

High price of owning a handbag dog

By **John Bingham**
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TO A certain type of well-heeled client they are as essential a fashion item as the handbag in which they are so often carried.

But many adherents of the celebrity-driven trend for tiny “designer” dogs who live in London’s most exclusive property developments are now finding the craze is weighing on the handbag in a different way altogether.

According to one leading letting agent, landlords in areas such as Mayfair, Belgravia and Chelsea are charging up to 100 per cent extra in deposits from would-be tenants who wish to keep miniature dogs such as shih-tzus, chihuahuas and pugs.

In some cases the premium can take the deposit to as much £25,000.

A survey of landlords by the Mayfair-based agent EJ Harris found that 30 per cent of tenants in London flats it manages have dogs, compared with almost none 10 years ago.

The average deposit for a two-bedroom apartment let for £1,000 a week is £5,000 compared with £10,000 for a dog-owning tenant.

For a three-bedroom flat let at £2,500 per week, the deposit rises from £15,000 for a pet-free tenant to £25,000 for a dog owner.

Because many buildings have rules forbidding pets, those in which they are allowed charge higher rates.

Elizabeth Harris, of EJ Harris, said tenants were looking for “pads situated close to Hyde Park or Regent’s Park, where they can regularly take their pets for walks”.

