



# Pet Policy

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<b>Approved by Committee/Board</b>	N/A
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<b>Policy developed by</b>	Senior Housing Manager
<b>Consultations</b>	Involved Customer Group, Housing Team and Support Services
<b>Associated Procedure</b>	Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Rechargeable Repairs Policy

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# Version Control

Version	Author	Date Published	Next Review	Comments
1.0	Senior Housing Manager	01 Jan 25	31 Jan 28	Policy review
1.1	Corporate Project Manager	23 May 25	31 Jan 28	Changes to terminology to align with new application. Accused to Accused, Affected to Affected.

## Introduction

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out the aims and principles that Connexus will apply in regard to keeping pets at our properties.
- 1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the individual tenancy/leasehold/licence agreement and any Local Lettings Plan that may apply.

### 2. Problem to Solve

- 2.1 Connexus recognises that:
  - Domestic pets can be a great source of comfort and companionship to both individuals and families. Connexus considers a domestic pet to be:
    - Dog
    - Cat
    - Caged bird
    - Fish
    - Small, caged rodent, e.g. rabbit, guinea pig, chinchilla, hamster
    - Small, non-poisonous caged reptile e.g. lizard, certain breeds of snake
    - Small, non-poisonous contained insect or amphibian e.g. stick insect, terrapin
  - Not all homes are a suitable environment in which to house a pet
  - Pets can, at times, cause issues to other neighbours if not cared for properly and responsibly
- 2.2 Where practical, Connexus will allow tenants to keep domestic pets but customers must be aware that the keeping of pets brings considerable responsibility not only for the animal, but also in terms of neighbours and the local community who may be affected by its presence.

### 3. Method/s

- 3.1 This policy should be applied in conjunction with the individual tenancy/leasehold/licence agreement which provides further detail regarding the keeping of pets.
- 3.2 Many Connexus tenancy agreements automatically give permission for one pet in our general needs properties, provided that it is not an animal prohibited by law. This does not apply to Supported Housing where permission from that relevant service must always be requested. The requirement for obtaining permission in supported accommodation is based on the understanding that residents in these settings often have specific support needs. This step ensures that residents are able to adequately care for a pet and the pets welfare is adequately safeguarded.
- 3.3 Where the tenancy/leasehold/licence agreements state that permission to keep pets is required, Connexus will individually assess each request taking into consideration details of:
- Breed and size of the pet/livestock requested
  - How many pets the customer currently has
  - The nature and layout of the property
  - Any nuisance or ASB that has been / is being reported at the property
  - Any evidence of financial hardship where having the financial responsibility for a pet might make the situation worse
  - If pets are required for medical needs such as hearing dogs, dogs for the blind
- 3.5 Emotional Support animals – currently in the UK the laws that protect assistance or service animals do not extend to emotional support or ‘therapy’ animals. If a customer requests permission for an emotional support animal that that request must be assessed using the criteria below. A reasonable and proportionate response should be given.
- 3.4 Connexus promotes responsible pet ownership and owners are responsible for their pet and their welfare as defined under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. As such all tenants with permission to keep pets will be expected to:
- Keep their pets under proper control and supervision
  - Appropriately care for their animal, and not abuse by any specific action, or by neglect
  - Ensure that no animal kept at, or which is brought to, the premises, causes any nuisance or annoyance
  - Provide and maintain suitable fencing and keep it, and the animal, in a clean and hygienic manner
  - Not allow dogs to roam unsupervised
  - Not keep any animal in such a way as to cause damage to the premises or any neighbouring property
  - Keep all dogs on a lead whilst on communal land owned by Connexus, including internal communal areas
  - Ensure that, in line with current legislation, that relevant pets are micro-chipped, and have appropriate identification collars
  - Not allow their pet to foul on any premises or land without clearing it away immediately after it

- To ensure that any pet is appropriately looked after and cared for while away from the home. For example, holiday, respite care or a residential home

### **Permission denied for keeping pets**

#### 3.5 Animals that are not allowed include:

- Any dog that is specified in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (see 3.6)
- Any mammal, bird or invertebrate that requires a license under the Dangerous and Wild Animals Act 1976
- Any farm animals, or livestock, e.g. goats, pigs, chickens, sheep

If the customer has a licence to be able to keep an animal listed above, or other animal where a licence is required, permission must still be sought. The licence however does not guarantee that permission will be granted.

#### 3.6 Permission will be denied keeping dogs that are listed on the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, namely:

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

This list is subject to change so for more detailed information on the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, please refer to [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk).

#### 3.7 Where we have concerns about the tenants' ability to look after an animal correctly and appropriately, Connexus has the right to refuse permission. Examples of this may include, the applicant is a Accused of a live ASB case, or their property is in a poor condition.

#### 3.8 Permission is given on a 'pet by pet' basis. If permission is given for one pet the tenant cannot automatically assume that this permission will be extended to a replacement pet if the first pet leaves the household. Permission must be sought each and every time.

### **Applicants who already have pets**

#### 3.9 Applicants will not be unreasonably overlooked for suitable properties if they have pets. Connexus will determine if the property is suitable for the applicants' pet based the breed and size of the pet(s), the age of the pet(s) and the length of time the customer has had their pet. For example, permission may not be given for a dog if they will be rehoused on the top floor of a block of flats with no access to communal space.

### **Nuisance caused by pets**

#### 3.10 If there is evidence that a pet is causing nuisance or annoyance to other people who live in the area, or if it causes a public or environmental health hazard, enforcement action may be taken in line with our Anti-Social behaviour Policy. This action may ultimately result in the landlords seeking possession of the

property if customers do not work with us to resolve this issue identified. This nuisance includes any pets that are visiting a Connexus property or are being looked after temporarily.

### **Selling pets/animals from Connexus property**

- 3.11 The selling of pets and animals from Connexus homes is only allowed where the customer has the appropriate licences from the Local Authority. Connexus will need to hold a copy of the licence on file before permission is given. Should the business start to cause nuisance to neighbours or others then permission will be withdrawn, and the Customer will be required to rehome all the pets/animals. Likewise, if the licence is withdrawn or not renewed then permission to sell pets will also be withdrawn.

### **Damage caused to property by pets**

- 3.12 Damage caused to the property or garden by pets owned by customers, or their visitors will be subject to a recharge in accordance with our Rechargeable Repairs Policy. An example of this may be scratches on internal doors or damage to fencing in a garden. This includes any alterations made to the property to house or entertain the animal that have not been granted permission.

### **Neglect or suspected abuse of pets**

- 3.13 Where reports of neglect or suspected abuse of pets are either reported to Connexus or witnessed by a colleague, the RSPCA will be informed and discussion will be had with the tenant customer about rehoming the animal(s).

### **Threats to colleagues or customers**

- 3.14 If animals are used in a threatening manner towards colleagues, contractors or members of the public, permission to keep the animal will be withdrawn immediately and tenancy enforcement action will be taken.

### **Withdrawing permission**

- 3.15 Should any landlord consider there is sufficient cause, then permission may be withdrawn for specific pets or all pets within a household at any time.

### **Eviction**

- 3.16 If we require the animals to be removed from the property while the RSPCA attempts to locate the owners, the RSPCA will require written confirmation that Connexus accepts boarding and veterinary liability.

### **Abandonment**

- 3.17 If Connexus genuinely believes that a customer has left a property with no intention to return and there are animals left within the property, the RSPCA will be contacted immediately. The RSPCA will take the most appropriate action under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.
- 3.18 Pets will never be seized as payment for any monies owed to Connexus.

## 4. Measurement

- 4.1 Anti-social behaviour complaints regarding pets or livestock will be recorded and monitored on the anti-social behaviour case management system.
- 4.2 Complaints about this policy will be recorded and monitored on the complaints case management system.