

**For Dogs,
Then, Now,
Always.**



**Dogs Trust Manifesto for the
2026 Senedd Election**



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Foreword

For 135 years, our love for dogs has never wavered. As the UK's largest dog welfare charity, Dogs Trust has led the way in securing a better future for dogs.

The last five years have dramatically altered the landscape of dog welfare. Demand for our services hugely increased, as did challenges with rehoming dogs, more of whom are arriving into our care requiring additional support. There has never been a greater need for legislation that protects the welfare of dogs.

In Wales, we have made great strides in promoting and protecting dog welfare. Since we opened our first Rehoming Centre in Bridgend in 1966, we have expanded our work across the country. In 2021 we opened our flagship rehoming centre in Cardiff, and since then we have found loving homes for over 4,000 dogs in Wales. This achievement is testament to the love and dedication of our staff, volunteers, and the wider community. In addition to our rehoming services, we are proud that we have been able to bring our specialist pet-fostering service, Freedom, to Wales. This vital programme supports people fleeing domestic abuse by providing free, confidential pet fostering and raises awareness of how pets can too often be used by perpetrators as tools of coercion and control. Since its launch in Wales in 2022, we have already fostered 110 dogs and supported 87 victim/survivors through Freedom.

**Owen Sharp
Chief Executive**

Our Public Affairs team has delivered numerous events and hosted many Members of the Senedd (MSs) at our rehoming centres, which demonstrates the wealth of support amongst MSs for promoting and protecting dog welfare in Wales. I really appreciate the support of MSs who have championed dog welfare, as without them, we wouldn't have made the fantastic progress that we have achieved during the previous term. In particular, the decision by the previous Welsh Government to bring an end to greyhound racing in Wales, is a monumental step forward for dog welfare in this country, and an achievement that wouldn't have been possible without the support for our campaign from many MSs.

Dogs Trust and partners secured a huge victory for the welfare of racing greyhounds during the previous Senedd term. Wales became the first UK nation to announce its intention to end greyhound racing by April 2027 at the earliest. Dogs Trust and the Cut the Chase Coalition hope to see the proposed legislation pass as soon as possible. Of course, we stand ready to help **every greyhound** that needs a home as a result of the industry coming to an end in Wales.

Looking ahead to the next Senedd term, we remain committed to working with policymakers, partners, and supporters to deliver policies that improve dog welfare, just as we have always done.

For Dogs, Then, Now, Always



Timeline

1891

Dogs Trust was founded as the National Canine Defence League (NCDL), by Lady Gertrude Stock.

1911

The NCDL influences the Protection of Animals Act. Anyone convicted of cruelty can be stopped from keeping an animal.

1912

Our first rehoming centre opened its doors; we now have 22 across the UK and one in Ireland.

1966

Dogs Trust Opens first Centre in Wales at Bridgend.

1995

Together through Homelessness launches, providing free veterinary treatment for the dogs of owners facing homelessness.

2004

Freedom is launched. It's a free dog fostering service to help people and their dogs escape domestic abuse.

2003

The National Canine Defence League changes its name to Dogs Trust.

2016

Microchipping dogs becomes compulsory. Something we long campaigned for governments to do.

2014

The Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations pass.

2010

Ban on the use of shock collars in Wales, something we campaigned for the Welsh Government to do.

2022

Freedom expands to Wales.

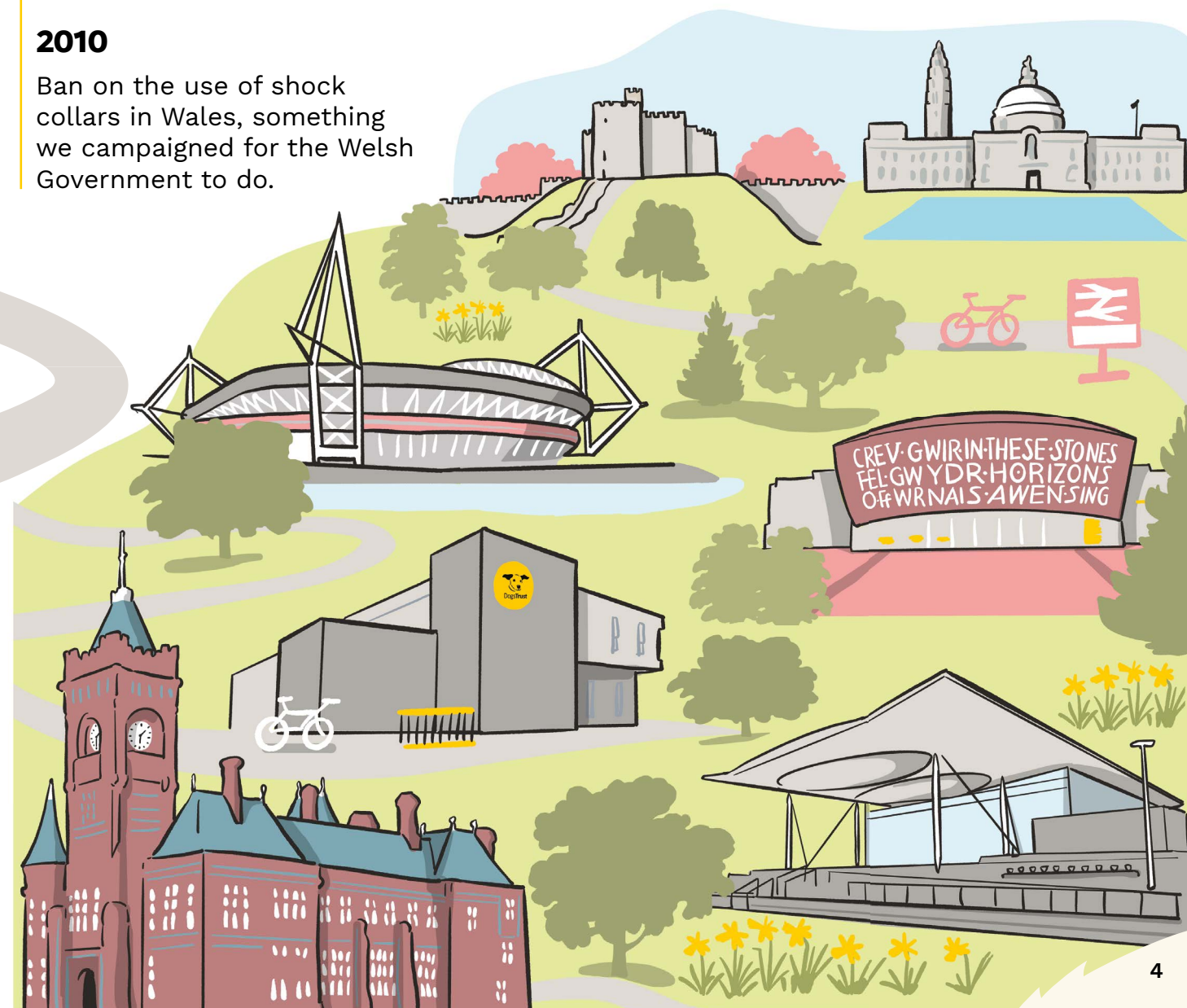
2021

Cardiff Rehoming Centre Opens, our 22nd centre.

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Wales) Regulations 2021. We campaigned for this change to be achieved.

2025

Achieved a Commitment from the Welsh Government to end Greyhound Racing in Wales.



Regulation of Animal Welfare Establishments



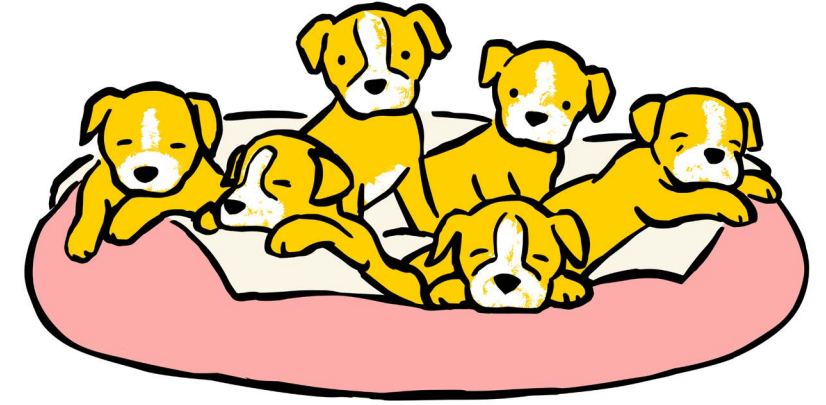
Background

Worryingly, anyone in Wales can currently set themselves up as an animal rescue and rehome dogs locally and from overseas without licensing or inspection. Being an animal welfare establishment does not automatically guarantee good welfare, as we have seen in several high-profile cases across Wales. Dogs Trust is especially worried about international rehoming, including the risk of importing diseases and behavioural issues that rescue dogs from overseas may experience. Many of these organisations operate solely on social media without a business premise.

Dogs Trust welcomes the Welsh Government's commitment to develop proposals for the regulation for animal welfare establishments. Consistent and enforceable standards are essential to safeguard animal welfare and ensure responsible practice, we look forward to supporting the development of a robust and effective framework.

We want to see:

- **Amendments to the Licensing of Activities Involving Animals legislation to include the licencing and inspections of animal welfare establishments.**
- **Any new regulations must include animal welfare establishments that rehome from overseas, and these regulations must include a requirement that these organisations must have premises in Wales and/or the UK.**
- **Use of the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes' Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards as the baseline for any licensing regime, ensuring all animal welfare establishments meet consistent, enforceable standards of welfare and care.**
- **The introduction of regular mandatory inspections carried out by centrally trained, specialist animal welfare inspectors, with regional hubs providing support to all local authorities. As part of this we would like to see sustainable long-term funding for Animal Licencing Wales to ensure local authorities have access to enforcers who are trained in examining animal welfare issues.**
- **The creation of a central database of all animal welfare establishments in Wales.**



Improved Dog Breeding Legislation

Background

Dogs Trust believes it's time for root-and-branch reform of dog breeding legislation in Wales. The current licensing system has too many loopholes, often exploited at the expense of dog welfare. Currently, breeders only require a licence if they are breeding three or more litters a year. This means that some breeders and sellers evade the licensing system by posing as small-scale breeders. Low welfare can also occur regardless of the scale of breeding operations. Furthermore, the welfare of stud dogs is not protected by the legislation. To tackle this, we urgently need an improved, robust system of registration and licensing. If these measures are to succeed, the next Welsh Government needs to build on the successes of Animal Licensing Wales to ensure that we raise the standards of breeding establishments across Wales.

We want to see:

- **Dogs Trust believes that anyone breeding, selling, or transferring the ownership of puppies regardless of any financial transaction or gain, should be required to be registered.**
- **Anyone breeding more than one litter in any 12-month period should have a licence.**
- **The creation of a robust system of registration and licensing that includes mandatory requirements to protect the health and welfare of stud dogs, as well as breeding bitches and puppies.**



Microchipping – Improved Traceability of All Dogs

Background

Dogs Trust welcomed the introduction of the Microchipping of Dogs (Wales) Regulations 2015. The legislation intended to improve reunification of stolen and lost dogs, as well as traceability of breeders. However, there are now more than 20 UK compliant databases now in operation without a single point of access of search for veterinarians, rehoming organisations and local authorities to access and update records.

We want to see:

- **The Microchipping of Dogs (Wales) Regulations 2015 amended to introduce a mandatory database field at puppy registration, recording who the dog was bred by to better aid traceability and enforcement.**
- **The Welsh Government works with the UK Government to introduce a single UK-wide point of search for records held across all microchip databases.**
- **We believe that the Welsh Government with governments across the UK should jointly explore the creation of a centralised, publicly accessible list of registered and licensed breeders, which is jointly kept or facilitated.**

Transforming Pet Advertising in Wales

Background

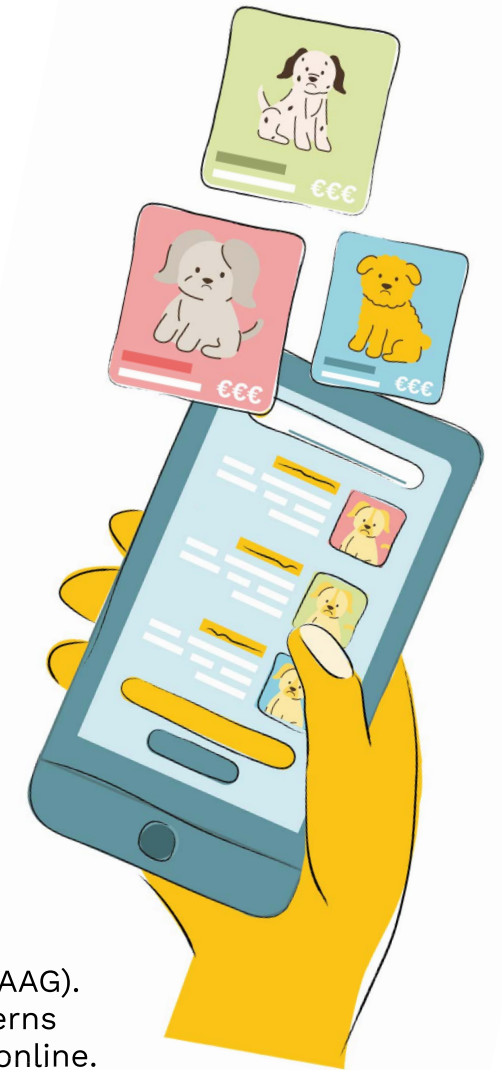
Dogs Trust chairs the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG). This group was created in 2001 following growing concerns regarding the irresponsible advertising of pets for sale online.

Shockingly, regulation of online pet advertising and sale is still extremely limited, and we have seen cases where people have unknowingly purchased poorly dogs or have been tricked into buying dogs that don't actually exist. Currently, licensing legislation requires licensed operators to display their licence details on adverts. However, this is unenforceable and provides limited transparency and traceability due to the licensing threshold.

In the absence of regulation, PAAG has developed a set of Government-backed Advertising Standards. However, whilst these remain voluntary, there is a limit to their impact.

We want to see:

- **PAAG's Advertising Standards implemented in legislation to improve the standards of all pet adverts, not just those from licensed sellers.**
- **A requirement that any advert for the sale of a puppy displays a registration or licence number, so that purchasers can verify who they are buying a dog from.**





Better Access to Pet-friendly Housing Across All Tenure Types

Background

Wales is in the midst of a housing crisis – with a shortage of available accommodation. We know that a lack of pet-friendly homes is one of the key drivers of why people are handing over their dogs to our rehoming centres in Wales. In 2024, we received 43,230 handover enquiries from individuals across the UK. 3,884 of all handover enquiries came from our rehoming centres in Wales. 510 handover enquiries mentioned “a change in accommodation or rental agreement” as a reason for wanting to relinquish their dog(s) to us. This equals to around 13% of all enquires in Wales. Therefore, it is essential that action is taken to ensure a smooth housing pathway for all pet owners.

We want to see:

- The right to request a pet without that request being unreasonably refused by the landlord.
- Publication of guidance on what constitutes “unreasonable refusal” with right of appeal for all tenants no matter their tenure type.
- Introduction of a timeframe for social and private landlord(s) of 14 days (seven days for superior landlords) to respond to pet requests.
- A change in the rules so that local authorities cannot discharge their duty to find suitable accommodation for people that turn down an offer of housing because it is not suitable for their pet.



Policies that Promote Responsible Dog Ownership

Background

Dogs Trust, believes breed specific legislation is not only detrimental to dog welfare, but it is ineffective and does little to protect members of the public. We believe reform and consolidation of dog control legislation is long overdue and that Breed Specific Legislation needs to be repealed and replaced with preventative, breed neutral legislation.

We need to ensure that we tackle the root causes and take preventative steps to reduce dog bite incidents, such as ensuring that dogs have the right start in life and that owners have the best advice possible to tackle problem behaviours. Although we recognise that the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 is not devolved to the Senedd, there are policy interventions that the Welsh Government can make, which includes our previously stated policy priorities on dog breeding and animal welfare establishments.

We want to see:

- The Welsh Government and UK Government work together towards effective breed neutral legislation and enforcement, with measures that allow for early intervention.
- Standardised recording and reporting of dog bites and strikes, across public services in Wales to better understand how dog bite incidents can be avoided.
- A multi-agency approach in developing professional guidance to improve and assure the welfare of seized dogs under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.



An End to Greyhound racing in Wales

Background

In February 2025, Wales became the first UK nation to commit to ending greyhound racing, which was a huge first step in ensuring the welfare of racing greyhounds is protected, but unfortunately due to time constraints at the end of the last Senedd term, the Welsh Government failed to pass the required legislation.


To ensure that this issue does not get kicked into the long grass it is important that policy makers commit and deliver an end to greyhound racing in Wales. Running at speed around oval tracks causes significant injury to many dogs, and in some cases the injuries are so severe that it is necessary to euthanise the dog.

During 2024 alone, 3,809 greyhounds were injured on GBGB tracks in England and Wales, and 346 greyhounds have died as a result of their participation in the industry. This is simply unacceptable. Any more delays will just result in more suffering for racing greyhounds in Wales.

We want to see:

- Legislation introduced to deliver an end to greyhound racing in Wales.





**Hello, I am Jax,
if you would like to visit
me or my friends, please
contact the Public Affairs
team to book a tour of the
Cardiff Rehoming Centre!**

Contact Us

**If you would like to discuss our recommendations in more detail, please
email: publicaffairs@dogstrust.org.uk**

www.dogstrust.org.uk/publicaffairs

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