



A PCH GUIDE TO OWNING PETS

This guidance has been created to encourage responsible pet ownership, and make sure we support our customers who already have or want to have pets.

This guidance can help you to be a responsible pet owner and not break any terms of your tenancy agreement with PCH for pets that you need permission for.

GAINING CONSENT

Please contact PCH for advice when you are considering a pet. Consent is not required for small pets that live in cages, bowls, and tanks but customers should still follow the terms of their tenancy agreement, and our Pets Policy. You will be required to complete a Responsible Pet Owners agreement for new cats and/or dogs which we will keep a record of.

Housing with Support schemes - we ask you to work closely with your Housing with Support Officer when wanting a pet as some of our schemes are fully carpeted and have shared access with the other residents.

BANNED BREEDS

The following dog breeds are banned in the UK:

- Pit Bull Terrier
- Japanese Tosa
- Dogo Argentino
- Fila Brasileiro
- XL Bully

As per our policy banned breeds will not be permitted, except those who are on the exempted index and lived with

a PCH resident prior to 1 February 2024 with appropriate permission.

Please note that XL Bully dogs must be kept on a lead and muzzled in public. From 1 February 2024 it is illegal to own an XL Bully dog if it is not registered on the Index of Exempted Dogs and meets strict requirements that you can read more about at www.gov.uk/control-dog-public





ENSURING YOUR PET'S WELLBEING

Before you get your pet, it's important to think about how you're going to keep the animal safe and happy.

Things to think about:

- **The size and location of your home**
(for example a large dog in a bedsit taking up a lot of space)
- **Space for your pet to exercise and go to the toilet**
- **Your own priorities and ability to care for your pet to meet its needs**
- **Extra costs – such as food, equipment, and vets' bills**
There is a pet cost calculator on the RSPCA website - www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/costofliving/petcalculator

Residents are legally responsible for the health and safety of any pet, making sure it has the right environment, diet, behaves well, and is protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease. Animals that need to live with, or apart from other pets should also be considered.

While you may be excited to get a new pet, there are things you need to consider to provide the best care for them. Dogs, for example, need to be walked regularly

to keep them healthy and obedient. Without exercise they could become bored leading to behavioural problems such as chewing, excessive barking, jumping and hyperactivity, which can cause distress to the dog and nuisance to neighbours.

You can find information on looking after various types of pets by visiting the RSPCA Pet Care pages - www.rspca.org.uk

HOW MANY PETS CAN I HAVE?

Everyone's home and access to their home is different so it is recommended that you contact PCH and explain your circumstances before you consider getting a pet. We will consider things like the size of your home and if your home comes with a garden before giving consent.

We will consider a request for consent for one pet if you live in a flat with communal access and up to two pets if you have a home with a garden.

We will always discuss a resident's request and not withhold consent for a reasonable request.

CAN I FOSTER A PET TEMPORARILY?

Yes, you need to contact PCH to request permission. We will consider things like the size of your home and if your home comes with a garden before giving consent.

REGISTRATION AT THE VETS

Whatever pet you are looking to get, regardless of its age, you should register with a vet and ensure your pet has regular check-ups to keep them healthy so that any problems can be treated quickly. Many vets provide health care packages to spread the cost so you

can keep up with regular appointments. Talk to your vet to find out if they offer a health care scheme. It is advised that you neuter or spay cats and dogs as soon as the animal is old enough.







PET IDENTIFICATION

It's important that your cats and dogs wear a collar and a tag that includes your contact details when outside, so they can be identified and help you get them back if they get lost or injured. It is a legal requirement for dogs to wear a tag which bears the owners' name and address. Failure to do so can lead pet identification to fine owners of up to £2000.

It is a legal requirement to microchip and register your dog by the time its 8 weeks old, and from 10 June 2024 cats in England need to be microchipped and registered on a database by the time they're 20 weeks old.

Microchipping can sometimes be done for free through animal welfare events and charities.

WHEN YOU ARE NOT HOME

It is your responsibility to make arrangements for someone to care for your pet if you're away from your home for things like holidays or hospital stays. If you're out during the day, pets can become lonely, bored and start to display behavioural problems, which might have an impact on your pet, your neighbours

and your tenancy with PCH. If you can't get a pet sitter, dogs should be exercised before you leave to help them to settle. Some pets also respond well to the sound of calming noises such as light background noise like talk radio to keep them calm and well behaved.

PET INSURANCE

Vet bills can be very expensive, and we strongly recommend that you take out pet insurance for your pet to help you if they need urgent or unexpected care. Here are some of the benefits:

- **Help with vet bills if your pet suffers illness or accident**
- **Dental treatment, farewell cover, lost and found and pets abroad cover**
- **Multi-pet discount**
Many insurers will offer you a discount for insuring more than one pet
- **Third party liability (dogs only)**
Covers damage to someone or someone else's property

ASK THE EXPERTS

There are many organisations that can help and support you with your pet ownership, from hints and tips on looking after your pet, to providing access to free services. These include:

- **RSPCA: rspca.org.uk**
- **The Dogs Trust: dogstrust.org.uk**
- **The Cat Protection League: cats.org.uk**
- **PDSA: pdsa.org.uk**

You may find there comes a time where you need access to vets' services you simply cannot afford. The PDSA are here to help those most in need.





ENSURING YOUR PET DOESN'T CAUSE NUISANCE

The behaviour of your pet, or anyone visiting you that brings their pet with them, can have a huge impact on your neighbours. Simple things like ensuring your pet isn't making excessive noise and ensuring dog faeces is promptly picked up can help to keep the peace.

For dogs, it is recommended that basic training is undertaken to teach them

skills to understand commands such as recall, sit, stay, heel, and walk on a lead. Socialising your dog will also help improve its behaviour.

Here are some other things you can do to make sure your pet isn't causing a nuisance.

PCH would not consent to:

- ✗ **Pets kept or tied up in communal areas**
- ✗ **Pets in any communal lounges without the agreement of other users**

Residents should seek agreement with other users when bringing pets inside communal areas, such as sheltered schemes and blocks with a lounge like the Beacon and Briarwood, except in the case of assistance dogs. Pets are not permitted in communal laundries because some residents and staff can suffer from allergies or be nervous around dogs.

- ✗ **The commercial breeding or boarding of pets in properties**



You should ensure that:

- ✓ **Your pets are well cared for and happy in their environment**
- ✓ **You clean up after your pet in public areas**

If you are a dog owner, you have a legal duty to clean up every time your dog messes in a public place. You can be issued an on-the-spot fine by your local council if you don't
- ✓ **Your pet does not foul in communal areas**

If the animal does foul in any of the shared communal areas, you must promptly clear and dispose of it hygienically
- ✓ **Your garden is kept clear of fouling by promptly disposing of it hygienically**
- ✓ **Dogs are kept on a lead while in all indoor and outdoor communal spaces**

This will prevent your dog running away or jumping on other dogs or people
- ✓ **Your pets do not cause any noise or odour nuisance**

Your pets should not interfere with your neighbours peace, comfort or enjoyment of their own home
- ✓ **Your home is kept free from animal mess, fleas and vermin**
- ✓ **Your pets are kept under control**

Your pets should not interfere with activities of PCH staff or our contractors who visit or undertake work in your home. (you may be asked to keep your pet in another room while work is carried out)
- ✓ **If your dog has access to a private garden, you must keep the garden boundaries secure to stop them escaping.**

Putting wire over gates with gaps in can stop small dogs getting through the bars
- ✓ **Your pets do not cause damage to your property or shared area**

If damage does occur its your responsibility to resolve this
- ✓ **Your garden is kept clear of animal remains**

In the sad event that your pet passes away, you cannot lay them to rest in your garden.

COMPLAINTS AND NUISANCE/POTENTIAL TENANCY ACTION

The last thing we want to do is remove permission to have pets, but we also have a duty to protect customers who tell us that pets are making life difficult for them.

Reports of nuisance or annoyance will be handled as anti-social behaviour cases and where complaints are received, we will work with residents to help them resolve the issues between themselves.

If a resolution can't be reached, the behaviours continue or there is unwillingness to engage and address the reports and we don't feel that the pet owner is engaging in the process,

we may withdraw permission for a pet to be kept. Where permission is withdrawn, customers will be notified in writing and a reasonable timeframe agreed to allow for rehoming.

Legal action may also be taken in some cases in line with the terms of your tenancy agreement.

We may also work with local authority, Police, RSPCA or any other organisation that may support us to find a resolution





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