01 / UNDERSTAND THE BUSINESS

How to Start a Pet Sitting Business

A pet sitting service provides agreed care while an owner is away. Reliability, clear instructions, and knowing your limits matter as much as liking animals. Begin with a schedule and care scope you can maintain.

Is this a good fit for you?

- You can commit to time-sensitive visits, including weekends or holidays.
- You are comfortable following detailed instructions and observing animal behavior.
- You can communicate calmly and protect access details and customer privacy.

Start with one clear service

Choose whether to offer drop-in visits, walks, or another service you can reliably provide. Define visit length, service area, pet types, and exclusions. Accept only care you are competent to deliver and arrange a meet-and-greet first.

What to prepare before spending

Prepare a secure way to record instructions, contact details, access arrangements, and visit notes. Agree on an emergency contact and what to do if a pet is unwell or access fails. Ask about behavior, routines, feeding, and any care needs.

02 / CHOOSE YOUR FIRST STEPS

Think about pricing before you quote

Account for visit length, travel, number of pets, scheduling demands, and extra agreed tasks. Map the time between bookings before taking on multiple customers. Revenue from a visit must cover more than the minutes spent inside.

Three useful first actions

- Choose one service and set a realistic travel radius.
- Draft the questions you will ask at a meet-and-greet.
- Map a sample day of visits to test your capacity.

Common mistakes to avoid

Overbooking, assuming all pets need the same care, and accepting responsibilities without clear instructions or a workable backup plan.

This is a starting overview. Verify local business requirements and develop the skills needed for your chosen service before accepting paid work.

Continue with the practical decision guide and worksheet on the next pages.

Test a small, clearly defined offer

Work through the decision

Choose a service and care scope you can reliably deliver, such as agreed drop-in visits. A visit schedule, travel radius, and competence limits belong in the offer. Liking animals is not a substitute for clear instructions and dependable attendance.

At a meet-and-greet, confirm routines, behavior, feeding, access, contact arrangements, and any care needs. Accept only responsibilities you are competent to handle. Agree on what happens if access fails, a visit is delayed, or a pet appears unwell. Complete a practice or pilot process with permission, record the time and supplies, and check whether the offer matches your skills and capacity before advertising widely.

A situation to learn from

Illustrative pilot: three 30-minute visits appear to require 90 minutes, but travel and reporting add 60 minutes. The route uses 2.5 hours before other duties. Check required visit windows before adding another customer, even when the nominal rate looks attractive.

How to respond

Write a first-customer process: enquiry, scope assessment, quote, agreement, preparation, service, and follow-up. For each stage, name the information required and what must be confirmed. Verify the business requirements for your location and actual service with appropriate sources; the pilot itself does not establish that you are ready for every kind of work.

Your starter offer and pilot log

Use this page with your own service and circumstances. Record assumptions separately from confirmed facts, and update the plan using actual work.

Pet / care scope / visit pattern

Visit windows / travel / reporting time

Instructions / access / emergency contacts securely stored

Backup plan / exclusions / meet-and-greet questions

Review before taking the next step

Pilot review: What took longer than expected? Which scope question would have prevented a surprise? What equipment is essential now? What work should remain excluded until you have the skill and process to deliver it?

- [ ] Starting service described in concrete tasks.
- [ ] Condition and access questions prepared.
- [ ] Pilot time and costs recorded.
- [ ] Scope and local requirements verified before paid work.

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