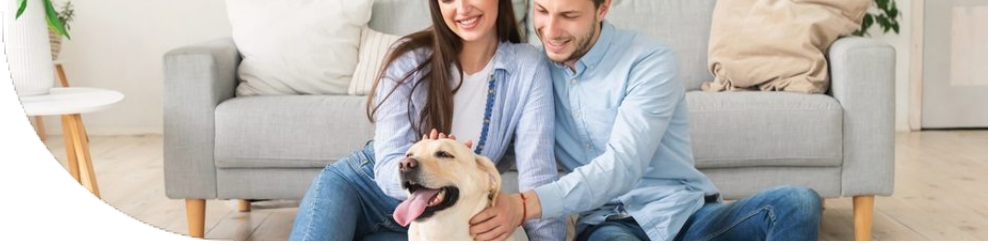

Good News for Pet Owning Tenants Everywhere

Many of us will know the pain of searching online for a new home to rent and finding what seems to be the perfect property, only to read the fine print and see the dreaded, sweeping statement: “No pets allowed”.

On 28 January 2021, in a boost to pet-owners, the Government announced its new Model Tenancy Agreement, the recommended contract for landlords, which will make it easier for tenants with pets to find accommodation for rent.

The new model agreement moves away from the previous default position of allowing landlords to dictate whether or not to allow pets in their property, instead of shifting in the opposite direction where consent for pets will now be the standard. Landlords would have to object, in writing, within 28 days of a written pet request from the tenant and provide a good reason for their objection.

Under the new agreement, rejections should only be made where there is a good reason, such as in smaller properties or flats where owning a pet could be impractical, though each case should be considered on its own merits. Landlords would no longer be able to refuse pets in their property simply because they feel like it, although to ensure landlords retain an element of protection, tenants will continue to have a legal duty to repair or cover the costs of any damage to the property caused by their furry friends. So assuming your pet is well trained and well behaved, your options may be about to widen.

While it must be noted that the new model agreement will not take precedence over any existing lease, new tenants should (wherever possible) look to insist on the use of the agreement or, at the very least, the new relevant clause.

It is estimated that only 7% of private landlords advertise their property as pet friendly when it is also estimated that more than half of adults in the UK own a pet; a rate which is likely to have only increased further throughout the pandemic. The previous rules meant that many people may have struggled to find a suitable home and may have had to resort to giving up their pets altogether. The ability of a landlord to outright ban pets at their own discretion had a disproportionately negative effect on people’s ability to move home.

As Housing Minister Christopher Pincher MP put it when announcing these changes: *“We are bringing an end to the unfair blanket ban on pets introduced by some landlords. This strikes the right balance between helping more people find a home that’s right for them and their pet while ensuring landlords’ properties are safeguarded*

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against inappropriate or badly behaved pets."

Here at LA, we love our pets and have the expertise and experience to advertise parties on either side of a transaction as to the potential implications of these new rules. Should you wish to discuss your potential new "fur-ever" home or what this could mean for your leasehold property, please do not hesitate to contact our "pawsome" Real Estate team by emailing online.enquiries@la-law.com or calling 01202 702645.

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