**Guidance on specific conditions – breeding dogs**

**1. Definitions**

*“dogs”* includes breeding bitches and male dogs,

*“exercise area”* means a secure area where dogs may exercise and play,

*“puppy”* means a dog aged less than 6 months,

*“prospective purchaser”* means a person who seeks to purchase a puppy,

*“sleeping area”* means a fully-enclosed indoor area in which a dog can rest and sleep,

*“breeding”* when used in the context of *“breeding dog”* means any adult dog intended to be used, being used or that has been used for the purposes of producing offspring.

**2. Advertisements and sales**

***Condition: A dog must not be advertised or offered for sale—***

***a) which was not bred by the licence holder,***

***b) from any place other than the premises where it was born and reared under the licence,***

***unless the dog is over the age of 12 months and was procured by the licence holder for breeding purposes.***

**Guidance:**

The steps from birth to sale must be clear, and the licensing authority must be shown how and where puppies are bred, born, reared and kept until sale. Local authorities should also see what potential buyers are shown including the details of mating.

To demonstrate that they are the breeder, the licence holder’s involvement in the complete reproductive process from conception and gestation to birth must be evident. Where requested, local authority inspectors must be shown details of the mating(s) and both parents.

Licence holders may provide other supporting evidence such as photographs, microchip and veterinary records to show that they housed and cared for the pups and their mother for the first 8 weeks of its life.

***Condition: Any advertisement for the sale of a dog must—***

***a) include the number of the licence holder’s licence,***

***b) specify the local authority that issued the licence,***

***c) include a recognisable photograph of the dog being advertised, and***

***d) display the age of the dog being advertised.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities should ensure that the licence holder understands that “any advertisement” includes ads placed on social media platforms, ad sites like Gumtree, Pets4Homes etc, and any other web site on which the licence holder advertises animals for sale to the public.

The ad must include a recognisable photograph of the animal for sale and state its age. Local authorities should take all practicable steps to verify that ads posted by the licence holder meet these requirements and take steps to ensure compliance where it becomes clear that this condition of licence is not being met.

***Condition: Any equipment and accessories being sold with a dog must be suitable for it.***

**Guidance:**

Inspections undertaken by local authorities should, as far as possible, confirm that licenced breeders only supply equipment and accessories that are designed for and are suitable for the puppies (or dogs) being sold.

***Condition: The purchaser must be informed of the age, sex and veterinary record of the dog being sold.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities should ensure that the licence holder provides this information as a minimum for any puppy sold.

***Condition: No puppy aged under 8 weeks may be—***

***(a) sold, or***

***(b) permanently separated from its biological mother.***

***Condition: A puppy may only be shown to a prospective purchaser if it is together with its biological mother.***

***Condition: The conditions regarding permanent separation from the biological mother (para. 2(5)(b) of schedule 6) and only showing a puppy to a prospective purchaser if together with its biological mother (para. 2(6) of schedule 6) do not apply in relation to a puppy if such separation is necessary for the health or welfare of the puppy, the other puppies in the litter or its biological mother or if the puppy’s biological mother is deceased.***

**Guidance:**

Puppies must remain with their mother for the first eight weeks of life unless the mother dies or there is a health risk to the puppy or its littermates or the mother from remaining with her. Where necessary, a veterinarian may certify that it is in the best interests of the animal to be removed earlier, **but it must not be sold**. The local authority should be satisfied that licence holders retain records that are sufficient to demonstrate compliance with these conditions.

If during any inspection of the premises puppies are present, inspectors should request sight of the mother and where there is any doubt about the bitch being the mother relevant records should be requested to confirm the relationship of the pups and bitch.

Where an inspector finds a puppy less than 8 weeks old that has been separated from its mother, they must take steps to determine why and any evidence provided to justify the separation should be supported by veterinary advice.

When puppies are being viewed by a prospective purchaser licence holders should ensure that such viewings are supervised to protect the welfare of the pups and their mother.

***Condition: A dog may only be sold if the name, and an address, of the licence holder are disclosed to the purchaser.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities should ensure that the holder of a dog breeding licence understands this condition of licence. It is recommended that local authorities establish upfront with the breeder the address that will be used and where this differs from the address on which the licensable activity is undertaken take the necessary steps to confirm that the address given is legitimate. Ideally, local authorities should seek to establish the association between the address given and the licence holder.

**3. Number of breeding bitches and litters produced**

***Condition: The number of breeding bitches kept in relation to the licensable activity of breeding dogs at any time on the premises specified in the licence and on which the licensable activity is carried on must not exceed the maximum number specified by the local authority in the licence.***

**Guidance:**

Regulation 6(6)(b) of the Regulations requires local authorities to specify in any breeding licence granted the maximum number of breeding bitches that can be kept on the premises for the licensable activity. During any inspection local authorities should determine as far as possible that the licence holder is complying with this condition and where more bitches are found on site than are permitted by licence action must be taken to establish the status of any additional bitches and whether they are or have been used for breeding purposes (again as far as this is possible). Veterinary advice should be sought where this is considered necessary.

***Condition: The number of litters produced on the premises during each consecutive 12 month period commencing with the date on which the licence was granted or, as the case may be, renewed must not exceed the maximum number of breeding bitches specified in the licence.***

**Guidance:**

Records should be thoroughly checked during any local authority inspection to ensure that the number of litters produced in the preceding 12 month period correlates with the maximum number of breeding bitches permitted under licence. Action must be taken where it is evident that more litters of pups have been bred than is permitted based on bitch numbers (remember, the breeder’s licence restricts each bitch to a maximum of one litter in a 12-month period).

**4. Suitable environment**

***Condition: Each dog must have access to a clean, dry and warm sleeping area with comfortable bedding and which is free from draughts and an exercise area.***

**Guidance:**

Dogs kept in domestic premises for the licensable activity should have access to more than one room, a separate sleeping location, outdoor access for toileting as needed and be exercised at least twice daily.

Dogs kept by the licence holder in a kennel environment must have an adjoining run or be given access to an outside secure area where they can exercise. Kennels must be secure, protect the dogs from weather and provide a comfortable and warm sleeping area. Each dog must have sufficient space within its enclosure to lie down fully stretched out without coming into contact with another dog. Ideally, the design and layout of accommodation should be such that dogs can control visual contact with their surroundings and animals in other enclosures.

***Condition: Each dog must be provided with sufficient space to—***

***a) stand upright on its hind legs,***

***b) lie down fully stretched out,***

***c) wag its tail,***

***d) walk, and***

***e) turn around,***

***without touching another dog or the walls of the sleeping area.***

**Guidance:**

The minimum acceptable kennel/enclosure sizes for breeding dogs are as set out in Annex I. **Bitches with a litter of pups should have an enclosure size double that stated for its normal weight range.**

***Condition: The exercise area must not be used as a sleeping area unless the dog chooses to do so.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities need only confirm that both a separate sleeping area and exercise area are provided for each dog kept for the licensable activity and that these meet the needs of the dogs.

***Condition: There must be a separate whelping area for each breeding bitch to whelp in which contains a suitable bed for whelping.***

**Guidance:**

There must be a whelping bed raised off the floor and with sides high enough to prevent new born puppies from falling out. The bed must contain sufficient 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 impervious material and must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between litters.

Bitches must be moved to their whelping accommodation 60 days after mating or sooner if signs of imminent whelping are shown.

There should be access to the whelping area without disturbing other dogs.

Where a bitch is whelped in a domestic environment it is acceptable for a temporary disposable covering to be used.

***Condition: Each whelping area must be maintained at an appropriate temperature and include an area which allows the breeding bitch to move away from heat spots and from her young if she chooses to do so.***

**Guidance:**

Licence holders must be able to demonstrate that the whelping area is capable of being maintained within a temperature range of 18°C – 24°C, with provision for higher temperatures in a whelping box for the first two weeks after puppies are born if appropriate. Monitoring of the temperature in the whelping area must be in place. The whelping area must be designed to allow the bitch and growing pups to move away from areas that are either too warm or too cold.

***Condition: Each dog must be provided with constant access to a sleeping area.***

**Guidance:**

Each dog kept for the licensable activity must have access to a safe and comfortable sleeping area where it can rest protected from the weather. The sleeping area must also protect the dog from temperature extremes.

***Condition: A separate bed or area with bedding must be provided for each adult dog.***

**Guidance:**

Clean and dry beds or bedding material must be provided for each dog. Any bedding material used must clearly be non-toxic, be absorbent, non-allergenic and padded so not to cause injury.

Bedding material must be cleaned or disposed of in accordance with the documented cleaning and disinfection procedure.

The bed must be easy to clean and disinfect, sited away from draughts and free from hazards. Bedding material must be non‐irritant and dry and used in sufficient amounts to provide the necessary comfort and warmth required.

***Condition: No puppy aged under 8 weeks may be transported without its biological mother except—***

***(a) if a veterinary surgeon agrees for health or welfare reasons that it may be so transported, or***

***(b) in an emergency.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities should encourage licence holders to record the detail of any such instance where it is necessary to transport a puppy under 8 weeks old without its mother, including any agreement from a veterinary surgeon that such transportation should take place. For the avoidance of doubt, the term emergency includes transporting or moving a puppy to a place of safety due to it being seized due to welfare concerns and to protect its welfare.

***Condition: No pregnant breeding bitch may be transported later than 54 days after the date of successful mating or breeding procedure except to a veterinary surgeon.***

**Guidance:**

Licence holders should make all reasonable efforts to ensure that where veterinary advice is needed the vet visits the premises on which the pregnant bitch is kept rather than transporting the bitch to the vet.

A pregnant breeding bitch can of course still be transported if it has been seized due to welfare concerns and in order to safeguard its welfare.

***Condition: No breeding bitch may be transported earlier than 48 hours after whelping except to a veterinary surgeon where it is not otherwise practicable or appropriate for that person to attend to the bitch.***

**Guidance:**

All efforts should be made to have the veterinary surgeon attend the premises where the bitch is located rather than transporting the dog to the veterinary surgery, unless the circumstances require urgent transportation to a veterinarian.

A breeding bitch can of course still be transported earlier than 48 hours after whelping if it has been seized due to welfare concerns and in order to safeguard its welfare.

**5. Suitable diet**

***Condition: Each puppy must be provided with the opportunity to start weaning as soon as it is capable of ingesting feed on its own.***

***Condition: Each adult dog must be provided with feed appropriate to its needs.***

**Guidance:**

Licence holders should have appropriate feeding plans in place for both breeding bitches and any pups produced. Where advised by a veterinary surgeon, dietary supplements should be given.

***Condition: Each puppy must be provided with feed appropriate for its stage of development.***

***Condition: Reasonable efforts must be made so that each puppy ingests the correct share of the feed provided.***

**Guidance:**

Licence holders must have a feeding plan in place that ensures puppies are being fed a diet appropriate for their age. All reasonable efforts should be made by the licence holder to supervise feeding to ensure that less dominant or smaller pups get their allocated share of the food. Where it is evident that a pup is not eating as expected or is struggling to compete for its share, the licence holder must take steps to address this.

**6. Monitoring of behaviour, exercise and training**

***Condition: The licence holder must implement and be able to demonstrate use of a documented socialisation and habituation programme for the puppies.***

**Guidance:**

The licence holder must have in place an adequate programme to socialise puppies and prepare them for life in the environment in which they are going to live. Procedures must be available so that all staff know how to appropriately socialise puppies.

Where bitches are anxious or aggressive when puppies are approached, this process should be gradual.

Puppies must be handled regularly from shortly after birth for short periods (e.g. gently picking up and examining) to habituate them to human contact and to examine them for any sign of disease and to ensure they are feeding properly.

Toilet training of puppies should be started before sale.

***Condition: All puppies must be given suitable and adequate opportunities to—***

***(a) learn how to interact with people, dogs and other animals where such interaction benefits their welfare, and***

***(b) become habituated to noises, objects and activities associated with a domestic environment.***

**Guidance:**

See guidance directly above regarding a socialisation and habituation programme for puppies.

***Condition: Each dog must be provided with toys or feeding enrichment (or both) unless advised otherwise by a veterinary surgeon.***

**Guidance:**

Food provision can be used to enhance enrichment, for example through the use of devices increasing the time and effort taken to access food (e.g. puzzle feeders, activity balls, stuffed rubber toys etc).

Where dogs are kept in pairs or larger groups, more devices must be available than the number of dogs and use should ideally be supervised carefully to identify where adverse behaviour occurs.

Dogs which show adverse behaviour associated with feeding, or when provided with food based enrichment, must be separated from other dogs prior to feeding.

***Condition: All adult dogs must be exercised at least twice daily away from their sleeping area unless advised otherwise by a veterinary surgeon.***

**Guidance:**

There are various options for exercise – a secure exercise space, on-lead walks etc. Regardless of the approach taken to exercise, licence holders must ensure that dogs receive adequate exercise time.

Pregnant and lactating bitches will require frequent opportunity to toilet with short gentle exercise. Consideration must be given to bitches within 48 hours of birth to access short toilet breaks.

***Condition: Where a veterinary surgeon has advised against exercising a dog, the dog must be provided with alternative forms of mental stimulation or environmental enrichment.***

**Guidance:**

Walks must be replaced with two extra periods of human interaction during the day which may include grooming and/or toys/play. Ideally any toys used during this period should be rotated to prevent boredom, provide stimulation and minimise stress. Toys should be appropriate for the breed and size of dog and damaged toys must be replaced to protect the welfare of the animal.

***Condition: All adult dogs must have at least daily opportunities to interact with people where such interaction benefits their welfare.***

**Guidance:**

Licence holders must exercise, or provide dogs with opportunities for exercise, at least twice daily. These periods of exercise should also be used to interact with the dogs where such interaction is welcomed by the dog and benefits its overall welfare. Where possible, dogs should have the opportunity for interaction with more than one person where such opportunities arise. Ideally, further interaction will occur periodically throughout the day.

**7. Housing with or apart from other dogs**

***Condition: Each adult dog must be provided with opportunities for social contact with other dogs where such contact benefits the dog’s welfare.***

**Guidance:**

Dogs must not routinely be kept separate from other dogs where possible. Clearly where a particular dog is the target of more dominant dogs, steps must be taken to address the situation. Mothers and puppies, must be kept together in a kennel area of acceptable size (see Annex I) for their sole occupancy.

Suitable facilities must be available to securely separate male dogs from bitches in season to avoid frustration.

***Condition: Each adult dog must be given suitable and adequate opportunities to become habituated to handling by people.***

**Guidance:**

See guidance notes above on socialisation and habituation.

***Condition: There must be an area within each sleeping area in which dogs can avoid seeing people and other dogs outside the sleeping area if they so choose.***

**Guidance:**

The design and layout of kennels must allow dogs to be able to control their visual access to surroundings and dogs in other kennels. Ideally, the layout should also minimise the number of dogs that staff disturb when removing any individual dog and ensure the safety of staff when passing other dogs.

There must be facility for a dog to be able to hide to avoid visual contact with other dogs.

**8. Protection from suffering, injury and disease**

***Condition: All dogs for sale must be in good health.***

**Guidance:**

Licence holders must not knowingly sell any animal that is not fit, healthy or, where applicable, socialised. Where it is clear that an animal that is for sale is not in good physical or mental health it must be removed from sale and provided with appropriate care, including veterinary care where necessary, until it is considered fit for sale. In order to meet this licence obligation the licence holder and any staff employed must be adequately trained and experienced enough to identify when a puppy is unsuitable for sale due to ill-health, injury or another form of suffering. Local authorities should therefore be satisfied that the licence holder has sufficient experience and knowledge to identify such animals and know the remedial action that should be taken. Procedures should be in place to deal with ill and injured animals.

***Condition: Any dog with a condition which materially affects, or is likely to materially affect, its quality of life must not be—***

***a) transferred in ownership,***

***b) offered for sale, or***

***c) moved from the premises specified in the licence and on which the licensable activity is carried on, other than to an isolation facility or veterinary care facility where the animal is in need of isolation or treatment,***

***until it has recovered, ceased to require isolation or, where there is no need for the animal to be isolated, been certified by a veterinary surgeon as being in a condition that is suitable for such transfer, sale or movement.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities should be satisfied that the licence holder has provision on the licenced premises or at another nearby suitable facility to isolate any animal with a condition that is likely to be affecting its quality of life, either short-term or long-term. If the animal is to remain on the licenced premises it should be located in a suitably quiet and safe part of the premises which is readily accessible to allow for regular monitoring of its condition. Veterinary opinion should be sought where necessary, and must be sought, where it is clear that the animals condition is long-term or unlikely to improve. If the animal requires to be transported to a veterinary facility then it should be done in a manner that minimises the stress on the animal.

***Condition: The licence holder must ensure that no bitch—***

***a) is mated or undergoes a breeding procedure if aged less than 12 months,***

***b) gives birth to more than one litter of puppies in a 12-month period,***

***c) gives birth to more than 6 litters of puppies in her lifetime,***

***d) is mated or undergoes a breeding procedure if she has had***

 ***- two litters delivered by caesarean section, or***

 ***- one litter delivered by caesarean section if the need for the caesarean section was due to the conformation of the bitch or her offspring.***

***e) is mated or undergoes a breeding procedure if aged 8 or more years.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities must be satisfied that any breeding programme implemented by the licence holder is fully compliant with the above conditions. The conditions set out above are particularly significant in terms of protecting the welfare of breeding bitches and local authorities should ensure that relevant records are thoroughly inspected during any inspection to confirm compliance.

***Condition: Each puppy must be microchipped and registered to the licence holder before it is sold.***

**Guidance:**

It is the responsibility of the breeder to get the dog microchipped by a suitably qualified person, as it must be done no later than eight weeks after birth and it is not possible to rehome before eight weeks. Any health exemptions from microchipping must be supported by a veterinary certificate. The microchip details must be recorded on a compliant database.

The breeder must be registered as the first keeper.

***Condition: No dog may be kept for breeding if it can reasonably be expected, on the basis of its genotype, conformation, behaviour or state of health, that breeding from it could have a detrimental effect on its health or welfare or the health or welfare of its offspring.***

**Guidance:**

Licence holders should take all reasonable steps to ensure that dogs to be used for breeding are of good physical and genetic health, of acceptable temperament and fit for function (e.g. be able to see, breathe normally, and be physically fit and able to exercise freely). Appropriate health screening of breeding dogs, for example in accordance with Kennel Club recommendations, should be in place and be relevant to the breed.

The Kennel Club operate a scheme called “Breed Watch”, which serves as an 'early warning system' to identify points of concern for individual breeds. Breed Watch provides information about specific health concerns to anyone involved in the world of dogs. The Breed Watch guidance can be found here: <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/events-and-activities/dog-showing/judging-dog-shows/breed-watch/>

All the breeds of dog recognised by the Kennel Club are placed into either category 1, 2 or 3. Breeds in category 3 are deemed to be of highest potential concern. The Kennel Club has highlighted a number of breeds as category 3 breeds on Breed Watch, as these breeds have been considered to be more susceptible to developing specific health conditions associated with exaggerated conformation: in particular problems that involve the eyes, skin, dentition, movement and respiratory function (breathing).

Where a local authority receives an application from a breeder wishing to breed a category 3 breed then it should take all reasonable steps to confirm that the applicant has demonstrable knowledge and experience of breeding the breed concerned. The local authority should also seek to confirm that the breeder implements robust selection and health screening procedures and that these are sufficient to minimise the risk of extreme conformations in any offspring produced. Local authorities should seek veterinary advice/input to confirm this where necessary.

Currently, the category 3 listed breeds are:

•             Bloodhound

•             Bulldog

•             Dogue de Bordeaux

•             German Shepherd Dog

•             Mastiff

•             Neapolitan Mastiff

•             Pekingese

•             Pug

•             St. Bernard

Outside of Kennel Club recognised breeds, breeding of so called “Teacup” dogs is likely to amount to a breach of the above licence condition. The fact that an applicant is specifically seeking to breed such dogs may lead to the conclusion that the application should be refused on the basis that the above licence condition is unlikely to be met. The Kennel Club oppose the breeding of “Teacup” dogs as the pups produced have an increased risk of suffering serious health problems as they are generally bred from the runts of litters to produce a dog that is as small as possible. A breeder who genuinely cares for the welfare and health of the dogs they breed would be very unlikely to engage in such breeding practices and any application received from a breeder wishing to breed such dogs should be treated with caution.

Licence holders must be aware of any health risks that may be specific to the breed of dog they wish to breed. Where appropriate veterinary advice on the suitability of an animal for breeding must be sought. Licence holders must not breed from animals that show fear or aggression.

Dogs that have required surgery to rectify a conformation that has caused adverse welfare, or requires lifelong medication, **must not** be bred from.

The prospective purchaser of a puppy from a category 3 breed should ideally be provided with written guidance on any relevant conformation issues for the breed and how to manage them in the relevant literature handed over with each sale.

***Condition: Each dog must be checked in person at least two times per day.***

**Guidance:**

This may be undertaken by the licence holder when the dogs are being walked. However, the checks should be thorough and include checking ears, eyes and paws and the dogs overall condition and temperament.

***Condition: Breeding bitches must be adequately supervised during whelping and the licence holder must keep a record of—***

***(a) the date of birth of each puppy,***

***(b) each puppy’s sex and colour,***

***(c) the number of puppies in the litter, and***

***(d) any other significant events.***

**Guidance:**

During inspections, local authorities must ensure that the licence holder is recording all the required information required in respect to the birth of each puppy and the litter. Significant events could include whether any pups were stillborn, under-developed or human assistance being required during the birth due to the position of a puppy or the puppy’s size. Any veterinary input required, be it advice or hands-on assistance, should be recorded.

***Condition: The licence holder must keep a record of each puppy sale including—***

***(a) the microchip number of the puppy,***

***(b) the date of the sale, and***

***(c) the age of the puppy on that date.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities during any inspection must ensure that the licence holder is accurately recording and retaining this information. Licence holders should be encouraged to also record any other information of significance for any puppy sold.

***Condition: The licence holder must keep a record of the following in relation to each breeding dog—***

***(a) its name,***

***(b) its sex,***

***(c) its microchip and database details,***

***(d) its date of birth,***

***(e) the postal address where it normally resides,***

***(f) its breed or type,***

***(g) the date or dates of any matings and breeding procedures (whether or not any such mating or procedure is successful),***

***(h) details of its biological parents,***

***(i) details of any veterinary treatment it has received, and***

***(j) the date and cause of its death (where applicable).***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities must during any inspection undertaken confirm that this information is being accurately recorded by the licence holder. The records must be made available to an inspector upon request.

***Condition: The licence holder must also keep a record of the following in relation to each breeding bitch—***

***(a) the number of matings and breeding procedures,***

***(b) its age at the time of each mating and breeding procedure,***

***(c) the total number of its litters,***

***(d) the date or dates on which it has given birth, and***

***(e) the caesarean sections it has had, if any, and their cause.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities must during any inspection undertaken confirm that this information is being accurately recorded by the licence holder. The records must be made available to an inspector upon request.

***Condition: Any preventative healthcare plan agreed with the veterinary surgeon with whom the licence holder has registered under the condition specified in paragraph 9(8) of the general conditions must be implemented.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities must, as far as practicably possible, confirm that any preventative healthcare plan in place and that was agreed with the breeder’s veterinary surgeon is being implemented. More generally, breeders should, as a minimum, be expected to have a healthcare plan that covers vaccinations, parasite control (internal and external) and body weight/conditioning monitoring.

***Condition: The licence holder must keep a record of any preventative or curative healthcare (or both) given to each dog.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities must during any inspection undertaken confirm that this information is being accurately recorded by the licence holder. The records must be made available to an inspector upon request.

***Condition: Where any other activity involving animals is undertaken on the premises on which the licensable activity of breeding dogs is carried on, it must be kept entirely separate from the area where that licensable activity is carried on.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities must be satisfied that where other activities involving animals are being conducted on the premises used for dog breeding they are undertaken in a separate area or building. Local authorities should, where possible, seek to confirm the nature of the other activity and whether it is an activity that requires to be undertaken under licence and, if so, whether the operator is licenced.