



Pet Policy for Council Tenants

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Version History

Version	Date	Author	Changes Made	Approved By
1.0	18.6.2026	Housing Policy	Initial draft policy	Housing and Community Safety Committee
1.1	10.9.2026	Housing Policy	Revised draft policy post consultation.	Housing and Community Safety Committee

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1. Scope of the policy

- 1.1 Moray Council understands that pets can be important family members and make a house a home. Pet ownership can help tenants maintain a healthy and active lifestyle, give a sense of purpose, and offer significant benefits to a person's wellbeing.
- 1.2 The policy provides the framework which the Housing Service will follow when managing tenancies where pets are kept, providing clear guidance for tenants and staff. It seeks to balance the benefits of pet ownership with the well-being of the community and the environment, encouraging responsible ownership to ensure that pets do not cause nuisance, harm, or disruption to others.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all Moray Council tenants who have a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) or short Scottish Secure tenancy (SSST) agreement, including tenants living in sheltered housing.
- 1.4 It applies to all Moray Council staff and contractors involved in delivering housing services, including staff responsible for tenancy management, estate management, and tenant support.

2. Strategic context

- 2.1 This policy will assist the Council to meet the aims and priorities as set out in the [2024-2029 Moray Corporate Plan](#) and the [Moray 10 Year Local Outcomes Improvement Plan](#).

3. Objectives and principles of the policy

- 3.1 The aim of the policy is to provide clarity on the approach to granting Council tenants permission to keep a pet and on being a responsible pet owner.
- 3.2 The specific objectives of the policy are to:
 - ensure a consistent and transparent approach to granting written permission to keep pets;
 - clarify the obligations and rights of both tenants and the Council as landlord; and
 - contribute to the continued development of sustainable and attractive communities which are safe and secure.
- 3.3 The principles underpinning the policy are:
 - it will comply with the legal framework and adopt good practice;
 - detailed procedures and agreed practices will be implemented uniformly across the service; and
 - supporting information resources and communication with tenants will use "plain language."

4. Legislation and definitions

- 4.1 Section 31A and Schedule 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, provides tenants with an SST with the right to keep a pet (or pets) at their house with the consent in writing of the landlord, which must not be unreasonably withheld.

Definition of a pet

- 4.2 A pet is an animal kept by a person mainly for personal interest (including regards for its welfare, treatment or training), companionship, or ornamental purposes. For this policy, a pet is defined as:
- Dog (excluding any dog prohibited by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991);
 - Cat;
 - Domesticated bird (excluding birds of prey);
 - Small domesticated animal (e.g. rabbit, hamster, gerbil, guinea pig, mouse);
 - Small reptile or amphibian kept in a secure enclosure or terrarium (e.g. terrapin, tortoise, and lizard).
- This list is not exhaustive.

- 4.3 The following legislation and regulations have been taken into consideration when developing this policy:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2025
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and The Control of Dogs Order 1992
- The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982
- The Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006
- The Microchipping of Dogs (Scotland) Regulations 2016
- The Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003
- The Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010
- Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- the Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR)
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998

- 4.4 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) uses the outcomes and standards in the Scottish Social Housing Charter to assess the performance of social landlords. The key outcomes that have been considered in the development of this policy are:

Outcome 1: Customers have their individual needs recognised, are treated fairly and with respect, and receive fair access to housing and housing services.

Outcome 6: Customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

5. Equalities, rights and socio-economic requirements

5.1 Moray Council will comply with the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998, Fairer Scotland Duty (socio-economic inequality) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) by:

- Making reasonable adjustments for disabled tenants.
- Understanding and addressing barriers faced by marginalised groups.
- Assessing issues through a non-discriminatory, inclusive lens.
- Monitoring issues to avoid disproportionate impacts on protected groups.

5.2 The Council is committed to preventing discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for every person. In accordance with the [Equality Act 2010](#), the Council seeks to ensure that the Pet Policy for Council Tenants does not discriminate between individuals with one or more of the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

5.3 In delivering the Pet Policy for Council Tenants, full consideration will be given to the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This requires public authorities to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

5.4 Disability-related needs and requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered in accordance with the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and relevant corporate policies, procedures and guidance.

5.5 Detailed arrangements relating to the assessment of disability-related needs, consideration of reasonable adjustment requests, recording of Equality Act considerations and decisions, communication methods, reviews and complaints will be managed through corporate procedures and staff guidance.

5.6 The Housing Service commits to:

- communicating with tenants and service users in clear and concise plain language to help with the understanding of important information;
- developing and providing information and advice in alternative formats where necessary; and
- providing interpretation and translation services free of charge, where required.

6. Confidentiality and data protection

6.1 The Council will treat all tenants with courtesy, sensitivity and complete confidence and ensure that any information given to it as part of the pet policy process will be used in accordance with the [UK General Data Protection Regulations \(UK GDPR\)](#) and the [Data Protection Act 2018](#). Relevant privacy notices will advise applicants how personal information may be collected, used,

stored, shared and securely disposed of and the legal basis for doing so and what their Data Subject Rights are.

7. Permission to keep pets

When permission is required

- 7.1 Tenants, and anyone residing with the tenant, must request permission for pets, except smaller pets as detailed at 7.6. This requirement is in accordance with the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement.
- 7.2 As a general guide, applications involving up to two pets will normally be considered suitable for most properties. Applications involving larger numbers of pets may also be approved where the Housing Service is satisfied that the property is suitable and there are no tenancy management, nuisance or animal welfare concerns. Each application will be considered on its own merits and will consider factors such as the type and size of pet, and type, size and location of the property.
- 7.3 As a responsible landlord Moray Council needs to ensure that it is aware of pets residing within its properties. This assists to keep pets safe in the event of an emergency and allows the service to manage the property and surrounding areas responsibly to ensure the comfort and safety of all residents.

Existing pet arrangements

- 7.4 The Housing Service recognises that some tenants may already own pets when this policy comes into force. Existing pets do not require retrospective permission or a new permission application where they are lawfully kept and are not causing nuisance, tenancy management or animal welfare concerns. Any pet living in a property immediately before the implementation date of this policy may continue to be kept at that property, provided that the keeping of the pet is lawful, complies with all relevant legislation, and does not cause nuisance, present a safety risk, or result in a breach of tenancy conditions. Any concerns relating to the keeping of a pet will be considered on an individual basis, taking account of tenancy management, community safety, nuisance and animal welfare considerations. Tenants who get a new pet after the implementation date of this policy must obtain permission in accordance with this policy.

Pets which are not permitted

- 7.5 To help keep everyone safe, and to safeguard animals' safety, permission will not be given to tenants to keep or allow into the property or any shared area any animal which the Council considers to be unsuitable for the property. This includes:
- Dog breeds banned under the [Dangerous Dogs \(Designated Types\) Order 1991/1743](#):
 - Pit Bull Terrier
 - Japanese Tosa
 - Dogo Argentino

- Fila Brasileiro
 - XL Bully breeds where a valid exemption certificate has not been provided*.
 - Endangered species (for example listed on the [Endangered Species \(Import and Export\) Act 1976](#)).
 - Any venomous (poisonous) insects and spiders.
 - All venomous and / or large constrictor snakes or lizards.
 - Any animal which is classed as dangerous under [the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976](#) (as amended).
 - Livestock (for example, pigs, goats, sheep, geese, cockerels and horses) as these are not considered pets.
 - Any type of bird of prey e.g. kestrels, buzzards, owls.
 - Primates including all species of monkeys.
 - Any other animal deemed inappropriate for a domestic dwelling.
- * Permission may be given for dogs prohibited under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, provided they are registered on the Index of Exempted Dogs. Owners must have a Certificate of Exemption and follow [rules](#) which can be found on the Scottish Government [website](#). Tenants must notify the Housing Service if they own an exempted dog.

Pets that do not require permission

7.6 Smaller pets, kept in small numbers, are less likely to cause an issue or be a source of nuisance. Formal written permission is not required for the following pets:

- Fish, reptiles, or amphibians kept in a single domestic aquarium of a size and weight that is suitable for the property and does not pose a risk of damage. The welfare needs of any fish, reptiles, or amphibians kept must be met in accordance with relevant animal welfare legislation and recognised good practice;
- Fish kept in a garden pond. Garden ponds containing fish do not require permission under this policy, provided they are for domestic, non-commercial use and do not create an unreasonable health and safety risk, nuisance, or damage to the property. Tenants remain responsible for ensuring any pond is properly maintained. Where a tenant proposes to construct a new pond, they must obtain permission in accordance with the Council's Permissions Policy. Consideration will be given to the pond's size, location and the potential health and safety implications of the proposal.
- Small domesticated rodents such as rats, gerbils, chinchillas, guinea pigs, rabbits, and hamsters where no more than one pair will be kept; or
- Small domesticated birds such as cockatiels, finches, canaries and budgerigars, where kept in small numbers appropriate to the species and the property. The Housing Service recognises that some species have welfare needs that make group housing preferable. In these circumstances involving larger numbers of birds, tenants will be required to seek permission applications and applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Where required, the construction of aviaries or cages, ponds or other structures to house pets will be subject to obtaining any necessary permission.

Assistance dogs and support animals

- 7.7 The Council recognises that some tenants may rely on assistance dogs, therapy dogs or other support animals to assist with their health, wellbeing, independence or the management of a disability or long-term health condition. An assistance dog is a dog that has been trained to assist a disabled person with activities relating to their disability and may be recognised by an accredited assistance dog organisation. The Housing Service will consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including the need to make reasonable adjustments where appropriate. Assistance dogs should be notified to the Housing Service but will not normally require a standard pet permission assessment where they are required as a reasonable adjustment.
- 7.8 Therapy dogs, emotional support animals and other support animals may provide significant benefits to an individual's health, wellbeing or independence. However, they do not automatically have the same legal status as assistance dogs. Applications involving therapy dogs or other support animals will be considered on an individual basis, taking account of the individual circumstances, the role of the animal, the suitability of the property, animal welfare considerations, any relevant supporting information provided by the tenant, and the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Such animals will not normally be included when considering the number of pets permitted at a property where a reasonable adjustment is required. The Housing Service will seek to balance the needs of the tenant, the welfare of the animal and the interests of neighbouring residents when making decisions.

Temporary care of pets

- 7.9 Tenants do not require permission to provide temporary care for a pet belonging to a family member, friend or recognised animal welfare organisation, provided the arrangement is short-term and does not result in nuisance, damage to the property or animal welfare concerns. If the arrangement is expected to continue for more than 28 days, the tenant must notify the Housing Service, which will determine whether a formal application for permission is required.
- 7.10 If any pets breed the tenant must ensure that either the adults or the offspring are removed once the offspring are independent or weaned so that only one pair remains unless permission has been granted for a greater number of animals. If a tenant decides to keep the offspring, then an application for permission must be made because of the increase in numbers.
- 7.11 Where it is discovered that additional pets are being kept at a property without permission, the tenant will be contacted to discuss options. Available options will depend on the circumstances and welfare of the pets and could include the tenant being given two months to find alternative homes for the pets.

Application for permission

- 7.12 Tenants are required to apply online or in writing for permission to keep a pet, except for those as set out in 7.6.

Assessment of applications to keep a pet

- 7.13 In line with statutory requirements, the Council will:

- consider the request;
- not unreasonably withhold its consent; and
- notify the tenant in writing of its decision within 28 days of receipt of the written application.

The written notice will contain any conditions attached to the permission or reasons for its refusal. If a decision is not given within this timescale, then consent is automatically deemed to have been granted.

- 7.14 Applications will be considered on an individual basis and may take into account factors including:

- number of pets already at the property;
- the type, size / suitability and number of animals;
- the size, type and suitability of the property and any relevant property restrictions;
- the availability of a garden or proximity of other exercise and toileting area;
- history of previous or current pet ownership (where known);
- guidance from professionals such as vets and animal charities, where appropriate; and
- if the pet is a support animal.

Refusal of consent

- 7.15 The Council may refuse a request to keep a pet if there are reasonable grounds for refusal. There is no definitive list of grounds for refusing consent and each case will be assessed on its own merits.

- 7.16 Reasonable grounds for refusal may include but are not limited to:

- previous or ongoing animal welfare complaints;
- where the number of pets proposed is considered unsuitable having regard to the size of the property, household circumstances, animal welfare requirements and any potential impact on neighbours;
- current tenancy enforcement or legal action against the tenant relating to antisocial behaviour, tenancy breaches or other tenancy management issues;
- animal welfare concerns;
- condition of the property; and
- previous pet permission refusal (within the last 3 – 6 months).

- 7.17 Where permission is refused, the Housing Service will inform the tenant in writing within 28 days of receipt of the application, explaining:

- the reasons for the refusal; and

- their right to request a review of a decision and the process to use.

Consent provided

- 7.18 Where the Housing Service consents to the tenant keeping the pet at the house, it will:
- inform the tenant in writing within 28 days of receipt of the application;
 - explain any conditions imposed in connection with the consent (see section 8); and
 - signpost the tenant to information resources which will assist them to be a responsible pet owner.
- 7.19 Where consent is provided, the tenant may keep the pet at the house until the end of their tenancy, unless any of the reasonable conditions prescribed are breached. In such circumstances, action as set out in Section 10 will be taken.
- 7.20 Where a property is held under a joint tenancy, any joint tenant may apply for permission to keep a pet. Permission granted under this policy does not remove the responsibility of all joint tenants to comply with the tenancy agreement.

8. Conditions for keeping a pet

- 8.1 Where the Housing Service provides written consent to keep a pet, that consent is subject to the following conditions. These conditions form part of the tenant's tenancy obligations. Failure by the tenant to comply with them may result in the withdrawal of permission to keep the pet and, where appropriate, tenancy enforcement action.

Legal requirements

- 8.2 Tenants must comply with all legal requirements relating to pet ownership, including but not restricted to the following:
- the keeping of the pet must not be prohibited under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or any other relevant legislation;
 - dog owners must not allow a dog to frighten, attack or injure a person in any public or private space;
 - dogs must wear a collar with a name tag displaying the owner's name and address when outside the home (a phone number is recommended); and
 - all dogs over the age of eight weeks are required to be fitted with microchips, registered on a database and information kept up to date.

Control, behaviour and nuisance

- 8.3 Tenants are responsible for the welfare, care, supervision, and behaviour of any pet owned by them, anyone living with them, or anyone visiting them. In particular tenants must:
- take all reasonable steps to supervise and keep pets under control, ensuring they are not left unattended in common or open areas;
 - ensure that their pet does not cause nuisance, annoyance, or danger to neighbours or visitors, including noise, smell, fouling, or aggressive behaviour;

- make sure that dogs are always accompanied when outside the tenant's home and kept on a lead in all common areas, shared gardens, and grounds; and
- ensure that pets (other than outdoor cats) are appropriately contained when in communal or shared areas.

Care, welfare and supervision

8.4 Tenants must ensure that pets are properly cared for and must:

- provide pets with a suitable environment, reflective of its needs;
- not leave pets unattended in the property unless arrangements have been made for their care. As a general guide, a dog should not be left alone for more than four hours, although individual needs may vary and veterinary advice should be obtained where appropriate;
- make suitable arrangement for the care of pets should they become temporarily unable to do so; and
- work with the Housing Service if they become permanently unable to care for a pet, for example due to long term ill health. Appropriate options will be considered which may include rehoming the pet.

Fouling, hygiene and damage

8.5 Tenants must make sure that:

- pets do not foul inside the property, except for caged animals or pets trained to use a litter tray;
- litter trays and similar items must be properly maintained and kept free from hazards;
- all pet faeces must be immediately removed and safely disposed of from gardens or outside areas; and
- they take reasonable care to ensure pets do not cause damage to the property, neighbouring properties, or any common areas maintained by the Council. Tenants may be recharged for any damage caused to their property as set out in Section 10.4.

Breeding

8.6 Tenants must not intentionally breed pets or operate any animal-related business from the property, including breeding, boarding, kennels, catteries or similar commercial activities. The Housing Service recognises that an unplanned breeding event may occasionally occur. Where this happens:

- if an unplanned litter, clutch or brood occurs, the tenant must notify the Housing Service as soon as reasonably practicable;
- the Housing Service may allow a reasonable period for the tenant to rehome, sell or otherwise responsibly place the offspring, taking account of animal welfare considerations;
- the Housing Service may provide information or signpost tenants to appropriate animal welfare organisations where required; and

- a temporary increase in animal numbers resulting from an unplanned breeding event does not constitute permission to operate a breeding business from the property.

Access and alterations

- 8.7 When staff or contractors visit the property, tenants may be asked to secure their pets in another room of the property to allow the Council to undertake their responsibilities as a landlord.
- 8.8 Tenants must not carry out adaptations (e.g. installing a cat flap) without written permission. Requests to install cat flaps will not normally be approved due to property, safety and asset management considerations. Each request may be considered on its individual merits where the Council has discretion to do so, including where Equality Act 2010 considerations apply.

9. Responsible pet ownership guidance

- 9.1 The Council encourages responsible pet ownership. Following the below guidance can help prevent issues from arising and support the long-term wellbeing of both pets and communities.

Good practice guidance

- 9.2 All tenants who want to keep pets at their property are encouraged to:
- have pets neutered, where appropriate, to prevent unwanted litters and reduce behavioural issues;
 - register pets with a local veterinary practice;
 - keep pets up to date with vaccinations, flea, tick, and worming treatments in line with veterinary advice;
 - consider taking out pet insurance or making financial provision for veterinary costs;
 - ensure pets receive sufficient physical exercise and mental stimulation appropriate to their species, breed, and age; and
 - seek advice from veterinary professionals or animal welfare organisations where needed.

Pet welfare awareness

- 9.3 Tenants should consider carefully if they have the time, financial resources, and living environment needed to meet a pet's needs throughout its lifetime. Responsible planning helps safeguard animal welfare and reduces the risk of nuisance or tenancy issues.

10. Tenancy management and enforcement

Management of pet related issues

- 10.1 Where concerns are raised about a pet kept at a Council property, the Housing Service will seek to resolve the issue promptly, proportionately, and in a way that protects animal welfare, neighbours, and the tenancy.

Concerns may include, but are not limited to:

- nuisance or disturbance to neighbours;
- fouling or hygiene issues;
- damage to property or common areas;
- failure to comply with conditions attached to consent; or
- concerns about animal welfare.

- 10.2 The Housing Service will:

- contact the tenant to explain the concern raised;
- discuss the issue and agree reasonable actions to resolve it; and
- set appropriate and proportionate timescales for improvement.

The Housing Service will normally seek to resolve pet-related issues informally before considering formal tenancy enforcement action, except where there is a serious risk to public safety, animal welfare or the condition of the property.

- 10.3 Where appropriate, the Housing Service may signpost the tenant to the following to help address the issue and support responsible pet ownership:

- veterinary professionals;
- animal welfare charities; or
- specialist support services.

Damage to property and recharges

- 10.4 Tenants must report any damage a pet causes to the property as soon as practicable. Tenants will be required to repair any damage to the property caused by their pets, or animals belonging to other members of the household or visitors to the property. In line with the Rechargeable Repairs Policy, if the tenant does not carry out the work needed, or if it does not meet Council standards, the Council will carry out the work needed and the tenant recharged for the costs incurred.

- 10.5 If the tenant does not undertake any agreed actions, or the issue continues or worsens, or there is a serious breach of tenancy conditions, the Housing Service will advise the tenant in writing of:

- the action that is needed to resolve the situation.
- the timescales for compliance; and
- the consequences, should the tenant fail to comply.

Enforcement action

- 10.6 Actions to resolve the situation will be dependent on the type of pet and the severity of the nuisance where relevant and proportionate, the Housing Service may:

- withdraw consent to keep the pet; and
- require the tenant to remove the pet from the property within a specified timescale that takes account of animal welfare considerations.

10.7 Where issues relating to a pet continue despite reasonable attempts to resolve them, the Housing Service may take formal tenancy enforcement action. This may include:

- issuing tenancy warnings;
- taking action under antisocial behaviour legislation; or
- initiating legal action where necessary.

Legal action will always be considered a last resort and will be taken in line with relevant legislation, Council policies, and guidance.

Animal welfare concerns

10.8 If the Housing Service believes that a pet is being neglected or harmed, it will report the matter to the appropriate animal welfare organisation or statutory body for investigation.

Pets and eviction or abandonment

10.9 If a tenant is being evicted, every effort will be made to determine the presence of a pet(s) and make sure the tenant has made suitable arrangements for them.

10.10 If pets are found to have been left behind in a property, either if the tenant has abandoned a property or following an eviction, the Housing Service will contact the appropriate authorities to arrange for their safe removal and care. The tenant may be recharged for any of the costs that this incurs.

11. Reviews and appeals

11.1 Any tenant who is not satisfied with the outcome of their application for permission to keep a pet can request a review by writing to their Area Housing Manager in the first instance. A request for review should normally be made within 28 days of the decision being notified to the tenant. The Housing Service will aim to provide a review outcome within 28 days of receiving the request. If the tenant is not completely satisfied with the outcome of the case, it will be referred to the Service Manager Housing Operations for their consideration.

11.2 If the tenant is not fully satisfied with any refusal of a permission to keep a pet or the conditions specific to their case, they can escalate the case through [Moray Council Corporate Complaints Process](#).

12. Review of the policy

12.1 This policy will be reviewed in 2029 or earlier if due to legislative requirements.