



Promoting Responsible Pet Ownership



We recognise the positive contribution that pets can make to a home and the significant benefits to their owners. Before bringing home a new pet you must ask permission from Circle by contacting your Tenancy Service Officer and completing a pet application form; you can find this online at www.circlevha.ie. This includes any pet you are looking after on a temporary basis. We will need details of the type of animal, and if a dog, the breed and age plus microchip registration.

Some of our properties may be considered unsuitable for certain sizes or types of pet, for example, apartments, properties with shared communal areas and facilities, properties without an enclosed garden and properties where there are restrictive covenants concerning pets and animals. Exceptions to this can be made in the case of tenants with an assistance or guide dog.

Your responsibility as owner

You are responsible for the care and behaviour of any pet living in your home and have a clear obligation to ensure your pet does not cause a nuisance to others – nor cause damage - both inside or outside your home and in the wider locality.

You are legally obliged under the Animal Health and Welfare Act to care for your pet by providing five basic needs:

- somewhere suitable to live
- a proper diet, including fresh water
- the ability to express normal behaviour
- any need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
- protection from unnecessary suffering or anything that could endanger the health of the animal

Make sure you have arrangements in place for looking after your pet before you go away on holiday or to hospital or should an unexpected emergency arise. No pet should be left in the property alone when you are away.

Neutering

Dogs, cats and rabbits are all routinely neutered. Neutering is important both to keep the animal healthy and to prevent unwanted breeding. Advice on neutering can be obtained from your veterinary surgeon or animal welfare organisation. Some charities subsidise neutering services and veterinary care if the owner is in receipt of certain means-tested benefits.

Vaccinations

Preventative healthcare is important for your animal's welfare. The care should be based on routine treatments. Where vaccinations are available (for dogs, cats and rabbits), you should consult a local veterinary practice and have them carried out. Vaccinations are essential to protect against some particularly distressing and serious illnesses. Vets carry out health checks during vaccinations and this is also a useful part of disease prevention. They will also give advice on treating or preventing parasites.

Identification: microchipping

All dogs in Ireland must be microchipped and registered by law. The requirement is that every dog in the State must be microchipped and that chip must be registered on a recognised database. Failure to microchip a dog will expose the owner to court action and fines of up to €5,000.

Insurance

For many of us our pet is part of the family, which means taking care of them if they are sick or injured. Apart from routine check-ups, your pet could someday need to visit the vet for more serious reasons. To avoid costly veterinary bills consider taking out pet insurance, do shop around and know what your policy covers.

If pets are causing a nuisance

Any nuisance caused by pets is a form of anti-social behaviour (ASB). This can include noise, fouling, a violent attack and so on. Problems should be reported to your Tenancy Service Officer.

Fouling

If you do not clean up and dispose of the faeces safely and hygienically after your dog has defecated on land on our estates, footpaths or areas out of bounds to dogs, we will see this as anti-social behaviour. Whilst cats tend not to foul public areas, they do foul in private gardens which can cause a problem to neighbours. Providing a regularly cleaned litter box should help prevent this behaviour.

Noise

Persistent barking by dogs, usually as a result of being left alone for long periods of time, is a nuisance to neighbours and should be investigated as soon as possible. If you are unable to solve this problem on your own, contact a veterinary surgeon or animal welfare organisation for advice. If after advice and intervention, the problem remains permission will be revoked for you to keep the dog(s).

Damage

Insurance policies, such as contents insurance, may not cover any damage caused by pets to properties and furnishings, so it's important that you do everything you can to prevent it from happening. As part of your tenancy agreement, you must make good any damage caused to your home or any communal areas by your pets.

Dealing with cruelty and neglect

Where there is evidence or concerns regarding cruelty, neglect or abandonment of a pet and these are brought to our attention, we will contact an appropriate animal welfare society. If these are proven, permission will be withdrawn for the keeping of pets. There may be a case for further action under the Animal Health and Welfare Act.

Useful Contacts:

ISPCA

The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Website: www.ispca.ie

Tel: 1890 515 515

DSPCA

The Dublin Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Website: www.dspca.ie

Tel: (01) 499 4700

CSPCA

The Cork Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Website: www.cspca.ie

Tel: Contact (021) 451 5534

The Irish Blue Cross

Animal Welfare Charity

Website: www.bluecross.ie

Tel: (01) 416 3030