

Keeping of Pets Policy

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KEEPING OF PETS POLICY

1. Purpose

This policy sets out clear guidance to residents and staff on the type and breed of animals allowed to be kept as pets in Tai Ceredigion properties under the terms of Tenancy Agreements and leases as appropriate.

2. Objectives

Tai Ceredigion recognises that pets which are well cared for and responsibly kept can be a positive attribute to both individuals and to the general community.

However, irresponsible ownership can cause nuisance and affect the quality of life for other residents in an area.

The main objectives of this policy is to reinforce the tenancy agreement relating to nuisance caused by pets, to set out the permissions required and to clarify that not all of our homes are suitable for pets, such as cats and dogs.

3. Legislative Framework

- Housing Act 1988
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (amended in 1997 and 2014)
- Control of Dogs Order 1992
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Dangerous Wild Animal Act 1976
- Microchipping of Dogs Regulations 2016
- The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Tenancy Agreement

4. Regulatory Framework

In operating this policy, Tai Ceredigion aim to satisfy the requirements of the Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations registered in Wales, adopted by the Welsh Government in December 2011 in the following ways:

- Proportionality
- Transparency and openness
- Consistency
- Promoting improvement and learning
- Delivering high quality services - providing services that meet people's needs and expectations and compare well with other Registered Social Landlords

5. Policy

5.1 Definition of a “Domestic Pet and Numbers Permitted

For the purpose of this policy a ‘Domestic Pet’ is defined as a dog, a cat, (up to a maximum of 2 dogs or 2 cats or a combination of 1 dog and 1 cat per property) a small

caged bird such as a canary or budgerigar, small animals such as rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, mice, gerbils and domestic rats, fish, non-poisonous insects, spiders, snakes and reptiles if appropriately tanked and contained.

Combinations of different small animal types will be considered on completion of a "Pet Application Form".

5.2 Permissions

Permission for a domestic pet will only be considered where a "Pet Application Form" has been completed.

Requests to keep birds/ racing pigeons will be considered individually. Membership of the Royal Racing Pigeon Society or Welsh Homing Pigeon Union will be necessary and written permission from Tai Ceredigion required.

Tenants must obtain written permission from Tai Ceredigion if they wish to keep a domestic pet and this applies to both new pets and replacement pets (those that have been rehoused or which have died).

Pet ownership is a privilege and not a right. Tenants who keep pets without written consent from Tai Ceredigion may have enforcement action taken against them and / or be asked to rehome the pet if retrospective permission cannot be given.

5.3 Property Type

Tenants living in a house, bungalow or flat with its **own** access to the ground floor and its **own** private garden, will normally be allowed to keep the usual "Domestic Pets" as set out above, with written permission from Tai Ceredigion.

Tenants living in flats with shared/communal access and /or with no direct access to a private garden will **not** be allowed to keep dogs * or cats.

*This is with the exception of Assistance dogs. A registered Assistance Dog, is able to accompany his/her owner at all times, provided the dog has been provided by a recognised agency, such as Guide Dogs for the Blind, Support Dogs or Dogs for the Disabled. Tai Ceredigion will require evidence from the relevant agency to support the application.

If a tenant of a flat with shared access and / or no access to a private garden wishes to keep any other type of 'domestic pet' as defined above, written permission from Tai Ceredigion is required. Where the domestic pet would be kept in a communal garden, for example animals in outdoor hutches or which need an outdoor run, including pigeon lofts and aviaries, permission will not be granted, because other tenants and visitors will also be using the garden.

Tai Ceredigion tenants are responsible for visitors to their home and should not permit people to visit with dogs and cats without the prior permission of Tai Ceredigion if their property has shared access. The exception to this is visitors who have a registered Assistance dog as outlined above.

If a new tenant moving into sheltered accommodation has a dog or cat living with them before moving into the sheltered accommodation, the pet will be allowed to live with the tenant until the end of its life. Upon the death of the pet, permission to replace with another dog / cat will not be granted. If however, the tenant wishes to keep any other type of 'domestic pet' as defined above, they must obtain written permission from Tai Ceredigion.

5.4 Responsibilities

Permission to keep the above mentioned domestic pets is conditional on the tenant making sure that their pets do not;-

- Stray or roam
- Damage anyone's property, including their own home. If a pet damages a home, including fixtures and fittings, the resident will be recharged the cost of putting right the damage, including the cost of any professional cleaning required
- Injure, annoy or frighten any one
- Cause a nuisance to anyone else, for example, make too much noise; cause a smell; foul communal areas
- Create a health risk to others

Permission is also conditional on the tenant;-

- Making proper arrangements for the animal's care if they go away overnight or for longer. In general this will require the pet to be boarded elsewhere but close supervision by a neighbour may be adequate for some animals with details of an emergency contact provided to Tai Ceredigion
- Making sure that litter trays are cleaned frequently and pet faeces are cleared daily from the house / garden and no smell is caused by pets
- Making sure that hutches / cages / tanks are cleaned frequently and no smell is caused by the pets
- Keeping the pets under control at all times, including where visitors such as Tai Ceredigion employees, contractors and postal workers / delivery operatives come to their home
- Not allowing any animal to breed or offering any animal for sale for exchange or for gift from a Tai Ceredigion tenancy
- Ensuring that any dog is microchipped as set out in "The Microchipping of Dogs (Wales) Regulations 2015
- Accepting full liability for the conduct and behaviour of their pet(s)

In the case of dogs and in addition to the above, Tai Ceredigion will take action against the dog owner where;-

- A dog has fouled in the home / garden and communal areas such as grassed areas and verges, foot paths and adjoining roads within the estate and the mess has not been cleaned up immediately and disposed of appropriately
- The dog is not accompanied by a responsible person outside the home and is not on a lead at all times in communal areas
- The dog has caused a noise nuisance
- The dog is a danger to others and is not kept under control at all times

- The dog has entered a children's play area

6. Animal Housing

No animal housing, this includes hutches, kennels, aviaries and pigeon lofts, may be erected, either externally or internally in the home, without the prior written permission of Tai Ceredigion.

Tenants may not create a fishpond in the garden without the written permission of Tai Ceredigion.

If Tai Ceredigion grants such permissions, it is on the proviso that the tenants must agree to remove the animal housing / fill in the pond properly if they move out of the property or Tai Ceredigion will charge them the reasonable cost of the work to do so.

7. Removal of a Pet

Tai Ceredigion will ask a tenant to remove pet(s) s from the property where;-

- Permission has not been sought or it has been refused
- Conditions applied to Tai Ceredigion's written consent have not been adhered to
- The pet has caused nuisance, distress or annoyance to any owner or occupier or property adjoining or within the locality of the property or has caused damage or destruction to any part of a property owned or leased by Tai Ceredigion
- The pet has caused injury to a person or if it is dangerous in any other way for example a poisonous snake. This includes all animals prescribed under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- It is not classed as a domestic animal, such as wild animals, primates, livestock, poultry or horses. Tai Ceredigion will not give permission to keep such animals / poultry
- The dog is a breed named in Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or has a substantial number of the characteristics of the following, a Pit Bull Terrier, Dogo Argentino, Japanese Tosa and Fila Brasileiro. Permission will not be given to keep such dogs and if this appears to be the case, Tai Ceredigion staff will notify Dyfed Powys Police in addition to taking their own legal action if rehoming is not undertaken immediately
- If a tenant or another household member has any convictions for, or past history of abandonment, cruelty, neglect or mistreatment of animals or convictions for any offences under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or has been disqualified from keeping animals, or a particular type of animal due to a conviction
- The tenant or another member of the household has previously left a pet behind when the tenant moved out, abandoned or was evicted from a Tai Ceredigion or other social housing tenancy
- When a tenant or another member of the household has previously had any tenancy enforcement taken against them in relation to their previous ownership of pets in a Tai Ceredigion property

This list is not exhaustive. Tai Ceredigion reserve the right to require removal of the pet(s) in other reasonable circumstances.

Any complaint received by Tai Ceredigion regarding the keeping or supervision of animals at a property will be appropriately investigated, working in partnership with all relevant agencies, including the Environmental Health Department of Ceredigion County Council. Tenants will be given the opportunity to rectify any problems where complaints are found to be justified but in cases of neglect and cruelty, Tai Ceredigion will report the matter to the RSPCA and the Police.

8. Abandoned Pets

It is the tenant's responsibility to rehome their pets responsibly if they are no longer able to care for them. If a tenant moves out, abandons or is evicted from a Tai Ceredigion property and leaves a pet behind, Tai Ceredigion will contact an appropriate agency e.g. RSPCA , Community Dog Warden, local animal shelter to assist in rehoming.

Any costs incurred by Tai Ceredigion in dealing with the animals left behind will be recharged to the tenant.

9. Policy Implementation

Tai Ceredigion's Director of Housing and Support will be responsible for implementing this policy and will assist colleagues in the Housing and Support department in the delivery and monitoring of performance.

10. Links to Other Relevant Policies/Documents

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Illegal Occupation Policy
- Allocation of Housing Accommodation, Ceredigion Housing Register and Partnership Members
- Void Management Policy
- Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy.
- Tenancy Agreement
- Tenants Handbook
- The Microchipping of Dogs (Wales) Regulations

11. Complaints/ Appeals

Tai Ceredigion accepts that despite our best efforts, problems arise from time to time. Should a complaint arise about how this policy has been implemented, please refer to Tai Ceredigion's Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy. This is a separate document and can be requested by calling Tai Ceredigion on 0345 606 7654, writing to Tai Ceredigion, Unit 4, Pont Steffan Business Park, Station Terrace, Lampeter, SA48 7HH or emailing on post@taiceredigion.org.uk

12. Review

Tai Ceredigion will review this policy every three years, in consultation with tenants, tenant groups and our Board. More regular reviews will be considered where there is a need to respond to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance or good practice guidance.