



Pet Policy

CONTENTS

Page

1	Purpose	2
2	Principles	2
3	Review	2
4	Responsibilities	3
5	Scope	3
6	Policy statement	3
7	Reasons for refusing permission to keep a pet or pets	5
8	Consultation	6
9	Equality Impact Assessment	6
	Appendix 1 Guidelines	8

1. Purpose

We appreciate the positive benefits to customers that can be gained through pet ownership. Responsible pet ownership can bring rewards of companionship and lowers the risk of social isolation.

The aim of this policy is to encourage and ensure responsible pet ownership in our properties and include:

- Encouraging responsible pet ownership
- Providing guidance to staff and customers when assessing whether to approve requests to keep pets, subject to specific obligations and requirements. Each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- Signposting customers to pet care advice and information from recognised animal welfare sources.
- Prohibiting any breeding or business activity from the animal within NDH (North Devon Homes) property
- Encouraging the permanent identification of pets, this includes but is not limited to micro-chipping and using a collar with tag details on.

2. Principles

The following principles will apply to this policy:

- It will be open, fair and transparent; and
- It will be reviewed every three years.

3. Review

We will review this policy at least once every two years to ensure that it meets best practice guidelines.

Alternatively, the policy and all associated procedures will be reviewed immediately following any relevant change to government policy, regulation or legislation.

The Community Services Manager will be responsible for ensuring that policy reviews are undertaken, that appropriate consultation takes place and that revisions are reported to the Executive Team for approval.

4. Responsibilities

North Devon Homes' Executive Team will approve this policy and delegate responsibility to the Customer Services Manager to ensure that this policy is communicated and implemented.

5. Scope

This policy applies to the NDH Group and must be adhered to by all employees, Board Members, involved customers, contractors (whether working in NDH offices or its homes), consultants and any other person granted access to data held or processed by NDH.

6. Policy Statement

This policy sets out how we will manage customer requests to have a pet and to encourage and ensure responsible pet ownership in our properties.

- 6.1 Customers will need to obtain consent from North Devon Homes before obtaining a pet.
- 6.2 The type of animals North Devon Homes considers reasonable include domestic cats, dogs, small domestic animals such as rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, mice, small birds such as budgies and canaries, fish, non-poisonous insects and spiders and non-poisonous snakes and reptiles under two feet in length (fully grown).
- 6.3 The number of animals may also be restricted. Dogs, in particular, may require additional ventilation; or be limited to one or two, depending on the property.
- 6.4 Some properties are not suitable for keeping certain types of animals. For example, North Devon Homes will not normally approve consent to keep cats or dogs in upper floors flats.
- 6.5 On ground floor flats we would expect the property to have its own door with direct access to a private garden, which is fenced at the customers cost, as part of any conditional consent given
- 6.6 Customers are required to request permissions for a cat flap which will only be possible within the lower panel of the rear door. Should a customer subsequently move home we will reserve the right to recharge to have the door panel replaced. Cat-flaps are not allowed in front doors, communal doors and fire doors.

- 6.7 North Devon homes will consider requests for house cats in flats on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.8 North Devon Homes will not normally allow rodents or snakes in flats.
- 6.9 Fish tanks over 150 litres will not be suitable in some of our properties. Permissions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.10 Pets requiring controlled environments, heating, cooling or pumps or which create humidity or moisture may not be suitable and require permission.
- 6.11 Guidance from professionals such as vets, animal charities or the North Devon Council Dog Wardens will be taken into consideration, where necessary when assessing an application for a pet.
- 6.12 Any customers found neglecting or abusing their pet will be reported to the RSPCA or dog warden (where relevant)
- 6.13 Communal gardens are not suitable for keeping or exercising pets. Dogs should not be left unattended at any time, should be properly trained and kept on a lead in communal spaces at all times, including communal hallways and gardens.
- 6.14 All pets and other animals must be kept in an appropriate manner which is adequate for their needs and from which they cannot escape. If a pet is left at a property without the appropriate care, for a long length of time and seems to be in distress, we will report this to the RSPCA or dog warden (where relevant) and arrange for the pet to be removed from the property into their care.
- 6.15 If any pet(s) and or other animals(s) cause damage to the home / garden or nuisance or annoyance or noise or danger to anyone in the neighbourhood, North Devon Homes will withdraw permission to keep that pet(s) and/or other animal(s).
- 6.16 If permission is withdrawn the animals must normally be removed within seven to ten days. If North Devon Homes needs to seek legal intervention, we will look to reclaim the costs and recharge the customer. Any damage caused to North Devon Homes property by the pet(s) will be recharged to the customer.
- 6.17 North Devon Homes works very closely with environmental health especially in incidents of customers not picking up after their dogs. If a Community Protection Warning or Notice is issued this will be treated as a tenancy breach and North Devon Homes may take action on your tenancy.

- 6.18 Breeding and / or selling of animals, including non-commercial breeding is prohibited in the property.
- 6.19 Customers are encouraged to arrange for dogs and cats to be neutered to prevent unwanted animals.
- 6.20 In order to prevent sudden and unforeseen costs, we recommend that pets be insured. There are a variety of pet plans available on the open market.
- 6.21 Under the new microchipping law that came into **effect on 6 April 2016** all dogs, puppies must be microchipped and registered by the age of eight weeks. We would encourage all cats to be microchipped over the age of 20 weeks in line with new legislation that will be coming in.

7. Reasons for refusing permission to keep a pet or pets

- 7.1 Permission will not be granted for a resident to keep a pet where we consider that the property is unsuitable.
- 7.2 Permission will not be granted if we consider the number of pets a customer requested is excessive and has the potential to cause a nuisance.
- 7.3 Permission will not be granted for cats, large dogs or medium sized dogs in flats unless the property has its own front door with direct access outside to its own private garden.
- 7.4 We will consider on a case-by-case basis any previous history of pet ownership the resident may have had when deciding whether to grant consent. Permission may be refused where records show a previous history of neglect or cruelty; or instances of irresponsible pet ownership, such as failure to control an animal, clean up after an animal or to allow wilful neglect of an animal.
- 7.5 Permission will not be granted if there are current rent arrears or outstanding recharges.
- 7.6 Permission will not be granted where there is an ongoing Anti-Social Behaviour case.
- 7.7 Permission will not be granted if the property is in poor condition.
- 7.8 North Devon Homes will not normally approve requests for livestock.
- 7.9 Under the new XL Bully Laws that fall under the Dangerous Dog Act 1991 we will only grant permission for this breed of dog as per the guidance in appendix 2 of this document – XL Bully Guidance.

7.10 We will not grant permission for new requests to home an XL bully.

7.11 We will only grant permission where customers already own a dog of this breed, have been given permission by North Devon Homes for a dog and where they adhere to the guidance as set out in appendix 2 of this document – XL Bully Guidance,

8. Consultation

Who has been consulted in developing the Policy?

Date	Consultation Methodology	Challenge / Impact / Result
6 October 2022	Customer Board Partnership	

9. Equality Impact Assessment

10.1 Identify potential impact on each of the diversity “groups”

Strand	No impact	Negative impact	Positive impact	Comments / evidence
Race				
Disability				
Gender				
Gender Reassignment				
Sexual orientation				
Religion or belief				
Age				
Rural issues				
Social Inclusion issues				
Pregnancy and maternity				
Marriage and civil partnership				

10.2 Does the Policy promote equality of opportunity?
N/A

10.3 If “adverse impact” identified in the table above, please state how this policy addresses this.
N/A

10.4 A full EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) is not required for this policy.

10.5 If suggestions for improvement have been suggested, what should the positive outcome be for North Devon Homes' customers and stakeholders?

Next review date	
Every two years Next review date: March 2026	
Author	Related Documents
Head of Customer and Housing Services	Appendix 1 - Animal guidelines and conditions Appendix 2 XL Bully Guidance

Appendix 1: Animal Guidelines and Conditions

All Pets must not be allowed to roam in communal areas inside or outside unattended at any time. Dogs, in particular, should be properly trained and kept on a lead in communal areas at all times.

All mess must be cleaned up immediately, regardless of whether it is in your private garden or in a communal space.

You will need to get our written permission if you would like a cat-flap installed, prior to installing one. Cat-flaps will not be allowed on a door that opens into a communal area as these are usually fire doors .

Under the new micro chipping laws that came into effect on 6 April 2016, all dogs, puppies must be microchipped by the age of 8 weeks. We would encourage all cats to be microchipped over the age of 20 weeks in line with new legislation that will be coming in.

Should North Devon Homes receive complaints regarding:-

- you not being a responsible owner;
- the condition of your home/garden;
- your pet's behaviour; then

we will assess the complaint on an individual basis. We may withdraw permission for you to have your pet in our property if the complaint is upheld. We expect you to find an alternative home for your pet and the pet to be removed in 7 – 10 days.

If you leave your pet in the property for any length of time without arranging for it to be cared for properly, we have the authority to remove the animal from the property and pass it to the RSPCA or similar organisation to be looked after.

Permission must be sought each time you wish to add a new animal into your home.

Appendix 2: XL Bully Guidance

Guidance on permission to keep an XL Bully type dogs

North Devon Homes will not be granting permission for any new XL Bully type dogs' to reside in our homes.

Any current dogs of this type living in NDH homes will need to comply with the government regulations, we will need to see the below information before we can consider giving retrospective permission.

- Evidence that the dog was already at the address.
- Certificate of Exemption.
- Third party public liability insurance..
 - We may request to see proof of this at any time so must be regularly renewed and kept up to date.
- Confirmation of neutering form (age dependent)..
- Microchip details.
- Photos of a secure fenced garden, fencing to be completed at customers cost.

In line with our pet policy, we will not be granting permission in flats or areas with communal gardens. Please see pet policy for further information.

In addition to this we request that the dog is shut in a separate room and a muzzle is placed on the dog throughout the duration of any visits to the property by staff and contractors and that you comply with the guidelines set out by the government when in a public place.

This will be subject to change depending on any changes to guidelines from government/local authority.

Any noncompliance with the guidance will result in NDH reporting the dog ownership/breach to the necessary agencies and withdrawal of permission.

All documentation to be provided to North Devon Homes within 28days following our request.