



# MARS

## The Pet-Friendly Advantage (PFA)

# Foreword

**Pets are an integral part of life for millions<sup>1</sup> of households across Europe**, bringing companionship, comfort and endless joy. So it's no surprise that as more of us are living with pets in our families, homes and cities – **there's an increasing expectation that our pets should be welcome at work!**

At Mars, we've long understood the positive impact pets can have in the workplace, **from helping encourage us to take more regular breaks, to fostering a more relaxed atmosphere.** But the benefits go further than this. Through our new research carried out with **more than 16,000 workers across Europe**, we're seeing pets at work move from a 'nice-to-have' to an employee expectation – with the majority of Europeans going as far as to say they would consider switching jobs for a pet-friendly workplace.

So for businesses, this new “must-have” work perk offers a pretty clear strategic advantage – our research suggests that a pet-friendly office shows you **support wellbeing**, you're **focused on strengthening culture**, and in an increasingly

competitive market, demonstrates you have a **commitment to retaining and attracting new talent.**

The following report dives into the perceptions, expectations and influences that pets have on employees across Europe, supporting what we at Mars have always known – that **a pet-friendly workplace is a better workplace for all.**



**Paolo Rigamonti**

Regional President Europe,  
Mars Pet Nutrition

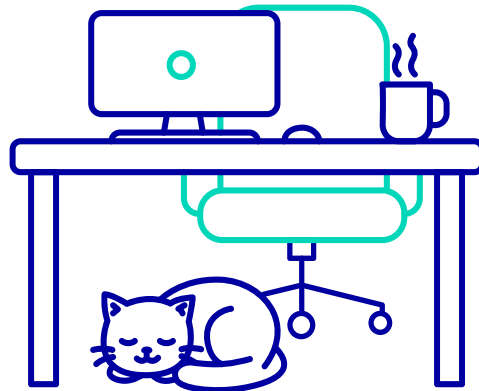


1. FEDIAF European Pet Food Report confirms 340 million pets in Europe: [https://europeanpetfood.org/\\_/news/fediaf-europeanpetfood-releases-its-annual-factsfigures-confirming-340-million-pets-in-europe/](https://europeanpetfood.org/_/news/fediaf-europeanpetfood-releases-its-annual-factsfigures-confirming-340-million-pets-in-europe/)

# Introduction

With **56% of people worldwide now owning pets**, the global pet population has soared to **over 1 billion<sup>2</sup>**. While extensive research shows the benefits of pets, including studies from organizations like the Human-Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI) and Mars' own research<sup>3</sup>, this report provides new, data-driven insights into how these benefits translate to the workplace. Through a new survey of over 16,000 European workers, Mars presents data-driven evidence showing that **a pet-friendly workplace is an increasingly important strategic consideration for businesses across Europe.**

This new research demonstrates that many employees, regardless of if they own pets, said they would choose a job, or even switch jobs, if it meant they could bring a pet to work, signaling a strong correlation between pet-friendly policies and a company's **ability to attract and retain talent, foster a positive working culture for all employees, and even enable future pet ownership.**



This report analyzes the business case for pet-friendly workplaces and provides actionable guidance for three key audiences:



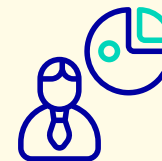
## For business leaders

It offers a strategic business case and practical implementation guidelines.



## For job seekers

It identifies key indicators of a truly supportive pet-friendly culture.



## For policymakers

It outlines the role of pet-friendly policies in urban development.

2. Euromonitor data 2024, as referenced in Mars, "Mars Global Pet Parent Study, 2024," available at <https://www.mars.com/en-gb/news-and-stories/press-releases-statements/mars-unveils-worlds-largest-pet-parent-study>

3. The positive impact of pets on human health is well-documented. Research compiled by the Human-Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI) shows that interacting with companion animals can decrease cortisol levels. Similarly, public health organizations like the CDC have linked pet ownership to benefits such as lower blood pressure and increased physical activity. Mars' own global Pets and Wellbeing Study (PAWS) research program has further explored how everyday interactions with cats and dogs shape our mental wellbeing.

# Executive Summary

Why a pet-friendly office is the new strategic advantage



## The Talent Magnet

**Over half** of all European workers say they would **consider switching jobs** for an employer that allows pets.



## The Culture Boost

**81%** of ALL employees – including those without pets – believe a pet-friendly office fosters a **more relaxed and positive atmosphere**.



## The New “Must-Have” Perk

**35%** prioritize **pet-friendly policies over enhanced personal benefits** like parental leave or private healthcare, or traditional office perks like company socials or free snacks.



## The Information Gap

**55%** of job seekers **struggle to find information** on pet policies.

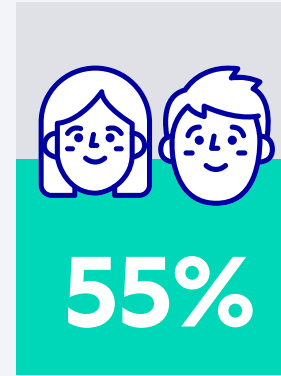
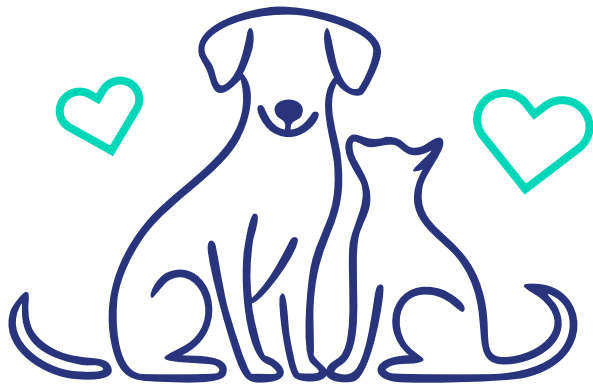
**Source:** 2026 Censuswide survey of 16,060 European workers across 14 markets. Markets surveyed: UK, Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Sweden.

# The Business Case for a Pet-Friendly Workplace

A pet-friendly workplace represents a strategic advantage in the modern business environment, with a demonstrable impact on two key areas: talent retention and employee wellbeing.

The business case for investing in employee wellbeing has become closely linked to talent retention. Indeed's 2025 Work Wellbeing Report found that **only 23% of people are thriving at work**<sup>4</sup>, and employees with low wellbeing are **twice as likely to be actively searching for a new job**<sup>5</sup>.

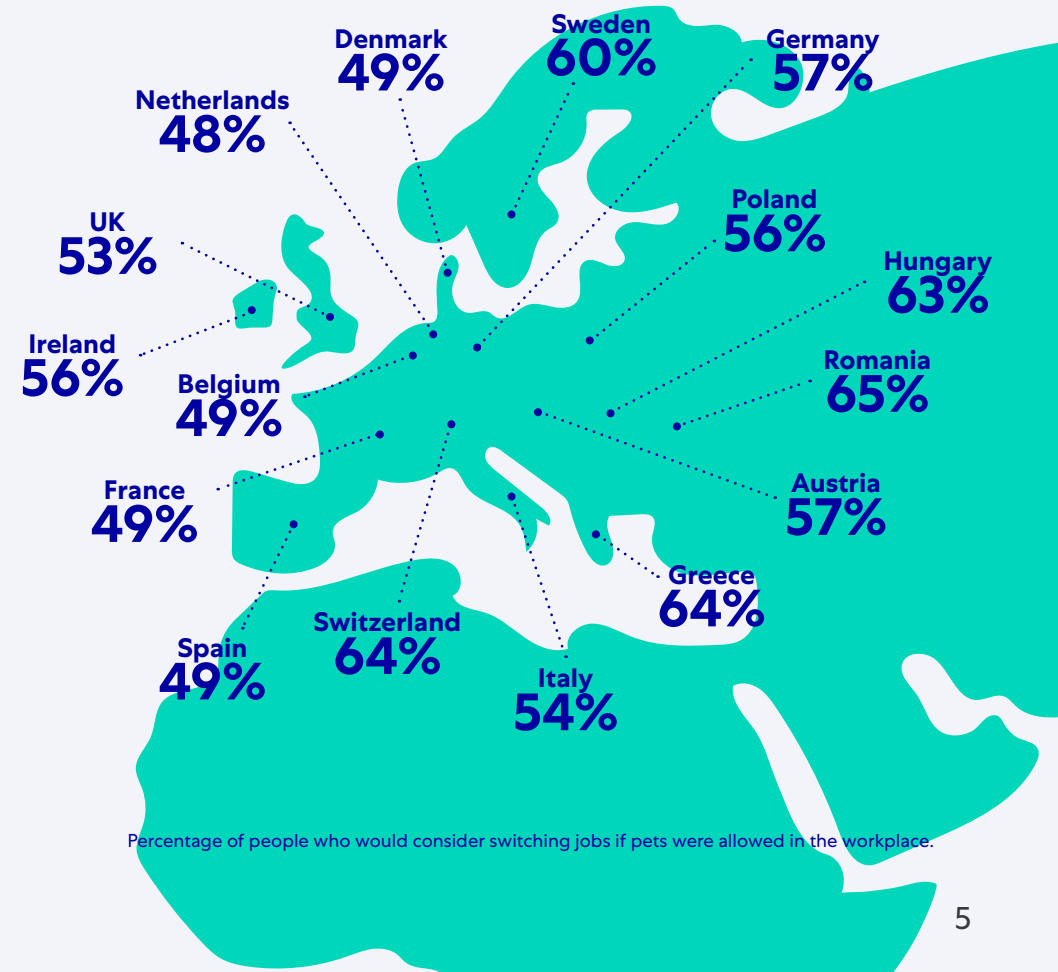
In this challenging environment, **pet-friendly policies can offer an authentic differentiator to attract and retain talent, improve workplace culture, and offer more flexibility**. A formal, well-managed "pets in the office" policy was found to have a positive influence on the perception of a company, and not just among pet owners.



Our research shows that...

**over half of all European workers (55%)**

report that being able to bring their pet to work would influence their choice of employer.

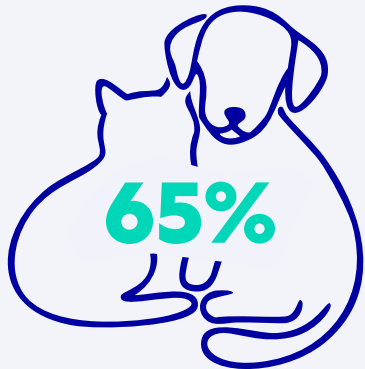
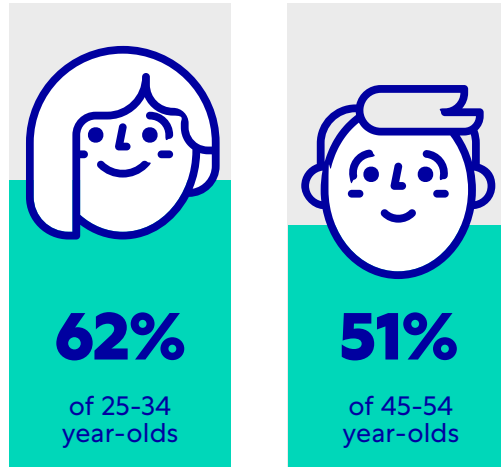


Percentage of people who would consider switching jobs if pets were allowed in the workplace.

4. Indeed, 2025 Work Wellbeing Report, p.13, available at: [uk.indeed.com/employers/work-wellbeing-report](https://www.indeed.com/employers/work-wellbeing-report)

5. Indeed, 2025 Work Wellbeing Report, p.22, available at: [uk.indeed.com/employers/work-wellbeing-report](https://www.indeed.com/employers/work-wellbeing-report)

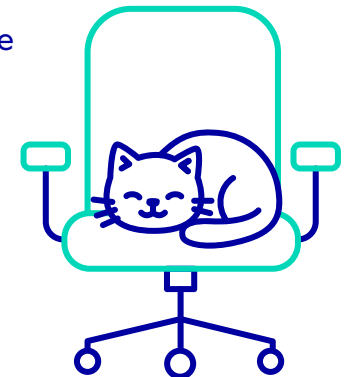
The influence of pet-friendly policies on individual career decisions is particularly strong among the 25-34 age cohort at 62%, and remains a high priority for all, with just over half (51%) of workers aged 45-54 also influenced by these policies.



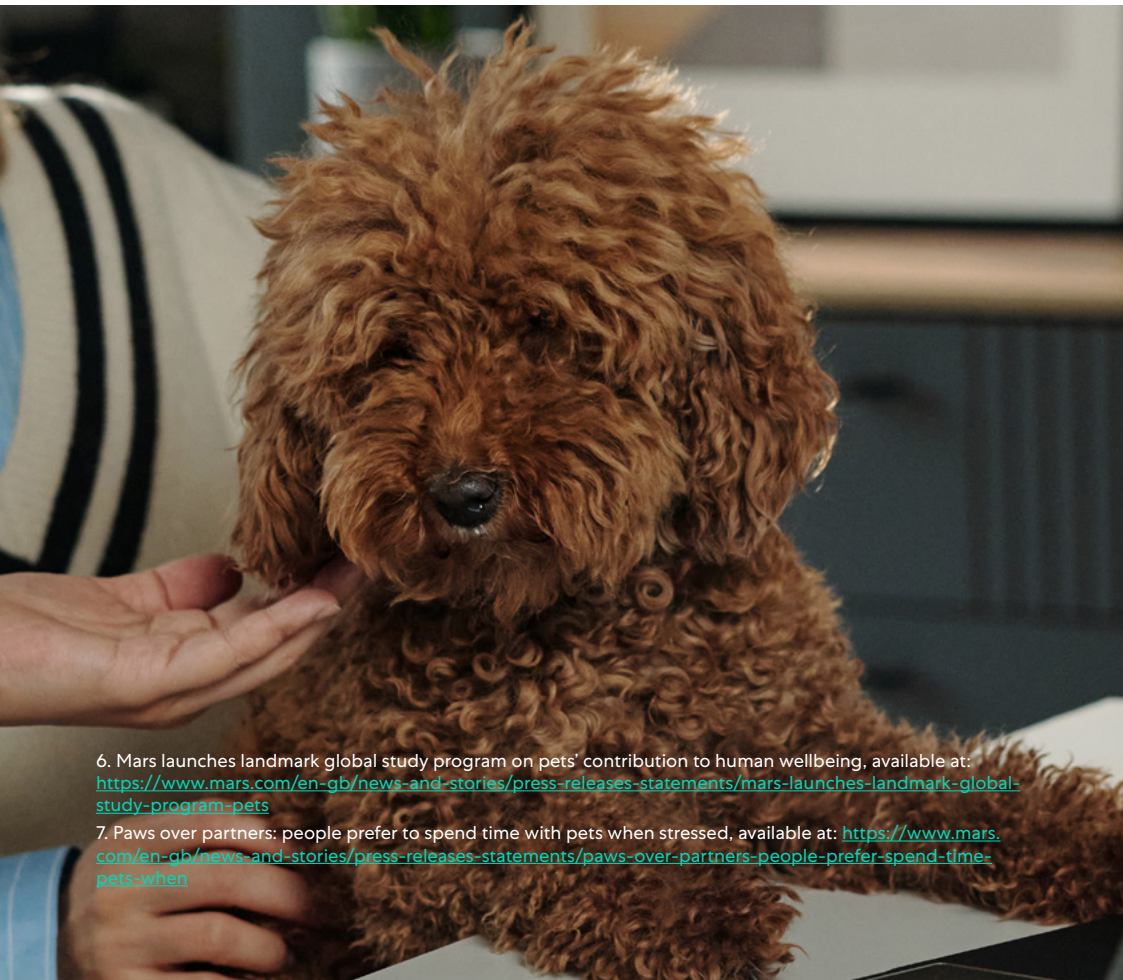
**65%** of pet owners said a pet-friendly work environment would impact their choice of employer.

A pet-friendly work environment also acts as a major deciding factor for current pet owners, with **65% stating it would impact their choice of employer.** This rises to **71% for non-pet owners who would be more likely to get a pet** if their workplace offered more supportive policies.

Just **16%** had concerns that a formal, well-managed pets in the office policy would **negatively impact the professional atmosphere.**



Against a backdrop of rising global anxiety and stress levels<sup>6</sup>, **the human-animal bond provides a proven antidote**: recent global research from Mars reveals that **83% of people say pets have a positive impact on their mental wellbeing**<sup>7</sup>. Translating this into a professional context, the benefits of a pet-friendly office are **recognized by the entire workforce**, not just pet owners. A third of Europeans believe a well-managed pet policy would **signal the company cares about employee wellbeing (33%)**, make the office a **more desirable location to work from (31%)** and suggest a **more forward-thinking culture (30%)**. A primary effect is on the office atmosphere.

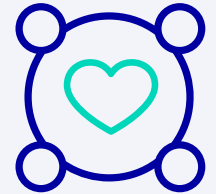


6. Mars launches landmark global study program on pets' contribution to human wellbeing, available at: <https://www.mars.com/en-gb/news-and-stories/press-releases-statements/mars-launches-landmark-global-study-program-pets>

7. Paws over partners: people prefer to spend time with pets when stressed, available at: <https://www.mars.com/en-gb/news-and-stories/press-releases-statements/paws-over-partners-people-prefer-spend-time-pets-when>

## What do employees think?

**81%** of all employees report that a **pet-friendly environment fosters a more relaxed and positive culture**, including encouraging employees to take short, regular breaks.



**79%** state it creates more **opportunities for spontaneous social connection** between colleagues.

**74%** agree that the **presence of animals helps to lower stress levels**.



As 'return to office' mandates increase, **half (50%)** of workers believe that companies with pet-friendly policies are more supportive of a transition to increased office-based working.

This desire for pet-friendly support now competes with, and in some cases outweighs, traditional office perks. Our research shows that **more than a third (37%)** of workers prioritize pet-friendly policies over personal benefits such as employee discount schemes, cycle-to-work schemes, free snacks, or after-work socials. **A similar amount (35%) even place pet policies above enhanced benefits like parental leave and private healthcare.**

This is especially the case for younger generations, where **44% of 18-24-year-olds care more about pet-friendly policies than 'soft' perks**, compared to 28% of over-55s.

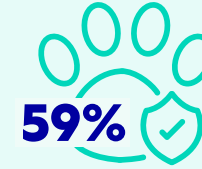


## The New Office Must-Haves

Policies that influence people's choice of employer include:



**Flexible work schedules to help care for a pet**



**Pet insurance as part of employee benefits**



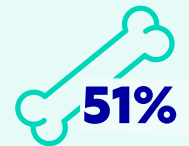
**Financial support for petcare when traveling for work**



**On-site petcare services**

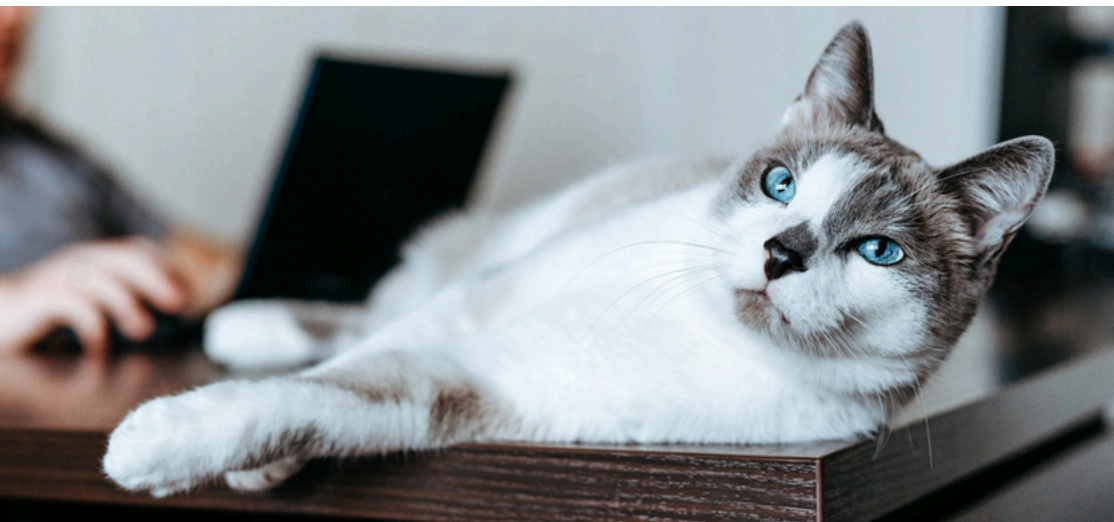


**Paid leave to care for a new or sick pet**



**A resident company pet**

%. Percentage of workers who find these policies influential.



What's clear from this data is that **flexibility and clear guidelines are paramount for a successful pet-friendly workplace.** Employees see strong value in policies that support pet care, such as flexible work schedules, while noting that advantageous adjustments to create a pet-friendly workplace, like increased access to outdoor spaces (80%) and encouraging more regular breaks (81%), have a benefit for everyone.

## Pet-Friendly Offices Are A Job-Seeker Priority Across Europe

Demand for pet-friendly workplaces is consistently high across the 16 European countries we studied, with notable variations in priorities.



In **Greece**, **64% of workers** say their pet being allowed at work would **influence their career decisions** - among the highest in Europe. **87%** believe a pet-friendly environment fosters a more relaxed culture for all.



**Swiss** workers are among those most likely to consider switching jobs for a pet-friendly workplace (**64%**), claiming pet-friendly policies support office-based working (**39%**) and foster employee loyalty (**31%**).



In **Romania**, workers are the most likely to **actively search for companies** with pet-friendly policies (**44%**), and are more influenced in their job choice by benefits like paid pet leave or petcare services at work (**both 66%**).



In the UK, **transparency** is paramount, with British workers being the most likely to demand that pet-friendly policies be clearly outlined in the employee handbook and benefits packages (**80%**).

Despite this clear demand from the talent pool, our data shows that **over half of all workers (55%) do not know where to find information on pet-friendly policies** when searching for a job.



**55% of job seekers** don't know where to find information on a company's pet-friendly policies.

This gap is highest in **Switzerland (66%)** and lowest in the **Netherlands (47%)**, but it exists across the board.

**A third (33%) of workers** said their company has pet-friendly policies, but don't advertise these on job ads.

This information gap presents a clear competitive advantage for companies that communicate their policies transparently to differentiate themselves in the hiring process.



# Pets Work at Work

## 4-Step Guidelines for Businesses



A successful pet-friendly program is built on clear policies and shared responsibility. By adopting a structured approach, companies can create an environment where all employees can thrive – with and without pets.



## Pets Work At Work Toolkit

Discover our tried-and-tested guidelines for a pet-friendly workplace<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup>. Depending on area of business, location and internal policies. Make sure you perform a legal check, before implementing any actions.

# 1

## Build Your Foundation

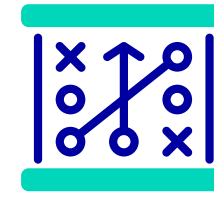
First, **assemble a leadership team**. Form a cross-functional task force (including HR, Legal and Facilities representatives), with a “devil’s advocate” to challenge assumptions, and an executive sponsor to champion the cause.

Next, clear the biggest hurdles. Engage with landlords and facilities teams to **assess building constraints** and align on requirements for pet access, hygiene, and safety. Once you have the green light, proactively **identify and plan for other key risks** like severe employee allergies or local workplace regulations.

With feasibility confirmed, it’s time to **survey employees** to understand their needs and concerns. The data shows you will likely find overwhelming support: **81%** of all European employees believe these policies create a more relaxed workplace atmosphere.



Assemble leadership team



Assess, identify and plan



Survey employees

**Use these insights to draft a clear policy that establishes shared responsibility:**



**Which pets are eligible** – all dogs, only dogs of a certain size, cats?



What does the **code of conduct** specify about pet behavior, vaccinations and training requirements?



What’s the **office-wide etiquette** for all employees when interacting with pets?



Is there a clear and fair process for resolving any **issues or complaints**?

# 2

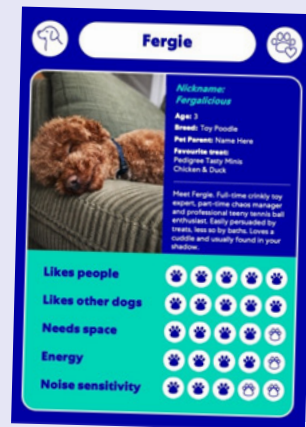
## Prepare Your Space & Your People

Create a pet-friendly space, with designated **“Pet-Free”** and **“Pet-Friendly” zones**, essential amenities like **outdoor relief areas**, **“Hydration Stations,”** and **outdoor green spaces**.

Conduct a **thorough safety walkthrough** to remove any hazards – from loose cables to toxic office plants. Additionally, establish clear extreme weather protocols – such as indoor relief zones and pavement-temperature checks – to safeguard animal welfare during seasonal heatwaves. Only encourage dogs in the workplace if it’s safe to do so.

Prepare **professional signage** for all zones, update your **emergency evacuation plan** to include pets, and **develop an “Etiquette Guide”** for pets to ensure a culture of mutual respect.

Build a strategic communications plan for launch, with clear timelines and consistent messages. Use engaging materials, like **“Canine CVs”** to **introduce the participating pets** and their personalities (e.g., “nervous around new people,” “loves a good ear scratch”, “hates the doorbell”).



# 3

## Activate Your Program



Consider a **pilot ‘pets at work’ program** across a single floor or department to gather feedback. When you’re ready, make it a significant cultural moment championed by senior leadership to signal their support.

Leverage your pet-friendly culture as an asset for your employer brand. **Make your pet-friendly policy highly visible** on your careers page, update job descriptions and other recruitment materials, and encourage teams to share their photos on social media. This allows you to directly appeal to the **55%** of employees who report that these policies influence their employment decisions.



# 4

## Measure, Learn, and Evolve

From day one, define and measure key performance indicators (KPIs) related to **talent, engagement, and wellbeing** to track the program's impact. Implement a formal system to gather **candid feedback** from both pet owners and non-pet-owning colleagues, and use this data to evolve the program over time.

A truly supportive policy also **empowers employees to opt for remote work on days when it is better for their pet's wellbeing** to remain at home (i.e. during heatwaves).

### Petcare Policies Are Gaining Political Momentum

The shift from perk to protected policy is gaining momentum, with 2026 legislative proposals in both Italy (introducing paid leave for petcare emergencies)<sup>9</sup> and the U.S. (using statutory sick time to care for a companion animal in NYC)<sup>10</sup> signaling a test case that today's employee perks may become tomorrow's legal expectations. While not yet passed, these efforts reflect a growing **legal acknowledgment of pets as integral family members and a legitimate reason for emergency absences.**

9. Euro Weekly News, "Paid leave for sick pets: Italy's precedent that could open up leave rights to care for animals," published April 15, 2026, available at: <https://euoweeklynews.com/2026/04/15/paid-leave-for-sick-pets-italys-precedent-that-could-open-up-leave-rights-to-care-for-animals>

10. New York City Council, "Introduction 0021-2026," introduced January 2026, available at: <https://intro.nyc/0021-2026>





# Indicators of an Authentic Pet-Friendly Workplace



For a significant portion of the workforce (55%), a supportive pet-friendly environment is a high-priority factor in their employment decisions. In response, companies are increasingly highlighting these benefits to attract talent.

For example, data from hiring platform Indeed shows that interest in pet-friendly policies is rapidly gaining pace, with job postings in the UK that mention “dog friendly” increasing 14-fold since 2019.

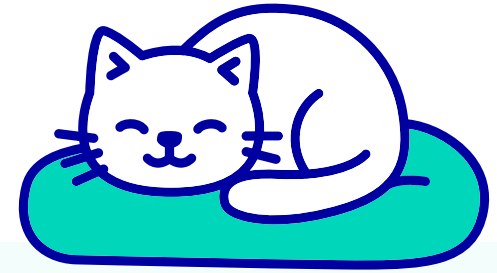


**14x increase in dog-friendly job postings since 2019**



**14**

However, for job seekers, a **key challenge is distinguishing between stated policy and true cultural integration**. For both job seekers and employers, several key indicators can help distinguish a stated policy from a deeply committed culture that welcomes pets:



1

### **Explicit Communication in Job Postings**

Companies with a mature pet-friendly culture often feature it as a key differentiator in job advertisements, with explicit mentions in the “Perks & Benefits” section.

2

### **Visible Evidence in Corporate Communications**

A strong indicator is the presence of authentic, employee-generated content (e.g., photos of pets in the office) on location-specific social media accounts, or in tagged posts at the company’s offices, which demonstrates that the policy is actively practiced, not just stated.

3

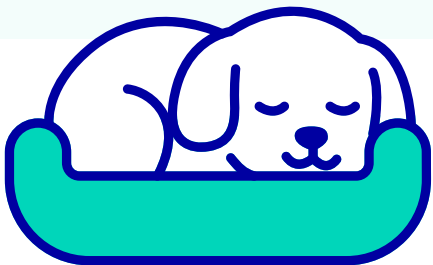
### **Transparency During the Interview Process**

Companies that are proud of their culture welcome detailed questions during interviews. They can readily provide information on the day-to-day workings of the policy, the existence of “pet-free” zones, the onboarding process for new pets, and procedures for handling complaints.

4

### **Formalized Policies and Agreements**

The most committed companies have a formal, documented pet policy or participation agreement. This document outlines key responsibilities for health, behavior, and hygiene and serves as clear evidence of a well-managed and officially supported program.



**These indicators provide a framework for both job seekers evaluating potential employers and for business leaders aiming to build a best-in-class, truly supportive pet-friendly workplace.**



# From Pet-Friendly Workplaces to Pet-Friendly Cities



The findings of this report highlight a significant trend in the modern workforce: **a strong and growing demand for pet-friendly environments**. This trend is situated within a broader societal context of high pet ownership, and one that is increasingly urban. Data from FEDIAF, who represent the European pet food industry, shows that **25% of European households own at least one dog**<sup>11</sup>, and in major urban centers like Paris, estimates suggest a **ratio of one dog for every seven residents**<sup>12</sup>.

However, our research reveals a **critical disconnect between the workplace and the wider urban environment**. While companies are increasingly adopting pet-friendly policies to attract talent, a separate Mars and Ipsos survey indicates that **only 42% of people find their own neighborhoods to be very pet-friendly**<sup>13</sup>.

This gap can create a **“last-mile” problem** for employees, where a pet-friendly office policy is undermined by a commute or local environment that is not accommodating to pets. This disconnect presents an **opportunity for policymakers to align urban planning** with the needs and priorities of a significant portion of their resident workforce, and drive a stronger local economy in the process.

11. FEDIAF (European Pet Food Industry Federation). (2023). Facts & Figures 2023. Retrieved from <https://europeanpetfood.org/about/statistics/>

12. Based on population data from INSEE (France's National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies) and dog population estimates from the Paris City Hall (Mairie de Paris), which place the ratio at approximately one dog for every seven residents (based on the estimate of 300,000 registered dogs within the city of Paris and the population of the city of Paris at roughly 2.1 million people).

13. Survey of over 20,000 people across 20 markets, conducted by Mars and Ipsos.

These recommendations to foster more pet-friendly urban environments **align with established models for urban improvement**, such as the **Mars BETTER CITIES FOR PETS™ program**<sup>14</sup>. Based on the trends identified, we recommend policymakers consider the following areas for exploration:



### 1. Supporting a Pet-Friendly Business Ecosystem

Exploring initiatives that recognize and support businesses with pet-friendly policies, which our data shows are highly valued by employees.



### 2. Investing in Pet-Friendly Infrastructure

Assessing and improving urban infrastructure, such as safe walking routes and accessible public transport for pets, to ease the “last-mile” challenges for commuters with pets.



### 3. Promoting City-Wide “Pets Welcome” Standards

Developing voluntary guidelines or initiatives that encourage more public spaces and establishments to become pet-friendly, creating a more cohesive urban experience for pet owners.

By addressing this gap, **city leaders can better support their residents**, align with modern workforce trends, and enhance their city’s appeal as a **desirable place to live and work**.



14. Mars Petcare, “BETTER CITIES FOR PETS™” program official website, available at: <https://www.bettercitiesforpets.com/about-the-program>

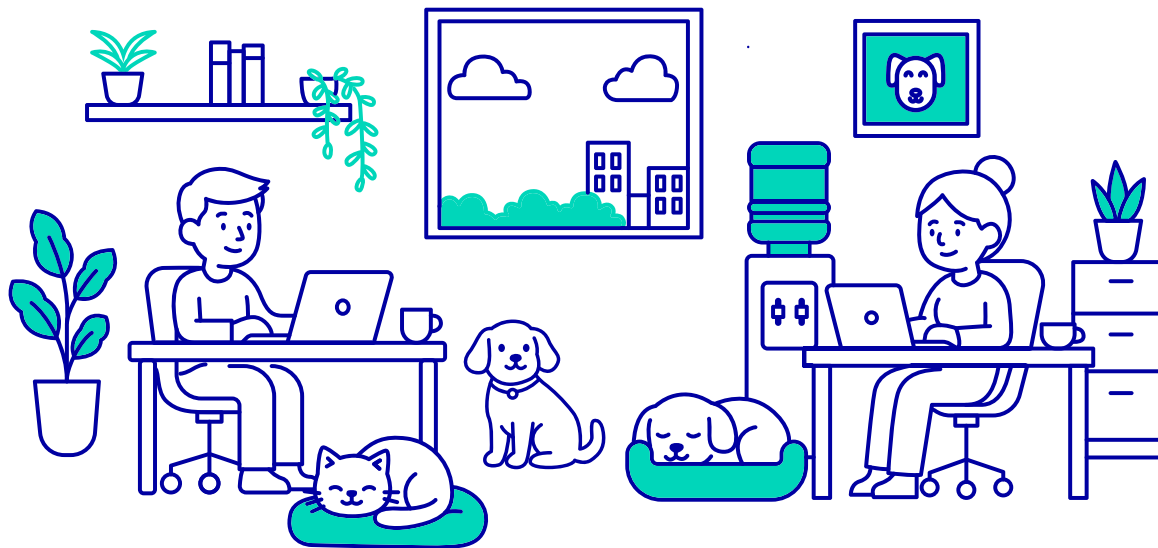
# A Strategic Advantage for a New Era of Work

The evidence from the research is clear: **pet-friendly policies have evolved from a niche perk into a strategic tool for employers, and an increasingly important component of the modern workplace conversation.**

As companies navigate the challenges of talent management and employee wellbeing, the evidence presented in this report demonstrates that **a well-implemented pet-friendly policy can be a valuable tool for creating a more positive, connected, and desirable workplace, with benefits that extend to all employees.** By easing the barriers to pet ownership for the next generation of workers, these policies also play a significant role in building the pet-friendly urban communities of the future. However, the workplace is only

part of the equation: as more companies embrace these policies, there is a clear opportunity for city leaders to align urban planning and infrastructure with the needs of a significant portion of their workforce. By fostering a more pet-friendly ecosystem, cities can better support their residents and enhance their appeal as modern, desirable places to live and work.

These findings demonstrate a clear convergence: **what is good for employees and their pets is also good for business.** By accommodating the needs of pet owners and enabling future pet ownership, these workplace trends contribute to a more pet-inclusive society.





## About the Research

The research was commissioned by Mars Petcare and conducted by Censuswide, a global insight-driven research company. The survey polled a total of 16,006 employees (aged 18+) who work in an office or in a hybrid model. The research was conducted between 31.03.2026 and 15.04.2026 across 16 European markets: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.