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London Mayoral Candidate Gives Voters 'Paws' For Thought

Tenants in London will not be prevented from keeping pets under new proposals by Independent Mayoral Candidate Farah London. As the next Mayor, the former businesswoman is aiming to introduce pet-friendly tenancy clauses across the capital, transforming the way Londoners live. To deliver the policy, Ms London will work with housing associations and local authorities to promote contracts that allow Londoners to keep their beloved animals.

Despite over 2.7 million people renting in London, only 8.5% of advertised properties were available to pet owners in 2019. London is also ranked the lowest city in the country for the percentage of people who own pets – which Ms London attributes to unfair renting clauses.

Ms London said - "As an animal lover myself, I think it is unfair and cruel to deny Londoners their pets. A dog, cat or other domestic animal can dramatically improve mental health and provide companionship. If this pandemic has done one thing, it's reinforced the benefits of keeping pets, with multiple studies showing the positive impact it has on our wellbeing."

Giving tenants the right to have a pet will also reduce the abandonment of animals, according to Ms London. Dogs Trust, an animal welfare charity, reported that many owners are forced to rehome pets because of a change in living circumstances. The Mayoral candidate described the situation as an "unacceptable and an unnecessary burden on local charities."

Ms London also believes that landlords often fail to recognise the benefits pets brought to not only their tenants, but also themselves. Research by the RSPCA revealed that pet owning tenants stay twice as long, providing steady and reliable income to landlords. The advent of home working has also made renting in London less attractive, with many people leaving the capital in search of more space and better value for money. By giving renters in London the right to own a pet, Ms London believes this exodus could be reduced.

BRING LONDON BACK

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As part of her wider commitment to animal health and welfare, Farah will also set up the "Mayor's Animal Welfare Charity Awards", an annual event celebrating Londoners who've made an outstanding contribution to improving the health and welfare of animals. The sponsored celebration would also be a fundraising event, with the proceeds going to charities in the capital. Ms London also plans to host the awards on 4th October, the international day of animal welfare, and the 'feast day' of Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals.

Ms London said - "These awards will honour the excellent work of Londoners across the city who've demonstrated an outstanding commitment to improving animal welfare. I would love to see Paul O'Grady or Brian May to host the awards, but ultimately, my goal is to improve the lives of animals in our capital."

Ms London also plans to launch a number of awareness campaigns around critical issues, such as illegal puppy farming, and will pressure the Government to expedite the Animal Welfare Bill, which would increase the sentence for causing 'unnecessary suffering' to domesticated animals to a maximum of 5 years . Banning home breeding without licences and making proof of ownership mandatory during the sale of pets are also a priority for Ms London. She also has hopes of highlighting the importance of education, and wants London's pet owners to learn more about routine vaccinations, neutering and microchipping.

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