

<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Pet Policy</b>
Date Adopted	02/2017
Review Date	04/2024
Review by Tenants	01/2021
Approved by Executive Team	04/2024
Date of Next Review	04/ 2027

## **1 Policy Statement**

- 1.1** This policy sets out Nehemiah Housing’s approach to the keeping of pets and clearly defines the basis on which decisions will be made.
- 1.2** Nehemiah recognises that allowing our tenants to have pets can offer significant benefits. Pet ownership has also been shown to benefit older adults, increase independence as well as a smaller social group as mobility reduces. This can lead to many older people growing more isolated and lonely, which can affect both their psychological and physical health. Nehemiah understands that Pet ownership should be considered as an additional factor that can help people live happy and fulfilling lives.
- 1.3** If you have a pet, or have visitors with pets, it is your responsibility to make sure that they do not cause any annoyance to neighbours and to keep them under control and clean up after them. However, irresponsible ownership can cause nuisance and affect the quality of life of others living nearby. A pet policy is in place to ensure that Nehemiah Tenants, staff, and external partners understand the outline of the conditions under which pets can be kept in the accommodation that Nehemiah manages. The policy is not exhaustive, and Nehemiah may allow some relaxation of the policy in exceptional circumstances.

## **2 Policy Aims and Objective**

Nehemiah encourages responsible pet ownership.

- 2.1** The main objective of the pet policy is to ensure that measures and procedure enable tenants to keep pets, whilst ensuring that others are not adversely affected by this. Nehemiah aims to encourage responsible pet ownership and ensure that issues of pet nuisance, cruelty or neglect are dealt with appropriately and effectively. The policy will specify the following:
- Conditions under which tenants will be granted permission to keep pets
  - Instances where permission will not be granted

- Action to be taken where conditions are broken

**2.2** However, ownership is a privilege, not a right and tenants must comply with Nehemiah's policy guidelines and ensure their animals welfare. Failure to do so may result in enforcement action by Nehemiah which might include eviction from the property. To request or log a pet already in your property please complete Appendix 2

### **3 Our Policy**

In our tenancy agreement, in section relating to tenant's obligation tenants are required to:

- Not keep any animals registered under the dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 or the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 at the Premises, *(from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 it is a criminal offence to own an XL Bully type dog in England and Wales unless your dog has a Certificate of Exemption).*
- Keep under control any pet(s) kept at the premises and not to keep any pet(s) that might cause a nuisance or annoyance to other persons in the neighbourhood.

#### **3.1 What type of pet can I have?**

You do not need permission from us if:

- You have a Guide dog or Assistance dog
- You want to keep fish in a tank
- You want to keep 1 small rodent in a cage
- You want to keep 1 bird in a cage

**If you want to keep any other pet in your home, you will need permission from us first. See form at the end of this policy.** If you are thinking about getting a pet but would like more advice or information, the RSPCA : [Advice and Welfare Information for Animals | RSPCA - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk](https://www.rspca.org.uk) offer lots of guidance on different sorts of animals and different breeds that are suitable for different lifestyles.

#### **3.2 Dangerous Wild Animals and Dogs**

Dogs listed in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991(amended in1997) and any animals listed in the schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 may not be kept. This is to protect the health and safety of any tenants and employees of Nehemiah who may come into contact with them. *(from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 it is a criminal offence to own an XL Bully type dog in England and Wales unless your dog has a Certificate of Exemption).*

#### **3.3 Pet Welfare**

Tenants are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets as they are required by law not to cause unnecessary suffering. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, this is called a duty of care. This requires proper day-to-day management and care of the pet. Tenants should be encouraged to contact their

vet or an animal welfare organisation if they have questions about the care of their pet.

Pets must not be left unattended for a period of time that will result in the owner being unable to meet its welfare needs as defined under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 section 9.1, ( A person commits an offence if he does not take such steps as are reasonable in all circumstances to ensure that the needs of an animal for which he is responsible are met to the extent required by good practice)

Where a tenant is taken into hospital or care temporarily and an animal is left behind, Nehemiah will contact relevant Local Authority under the National Assistance Act 1948(s,48) to assist in the animal's welfare. Local Authority has a duty to take into care any pets that cannot be cared for by family or relatives, or where there is no family or relatives to assist.

If Nehemiah believes that a pet is kept in the property and has been neglected or abandoned, we will report the case to local police and an appropriate animal organisation.

### **3.4 Breeding Animals**

Tenants must not breed any animals kept in a Nehemiah property or offer any animal for sale from the property under any circumstances. The sale of pets is likely to cause a nuisance to neighbours and may require a licence from the local authority.

### **3.5 The Number and Type of Pets**

The number of animals in a property matters because animals interact, and this needs space. The size is relevant because every animal needs sufficient space to be able to lie comfortably in its own bed. The number and type of pets which may be kept are listed in Appendix A. Any tenant who exceeds the number of pets permitted may have enforcement action, including eviction taken against them.

### **3.6 Damage caused by Pets**

As part of the tenancy agreement, Tenants agree to make good any damage to the Premises or the Association's, furniture, fixtures and fittings or to the common parts caused by the Tenant or any member of the Tenant's household (which includes pets) or any visitor to the Premises, fair wear and tear excepted, caused by their act(s), omission or neglect and to pay any costs reasonably incurred by the Association in carrying out such works in default. Nehemiah will arrange repairs to the damage and the tenant will sign a declaration form agreeing to pay prior to the work being completed.

### **3.7 Identification**

All pets must be permanently identified by microchip or tattoo. This allows identification of any animal breaching the policy so enforcement action can be taken against the keeper. To comply with current legislation dogs and cats must also wear a collar.

### **3.8 Control of Pets**

The control of pets and any pets visiting the property are the tenant's responsibility. If cats are allowed free access outside then steps must be taken, by the tenant, to ensure that they do not cause nuisance to neighbours. Dogs must always be kept under control and on a lead when in public area. They must never be allowed outside of the tenant's property on their own – this includes communal balconies, stairwells, and shared garden areas. Animal faeces must always be removed immediately.

### **3.9 Outside Accommodation for Pets**

If a tenant wishes to conduct outside accommodation other than a hutch and exercise pen for small mammals, they must seek written permission from Nehemiah. An application for such permission must include plans of the proposed construction and details of the species to be kept. If the request is likely to cause nuisance to neighbours, it will be refused.

### **3.10 Leaving Pets in Property**

No pet should be left in a property when the Tenant is away unless clear arrangements have been made to provide adequate care.

### **3.11 General Statement about general needs tenants**

Tenants living in general needs accommodation should discuss having a pet with their housing officer prior, as restriction may apply if they live in accommodation with shared communal areas and gardens. Nehemiah will consider other tenants and their access to communal gardens etc.

### **3.12 Pets in our Sheltered Schemes**

Tenants living in retirement living flats and mental health projects will be allowed to have 1 small dog or cat. (See Appendix A for definition) Pets will not be allowed to wander corridors or hallways. Dogs must be walked away from the scheme. Cats must be provided with a litter tray. All pets must be house trained. Tenants will be asked to give the scheme manager information of another person willing to take care of their pet in the event of hospital admission an inability to look after the pet.

Where a tenant starts to experience difficulty looking after their pet the scheme manager will access advice and assistance from voluntary organisations that operate a network of dog walkers and foster carers across the UK for the elderly and terminally ill.

#### **4 Enforcement Action**

If an enquiry or complaint is received about the pet the Tenant will always be visited to discuss the issue. A solution will be identified in conjunction with the Tenants whenever possible. This may include:

- A move to a more suitable property
- Provision of information on who to contact for per welfare advice
- Advice on rehoming if the tenant is not willing or able to resolve the problem.
- Sending a letter confirming the situation and the likelihood of legal action if the tenant does not comply with the requests
- Legal action

#### **5. Government legislation**

##### **Dangerous Dogs**

##### **What Should You Do If You Own a XL Bully Dog?**

We have some advice and guidance for Nehemiah tenants who own an XL Bully dog, after the Government recently ruled to add the breed to the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 from 31 December 2023. If you own an XL Bully dog, you must apply for a Certificate of Exemption to legally keep your pet after 31 January 2024. Without a certificate, you will be breaking the law to own an XL Bully dog from 1 February 2024 – a criminal offence and a breach of your tenancy agreement with Nehemiah. As part of the application process, you will need to make sure your XL Bully dog is neutered, microchipped, kept in a secure location, kept on a lead and with a muzzle on when in public, and owned by someone aged 16 and over. You can find out more about the certificates, including how to apply, on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). From 1st February 2024, it will be a criminal offence to own an XL Bully type dog in England and Wales unless your dog has a Certificate of Exemption. Those who own an XL Bully or a dog with XL Bully characteristics can apply for a Certificate of Exemption online, by email or post.

##### **Cats**

All cat owners should now have their pets microchipped in line with new legislation that came into force on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

##### **What you should do**

Owners must ensure their cat is microchipped before they reach the age of 20 weeks with their contact details stored and kept up to date in an approved pet microchipping database.

## 6. Training of Staff

All relevant Nehemiah staff will be fully supported in the operations of this policy through training on the policies principles.

## 7. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if legislation or good practice dictates. The terms of the individual tenancy agreement and any current, or future legislation will always take precedence over this policy.

## 8. Link to other documents/policies

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Letting Policy
- Tenancy Agreement
- Social Housing White Paper
- Compensation Scheme Policy
- <https://www.gov.uk/control-dog-public/banned-dogs>  
<http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/factsheetpetsandhousing09.pdf> <https://www.rspca.org.uk/home>
- <https://www.nationalpetregister.org/>
- [www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-welfare-legislation-protecting-pets](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-welfare-legislation-protecting-pets)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-standard-tenancy-agreement-to-help-renters-with-well-behaved-pets>  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-standard-tenancy-agreement-to-help-renters-with-well-behaved-pets>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/keeping-or-training-animals-for-exhibition-licensing-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities>.
- <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/can-my-landlord-prevent-me-from-keeping-a-pet/>
- <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3462>
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cat-microchipping-now-mandatory#:~:text=All%20cat%20owners%20should%20now,an%20approved%20pet%20microchipping%20database>.

## Dog Size Definitions

Examples Are:

Small Dogs	Yorkshire Terrier, Jack Russell, and Chihuahua.
Medium sized dogs	Collie, Whippet and Lurcher
Large dogs	Golden Retriever, Labrador, and German Shepherd
Giant dogs	Great, Irish Wolf Hound, St Bernard, Mastiff.

## Guidelines of Property Sizes and Maximum Number of Pets Allowed

1 and 2 bed flats	1 small dog or cat
2 bed house	1 large or medium size dog plus cat or 2 small dogs plus a cat or 2 cats
3 and 4 bed houses	2 large /medium sized dogs or 1 large dog/medium sized dog and 2 small dogs or 1 large dog/medium sized dog and 2 cats or No more than 3 cats



**Pet request form: Changes or update to my household**

Name of Tenant: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Numbers: mobile and landline: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to have a: \_\_\_\_\_

I consent to store data: \_\_\_\_\_

I give permission to store and process my data: \_\_\_\_\_

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**The following section must be completed by Nehemiah Staff Only**

Request approved/ register existing pet:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Rejected: Reason  
why: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Authorised by: \_\_\_\_\_

Job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_