

# BRIEFING PAPER FOR HEADS FOR TAILS! REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

August 2021

**Subject :** Improving the lot of thousands of pets surrendered to rescues because of No Pets clauses in rental contracts, and making renting with pets easier & fairer for both tenants AND landlords.

Prepared by AdvoCATS, a voluntary organisation with 3 years' experience in working with landlords & tenants regarding keeping pets in rented properties & Renting Evidence, a community of researchers, stakeholders and policy-makers committed to improving the rented sectors through research and evidence-informed policy and practice.

## The problem :

- 1 in 5 landlords have stopped allowing pets since the introduction of the Tenant Fees Act 2019.
- 55% landlords impose blanket No Pets clauses in rental contracts
- Only 7% of landlords actively market their properties as pet friendly
- Rescues seeing more pets surrendered because of rental issues
- Landlords no longer have ability to request separate pet deposits as would exceed the 5 week deposit cap stipulated in the Tenant Fees Act 2019
- Landlords concerned about recouping any pet damage costs incurred during a tenancy
- Many landlords now asking additional monthly "pet rent" which at £25+ per pet costs tenants hundreds of pounds extra a year
- Need for landlords to recognise the importance of providing for a tenant's social, emotional, creative & wellbeing needs
- New pro-pet ownership Model Tenancy Agreement is voluntary, not the law & unpopular with PRS

## Our solution :

- Options for pet damage insurance OR a capped pet deposit
- Limited number of products currently exist from £20/month but are not well publicised
- More companies on the sidelines & preparing to enter the marketplace
- Tenant benefits from a portable policy which is per household not per pet
- Better use of "pet rent" monies as tenant can build up no claims/bear the increased premium for any claim



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## Our proposals :

- Encourage use of Pets Considered clauses/search filters etc, as opposed to No Pets
- Add pet damage insurance to the list of permitted payments under the Tenant Fees Act 2019
- Make allowance for an additional (capped) pet deposit in the Act for landlords who prefer the responsibility to be theirs
- Introduce a Code of Practice for landlords & tenants to offer guidance on such issues as what type of accommodation is suitable for what pet(s), how to deal with pet related complaints, documentation a tenant should provide etc

## The statistics & evidence :

- YouGov polled 1056 adults in February 2021 regarding have such insurance
- 57% of dog owners & 55% of cat owners would take out pet damage insurance if it was reasonably priced and a condition of being able to rent a property
- 76% of landlords polled by TDS also in 2021 believe pet damage insurance should be available to protect both them & tenants
- ARLA polled 300 businesses, again in 2021, 1/3 of whom said more widely advertised pet damage insurance would most likely to lead to an increase in pet friendly landlords
- Renting with pets is a hot media topic at the moment, on average an article every week in the media and/or trade press
- Heads for Tails! has an **unprecedented** level of support across the animal welfare & PRS, indicating a genuine desire for change that is sustainable and fair to ALL.

