

HFL Pets Policy

Objective

To provide a consistent approach to pet ownership in Homes for Lambeth (HFL) properties that is:

- Unambiguous
- Open to inspection by all interested parties
- Promotes a consistent approach to responsible pet ownership and
- Provides a reference document for HFL staff, its agents and tenants

This policy aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To ensure that its implementation does not discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age
- To promote animal welfare
- To minimise nuisance caused by pets
- To address residents' concerns about dangerous dogs and nuisance caused by dogs
- To identify irresponsible owners and tackle them for breach of tenancy conditions, and
- To improve the safety and environmental condition of neighbourhoods.

HFL will operate its Pets Policy in compliance with the Housing Regulator's Standards as set out in "The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012" as updated in 2015 and 2018 and associated guidance documents.

Exotic Pets

We will not usually grant permission to keep exotic animals but will consider applications to keep small birds and fish.

Dogs

In recent years there have been increasing concerns about the rise in "status dogs". Evidence suggests that in the UK "status dogs" that are used for criminal and anti-social purposes, is getting worse.

An increased number of potentially dangerous dogs are kept illegally and some animals are mistreated.

We and our Managing Agent will closely with the Metropolitan Police, RSPCA, Battersea Dogs Home and animal welfare agencies to investigate incidents involving dangerous dogs.

HFL will not tolerate antisocial behaviour from dogs including:

- Using dogs as weapons
- Using dogs to intimidate others
- Allowing dogs to attack other dogs
- Illegal dog fighting
- Mistreatment of dogs and
- Damage to public property, including trees

Banned Dogs

Under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 Section 1 (Amended 1997), it is illegal to own a banned type of dog (unless it is registered in the Index of Exempted Dogs Register). The four banned types of dogs are:

- **Pit Bull Terrier** (other names include American Pit Bull Terrier, American Pit Bull, American Staffordshire Terriers, Irish Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Irish Blue or Red Nose)
- **Dogo Argentino** (other names include Argentinean Mastiff)
- **Japanese Tosa** (other names include Tosa Inu and Tose Fighting Dog)

- **Fila Brasileiro** (other names include Brazilian Mastiff)

Microchipping

The RSPCA, veterinary organisations and the police agree that microchipping is the most effective way to manage antisocial behaviour connected to dogs and to promote the welfare of dogs.

Since April 2016 all dogs have needed to be microchipped. Microchips are coded with the owner's details, and owners can face fines of up to £500.

HFL recognises that the requirement to microchip dogs could be financial burden for low income households. HFL and its Managing Agent will work with the council, RSPCA and other animal welfare organisations to arrange free microchipping for Lambeth residents.

HFL and its Managing Agent will signpost pet owners to the RSPCA South East Branch at West Norwood, 380 Norwood Road, SE27 9AA, where free micro chipping can be obtained.

Requirements of the Tenancy Conditions

HFL's Tenancy Conditions stipulate that tenants must obtain permission from HFL to keep dogs.

The agreement confirms that, to obtain consent, we require documented evidence that the animal is microchipped.

Under The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015, it became compulsory for all dogs over the age of 8 weeks in England to be fitted with microchips from 6 April 2016. If a dog without a microchip comes to the attention of the authorities, its keeper may be served with a notice requiring the dog to be microchipped, and may face criminal prosecution and a £500 fine if they do not comply with the notice.

Before consent is granted the tenant will also be asked to sign an agreement ensuring that:

- They keep the microchip information up-to-date
- The dog has a name tag and contact details when in public places
- The dog is on a lead at all times in public places
- The dog does not cause nuisance
- The dog does not foul on, or damage, communal areas and
- The dog is not used for breeding purposes

Except in exceptional cases, permission will not be granted to have more than 2 cats/dogs. We will not give permission if the property is unsuitable for a pet or if it is believed that the pet is likely to cause nuisance, or pose a danger to any other person.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every two years in accordance with any future legislative changes as and when they occur.

Equalities and Diversity

HFL Homes does not discriminate against tenants or residents regardless of their race, religion, language, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, health or disability, location, political or immigration status.

We recognise that vulnerable tenants have housing related support needs and will work with agencies to meet those needs.

We work in accordance with the organisation's Equality and Diversity Policy, ensuring that appropriate advice and assistance is given to those disadvantaged in the community, and that adequate translation and interpretation facilities, large print material, Mincom, induction loops etc are available. All actions carried out are in accordance with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Training and Promotion

We will publicise this policy to staff and tenants through:

- Our website
- Policy briefings and training

HFL Policy Name:	HFL Pets Policy
HFL Policy Owner:	HFL Operations Manager
Applies to:	All HFL Group Companies
Policy Compliance:	Annual Review
Policy Review Cycle:	Every two Years (min or as per legal/regulatory requirements). Next review July 2021
Version Control/Audit Trail:	
	DRAFT v1.0 Prepared for HFL Board approval February 2019. Sent out for Board approval via circulation on 24 June 2019 Based on Lambeth Council policy.
24 June 2019 15 July 2019	Sent out for Board approval via circulation Approved by Board via circulation