

Summary of submissions around pet clauses from non tenants

I am a Landlord and I also work for the dog rescue registered charity Yorkshire Rose Dog Rescue, most of our unwanted dogs come from council estates where indiscriminate breeding takes place for extra income without a thought as to where these poor dogs end up, usually put to sleep if it is an unwanted Bull Breed as the rescues are full of them, it's about time someone got a grip, I have written to David Cameron in the past to no avail.

I think as an owner of property, you are right to control pet numbers in your rented accommodation. I think they should at least microchip all pets, neuter, and worm them at least every 3 months. The main problem would be enforcement of these issues. I think the damage done to your property by large uncontrolled pets is the main problem. Therefore you could request evidence of attendance at obedience classes. Yours -
(submission from a Vet)

Representative of the Cats Protection League

From a feline welfare perspective the things that Cats Protection would be eager see to implemented are on the whole similar to those you have already highlighted.

Neutering is vitally important and if you are able to add a clause to encourage this it would be fantastic. The problems we see due to lack of cats being neutered are numerous. There is some good information in our Cats Protection Neutering leaflet.

- Obviously people deliberately breeding cats adds to these issues too.
- Limiting the number of cats people have is also a good idea. Firstly cats are not a social species, they are territorial and therefore in most cases prefer not to have to share their space with other cats. Secondly, where we see a lot of health and behavioural issues in cats is when they have come from multi-cat households. We see more disease like cat flu, flea problems and gastrointestinal problems from such environments – largely because it is difficult to keep the home clean when dealing with multiple cats and often people end up with so many cats they can't afford to provide appropriate veterinary care when it is needed. Similarly when cats are kept in large numbers their stress levels are increased

and issues such as over grooming, straying and inappropriate toileting round the house are much more likely to occur – the latter being something I would imagine is pertinent to council owned properties.

- If you can encourage microchipping the benefit to the Council as a landlord would be that ownership of a specific cat could be proved. From a cat welfare perspective it means if the cat goes missing and then brought in to an organization like Cats Protection or a vets we can reunite with its owner.
- Any promotion of regular treatments for parasites like fleas and worms would be beneficial for the cats, and their owners – and in the case of council properties a particular focus could be made on fleas which utilise carpet and soft furnishings as part of their environment
- Also any promotion of regular vaccinations would be great for the ongoing health and welfare of people's pets.

Cats Protection does provide financial assistance for neutering for cats owned by people on benefits or low incomes. We would be glad to provide you with some literature about this scheme to place in your housing office.

Leeds Council appear to have a robust policy for pet ownership on their properties <http://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Pets%20Policy.pdf>

Good morning, I am more than happy to put my thoughts forward on the changes to the Council House Pet Policy which I list below in note form. I appreciate that some of these may not be able to be achieved but I feel strongly that they would be a big help from the point of view of animal welfare for a start:-

1. Microchipping - all dogs MUST be chipped by April 2016. Could this be extended to include all cats and rabbits in Council properties? Cats frequently go missing (and rabbits fairly often too) - this is the easiest way for them to be reunited.

2. Absolutely NO breeding of animals whatsoever should be permitted and cats and dogs should be neutered/spayed as soon as possible. (Both the RSPCA and Cats Protection recommend 4 months of age for kittens but some vets are unwilling to carry this out until 6 months of age). I believe dogs should be spayed/neutered around 6 months of age.

This not only prevents unwanted offspring but I understand has health benefits too for the animals. (I have read that the younger a male dog is neutered, the more effective the neutering can be on curbing aggression too so this could be another good reason for early neutering.)

3. I do not think that a limit should be placed on the numbers of animals that people already have as that would seem unfair and indeed cruel to both the owners and the pets (providing of course no nuisance is being caused by the animals) - however it may be that deciding on a reasonable number for new tenants could be a good idea.

However how could this be policed? Would it rely on people being reported by others if their cat had a litter of kittens or their dog puppies? Or would paperwork have to be provided proving that animals had been neutered/spayed? If they didn't provide this, how would it be followed up?

Is the Council considering working with animal welfare organisations or licensed implanters to encourage tenants to ensure their dogs are chipped by April? (and hopefully cats too)

Cats Protection recently had a spaying/neutering campaign for only £5 for people entitled to certain benefits and I, along with some others, delivered around 10,000 or more leaflets door to door, targeting in particular areas with a high percentage of Council properties. Is this something the Council is interested in looking into- promoting these campaigns when they run?