



Responsible Pet Ownership Policy

Originator:	Regulatory Compliance Team
PCHA Board Approval Date:	June 2026
Review date:	June 2029

1	Introduction
1.1	Pine Court Housing Association (PCHA) strives to be the best landlord, and to make homes and communities as safe as possible for its customers.
1.2	To achieve this aim PCHA needs to balance the wishes of many customers who want to keep pets, with the principles of animal welfare and our commitment to promoting safe communities.
1.3	The Policy sets out the process for requesting permission, how decisions will be reached, and what terms and conditions may be attached to the consent given by PCHA.
1.4	Scope of Policy
1.4.1	The Policy applies to all social, affordable and rent to buy properties owned and managed by PCHA. The Policy does not apply to PCHA leaseholders, market rent tenants or shared owners.
1.5	Legal compliance
1.5.1	PCHA’s relationship with their customers is underpinned by the tenancy agreement. This sets out the rights of both parties and forms a legal contract in accordance with the Housing Act 1988 (as amended).
1.5.2	Operation of the Policy demonstrates a commitment to making fair and consistent decisions in response to customer requests to keep pets and supports the principles of The Animal Welfare Act 2006.
1.5.3	The Equalities Act 2010 defines who should be considered as disabled and requires PCHA to take account of disabled persons’ needs even if this means treating disabled people more favourably. As such, PCHA will consider circumstances in which a customer may have medical reasons for keeping an animal.
1.5.4	Where an ‘assistance dog’ is required for customers to live independently and the property is unsuitable, then priority for re-housing will be assessed in accordance with the Allocations Policies as relevant in each area.

1.5.5	<p>Operation of this Policy also takes into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (as amended in 1997) • The Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 • The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 • The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 • Animal Welfare Act, 2006
1.5.6	<p>Section 3.4 addresses the approach of PCHA where pets or animals cause nuisance and annoyance and should be read in conjunction with the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.</p>
1.5.7	<p>The application of this Policy ensures compliance with the outcomes of the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England, responsibility of the Regulator for Social Housing as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to the housing and landlord services they provide, registered providers must take action to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants and, where relevant, prospective tenants
1.6	<p>Access and Communication</p>
1.6.1	<p>PCHA is committed to ensuring that its services are accessible to everyone. We will seek alternative methods of access and service delivery where barriers, perceived or real may exist, that may make it difficult for people to work for PCHA or use its services.</p>
1.7	<p>Equality, Diversity and Human Rights</p>
1.7.1	<p>PCHA is committed to fairness and equality for all customers, colleagues, and stakeholders.</p>
1.7.2	<p>PCHA’s approach to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) goes beyond legal or statutory obligations, however, PCHA will meet or exceed its legal requirements as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. This policy also demonstrates how PCHA will meet the requirements of Public Sector Equality Duties, which it has chosen to adopt and implement as a matter of good practice rather than as a legal obligation.</p>
1.7.3	<p>PCHA is fully committed to eliminating unfair and unlawful discrimination. Hate crime, harassment, and bullying will also not be tolerated and PCHA will take proactive steps to prevent such behaviours.</p>
1.7.4	<p>It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly based on the following protected characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability • Gender • Gender identity, or gender reassignment status • Race, racial group, ethnic or national origin, or nationality • Religion or belief • Sexual orientation • Age • Marriage or civil partnership status • Pregnancy or maternity

1.7.5	PCHA are also committed to ensuring that individuals are not treated less favourably due to their social, economic, or cultural backgrounds, as well as specific medical conditions as defined in the Equality Act.
1.7.6	PCHA regularly review policies and practices to ensure they reflect its commitment to equality and diversity.
1.8	The Policy should be read in conjunction with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCHA Anti-Social Behaviour Policy • PCHA Domestic Abuse Policy • PCHA Harassment and Hate Crime Policy

2	Statement of Intent
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2.1	PCHA will consider all requests from customers to grant permission to keep a pet at their home. Permission for small animals that can be kept in self-containers (i.e. fish, hamsters) will not be required, however, PCHA will require tenants to seek a permission to keep medium to large pets i.e. cats, dogs.
2.2	Decisions will be taken giving due regard to the terms of the individual’s tenancy agreement, the type of property, the individual’s circumstances and the appropriateness of the request depending upon the type of pet.
2.3	PCHA will utilise this Policy as a basis for making clear, fair and consistent decisions whilst recognising the diverse needs of customers and the many varieties of property type and layout.
2.4	PCHA will ensure it meets its legal and regulatory requirements in regard to granting permission for its tenants to keep pets.
2.5	PCHA will endeavour to promote animal welfare principles with existing and proposed pet owners.

3	Policy
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3.1	Permission
3.1.1	Decisions on pet/animal ownership will be taken by the Housing Manager and a written response will be provided to customers requesting permission within 10 working days.
3.1.2	Where consent is granted, this will be subject to terms and conditions which are aimed to minimise the likelihood of problems arising, and to promote the welfare of the pet / animal.
3.1.3	Applications for permission to keep pets or animals will need to be signed by the tenant or in the case of joint tenancies, both tenants.

3.1.4 PCHA will not grant permission to keep larger pets in Retirement Living Schemes except for exceptional circumstances e.g. 'assistance' dogs or where the request is for small pets that are kept in contained areas e.g. small cages / glass tanks or similar.

3.2 **Factors to be taken into account**

3.2.1 PCHA aims to act fairly and reasonably in relation to requests from customers to keep pets / animals, and therefore the decision making process should be consistent. In order to facilitate this, officers will consider the following factors when making their decision.

- The size of the property
- Whether the property is accessed via a communal internal area
- Whether the property has a communal or individual garden
- The size of the outside space
- Whether the property is a part of a scheme, for example, a sheltered scheme
- Whether the property is a house, bungalow or flat
- Whether the property is part of a block, for example low-rise
- The location of the property
- Whether the property is adjoined to another property
- The nature of the pet or animal to be kept
- The personal circumstances of the tenant
- Any other relevant circumstances (e.g. circumstances of neighbouring properties / tenants)

3.2.2 Each case will be considered on its merits; however, it is extremely unlikely that PCHA will grant permission for:

- Any large animal (unsuitable to be kept indoors)
- Any animals that have to be kept outdoors (including caged birds, pigeons or similar)
- Requests for multiple animals to be kept at the premises
- Any wild animals
- Any banned animals e.g. those classed as being dangerous dogs (unless exempted by a court order)
- Any animals that are a danger due to being poisonous or venomous
- Any animals classed as livestock (i.e. any traditional farmyard animals)
- Where there is a high likelihood of animals creating a statutory nuisance e.g. through noise
- Any permission for breeding or commercial activity associated with pet or animal ownership

3.3 **Existing pet owners**

3.3.1 Where PCHA tenants have existing pets prior to the publication of this Policy and they do not have express written permission to keep them, PCHA may allow them to remain on a discretionary basis, provided:

- No complaints have been received
- No damage to PCHA's property has been caused as a result of the keeping of the pet or animal

- No concerns as to the animal's welfare exist and the suitability of the animal or pet to the type of accommodation

3.4 Enforcement issues

3.4.1 In a minority of cases, pets/animals can cause nuisance to others. Where this happens, PCHA's Housing Team will sign-post customers to organisations that can help.

3.4.2 Non exhaustive examples of the kinds of issues where PCHA may get involved include:

- A pet roaming in communal areas and/or unattended
- Excessive noise, for example, dogs barking
- Pets fouling
- Aggressive pets
- Too many pets in a property affecting property condition or garden

3.4.3 PCHA may also get involved or make referrals to other agencies including the Royal Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) where there are concerns about the animal's welfare, examples include:

- Where animals have been abandoned
- Where animals are under-fed
- Where animals are experiencing neglect or cruelty
- Where animals are kept in unsanitary conditions

3.4.4 Following the provision of verbal warnings, if problems persist or tenants fail to comply with instructions issued by PCHA, it may on a case-by-case basis consider further actions including but not limited to:

- Issuing warning letters
- Withdrawal of permission to have a pet / keep animals
- Issuing Acceptable Behaviour Contracts
- Referrals to the Police / Environmental Health
- Tenancy enforcement actions / other legal remedies including civil actions

3.4.5 Where clear evidence exists that pets have caused damage to the property, PCHA may consider recharging their owners for remedial works.

3.4.6 Where pets are abandoned in properties, PCHA will work with RSPCA or other similar organisations to find suitable, professionally run, temporary homes for them depending on the nature of the pet and its physical condition.

3.4.7 If in the course of carrying out normal landlord functions e.g. repairs and maintenance or annual gas safety checks, it is necessary to engage the services of professional bodies to control pets safely, PCHA reserves the right to recharge tenants for this service.

3.4.8 In such circumstances where owners cannot control their pets to allow safe access to properties, PCHA will withdraw any previous permissions to keep pets and may take tenancy enforcement actions where the keeping of the pet constitutes a tenancy breach on anti-social behaviour grounds.

4	Implementation	
4.1	All PCHA staff have responsibility to be aware of the PCHA Responsible Pet Ownership Policy in order to direct any customer enquiries that may arise.	
5	Performance	
5.1	There are no additional performance requirements as a result of the operation of this Policy.	
6	Consultation	
6.1	All PCHA staff have been consulted in the development of this Policy. The Customer Empowerment Panel have also been consulted in the development of this Policy.	
7	Review	
7.1	This Policy will be reviewed every Three years (from the date it is approved) by the Departmental Management Team (DMT) to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness or as required by the introduction of new legislation or regulation that impacts on the obligations of PCHA or changes to PCHA business practices.	
8	Equality Impact Assessment	
8.1	Was a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) required?	No
8.2	When was EIA conducted and by who?	An EIA Relevance Test was conducted by the Strategic Regulatory Compliance Manager and the Policy and Strategy Administrator in May 2026.
8.3	Results of EIA	<p>The EIA Relevance Test did not identify any adverse impacts for any groups with protected characteristics as a result of the operation of this Policy.</p> <p>There were potential differential impacts for those with disabilities although these are adequately thought to be mitigated through 'reasonable adjustments' and a case by case approach to permissions.</p>
9	Scheme of Delegation	
9.1	Responsible committee for approving and monitoring implementation of the policy and any amendments to it	DMT

9.2	Responsible officer for formulating policy and reporting to committee on its effective implementation	Operations Director- PCHA	
9.3	Responsible officer for formulating, reviewing and monitoring implementation of procedures	Operations Director -PCHA	
10	Amendment Log		
Date of revision:	Reason for revision:	Consultation record:	Record of amendments:
This is the first version of the Policy for PCHA	N/A	See section 6	N/A
18 th June 2026	In Line with the Review Schedule	See Section 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIA information updated in Section 8 • Equality, Diversity and Human Rights statement updated in 1.7 • Team names and job titles updated throughout • Section 3.3 'Existing Pet owners' added