# Pet Policy

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| **Approved by SMT** | 23rd December 2021 (Updated version) |
| **Approved by Committee** | December 2021 |
| **Effective date** | December 2021 |
| **Review date** | December 2024 |
| **Policy developed by** | Housing Services Manager |
| **Consultations** | Housing Team  Customers via consultation platform and email |
| **Associated procedure** | Tenancy/Leasehold/Licence Agreement |

## Purpose

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| 1.1 | This policy sets out the aims and principles that Connexus will apply in regard to keeping pets at our properties. |
| 1.2 | Scope:  The policy applies to the whole of the Group.  This means Connexus Housing Limited, (ultimate parent) and all its subsidiaries. |

## 2. Problem to solve

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| 2.1 | Connexus recognises that domestic pets can be a great source of comfort and companionship to both individuals and families but also that not all homes are a suitable environment in which to house a pet and that on occasion, pets can 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

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| 3.1 | This policy should be used in conjunction with the individual tenancy/leasehold/licence agreement which provides further detail regarding the keeping of pets. |
| 3.2 | From April 2021, 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 Independent Living Schemes where permission must always be requested. |
| 3.3 | Where 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 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, therapy dogs etc. Proof will be required. |
| 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 customers 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 property causes any nuisance or annoyance   + Provide and maintain suitable fencing and keep it and the animal, in a clean and hygienic manner.   + Should additional fencing be required then the appropriate permission must be sought from Connexus before any work is started.   + Not allow dogs to roam unsupervised   + Not to 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 no pet is kept in a communal area.   + 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, on holiday or in respite care |
|  | **Permission Denied for Keeping Pets** |
| 3.5 | Connexus will deny permission to keep animals that are listed in the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976, for example, primates, carnivores, larger or venomous reptiles, dangerous spiders and scorpions unless the customer has the appropriate licence for keeping the animal. Connexus reserves the right to deny permission even if the Customer has a licence for the animal |
| 3.6 | Permission will be denied to keep dogs that are listed in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. The list is subject to change and should always be checked via [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk) |
| 3.7 | Where we have concerns about the Customers ability to look after an animal correctly and appropriately, Connexus has the right to refuse permission. Examples of this may include that the applicant has previously had a pet removed from their care, is a perpetrator in 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 Customer 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 time |
|  | **Applicants who already have Pets** |
| 3.9 | Applicants will not be unreasonably overlooked for suitable properties if they have pets. Connexus will decide if the property is suitable for the applicants based on the breed and size of the pet, the age of the pet 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 cases a public or environmental health hazard, enforcement action may be taken in line with the Connexus’ Anti-Social Behaviour policy. This action may ultimately result in Connexus seeking possession of the property if customers do not work with us to resolve the issues 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 property is only allowed where the customers have 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 the community 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 home or garden by pets owned by our 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 home or garden to house or entertain the pet that has not been granted permission as well as damp or condensation caused by poor ventilation |
|  | **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. Connexus will liaise with the RSPCA that may result in a discussion with the customer about rehoming the animal(s) |
|  | **Threats to Colleagues or Contractors** |
| 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 taken |
|  | **Eviction** |
| 3.15 | Any pets left behind by a customer are regarded as ‘property’ under the law and Connexus becomes responsible for removing them, arranging for their care recouping any costs from the former tenant. In this situation, the RSPCA should be contacted immediately who will attend to the immediate welfare needs of the animal. The RSPCA will not guarantee attendance at an eviction |
| 3.16 | If the animals are required 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 and animals will never be seized as payment for any monies owed to Connexus |

## 4. Measurement

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| 4.1 | Anti-Social Behaviour complaints regarding pets will be recorded and monitored on the CX Housing Management system. |
| 4.2 | Complaints about this policy will be recorded and monitored on the complaints case management system |