



## Pets policy

### Introduction

This policy outlines IVH approach to responsible pet ownership. This policy has been written in accordance with the principles of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. IVH is in support of allowing customers to keep pets provided they are well looked after and do not adversely affect the lives of neighbours and those living in the vicinity. IVH recognises that having a pet can contribute to positive and improved mental health.

### Aims and Objectives

This policy applies from the date of implementation and will outline the requirements of customers should they wish to keep a pet.

This policy will be used to apply discretion to customers applying for permission to keep a pet in their home. IVH will revert to the terms and condition of the individual tenancy agreement should this policy be breached.

This policy applies to General Needs social and affordable properties owned and managed by IVH. This policy does not apply to leasehold, shared ownership, independent living and leasehold.

This policy covers:

- Application and permission
- Wellbeing and Welfare
- Management and Implementation of Policy

### Policy

#### 1.0 Policy

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.

#### 1.1 Application and Permission

IVH will consider all requests from customers requesting permission to keep a pet in their home. Permission will **not** be required for small birds, small fish or mammals which are housed in cages, bowls, or tanks inside the home.

A pet application form will need to be completed and submitted to the Neighbourhood Officer prior to getting a pet. Any new customers should complete an application form at the application stage via the home move team. Each application will be treated fairly, with the following criteria taken into consideration:

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- Type of property (house, bungalow or flat)
- Size of property
- Size of the outdoor space
- Whether the property has a communal or individual garden
- The location of the property
- Where the property is situated within a high-rise block
- The nature and type of animal/pet kept
- Maximum number of permitted pets

#### **1.2 Permission will not be granted for the following:**

- Any large animals (unsuitable to be kept indoors)
- Any banned breeds e.g. those classified under the dangerous dog acts
- Any animals that are a danger due to being poisonous or venomous
- Any wild animals
- Any animal classed as livestock
- Any animals that have to be kept outdoors (including caged birds, pigeons or similar)
- Where there is a high likelihood of animals creating a statutory nuisance e.g., through noise
- There will be a maximum number of 2 dogs at any one property. The number of any other animals will be limited dependant on the factors outlined in 1.1

#### **1.3 Wellbeing and Welfare**

Where IVH grant permission, customers are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets.

Under the animal Welfare Act 2006, this is called a duty of care. Animal welfare requires suitable day to day management and care of pets.

Customers should not leave their pets in the property whilst they are away from the property for a prolonged period unless suitable arrangements have been made with a responsible person to provide adequate care.

If it is suspected that a customer has abandoned a property leaving a pet behind, the RSPCA will be informed immediately. If any IVH staff member or contractor has concerns regarding how a pet is treated, they will report this to RSPCA.

IVH recommends that dogs should be permanently identified by a microchip and the identification details registered in line with legislation.

It is now compulsory for all cats to be microchipped by 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and contact details to be stored and kept up to date in a pet microchipping database.

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## 1.4 Management and Implementation of Policy

All steps must be taken to ensure dogs do not defecate in any internal or external communal areas, including any grassed areas of an estate. If a dog does defecate in a communal area this must be removed immediately and the area let clean.

Dogs must always be kept on a lead when in any public or communal areas including communal balconies and stairwells. They must never be let out on their own, or without being supervised by a responsible adult.

Where visits/repairs are carried out in homes, where pets are present, IVH and its contractors have the right to request the pets are kept away for the duration of the visit. Where this is not the case, IVH staff and contractors can leave the property without completion of the repair or visit.

Customers must ensure they look after their pets responsibly and must not allow them to cause a nuisance to any neighbours or members of the public. Customers will also be held responsible for the behaviour of any pets brought into their home or Neighbourhood by their visitors.

If a pet is found to be causing a nuisance or annoyance, IVH will manage this in line with the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. Some examples are:

- Excessive persistent barking or any other loud noise causing a disturbance
- Failing to keep pets under control, or away in another room when IVH staff or its contractors are present at the property
- Dogs or any other animals being used to intimidate people
- Pets causing damage to IVH property
- Any other behaviour considered to be causing a nuisance or annoyance

If a pet is considered to be causing a nuisance or annoyance, IVH will consider the following actions to be taken:

- Issue a verbal or handwritten warning
- Outline expectations regarding the control and welfare of pets within an Acceptable Behaviour Contract
- Withdraw permission and require the pet to be rehomed within 14 days of notification
- Report an incident to the Police and/or the RSPCA
- Take legal action to obtain an injunction
- As a last resort take legal action to obtain a possession order

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### 1.5 Existing Pet Owners

IVH recognise there are customers who have existing pets prior to the implementation of this policy and as such IVH will allow these pets to remain on a discretionary basis provided:

- There are are/have been no concerns as to welfare of the animal
- No complaints have been received about the pet (where this is the case, IVH will follow 1.3 and 1.4 of this policy)
- Provided the property and outside space is suitable for the type of pet.
- No damage to any property has been caused as a result of the keeping of the pet

### Performance Reporting

This policy will be effective from May 2024.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or when required taking into account changes in regulation, legislation and IVH good practice.

This policy will be overseen by Neighbourhood Managers who will work with Neighbourhood Officers to monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

The Neighbourhoods team are responsible for the administration and application of the pet permission process. Any issues arising from the ownership of pets will be investigated accordingly and where applicable with the support of the Community Safety Officers.

This policy's effectiveness will be measured using the performance indicator of customer feedback and complaints.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Director (Customers) is responsible for the overall effective implementation of this policy.

The Head of Customers and Communities, Neighbourhood Managers and Neighbourhood Officers are also involved in implementing and delivering this policy.

### Associated Documents and Good Practice

Housing Act 1988 (As amended)  
The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (As amended in 1997)  
Animal Welfare Act 2006  
The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976  
The Anti-Social Behaviour Policing Act 2014  
Anti-Social Behaviour Policy  
Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure  
Tenancy Policy

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<b>Approval Date:</b>	May 2024
<b>Approval Body</b>	Senior Leadership Team
<b>Implementation Date:</b>	May 2024
<b>Policy Authors:</b>	Rachel Buckley Shaban Talib – Neighbourhood Managers
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Ceris Esplen – Executive Director (Customers)
<b>Frequency of Review</b>	Every 3 years
<b>Planned Review Date</b>	May 2027
<b>EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) Date and Link to EIA</b>	May 2024
<b>Safeguarding Impact</b>	N/A
<b>Lead Team</b>	Neighbourhoods Team

The latest version of this policy should be viewed online from The Hub area of the IVH intranet. Any printed version cannot be relied on as the most current version.

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