

How sky-high rents forced people into imaginative alternatives

Renting a property in the UK can be a bleak business. The average monthly rent rose to £932 last month and in London it is even more expensive at £1,588, according to new figures.

With **spiraling** rents leaving many people with barely any disposable income, let alone the means to save towards a deposit, some are now choosing alternatives.

spiral 螺旋

Office administrator Tina Gotla-Aluri, 42, was struggling to cope with the £950 a month she was paying for her house share in Putney, south-west London, when a friend suggested Share and Care Homeshare, which matches older homeowners who have a spare room with people who can offer practical help in exchange. She now lives in Putney with a man in his 90s and pays £180 a month to the scheme.

In return, Gotla-Aluri provides companionship, goes food shopping, and cooks meals. “He is quite well travelled and food is one of the things we have bonded over,” she says. “I cook British food like Sunday dinners and sometimes Indian or Moroccan food. It’s **mutually** beneficial.”

While some people **house-sit** for free to get a taste of luxury or a different life for a few weeks, designer Jennifer Hamley, 39, and her husband, Ben, 37, have turned it into a way to live rent-free.

mutually 互相地

house-sit 看家

The couple house-sit through TrustedHousesitters.com, which connects home and pet owners with house-sitters and costs each party £89 for an annual membership. They house-sit mainly in Brighton, taking care of pets, the home, post and watering plants.

“It is a peace of mind for many homeowners. A homeowner doesn’t need to get anyone to check in on the house, and pet owners don’t have to pay **kennels, catteries** or dog walkers.”

kennel 狗舍

cattery 猫舍