

Pets: Requesting Consent to Keep a Pet

Tenant FAQ

Q: Can I ask my landlord for permission to keep a pet?

A: Yes. This is now a built-in right in every assured tenancy (under Section 16A of the Housing Act 1988), so your landlord can't operate a blanket "no pets" policy. You'll need to make your request in writing and describe the pet you'd like to keep - a passing question doesn't count as a formal request and won't start the clock on your landlord's response time.

Q: How long does my landlord have to respond?

A: They must give you a decision in writing within 28 days of your written request. If they don't respond within that time, consent is treated as automatically given. One exception: if your landlord reasonably asks you for more information about the pet within that 28-day window, the clock pauses - they then get a further 7 days to decide once you've given them that information, so it's worth responding promptly if they come back with questions.

Q: On what grounds can my landlord refuse?

A: Only for a reasonable and legitimate reason specific to your request and your property - for example, if a superior lease means they'd need a freeholder's consent that hasn't been given (provided they've taken reasonable steps to get it), or if the type of pet genuinely isn't suitable for the property, such as a large dog in a small flat. A blanket "we don't allow pets" isn't a reasonable ground on its own.

Q: Can my landlord insist I take out pet insurance?

A: No, they cannot require pet insurance as a condition of saying yes - this was actually proposed during the Bill's passage through Parliament but was removed before the Act was finalised. That said, it's still worth considering your own cover, since you'd remain responsible for any damage the pet causes regardless of insurance.

Q: What should I do if I want to request a pet?

A: Put your request in writing, describe the pet clearly, and keep a copy. Your local Winkworth office can advise on the process if you're unsure.