

CHESTERTONS



A guide to
renting with pets

In association with



An introduction from Chestertons

Pet owners can often find it hard to find a place to live in London

as many landlords do not allow animals in their properties and some leases restrict the keeping of pets.

I understand what an important part pets can play in people's lives and that landlords are often unaware of the benefits of allowing pets in their properties, that is why Chestertons has chosen to support Dogs Trust's Lets with Pets scheme.

With over 30 offices across London, Chestertons is one of the largest estate agents in the capital and we now have the largest selection of pet friendly properties too. Our award-winning Lettings division helps many landlords rent their properties to pet-owners every year.

As a supporter of the Lets with Pets scheme, we encourage our landlords to consider letting their properties to tenants with pets and support them in their decision to do so.

We are also committed to working closely with tenants that are looking to find a home for themselves and their pets.

If you are a landlord or a tenant and would like to discuss pets and renting in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact one of our branches to discuss your requirements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'G' followed by several vertical strokes.

Guy Gittins

CEO – Chestertons

Dogs Trust's Lets with Pets scheme

Almost half of households in the UK are pet owners*, yet staff at Dogs Trust know from experience that many people struggle to find a rented home with their pet.

Dogs Trust launched its Lets with Pets scheme in 2009 to encourage landlords to rent their properties to pet owners and to help make the house-hunting process easier for tenants with pets.

The support of estate agencies such as Chestertons is vital to the Lets with Pets scheme and it is hoped that the advice and resources Dogs Trust has put together with Chestertons will help landlords and tenants alike.

For more information on Lets with Pets or to download our free resources, visit www.letswithpets.org.uk

*Pet Food Manufacturers Association, 2018.



Five reasons why landlords should consider tenants with pets

Increased demand

Although 45%* of households own pets, tenants with pets generally find that there is a shortage of pet-friendly properties in London. By allowing pets into their property, landlords will open it up to a wider market, which will increase demand and reduce the amount of time the property is left empty between tenancies.

Responsible tenants

Landlords often find that pet owners take better care of their property than the average tenant.

Avoid separating pets and their owners

If a tenant cannot find a suitable rental property, they may be forced to give up their pet or be separated from it, which can have an emotional impact on both the animal and the owner. By allowing pets into their properties, landlords can help reduce these situations.

Tenants stay for longer

Tenants with pets know how difficult it is to find suitable rented accommodation and generally try to avoid distressing their pets by moving home too often. They will therefore often stay in a property for longer than the average tenants.

Reduce vacant periods

With pet-owning tenants staying in properties for longer, landlords will enjoy shorter vacant periods and therefore a better return on their investment.

*Pet Food Manufacturers' Association (PFMA), 2018





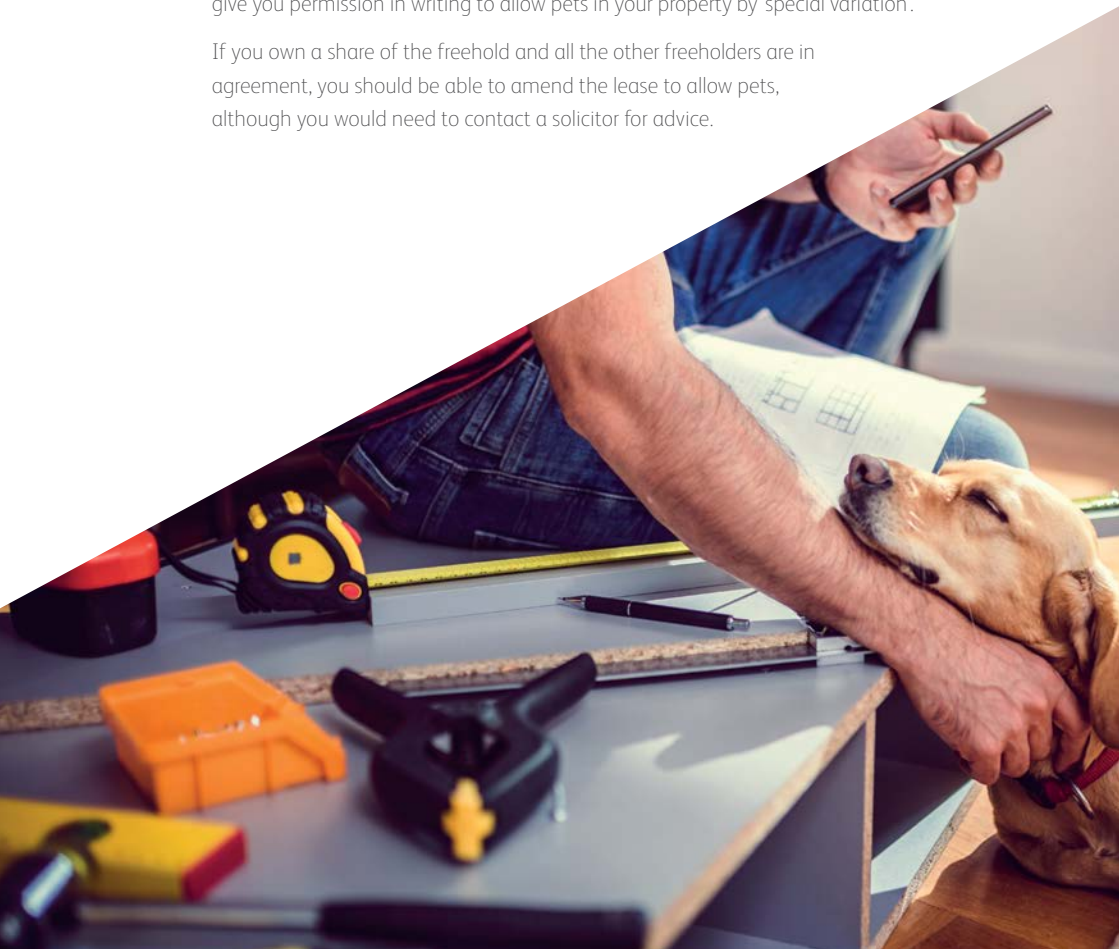
Advice for landlords

If you are willing to consider pets in your property, there are seven steps that you should take to ensure the tenancy runs as smoothly as any other.

Check the terms of your freehold and lease

If your property is leasehold, there may be certain stipulations in the lease which restrict or prohibit pets. If so, you can approach the freeholder or their managing agents to see whether they would be willing to change the terms of the lease or give you permission in writing to allow pets in your property by 'special variation'.

If you own a share of the freehold and all the other freeholders are in agreement, you should be able to amend the lease to allow pets, although you would need to contact a solicitor for advice.



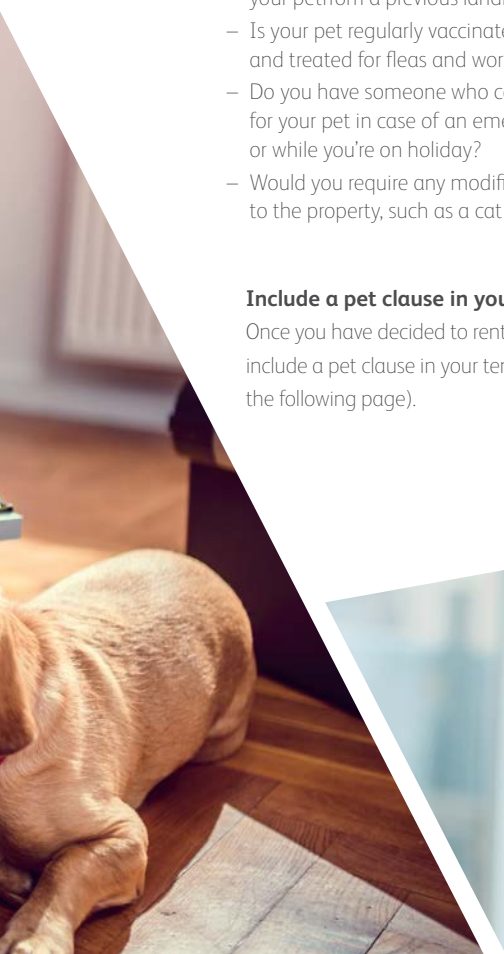
Ask the right questions about the pet

Deciding that you are willing to consider pets does not mean that you must accept every pet. We recommend you consider each tenant and their pet on a case-by-case basis. Some questions that may help you make a decision could include:

- What type of pet(s) do you own and how many?
- How long have you had your pet for?
- Are you able to provide a reference for your pet from a previous landlord?
- Is your pet regularly vaccinated and treated for fleas and worms?
- Do you have someone who can care for your pet in case of an emergency or while you're on holiday?
- Would you require any modifications to the property, such as a cat flap?
- How often do you walk/exercise your dog?
- How often will your pet be left at home alone and for how long?
- Do you have a pet sitter or dog walker for when you are not at home?
- Is your pet toilet-trained?
- How does your pet get along with other people, such as visitors to the property?
- Has your dog ever attended behaviour training classes?
- Has your pet been neutered?

Include a pet clause in your tenancy agreement

Once you have decided to rent your property to a tenant with a pet you should include a pet clause in your tenancy agreement (see Chestertons pet clause on the following page).



Chestertons' standard pet clause is shown below:

"It is further agreed between the Landlord and Tenant, that the Landlord grants permission for the Tenant to keep his pet **[type of animal and breed]** named **[name of pet]** ("The Pet") in The Property for the duration of the Tenancy, such permission to exclude all other pets or animals that the Landlord has not consented to. The Tenant hereby undertakes and agrees to keep The Property, garden (if any) and all common areas free of fouling during the course of the Tenancy. At the end or sooner determination of the Tenancy the Tenant agrees to remedy or pay for any damage caused to The Property and/or contents of The Property, including replacing carpets and fumigating The Property to treat for any infestation which shall have been caused by The Pet residing in The Property. For the avoidance of doubt any such damage caused or infestation shall not be deemed to be fair wear and tear. The Landlord reserves the right to withdraw this permission at any time although such permission not to be unreasonably withheld".



Ask for a pet reference

We recommend that landlords ask tenants to provide a reference for their pets from a previous landlord if they have rented before.

The key points that should be covered in a pet reference are:

- The name and breed of the pet
- How long the tenant lived in the previous property with their pet
- Which pet they owned at that time
- Whether the referee considers the tenant to be a responsible pet owner
- Whether the pet is well behaved
- Details of any damage to the property caused by the pet
- Whether the pet cause a nuisance to neighbours or visitors





Require a professional clean

All Chestertons' tenancy agreements state that tenants should professionally clean the property when they move out. However, if you are using a different tenancy agreement, you should amend it to include a similar requirement. This should include professionally cleaning all soft furnishings and carpets and treating the property for fleas and mites.

Check your landlords insurance

Check with your insurance company whether your landlord, building and contents insurance covers accidental pet damage or whether they offer an additional cover for tenants with pets.

Advice for tenants

When looking for accommodation with a pet, there are a number of things tenants can do to make the search as simple as possible:

Don't leave your house hunting until the last minute

Pet-friendly rental properties can prove scarce, so give yourself plenty of time to find a suitable property and begin searching at least six to eight weeks before you need to move out of your current home.

Make letting agents aware of your requirements as soon as possible

They may be aware of landlords who would consider pets, but are not marketing their property yet.

Be as flexible as possible

The more restrictive your search criteria is, the harder it will be for you to find a pet-friendly property. Try to be as flexible as possible on location and property type as this will increase your chances of finding somewhere for you and your pet to live.

Write a CV for your pet

Provide landlords with as much information about your pet as you can. Include the contact details of your veterinary practice and someone who can care for your pet in an emergency. You could also include details of your pet's last vaccinations and any flea and worming treatments they have had.

Get a reference for your pet

By providing a reference from your previous landlord, you can show that your pet is well behaved and has caused no problems at your previous property.



Introduce your pet to your landlord

Meeting your pet in advance may put the landlord's mind at ease.

Get written permission

A pet clause will be added to your tenancy agreement stating the type of animal and your pet's name to show that the landlord agrees to allow your pet to live in the property.

Make moving day stress free for your pet

When you are ready to move into your new home, think about what you can do to make moving day as stress-free as possible. It's a good idea to ask a friend or relative to look after your pet for the day if you can.



Being a responsible tenant

Fouling

Fouling by dogs and cats is one of the main causes of problems between pet owners and their landlords and neighbours, so it's important that your pet is toilet trained. You should ensure that you pick up your pet's faeces from communal areas, walkways or in the garden.

Noise

If your pet is causing a nuisance to your neighbours through excessive noise, you will need to investigate the cause of the problem. This is most likely to happen with barking dogs. Dogs bark for many different reasons, including excitement, fear and boredom. If you are unable to solve the problem on your own, you should contact a veterinary surgeon or dog behaviourist for advice.

Abandonment and neglect

All pet owners are responsible for their pet's health and wellbeing and have a 'duty of care' to provide them with adequate food and water, exercise, a suitable place to live and access to veterinary treatment.

If you are going away and you will be leaving your pet behind, you must ensure that someone will be able to care for them until you return.

Damage to property

Damage caused to properties and furnishings is one of the top reasons why many landlords will not accept pets. Insurance policies for tenants, such as contents insurance, will not cover any damage caused by your pet so it's important that you do everything you can to prevent it from happening.

Small pets – If you let your small pets (such as hamsters or gerbils) out of their cages to exercise, you should ensure that they are supervised at all times.

Cats – You should provide your cat with a scratching post and toys to occupy them while they are indoors. This should help prevent them from clawing at the carpets and furniture.

Dogs – If they are left at home for long periods of time are more likely to cause damage to property and furnishings. Dogs should not be left alone for more than four hours at a time. Ensure that you leave plenty of food, water and toys to occupy them.



Pet CVs and references

Chestertons recommends that tenants write a CV for their pets and provide a reference from a previous landlord. These documents should demonstrate to landlords that the tenant is a responsible owner and that their pet would be a well behaved occupant. They can also be used to talk about the pet's behaviour and personality.

Writing a pet CV

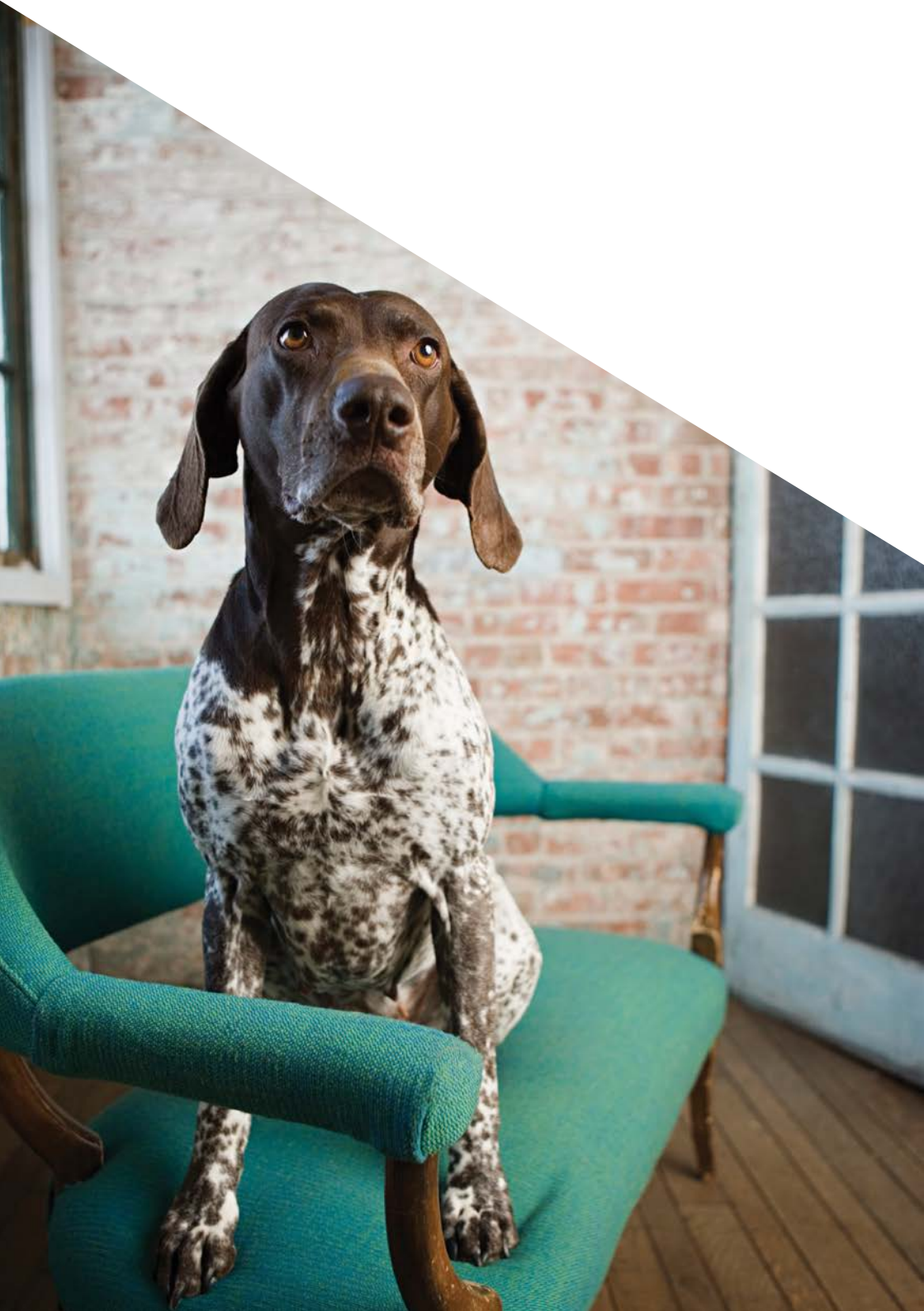
- Include your pet's name, breed, sex, age and microchip number
- Add a clear picture of your pet
- State how long you have owned your pet
- Include the dates of your pet's last vaccinations, flea and worming treatments
- Include information on whether your pet is toilet or litter box trained
- State how long your pet will be left at home alone, if that is the case
- If you have a dog walker or someone who checks on your pet during the day, state this too
- Mention any training your dog has had
- Include names of people who will care for your pet in an emergency

Pet references

Ideally, tenants should ask their previous landlord to write the reference as they will be in the best position to recommend individuals and their pets as tenants. The reference should include the points listed on page 9.

Dogs Trust has produced example pet references and CVs, which can be downloaded from: www.letswithpets.org.uk





Animals and the law

There are various laws that apply to pet owners and we have listed the main ones below.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Animal Health and Welfare Act (Scotland) 2006 places a duty of care on all pet owners to provide for their animal's basic needs, including adequate food and water, exercise, a suitable place to live and access to veterinary treatment.

Under the Act, an animal does not have to suffer in order for its owners to be prosecuted for a welfare offence.

The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 makes it an offence to keep any dog of the type known as Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino or Fila Brasileiro, unless the dog is registered on the Index of Exempted Dogs.

The Act makes it a criminal offence to allow any dog to be dangerously out of control in a public place. This includes instances where there is a fear that an injury may occur.

The Control of Dogs Order 1992 requires every dog in public to wear a collar bearing the name and address of its owner.

If a dog is not wearing a collar when out in public, it may be seized by the local authority and treated as a stray. The owner or person responsible for the dog may also be prosecuted and fined.

For further information on animals and the law please visit the www.letswithpets.org.uk or www.gov.uk

Caring for pets

Once you have moved into your new property, it's important that you care for your pets responsibly.

Microchipping

Microchipping is the most effective and secure way of permanently identifying your pet. Since 2016 it has been a legal requirement for all dogs over the age of eight weeks to be microchipped.

The simple procedure involves implanting a microchip, which is the size of a grain of rice, under your pet's skin. Once microchipped, a unique identification number will be registered to your pet and your contact details will be placed on a national database.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are important to prevent pets from developing potentially life threatening illnesses. Dogs, cats and rabbits can be vaccinated against a wide range of illnesses and should be given an annual booster each year.

Neutering

Neutering pets is widely recommended for their health and wellbeing. Landlords are also more likely to accept neutered pets in their properties.

The benefits of neutering

- Prevents unplanned pregnancies and unwanted litters.
- Generally improves the overall behaviour of dogs and can encourage calmer and more predictable behaviour. Neutered dogs are also less likely to mark territory and roam trying to find a mate.
- Improves the overall health of dogs whether male or female. It can remove health risks associated with pregnancy, some cancers and fatal infections.



Frequently asked questions

Q. What can be done to prevent odours caused by pets?

A. Tenants must keep the property clean and odour-free by regularly cleaning their pets' cages. Dogs must not be allowed to foul inside the property and cats and indoor rabbits must use a litter tray that is regularly emptied.

Q. Will pets increase the chance of other tenants getting allergic reactions?

A. It's possible that tenants with pet allergies may move into a property where pets have previously lived. As long as the property has been cleaned, vacuumed and aired thoroughly, they should not experience any problems.

Q. What is the law on assistance dogs?

A. The Equality Act (2010) prohibits anyone who is renting or selling a property from discriminating against a disabled person. Assistance dogs, such as guide dogs, hearing dogs and dogs for disabled people, must therefore be permitted by law in any property.

Q. Are there any other laws relating to pet owners?

A. There are a number of laws that apply to pet owners in the UK such as the Animal Welfare Act 2006, the Animal Health and Welfare Act (Scotland) 2006 and the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

Full details can be found at www.gov.uk

Q. How to deal with a constantly barking dog?

A. Dogs bark for many different reasons, including excitement, fear, boredom, frustration, because they are guarding the home or because they cannot cope with being left alone. If the tenant is unable to solve the problem on their own, they should contact a veterinary surgeon, dog behaviourist or animal welfare organisation for advice.

Q. How can fleas and worms be prevented?

A. Pets that receive regular preventative flea treatments rarely get fleas. Tenants should be able to provide landlords with details on their pets' preventative treatment. If there is any doubt, the tenants should fumigate the property at the end of the tenancy.

Q. What if an animal is neglected or abandoned?

A. If you are concerned about the welfare of any animal or think that one has been abandoned, you should contact an animal welfare organisation immediately.



