

# 2015 General Election



# Dog Manifesto

A message from our Chief Executive Officer,  
**Clarissa Baldwin OBE**  
**About Dogs Trust**



Dogs Trust is the UK's largest dog welfare charity. We care for approximately 16,000 dogs each year through our nationwide network of eighteen rehoming centres (with two more opening 2014 – one in Essex and the other in Manchester). Dogs Trust invests substantial resources in education and responsible ownership initiatives such as free microchipping and neutering vouchers.

Founded in 1891, Dogs Trust (formally known as the National Canine Defence League) has always campaigned on dog-welfare related issues to ensure a safe and happy future for our four-legged friends.

The health and happiness of every dog is at the heart of all our work – that is why we never put a healthy dog down.

The last few years have seen significant progress in the protection of dogs, and it is encouraging to see the commitment that political parties have made to dog welfare. However, as this manifesto outlines, we still have much more to do in order to properly enshrine the welfare of our canine companions in law.

Thank you for taking the time to read this manifesto. It is my sincere hope that we can all work together to make the 2015 general election a great one for dogs!

Clarissa Baldwin OBE, Chief Executive



# Manifesto:

## Aims and Objectives

First and foremost science has proven that dogs are good for us as individuals and society in general. Therefore, we are calling on politicians and policy makers to think carefully about the wider social impact of dog welfare.

There are approximately 9 million dogs in this country, the majority of which live happily with their responsible owners. Dogs Trust is greatly encouraged by the progress that both the current and previous Governments have made to enshrine animal welfare in legislation. Measures such as the Animal Welfare Act 2006

and the forthcoming microchipping regulations have certainly made important steps towards safeguarding the welfare of dogs in the UK, but we believe that more still needs to be done.

This document sets out our proposals to the political parties for commitments we would like to see them make in the run up to the 2015 General Election:

- 🐾 A complete review and update of existing dog legislation, particularly relating to dog control
- 🐾 Robust and effective compulsory microchipping regulations
- 🐾 A review of the Welfare of Greyhounds Act 2010 to protect the welfare of Greyhounds from cradle to grave
- 🐾 Continued support for the work of Dogs Trust and the Pet Advertising Advisory Group in tackling the problems associated with the online advertisement of pets
- 🐾 Action on the increased incidences of illegal imports of dogs and puppies into the UK
- 🐾 A review of existing breeding legislation
- 🐾 The introduction of regulations which make it illegal to use aversive training aids such as electric shock collars

## Review and Update of Existing Legislation

Dogs Trust believes that there is a need for a fundamental overhaul of dog legislation, especially in relation to irresponsible dog ownership; therefore we are disappointed that the current and previous governments have traditionally opted for a piecemeal approach. Instead both dog owners and enforcers will be left to contend with, at a minimum, 12 different pieces of legislation relating to dog control, excluding any local bylaws. Dogs, their owners, the public and enforcers deserve better.

### We would like to see:

- 🐾 A complete review of existing dog legislation
- 🐾 Clear, targeted legislation to identify and deal with those owners who fail to take appropriate action to control their dogs
- 🐾 A robust new law bringing together the many existing disparate threads of dog control and welfare legislation



## Breeding

Dogs Trust would like the Government to strengthen existing breeding legislation to afford greater protection to dogs and puppies, as the provisions under the existing Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999 are not strong enough. It is evident that breeding licenses are issued too easily (or often not at all) and license requirements are too soft. What's more, we find that Local Authorities often provide unclear guidance to potential breeders on the requirements of a licence. Dogs Trust chairs a working group which has drafted improved guidance for Local Authorities on model conditions for the inspection of breeding establishments.

### We would like to see:

- 🐾 A review and strengthening of the law surrounding dog breeding. Any such legislation should include measures governing breeding establishments, the welfare of dogs and puppies in these establishments, and the prevention of inappropriate breeding practices
- 🐾 Robust and effective license requirements, including the need for breeders to devise socialisation and habituation plans for the puppies in their establishments
- 🐾 Better enforcement – through more detailed Government legislation and guidance – of licensing requirements at a Local Authority level



## Compulsory Microchipping

Dogs Trust strongly welcomed the Government's decision to introduce compulsory microchipping for all dogs in England from 2016. Microchipping is proven to be the most effective way of ensuring lost dogs are returned to their owners and is, as such, a vital aspect of dog welfare and responsible ownership. Dogs Trust has set aside a substantial investment to ensure that every owner can have their dog chipped ahead of the legislation coming into force. Since our microchipping campaign began in the mid-nineties, we have chipped over 725,000 dogs in the UK.

The microchip number itself is meaningless. Owners need to register the microchip number as well as their details with an appropriate computerised database. It is essential that the databases are kept up to date with correct personal details. It is vital that any database is available 24 hours a day, and all databases are compatible and communicate with each other.

### We would like to see:

- 🐾 MPs working closely with us to promote the benefits of microchipping and the importance of keeping database details up to date to their dog owning constituents
- 🐾 Robust and effective microchipping regulations from the Government
- 🐾 A commitment from the Government to enshrine the importance of registration and updating details in these regulations



## Greyhounds

Whilst Dogs Trust welcomed the existing Welfare of Racing Greyhound Regulations 2010, we do not believe that they go far enough to protect the welfare of greyhounds in the UK. We are particularly concerned by the lack of transparency from the industry in relation to figures on injury statistics and the number of dogs put to sleep (PTS) for both economic and welfare purposes – this is something we would like to see addressed immediately. We look forward to the proposed 2015 review of the regulations, during which we will lobby the Government for the protection of greyhounds from cradle to grave.

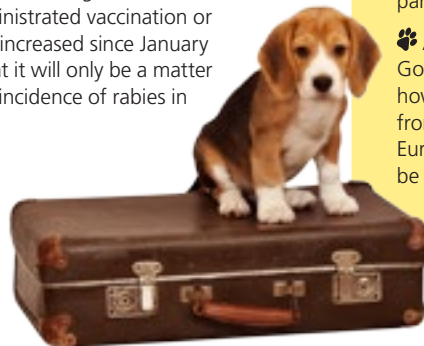
### We would like to see:

- 🐾 The introduction of statutory regulation across all tracks and the inspection of breeders' and trainers' kennels by an authorised, independent, and professionally trained inspector.
- 🐾 An industry commitment to developing a system that matches the number of dogs entering racing with the numbers that can be rehomed
- 🐾 The collection of injury and PTS statistics in a prescribed format, and the subsequent use of data to improve standards
- 🐾 Proposals for a central database to ensure that all greyhounds can be traced throughout the course of their whole lives



## Pet Travel Scheme

In January 2012, the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) rules were changed to further harmonise travel across Europe. This resulted in a relaxation of the UK's quarantine controls. The changes meant that the previous requirement to carry out a blood test for rabies serology followed by a six-month wait before entry into the UK was no longer required. Since this change Dogs Trust has been concerned about the increased potential for infectious diseases, such as rabies, to enter the UK. The number of illegal entries (primarily puppies intended for sale either through pet shops or classified websites) that are entering the UK – either through inaccurately administered vaccination or falsified paperwork – has increased since January 2012 and we maintain that it will only be a matter of time before we see an incidence of rabies in the UK.



### We would like to see:

- 🐾 A review of the current risk assessment which we believe no longer holds true
- 🐾 A review of how the current enforcement of the legislation is carried out, particularly at the ports
- 🐾 A commitment from the Government to examine how the influx of puppies from rabies endemic Eastern European countries might be addressed

## The Online Advertising of Pets

Dogs Trust chairs the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG), which comprises a number of animal welfare organisations, specialists, and veterinary bodies and was created in 2001 to combat growing concern regarding the irresponsible advertising of pets for sale, rehoming, or exchange. PAAG has been engaging with website providers in the UK to help them distinguish the legitimate adverts from those that they should be wary of. We have developed a set of minimum standards, which have received endorsement from the Department for the Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs.

### We would like to see:

- 🐾 Continued support from Government in tackling the various problems surrounding the online advertisement and sale of pets and animals
- 🐾 A review of the Pet Animals Act 1951 to consider its effectiveness in the twenty-first century culture of online sales and impulse buys



## Electric Shock Collars and Other Aversive Training Aids

Dogs Trust wants to see a complete ban on the sale and use of electric shock training aids ('shock collars') for dogs. We are against the use of any negative training method or device and believe that their use is both irresponsible and ineffective. Shock collars are worn around a dog's neck and work by delivering an electric shock to the dog to 'correct' an undesirable behaviour. The shock delivered can be likened to the shock a human would feel if they touched an electric fence. However, the dog cannot simply 'step away' from the shock, which can be of varying lengths and intensities.

Every dog should be trained using kind, fair and reward-based methods. Under no circumstances do we condone the use of equipment or techniques that use punishment, pain or fear to train a dog.

### We would like to see:

- 🐾 A complete ban on the sale and use of electric shock training aids
- 🐾 Government action to prohibit the sale and use of other aversive training aids





# Rehoming Centres

To find opening times and directions for our rehoming centres please visit:  
[www.dogstrust.org.uk/rehoming](http://www.dogstrust.org.uk/rehoming)



- |    |              |                      |
|----|--------------|----------------------|
| 1  | Ballymena    | Tel 028 2565 2977    |
| 2  | Basildon     | Tel 012 6853 5050    |
| 3  | Bridgend     | Tel 01656 725 219    |
| 4  | Canterbury   | Tel 01227 792 505    |
| 5  | Darlington   | Tel 01325 333 114    |
| 6  | Dublin       | Tel 00 353 1879 1000 |
| 7  | Evesham      | Tel 01386 830 613    |
| 8  | Glasgow      | Tel 0141 773 5130    |
| 9  | Harefield    | Tel 0845 076 3647    |
| 10 | Ilfracombe   | Tel 01271 812 709    |
| 11 | Kenilworth   | Tel 01926 484 398    |
| 12 | Leeds        | Tel 0113 281 4920    |
| 13 | Loughborough | Tel 01509 880 070    |
| 14 | Manchester   | Opening autumn 2014  |
| 15 | Merseyside   | Tel 0151 480 0660    |
| 16 | Newbury      | Tel 01488 658 391    |
| 17 | Salisbury    | Tel 01980 629 634    |
| 18 | Shoreham     | Tel 01273 452 576    |
| 19 | Shrewsbury   | Tel 01952 770 225    |
| 20 | Snetterton   | Tel 01953 498 377    |
| 21 | West Calder  | Tel 01506 873 459    |

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