



# Pet Policy

## **1.0 Purpose of this Policy**

- 1.1 Maidstone Borough Council recognises the benefits that responsible pet ownership can bring to owners' mental and physical wellbeing. However, irresponsible pet ownership can cause nuisance to other residents, damage to property as well as suffering to animals.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to set out which pets are allowed and provide tenants with guidance on managing their pets.

## **2.0 Policy Scope and Objectives**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Maidstone Borough Council tenants.

### **2.2 This policy aims to clarify:**

- What pets tenants can and cannot keep at properties.
- How the Council expects the tenants' pets and home to be looked after, to ensure the wellbeing of the pet and community.

## **3.0 Legal and Regulatory Framework**

- 3.1 Maidstone Council will abide by the following legislation and requirements:
  - Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 s.3
  - Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA)/ Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (CNEA)
  - Animal Welfare Act 2006
  - The Micro chipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015).

## **4.0 Permitted Animals**

- 4.1 Pets that are permitted to stay, only when certain requirements are met:
  - Dogs
  - Cats
  - Fish
  - Caged Birds
  - Small, caged animals (e.g., hamsters/ rabbits).
- 4.2 The tenant must not keep any dog at the premises (including any dog belonging to other people) either permanently or temporarily, long, or short-term, without first getting Maidstone Council's written permission.
- 4.3 The tenant must get the Council's prior written permission to keep more than two cats.
- 4.4 Other pets such as small, caged animals and birds or fish do not require permission.

#### 4.5 Dogs

No dog must be kept at the property which is of a breed that is banned under the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act. This includes the Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino and Fila Brasileiro.

Dogs must be chipped in line with current laws. Micro chipping is a legal requirement from 6 April 2016 under The Micro chipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015.

If the Council gives the tenant permission to keep a dog, tenants must make sure that:

- Vaccinations and treatment for fleas and worms are kept up to date
- The dog is not left alone for long periods, it is regularly exercised according to its needs, and it does not bark continuously or at un-social hours
- The property and garden are kept clean and free of the dog's faeces by the frequent and hygienic removal of all animal waste
- The dog is kept under proper control in the tenant's home, a private place such as a neighbour's house or garden and a public place, so that it does not: stray onto other people's property and/or more widely in the neighbourhood/locality; and/or cause damage to property or injury to a person, animal, or pet

#### 4.6 Number of animals permitted:

Maidstone Borough Council will allow tenants to have the maximum of:

- One dog and one cat, or two cats and no dog
- Two caged animals
- Reasonable amount of caged birds

### 5.0 Animals the Council does not permit under this policy

5.1 Maidstone Council will not allow applicants to keep wild animals, livestock or farm animals, endangered species or any dogs identified in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or any subsequent legislation.

5.2 In addition, animals registered under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976, which includes venomous snakes, certain types of spider and various breeds of monkey, are not permitted in Maidstone Council Properties.

### 6.0 Keeping Pets without Permission

6.1 If tenants keep a pet(s) without first requesting permission from the Council, it will be a breach of the tenants' licence.

6.2 The tenant will be issued with a warning and must rehome their pet(s) within 14 days. Failure to do so may mean that the Council will ask the tenant to leave the accommodation.

## **7.0 If someone complains about your pet:**

- 7.1 If the Council receives complaints of nuisance behaviour about a pet or other animals living at any property, it will be treated as an anti-social behaviour complaint. Maidstone Council will first ask the tenant to resolve any problems themselves. If the tenant does not, the Council will consider withdrawing permission to keep the pet and take enforcement action to resolve the issue as a breach of licence conditions.

Complaints of nuisance behaviour, may include:

- Fouling of staircases, walkways, courtyards, any communal areas, or dwellings including the tenants' own property
- Injuring or frightening anyone into thinking they might be injured (by the pet)
- The pet being out of control or a danger to other residents
- Making a noise that causes or is likely to cause alarm, distress, or harassment to others
- Failing to comply with the terms of any dog control notice or similar notice issued by the relevant authority
- Not keeping the tenants' home and surrounding areas in good condition

## **8.0 Responsible Pet Ownership**

- 8.1 A pet owner is responsible for the welfare of their animal by law and must take reasonable steps in all circumstances to ensure that the needs of the animal are met to the extent required by good practice (Section 9, Animal Welfare Act 2006). This includes the provision of a suitable environment for the animal, as well as ensuring that the animal has the ability to express normal behaviour which may include the provision of regular exercise e.g., dog walking. An appropriate diet must also be provided as well as protection from pain, suffering, injury, and disease.
- 8.2 If Maidstone Council believes that a pet at the property has been neglected or abandoned, the Council will report the case to an appropriate animal welfare organisation.

## **9.0 Equality and Diversity**

- 9.1 Maidstone Borough Council adopts a flexible approach to ensure that different needs are met and well supported.
- 9.2 The Council recognises that some individuals may experience discrimination and disadvantage. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on this policy to ensure that all customers are treated fairly, regardless of any characteristics.

## **10.0 Monitoring and Reviewing**

- 10.1 This Policy will be reviewed every 5 years, or sooner if significant and relevant statutory changes occur.



**Further information: [maidstone.gov.uk/housing](http://maidstone.gov.uk/housing)**