



Pet Policy 2026-2029

Document Owner(s)
Resident Services Manager & Independent Living Services Manager

Manual Version Control

Version	Date	Change Description
1.0	June 2017	New Policy
1.1	December 2018	Minor updates
1.2	July 2022	Minor updates
2.0	April 2026	Fundamental review. Reflects requirements of the Renters Rights Act 2026. Inclusion of staff responsibilities. Inclusion of right to appeal.

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This policy is intended to outline conditions under which residents may keep animals in PFH properties. The Policy applies to both existing and prospective residents.
- 1.2** Pickering and Ferens Homes (PFH) has a flexible approach to residents keeping pets in their homes, as long as they are well cared for and don't cause nuisance, annoyance or damage to the property and the surrounding area.
- 1.3** We recognise that if properly cared for, pets can significantly enhance the health and wellbeing of residents by providing them with companionship and purpose, and improve their quality of life. Owning a pet offers significant physical and mental health benefits, including lower blood pressure, reduced stress, and increased physical activity. Pets provide companionship, combat loneliness, improve heart health, boost mood and aid social interaction.
- 1.4** This policy relates to both existing residents requesting a pet, and prospective residents who may already have one or more pets when they move into a PFH home.

2. Policy Guidance

- 2.1** This policy has been developed on the principles of the Renters Rights Act 2026, Animal Welfare Act 2006, and PFH's Customer Strategy.
- 2.2** The Pet Policy is not a standalone policy and there are a number of interlinking policies, strategies and regulations. These include:
 - Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
 - Allocations Policy
 - Resident Code of Respect
 - Complaints Policy
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
 - Hoarding Policy
 - Customer strategy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Licence Management and Sustainment Policy
 - Safeguarding policy

(This is not an exhaustive list).

- 2.3** PFH will also abide by existing regulatory requirements, in particular those contained within the Neighbourhood and Community Standard, and Tenancy Standard.

3. Legal Requirements

- 3.1** The Renters' Rights Act (RRA), which comes into force on May 1, 2026, introduces the legal right for private renters and licensees in England and Wales to request a pet, which landlords cannot unreasonably refuse. The RRA mandates tenancies/licences cannot be denied solely because of pet ownership. Blanket bans on pets will be prohibited, with landlords being required to consider each request on its merits.

- 3.2** These changes aim to make renting with pets easier for both social and private tenants/licensees. However, social tenancies/licences are explicitly excluded from the statutory pet-request right and The Act does not amend social housing tenancy law to create an enforceable right to keep a pet.
- 3.3** However, government guidance issued in February 2026 makes it very clear that social landlords are expected to consider pet requests fairly and consistently, and regulators and ombudsmen are likely to scrutinise blanket bans or poorly-reasoned refusals.
- 3.4** Landlords must consider the request fairly and on an individual basis, and have 28 days to respond to a written request for a pet. Further, the RRA stated landlords must have good reason for refusing a pet request and be able to demonstrate the rationale behind the refusal.
- 3.5** Tenants and Licensees have the right to challenge the refusal of a landlord to keep a pet, so it is important that PFH has a robust approach to recording pet requests, and the outcomes. This includes a detailed rationale behind refusals.
- 3.6** The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, sections 3 as amended in 2014, makes it an offence to own or be in charge of a dangerously out-of-control dog in all places, including private property and homes in England and Wales. This includes the owner's home and private gardens. Dogs listed in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and any animal listed in the Schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 may not be kept.
- 3.7** The Animal Welfare Act 2006 is in place to ensure those with pets care for them properly. This means making sure the pet has a suitable place to live, is given the right food to eat, is exercised and is protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.
- 3.8** The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015 has introduced compulsory microchipping of dogs from April 2016 and failure to comply with the new regulations could result in a fine of up to £500.
- 3.9** Section 7.3 of PFH's Letter of Appointment (Licence) sets out PFH's conditions for the keeping of pets. It requires the resident to comply with the terms of this policy.
- 4.0 Definitions**
- 4.1** The Animal Welfare Act 2006 in the UK focuses on "protected animals" that are commonly domesticated or under human control, establishing a duty of care for their welfare. Legislative definitions of a domestic pet generally define them as animals commonly domesticated in the region, for example, dogs, cats, horses, small, caged rodents and non-poisonous caged reptiles, non-poisonous contained insects or amphibians, fish, rabbits and birds, or any animal sufficiently tamed to live under human control.
- 4.2** This list is not exhaustive but is to illustrate the most common types of animals which we may give permission for.
- 4.3** The keeping of other animals such as chickens, ducks, geese, goats and pigeons may be considered by PFH, but will require special permission.
- 5. Consideration of requests**

- 5.1** The physical and mental wellbeing benefits of pet ownership is widely known, and PFH's Customer Strategy encourage its residents to participate in activities which encourage an active, stimulating and meaningful life.
- 5.2** PFH will therefore not unreasonably withhold permission from prospective residents who wish to bring pets with them, or existing residents who seek a new, or replacement pet. Pet ownership encourages an active lifestyle, provides companionship, purpose and meaning to many people's lives.
- 5.3** As part of the application process, applicants are asked if they have pets which they intend to bring with them should they be rehoused.
- 5.4** We will seek to understand the types and number of the pets, so that any property they may be shortlisted for can be assessed for suitability, and any potential effects on other residents.
- 5.5** Existing residents may lose a pet and seek to replace it, or wish to have new pet.
- 5.6** The factors PFH will take into account for both prospective and existing residents will include:
- i) The number of occupants and pets for the size and type of property,
 - ii) The type of pet(s) for the size and type of property,
 - iii) Health, safety or welfare issues, and whether the resident is able to adequately care for the pet, including feeding and exercising,
 - iv) The potential impact of the pet(s) on other residents, including possible allergic reactions
 - v) Whether the prospective or existing resident has arrangements in place for the care of the pet(s) should they no longer be able to.
- 5.7** Any resident contacting PFH seeking permission to have one or more pets will in all circumstances be provided with a guidance sheet (Appendix 2) explaining their responsibilities and useful information. For those requiring permission, a Pet Request Form (Appendix 1) will be completed.
- 5.8** The Scheme Manager will be responsible for managing applicant and existing resident pet requests within PFH Plus schemes, and the Area Coordinator will be responsible for pet requests in all other properties.
- 5.9** PFH Plus and properties with shared internal areas/access - Existing Residents living in PFH+ housing or housing with shared internal areas will be required to complete a 'Pet Request Form' if they wish to keep one or more pets. *Please note PFH may feel it necessary to limit the number of pets to one, due to the size of PFH's properties and the demographic of those PFH rehoused. However, each case will be considered on an individual basis. An assessment of the suitability of the resident's property, and the resident's ability to provide adequate care and exercise will be undertaken.
- 5.10** Bungalows/other fully self-contained homes, no shared access - Those living in bungalows/other fully self-contained homes will not routinely be required to complete a pet request form if they are seeking to home up to two standard domesticated pets, such as two small/medium dogs, cats or caged birds. This is including any pets they may already have. Residents seeking to home more than two pets will be required to complete the pet request form. An assessment of the suitability of the resident's property, and the resident's ability to provide adequate care and exercise will be undertaken.

Property/scheme type	Resident Permissions
PFH Plus Properties with shared access and/or internal areas	One or more standard domesticated pets – The resident will be required to follow formal authorisation routes.
Bungalows or other fully self-contained properties	More than two standard domesticated pets – The applicant will be required to follow formal authorisation routes.

- 5.11** Applicants with Pets – Applicants are required to tell us about any pets they have which will be moving with them. They will not in all circumstances be expected to complete the Pet Request permission form for existing pets they have, should they be rehoused with PFH. However, applicants will still be assessed in line with the permissions criteria, including the number and type of pets to ensure any property offered is suitable and they are able to care for and exercise the pet. If applicants are rehoused in PFH Plus schemes, Scheme Managers will keep a record of all residents with pets. General guidance is below.

Property/scheme type	Applicant Permissions
PFH+, properties with shared access and/or internal areas	Up to one standard domesticated pet – The applicant will not be required to follow formal authorisation routes.
PFH+, properties with shared access and/or internal areas	More than one standard domesticated pet - The applicant will be required to follow formal authorisation routes.
Bungalows or other fully self-contained properties	Up to two standard domesticated pets – The applicant will not be required to follow formal authorisation routes.
Bungalows or other fully self-contained properties	More than two standard domesticated pets – The applicant will be required to follow formal authorisation routes.

- 5.12** A landlord reference will be obtained (if applicable) to ascertain if there have been any animal nuisance-related complaints. An Applicant Declaration form will be completed in the absence of a landlord reference. Checks will also be made via the application and at viewing stage. In addition, the pet guidance document is provided at offer stage as standard.
- 5.13** If an applicant is close to being rehoused, and if there are any concerns regarding the number of pets an applicant has, their ability to care for them, or the suitability of the property types they are requesting, the Area Coordinator and Resident Services Manager will review the circumstances before making a judgement on the suitability of the allocation. The applicant will be provided with a full explanation of any decision made.

6.0 Special Permissions

- 6.1** In some cases, the 'Special Permissions' section of the Pet Request Form will be required to be completed for the keeping of animals, such as reptiles and spiders, aviary birds outside, chickens or other fowl or livestock.
- 6.2** The ILSM or RSM will be responsible for making the pet request decision. The parameters listed in section 7 will be used to inform the decision-making process, along with the guidance document and if necessary, a visit to the resident and property.

7. Refusing requests

7.1 There may be some circumstances in which PFH deems it appropriate to refuse a request for a pet. This may include when some of the measures listed below, or within the detailed guidance cannot be met. However, refusals must be reasonable and evidence-based. Requests may be refused if:

- i) Dogs listed in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or animals listed in the Schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976,
- ii) Animals such as chickens, ducks, geese, goats and pigeons may be refused if it is deemed that there is lack of sufficient private, outdoor space to keep them humanely, there is a risk of the animal causing damage to property, or if the animal is likely to cause nuisance or annoyance to other residents.
- iii) If the property is not suitable for the type, size or number of the pet(s).
- iv) There are significant concerns over the pet owner's ability to care for and exercise the pet
- v) Other residents have allergies – this may be particularly pertinent in PFH+ accommodation or any other property with shared access, where the pet is likely to regularly frequent.
- vi) There is a history of the resident not managing a previous pet appropriately.

7.2 Guidance is available for both staff and residents to refer to when assessing pet requests and includes set criteria for the assessment process and terms for the resident to agree to.

8. Resident pet care expectations

8.1 Residents requesting a new pet may be required to complete the 'Pet Request Form' and guidance document (Appendix 1 and 2), as detailed in section 5. This helps PFH risk assess the request and obtain assurances regarding the handling and care of the pet now, and in the future. The resident is required to demonstrate that:

- That they are able to care for and exercise the pet, appropriate to its needs,
- That they have arrangements in place for the pet's care if they are unable to or. If the resident moves or passes away, the resident must have made arrangements to rehome the pet.
- That pets are not allowed to roam free in internal communal spaces,
- That dogs are to be kept on a lead in all internal and external communal spaces,
- That foul is cleared up immediately and appropriately disposed of.

8.2 The resident will be considered to be responsible for looking after and caring for the pet properly. This will include precautionary measures for the pet's wellbeing and good health where necessary. For example;

- Treatment for fleas, worms and other parasites,
- Bathing, cleaning and grooming,
- The provision of proper bedding,
- Mandatory vaccinations.
- Providing water and proper food.

8.3 Residents will be required to ensure their home is free of pet-related infestations. Should an infestation be identified, either during their occupancy or when the property becomes empty, the resident will be responsible for carrying out pest control and thorough cleaning at their own cost. If this is not carried out, PFH reserve the right to arrange pest control and cleaning services, which the resident will be recharged for.

- 8.4** The resident will be required to take all reasonable steps to supervise animals under their control or visiting their home.
- 8.5** The resident will take all reasonable steps to prevent any animals from causing nuisance, annoyance or danger to neighbours in the neighbourhood. This includes fouling, noise and smells.
- 8.6** The resident will take all reasonable care to ensure that any pets do not cause damage to the property, anything belonging to PFH or for which we are responsible, such as communal areas of flats, gardens and grassed areas.
- 8.7** The resident will not use the property for the commercial breeding of pets. The conditions of the Licence relating to the running of a business from a PFH property also applies.
- 8.8** Residents may be required to complete the Alterations or Improvements Request Form if they are looking to construct any outside accommodation for their pet, or provide pet accesses for example cat flaps. PFH will assess the type of accommodation that they are looking to obtain and advise them whether formal permission is required or not. This should be done at the time of applying for permission to keep a particular pet;
- 8.9** Where the nominated person is unable to take care of a pet PFH reserves the right to place the animal in suitable accommodation and recharge the resident.
- 8.10** Residents are also advised that they must recognise and accept their responsibilities to fellow residents, for example the owner should:
- i) Clean up after their pet, including careful and hygienic disposal of waste, ensuring it is double-bagged and securely tied up to prevent smells and spills,
 - ii) Pay for any damage or injury caused by the pet,
 - iii) Not take their pet in the communal lounges or Pop-Ins, unless it is an assistance animal,
 - iv) Control their dogs and keep them on a leash when in communal areas,
 - v) Endeavour to minimise the risk of other residents/staff tripping over the animal or feeling uncomfortable because of the animal, or being affected as a result of allergies,
 - vi) Not leave food bowls, litter trays, puppy pads or foul in communal areas,
 - vii) Ensure that any visiting guests with pets also follow these guidelines.

9. Appeals

- 9.1** The Renters Reform Act 2026 provides tenants and licensees with the opportunity to appeal against refusal decisions.
- 9.2** Appeals should be put in writing/email to the ILSM if from a PFH+ resident, or the RSM if the appeal comes from other property types or an applicant.
- 9.3** The manager will review the information and speak to the resident/applicant if necessary to ascertain all details. The manager will then provide a response within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal, in writing or via email.

10. Supporting Residents and Avoiding Breaches of the Policy

- 10.1** PFH will endeavour to provide appropriate and meaningful advice to any resident or prospective resident with regard to responsible pet ownership. Staff will also signpost residents to specialist agencies where appropriate.

- 10.2** We may from time to time, check in with residents to ensure that the pet is being appropriately cared for and is not causing any nuisance.
- 10.3** In the event that a resident becomes unable to care for their pet, PFH will work with the resident in a sensitive manner, to reach the best outcome for the resident and the pet. PFH will work with family members and friends (those named as the emergency contact for the pet's care, in the first instance), and may signpost to specialist agencies or charities, such as The Cinnamon Trust, which may support those struggling with the care of their pet.
- 10.4** PFH will take any cases of cruelty or neglect seriously and will work with appropriate agencies to remove the pet and prosecute the owner where necessary. If this happens, permission to keep any further pets will automatically be withdrawn and Licences may be at risk.
- 10.5** If PFH receives persistent complaints regarding pet noise or damage caused by pets, this may fall within the remit of the ASB Policy. In the first instance, complainants should contact the resident responsible for the pet or pets in question and discuss matters in order to seek a resolution. We will confirm the outcome in writing to the resident and the complainant.
- 10.6** If the nuisance continues despite attempts to seek resolution we will consider withdrawing permission to keep the pet or pets and if necessary give 28 days' notice in writing for the resident to find an alternative home for the pet(s).
- 10.7** Legal action in the form of possession or injunction proceedings may be used as a last resort if the resident fails to comply with the conditions set out in this policy and/or their Licence and subsequently fails to re-house their pet following the formal withdrawal of permission.
- 10.8** In appropriate circumstances we will enlist the help of and work with other agencies to resolve problems. This will not only refer to any pet related nuisance, but will also include any steps necessary to hold the owner responsible for their actions. Other agencies may include the Police, Environmental Health or the RSPCA.

11. Recording, Monitoring and Review

- 11.2** Requests from PFH+ residents will be reviewed by the Scheme Manager, and requests from all other properties will be reviewed by the Area Coordinator. In all cases, responses will be reviewed against the requirements of this policy.
- 11.3** Staff members will record all pet requests from residents on the 'Log of Pet Requests and Outcomes' log, which will include all decision rationale and outcomes. This will be confirmed in a CRM log on Civica.

12. Managing and Reviewing the Policy

- 12.1** PFH will ensure that the Pet Policy and procedures are reviewed every three years. The Resident Services Manager (RSM) will be responsible for the review and approval of policy, with support from the Independent Living Services Manager (ILSM). The RSM and ILSM will also ensure that resident groups are consulted with before making any changes, and changes are clearly communicated to staff, volunteers and residents.
- 12.2** The RSM will annually review the log of pet request to make sure that requests have been effectively managed and that PFH is fulfilling its regulatory duties. This will also make sure that any points of learning or areas of improvement are identified, reported and addressed.

13) Data Protection

- 13.1** All information regarding a resident's pet ownership will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act (General Data Protection Regulations 2018). All information is stored securely and will not be disclosed unless the licensee has given their consent or there is a clear duty to do so (for example, there is a significant safeguarding concern, or where an information sharing agreement is in place).

14) Our Commitment to Equalities

- 14.1** PFH seeks to ensure that its actions do not lead to unlawful discrimination. Deliberate acts of discrimination, including victimisation, harassment, instruction or pressure to discriminate, will result in disciplinary actions and/or termination of contracts with external agents.
- 14.2** PFH can provide access to interpreters for minority languages including sign language, and can arrange written material in large print, Braille and first languages where necessary.
- 14.3** PFH will aim to ensure that no individual or group is treated less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. We aim to recognise the needs of individuals and treat each person with dignity and respect.
- 14.4** We will update the Equality Impact Assessment at least every three years to assess and compare pet requests against protected characteristics.
- 14.5** We will consider the individual needs of residents who may require additional support and make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 and in accordance with our EDI Policy.
- 14.6** We will work with relevant contractors and support services to ensure that any resident who feels uncomfortable with male only operatives, for example, either can opt to have a female operative, or a female accompanying the operative.