

Collaboration is key

The way forward for
Scottish dog breeding
regulations



Collaboration is key – the way forward for Scottish dog breeding regulations

The Kennel Club is the largest organisation in the UK devoted to dog health, welfare and training, whose main objective is to ensure that dogs live healthy, happy lives with responsible owners.

The Kennel Club is the only organisation accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) to certify dog breeders. Its requirements go beyond dog breeding licence guidelines in several key areas including pre-sale vet checking, health testing and screening and lifetime support for puppy buyers.

We believe Scottish breeding regulations should be modernised and that the litter licensing threshold at which breeders will require a licence should reduce from five litters per year to three. This would bring the threshold in line with those in Wales, Northern Ireland and England. However we understand, based on Kennel Club registration data alone, that this will result in a three-fold increase to the already stretched workloads of Scottish local authorities.

We want to ensure that if the Scottish Government does update Scottish breeding regulations, that any new system works in practice in order that good breeders are more identifiable to puppy buyers and puppy farmers and bad breeders are driven out of business. One way to achieve this is to take this opportunity to grow The Kennel Club Assured Breeders scheme by incentivising the best breeders to join and improving the standards of health and welfare in dog breeding.



By email


holly.conway@thekennelclub.org.uk or
edward.hayes@thekennelclub.org.uk



By phone

020 7518 1020

[thekennelclub.org.uk](https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk)

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Section 1

Introduction to The Kennel Club's view on Scottish dog breeding regulations



Introduction to The Kennel Club's view on Scottish dog breeding regulations

The Kennel Club and the Scottish Kennel Club are the only welfare organisations to truly recognise the valuable contribution that good breeders make to society. All too often dogs are found in rescue centres owing either to poor breeding practices which have led to health issues that are too costly to address, or because of a lack of knowledge by the puppy buyer as to which breed of dog may best suit their lifestyle. We register around a quarter of a million pedigree dogs each year, including 20,000 in Scotland.

Whilst it is the case that we encourage rescue through our own breed rescue network and indeed other organisations' rescue centres, it is crucial in order that dogs never have to enter a rescue centre, they are bred with health and welfare at the forefront and that puppy buyers know the best sources of well-bred puppies.





Section 2

**The Kennel Club's
vision for the future
of dog breeding
regulations**

The Kennel Club's vision for the future of dog breeding regulations

In updating current breeding regulatory requirements, we believe the following requirements should be included to modernise the regime.

A reduction in the litter licensing threshold within a risk based model

A reduction in the litter licensing threshold should ensure that more breeders would be inspected. Combined with enhanced licensing standards, this could deliver a real improvement in animal welfare. Although this would create a significant inspection burden for local authorities, we believe this is achievable provided that a new risk-based model, which incorporates The Kennel Club Assured Breeders scheme (thereby making use of the scheme's inspectors), is established in Scotland as described in section 6. This is a logical next step, following on from the Government's proposals regarding the use of expert independent bodies in inspecting animal sanctuaries and rehoming centres.

In Wales, there is no formalised risk-based element to the updated breeding regulations and as a result they are not having the desired effect. When the regulations were passed we estimated that, based on The Kennel Club's registration data, there should be a threefold increase in the number of licensed breeders in Wales. However, we are disappointed that five years on, Freedom of Information based research has revealed that there has been little over a 10 per cent increase in the number of licensed dog breeders. Based on 2017 Kennel Club registration data, it is estimated that there are 960 dog breeders in Wales requiring a licence, yet only 212 have one – less than a quarter of those who should.

Removal of the business test

Subject to the licensing threshold reducing to three litters, it is our view that given the experience of breeders in England following the introduction of updated breeding regulations in 2018, that the business test should be removed from future regulations in Scotland.

For the 12 months following the introduction of the English breeding regulations, The Kennel Club registered 25,000 fewer puppies (10 per cent less) than the previous year. Given that The Kennel Club registers around one third of puppies bred, we estimate the business test element of the English licensing regulations may have reduced domestic dog breeding output by around 75,000 fewer puppies. At the same stage we've seen no decrease in the demand for puppies and we can only speculate that any shortfall in supply was met by puppy farmers and most likely importers. The welfare implications of this are very concerning for all those who wish for the regulations to improve the welfare of puppies being bred.

Temporary registration for unlicensed breeders (breeding legally) who advertise dogs online

We understand the principle of introducing a temporary registration scheme for those who breed fewer than three litters per year and advertise their puppies online. However we would have concerns that such a process could deter genuine high welfare, low volume breeders, unless the process was quick and straightforward and the cost were minimal (e.g. £10).

A requirement for breeders to socialise their puppies

Assured breeders are obliged to prove they adequately socialise puppies. As early socialisation is so important to puppies' overall health and development we believe that this should be a regulatory requirement. Poor socialisation can cause fearfulness, anxiety, stress and aggressive behaviour in dogs which new owners could struggle to deal with.

The Kennel Club's vision for the future of dog breeding regulations

A requirement for a puppy to always be seen with its mother and remain with its mother until it is 8 weeks old

According to The Kennel Club's Puppy Awareness Week survey data (2018), 20 per cent of people who buy a puppy do not see the puppy with its mother and 31 per cent do not see its breeding environment meaning there is a strong possibility that those puppies would have been bred by puppy farmers. It is crucial to healthy socialisation and a puppy's health and development, that they are not separated from their mothers until the age of 8 weeks. This a general requirement of The Kennel Club Assured Breeders scheme but should also be a legal requirement.

A ban on third party sales

The Kennel Club and Scottish Kennel Club believe that the continued practice of puppies being sold via third parties must stop in order to effectively tackle the problem of puppy farming and larger scale breeders. It is our view that responsible breeders do not sell to third parties and therefore against our rules for puppies registered with The Kennel Club to be sold via commercial dealers or pet shops.





Section 3
Key statistics

Key statistics

Based on an average of 2016 and 2017 data from Freedom of Information requests, Scottish local authorities are currently licensing 101 dog breeders annually – just less than 65 per cent of the number they should be based on our own registration data. Should the litter licence threshold reduce from five litters to three litters, around three times as many breeders in Scotland will require a licence. This is based on information from our 2016 and 2017 registrations database which shows that 98 more breeders who register with The Kennel Club will require a licence, and The Kennel Club are registering around 30 per cent of puppies bred.

The following figures are based on Freedom of Information requests from 80 per cent of local authorities in Scotland.

Local authority statistics an average of 2016 and 2017 data	The Kennel Club Assured Breeders scheme statistics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 101 licensed dog breeders in Scotland • 14 per cent of Scottish local authorities license 10 or more breeders in their area and 12 per cent license five or fewer breeders. This suggests many high volume breeders will be operating without a licence currently • Over 50 per cent of local authorities carried out two or fewer inspections on dog breeding premises in 2016–2017 • No dog breeding licences were revoked throughout 2016 and 2017 and over a two year period, only three licences were refused • Over half of local authorities have two or fewer members of staff qualified to carry out inspections on dog breeding premises • Local authority staff carrying out inspections on dog breeding premises have varying job titles, just half of which include reference to ‘animal’, ‘dog’ or ‘vet’. This suggests that in some local authorities inspectors may be more qualified than others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,382 breeders are registered on The Kennel Club Assured Breeders scheme, including 300 in Scotland • On average the scheme receives over 50 new applications per month • The scheme inspected approximately 2,200 breeders in 2014, its first year of full inspection, and currently inspects approximately 1,200 annually. In Scotland, the scheme inspects more breeders than local authorities do • The scheme currently has the capacity to carry out 5,000 inspections per annum which grows as the number of scheme members increases • 304 dog breeders were suspended from the scheme during 2014 and 2015 • The scheme aims to have at least one fully trained assessor for every 50 mile radius of the UK. They receive residential training twice a year and are competency assessed at least twice per year • All assessors are selected from an appropriate and relevant industry and have a relevant background in animal welfare

These figures show that within the local authority licensing regime there is inconsistency in the application of the law and the inspection regime – with no licences revoked or refused and inadequate expertise and resources.

It is worth noting that in Wales, where tighter regulations were introduced to curb puppy farming and the licensing threshold was reduced from five litters per year to three, the number of licensed breeders decreased from 195 in 2014, to 181 in 2015

and stood at 200 in 2016 (even though at least three times as many breeders should have required a licence). What is more, only three licences were refused and none were revoked from 2015–2016.

This suggests that without collaboration, tighter regulations do not equate to better enforcement. Although we believe Scottish breeding regulations should change, in our view collaboration is key to improving enforcement in the standards of breeding.

Section 4

The Assured Breeders scheme – cost and objectives



The Assured Breeders scheme – cost and objectives

The Kennel Club Assured Breeders scheme is regulated by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) and is not subject to any outside influence. UKAS accreditation of The Kennel Club to certify breeders ensures that assessors are trained and operate in a consistent manner. UKAS accreditation is the formal recognition that The Kennel Club is competent to perform specific processes, activities and tasks (which are detailed in the scope of our scheme accreditation) in a reliable, credible and accurate manner. The provision of accreditation is undertaken impartially; is objective, transparent and effective; uses highly professional, competent assessors and technical experts in all relevant fields; and uses assessors (and subcontractors) that are reliable, ethical and competent in both accreditation processes and the relevant technical fields. Accreditation delivers confidence in conformity statements. It underpins the quality of results by ensuring their traceability, comparability, validity and commutability (UKAS.com).

The Kennel Club is a not-for-profit organisation with a charitable trust which works solely to improve the health and welfare of all dogs. The Kennel Club set up the Assured Breeders scheme to tackle puppy farming by raising the standards of breeding, thereby improving dog health and welfare, and helping the puppy buying public identify the best breeders i.e. assured breeders.

Previously the scheme ran at a cost to The Kennel Club of £120 per breeder over a three year period. Over recent years a restructuring of fees has taken place and whilst the scheme still operates at a loss, these losses are considered sustainable. Should the scheme generate an income, then The Kennel Club, as a not-for-profit organisation, would invest any surplus back into projects to advance the welfare of dogs. It is important for the integrity of the scheme that it is not operated as a commercial business.

This allows for members to be disqualified from the scheme at no cost to The Kennel Club, for certification fees to be refused from breeders who do not meet our criteria and allows The Kennel Club to review and raise the standards of the Assured Breeders scheme, as is done frequently. Within the past six months alone, five new DNA testing and reporting schemes were incorporated into the scheme, bringing the total to 74 recorded disease tests across 79 breeds, resulting in puppies being born completely free of these diseases.

At the present time assured breeders cannot meet all the demands of the puppy buying public, as the scheme has just approximately 4,500 members (providing around 25,000 of the 750,000 dogs sold annually in the UK – or just three per cent). However, if there was a strong incentive for more breeders to

join the scheme, it would lead to real improvements in terms of dog health and welfare; if assured breeders were more commonplace, it would help the puppy buying public know where to go to get a well-bred dog (pedigree and crossbreed), in order that, over time, the current high demand for puppies from puppy farmers would reduce and the demand for puppies from reputable breeders would increase.

This problem cannot be underestimated as it is clear the puppy-buying public cannot recognise a puppy bred by a commercially driven breeder with low welfare standards (often referred to as a 'puppy farmer'). At the moment, the vast majority claim that they would never buy a puppy from a puppy farmer; however recent survey statistics from the Puppy Awareness Week 2019 survey indicate that many may unwittingly do so.

1 in 10 people suspect their puppy could have come from a puppy farm and this is likely to be even higher, as 42 per cent would not be confident that they could spot the signs that a puppy had been bred by a responsible breeder, before buying.

An important picture has emerged from the research of a nation who make hasty puppy buying decisions, with serious consequences in terms of the choices they make and the subsequent health and welfare of their puppy. One third of people will spend less than 15 minutes choosing a puppy and 1 in 5 people admit that they spent no time at all researching where to buy their puppy. However, these hasty and impulsive puppy buying habits are having dramatic consequences. Dogs owned by people who spent more than an hour researching where to buy them from are likely to live twice as long as those who spent under 20 minutes choosing a puppy, which mean mortality ages of 8.8 and 4.3 respectively, when the average age a dog lives to is around 12.

Furthermore, one quarter of pups under 6 months suffer from conditions ranging from Parvovirus – a potentially deadly disease often associated with puppy farmed dogs – to kennel cough, if their owners spent only 6–20 minutes researching where to buy them. 1 in 10 of these died in their first six months or needed ongoing treatment. In comparison only 12 per cent of puppies under 6 months suffered from these conditions if their owners had spent more than an hour researching where to buy.

The Assured Breeders scheme – cost and objectives

Similarly, almost half of people (47 per cent) claim to have suffered emotional and financial hardship after buying a puppy if they spent between 6-20 minutes researching where to buy their puppy, compared to six per cent who spent more than an hour finding out where they should buy their puppy.

People are not only failing to invest time in researching where to buy their puppy, but they are confused about what they should look for, with more than a third of people (34 per cent) saying that they would not be sure where to look for a responsible breeder. The Kennel Club Assured Breeders scheme makes it easy for people to find responsible breeders, whose standards have already been assessed and if the number of breeders on the scheme were to grow, there would be more puppies available through this route, and the brand awareness would increase amongst puppy buyers. Almost three quarters (73 per cent) say they would be interested in a list of breeders who have already been checked by an independent and UKAS approved body, to help them find a responsibly bred puppy more easily.

The size of the puppy market is vast: there are between 8.5–9 million dogs in the UK with an average life span of 12 years. Around 750,000 dogs are bred each year and are sold for £500 on average (a low estimate) – equating conservatively to £375 million. The Scottish figures would be an estimated 55,000 puppies acquired annually, with a value of approximately £27 million (based upon the same low estimate of £500 per puppy). This is calculated from data provided by from the Pet Food Manufacturers Association on their estimates of how many dogs there are in the UK. The PFMA further estimate in Scotland there are approximately 653,000 dogs, with 23 per cent of the population, or some 485,000 households owning dogs.

Through the analysis of online puppy sales advertisement data over a 12-week monitoring period, some 1,500 advertisements in Scotland were identified. Approximately 4,000 puppies were for sale. The total value of the puppies advertised is estimated to be a minimum of £3 million, with the approximate average cost of a puppy estimated at £800. Extrapolating these figures to cover a full year suggests an approximate minimum of 17,500 puppies being advertised for sale, with a total value of approximately £13 million.

Working with Agria, the organisation that administers and underwrites The Kennel Club Pet Insurance, The Kennel Club is able to monitor the progress of the Assured Breeders scheme with empirical verification that the scheme is achieving its core aims.

Agria's analysis highlights that dogs bred by assured breeders are costing owners on average 18% less in unplanned veterinary fees and are 23% less likely to need to visit the vet. For older dogs who experience many of the health issues the scheme is specifically endeavouring to target, the differences are more acute with dogs bred by assured breeders 34% less likely to need to see a vet resulting in veterinary bills that are 27% lower for their owners.





Section 5
Additional
surveillance for
members of the
Assured Breeders
scheme

Additional surveillance for members of the Assured Breeders scheme

The additional surveillance mechanisms which are incorporated into the Assured Breeders scheme can be summarised as follows:

Customer feedback

Every puppy sold by an assured breeder is accompanied by a puppy feedback form which provides an opportunity for the customer to inform The Kennel Club about the puppy and their experience with the breeder. Post sales advice and information must be provided to the new puppy owner on immunisation, worming, feeding, grooming, behavioural traits, socialisation and exercise, and puppy buyers must be alerted to the complaints procedure. Feedback is collated and recorded and the level of feedback is monitored with action taken if levels are lower than average. Any negative feedback is acted upon, and this will generally result in additional inspections, and subsequent action if considered necessary.

Litter checks

Every single litter bred by an assured breeder is checked when it is registered with The Kennel Club. These checks provide a vital opportunity to aid the surveillance of breeding practices and identify discrepancies at the earliest possible stage. These checks ensure that the litter complies with regulations affecting the genetic health status of the parents, the minimum/maximum age of the dam, the number of previous litters, date of birth, date of mating, previous caesareans etc. Bitches must not be bred from if they are under 1 year of age or over 8 years old (even though there is no legal upper age limit), if they have had two caesarean sections, or if they have previously produced four litters even though the legal maximum is six. NB: we currently provide this information upon request and for a small administration fee to any relevant authority. If the scheme is successfully incorporated in a collaborative risk based system, The Kennel Club will provide litter and breeder information on a routine basis to local authorities, which will play a vital role in identifying which breeders are required to hold a licence.

Vet health checks

Every puppy sold by an assured breeder must be examined by a vet prior to sale. This ensures transparency on the physical health status of each individual puppy. The assured breeder is required to keep a record, and the purchaser is able to inform The Kennel Club (via the puppy feedback form) if a vet check has not taken place. In addition, the Assured Breeder is required to include details of the vet check in their contract of sale, a copy of which is checked at the time of an inspection visit.

Publishing of litter details

The details of each litter, including the number of puppies born, names and sexes of puppies, and names of new owners are published by The Kennel Club in our 'Breed Records Supplement'. This information is available in the public domain and is provided free of charge to a number of agencies. This provides further transparency and allows fewer opportunities for breeders to operate 'under the radar'. There is also an effective peer-review system in place whereby discrepancies are reported to The Kennel Club on a regular basis.

Health test screening

Assured breeders are required to screen their breeding stock, and in some cases, their puppies, for signs of hereditary disease. Some of the tests are long standing health schemes with proven efficacy (BVA/The Kennel Club hip, elbow and eye schemes), whilst others are DNA tests which can give cast iron guarantees that a puppy will not be affected by a known hereditary disease. Members of the Assured Breeders scheme must participate in any breed health survey or reasonable health initiative in their breed(s). The collection of health data in all breeds of dog is an urgent priority and the expectation is that any assured breeder will assist in this process. We acknowledge that this is a complex area and understand why such detail cannot be incorporated into regulation, but it is vital that it is recognised as an element of a risk-based system as it provides essential guarantees to puppy purchasers about the future and long term health of puppies being bred.

Buyer selection and after sales service

Assured breeders are required to undertake checks to ensure that any prospective puppy buyer is able to provide a good home for the puppy and that there is a reasonable expectation of offering a permanent home.

Ban on third party sales

Third party selling is effectively puppy dealing, and as such, is not allowed by The Kennel Club. We believe that legitimising third party sales contributes to the increasing problem of puppy farming and buyers not knowing where to get a well-bred puppy. There are many other welfare groups campaigning for a ban on third party sales in all circumstances.

Additional surveillance for members of the Assured Breeders scheme

Allowing any purchaser to be able to view the puppies with their mother, unless an exceptional and documented reason is provided

There is no requirement for licensed breeders to do this which makes it easier for irresponsible breeders to mislead puppy buyers. Seeing puppies with their mother in the environment where they were born and reared provides a valuable opportunity for buyers to assess the temperament of the mother, to make an assessment on the interaction between the mother and her puppies, and to also make an assessment of the conditions in which the puppies were raised. There is a welfare campaign, 'Where's Mum?' which highlights the importance of this and which many welfare organisations support.

Commit to help, if necessary, with the re-homing of any dog that they provide within the scheme, throughout the dog's lifetime, for whatever reason

There is no requirement for licensed breeders to do this, which may result in unwanted puppies and more dogs ending up in rescue. Responsible breeders care passionately about the puppies that they breed and in the event of unforeseen circumstances, where a puppy should need to be rehomed, they have a vital role to play in ensuring that a suitable new home can be found. This provides an additional incentive for breeders to assess the suitability of the potential puppy buyer and their lifestyle and whether the puppy they are seeking is a good fit.

This list is not exhaustive but does cover the major differences between current breeding and sale of dogs legislation and dog breeding licence guidelines when compared to the standard adopted by The Kennel Club Assured Breeders scheme.

All of this additional surveillance benefits the long term health and welfare of puppies being bred and, in practice, these additional requirements cannot be effectively audited and assessed within a local authority licensing regime. For example, mandatory breed specific health testing and the scheme's formalised puppy buyer feedback system are both reliant on an underpinning, transparent puppy registration system.

Integration of the Assured Breeders scheme within the licensing framework therefore provides an opportunity for recognition of these additional, auditable measures which will improve welfare and provide additional benefit to customers (and with respect to dog breeding establishments, the puppies being produced).



Section 6

Incorporating the Assured Breeders scheme into the Scottish licensing framework in practice

Incorporating the Assured Breeders scheme into the Scottish licensing framework in practice

By working with local authorities in England we have developed a proposal that we believe incorporates the inherent advantages of a scheme run by a body accredited by UKAS, and that removes the disincentives to responsible breeders of being regulated both by a UKAS accredited body and a local authority (i.e. additional costs and duplicated inspections).

The proposal would operate similarly to the Government's proposals for the regulations of animal sanctuaries and rehoming centres. Whilst our proposal is built around The Kennel Club Assured Breeders scheme, the principles could also potentially be applied to the Scottish SPCA Assured Puppy Breeder Scheme or other third party accreditation schemes. The proposal is as follows:

Step 1

Risk categories' would be established for breeders, (both members of schemes regulated by UKAS and those outside of such schemes). High risk breeders would require more frequent inspections which would in turn incur a higher licence fee and low risk breeders would require less frequent inspections and therefore a reduced licence fee.

Step 2

Routine inspections of establishments belonging to members of the Assured Breeders scheme would be conducted by the scheme's trained and accredited assessor and gather evidence to demonstrate compliance to the local authority licensing conditions, alongside any additional requirements specific to the scheme.

Step 3

Should the assured breeder require a licence (e.g. if they breed three or more litters per year), they would submit their completed inspection report to the relevant local authority with a 'general administration fee' (as opposed to a full licensing fee).

Step 4

Assuming compliance to licensing conditions had been met, the local authority would grant a licence, in accordance with the risk category the establishment fell into e.g. an assured breeder meeting the scheme's higher standards would be classified as low risk.

This would avoid a duplicated inspection from a local authority and the associated cost of that inspection. It would allow local authorities to undertake checks to ensure documents were genuine, by checking against details on the website. In the event that a complaint was made to a local authority about a scheme member, the local authority could alert The Kennel Club in order that a scheme assessor could inspect, though the local authority would remain the licensing authority and retain enforcement powers.

In the event that a complaint was made to a local authority about an Assured Breeders scheme member, the local authority could alert The Kennel Club in order that a breeder assessor could inspect. However as the local authority would remain the licensing authority, they would retain enforcement powers and the right to inspect establishments.

This improved collaboration between the Assured Breeders scheme and local authorities would benefit:

Puppy buyers

As has been highlighted previously, many puppy buyers fail to do sufficient research before adopting or purchasing a dog. Raising awareness of the Assured Breeders Scheme would naturally point more puppy buyers in the right direction, towards assured breeders and away from puppy farmers/rogue breeders/ third party sellers.

Members of the public

Would be able to lodge complaints with either the council or the UKAS accredited body. We would expect complaints about members of a scheme accredited by UKAS to be dealt with by the responsible organisation in the first instance (because as part of UKAS accreditation a robust complaints procedure must be in place); but for UKAS accredited scheme operators to be obliged to keep the local authority updated regarding significant concerns or disqualifications etc. This would reduce the burden on local authorities.

Incorporating the Assured Breeders scheme into the Scottish licensing framework in practice

Licensed establishments affiliated to a body accredited by UKAS

Would have the benefit of avoiding duplicate inspections (with the associated cost implications) and additional paperwork etc. Assured breeders are already subject to continuous monitoring through our formal puppy buyer feedback system so it is counterintuitive that those operating to the highest standards would be required to undergo more frequent inspections (if subjected to separate local authority and UKAS operator inspections).

Low volume breeders and responsible breeders

This model is likely to give a greater incentive to those for whom dog breeding is something they do a few times a year rather than a full time operation. For many, a low volume home breeder is seen as the ideal source of a family pet, but the message we receive repeatedly is that these breeders will be put off breeding if they have to go through the local authority licensing system. This is not because they do not believe they can achieve the requisite standards, but due to cost, perceived experience of local authority inspectors etc. Certainly these breeders will struggle to justify paying for two

separate inspection regimes. This is concerning since it is precisely these dog breeders that our organisation (and many others) would direct potential puppy buyers to at the moment. Of course, reducing unnecessary red tape will be desirable to all licensed establishments. Responsible breeders breeding in greater volume will receive a financial incentive for joining the scheme – where currently there is no real incentive (as they are able to sell their puppies easily outside of the scheme).

Local authorities

We believe the model outlined above provides the framework which any generic scheme run by a UKAS accredited body can sit within, and integrate with the local authority licensing regime. It provides local authorities with overall control of the system; greater intelligence provided by the Assured Breeders scheme about breeders within their area; a guaranteed income from more breeders (reduced for members of the Assured Breeders scheme); and a reduced burden on already stretched resources to carry out duplicate inspections.

Campaigners

Transparency in the licensing system would be retained as campaigners would be able to make FOI requests to local authorities for inspection reports submitted to them.



Section 7

Proposed licensing models – how the Assured Breeders scheme fits







Proposed licensing models – how the Assured Breeders scheme fits

The following models are based on a star rating. We believe that a 5th star level could be reserved for establishments which demonstrate compliance to the highest standards within the local authority risk framework, but also demonstrate compliance to additional beneficial standards.

There are various options to achieving this including:

1. Specifically identifying the Assured Breeder Scheme (or other scheme run by organisations with UKAS accreditation) within the regulations. The regulations could be drafted in a manner which allows the Cabinet Secretary for the Environment to designate schemes as delivering additional benefits to allow access to the 5th star level. This would be a simple message to dog breeders and local authorities
2. Alternatively, additional welfare markers could be incorporated into the risk based system (health testing/formal surveillance measures). Awarding 'points' or otherwise to establishments able to demonstrate achievement of these measures. These additional points would allow a licensed establishment to be elevated from the 4th star tier into the 5th star tier

5 Stars	
Standard	Highest standards within LA framework + additional auditable standards
Total score	25+
Inspection regime	Schemes run by an organisation accredited by UKAS to certify breeders would continue to inspect to additional requirements than the local authority and allow for scheme members to share inspection reports with their local authority thereby guaranteeing only low risk breeders are certified. Currently reserved for the Assured Breeders scheme (since this is the only breeder scheme which can certify breeders).
Licence fee	Significant reduction
4 Stars	
Standard	Highest standards
Total score	20-24
Inspection regime	Every three years (one unannounced visit in three year period)
Licence fee	50% reduction in licence fee
3 Stars	
Standard	Additional standards
Total score	12-19
Inspection regime	Inspection every two years (one unannounced visit in two year period)
Licence fee	25% reduction in licence fee
1 and 2 Stars	
Standard	Minimum standard
Total score	8-11
Inspection regime	Inspection every year (one unannounced visit in 12 month period)
Licence fee	Full licence fee

MINOR FAILINGS	MINIMUM STANDARDS	HIGHER STANDARDS	BEST PRACTICE
(an existing premises that is failing to meet minimum standards, potentially under improvement notice)	(as determined by guidance)	(as determined by guidance)	(as determined by guidance) As with higher standards but incorporating mandatory health testing/vet checks etc. as determined by an appropriate UKAS accredited scheme.

High risk*	Low risk**	High risk	Low risk
0	0	1 STAR	5 STARS

1 year licence	1 year licence	1 year licence	2 year licence	3 year licence	3 year licence
Minimum 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	Minimum 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	Minimum 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	Minimum 1 unannounced visit within 24 month period	Minimum 1 unannounced visit within 36 month period	Subject to ongoing compliance and demonstrating high standards
Option for full costed re-inspection	Option for full costed re-inspection	Option for full costed re-inspection	Option for full costed re-inspection	Option for full costed re-inspection	Routine inspection plus additional inspection on complaint/other intelligence

Option for full costed re-inspection	Option for full costed re-inspection
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****Low risk**

- New business (no history)
- Poor compliance history (possible previous formal intervention)
- Complaints received
- Only meeting minimum requirements within schedules for Standard Operating Procedures, records etc.
- Excellent compliance history
- No complaints
- Member of scheme run by UKAS accredited body including inspection
- Excellent SOPs, records etc. – above minimum requirements within schedules
- Ongoing surveillance

Section 8

Non-regulatory considerations



Non-regulatory considerations

Breeders who do not sell puppies

Breeders are currently exempt from regulatory licensing requirements if they do not sell their puppies. For now, we believe that this approach should continue in order that the regulations can tackle larger scale breeders or indeed unlicensed smaller scale breeders operating at high profit margins.

Whilst local authorities are already stretched, and likely to become more stretched if new regulations are introduced, for now, we would not want forthcoming regulations to require people to be licensed as breeders who do not sell their puppies but instead keep them – for instance those breeding for showing purposes.

The purpose of forthcoming regulations should not be to license every breeder but to find new ways of tackling irresponsible ones.

Educating the puppy buying public

Educating the puppy buying public is key to improving the welfare of pet dogs and the standards of breeding. The Kennel Club supports rescue centres' charitable work aimed at finding the right homes for dogs in the UK and re-homes dogs each year via its own breed rescue organisations as well as subsidising the Assured Breeder Scheme to ensure that those who wish to buy puppies can do so from reputable breeders. However many remain outside the reach of The Kennel Club.

Although we recommend some intervention from the Scottish Government to assist in educating puppy buyers, we do not believe (from a practical perspective) that it should be a legal requirement to oblige prospective owners to consider a set of questions related to their capacity to take on a puppy/dog. As well as the problems of enforcing this (it is unclear whether the responsibility would fall to the breeder, the local authority, or the dog owners themselves), it would be almost impossible to determine a means of adequately doing this. Each breed of dog is different, and as such is suited to a different type of lifestyle meaning a generic questionnaire would not be adequate.

Similarly, whilst we agree that puppy buyers should check that breeders are licensed or operating legally without a licence before purchasing a puppy from them, we have concerns about making this a legal requirement. Irresponsible breeders/puppy farmers are already used to getting around the law and will continue to try and do so. It may be easy for them to trick potential puppy buyers in to thinking they are licensed or registered (or even registered when they should be licensed), and it would be unfair for puppy buyers to take the blame for this.

Instead we believe that the sector should come together to distribute uniform information on the 'do's and don'ts' of puppy buying. Very often a large segment of the welfare sector ignores the very large proportion of people who want to buy a puppy from a breeder as opposed to a rescue centre. We believe that a lack of information from these credible sources about where to go to get a well-bred dog is partly responsible for why people unknowingly purchase puppies from irresponsible breeders and dealers.

Via The Kennel Club website, prospective puppy buyers can fill in information about themselves to find out which breeds of dog would best suit their lifestyle, and we recommend that people buy dogs only through Assured Breeders (who must carry out mandatory breed specific health testing and who have a commitment to re-home the dogs if necessary). We believe that more needs to be done to signpost puppy buyers to good breeders, as well as to rescue centres, by other organisations and the Scottish Government.



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The Kennel Club
Clarges Street, London, W1J 8AB

01296 318540 • 020 7518 1058