

Council Housing Pets Policy



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Introduction

This policy sets out Enfield Council's approach to responsible pet ownership in our council homes. We recognise the benefits of pets to many residents' wellbeing and independence and will support residents to be responsible pet owners without imposing unnecessary restrictions on pet ownership.

We also recognise the importance of making sure pets do not create nuisance, risk, or harm to people, property, or other animals.

This policy balances individual choice with community safety, health and wellbeing, and housing management duties.

Scope

This policy applies to all council tenants, leaseholders and household members living in council homes, communal areas and estate grounds.

Assistance dogs are permitted in all circumstances. Please see section on Assistance Dogs for further information.

Relevant Legislation and Regulatory Framework

- **Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (as amended) and the Dangerous Dogs (Designated Types) (England and Wales) Order 2023**, under which XL Bully dogs are now a banned type unless exempt. To be exempt owners must hold a Certificate of Exemption, comply with lead and muzzle rules in public, have public liability insurance, microchip, and meet neutering deadlines. It is a criminal offence to own an XL Bully without a Certificate of Exemption¹.
- **Animal Welfare Act 2006**
- **Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976**—licensing for specified species; we will not grant permission where a **DWA licence** would be required.
- **DEFRA's Animal Welfare Strategy for England** (published 22 Dec 2025)²
- **Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023** and **Consumer Standards**
- **Awaab's Law** - From 2026-27 pet related hazards (e.g., severe odour, infestation, unsafe structural damage caused by animals) will be triaged, and where they meet the Regulations thresholds, responded to in line with timelines set out in Awaab's Law³.
- **The Equality Act 2010**

¹ [Ban on XL Bully dogs - GOV.UK](#)

² [Animal welfare strategy for England - GOV.UK](#)

³ [Awaab's Law: Guidance for social landlords - Timeframes for repairs in the social rented sector - GOV.UK](#)

Relevant Enfield documents

- Tenancy Agreement
- Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Lease Agreements
- Tenants' Handbook
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Policy Statement

- We support responsible pet ownership and do not impose unnecessary restrictions.
- We will not permit animals which require licensing under Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 (such as large mammals, primates, carnivores, venomous or large reptiles, dangerous spiders, scorpions) or pose a risk we consider to be unacceptable
- We will act appropriately where pets cause nuisance, damage or risk, ensuring actions are evidence based and fair.
- We will manage XL Bully cases in line with the law and national guidance.

Definitions

- **Pet nuisance** includes but is not limited to: fouling in communal areas; excessive or persistent noise; intimidation, aggression or attacks; uncontrolled animals in communal areas; significant odour; infestation caused by animals; and property damage.
- **Animal hoarding** is the keeping of a higher than usual number of animals without the ability to provide appropriate standards of care.
- **Communal areas** include shared hallways, lifts, stairs, lobbies, laundries, play spaces, gardens and estate grounds.

Permission to Keep Pets

Standard permission (general needs housing)

- Pets should be declared when residents make a housing application.
- Residents are required to notify us of their new and existing pets and comply with this policy and the tenancy agreement.

- Implied permission is for one pet such as a cat, dog, small bird, fish, non-poisonous insect, spider, small snake or lizard.
- For XL Bully: provide Certificate of Exemption, insurance, microchip details, and neutering evidence must be provided.
- Residents are required to ask permission to keep more than one permitted pet. Requests will be decided on a case-by-case basis according to the circumstances of the household and nature of the property. This includes residents who are moving via transfer, decant or mutual exchange.

We will confirm decisions regarding additional pets in writing with any conditions. We may refuse where:

- the property is unsuitable, e.g. flats with limited outdoor access for large dogs
- where there is a history of anti-social behaviour or non-compliance with terms of the tenancy,
- where building management / lease terms prohibit,
- where there is a history of problems involving animals in or around the property concerned.

Where we are made aware of a pet in one of our properties where permission has not been obtained, we will consider whether permission would have been granted if permission had been sought by the resident. If permission would have been granted, and conditions for keeping a pet are being met, retrospective permission may be granted.

If a previous request for permission was refused, or permission would have been refused, then the resident will be provided with a written explanation for the refusal and set a timescale to arrange for the removal of the pet. If the pet is not removed within the specified timeframe, we will follow breach of tenancy procedures. Legal advice will be obtained where necessary, and legal action may result.

Sheltered/supported housing

Pets may be permitted subject to:

- support needs
- capacity of those living in the property to care for them
- arrangements for contingencies (e.g., hospitalisation)
- nature of the property e.g. size and layout
- impact on others

Pets must be declared at application stage.

Scheme specific rules may restrict replacement pets when an older pet passes away.

Mixed-tenure blocks

- Lease terms take priority in leasehold/mixed tenure settings where they are more restrictive than this policy.

Prohibited Animals

We will **not permit**:

- Any animal listed under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976⁴ for example large mammals, primates, carnivores, venomous or large reptiles, dangerous spiders, scorpions.
- Endangered species or any hybrids of domestic and wild animals.
- Dogs prohibited under Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991: Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino, Fila Brasileiro, and XL Bully (unless lawfully exempt).
- Bees in domestic dwellings.

XL Bully – Specific Rules

It is illegal to own an XL Bully without a Certificate of Exemption. Where a resident already owns an **XL Bully**:

- We will require evidence of exemption, microchipping, neutering by the statutory deadlines, public liability insurance, and compliance with lead and muzzle requirements in public places.
- We cannot ask or require a resident to sell, give away or “rehome” an XL Bully, as transferring ownership is prohibited. We will therefore refer to the police in the first instance and may seek legal action for non-compliance with the law or tenancy conditions.
- Permission requests for an XL Bully will only be considered where the dog is exempt and the property, household condition, and compliance history are satisfactory. We may, in these instances, require updated insurance annually and immediate reporting of any incidents or enforcement notices.

⁴[Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976](#)

Assistance Dogs

The Equality Act 2010 defines an assistance dog as one that has been trained to carry out specific tasks that enable someone to live more independently. These may include guide dogs, hearing dogs, medical alert dogs, mobility assistance dogs, autism assistance dogs and psychiatric support dogs.

We recognise that emotional support animals (dogs or other animals that offer comfort) can make a big difference to an individual's wellbeing. However, since these animals are not trained to carry out specific tasks related to a disability, they are not covered by the Equality Act in the same way as assistance dogs and do not have the same access rights.

Accredited assistance dogs are permitted where they are needed. Residents are required to ensure their assistance dogs are properly trained.

Residents should notify us so we can record the animal on the tenancy and ensure any reasonable adjustments to property/communal areas can be considered.

Resident Responsibilities

All pet owners must:

- Keep animals under control. Dogs must be on a lead and under control in communal areas and in the home when any visitors are present.
- Not take pets into play areas.
- Prevent fouling in communal areas. If this does occur, pet owners must clean up and arrange for disposal immediately.
- **Not** wash pet bedding or clothing in the communal washing machines.
- Ensure pets are free of fleas, ticks or any other infestation which could be a health risk to residents, care staff, Enfield Council officers or visitors and/ or impact the condition of the property
- Prevent excessive noise and odour and avoid unsanitary conditions
- Prevent damage to property (home, communal areas, neighbours' homes); the Council may recharge costs for repairs attributable to pets
- **Not** breed animals or keep animals to sell
- Avoid animal hoarding
- Ensure capacity to care for pets. This includes having contingency plans when away from home for prolonged periods such as for holiday/hospital

stays. The Council reserves the right to enter a resident's accommodation where it is determined a pet has been left unattended.

- **Not** install cat/dog flaps without written consent from Enfield Council
- Ensure their cat is microchipped before they reach the age of 20 weeks
- Dispose of deceased pets responsibly and safely

Pet owners may be **recharged** for any cleaning, treatment, repair or other costs incurred where they have failed to meet their responsibilities as pet owners. This may include, but is not limited to, damage to the property such as chewing, scratching or staining, infestations such as fleas or mites, and any additional cleaning, treatment or repair costs arising as a result.

Managing complaints

Where concerns or complaints are made, we will seek:

Early Resolution

- We will attempt to contact the resident to agree behavioural controls (such as training or muzzling in shared areas where appropriate), cleaning routines, or vet checks

Support

- Where appropriate we will make referrals to animal welfare organisations for owner support, if appropriate, with consent from the resident,

Further Action

- Where issues persist or are serious (attacks/threats, repeated fouling, health hazards, property damage), we will investigate and act, which may include, Community Protection Warnings/Notices, seeking legal injunctions, tenancy enforcement, or referral to the Police/RSPCA for serious cases

Health and Safety Hazards

- If pet related conditions create hazards such as infestation from animal waste, we will act in line with our repairs and hazard response processes and **Awaab's Law** timeframes where these thresholds are met.

Withdrawal of Consent

We may withdraw permission for the resident to keep any pet where there is evidence of:

- Repeated or serious nuisance or anti-social behaviour linked to the animal
- Non-compliance with legal requirements, such as XL Bully exemption conditions or muzzle/lead obligations
- Animal cruelty or neglect

Residents will be given a reasonable period to resolve issues where appropriate. If this is not achievable, then the resident will be asked to remove the pet from the home.

Safeguarding and Animal Welfare

We will report suspected animal cruelty or neglect to the RSPCA or police and take tenancy action where necessary. We will also consider the welfare of residents, including children and vulnerable adults where pet related conditions create safeguarding concerns.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We are committed to a fair and consistent application of this policy.

We will consider residents' individual circumstances and provide reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Assistance dogs are always permitted where they are needed.

Monitoring and Review

We will record pet permissions and notifications and keep a register of exempt dogs and annual insurance checks where required.

We will track pet related anti-social behaviour cases. Pet-related hazards that meet thresholds will be responded to in line with Awaab's Law timeframes.

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or as and when legislation/regulatory changes require it.