sufficient.
- 4.3 Tenants may be asked to provide additional information with the application, for example, if a pet or animal requires a licence they will need to show proof that this is in place. In all cases, a decision will be made by Mid Devon Housing (MDH) on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.4 MDH are not prescriptive about the type or number of pets or animals that a tenant can keep within their home, consideration will be given to the size of the property to allow adequate space for the pet or animal. Every application to keep pets or animals will be reviewed in line with what can sensibly be managed and will work considering the specific circumstances of the other residents and/or community. Pet or animal ownership should not cause any nuisance or inconvenience to other residents, nor cause damage to the property.
- 4.5 Tenants with pets or animals who wish to undertake a mutual exchange will need to establish from us if pets or animals are permitted in the new property. Tenants will need to reapply for permission for keeping a pet or animal in the new home. If permission is not granted the tenant must ensure that the pet or animal is rehomed.

5 Terms of consent

- 5.1 You must not keep any pet(s)/animal(s) at the property without our written consent unless it is a registered service animal, a small domestic caged animal or small fish. Any consent we grant will be at our absolute discretion.
- 5.2 Tenants are expected to ensure their properties are well kept when keeping pets or animals and restore or repair any damage caused to the property as a result of them.

- 5.3 Under no circumstances are pet and animal owners allowed to breed (intentionally or unintentionally) or offer any animal(s) for sale from a MDH owned property. Doing so is a breach of the Tenancy Agreement and tenants could be putting their home at risk.
- 5.4 All pets and animals 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 MDH employees or contractors attend a property (in accordance with the Dog Control Order 1992). Pets and animals must not injure, frighten, or cause a nuisance to anyone else.
- 5.5 Pets or animals must not damage any MDH 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.
- 5.6 Tenants are not allowed to keep or allow any dangerous pet(s)/animal(s) into their home. This includes those covered by The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 or any other relevant legislation.
- 5.7 Tenants who currently own an XL bully dog will be allowed to keep them as long as they comply with the law which came into force on 31st December 2023. From that date it became illegal to breed, sell, advertise, exchange, gift, rehome, abandon or allow XL Bully dogs to stray in England and Wales. In addition, these dogs must now be kept on a lead and muzzled in public. From 1st February 2024, it will then become illegal to own an XL Bully dog if it is not registered on the Index of Exempted Dogs.

6 Refusing or withdrawing consent

- 6.1 Very occasionally MDH may refuse permission to keep a pet or animal or may have to withdraw consent to keep a pet or animal.
- 6.2 Where keeping a pet or animal is causing disturbance to other customers, MDH will act to ensure problems are resolved as quickly as possible.
- 6.3 In the very rare event that a tenant is advised that they cannot keep an existing pet or animal, MDH will work with them to identify any animal welfare agencies who can assist in placing the pet or animal in a new home. Tenants are expected to start looking at rehoming the pet or animal as soon as possible. MDH recognise that this can be an extremely traumatic time and will deal with the matter sensitively, however, extreme nuisance behaviour or mistreatment of the animal(s) will – if necessary - result in a legal action to remove the pet or animal from the home.
- 6.4 If your animal injures another dog, animal or person we will insist that this is rehomed or any other course of action which the Police have ordered such as the pet or animal being destroyed.

6.5 Any tenant believed to be neglecting or abusing any pet(s) or animal(s) in their care may be reported to the Police or RSPCA and we may provide these organisations with any evidence that we hold. In such cases we may also withdraw our permission and require that the tenant immediately ceases to keep the pet or animal at any property that we own.