

# Renting with Pets

IN ENGLAND



**MARS**

**BETTER**   
**CITIES**  
**FOR PETS**

A Mars Program



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**TO LET**  
**PETS WELCOME!**



# Renting with Pets: What the new law means for you

The Renters' Rights Act gives tenants more freedom to have pets in rented homes, making it easier for pets and people to enjoy life together.

While the Renters' Rights Act applies to England, similar legislation is in place in Scotland.

## This guide is for:

- Tenants who want to keep a pet
- Landlords considering a pet request
- Letting agents supporting either party

## This guide explains:

- What's changing
- Why it matters
- What it means for you – whether you're a tenant or a landlord

Mars and Battersea Dogs & Cats Home have long championed making it easier to rent with pets. We're here to support both pet-owning tenants and landlords: helping tenants find suitable homes while giving landlords the confidence to welcome pets responsibly.



# Section 1: What's changing?

Before the Renters' Rights Act, pet parents had no legal protection in the private rented sector. **At this time, only 7% of private rental listings described themselves as pet friendly.**

As a result, many renters faced the heartbreaking choice between keeping their home and keeping their pet.

## That has now changed.

Under the new law, **you now have the legal right to request a pet in your rented home**, and landlords can't turn this down without a valid reason. This marks a big shift away from the previous rules, when rental properties could advertise with "no pets allowed".

Overall, these changes are designed to create a fairer, more balanced system – giving renters greater security while ensuring landlords' concerns are properly considered.

## Under the Renters' Rights Act, from 1st May 2026:



**Landlords cannot unreasonably refuse a tenant's request to keep a pet**

What counts as "unreasonable" will be judged on a case by case basis



**Landlords must respond within 28 days of receiving a pet request**



**Disputes can be referred to the new Private Rented Sector Ombudsman once established**

## Section 2: Why has the law changed?



The UK is a nation of pet lovers, with around **60% of people owning a pet**. At the same time, nearly **one in five people in England rents their home**.

Despite this, only **7% of rental properties are advertised as pet-friendly**, even though **three-quarters of private renters either own a pet or would like to**.

### The benefits of pet ownership

Pet ownership plays an important role in supporting people's wellbeing and quality of life:

**82%**

of pet owning tenants say having a pet helps them feel more at home in their rented property

**87%**

of UK pet parents say their pet has a positive impact on their mental wellbeing

**81%**

of pet parents say their pet encourages them to spend more time outdoors

## Section 2: Landlord benefits

Research commissioned by Battersea Dogs & Cats Home and led by the University of Huddersfield shows that pet owning tenants can also be good for landlords.

The research found that:

Pet owning tenants tend to **stay in properties for longer**, reducing turnover

Longer tenancies provide **greater stability and financial certainty**

Where damage does occur, **pet related damage is typically lower** than damage caused by other factors

Most landlords report **no pet related** damage, with three out of four (76%) saying they have not experienced any damage caused by pets in their rental properties

Landlords often report **stronger, more positive relationships** with tenants who own pets

## Section 2: Renting and pet homelessness



**Blanket “no pets” policies in the private rented sector have had a serious impact on animal welfare.**

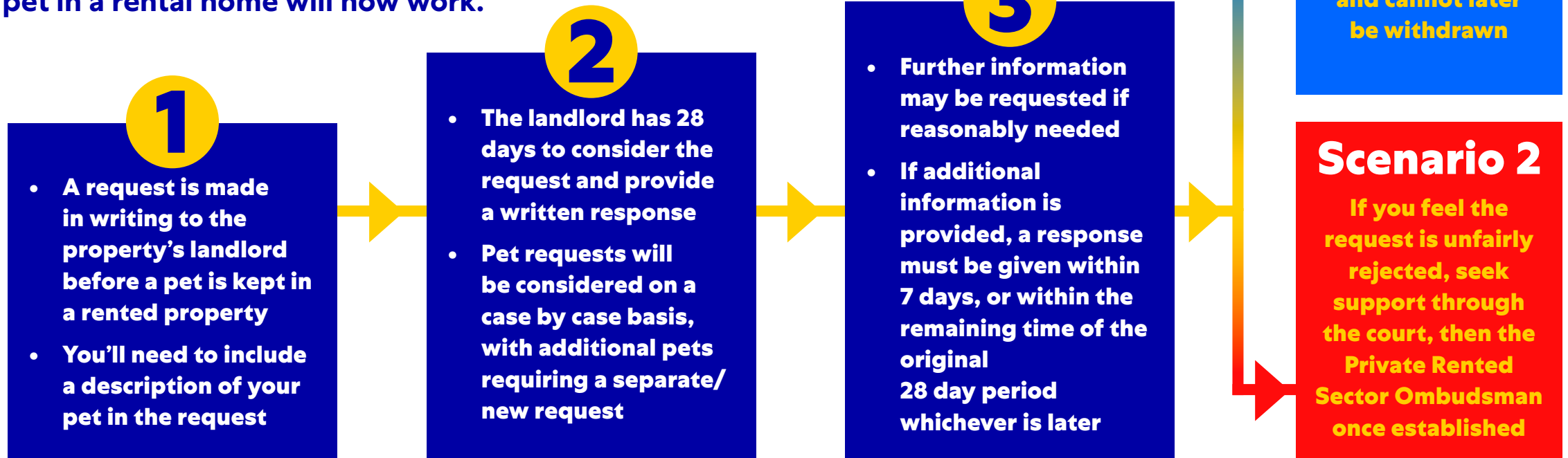
**Housing issues are now the second most common reason dogs and cats are given up to re-homing centres**

**1.16 million cats and dogs in the UK are homeless**

By removing blanket bans on pets, the Renters’ Rights Act takes an important step towards keeping pets with the families who love them and opens new doors to pets looking for a second chance.

## Section 3: Requesting a pet in a rented home

Whether you are a tenant or a landlord, this section sets out, step by step, how a request to keep a pet in a rental home will now work.



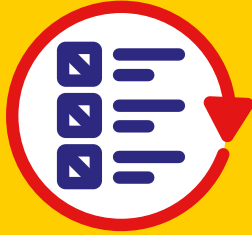
## Section 3: Help your landlord get to know you and your pet better

A great way to support your request is to **share a short “pet profile”** that helps your landlord understand what your pet is like and how they fit into your home.

**You could include:**



**A brief introduction to your pet (size, age, temperament)**



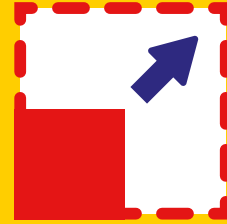
**Their routine and behaviour at home**



**Any steps you take as a responsible pet owner**



**How having a pet supports you personally**



**How much room it will need e.g. if it will be in an enclosure**

A little extra detail can go a long way in building trust and reassurance.



## Section 3: When can a request be refused?

It may be reasonable for a landlord to refuse a request in some circumstances, such as:

- Another tenant has an allergy
- The property is too small for a large pet or several pets
- The pet is illegal to own
- If you're a leaseholder, and your freeholder does not allow pets

It will not usually be reasonable to refuse if you:

- Do not like pets
- Have had issues with tenants who had pets in the past
- Have had previous tenants with pets who damaged the property
- Have general concerns about potential damage in the future
- Think a pet might affect future rentals
- Know the tenant needs an assistance animal, such as a guide dog

Note: if a tenant keeps or gets a pet without permission, they may be breaking the terms of their tenancy agreement.



## Section 4: FAQs for tenants



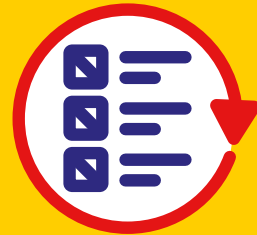
### How do I request to keep a pet?

You'll need to ask your landlord in writing, most commonly via email. To help aid the request, we would recommend including information about what your pet is like and how they fit into your home.

#### You could include:



**A brief introduction to your pet (size, age, temperament)**



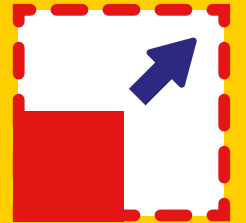
**Their routine and behaviour at home**



**Any steps you take as a responsible pet owner**



**How having a pet supports you personally**



**How much room it will need e.g. if it will be in an enclosure**

Sharing this information can help reassure landlords about having a pet in their property.

## Section 4: FAQs for tenants

### Is there any research or evidence that will help me to make a request?

Research commissioned by Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, led by the University of Huddersfield, shows that pet parents not only make good tenants but can also be financially beneficial for landlords.

#### The research found that:

- Pet owning tenants tend to stay in properties for longer, reducing turnover
- Longer tenancies provide greater stability and financial certainty
- Where damage does occur, pet related damage is typically lower than damage caused by non pet related factors
- Most landlords report no pet related damage, with three out of four (76%) saying they have not experienced any damage caused by pets in their rental properties
- Landlords often report stronger, more positive relationships with tenants who own pets



## Section 4: FAQs for tenants

### What if my landlord rejects my request?

Any refusal must be based on a fair and reasonable reason.

If a landlord does not meet their legal obligations, tenants may be able to apply to the court to enforce the rules. Soon, tenants will also be able to raise complaints with the new Private Rented Sector Ombudsman once it is fully established.

For further information, please see the guidance on GOV.UK on the Renters' Rights Act.



### What if my landlord does not reply?

If your landlord does not respond within 28 days, you may be able to apply to the court or the Ombudsman once established.

### Can my landlord ask questions about my pet?

Yes. Landlords can make reasonable requests for information, such as about the pet's size or behaviour. It's a good idea to provide this information, as otherwise your landlord does not have to consider your request. After you have answered any questions about your pet, your landlord will have 7 days to respond to you.

### What if my landlord is a leaseholder?

They may need to check the terms of their lease or seek permission from the freeholder before agreeing. Where this is the case, the freeholder or superior landlord can overrule the request, even if the immediate landlord is supportive.

This is because leaseholders are legally required to comply with the terms of their lease and cannot grant permissions that would put them in breach of it.

### Can my landlord change their mind later?

No. Once consent is given for a specific pet, it cannot be withdrawn and will not be treated as a breach of your tenancy.

### Is my landlord able to charge an extra deposit for a pet?

No. Deposits are capped by law and cannot be increased specifically for pets. Landlords may, however, recover the cost of any damage through the existing deposit outlined in the Tenant Fees Act (the usual 5 weeks max deposit).

## Section 4: FAQs for tenants



### Why is it important to keep written records of pet

It's a good idea to keep copies of all written correspondence relating to your pet request, including emails, letters, and any responses received.



**Keep track of timeframes, such as the 28 day response period**



**Clearly evidence what was requested, asked for, and agreed**



**Support your position if there is a disagreement or delay**



**Provide evidence if you need to raise the issue with the court or the Private Rented Sector Ombudsman**

## Section 5: FAQs for landlords

### What needs to happen if I want to refuse a request?

You will need to ensure your justification for rejecting a request is in line with the guidance on 'reasonable refusal' (page 9). Any refusal must be made in writing within the 28-day deadline, unless further information was requested. Tenants can challenge an unreasonable refusal through the court or the Private Rented Sector Ombudsman.

### Can I withdraw consent at a later date?

No. Once consent is given for a specific pet, it cannot be withdrawn.



## Section 5: FAQs for landlords



### What if a pet causes damage?

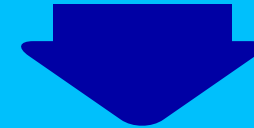
If a pet causes damage to a rented property, the tenant's deposit can be used to cover the cost of repairs, in line with the Tenant Fees Act, which caps deposits at up to five weeks' rent.

Research commissioned by Battersea, in partnership with the University of Huddersfield and other universities, shows that damage caused by pets is more often a perceived concern than a reality.

### The research found that:

**3 OUT OF 4**

landlords (76%) reported that they had not experienced any damage caused by pets in their rental properties.



Where damage did occur, the average reported cost of pet related damage (£300) was significantly lower than the average cost of non pet related damage (£775).

This evidence suggests that the existing deposit is generally sufficient to cover the cost of any pet related damage, where it occurs, and that pets do not typically present a higher financial risk than other causes of damage.

## Section 5: FAQs for landlords

### What if there are concerns about a pet?

Concerns should be raised with the tenant in the first instance.

- For nuisance issues, follow the Government's antisocial behaviour guidance
- For animal welfare concerns, the Government have advised you to contact the RSPCA, the local council, or the police, where appropriate.
- The research commissioned by Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, led by the University of Huddersfield, found that pet parents not only make good tenants but can also be financially beneficial for landlords.

### The research found that:

- Pet owning tenants tend to stay in properties for longer, resulting in lower turnover
- Longer tenancies provide greater stability and financial certainty for landlords
- Where damage does occur, pet related damage is typically significantly lower than damage caused by non pet related factors
- Landlords often report stronger and more positive relationships with tenants who own pets



## Section 5: Further information



**Without this legislation, renters across the country would continue to face a heartbreaking choice between their pet and their home.**

**Thank you for playing your part in keeping more pets with their families and helping to unlock millions of homes for pets across the country.**

For further information  
[click here](#)

## Section 6: Sources

**'The financial impact of pet ownership in rental properties' (2024) -**  
<https://www.hud.ac.uk/news/2024/march/pets-good-for-rented-homes-battersea-report/>

**'Pet Friendly Properties – the Private Rented Sector, Battersea (2022) -**  
<https://bdch.org.uk/files/Battersea-Pet-Friendly-Properties-Full-Report.pdf>

**State of Pet Homelessness Project (2024) -**  
[www.stateofpethomelessness.com](http://www.stateofpethomelessness.com)

**Mars & Calm Global Survey of Pet Owners, May 2025 -**  
<https://www.mars.com/en-gb/news-and-stories/press-releases-statements/paws-over-partners-people-prefer-spend-time-pets-when>

**Renting out your property: guidance for landlords and letting agents –  
If a tenant wants a pet to live with them 2025 -**  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/renting-out-your-property-guidance-for-landlords-and-letting-agents/if-a-tenant-wants-a-pet-to-live-with-them>

