

Relocating Your Pet to the United Kingdom



A practical guide to Great Britain entry rules, direct air-cargo travel and the alternative route through the European Union by road, ferry or LeShuttle.

Personally managed by Julia | Fly Your Tail

Two main ways to reach Great Britain.

Pets flying directly into England, Scotland or Wales normally travel as manifested cargo. An alternative is to enter the European Union first, then travel with the pet by an approved ferry route or LeShuttle. The EU border and Great Britain border each have their own document requirements.

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The essentials before you begin

This guide covers entry into Great Britain - England, Scotland and Wales. Northern Ireland follows a different pet-travel framework linked to EU rules.

Core requirements	Dogs, cats and ferrets generally need a microchip, valid rabies vaccination and an accepted travel document.
Direct air entry	Ordinary pets arriving by plane must travel as cargo unless travelling on a chartered private aircraft or as a recognised guide or assistance dog.
Sea or LeShuttle	Pets may enter on approved routes with authorised carriers. The carrier's pet conditions and check-in process must be confirmed before booking.
Tapeworm treatment	Dogs usually need veterinary tapeworm treatment 24 to 120 hours before arrival in Great Britain, unless travelling directly from an exempt country.
Approved route	The route and transport company must be approved for pet travel and can change, so the current GOV.UK list must be checked.
Non-commercial movement	The owner or authorised person should travel with the pet, or within 5 days of the pet, and the movement must not involve sale or transfer of ownership.

When different rules apply

- Movements involving more than 5 pets may need to meet commercial rules unless a qualifying competition, show or sporting-event exception applies.
- Rescue, sale, adoption, breeding or transfer-of-ownership movements may be treated as commercial imports.
- Pets arriving from an unlisted country generally need a rabies antibody blood test and a Great Britain pet health certificate.
- Special certificates may apply to certain species and origins, including cats from Australia and cats or dogs from Peninsular Malaysia.

Great Britain is not the same as the whole United Kingdom.

England, Scotland and Wales use the Great Britain pet-travel rules. Northern Ireland has separate rules and entry points.

Direct flight or travel through the European Union?

Option	How it works	Best suited to
Direct to Great Britain by air	The pet is booked as manifested cargo to an approved UK airport. Arrival handling, veterinary checks and customs clearance are arranged at destination.	Owners who want the shortest overall routing, large pets, unaccompanied pets, or cases where an EU land bridge is impractical.
Fly to the EU, then cross to Great Britain	The pet enters an EU country under EU rules, then travels by road to an approved ferry route or LeShuttle and enters Great Britain under GB pet-travel rules.	Owners who want to avoid direct manifested-cargo entry into Great Britain and can accompany the pet for the road/sea crossing.

Important limits of the EU-first option

- It avoids the Great Britain requirement for pets arriving by plane to travel as cargo, but it does not necessarily avoid air cargo on the flight into the EU. The airline's cabin, checked-baggage or cargo policy still applies.
- The pet must satisfy the EU import conditions at the first EU border and separately satisfy Great Britain entry conditions at the Channel crossing.
- The documents used to enter the EU are not automatically accepted as the Great Britain travel document. Plan both document sets before departure.
- The road transfer, ferry or LeShuttle booking, pet check-in and Great Britain tapeworm timing must be coordinated precisely.
- Eurostar passenger trains do not generally carry ordinary pets. LeShuttle carries vehicles and their pets through the Channel Tunnel.

The EU route is a compliance strategy, not a shortcut.

It can offer a more owner-accompanied journey, but it adds another border, more documents, ground transport and timing dependencies.

Direct air-cargo relocation to Great Britain

1**Eligibility and document assessment**

Confirm the origin-country status, microchip, rabies vaccination, blood-test requirement and correct Great Britain travel document.

2**Airline and airport planning**

Select an airline, aircraft and approved UK entry airport that accepts the pet's species, breed and kennel.

3**Travel kennel preparation**

Calculate the airline kennel size and review ventilation, structure, bowls, labels and fasteners.

4**Veterinary certification**

Complete the Great Britain pet health certificate and any additional certificates or treatments within the required time windows.

5**Manifested-cargo booking**

The pet is booked under an air waybill through an airline cargo office or authorised freight agent.

6**Export and departure handling**

Complete origin customs, official export endorsement and cargo acceptance.

7**UK arrival handling**

The pet is transferred to the authorised animal reception or cargo facility for document, microchip and compliance checks.

8**Customs release and delivery**

Complete any applicable customs formalities, then collect the pet or arrange onward home delivery.

OPTION 2

Fly into the EU, then cross to Great Britain

This option is often used when a small pet can travel in the cabin or as accompanied baggage to an EU airport, or when the owner prefers to complete the final sector by road. France is commonly used because of its Channel connections, but another EU entry country may be used if the route and documentation are suitable.

1

Prepare for EU entry

Meet the EU microchip, rabies vaccination, animal-health-certificate and rabies-titre requirements that apply to the country of origin.

2

Choose the first EU entry point

The pet must enter through an appropriate EU travellers' point of entry where the documents and microchip can be checked.

3

Plan the Great Britain document

Obtain a document accepted by Great Britain. A third-country EU animal health certificate should not be assumed to replace a Great Britain pet health certificate.

4

Fly to the EU

Travel according to the airline's cabin, accompanied-baggage or cargo rules and complete EU border clearance.

5

Arrange the UK dog tapeworm treatment

For most dogs, an authorised veterinarian must administer and record praziquantel treatment 24 to 120 hours before arrival in Great Britain.

6

Travel by road to the Channel

Use a pet-friendly vehicle transfer and allow sufficient time for rest, border delays and the treatment window.

7

Cross on an approved carrier

Use an approved ferry route or LeShuttle. Confirm whether the carrier requires a vehicle, pet booking, muzzle, kennel, pet lounge or other conditions.

8

Pet document check

The authorised carrier checks the microchip and Great Britain travel documents before embarkation.

9

Enter Great Britain and continue home

After successful checks and crossing, continue by road to the final destination.

DOCUMENTATION

Core veterinary and travel requirements

Great Britain entry	Additional EU-first requirements
• Readable microchip implanted before the qualifying rabies vaccination • Valid rabies vaccination and applicable waiting period • Rabies antibody test for pets coming from unlisted countries • Accepted Great Britain travel document • Dog tapeworm treatment 24 to 120 hours before arrival unless exempt • Non-commercial declaration where required	• EU animal health certificate or valid EU pet passport, as applicable • EU rabies-titre test and 3-month waiting period where the origin is not EU-listed • Entry through the appropriate EU travellers' point of entry • Separate planning of the document accepted for the Great Britain crossing • Ground transport and approved ferry/LeShuttle booking • Timing the Great Britain tapeworm treatment around the actual Channel arrival

Rabies blood-test essentials

- For Great Britain entry from an unlisted country, the sample must be taken at least 30 days after rabies vaccination.
- The result must be at least 0.5 IU/ml and the test must be performed by an accepted laboratory.
- A 3-month waiting period from the blood-sampling date normally applies before entry from an unlisted country.
- The EU applies its own listed-country and rabies-titre framework. A route through the EU does not remove a titre requirement that applies at the EU border.

Document planning is the critical point on the EU route.

A pet can be fully compliant for EU entry but still be refused at the Great Britain carrier check if the GB document or dog tapeworm record is missing or incorrect.

CHANNEL CROSSING

Ferry and LeShuttle planning

LeShuttle

- Pets travel with their owners in a vehicle through the Channel Tunnel.
- The pet must be added to the booking and checked at the dedicated Pet Reception before travel.
- The microchip and documents are checked before the vehicle proceeds to boarding.
- LeShuttle is different from Eurostar; ordinary pets are not generally accepted on Eurostar passenger trains.

Approved ferry routes

- Only approved routes and authorised carriers may be used for entry into Great Britain under the Pet Travel Scheme.
- Carrier rules vary: pets may remain in the vehicle, use a kennel, travel in a pet lounge or occupy a pet-friendly cabin.
- Some services accept pets only when travelling with a vehicle; foot-passenger acceptance must be confirmed directly.
- Sailing schedules, seasonal approval and pet capacity can change. Check both the current GOV.UK approved-route list and the carrier before booking.

Tapeworm timing for dogs

For most routes into Great Britain, the treatment must be administered by a veterinarian no less than 24 hours and no more than 120 hours before arrival. The product must contain praziquantel or an equivalent proven effective against Echinococcus multilocularis, and the vet must record the date, time, product and signature in the accepted travel document.

The practical arrival time - not only the scheduled departure time - should be used when planning the treatment window. Allow for road delays, missed sailings and rebooking.

RISK CONTROL

Common mistakes that delay UK relocations

Assuming pets can fly directly in cabin: Ordinary pets arriving in Great Britain by plane must normally travel as cargo.

Using an unapproved route: A compliant pet can still be refused if the carrier or route is not authorised.

Confusing EU and GB documents: The certificate used to enter the EU is not automatically the document required to enter Great Britain.

Incorrect tapeworm timing: Treatment outside the 24-to-120-hour window can prevent a dog from boarding.

Booking ferry or LeShuttle too late: Pet places and pet-friendly cabins can sell out.

Ignoring the 5-day owner rule: If the owner's travel is not aligned with the pet, the movement may fall outside non-commercial pet-travel rules.

Microchip discrepancies: The microchip must match every vaccination, laboratory and travel record.

Choosing the EU route without ground logistics: A suitable vehicle, driver, rest plan and approved Channel crossing are essential.

Treating the journey as non-commercial when ownership changes: Sale, adoption or transfer may require commercial import procedures.

Before booking, confirm these 10 points

- The movement qualifies as non-commercial or the correct commercial process is being used.
- The microchip and rabies vaccination sequence is valid.
- Any required rabies titre test and waiting period are complete.
- The correct Great Britain travel document will be available.
- For the EU route, the separate EU entry requirements and documents are complete.
- The dog tapeworm treatment can be timed within 24 to 120 hours of GB arrival.
- The airline accepts the pet by the proposed method.
- The UK airport, ferry route or LeShuttle service is currently approved.
- The carrier's pet booking and accommodation conditions are confirmed.
- Arrival handling, customs and final delivery are arranged where required.

How we support a United Kingdom relocation

Fly Your Tail can manage a direct manifested-cargo relocation, an EU land-bridge itinerary, or selected stages of the process. Every case is personally coordinated by Julia, with one point of contact across documentation, transport and arrival.

- Assessment of direct UK cargo versus EU-first travel
- EU and Great Britain documentation timeline
- Rabies-titre sample logistics where required
- Airline, cargo, cabin or accompanied-baggage option review
- Travel-kennel sizing and airline compliance review
- EU airport entry and border-clearance coordination
- Veterinary tapeworm appointment and document review
- Road transfer, ferry or LeShuttle planning
- UK customs, animal reception and final-delivery coordination
- Travel-day monitoring through final arrival

Planning a move to the United Kingdom?

Send Fly Your Tail your pet's species, breed, age, weight, measurements, current country, UK destination, vaccination history and preferred travel date. Julia will compare the direct-cargo and EU land-bridge options for your case.

Official references used for this guide

GOV.UK - Bringing your pet dog, cat or ferret to Great Britain

<https://www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-great-britain>

GOV.UK - Travel routes for pets

<https://www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-great-britain/travel-routes-pets>

GOV.UK - Approved sea and rail routes and companies

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pet-travel-approved-air-sea-and-rail-carriers-and-routes/pet-travel-sea-routes-and-companies-you-can-use>

GOV.UK - Tapeworm treatment for dogs

<https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/tapeworm-treatment-for-dogs>

GOV.UK - Rabies blood tests

<https://www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-great-britain/rabies-blood-tests>

European Commission - Bringing a pet into the EU from a non-EU country

https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/live-animal-movements/dogs-cats-and-ferrets/bringing-pet-eu-non-eu-country_en

LeShuttle - Travelling with pets

<https://www.eurotunnel.com/uk/travelling-with-us/travelling-with-your-pet/>

Important disclaimer

This guide is general information prepared in August 2026. Great Britain and EU import rules, approved routes, carrier policies and fees can change. The current GOV.UK requirements, EU legislation, official health documents and carrier instructions take precedence. Fly Your Tail verifies the applicable requirements and route availability for each individual case before travel.