



PET FRIENDLY PROPERTIES

BRINGING PEOPLE AND PETS TOGETHER
FOR HAPPIER HOMES
SUMMARY REPORT 2018



BATTERSEA

HERE FOR EVERY DOG AND CAT

PET FRIENDLY PROPERTIES

Eight million households in the UK rent their homes¹. This is 38% of all households, predicted to rise to 40% by 2025². In London, it is higher at 60% by 2025³. Many landlords (55% according to one survey) ban pets, disenfranchising their tenants from all the health and social benefits of pet ownership that save the NHS £2.45 billion annually⁴. As a result, animals lose loving homes and stay longer in rescue centres as the pool of potential adopters shrinks.



38%

of all households in the UK rent their homes.

60%

of all households in London by 2025 will rent their homes.

55%

of Landlords do not allow their tenants to keep pets.

¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/workingandworklesshouseholdsalldata>

² <https://www.pwc.co.uk/assets/pdf/ukey-section3-housing-market-july-2015.pdf>

³ http://pwc.blogs.com/press_room/2016/02/london-to-be-transformed-from-city-of-home-owners-to-city-of-home-renters-in-a-generation.html

⁴ <http://www.lincoln.ac.uk/news/2016/12/1300.asp>

⁵ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/workingandworklesshouseholdsalldata>

⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/632464/Social_rented_sector_report_2015-16.pdf

Barriers to pet ownership:

- **Residents in social housing are particularly vulnerable to barriers to pet ownership.** 3.4 million UK homes are social rented⁵. The sector is dominated by a relatively few big landlords and tenants stay in their homes three times longer than those in the private sector⁶, therefore the policies of Local Authorities and Housing Associations have a profound effect on a large number of people.
- **There are large inconsistencies between social landlords policies for keeping dogs in flats,** particularly flats that do not have direct access to a private garden or their own front door. Housing Associations are more likely than councils to ban them.
- **There is a disparity between different areas of London around pet ownership.** The opportunity to own a dog or cat in London depends as much on where you live and who your landlord is as the kind of animal you want to keep and the accommodation you live in.
- There is inconsistency between the conditions and standards that Local Authorities expect of dog owners. Some Local Authorities are very comprehensive, promoting responsible ownership and animal welfare, whereas others simply enforce anti-social behaviour rules.
- Although none of the policies of the social landlords we examined in London impose 'no pet' clauses, there are circumstances where specific animals (mainly dogs) are banned from specific types of accommodation (e.g. flats).

There are some positive findings for pet owners:

- None impose a blanket ban on all their tenants from keeping a dog or cat.
- 24% of Local Authorities allow all their tenants to keep a dog, 48% allow all to keep a cat.
- Few tenants are the subject of formal complaints or legal action because of their pet.

However, there is still plenty of work to do in London

- **Policies are inconsistent on keeping dogs in flats** (with no private garden or front door). Local Authorities are split on this. 24% (seven) allow dogs in these flats, 21% (six) ban them. Most Housing Associations (64%) ban them. Our research shows that flexible policies that give tenants in flats the opportunity to have a dog can work.
- **The conditions imposed on dog owners vary considerably.** Most landlords require that the dog is not a nuisance. Few include requirements relating to microchipping, breeding and selling, and animal welfare. Our survey shows that standalone policy documents, supporting the tenancy agreement, allow more comprehensive policies to be implemented, oriented towards promoting responsible ownership.
- **Little support for pet owners.** Some housing providers give contact details of animal welfare organisations to their tenants with dogs, and provide services such as free microchipping and access to responsible dog training courses. These, however, are rare. Most take an enforcement approach to dog ownership to ensure compliance with the conditions in the tenancy agreement.

In London

24%

of Local Authorities allow all their tenants to keep a dog.

48%

of Local Authorities allow all their tenants to keep a cat.

64%

of Housing Associations ban dogs in flats with no private garden or front door.



Marlowe

Recommendations:

1. Local Authorities and Housing Associations should **implement more flexible policies** on keeping dogs and cats, with a presumption in favour of allowing a pet. Some may see this as risky and costly, so should enlist the help of a recognised animal welfare organisation like Battersea. Such a partnership would provide the expertise and confidence to implement such policies, possibly on a trial basis initially, for subsequent roll out and sharing with other Local Authorities if successful. Battersea's Pet Ready Training Programme could form a critical part of this partnership; providing knowledge and training for dog owners and peace of mind for housing providers.
2. Tenancy Agreements should be supported by a **standalone document**, setting out the conditions and standards to which dog owners are expected to adhere.
3. Housing providers should **identify and share best practice** to generate a more consistent approach to keeping dogs and cats in social housing across London. The variety of policies currently in place lends itself to testing different approaches, although the issue of poor data availability will need to be addressed.
4. The **legal standing of 'no pet' clauses** in tenancy agreements should be clarified by the Competition and Markets Authority. If it remains unclear whether this is an unfair contract term, such clauses should be banned as they have already been in other jurisdictions including France, Canada (Ontario) and Australia (Victoria).

battersea.org.uk/petfriendlyproperties

Dog on cover image is Shayla