

## Kennel Club Guidance for Assured Breeders

This guide is designed to expand upon the rules of the Kennel Club Assured Breeder Scheme (the ABS Standard) by outlining recommendations for Assured Breeders. It is for use by Kennel Club Regional Breeder Assessors (RBA) when assessing facilities and compliance with the scheme rules, but is also designed to assist members, by suggesting ways in which acceptable outcomes may be achieved. The scheme is not prescriptive and it is recognised that a pragmatic approach is needed with breeders using the many varied types of accommodation and facilities available, and due to the great variety that exists between different breeds and types of dog bred within the scheme.

### 1) Legal requirements and contracts

Members of the scheme are expected to comply with all legal requirements.

**1.1) Breeding licence.** Breeders who regularly breed in excess of 4 litters per year are required, by law, to hold a breeding licence. Members should demonstrate an understanding of the licence requirements, any appropriate local variations and bye-laws and should also be able to provide assurances that they intend to remain within the law.

**1.2) Local requirements.** In addition to the breeding licence, some local authorities apply further bye-laws that apply certain conditions relating to dog ownership as well as breeding. This is more likely to apply in urban areas or where large numbers of dogs are involved, but nevertheless it is the member's responsibility to be aware of any local laws and understand which apply to them. Members should have an understanding and acceptance of local legislation.

**1.3) Contract of sale.** A sales document should be produced that is easy to understand, is well presented and is in an easy to read format. The contract produced may be similar to the Kennel Club guide to a sales contract, but the RBA, the Kennel Club or its staff are not able to offer legal advice and the member should consult their own legal advisor. Nevertheless using their own experience, knowledge and common sense, the RBA may identify specific concerns where independent legal advice should be taken. The contract should have space for a date and signature and there should be at least 2 copies so that one may be retained by the member and one by the buyer. If KC endorsements are placed then the contract should have a clear explanation of the endorsement system and its implications. Reference may also be made to the KC leaflet 'Guide to endorsements'. There should be a clear reference if there are any terms or conditions under which any KC endorsements may be removed.

It is a scheme requirement to ensure that puppies are examined by a veterinary surgeon. Ideally an examination should be carried out no more than 7 days prior to sale and members should take all reasonable steps to ensure that puppies are also examined by a veterinary surgeon within 7 days of sale by the buyer's own veterinary surgeon. The sales contract may be an appropriate place to alert the buyer to this.

Particular care should be taken where deposits are taken as a deposit may be treated as part payment of a binding contract that has come into existence. Where a deposit is taken, the terms of that deposit should be clearly stated in writing and should set out the rights of both parties. A failure to do so could result in a legal dispute for breach of contract and a claim for damages even if the deposit is returned. Legal advice should always be obtained if there is any doubt.

## **2) Information and advice for puppy buyers**

Documents should be provided to the puppy buyer which should be of sufficient content to give a reasonable basis of puppy rearing. As a guide it would not be unreasonable to expect the member to provide 500 words on each topic. The member may wish to provide supplementary documentation, such as a book, leaflets, manufacturer's information or DVD. Where used, this information should be clearly referenced in the member's own documentation so that there is no room for doubt as to whether the information has been provided. Additionally the member may wish to refer the buyer to a third party such as a specific training class or training scheme or method, and again this should be clearly referenced for the avoidance of any doubt. Guidance templates to assist members are available on the Kennel Club website.

**2.1) Socialisation and Habituation information.** This information must be in a written format and should be presented in a manner that is easy for the buyer to understand, and in accordance with best practice. This should include information for owners on how to gradually introduce their new puppy to the range of experiences they are likely to encounter as adults. This should include specific advice about the introduction of potentially fearful noises, such as fireworks, being left alone by their owner, meeting new people of both sexes and different ages, being handled and restrained, travelling in a car, and meeting other dogs. Information should emphasise the importance of gradual exposure of puppies to new experiences, such that they do not startle, withdraw or show other signs of anxiety. Further information about good socialisation practice is available in the Kennel Club / Dogs Trust puppy socialisation plan.

**2.2) Exercise information.** See above. Some guidance should be given to the likely quantity and frequency of exercise, both whilst growing and throughout the animal's life stages. Guidance templates to assist members are available on the Kennel Club website.

**2.3) Tendencies/traits information.** Members are expected to understand the breed specific points of the breeds that they are breeding and are required to pass this knowledge on to the puppy buyer. The member should provide sufficient information to assist the buyer in gaining an insight and understanding of the breed so that they are given a reasonable indication of the expectations that pertain. This should include areas such as health, life expectancy, temperament, size etc. It is reasonable to expect that where dogs have a high maintenance requirement such as that which may be required with coated breeds or those with high exercise requirements then this should be highlighted. Additionally where a breed is known to have particular temperament traits such as wilfulness or shyness etc then this should also be referred to. The documentation should not be limited to the dog as a puppy but should include expectations throughout the dog's lifetime. As previously outlined, if the member provides supplementary documentation, such as a book, leaflets, manufacturers' information or DVD, this information should be clearly referenced in the member's own documentation so that there is no room for doubt as to whether the information has been provided. Guidance templates to assist members are available on the Kennel Club website.

**2.4) Training information.** Training information must be provided to prepare the new owner and inform of what might be reasonably expected with a new puppy. This may largely consist of early training information, such as house training, but should include appropriate advice for further training such as the advisability of attending training classes. Guidance templates to assist members are available on the Kennel Club website.

**2.5) Grooming information.** Grooming information should be provided to ensure that the purchaser is aware of the likely grooming regime that needs to be practised to ensure that

the dogs remain healthy and in good condition. It should include an indication of the likely time that is required for example on coat maintenance or bathing, and should also include areas such as teeth, nails and eyes etc. It should also include information regarding parasite detection and control. In the case of heavily coated breeds this information is likely to be more in depth than short coated breeds. In breeds that are likely to require specialist or professional grooming, this should be pointed out, together with any cost implications. Guidance templates to assist members are available on the Kennel Club website.

**2.6) Feeding information.** Members must provide a guide to the buyer about the likely feeding requirements for the puppy. This should include information regarding the diet that the puppy has been fed to date and recommendations and advice for the future. Ideally the member will also provide a supply of food, identical to that which the puppy has been fed, sufficient for 5 days. The feeding instructions should also include recommended feeding times and quantities of food together with recommendations on the type of food and the quantities required giving an indication of when increases or reductions may be required throughout the dog's life stages. Whilst it is understood that the requirements may vary from dog to dog, a guide to the breed's average or expected requirement should be provided. If reference is made to manufacturers' feeding instructions then this should be made clear in the member's own documentation. Guidance templates to assist members are available on the Kennel Club website.

**2.7) Worming programme.** The breeder should follow advice from their own veterinary surgeon regarding worming and should advise the new owner to seek further advice from their veterinary surgeon regarding future treatments. Information should be passed to the owner on the worming regime that the puppy has received to date and will ideally include exact dates that treatments were administered and details of the product used.

**2.8) Immunisation measures.** Information should be passed to the owner regarding any immunisation that the puppy has received to date and the details of the Veterinary Surgeon who administered it. It is recognised that many puppies may not be fully immunised prior to sale and it is therefore important that the buyer is made aware of future treatment requirements.

**2.9) Registration certificate.** A certificate of Kennel Club registration must be passed to the new owner at the time of sale or as soon as it is available. Puppies should be registered as soon as is practical after birth to ensure that the certificate is available.

**2.10) Insurance.** A valid insurance policy should be commenced to cover the puppy at least for the first four weeks from the date of sale to assist in covering the cost of unexpected veterinary treatment. The breeder is not expected to give advice on the types of policy available. A wide variety of policy is available some of which can be provided at zero cost to the member

### **3) Documentation**

**3.1) Breeding records.** The breeder should maintain an accurate record of the dogs that they have kept and sold. These records should be maintained for a period of 10 years. Records should include: copies of registration certificates, microchip numbers, parentage (pedigrees), dates of litters and details of puppies produced, identification details, date of transfer to new owner and date and cause of death (a facility is available to assist in record keeping is available on the Kennel Club 'MyKC' service). For dogs currently in ownership, further records of veterinary treatment, immunisation and any other relevant data and

material should be kept. A copy of any sales contract should also be retained. Ideally each member should have an available system that contains an easily referenced record, such as a basic filing or record system. It is also recommended that a 3 or 5 generation pedigree is passed to the owner. This information may be available online for dogs registered with the Kennel Club.

A record of whelping should be kept. This should record the details of times of birth and weight of puppies. Any exceptional events should also be recorded. Exceptional events may include but are not limited to, difficult or problematic births, retained placentas, inertia or malformed puppies.

**3.2) Veterinary practice.** Details of the member's regular veterinary surgeon should be available during a kennel assessment visit. It is not usual practice for contact to be made, but the Kennel Club does reserve the right to contact the vet where it is considered appropriate. The member should have an arrangement in place with a vet, so that health issues, particularly in the case of emergency, may be dealt with promptly. Attention should be drawn to the puppy buyer on the availability of veterinary insurance, and the breeder may consider insuring the puppy on behalf of the buyer prior to sale.

**3.3) Record of dogs.** A member should be aware of all the dogs that they have on the premises and/or that they have responsibility for. A formal record should be available, documenting details of each animal's registration number, registered and call name, sex, date of birth, parentage, colour and /or distinguishing marks. Ownership records must also be kept including date of birth, transfer, and purchaser details. Mating details must also be recorded including dates of matings, details of puppies produced, and dates of death and reason for death of puppies (if known). Health records must also be kept of health screening test results. Such information should be held in an easily referenced source such as a register if applicable. Further records should also be kept including information of when treatments, immunisation, or worming is due etc. The number of dogs kept and owned by the member should be recorded. This should include any animals living off the premises and should include puppies and adolescents. It should be established if there are any other dogs that are kept away from the premises either temporarily or permanently or if any are owned by others under breeding term arrangements etc.

**3.4) Statement of experience.** This provides the member with the opportunity (in a maximum of 50 words, to provide an insight to the puppy buyer of their breeding knowledge and aspirations. This information is made publicly available and should not include negative or critical statements. It should also be accurate at the time of writing and should, wherever possible, not be date sensitive and should be kept up to date. The statement of experience provided by the member will be reviewed during a Kennel Club visit where it will be checked and confirmed for accuracy and current relevance.

#### **4) Facilities**

The facilities available and the routines in place will be wide ranging and may vary considerably according to the environment, situation and numbers of dogs kept. However all facilities should fulfil the scheme requirements.

**4.1) Overall situation.** This will often be dependent on the number and type of dogs kept, the location of surrounding properties and the proximity of other local amenities. Many breeders keep their dogs in domestic premises where the dogs live within the family environment which is perfectly acceptable providing all other requirements are met. Dogs kept in domestic premises should have free access to more than one room during the course of the day and there should be a specific bed or indoor kennel.

**4.2) Structure.** Dogs should be kept and housed in accommodation that is appropriate to ensure the welfare of the occupants. This may be within domestic premises such as within a family home, or in separate, purpose built animal housing or other appropriately adapted buildings (kennels). Where separate housing is provided, it should be constructed in such a way as to provide a safe and secure environment for the dogs. There should be no projections or rough edges liable to cause injury. Where washing out or hosing is appropriate, all areas (to include all kennel floors, exercise areas, passageways and kitchen areas) should not be subject to pooling and be able to dry easily. The kennel doors should be strong enough to resist impact and scratching and should be capable of being effectively secured. Where metal bars and frames are used, they should be of suitable gauge with spacing adequate enough to prevent dogs escaping or becoming trapped. Areas that are subject to chewing or damage should be repaired or replaced regularly. Where metal edging is used, this should not present a risk of injury to the dog. Carpeting or other soft materials where soiling routinely occurs should not be used unless they are able to be adequately cleaned and dried.

**4.3) Lighting.** Lighting should be provided to exercise and sleeping areas so that all parts are clearly visible. Where practicable this should be natural light. Adequate supplementary lighting should be provided throughout the establishment. Lighting must be switched off at night time to allow proper sleep patterns.

**4.4) Temperature control.** Kennels must be constructed so as to provide protection from adverse weather conditions and extremes of temperature. Devices used for heating and cooling must be safe and free from risk of burning or electrocution and manufacturer's instructions should be followed. Open flame appliances should not be used. Heat and cooling sources should be safe and comply with all regulatory requirements for both the animals and people on site. Where temperature is liable to variation, a thermometer should be used. Permanently fitted thermometers should be placed where it closely simulates the conditions experienced by the occupants. Heating should be provided to ensure the temperature does not fall below the minimum. It is recognised that high external ambient temperature may make it difficult to achieve the ideal temperature at all times. High temperatures should be alleviated by providing additional air movement. Temperature of the sleeping area should be relevant to the breed/type of dog (for most this is likely to be between 10°C and 26°C).

**4.5) Ventilation.** Adequate ventilation must be provided to all interior areas without the creation of excessive draughts. It must also be possible to regulate changes in temperature. Ventilation in the indoor accommodation of all dogs should provide sufficient fresh air of an appropriate quality; keep down the levels and spread of odours, noxious gases, dust and infectious agents of any kind; and provide for the removal of excess heat and humidity. The ventilation system should be so designed as to avoid harmful draughts and noise.

**4.6) Size of quarters.** The accommodation areas should be large enough to allow both separate sleeping and activity, and dogs should normally be provided with separate sleeping and exercise areas. Sleeping and accommodation areas should be sufficient and increased in relation to size and number of dogs, such that both the length and width are sufficient for all the dogs to lie outstretched at all angles with neither their tail or nose touching the walls or another individual. The height of kennels must be sufficient to allow the dogs to raise their head to full height without touching the ceiling with their nose or ears. The ceiling must be sufficiently accessible to allow access for cleaning.

**Important note:**

**These sizes are not prescriptive. The assessor's own expertise, opinion and common sense will be applied, and consideration given to the daily routine in place, the breed, temperament and activity levels of the animals kept.**

#### Small Size Dogs

No. dogs	Where regular access to external run is provided	Where no separate exercise run is provided
1	2.5 sq m	4.5 sq m
2	2.5 sq m	4.5 sq m
3	4.5 sq m	6.5 sq m
4	6.0 sq m	8.5 sq m

#### Medium Size Dogs

No. dogs	Where regular access to external run is provided	Where no separate exercise run is provided
1	2.5 sq m	4.5 sq m
2	4.5 sq m	6.5 sq m
3	6.0 sq m	8.5 sq m

#### Large Size Dogs

No. dogs	Where regular access to external run is provided	Where no separate exercise run is provided
1	4.5 sq m	6.5 sq m
2	6.0 sq m	8.5 sq m

Bitches with litters should be provided with additional space.

Dog crates, where deployed, should be of sufficient size to allow each dog to be able to stand, step forward, turn around and wag its tail and to lie down comfortably, without touching the sides of the crate or without touching another individual. Dogs should not normally be confined to a crate for more than a total of a nine-hour period during any 24 hours.

**4.7) Bedding.** Beds and bedding should be provided and be suitable to allow dogs to be comfortable. Beds and bedding should be capable of being easily cleaned, disinfected and sited away from draughts. All bedding material in use should be clean, non-irritant and dry. A dog bed should be of a durable construction and should offer protection from drafts and be of a suitable size for the breeds of dog kept. The use of raised beds and the facility to move out of other dogs' sight should be provided where appropriate.

**4.8) Whelping and rearing facilities.** Each bitch should be provided with a designated area/kennel separate from other dogs prior to whelping, with a suitable whelping box/bed, and adequate facilities for the puppies to be kept safely until they are expected to leave. The whelping area should be maintained at an adequate temperature (approximately 26°C to 32°C). The facilities should cater for the maximum number of puppies and take account of breed size and litter size. An area should be provided within the whelping area where a bitch can rest away from her puppies. The bed should contain bedding to ensure a soft surface for the bitch and to enable the absorption of mess resulting from whelping. The bed must be constructed of easily cleanable material and must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between litters. The use of wood is acceptable for a whelping bed as long as it has been

treated to render it impervious with paint or varnish. Bedding should be of soft material that may be covered by absorbent material. The use of newspaper alone is not acceptable other than for short periods during whelping and sawdust and straw should not be used in whelping beds. The use of 'pig rails' to prevent a bitch lying on her puppies is advisable. Cleanliness of the whelping and surrounding areas is paramount and all materials used in the construction and maintenance of these areas should be capable of being easily cleaned on a regular basis.

## **5) Health and safety**

**5.1) Storage and preparation of food.** Suitable facilities, hygienically constructed and maintained, should be provided for the storage and preparation of food for the dogs. Refrigeration facilities should be provided where fresh and cooked meats are stored. Food contamination must be avoided. A sink with hot and cold running water should be available for washing kitchen utensils and eating and drinking vessels. Food must be adequately protected against pests and vermin.

**5.2) Cleaning routine/ disease control.** All kennels, whelping areas, corridors, common areas, kitchens etc must be kept clean and free from accumulations of dirt and dust so that disease control is maintained and the dogs are comfortable. A routine cleansing schedule should be implemented and should include daily, weekly and monthly cleansing and disinfection which should incorporate an approved formulation effective against micro-organisms responsible for canine diseases. Hot and cold water should be available at all times. A list of approved disinfectants can be found at: <http://disinfectants.defra.gov.uk>. Dogs should not be returned to kennel areas before they are dry and particular care should be given to restrict dogs from areas where cleaning chemicals and disinfectants have been recently used. Isolation facilities or other adequate facilities to prevent the spread of infectious disease between isolated animals and other animals should be available where appropriate. Effective bio security measures should be in place and understood by all staff in all circumstances, e.g. when dogs are introduced or reintroduced. Isolated animals need to be effectively barrier nursed and evidence of veterinary involvement will be expected. In large breeding establishments, a quarantine area should be provided in which any imported dogs can be kept for 14 days. Where new dogs are introduced, the kennels must be cleaned and disinfected between occupants.

**5.3) Excreta and soiled materials.** Facilities should be provided for the proper reception, storage and disposal of waste. Particular care should be taken to segregate waste arising from the treatment and handling of dogs with infectious diseases. If any doubt exists, the member should check with the Environment Agency or local authority for up to date guidance.

**5.4) Staff levels.** The maximum number of dogs that can be reasonably kept at any one time is limited to the number of staff available.

As a guideline it may be considered that a full time attendant may care for 20 dogs. However, this is dependent on the facilities available, the breed, size, and type of dog, the dog's activity levels and the capabilities and competence of the supervisors. This will all be considered by the RBA during a visit.

Staff numbers should be of concern only when there is evidence that the standards maintained or the condition and behaviour of the animals is being compromised, or where an unrealistic routine is being maintained. Supervision must be by a suitable and competent person, who must be at least 18 years of age and must be available to deal with

emergencies. All members, and any others involved in the care of the dogs, should be aware of and be familiar with the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs and relevant legislation. They should have a sound working knowledge of dog breeding and be aware of good practice and the traits of the breeds in their establishment.

Where staff are employed they should receive adequate training to ensure that they understand all aspects of dog care as outlined in the standard document and within these guidelines and should be aware of all standard operating procedures. Where necessary a documented training plan should be available and standard operating procedures adopted.

**5.5) Emergency procedures and risk assessment.** There should be an appropriate emergency evacuation plan and fire warning procedure in place. Where appropriate and in premises where staff are employed, this should be posted where staff may become familiar with it. This procedure should include instructions on dealing with an emergency situation and how and where dogs are to be evacuated. There should be adequate means of raising an alarm in the event of a fire or other emergency. Precautions should be taken to prevent any accumulation of material which may present a risk of fire. Members should be able to demonstrate an understanding of any risks that are present and that they have adequate plans to deal with situations that may arise. All electrical installations and appliances should be maintained in a safe condition. There should be a residual current circuit breaker system on each block of kennels.

**5.6) First aid kit.** A fully stocked first-aid kit suitable for use on dogs and puppies should be available and accessible on the premises. It should be kept fully stocked at all times. A veterinary surgeon should be consulted concerning its contents and a competent member of staff should be in charge of its maintenance.

**5.7) Security.** All gates, gate fastenings and locks should be of sufficient construction to prevent escape or damage by the occupants. All fencing should be in well maintained condition.

## **6) Dogs' welfare**

**6.1) Water and food.** All dogs and puppies should be supplied with adequate food suitable to their age, breed, activity level and stage of breeding cycle. Puppies should start the weaning process as soon as they are capable of ingesting food on their own. The food offered must be appropriate for the stage of development of the puppies. Weaning should normally commence at 3-4 weeks old. The weaning process should be gradual and aim to be completed by the time the puppy is six weeks old. Care should also be taken to allow the bitch gradually to reduce the production of milk. The initial diet may be liquid progressing to solid food over the ensuing period. Puppies should initially be offered food up to five times a day and care must be taken to ensure that each takes the correct share of the food offered. Monitoring weight gain is important. Food intake should be monitored to ensure that each dog receives an adequate quantity of food. Dogs should normally be fed from individual bowls. Adult dogs should normally be offered at least two meals per day, dependant on breed and type of dog, and in accordance with veterinary advice and food manufacturers' recommendations. 'Ad lib' or continuous feeding is not desirable and should only be practised if specifically recommended by a food manufacturer or instructed by a veterinary surgeon. Adequate routine cleaning procedures should be in place to ensure that the environment remains clean and free from infectious diseases. A standard operating procedure to administer this should be in place.



Dogs should routinely have access to fresh clean water. This should be checked at suitable intervals and changed daily. In kennels with more than one occupant there should be sufficient filled water bowls. Eating and drinking vessels should be suitable bowls that must be capable of being easily cleansed and disinfected to prevent cross-contamination. They should be maintained in a clean condition.

**6.2) Whelping and rearing.** Bitches should be bred only within the rules of the Kennel Club which are published in the Kennel Club Year Book each year. These normally provide for a bitch to produce a litter a maximum of 4 times in her lifetime, not before the age of 12 months and not after the age of 8 years. Additionally bitches should not normally be allowed to produce more than 1 litter in a 12 month period. Any exceptions to this should be only after seeking veterinary advice. Bitches should be moved to whelping facilities in adequate time to allow them to familiarise themselves with their environment. This would usually be no fewer than 7 days prior to whelping. Bitches should not usually be transported for long distances 54 days or more after mating or for 7 days after whelping. Facilities must be adequate, secure, safe and capable of providing the range of temperatures suitable for both pups and bitch. Bitches due to whelp in the next 24 hours should be observed regularly, either in person or via other means, e.g. closed circuit television, at least every 4 hours until whelping has commenced. Once whelping has commenced they should be checked at least every 30 minutes until all puppies have been born and checked. Bitches must be allowed a minimum of four periods a day for toileting and exercise away from their puppies. Bitches should be allowed out without contact with other dogs and for short periods from a few days after whelping.

**6.3) Dogs' physical appearance.** All dogs should be in apparent good physical condition with no sign of illness or ailment, and should be identifiable by its appearance as defined by the Kennel Club breed standard where applicable. If obvious signs of injury, illness or disease are apparent, evidence of veterinary treatment should be recorded. Dogs should be examined daily, at least by observation, and should be physically examined weekly for any evidence of parasites, signs of ill health or injury which, if found, should be acted upon.

**6.4) Health.** The member should have a veterinary health plan for their dogs as agreed with their veterinary surgeon. As a minimum, this should include an annual examination by the veterinary surgeon, immunisation, and regular treatment for external and internal parasites. All health and veterinary treatment must be recorded. Routine health screening should be performed to ensure that the health status of breeding stock is current. Breeders are expected to make their own informed decisions regarding the various risks posed by current infectious disease and must be able to demonstrate that they have taken appropriate action to ensure that their animals are sufficiently protected. The most common veterinary regime, which would normally be most acceptable, is an initial vaccination course, followed by booster at an appropriate time. The frequency of such boosters should be carried out as directed by a veterinary surgeon underpinned by recommendations by the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA). A number of factors should be taken into consideration and may include location and local conditions, and age and routine of animals. Where non-conventional methods are employed, such as natural remedies, they should always be undertaken on the advice of a veterinary surgeon. Other methods such as antibody measurement (titre tests) are available which may also indicate a need or otherwise to offer additional protection, but again should be employed under the direction of a veterinary surgeon. Breeders may consider that their dogs are at low risk and are sufficiently protected if they do not mix with dogs which are themselves not adequately protected or are likely to be disease free. The areas that the dogs frequent will also be a consideration. Members should be able to demonstrate this or provide additional evidence to support this which may include confirmation from a veterinary surgeon. For the avoidance of

confusion the following definitions are provided; **Immunisation**: to render immune; not liable to danger, protected from a disease or infection because of the presence of specific antibodies which act against the antigens concerned;

NOTE: Veterinary insurance may be dependent on the vaccination regime employed and this should be confirmed with the breeders' insurance company to ensure compliance and continued cover.

Health screening - the intention of testing for inherited disease is to improve genetic health and this can only be achieved by selecting the best breeding stock. Where tests are based on DNA, affected dogs should not normally be used for breeding and carrier dogs should normally only be mated to clear dogs. It is recognised, however, that the careful breeding of affected animals to clear animals may be acceptable in certain breeds, depending on the severity of the condition and the individual breed's genetic picture. Health test results must be considered when choosing breeding stock to minimise the risk of producing clinically affected puppies. Longevity of relatives, particularly in short-lived breeds, should also be considered. Dogs that display adverse temperament traits, such as withdrawal from or aggression towards people or other dogs should not normally be bred from.

Genetic disorders vary in their age of onset, and a simple vet check on a puppy or a young dog may not reveal if the dog is suffering, or will suffer in the future, from an inherited disorder. In addition, some conditions require diagnosis by a specialist, such as some eye disorders. Conditions for which a DNA test is available can be diagnosed at any age, although again a young dog might not necessarily be displaying clinical signs at the time of testing.

Selection of breeding stock - it is recognised that breeders will consider many factors when selecting breeding stock. These will include the genetic and physical health status of the animals, their physical characteristics, their temperament and their relationship to each other. The health of puppies produced must be a priority. Where parentage is known, the genealogical relationship may be assessed via a calculation known as an inbreeding coefficient (COI), and this should be considered prior to mating. The COI of dogs registered with the KC can be viewed via the Mate Select system on the Kennel Club website. Ideally and when considering all other relevant factors, breeders should aim to produce puppies with an inbreeding coefficient below the breed average.

**6.5) Behaviour.** Dogs should be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns at all times. This should include social behaviour with other dogs and with people. They should have the opportunity to enjoy exercise and interaction with people and be adequately supervised. The breeder should be able to recognise behavioural signs of fear or anxiety in their dogs, and take action to remove dogs from situations which cause these responses. Provisions should be in place to separate dogs at relevant times to ensure accidental matings do not occur and that undue anxiety is prevented. Dogs should be trained, using humane methods, so that they can:

- Walk on a lead;
- Come when called;
- Sit and stay when requested;
- Are capable of being physically examined and treated under normal conditions.

Breeding animals should have temperamental characteristics suitable for living in a domestic environment, as well as traits characteristic of their breed, as described in the Kennel Club breed standard.

**6.6) Exercise.** All dogs should have sufficient exercise for their individual needs to ensure their physical and mental wellbeing. A formal exercise programme should be adopted. Ideally, dogs should have access to a good sized exercise area, supervised free running exercise and lead walking on a routine basis. All dogs and puppies must be provided with adequate opportunities to satisfy their particular exercise requirements. If ad lib access to an exercise area is provided, then adequate protection from adverse weather must be provided in the form of a sheltered area. If groups of animals are exercised together, adequate safeguards must be in place to ensure all aspects of their wellbeing. This may include adequate observation and inspection to prevent injury and detect infection or parasite build-up. Care should also be taken to observe and ensure the group works as a social unit and that behaviour of individual dogs is normal.

**6.7) Environmental enrichment.** The member should be able to demonstrate that the dogs receive adequate environmental enrichment. This should include such appropriate daily routine that provides them with the opportunity to express normal behaviour. All groups of dogs should be able to engage in activities including daily play and contact with humans (grooming, training or playing). A written programme showing enhancement and enrichment may be produced, which may include a record of alternated activities. Dogs must be provided with adequate environmental enrichment and the ability to have some control over their environment. Puppies should also be exposed to a variety of places and situations. Toys and activity feeders that are changed regularly are ideal enrichment and should be considered where appropriate. There should be more toys or feeders than there are dogs in the kennel. Games such as fetching or swimming and training sessions should be considered to provide additional stimulation. Where dogs live alone, adequate provisions should be in place to ensure that they have frequent contact with other dogs.

**6.8) Socialisation.** Members must socialise puppies prior to sale. This should be demonstrated with accommodation areas identified where this may be achieved and a socialisation plan being available. Puppies should be regularly exposed to a wide range of different humans, non-aggressive vaccinated dogs and other animals, where appropriate. Puppies should also be exposed to a varied number of places, sounds and situations. When dogs are mixed, the compatibility of the dogs will vary depending on the stage of the breeding cycle and their age. Puppies should be handled regularly shortly after birth and providing that it does not cause undue stress to the bitch, to habituate them to human contact and to examine them for any sign of disease. Handling should consist of gently picking up and examining each puppy. This should be done at least twice daily. Puppies should be maintained as a litter or with puppies of a similar age and size. However, puppies should be separated from litter mates and the bitch for short periods from the age of six weeks. During periods of separation there should be human social contact. Puppies should be separated to habituate them prior to re-homing. For further advice members may wish to read the Kennel Club Puppy Socialisation Plan ([www.thepuppyplan.com](http://www.thepuppyplan.com)).

Dogs used for breeding must be kept in an environment that allows adequate social contact when the stage of the breeding cycle permits. There must be procedures for introducing new dogs to the breeding establishment.

**6.9) Habituation.** From 3 weeks old, puppies should be habituated to events likely to be encountered upon homing to a domestic environment. This should include the sights and sounds in households, such as appliances, as well as differing substrates on which to walk.

Introduction to novel sights and sounds should be gradual such that puppies do not show a fearful response such as being startled or withdrawal. In a domestic environment this may occur naturally whereas in a kennel sights and sounds should be introduced in a structured

manner. Recordings of sounds likely to cause fear when first encountered later in life, such as firework and traffic noises, may be introduced at a low volume. TV and radio may also be useful. A standard operating procedure to do so should be in place.

**6.10) Training.** Adult dogs should be capable of being kept under proper control and should receive at least basic training to understand basic commands so that they can be handled easily and safely e.g. walk on a lead, come when called, and stay when requested. Provisions should be made to provide appropriate training where dogs are to be re-homed. All training must be based on rewarding desired responses rather than punishing undesired ones.

**6.11) Re-homing.** Where members re-home dogs, puppies or ex-breeding dogs, the member must ask about the potential purchaser's lifestyle and availability of resources to properly care for the puppy/dog for the whole of its life. A letter from a veterinary surgeon who knows the purchaser may be a useful means of monitoring suitability. Responsible re-homing must include a requirement to return the puppy or dog, if the new owner is unable to continue to care for it.

## **7) Compliance with scheme rules**

All members of the ABS are expected to fully comply with the rules of the scheme.

**7.1) Non-Compliance.** Any non-compliance will be dealt with as appropriate and will be dependent on the seriousness of that non-compliance. When considering the seriousness of the non-compliance the following is taken into account.

- a. The effect of the non-compliance being corrected
- b. The likelihood of the non-compliance having an adverse effect
- c. How likely the non-compliance is to be detected if it was not corrected.

Non-compliance is assessed on a case by case basis but is expected to be exceptional. Any non-compliance that occurred on more than one occasions would not normally be considered to be exceptional unless the breeder was able to provide compelling reason, which is acceptable to the Assured Breeder Scheme, as to why the non-compliance occurred.

**7.2) Minor non-compliance.** Minor non-compliance is defined as any point where the member does not meet the standard of the Assured Breeder Scheme. Minor non-compliance will result in a member being provided with an opportunity to comply (normally 60 days or until the next time that the member's procedures are reviewed).

**7.3) Major non-compliance.** Major non-compliance is defined as any point where the member does not meet the standard of the Assured Breeder Scheme, and which materially affects the welfare of the dogs in the breeder's care, could be reasonably expected to affect the health or welfare of puppies or dogs produced and offered for sale, and/or which brings the Kennel Club or the Assured Breeder Scheme into disrepute. Major non-compliance will result in a member being immediately suspended until the Kennel Club is satisfied that the member has complied and will continue to comply.