

Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018

Summary

These Regulations will come into force on 1st October 2018 and will repeal the current legislation governing dog breeding, selling and boarding in England:

- Pet Animals Act 1951
- Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963
- Breeding of Dogs Act 1973
- Breeding of Dogs Act 1991
- Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999

There have been significant advances in the understanding of dog behaviour and welfare in recent decades. Dogs Trust is pleased that the Government is updating this old legislation, which pre-dates the Animal Welfare Act, and are introducing new measures to ensure those conducting animal activities are doing so to the best standards of animal welfare.

Key reforms include:

The introduction of a single licence for pet vending (selling), dog breeding and animal boarding establishments, including home boarders and day care establishments. The Regulations will introduce updated practices (found in the Schedules) for each of these activities, which have been drafted in collaboration with animal welfare organisations including Dogs Trust and enshrine the key requirements from the CIEH Model Licence Conditions into law.

A move to licences being issued for a fixed term, set at any point in the year. This will prevent a backlog of inspections at one time of year.

Local authorities will now use a risk-based approach to licensing meaning lower risk and high performing operators will be allowed a longer licence and fewer inspections. This will incentivise licence holders to operate at higher standards, whilst allowing local authorities to target their resources, reducing the burden on them. Unannounced inspection visits will still be an important part of ensuring high standards under these Regulations.

The sale of puppies below the age of eight weeks will be prohibited in all cases.

Anyone breeding 3 or more litters will now require a licence (this was previously set at 5 or more litters). As before, anybody 'in the business' of breeding and selling will still require a licence no matter how many litters they produce, but the business test is being improved in an effort to be make it clearer for licensing officers.

Dogs Trust chairs the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG). PAAG aims to ensure that pet animals advertised



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for sale online are done so legally and ethically. Dogs Trust is pleased that the Government is making some of PAAGs Minimum Standards mandatory, regulating adverts by ensuring licensed sellers of all pets, including puppies, detail the seller's licence number, country of origin and country of residence of the pet in any advert for sale.

Challenges:

1. The changes need to be conveyed to the public to ensure they have the best possible chance of being effective at tackling the illegal trade in pets.

PAAG is currently in the process of updating its advice on buying pets and has plans to launch a campaign to help the public understand the changes that are coming that will impact them and how they buy and board their pets.

2. Businesses and local authorities also need to understand the new Regulations and then put them into practice. The impact assessment for the new Regulations has allotted only two hours for the familiarisation and dissemination of the new requirements within local authorities.

Dogs Trust is working with the City of London Trading Standards team to offer an introductory course to help inform local authorities ahead of the Regulations coming into force.

A training course for licensing officers is also being developed and Dogs Trust has met with the creators to offer our experience and insight into dog welfare and behaviour, as well as explore how we can best help get this information across to LAs and businesses.

Future improvements:

As next steps to progress the good work that has been done, we would like to see the Government look to address and bring other activities under these Regulations, including:

- Rehoming organisations and sanctuaries
- Dog walking
- Dog grooming
- Hydrotherapy

[The Animal Welfare \(Licensing of Activities involving Animals\) \(England\) Regulations 2018](#)



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