

STANDARD FOR BREEDING DOGS

Standard	Guidance
<p>1. The breeder must comply with all legislation relevant to their breeding establishment. Welfare legislation requires dogs' needs to be provided and they are expressed thus: "an animal's needs shall be taken to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) its need for a suitable environment, (b) its need for a suitable diet, (c) its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns, (d) any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals, and (e) its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease." 	<p><i>All dogs in England and Wales are subject to the Animal Welfare Act 2006, in Scotland to the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, and in Northern Ireland to the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. In addition some breeders may be subject to additional legislation. A list and summary of their provisions is given at Annex A.</i></p> <p><i>While this standard is not constructed strictly in the same order as the legislation, the Advisory Council considers that complying with these standards is likely to fulfil the requirements of the welfare legislation.</i></p>
<p>2. Records must be kept for all activity relating to the dogs and kept for 10 years. Records must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Name, date of birth and permanent identification number; b. Breed where appropriate; c. Colour and other distinguishing marks; d. Registration number where appropriate; e. Date of acquisition; f. All veterinary treatment; g. Dates of mating; h. For bitches, date of whelping and number of puppies; i. For dogs, dates of matings and number of puppies; j. Results of all tests for inherited defects and the date of the tests; k. Date of leaving the breeder, and contact details for destination. 	<p><i>Records may be kept manually or on computer. When kept on computer some means of printing records for an inspector should be available.</i></p>
<p>3. When euthanasia is required at any age it must be carried out by a veterinary surgeon and recorded to include the reason for euthanasia and the name of the veterinary surgeon who performed it. Breeding stock must</p>	<p><i>This applies equally to terminally ill breeding stock as well as to puppies. Puppies should not be euthanased simply because they have a colour or conformation defect that will not affect welfare or can be corrected without</i></p>

not be routinely euthanased when no longer required for breeding and measures must be demonstrated to ensure breeding stock can be successfully re-homed.	<i>compromising welfare. Affected dogs should be neutered. Ex breeding stock should only be euthanased where they are incapable of being re-homed, as certified by either a veterinary surgeon, or a behaviourist working at the level of Applied Animal Behaviourist, Clinical Animal Behaviourist or Veterinary Behaviourist, as defined by the Animal Behaviour and Training Council (www.abtcouncil.org.uk).</i>
<u>BREEDING ANIMALS¹</u>	
<p>4. All dogs must be kept in an environment which enables them to display normal behavioural characteristics, including social contact with other dogs or humans.</p> <p>There must be social contact with other dogs and humans</p> <p>All dogs used for breeding must be selected for temperament characteristics suitable for their intended purpose.</p>	<i>Fulfilment of social needs may be provided by mixing compatible dogs and by contact with humans. When the social interaction is provided solely by humans, there should be contact at regular intervals during the day. When dogs are kept in a kennel environment this should be the working day and in a domestic environment the normal waking hours of the household. Care should be taken when mixing dogs, especially when close to whelping or when lactating, and they should be maintained in groups compatible in terms of temperament, size, and number. When dogs are mixed, the compatibility of the dogs may vary depending on the stage of the breeding cycle and their age and this should be borne in mind.</i>
<p>5. Dogs must have access to clean drinking water.</p>	<i>Unless automatic drinkers are provided, drinking water must be checked at least twice daily. Where dogs are mixed it is advisable to provide a number of drinking bowls. How often bowls are re-filled will depend on circumstances and the potential for contamination. When dogs are transported they should be offered water.</i>
<p>6. Dogs must be fed a diet appropriate to their age, breed, activity level and stage of the breeding cycle. Adult dogs must be fed individually with separate bowls. Food must be stored in vermin-proof containers and fresh food must be refrigerated</p>	<i>For most dogs in breeding establishments two meals should be provided daily. Pregnant bitches will require increasingly frequent meals of high quality food as their pregnancy progresses. Lactating bitches also need frequent high quality food to prevent excessive weight loss. Ad lib feeding may be appropriate. Activity feeders will enhance dogs' mental stimulation.</i>

¹ A breeding dog is defined as one greater than one year old kept by a breeder for breeding

	<i>Dogs should be weighed regularly and their body condition observed.</i>
7. There must be an area for food preparation. Hot and cold running water must be provided.	<i>To ensure proper hygiene the kitchen should be kept clean and dry. A cleaning and feeding Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)¹ should be provided.</i>
8. Dogs kept in domestic premises must have a specific bed or indoor kennel. The bed must have clean bedding. The bed and any indoor kennel provided must be large enough for each dog to lay flat on its side and stand in a natural standing position.	<i>Keeping dogs in domestic premises occupied by people provides a good social environment that has adequate temperature control and ventilation. However more care may be required to ensure adequate hygiene when floors are covered with permeable covering such as carpet. Where indoor kennels are used, dogs should not be confined in them for more than eight hours a day without being let out during this period for exercise and socialization with both humans and other animals. Dogs sharing an indoor kennel should always be compatible in both temperament and stage of breeding cycle.</i>
9. Dogs kept in kennel accommodation must be provided with a clean and durable environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Kennels must be constructed of impermeable material that can be cleaned and disinfected. b. Kennels must be divided into sleeping and activity areas. No floor area dimension may be less than 1.5m². Dogs must be able to lie flat on their sides outside their bed in the sleeping area. The activity area must be a minimum of 4m² for a single dog and a minimum 1m² for each additional dog. Dogs must be able to walk, turn around easily, wag their tails without touching the kennel sides, and lie down without touching another dog. c. The sleeping area must contain a bed with clean bedding large enough for the dog to lie flat on its side. d. The kennel must have sufficient lighting to enable dogs to be examined and the kennel to be cleaned. e. There must be sufficient ventilation to prevent excessive odours or contamination without causing draughts. 	<i>The use of wood for kennel surfaces is undesirable. Where it is used it should be painted or lined with waterproof material so that it is impermeable and should be kept in good, splinter-free condition. Wood should not be used in new builds. The floor must be smooth concrete or tiles or a similar impermeable and cleanable surface.</i> <i>Kennels should be of a sufficient height to allow dogs to move freely and to allow efficient cleaning.</i> <i>Heating should be provided to ensure the temperature does not fall below the minimum. This may be by 'spot' heaters. It is recognised that high external ambient temperature may make it difficult to achieve the maximum at all times. High temperatures should be alleviated by providing additional air movement. There should be some part of the sleeping area where the dog is able to enjoy a temperature of between 10 °C and 26 °C. Temperature should be relevant to the breed/type of dog.</i> <i>Kennels should have natural daylight.</i>

f. The kennel must be constructed to minimise noise levels.	<i>Noise can be reduced by the use of noise absorbent materials such as ceiling tiles in the construction of the kennel. External sources of noise should also be minimised.</i>
10. There must be a written routine cleaning regime. This must include the removal of faeces at least twice daily and routine disinfection. Floors must be dried after cleaning. Adequate routine cleaning procedures must be in place to ensure that the environment remains clean and free from infectious organisms.	<i>A cleaning SOP should be provided. Kennels and outside exercise areas should be cleaned and disinfected between occupants.</i>
11. Dogs must be provided with environmental enrichment and the ability to have some control over their environment.	<i>Toys and activity feeders that are changed regularly are ideal enrichment and more active breeds should have more exercise. There should be more toys or feeders than there are dogs in the kennel. The use of raised beds and the ability to move out of other dogs' sight should be provided.</i>
12. All dogs must have access to an exercise area and must be allowed a minimum of two periods daily of at least 30 minutes to exercise freely.	<i>Exercise may be provided by walking individual or small groups of dogs or by access to an exercise run appropriate to the size and breed of dog. The use of further enrichment such as swimming or fetching a ball should be encouraged. Breed specific behavioural characteristics should be taken into account when providing environmental enrichment.</i>
13. Separate bitches in season securely from entire males.	
14. In addition to the habituation set out in paragraph 38, breeding dogs must be trained to fulfil basic requirements. They must be capable of being physically examined and treated under normal conditions. They must not cause unreasonable nuisance to neighbours or to visitors to the property.	<i>Basic training should be given to all dogs so that they can be handled easily and safely and can be re-homed at the end of their breeding career. Reward based training should be used. Basic requirements include walking on a lead and coming when called.</i>
15. All breeding stock must be permanently identified and registered on a recognised database. Breeding stock must be selected on their temperament and their physical and genetic health. Breeders must take all reasonable steps to ensure that breeding stock is of good physical and genetic health, or acceptable	<i>Microchip is the preferred method of identification, implanted by a trained operator. Other validated means of identification may be acceptable. The great majority of dogs live as pets in a domestic environment. Their health and behaviour are therefore far more important than their appearance. It is accepted that a physical examination by a veterinary</i>

<p>temperament and fit for function. Fit for function means being able to see, breathe normally and be physically fit and able to run freely.</p> <p>Breeders must make use of scientifically validated health screening schemes relevant to the breed or cross breed.</p>	<p><i>surgeon may be useful.</i></p> <p><i>Dogs that display adverse temperament traits, such as withdrawal from or aggression towards handlers or other dogs, should not be bred from.</i></p> <p><i>The intention of testing for inherited disease is to improve genetic health and that 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. Where such tests provide a score, no dog should be used for breeding if their score is worse than the average published for the breed. Longevity of relatives, particularly in short-lived breeds, should also be considered.</i></p> <p><i>Genetic counselling should be provided in writing for both the breeder and the purchaser of puppies that may be used for breeding.²</i></p>
<p>16. All dogs must be examined daily and any signs of disease or injury acted upon.</p>	<p><i>The examination does not need to be extensive and should include the dog's behaviour. Treatment does not necessarily imply veterinary intervention as some disease, e.g. mild diarrhoea, may only require self-directed management.</i></p>
<p>17. Breeders must take reasonable precautions to prevent the spread of infectious disease and make available facilities for the treatment of dogs in an emergency.</p> <p>The breeder must have a veterinary health plan for their dogs as agreed with their veterinary surgeon. All veterinary treatment must be recorded.</p>	<p><i>The health plan may be a very simple document detailing routine treatments required, disease prevention procedures, and procedures related to breeding. These should include measures to prevent the transmission of roundworm larvae from bitch to puppies. As a minimum this may include an annual examination by a veterinary surgeon, vaccination, and regular treatment for external and internal parasites. A draft plan is at Annex A.</i></p> <p><i>Adequate arrangements or plans should be available for the isolation of sick or injured dogs and their transport when necessary to and from the</i></p>

	<p><i>establishment for veterinary treatment.</i></p> <p><i>All medications should be used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions unless otherwise advised by a veterinary surgeon. They should be stored safely and securely, and only used within their expiry date.</i></p>
18. There must be procedures for monitoring the health status of new dogs introduced to the breeding establishment.	<p><i>A veterinary health record detailing identification and preventive treatments should be provided by the vendor. In breeding establishments where dogs are accommodated in kennels a quarantine area should be provided in which all new dogs are kept for 14 days to prevent any possible transmission of disease or infection to resident dogs. Extra human contact during this period is advisable. At the end of the quarantine period, introduction to the resident dogs should be controlled. Care should be taken in introducing dogs to existing groups of dogs in a domestic environment, to avoid stress to either new or resident animals. Where new dogs are introduced to groups in either domestic or kennel environments, behaviour should be observed for signs of aggression or fear.</i></p>
19. Dogs whose breeding career has ended must either be retained for the rest of their natural life, be responsibly re-homed or, as a last resort, euthanased by a veterinary surgeon. Dogs must be neutered prior to re-homing.	<p><i>Responsible re-homing should include an assessment of the adopter to ensure that they can provide a suitable home environment, and a requirement to return the dog if the adopter is unable to continue to care for it.</i></p>
<u>BREEDING AND REARING</u>	
20. All dogs and bitches must be at least one year old before they are mated.	<p><i>It is as important for male dogs as it is for bitches that they are physically and mentally mature before they are allowed to breed. Some breeds mature later and may need to be older and some inherited diseases are late onset. Consequently the decision about when to breed should be related to these factors. Some breed clubs may provide specific guidance.</i></p>
21. Bitches must not have litters too close together and must not have	<p><i>Bitches should not have litters less than 12 months apart. Pregnancy and</i></p>

more than four litters in their lifetime.	<i>lactation are a significant drain on metabolic resources and sufficient interval must be left to allow for full recovery after a litter.</i>
22. Bitches that have had two caesarean sections must not be bred from again.	<i>It is very likely that a bitch that has required a caesarean section will require surgery at a subsequent whelping. It is not in the welfare interests of the bitch to be bred from again.</i>
23. Breeders must take all reasonable steps to ensure that proposed parents are as distantly related as possible.	<i>Inbreeding is likely to increase the risk of producing puppies that are affected with inherited disorders. COI measures the degree to which any given dog is already inbred. For dogs registered with the Kennel Club COI's are available at MateSelect. Bitches may only be mated to a dog when the Coefficient of Inbreeding (COI) of the resulting puppies as measured from a five generation pedigree is lower than the breed average. www.the-kennel-club.org.uk/services/public/mateselect/Default.aspx Useful information is available on the Advisory Council website at www.dogadvisorycouncil.org.uk</i>
24. Individual dogs with proven health issues caused by over exaggeration of physical features must not be used in a breeding programme.	<i>Dogs with the most exaggerated conformations that may be associated with adverse welfare should not be bred from. This includes dogs that have required surgery to rectify an exaggerated conformation that has caused adverse welfare.</i>
25. Bitches must not be transported later than 49 days after mating and for 48 hours after whelping unless to a veterinary surgeon for treatment.	<i>The stress of transport is more likely to adversely affect welfare during this period.</i>
26. Bitches must be introduced to their whelping accommodation no later than eight weeks after mating, or sooner if signs of imminent whelping are shown.	<i>The bitch needs to get used to the whelping environment. Once separated from other dogs there must be increased social contact with humans. Increased human contact will also ensure that the bitch is closely observed prior to whelping.</i>
27. There must be a separate whelping pen or room for each bitch in which to whelp.	<i>Bitches can become protective of puppies at whelping and this may result in aggression. Care should be taken by staff in approaching or handling bitches during this period, in addition to other dogs being kept away.</i>

28. Each whelping pen must be constructed of easily cleanable materials. The area must be cleaned regularly. An area must be provided within the whelping area where the bitch can rest away from her puppies.	<i>Both the bitch and puppies are more susceptible to disease around the time of whelping and the routine use of appropriate disinfectant is necessary. In a domestic environment where a room is used, covering existing flooring such as carpet or floor boards to enable regular cleaning is acceptable. Where a whelping kennel is used it must be constructed to the same standard as general kennels.</i>
29. There must be a whelping bed with sides high enough to prevent new-born puppies from falling out. The bed must 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.	<i>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 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 until puppies are well enough developed to be able to move out of the bitch's way.</i>
30. The whelping area must be maintained at an adequate temperature.	<i>Temperatures should normally be maintained between 26°C and 32°C. Where heat is provided by a heat lamp or a gas device, precautions should be taken to avoid excessive heat or contact with any flame, and there should be adequate ventilation to prevent the build-up of Carbon Monoxide and other noxious gases or vapours. Alarms should be provided.</i>
31. Bitches must be constantly supervised during and immediately after whelping and records kept of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Time of birth and identification of each puppy; b. Puppies' sex and colour; c. Placentae passed; d. Any other significant events. 	<i>Accurate records are essential in the event of any difficulty. A paper record, a summary of which is transposed to the full veterinary record later, is acceptable. The person supervising must be aware of the signs of abnormal whelping.</i>
32. Bitches must be allowed a minimum of four periods a day for toileting and exercise away from their puppies.	<i>Bitches should be allowed out without contact with other dogs and for short periods from a few days after whelping.</i>
33. Puppies must be handled regularly from shortly after birth to habituate them to human contact and to examine them for any sign of	<i>Handling should consist of gently picking up and examining each puppy. This should be done at least twice daily. Care should be taken as bitches may be</i>

disease and to ensure they are feeding properly.	<i>anxious or potentially aggressive when puppies are approached.</i>
34. Records must be kept for all puppies and kept for 10 years detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Date of birth, sex, colour and any other identifying marks; b. Weight weekly until sold or at six months of age; c. All veterinary treatment. 	<i>Good records are essential to monitor puppies' health and development. A copy of the records should be given to the purchaser.</i>
35. Puppies must 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.	<i>Weaning should normally commence at 3-4 weeks old. The initial diet may be liquid progressing to solid food over the ensuing period.</i>
36. Puppies at weaning must initially be offered food five times a day. It must be ensured that each puppy takes the correct share of the food offered.	<i>Feeding five times a day at the start of weaning is necessary to allow adequate food intake and may be reduced to four times a day at about 6 weeks. Monitoring weight gain is important.</i>
37. Breeders must provide adequate socialisation and habituation from no later than 3 weeks through to point of sale.	<p><i>From early life (11 days onwards) puppies should be habituated to events likely to be encountered on homing to a domestic environment. This should include the sights and sounds in households, such as appliances, as well as differing surfaces on which to walk. Introduction to novel sights and sounds should be gradual so that puppies do not show a fearful response such as being startled or withdrawing. 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, should be introduced at a low volume. TV and radio may also be useful. An SOP for this purpose should be in place.</i></p> <p><i>Puppies should be introduced to a variety of people including adults of both sexes, children of different ages, and wearing a variety of clothing styles. Both adults and children should be used to interacting with dogs and their interaction should be calm and consistent such that the experience is positive for the puppy.</i></p>

	<i>Puppies must be provided with environmental enrichment by the provision of toys and a complex environment. Toys to chew and places to hide under and behind should be provided.</i>
Puppies must be maintained as a litter or with puppies of a similar age and size. However puppies must be separated from litter mates and the bitch for short periods from the age of six weeks. During periods of separation there must be human social contact.	<i>Puppies should be separated to habituate them prior to re-homing. Periods of separation should initially be very short, such that puppies do not show signs of distress, and the period of separation gradually increased.</i>
38. Puppies must be permanently identified and registered on a recognised database prior to sale by a person trained in the appropriate technique. The identification number must be shown on all documentation.	<i>Microchip is the preferred means of identification and should be implanted by a trained person³.</i>
39. Puppies must be examined by a veterinary surgeon prior to sale. Veterinary advice in the establishment health plan must include the routine for treating puppies' internal and external parasites and vaccination regime.	<i>The examination should be limited to a simple physical examination and should be recorded in the puppy's treatment record. Where vaccinations are undertaken a completed vaccination certificate should be provided. This examination should not preclude an examination by the purchaser's veterinary surgeon shortly after acquisition.</i>
<u>SALE</u>	
40. A register must be maintained and kept for 10 years of all puppies sold showing: a. The name and contact details of the purchaser; b. The puppy's identification number; c. The date of sale.	<i>Records may be an integral part of the breeders' records and may be kept manually or on computer.</i>
41. Puppies must not be sold before the age of 8 weeks unless a veterinary surgeon certifies that they are fit to be re-homed.	<i>Early sale should only be authorised when it is for the benefit of the puppy's health or welfare. There should be some assurance that the puppy's environment will be appropriate.</i>
42. Potential purchasers of puppies must be vetted to ensure that they will be able to provide a suitable home and that they are committed to	<i>The breeder should ask about the potential purchaser's lifestyle and availability of resources to properly care for the puppy for the whole of its life. A certificate from a veterinary surgeon who knows the purchaser may</i>

caring for the puppy for the whole of its life.	<i>be a useful means of monitoring.</i>
<p>43. The purchaser must be given a copy of all relevant records relating to the puppy including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The pedigree showing five generations including for cross-breeds when possible; b. Treatment records; c. Vaccination certificate when given; d. Veterinary health check results; e. Results of all health tests on both parents and the puppy where appropriate; f. Microchip (or other permanent identification) certificate; g. Kennel Club or other registration certificate. 	<i>These should form an integral element of the 'puppy pack'.</i>
<p>44. The breeder must also supply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The puppy's feeding regime with sufficient of the food for 5 days; b. Temporary health insurance; c. Advice on training and socialisation; d. Advice on special care such as grooming where appropriate; e. A puppy contract; f. Breeder's contact details. 	<p><i>A puppy contract is available from the BVA AWF and RSPCA. Advice on training and socialisation should be up to date and welfare compatible, and should not include information on outdated concepts such as 'status reduction' nor advice to use punitive or coercive training techniques.</i></p> <p><i>At the time of sale, the breeder should demonstrate willingness to accept back, or assist in re-homing, any dogs bred and sold, by the breeder, to the purchaser, which can no longer be cared for by the purchaser.</i></p>
<u>MANAGEMENT</u>	
<p>45. Numbers of staff must be appropriate for the breed/type and number of dogs being bred. Numbers must be sufficient to provide the level of care set out in paragraphs 4, 10, 12, 14, 17, 32, 33, 34, 38, 39, 40, 41, 44, and 47.</p>	<p><i>Owing to the significant variation in workload between breeds and numbers of litters it is not possible to set a minimum staff:dog ratio. Establishing the number of staff required will require an assessment of the conditions at the establishment. In domestic environments, it is advisable for either other members of the household, or dog sitters to be provided with guidance notes in regard to general day to day care - feeding, grooming, cleaning, exercise and compatibility issues - especially where several dogs, or breeds of dog, are involved.</i></p>

46. Where staff is employed there must be an induction and training SOP. There must be some continuation training.	<i>This should detail exactly what members of staff are required to do with all the dogs on site and provide sufficient knowledge to allow the staff to undertake their duties competently. In domestic environments the daily routine referred to above will be appropriate.</i>
47. Where the number of dogs is large enough to require staff other than the immediate family of the owner (generally spouse) to be used for their care, at least one member of staff must be a suitably qualified or experienced person.	<i>There are a number of nationally recognised relevant qualifications available.</i>
48. Where staff is employed, there must be separate washing, toilet and eating facilities.	<i>Staff should not be using areas used for preparing dog's food for their own purposes. In a domestic situation, the use of the normal household facilities is suitable with appropriate hygiene measures in place.</i>

¹ Sample SOPs are available on the Advisory Council website www.dogadvisorycouncil.org.uk

² Useful advice is available on the Advisory Council website www.dogadvisorycouncil.org.uk The Kennel Club 'mate select' may also provide advice.

³ Trained person is a veterinary surgeon, veterinary nurse or a person trained to the Microchip Advisory Group standard available in the Code of Practice at www.bsava.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=4gFweQEUACU%3d&tabid=154&mid=3021