

Pawperty report

Every Dog Deserves a Happy Place

November 2026

Every dog's happy place



Dogs make a house really feel like a home. They become part of our family and daily routines, always greeting us with an enthusiasm that makes even an ordinary day turn into something special.

In return for their unconditional love, we naturally want to give them a life filled with love and a comfortable home that makes them feel happy and safe.

My dog Archie, who lived to the ripe old age of 15, was happiest on the back of the sofa. That was his space and he curled up on his blanket which is still upstairs in a box of his things that I haven't been able to discard.

Making a happy home for a dog starts with understanding them. What do they enjoy? How do they like to rest? What helps them relax – and what might trigger anxiety?

For one dog, being outside might be the key to their heart — but for Archie a short walk, meeting a few friends in the park and then curling up on the back of the sofa was enough to make him content.

This Pawperty Report from Dogs Trust celebrates those differences and the thought that the nation's dog owners put into giving their dogs – with all their quirks and differing personality traits – a happy place suited to them. It also reminds us that making a dog comfortable doesn't have to mean spending a fortune. Small changes, guided by what your dog needs, can make a real difference.

I hope this report inspires you to look at your home through the eyes of the dog in your life, and discover the little things that help them feel settled and safe.

Because every dog deserves a happy place that they can call home.

— Clare Balding CBE
Broadcaster, writer and Dogs Trust Ambassador

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A home with dogs in mind



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We don’t just share our homes with dogs.



Often, we design our lives around them too, and that can start before we’ve even moved in!

Two in five (42%) have chosen a home for its garden or outside space, while 41% have picked a home because the garden was secure. A third (32%) of dog owners have decided against a property because it wasn’t right for their dog, while 16% spend more on their dog’s food than on their own groceries.

What’s more, a huge 52% of dog owners would forgo their dream property for their dog!

Whether it’s choosing somewhere to live based on the size of the garden, access to green space or sacrificing cream carpets for easy-to-clean wooden floors, **dogs often have a bigger say in our home choices** and interiors than we might like to admit.

In fact, 9 in 10 (89%) dog owners have added, altered or bought something to make their home better for their dog.

We know that for a lot of dog owners, creating a happy home means thinking beyond their own creature comforts and dipping into the minds of their canine companion...

48% have made **changes around their home** based on their dog’s preferences and needs

47% have **rearranged furniture** to give their dog more space

22% have sacrificed their own **decor preferences** for their four-legged friend

> **“I’ve spent more on my dog’s bed than I have on some of my own furniture.”**
>
> **Ella, London**

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Location, location, location

Our dogs might not contribute to the mortgage or rent, but they certainly seem to have their say on where we live. After all, any owner knows that, unless their dog is happy, they're not happy.

Nearly three in 10 (29%) have chosen to live in an area for its access to parks, countryside or good walks specifically because of their dog.

It can take a village to care for a dog at times, which is why 10% have picked a location because it was close to people who could help care for their pooch.

Room with a view
Nearly one in five dog owners (18%) have chosen a home because it had good spots for their four-legged friend to look outside and watch the world go by.



"A white-walled house would never stay white with our dog!

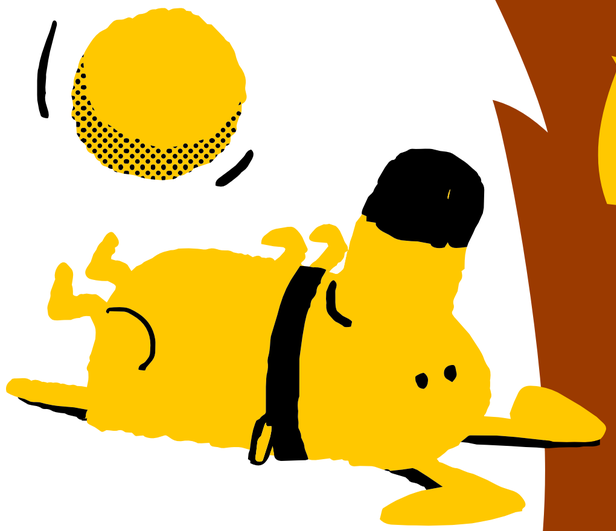
Kad, Berkshire

"When we were moving house, our dog definitely influenced our decisions. We wanted a garden as well as plenty of local walks that we could take our dog on.

We were also envisioning where Buzz would sleep and where we would store all his toys. We knew it wasn't just our home, but his home too. Plus, we didn't want a newly built house which was immaculately white. Buzz would ruin that in an instant!"

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Grand Designs: the dog edition



At Dogs Trust, we know that dogs don't need a home full of fancy gadgets to feel content. Often, the smallest things can keep our pooches happy: 54% have created a cosy space for their dog and 21% leave familiar smelling clothes out for when they are alone.

However, some dog owners have made elaborate, and often bespoke, changes to their homes, to keep their furry family members comfortable.

Nearly half (48%) would spend more on dog-friendly home alterations than their own interiors while 58% would prioritise their dog's preferences over their own when making changes in a new home.

For some, making doggy-approved amendments has come at a cost: of those who have splashed the cash on their dog, 37% have spent between £150 and £500 on a single item or home adaptation for them, with a generous £292 being the average total spend.

So what lavish lengths are 'pawrents' going to keep their furry friend happy?

Because they know it would work better for their dog, some owners have chosen specific furniture and décor – with rugs and carpets coming top (30%), followed by flooring (27%) and a sofa that suits their furry friend (23%).

A few more dog-friendly home alterations:

14% bought or commissioned **custom-built furniture** for their dog

9% have set up a **safe indoor obstacle course** for their dog suited to their needs

8% have added a **dog washing station**

5% have a **fridge/freezer** specifically for their dog

5% have an **outdoor digging pit**

5% have a **doggy doorbell**



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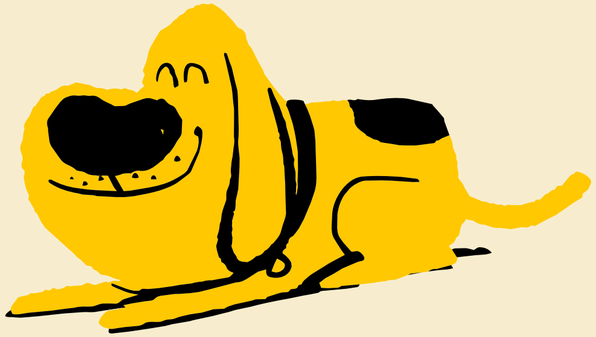
If money was no object...

...some UK dog owners would really pull out the stops for a perfect home. Here's what they'd provide to create a dream home for their pooch...

Tip: Make sure your dog has a warm and comfortable bed so it's an attractive space for them. It should be big enough for your dog to stretch out with their water and toys nearby.

"His **own chef** to cook him steak and chicken."





"His very **own dog house**; a little mansion like they **have on MTV Cribs.**"



"A **warm wet room** to be able to **wash them off** after a walk rather than outside in the **cold.**"

"A **large meadow,** completely enclosed so they can **run around and sniff** wherever they want."



"A **bone piñata** on his birthday - I know it would make him so **happy** to break one open and discover lots of doggy treats."

"A ball pit full of flip flops to chew!"



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Top 10 home improvements, with dogs in mind

Extravagance might be nice, but we know that the simplest things will help dogs feel comfortable and safe. These dog owners have made all sorts of thoughtful tweaks to keep their four-legged friends happy...

35%

of dog owners play 'find the treat' to **mentally stimulate** their dogs



1. Built **fencing or gates** (29%)
2. Added **familiar-smelling items**, such as blankets or clothing, to their dog's sleeping area (26%)
3. Used **rugs or mats** to make certain areas quieter and more comfortable (26%)
4. Added **baby gates** (25%)
5. Allocated their dog his or her **own sofa** (24%)
6. Created a **dedicated dog bedroom** (19%)
7. Added **non-slip flooring** (16%)
8. Built dog **steps or a ramp** (15%)
9. Given their dog a **bespoke bed** (13%)
10. Built a **viewing platform** so their dog can look out of the window (11%)

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A Happy Place with a happy budget.

Rachel, London

“I am always tempted by the lovely doggy toys and accessories that you can buy in the shops. But I’ve found that I really don’t have to spend a fortune to make my dog happy at home because some of the most basic things have been the biggest hits in our home!

“Winston always finds joy in cardboard boxes, so now whenever we have a delivery, we make sure we save the box. The same goes for egg boxes; sometimes I will tuck the odd treat inside if he’s been good! There’s also a sunny spot on our living room floor, which he tends to bask in during the afternoon.”

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One-of-a-kind



Turns out, we really go above-and-beyond to keep our dogs happy...

"I got **rid of the dishwasher** to accommodate my dog's bed space."

"I bought him his **own armchair** so he doesn't need to take up all the space on our sofa."

"I've **given my dog a bedroom** for herself - she's a very pampered pooch!"

"I've **cut down the bushes** outside my house so my dog can watch what's happening in our street."

"I sleep on about **three inches of my bed** because my dog takes the rest!"

"I **made a window seat** for my dog so he can watch for me coming home! He always gets so excited."

"Our dog needed more space indoors to play around freely, so we **rearranged the furniture** to make more room."

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The weird and wonderful ways we spoil our dogs

These dog owners have thought outside the box when it comes to making their pooches feel at home...

"He has his own sofa with all his toys dangling from it."



"We created a dog room under the stairs."

"I made a mini bunk bed for my dog and cat!"



"Our dog loves to forage, so I made her a little forest out of dog-friendly plants so she can forage as much as she wants!"



"I replaced the door handles in our home with ropes so our dog can pull them open and closed."



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Dogs rule the roost



Who actually runs your household? The dog, naturally! Because our dogs shape our everyday lives more than we realise.

That's why they often lie stretched across the sofa or bed, hogging the very spot you were about to sit in. Or, how they manage to persuade us to give them yet another doggy treat!

In fact, we humans often bend our own behaviour around our furry friend even if it means previous house rules go out of the window.

Because of course, our precious pooch can do no wrong: 72% of people have been known to prioritise their dog's comfort or preferences over a partner's or family member's.

Life with a four-legged friend can also mean personal space is limited at best; we understand that daily routines often revolve around the furry family member.

74% say their dog has a **favourite spot** in the house that everyone knows is theirs

32% **sleep awkwardly** to give their dog more bed space

32% **delay getting food, drink or the remote** because they don't want to disturb their comfortable dog

27% have a **special bedtime routine** with their dog

19% would **give up the best seat** in the house for their dog

> **I play bird watching shows on TV for him to watch. It keeps us both happy!**
>
> **James, Surrey**

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My husband knows where he stands in the pecking order!

Becky, West Sussex

“I know for a fact that my husband, Joel, would say that the dog gets treated better than he does. When Luna is on the bed, I definitely won’t ask her to move, just so my husband has more room. If anyone is going to get pushed to the edge, it’s my husband!

How am I supposed to say no to the dog when she’s the happiest, most loyal and fun member of our household!? She is part of the family, and I just want her to be happy.”



Keeping the whole family happy

Putting the dog first isn’t always something that the whole household agrees on. While one person is happy to give up their favourite spot on the sofa so the dog can relax, another might not particularly enjoy perching on the edge for the evening.

When presented with the choice between asking their dog or their housemate to budge off the sofa to make space, one in three (30%) would rather the housemate moved.

Tip: While some pups love to snooze and snuggle, others love playing fetch. Some might enjoy long walks with doggy pals, while others prefer pottering and sniffing around the garden on their own. So, it’s important to get to know your dog, then you can structure their routine and the activities they do during the day around this.

The belongings we keep for our dogs

Time for a clear out? Not if the dog has their say! For a lot of dog mums and dads, their four-legged friend’s comfort and happiness has come before their desire to get rid of something with nearly a third (30%) keeping something they would otherwise replace because their dog loves it.

Over half (53%) are harbouring a selection of old, worn-out toys because their dog likes them, 43% have avoided throwing out old blankets favoured by their dog and 20% keep clothing because their pooch enjoys the smell. Plus, 15% have kept a dog’s well-loved puppy bed or cage.

13%



For 13% of dog owners, **ugly or mismatched furniture has remained**, because their furry friend likes sitting or sleeping on it.

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A dog's happy place

If your dog could design their happy place, would they choose a huge garden, lots of toys, a plush memory foam bed, and the finest dog food money can buy?

Or would they actually be content with their worn-out blanket and their favourite human to curl up to after a long walk in the rain?

We can't get into the minds of our pet pooches, which is why it's so important to get to know your dog's individual personality and learn what makes their tail wag with joy.

One thing's for certain though, your dog's happy place is simple to achieve.

Tip: Your dog's happy place will be where they feel most comfortable and relaxed. Being patient and understanding is so important to help them feel at home, which also means looking out for signs that they are feeling anxious or frightened, so you can respond appropriately.



So how well do we really understand what our dogs want and need to feel safe and at home?

When we asked UK 'pawrents' to imagine their dog's happy place...

24%
said **great walks nearby** would matter the most

21%
said having their **favourite toys and familiar belongings** mattered most

7%
said their dog wanted plenty of **indoor space**

19%
know a **sunny spot** for their pooch is the key to happiness

20%
said that plenty of **time with loved ones** mattered most.

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I know what my dog likes.

Nyomi, Essex

“Over the years, I’ve learnt to understand when our family dog is happy and settled. It’s usually the little things that give it away, like when he’s curled up in his favourite spot on the back of the sofa or how he greets the kids when they arrive back from school.

As a family, we definitely spoil Kobe, but he’s usually happy just being around the family chaos and doesn’t seem too bothered by the toys we buy him.

When I see Kobe relaxed and comfortable in our home, I know that as a family we’re doing something right.”



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Seasonal changes



Just as we humans make lifestyle changes during the colder, darker months as we hunker down, our dogs also want to stay snug during the autumn and winter months.

Some UK dog owners shared more specific seasonal changes that keep their dog happy, from using a heat pad in their dog's bed to buying them a warm winter coat and even letting them sleep in the bed when they wouldn't normally.

37% of dog owners ensure their dog has their **favourite blanket** to curl up in

32% **leave a light on** for them when the nights draw in

26% keep the house toasty by leaving the **heating on** for their dog **when they go out**

22% **create a cosy den** for their dog

17% of people put the **heating on** for their dogs when they **don't even need it themselves**

Tip: Make sure your dog has somewhere to relax and sleep in comfort. A clean, dry, cosy, padded bed, or even a snug blanket in their favourite spot, is perfect. Ideally give them somewhere quiet, away from loud noises or bustling family rooms, that they can retreat to undisturbed if they'd like their own space. Some dogs prefer the nest-like feeling of a crate or doggy den as it makes them feel safe, so consider trying one of these if your dog seems uncomfortable in the open.

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Fostering dogs has taught us that a happy place isn’t the same for every dog.

Jason, Edinburgh

“Fostering has really opened mine and my husband’s eyes to just how different every dog can be. Some settle in straight away and adopt a routine, while others need more time and reassurance before they feel comfortable.

We never assume that because one dog loved a certain bed or toy, the next one will too. We watch their behaviour and start to learn what they enjoy, but we also let our foster dogs find their feet at their own pace. It’s very rewarding when you notice a dog gradually relax and feel at home.”

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Home is where the dog is



Like you, our love for dogs is what gets us up in the mornings, which is why we're so dedicated to rescuing and caring for abandoned or unwanted dogs. Because we think all dogs deserve a happy life in a happy place.

Your pooch doesn't need expensive doggy coats or an extravagant bed. Instead, they love the simple things such as familiar blankets and toys, a comfy place to lay their head after a busy day of walking and playing and of course, their favourite people close by.

At the end of the day, however you make your home work for your dog, the main thing is that they feel safe, comfortable, happy and loved.

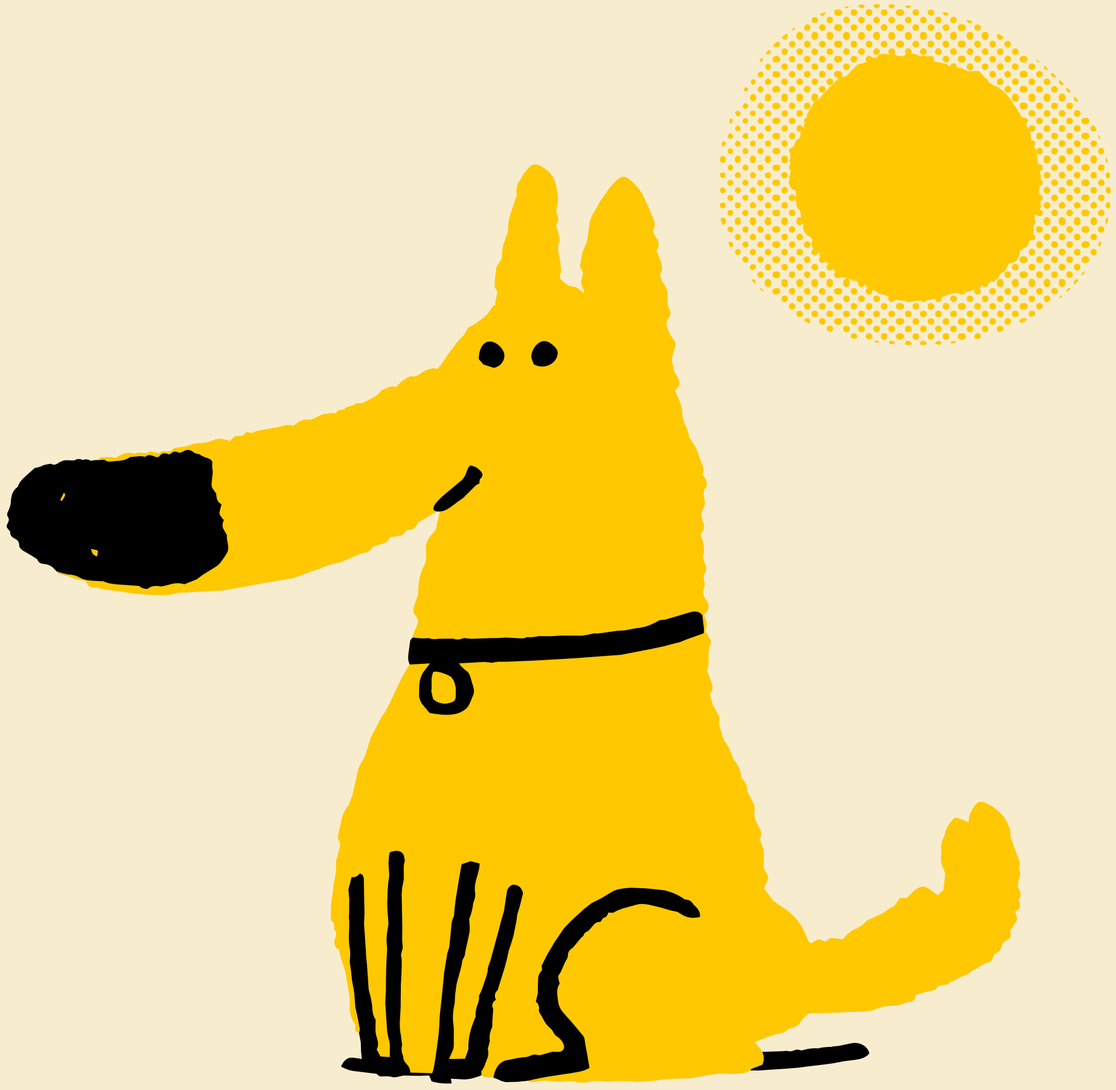


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Will you help dogs?

Last year, your kind donations helped us to provide life-changing care for over 10,000 of our furry friends.

For more information or to donate, please visit: **dogstrust.org.uk**



Research conducted by Obsurvant among 4,009 UK adults aged 18+ who own at least one dog. Respondents were recruited through online research panels, with sampling controlled by age, gender and region to match UK population demographics. All participants were screened to confirm dog ownership.

FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

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