

Licensed Third Party Puppy Vending in Great Britain

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INTRODUCTION

In November 2015, Canine Action UK issued Freedom of Information requests to all 379 Local Authorities in England, Wales and Scotland, asking for information relating to pet shops that were licensed to sell puppies.

We have had a 99% response rate to our enquiry (three local authorities have not responded) and this has enabled us to build a very detailed picture of licensed third party puppy vending in Great Britain during the last three years.

We wanted to primarily identify all premises selling puppies which hold pet shop licences and establish whether these were retail or non-retail premises. We also wanted to:

- **Ascertain the scale of the licensed third party puppy trade in Great Britain.**
- **Examine the inspection processes that justify the issuing of the licenses.**
- **Look at the supply chain, including where puppies are being sourced from and transportation links.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Freedom of Information survey has revealed a detailed picture of the licensed third party trade of puppies in Great Britain. Key findings are:

- 61 (16%) of Local Authorities licence pet shops to sell puppies under the criteria of the Pet Animals Act 1951.
- 14 (4%) of Local Authorities have more than one pet shop licensed to sell puppies.
- Only 38% of pet shop licences are issued to retail premises. 21% of pet shop licences are held by dealers (selling bought in puppies from non-retail premises) but 41% are granted to hybrid sellers/vendors (licensed breeders selling bought in puppies alongside those bred on site).
- The sale of puppies through non-retail licensed pet shops is a growing problem. Nine new licences permitting the sale of puppies have been granted in the last three years - five to dealers and four to hybrid sellers.
- As many as 80,000 puppies may be sold each year through licensed pet shops in Great Britain.
- Non-retail pet shops are on average permitted to stock more than twice the number of puppies permitted in retail pet shops.
- Almost a quarter of pet shop licences place no restriction on the number of puppies that may be stocked. This includes licences for large scale hybrid sellers/vendors and puppy 'supermarkets'.
- It is estimated that fewer than 12% of pet shops are importing puppies from outside the UK.
- Almost 70% of local authorities did not know where the pet shops were obtaining puppies from.
- About two thirds of local authorities are not inspecting premises against the latest (2013) model conditions, including those licensing some of the largest puppy vendors in the UK.
- Licensed establishments involved in the breeding and sale of dogs are unlikely to be assessed by officers with specialist knowledge of the species.
- More than half of the licensees did not hold any formal qualification in animal care and even where the licence conditions required new applicants to obtain a qualification, some authorities deemed this unnecessary as only one species was being sold.

- Vendors are not obliged to maintain a level of continuous professional development.
- 40% of premises do not have full inspection reports on file and almost 20% have no written record of inspection assessments.
- 31% of the full inspection reports had fields left blank – presumably to avoid recording a negative response. This was also frequently observed on breeding establishment inspection reports.
- Breaches of licence conditions were noted on 14% of inspection reports.
- Where the number of breeding bitches on the premises exceeded the number permitted in hybrid sellers' breeding licences, this seemed to be overlooked.
- Issues with record keeping were noted on 19% of inspection reports, in some cases on successive visits.
- Acclimatisation periods for puppies varied between 48 hours and 10 days, but the most common were either 48 hours or 7 days. Puppy 'brokers' who bought in puppies and sold them on to other pet shops were generally only required to hold puppies for 48 hours.
- Acclimatisation, though necessary for third party vending, will inevitably have some negative consequences that would not have arisen with a puppy sold directly from the breeder. The process of acclimatisation itself is therefore 'harmful'.
- The websites of hybrid sellers/vendors partially or completely conceal the pet shop side of the business in almost all cases, leading consumers to believe they are buying directly from the breeder.
- More than half of pet shops had complaints relating to the sale of puppies made against them and 41% of premises had multiple complaints recorded.
- 29% of vendors had complaints relating to sick puppies recorded – including puppies that had died soon after purchase, and 26% of vendors had complaints relating to the welfare of puppies recorded.
- Where diseases such as parvo virus have been reported, the usual action recorded was to visit the premises and make a visual assessment of the health of puppies on sale. Physical examinations of puppies do not seem to take place and no laboratory testing to confirm the presence or absence of disease was ever reported.
- No centralised database exists to record complaints or problems with vendors. Owners may complain to different organisations or just to the vendor. Therefore, complaints reported to local authorities are only likely to be the tip of the iceberg and should be regarded as an indication rather than the extent of problems.
- Local authorities have no statutory duty to enforce the Animal Welfare Act 2006 so it is rarely mentioned in licence conditions/inspections. Where it has been included, it appears that only 'lip service' has been made to the requirements.
- Although retail outlets on average sell fewer puppies than non-retail outlets, they have particular issues, including puppies being left unattended for long periods when the shop is closed; puppies that are stressed due to overstimulation and impulse purchasing.
- 68% of local authorities were unable to say if the licence holder held an Authorised Transporter certificate, even though the local authority is the body responsible for enforcing the Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006.

- The average fee charged for licensing a pet shop selling puppies was £155.33. This is unlikely to cover the cost of multiple visits where required or further formal enforcement action. Even the highest licence fee (£499) would be unlikely to offset the cost of a prosecution.
- While most local authorities were efficient at providing the requested information, some authorities initially refused to release details, even though these establishments are operating as businesses.
- Where puppies are sold through third parties in particular and on a commercial scale in general, issues may arise both from encouraging impulse purchasing/not refusing sales to unsuitable homes and with unsold puppies. There is no duty to ensure that puppies are bred and sold responsibly.
- Breeding establishments supplying pet shops tend to have more breeding bitches than those selling directly to the public and there is a correlation between the number of breeding bitches and welfare standards.
- There is reluctance for breeders to identify puppies sold via third party vendors.
- The location of a breeding establishment does not appear to be a barrier to private sales.

Licensing is regarded as a tool to protect animal welfare and consumers by ensuring that basic minimum standards are complied with. However, our study has shown that it is ineffective on both counts. The regulation itself is inadequate; it also has tremendous variation in application and enforcement. There is almost no deterrent for non-compliance and once granted, a licence may even serve to protect the licensee. We do not believe that the licensing system as it currently functions is fit for purpose. Rather than amending the basic parameters, a radical rethink of the entire process is required towards a system which incentivises the highest standards and will ensure that puppies are bred and reared to meet the expectations of those purchasing them.

Puppy buyers want to be able to confidently buy a puppy that has the best possible chance of being a happy and healthy companion. Businesses that sell puppies as family companions should have a legal duty to ensure *as far as possible* that the animals they are producing are fit for that purpose.

There is no way that selling puppies through licensed pet shops can meet this objective, because selling puppies from premises other than where they were born has an inherently negative impact on their welfare that cannot be neutralised.

NUMBER OF LICENSED PET SHOPS TRADING IN PUPPIES IN GB

Prior to this survey, information on the scale of the licensed third party puppy trade was very limited. The Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association conducted a Freedom of Information Request into Pet Shop Licensing in 2014 and identified 92 premises that were permitted to sell dogs. Our own investigations and those of other campaign groups and welfare organisations have highlighted that these premises vary considerably in scale and type so we sought to drill down beyond these basic figures.

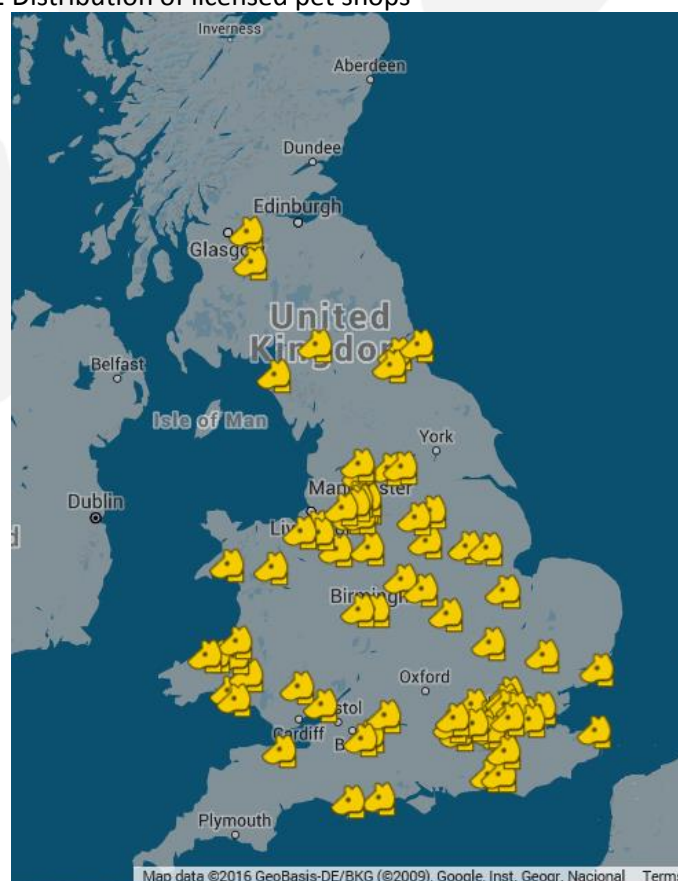
- 96 pet shop licenses permitted the sale of dogs in 2015, which is a slight increase on OATA's findings. 16 of these licenses have been discounted from our analysis for the following reasons:
 - Four were registered charities and as such are not believed to require licensing as their activities are not commercial. (One has since changed location and is no longer licensed.)
 - Six (all retail premises) are not known to have sold puppies during 2015 and the permitted species list appears to be historical.
 - Four have closed/not relicensed (one of these has resulted in a successful prosecution).
 - One is currently under investigation and no details were obtainable. It is not believed to be trading.
 - One is a second premise that trains security dogs so not a genuine pet shop.

- 80 premises with pet shop licenses permitting the sale of dogs (puppies) are currently operating under the criteria of the Pet Animals Act 1951 i.e. operating as a business selling animals as pets. This is approximately 3.4% of all licensed pet shops
- 61 (16%) of Local Authorities licence pet shops to sell puppies under the criteria of the Pet Animals Act 1951.
- 14 (4%) of Local Authorities have more than one pet shop licensed to sell puppies. The Local Authority with the largest number of licensed pet shops selling puppies is Ceredigion, which has four.

Fig 1. Number of pet shops licensed by Local Authorities

NO. OF LICENSED PET SHOPS	NO. OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES
1	47
2	10
3	3
4	1

Fig. 2 Distribution of licensed pet shops



TYPES OF PET SHOP

The OATA Report states that 4.7% of pet shops were in private dwellings. Our own investigations have found that the types of premises which sell puppies under pet shop licenses vary tremendously and that simply classifying them into retail or private dwellings was insufficient to cover this variation. Rather than attempting to categorise the

building type, we examined the type of activities that were being carried out. The Pet Industry Federation (PIF) provided its definition of a retail pet shop in November 2014:

“A commercial retail premises (shop or store) where business rates are chargeable, which serves as a place of exhibition, which enables the public to see and purchase pets and/or pet-related goods and which is open and visible for public scrutiny at least during working hours. In addition, with the introduction of the internet, PRA’s membership definition has been amended to include online retailers that sell pet-related goods (no pets).”

We found that of the 80 currently trading licensed pet shops, only 30 **(38%) are retail premises**. Almost all of these are selling dogs alongside other species but two are ‘puppy superstores’ that exclusively sell puppies from retail premises. (PIF has indicated to us that these two establishments would not be accepted for membership of their Pet Retailers’ Association.)

One establishment operates as a ‘petting zoo’ but sells puppies alongside other domestic pets such as rabbits and guinea pigs. This has not been included within the retail definition as it operates as a farm rather than a shop or store; although it would appear to meet PIF’s other criteria. (We classified this establishment as a dealer – see below)

We found that 17 of licensed pet ‘shops’ **(21%) are dealers** (buying in puppies to sell from non-retail premises) and 14 of these, **(82%) sell from residential properties**. This is highly misleading for purchasers as the premises are not perceived to be shops and owners often believe they are purchasing from a breeder as it appears the vendor is selling from a home environment. One of these dealers has applied for a dog breeding licence, following a growing trend.

The majority of pet shop licenses **33 (41%) have been granted to premises which also hold dog breeding licences**. In all cases they are purchasing puppies in from other breeders to sell alongside those they have bred themselves. For this reason, we describe these establishments as hybrid sellers. Three of these also have boarding licences and five act as brokers (selling puppies to other pet shops). The number of hybrid sellers appears to be increasing and the risk posed by these establishments, both in terms of the potential for misleading consumers and spread of disease is highly significant. All of the four pet shop licences granted by Ceredigion Council to sell puppies are held by hybrid sellers.

This shows that although the licence and legislation refers to a pet ‘shop’, 63% of licenses are granted to premises that bear no resemblance to a retail shop. This means that consumers - and regulators - are not easily able to identify third party vendors or discriminate between those holding licenses and those operating illegally. It also means that the public scrutiny element of pet vending, (which acts as an additional layer of protection over licensing) is largely absent. These are significant risk factors.

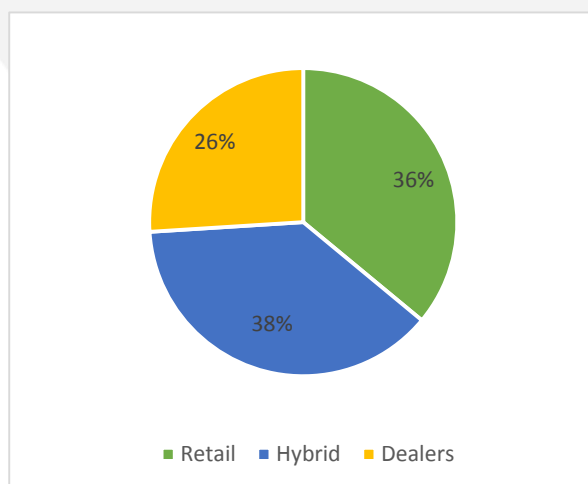


Fig. 4 Types of licensed pet shops

SCALE OF LICENSED THIRD PARTY PUPPY VENDING IN GB

We asked Local Authorities to state how many puppies were permitted to be stocked on the premises at any time. This was to gain an insight into the scale of individual trading and the overall scale of the trade. Estimates have suggested that only 3-5% of puppies are sold via licensed pet shops but our investigations indicated the number may be considerably higher.

Almost a quarter (19) of pet shop licences did not specify the number of puppies that were permitted. When questioned further, the local authorities for 14 of these establishments were unable to give any indication as to the number of puppies being traded. This is highly concerning because only three of these premises were operating as 'traditional' retail premises. Some of the establishments that have no restrictions on permitted numbers include the two puppy 'superstores' and seven hybrid sellers – one of which is the largest licensed dog breeder with 200 breeding bitches. The lack of restrictions means that regulators have no way of knowing what proportion of puppies are being bred on site and are therefore wholly dependent upon the records of the establishments.

For retail pet shops, the number of puppies permitted to be sold ranged from 4 to 35 with an average of 10. Dealers were permitted to stock between 8 and 60 puppies with an average of 23. Hybrid sellers were permitted to stock between 8 and 150 puppies, with an average of 28. The number of puppies sold through non retail premises are therefore more than double those sold from retail outlets. Although it is still impossible to gauge accurately how many puppies are traded, from these figures and our own investigations we have estimated that at least 40,000 and potentially as many as 80,000 puppies may be sold annually by licensed third party sellers. This is approximately 14% of puppies sold in Great Britain each year, based on UK Government estimates.¹



Fig. 4 Average number of puppies permitted to be stocked for each category of pet shop

SOURCE OF PUPPIES

We sent additional Freedom of Information requests to the Animal and Plant Health Agency to obtain figures for the number of dogs that are commercially imported into the UK and sold via licensed pet shops. It has not been possible so far to obtain figures for all licensed premises but from the information we have gathered to date we estimate that fewer than 12% of licensed pet shops appear to be obtaining puppies from outside the UK (including imports from Ireland).

The majority of puppies sold in licensed pet shops are therefore being bred in the UK. We asked local authorities to state where puppies had been sourced from but 42 (69%) stated this information was unknown - in some cases, even where licence conditions state the local authority must be provided with details of the supplier. Where a source was given, it was usually a region or non-specific. e.g. "Wales" or "one breeder". Even the most recent (2013) Model Licence conditions place no obligation on local authorities to check where puppies are sourced from and no

¹ DEFRA 2012 Microchipping of Dogs Impact Assessment

obligation is placed on licence holders to obtain their stock from appropriate sources. It would seem logical for puppies to be obtained only from licensed breeding establishments, which would partially assist with traceability but only a few authorities have included this as an additional condition.

Traceability is particularly difficult as records are often incomplete or poor. Important aspects such as mortality, either at breeding establishments or pet shops is not required to be recorded and therefore the number of puppies that die on route to the final point of sale or whilst on the premises are unaccounted for.

CARMARTHENSHIRE LICENSED BREEDER ANALYSIS

The county of Carmarthenshire in Wales has the largest number of licensed breeding establishments (76) and many of the breeders sell their puppies through third parties. Inspections are undertaken by a small team of inspectors which means there is minimal variability in interpretation/observation between premises. This made it an ideal sample population so we obtained and analysed the two most recent inspection reports for all licensed breeders in Carmarthenshire.

We had to exclude two breeders from the analysis as they only had the most recent format of inspection report, which curiously does not indicate how puppies are sold. Therefore, the analysis was based on 74 breeding establishments. It is worth noting that Battersea Dogs and Cats Home conducted a Freedom of Information survey into breeding establishments in April 2015² and found that Carmarthenshire had 81 licensed breeders. By December 2015, this number had decreased to 76, in spite of new regulations which lowered the licensing threshold and should have brought more breeders into the remit. (Note: Carmarthenshire Council had itself estimated that the new Breeding of Dogs (Wales) Regulations would see 400+ dog breeders requiring licences.)

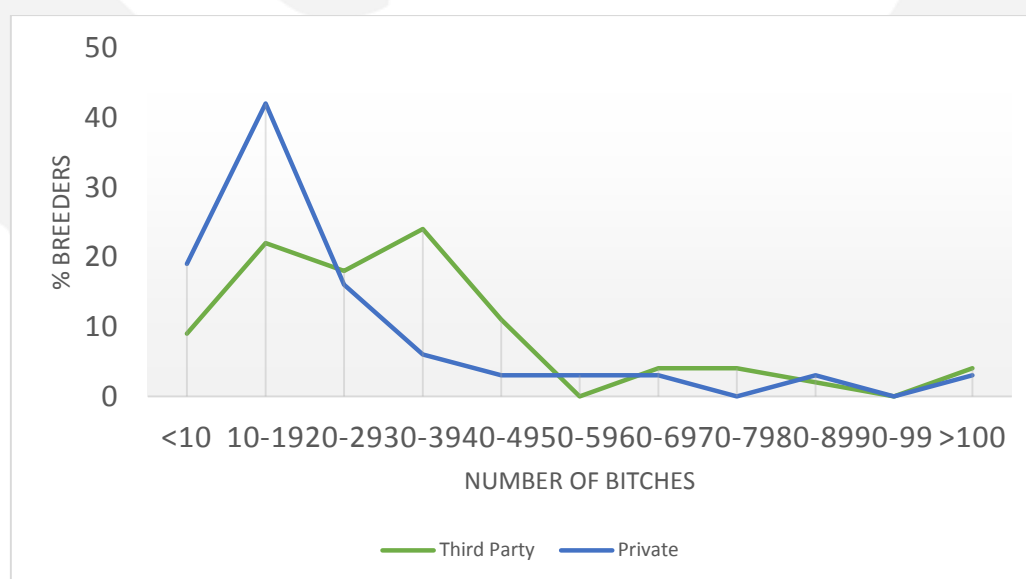


Fig. 5 Number of bitches in Carmarthenshire licensed dog breeding establishments

We found that 59% of breeders sold at least some of their puppies to licensed pet shops, but only 31% sold exclusively through these outlets (2% of breeders were hybrid sellers). Establishments selling to third parties tended to be larger than those selling all their puppies directly to the public. 67% of breeders selling through third parties had twenty or more breeding bitches compared with only 37% of breeders selling directly. The two largest establishments (with well over 100 breeding bitches) both sold puppies through third party vendors, but the largest also sold some puppies directly to the public. Breeders that exclusively sold their puppies directly to the public were able to sustain large scale establishments (the third largest also had over 100 breeding bitches and fell into this category).

² Licensed Dog Breeding in Great Britain, Battersea breeding Report 2015

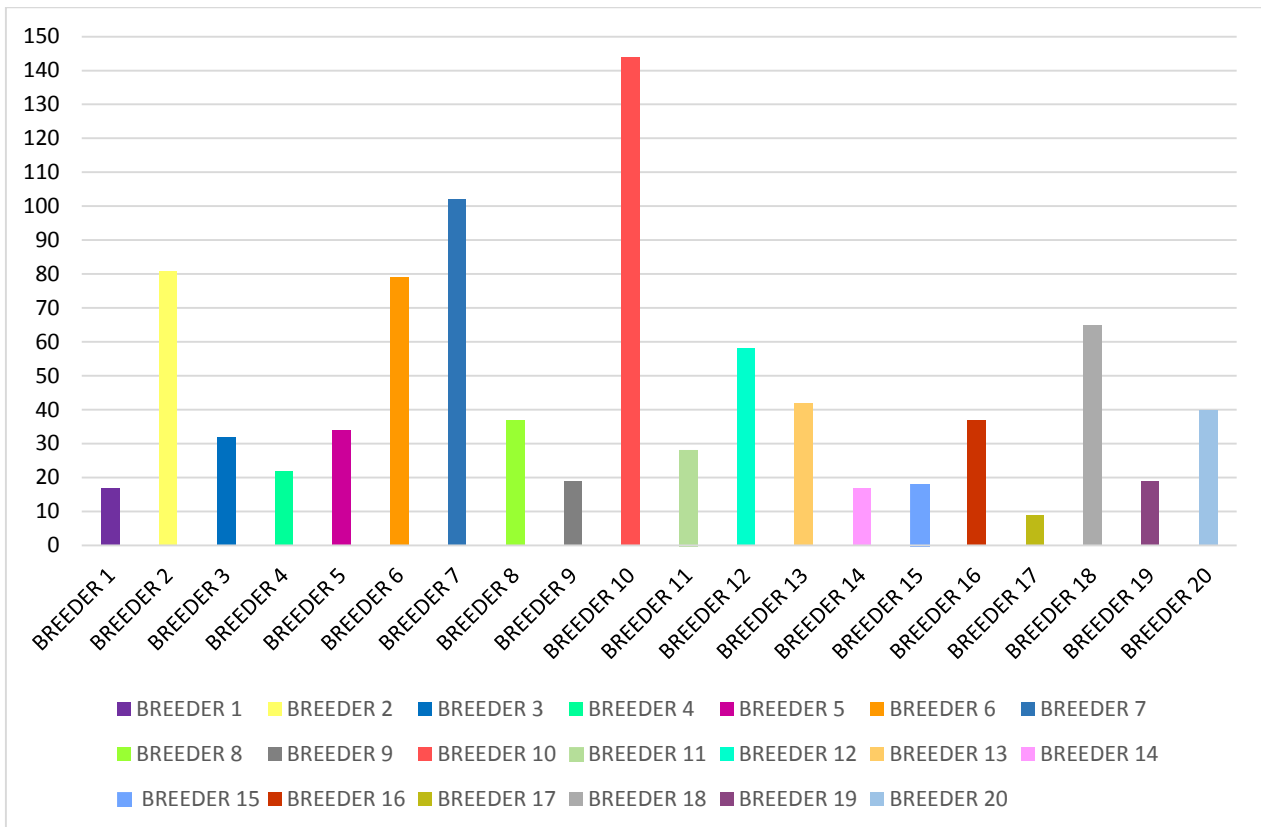


Fig. 6a Carmarthenshire licensed dog breeders selling through licensed pet shops 2014 - 2015: Number of breeding dogs per breeder (breeders 1-20)

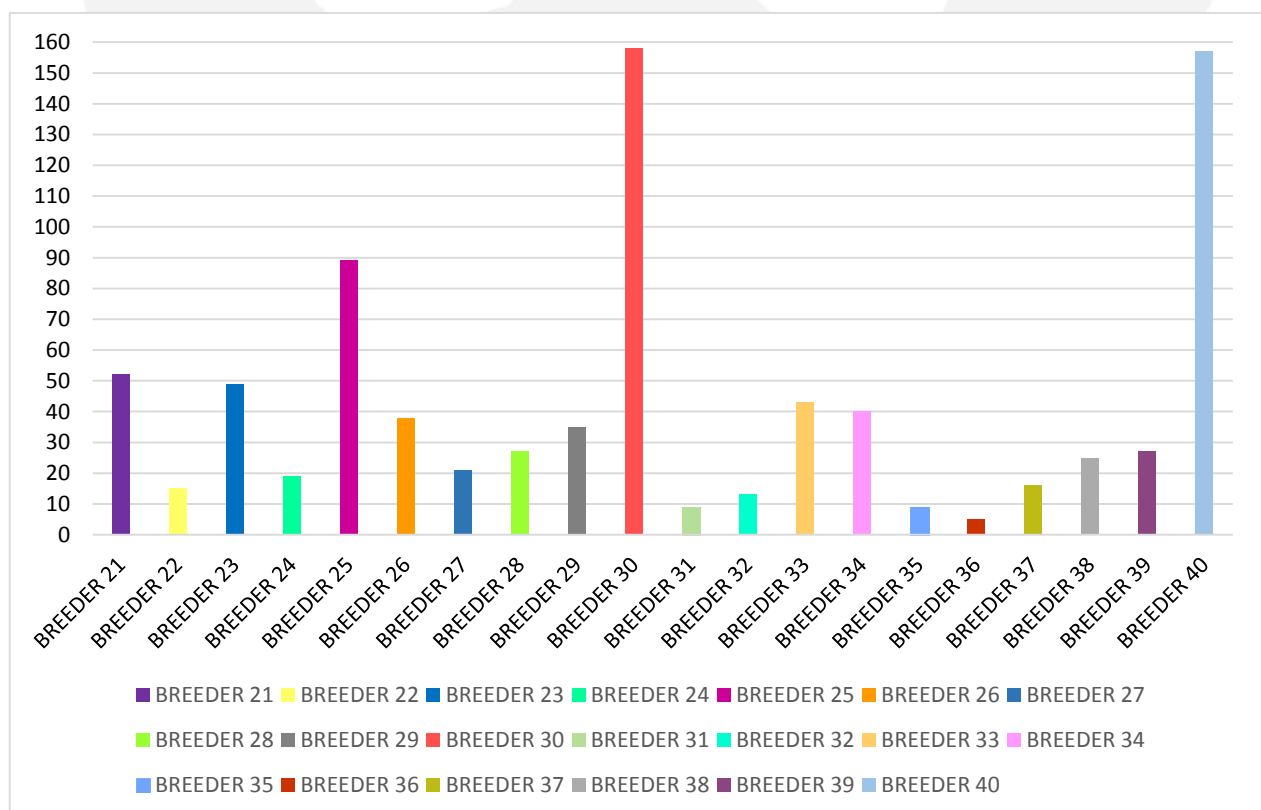


Fig. 6b Carmarthenshire licensed dog breeders selling through licensed pet shops 2014 – 2015: Number of breeding dogs per breeder (breeders 21-40)

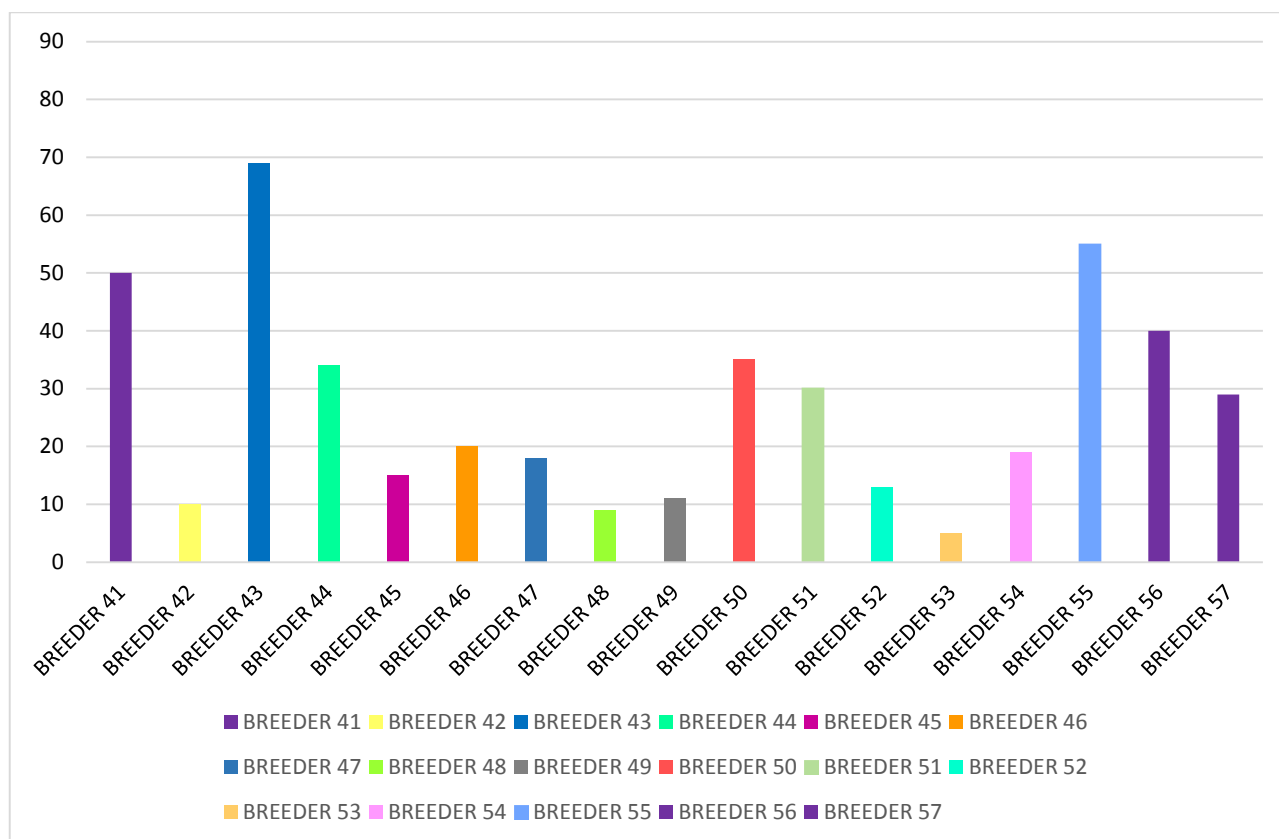


Fig. 6c Carmarthenshire licensed dog breeders selling through licensed pet shops: Number of breeding dogs per breeder (breeders 41- 57)

We conducted an analysis into welfare aspects of the inspections and found that establishments with twenty or more breeding bitches were significantly less likely to be rated as ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ in terms of cleanliness of the kennels and were also significantly less likely to provide ‘other’ areas for exercise in addition to the kennel runs/yards. (Approximately two thirds of larger breeding establishments provided no other exercise areas). Larger establishments were also significantly more likely to require improvements to comply with one or more of the licencing conditions. We noted that the smaller establishments (fewer than twenty bitches) were slightly more likely to microchip puppies and use the 7 in 1 vaccination rather than the single parvo virus inoculation. (The sample size was smaller for both criteria as microchipping and vaccination protocol was not noted on all the reports).

We ran a similar analysis comparing differences between premises that sold at least some puppies to pet shops against premises that only sold puppies directly to the public. Here we found a significant difference in puppy identification. 86% of establishments that sold to third parties did not microchip their puppies compared with only 13% of establishments that sold directly.

In addition, we also noted that breeders who sold puppies to third parties frequently did not identify their puppies in any way, although this has been an offence for more than a decade under the Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999. (Where used, ‘Tab Bands’ are the preferred method of identification.) It is also highly significant that none of the pet shop inspection reports recorded whether puppies were identified in this manner, although the keeper of a licensed pet shop is also committing an offence if a puppy is sold without the identification collar that it should have arrived with. This illustrates the absence of transparency and traceability in the trade. It also indicates that breeders do not have any pride in the puppies they are producing and pet shops have no confidence in their suppliers. This is not just conjecture; comments made by both breeders and pet shop licence holders in their response to the Welsh dog breeding consultation support this.³

³ Breeding of Dogs (Wales) consultation responses (2011)

Further comments:

Although not quantifiable, the breeding establishment inspection reports highlighted some further disturbing aspects of the trade. In one case, a (high volume) breeder was recorded as identifying his breeding bitches with “a sheep tag in the ear”. The breeds kept included Cavaliers and Bichons. More concerning still was that this method of identification was presumably deemed acceptable by the inspector, as no comments were made to the contrary.

Are any of the dogs Micro chipped?(details)	all bitches identified by way of sheep tag in ear.
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Although not recorded on all the inspection reports, a number of breeders passed ‘retired’ breeding dogs and bitches to rehoming charities. This is of course preferable to euthanasia (carried out by various methods) but ex-breeding dogs generally require medical treatment and rehabilitation, the costs of which are footed by public funding/donation.

Breeders in Wales have claimed that they would not be able to run a viable business by selling directly to the public due to their rural location. We analysed the post code areas of all the breeders and compared those selling exclusively to the public against those selling at least some of their puppies through third parties. Breeders in Carmarthenshire are located across 17 postal areas and 89% of breeders that sold puppies to third parties are based in postal areas where breeders were able to sell all their puppies directly. This indicates that location is not a barrier to private sales. Incidentally while breeding establishments that sold their puppies to third parties tended to have more breeding bitches, large kennels are also able to survive by selling puppies directly, the largest of these had more than 100 breeding bitches.

Eliminating additional links from the supply chain and selling puppies at the market price directly to consumers will increase gross sales revenue per puppy. Recent figures are unavailable, but Welsh breeders responding to the 2011 Welsh licensing Consultation indicated that the wholesale price of a puppy was around £180. 42% of Carmarthenshire establishments breed Bichon Frise puppies and 51% breed Cavalier King Charles Spaniels so we compared this against the market price of these two popular breeds. Research conducted in 2012⁴ found the average price for a Bichon Frise puppy was £400 and £495 for a Cavalier. This indicates that the mark up price for puppies sold through licensed pet shops is around 50-60% of the wholesale price paid to the breeder. The research also found that retail pet shop puppies were on average £51 more expensive than the average breed price and dealers were on average £32 cheaper. Licensed breeders were found to be selling puppies at approximately the average breed price.

LICENCE CONDITIONS

Although we did not specifically ask Local Authorities to indicate which version of licensing conditions are being used, many included this information with the licence, and others provide the licence conditions on their website. From this it has been possible to ascertain which version of pet shop licence conditions are in use by 48 out of the 61 Councils that have currently operating pet shops. Only 33% of these Councils were using the latest Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Model Conditions for Pet Vending Licensing (2013). Almost as many, (31%) continued to use the Local Government Authority Model Standards for Pet Shop Licence Conditions (1998) while 21% were using Model Conditions produced in 1992. 15% were using other versions of licence conditions, which either appeared to pre-date the 1992 conditions or were adapted from the officially endorsed model conditions. The OATA FOI report found that 28% of all local authorities were using the 2013 Model Conditions and 40% were using the 1998 version, with only 11% using the 1992 version.

⁴ Study into online Advertising of puppies in the UK – Julia Carr (2012)

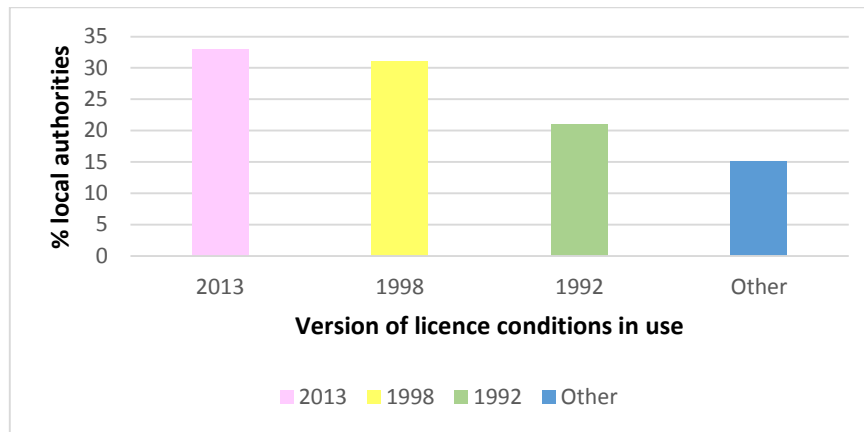


Fig. 7 Percentage of local authorities using each version of model licence conditions

This indicates that although dogs are regarded as one of the ‘higher risk’ species for pet shops to sell, approximately two thirds of the local authorities that licence pet shops to sell puppies may not be using the most up to date version of licensing conditions.

However, even where the 2013 conditions were used, worryingly this did not seem to prevent serious problems arising. In one particular case (CASE STUDY TWO), 26 complaints relating to the sale of puppies were registered between 2013 and 2015 against a pet shop licensed under the 2013 conditions and another (retail) premises, also licensed under the 2013 conditions, had 43 complaints recorded (for all species) during the same period.

It also appears that the 2013 Model Conditions are not being used by Local Authorities that licence pet shops selling large numbers of puppies. Where the number of puppies permitted was specified, the largest vendor is licensed under the 1998 conditions. The establishment believed to be the largest vendor of puppies in Great Britain is also licensed under this version, as is one of the two ‘puppy superstores’.

An analysis of the different types of puppy selling pet shop vendors showed that only 46% of retail premises and 38% of non-retail premises were licensed under the 2013 Model Conditions. 40% of hybrid sellers, 19% of retail pet shops and 29% of dealers were licensed under the 1998 conditions.

INSPECTORS

We did not ask local authorities to indicate the official job title of pet shop inspectors but this information was included on a sufficient number of inspection reports to conduct an analysis. For pet shops where the information was included, Environmental Health Officers inspected 45% of premises, Officers with an animal specific job title inspected 34% of premises and veterinary surgeons inspected 10%. (Vets are often involved in the initial visit where licences are granted but rarely on subsequent renewal inspections). 10% of inspections were conducted by Licensing/ Enforcement Officers.

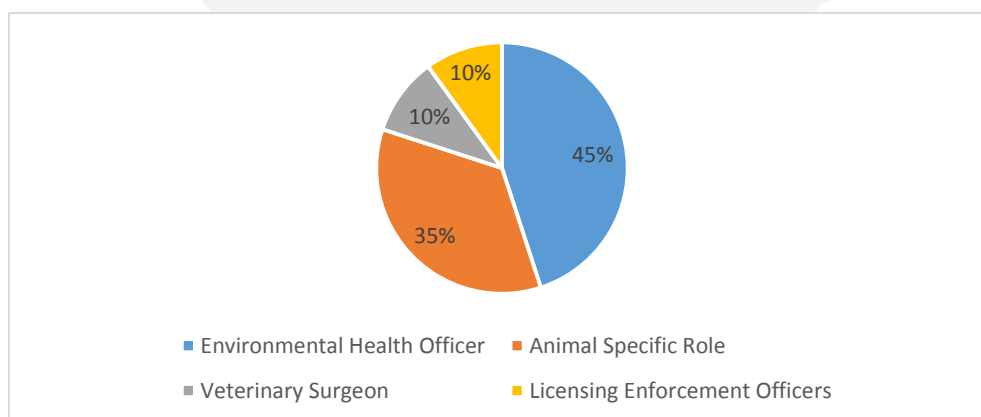


Fig. 8 Percentage of inspections carried out by different categories of inspector

The OATA Survey revealed that 75% of licensing inspectors had “received relevant specialist training” but whether this training was generic or included species specific elements isn’t known. It is likely that officers with a specialist animal welfare role would have a greater degree of knowledge. However, with the number of different types of activities and species included under the remit of ‘Animal Establishment licensing’ it is improbable that these officers are experts in canine health and welfare. (This is evidenced by some of the terminology/language used in inspection reports).

From this, it is reasonable to assume that licensed establishments involved in the breeding and sale of dogs (the same officers will inspect licensed dog breeding establishments) are unlikely to be assessed by officers with a specialist knowledge of the species. Dogs have a far more significant impact on owners and the wider society than other pet animal species (i.e. aggressive/dangerous dogs) and therefore the potential consequences arising from inadequate inspections may be far reaching and considerable. Although the majority of pet shops (of all types) are tending towards toy breeds and small ‘designer’ crossbreeds, some continue to sell large, powerful breeds such as Japanese Akitas, German Shepherds, Dobermans and Alaskan Malamutes.

QUALIFICATION OF VENDOR

Surprisingly it is not mandatory for the keeper of a licensed pet shop to hold a formal qualification in pet care – although they are held in a position of trust when advising customers and a position of responsibility when caring for and selling live animals to the public. We feel this is an issue for all licensed pet shops, irrespective of the species sold but the lack of formal qualifications for those involved with selling dogs is particularly concerning. Since 1992, the standard model licence conditions have included a requirement that for all new applications, at least one member of staff must have a recognised qualification, such as the City and Guilds Pet Store Management Certificate. While this was not part of our request, inspection reports frequently include provision for recording the licensee’s qualifications and the sample size (35 records/44% of all establishments) was deemed sufficient for analysis. Where recorded, 63% of licensed pet shop keepers held no formal qualifications. Broken down into different types: 45% of retail pet shop keepers were unqualified, 69% of hybrid sellers and 75% of dealers. Where retailers were unqualified, this was noted as an area for improvement on only two of the inspections. Only one of the hybrid sellers was advised to obtain formal training, while none of the dealers were.

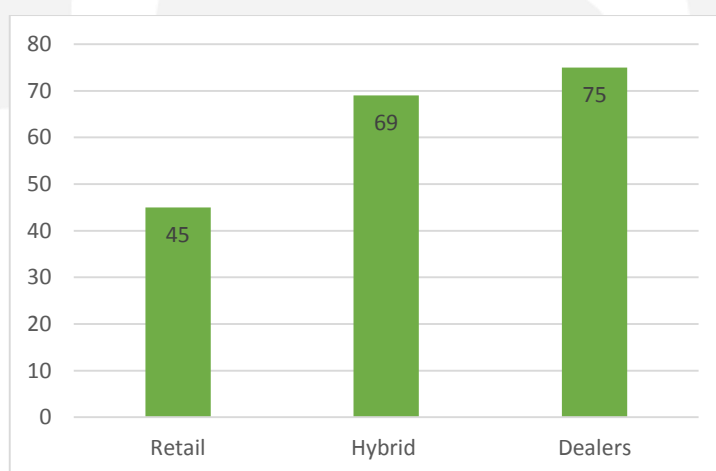


Fig. 9 Percentage of pet shop licence holders with no formal qualification

Perhaps of even more significance was that in the case of at least two new applications where licence conditions stated that the applicant must hold a formal qualification, inspectors deemed this was unnecessary. In one instance the applicant’s only experience was through pet dog ownership and their lack of knowledge beyond the “minimal acceptable level” was highlighted to the extent they were “advised to read up on the breeds they intend selling to ensure they are able to provide competent advice.” It was noted that improved knowledge levels would need to be demonstrated at the next inspection, but the City and Guilds qualification was agreed not to be necessary as the premises was a single species enterprise.

Many licence holders claim that they are experienced but this does not necessarily equate to competence, as poor practice may have been followed for many years. If vendors are not obliged to maintain a level of continuous professional development, they may not be familiar with current accepted practices in animal welfare. While we feel this is a particular issue with vendors selling dogs, we would make the point that it is applicable to all engaged in the trade of pet animals.

INSPECTION REPORTS

We asked local authorities to provide inspection reports for licensed pet shop premises for 2013, 2014 and 2015, where available. Full inspection reports were only available for 60% of premises. 19% of establishments had no written records of inspections, in one case this was because no inspections had been carried out during the specified period. 16% had either only very vague notes or letters recording that a visit had been carried out. 5% of premises were missing inspection reports for one or more years (apart from 2015). One local authority refused to supply inspection reports on the basis of the Law Enforcement exemption of the Freedom of Information Act. It is presumed from this that the establishment is under investigation. Although the Pet Animals Act does not oblige authorities to complete an inspection report, the absence of records relating to previous inspections means that enforcement will be difficult. It also means that there is very limited transparency of an area which is subject to considerable public interest.

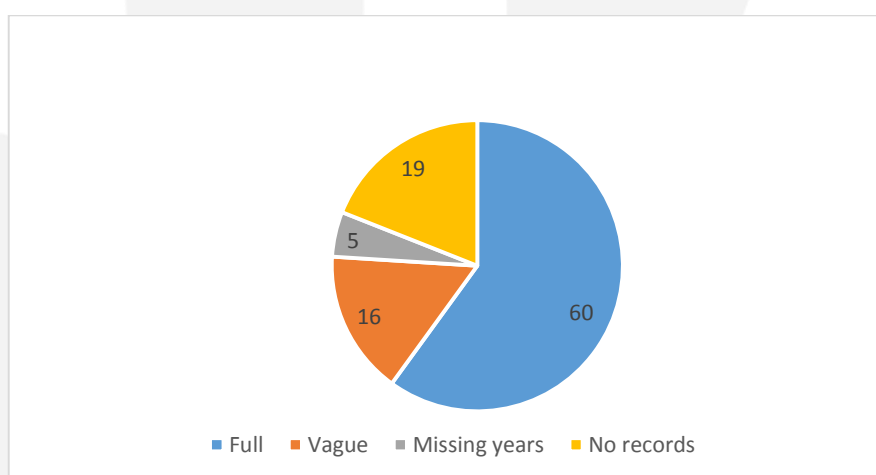


Fig. 10 Percentage of premises with inspection reports

Inspection reports varied considerably in format and there was no one standardised version. Those deemed to be 'full' reports demonstrated that the establishment has been checked against licence conditions, although in many cases the conditions listed on the report did not correspond with the version the local authority claimed to be using. These full inspection reports usually included a section for the inspecting officer's comments against each condition – some utilised this facility fully and provided detailed notes while others just marked Y/N. In 31% of these inspection reports, one or more of the inspection criteria were left blank. This situation was also frequently noted when reviewing the breeding establishment inspection reports and it appears (from the additional comments) that this has been done to avoid noting a negative response i.e. a breach of conditions, where advice was given.

BREACHES

Breaches of licence conditions were recorded for 14% of premises (this includes breaches of breeding licence conditions for hybrid sellers.) At least five of the hybrid sellers had more breeding bitches on the premises than permitted on their licence, but it appeared that the inspectors did not feel this warranted any action as no recommendations were given to reduce numbers. Other examples of licence breaches for pet shops included unsatisfactory accommodation, lack of fire extinguishers and inadequate record keeping. Issues with sales/purchase registers were noted for 19% of establishments, in some cases the issue had been previously highlighted on more than one occasion. This illustrates a trend towards concealment and lack of traceability.

In only one case during the period 2013-2015 has a breach of record keeping resulted in enforcement action. As the local authority did not renew the licence for 2016, the establishment has not been included in our figures but it is worth mentioning that the application was only granted in 2015 and the local authority was unable to provide an inspection report for the licensing visit.⁵

ACCLIMITISATION PROTOCOLS

Acclimatisation protocols have been included in model licencing conditions since at least 1992, although it is down to individual authorities if they wish to specify a minimum period. We could only find references to this on 15 inspection reports, but the periods ranged from 48 hours (particularly where pet shops are 'brokers' – collecting from breeders and selling on to other pet shops) to 10 days. A period of either 48 hours or 7 days appears to be most common. There are problems with both short and longer acclimatisation periods and this aspect of third party selling is a perfect example of the negative impact the process will have on a puppy. Puppies sold straight from a breeder do not need this period of acclimatisation, but it would be undesirable to sell puppies immediately they have arrived on the pet shop premises.

Holding puppies for any length of time will allow them to 'settle' and be under quarantine for disease, but conversely will delay the sale (hindering the vital and time limited socialisation process) and will mean they are also potentially exposed to a higher risk of disease/infection. Therefore, acclimatisation can only ever be the lesser of two evils and will inevitably have some negative consequences that would not have arisen with a puppy sold directly from the breeder to the public.

HYBRID SELLER WEBSITES

We examined websites for many of the hybrid sellers (not all have websites) and found that most presented themselves as dog breeders and made references to the high standards of care that puppies had received. Some implied that purchasers would be able to see the puppies' parents and many made no reference to the pet shop side of the business. Even where mentioned, this was done so obliquely it was unlikely that purchasers would be able to understand the implications.

We also found that some dealers were marketing themselves as breeders, although no breeding was taking place. (We have made formal complaints to a number of local authorities in relation to the advertising strategies of licensed pet shops. In some cases, this has resulted in wording either being removed or amended). In virtually all cases where hybrid sellers have websites, we felt that the information was either misleading, inaccurate or false and that there had been a deliberate intention to disguise the true nature of the business. This was also true of dealers (although generally less likely to have websites).

We have conducted extensive examinations of the online marketing strategies used by all types of licensed third party sellers and found a prevailing theme of concealment and deception across the industry. Many of our investigations have resulted in advertisements being removed or advertisers being banned from online classified websites.

COMPLAINTS

We asked local authorities to supply details of the number, nature and outcome of any complaints relating to pet shops selling puppies for the period 2013 to 2015. At least 51% of all the establishments had complaints relating to puppies recorded. (Potentially this figure is higher but several authorities which licensed multiple premises refused to indicate which establishment complaints related to. In these cases, we only logged complaints for a single establishment.)

⁵ Successful prosecution March 2016 for the offence of failing to keep correct records.

Multiple complaints during this period were recorded against 39% of hybrid sellers, 35% of dealers and 42% of retail pet shops.

Not all local authorities were able to supply details of complaints and some only provided minimal information. However, from the information provided we found that 24% of hybrid sellers, 18% of dealers and 33% of retail premises had complaints made against them relating to “welfare of puppies”. Complaints relating to sick puppies were made against 27% of hybrid sellers, 24% of dealers and 33% of retail pet shops. (Illnesses were varied but included parvovirus, kennel cough, worms, parasites and zoonotic diseases.) We were not advised of any formal proceedings resulting from complaints about the health of puppies. In most cases the trader was either given advice or licence conditions were amended. It was noted that laboratory testing was never carried out to confirm or disprove the presence of disease at the establishment and the general response appears to be a visit and visual inspection. None of the complaint information or the inspection reports ever suggests that a physical examination is carried out and veterinary advice seems to be rarely sought.

8% of premises had complaints relating to ‘paperwork’, including breeder details, pedigree and vaccination records. 6% of premises had complaints related to advertising, including misleading or incorrect description of the breed and the nature of the business. All but one of these were against hybrid sellers.

Although we have not included these in our figures, a significant number of complaints were received querying the licence status of premises or the legality of puppy sales.

REPORTING COMPLAINTS

It must be noted that through our own investigations, we have found that puppy owners are unlikely to register a formal complaint against a trader with the local authority. This is often because they are unaware of this option. In most cases owners seem to deal directly with the vendor, which although preferable from the perspective of resolving disputes, does not allow for accurate assessment of the scale of problems. There is no central database for recording complaints so owners may raise issues with different bodies and organisation, including Citizen’s Advice, Trading Standards, the RSPCA, the Kennel Club and independent campaign groups such as C.A.R.I.A.D. and Puppy Love. The number of complaints recorded by local authorities are therefore likely to reflect only the tip of the iceberg. Complaints are also generally only as a result of serious and acute problems (e.g. parvo virus) and later onset chronic issues that may have resulted from poor breeding or rearing practices are almost certainly unreported. The nature of third party vending also means that proving liability/fault for an illness or condition (even those arising within days of purchase) seems to be almost impossible and therefore formal action is extremely rare.

ANIMAL WELFARE ACT 2006

Local authorities have no statutory duty to enforce the Animal Welfare Act 2006. However, a few had made some reference to this either in licence conditions or inspection reports. In one example an establishment was stated to comply with the Act, although there were no provisions included in the inspection report for checking this. Another establishment applied for a dog breeding licence in addition to the existing pet shop licence and this inspection did include a detailed assessment of compliance with the Animal Welfare Act resulting in an overall score. This establishment scored a total of 65/100 with the lowest scores in the behaviour/company aspects. However, it was deemed suitable for licensing and no conditions/recommendations were noted to improve these essential areas.

RETAIL PREMISES

Retail establishments on average sell fewer puppies than non-retail pet shops and are subject to a far higher level of public scrutiny. However, there are particular issues associated with this type of premises. Where puppies are sold alongside other animals there may be additional risk of disease/infection and the general environment may result in ‘stress’ due to high volumes of noise and levels of disturbance. Shop opening hours are likely to mean that puppies are left unattended for prolonged periods (in excess of 12 hours) and non-specialist/untrained staff will have

insufficient knowledge or experience to appropriately advise customers. There is also a greater chance of impulse purchasing.

TRANSPORT LICENCE

The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006 guidance states that local authorities are responsible for enforcement. However, when asked if Pet Shop Licence holders held Transporter Authorisation certificates, 68% of authorities stated this was unknown. In some cases, this was where inspection reports indicated that vendors had transport for moving dogs and were doing so regularly. Although these regulations provide minimal protection for the welfare of puppies (and other small animals) the lack of active regulation in this area is concerning. Where the information was provided, 15% of licence holders did not have transporter authorisation. 13% did hold Transporter Authorisation. Two held a Type 1 Authorisation (journeys over 65km and up to eight hours) and two held a Type 2 Authorisation (journeys over eight hours). In most cases, where indicated on inspection reports, it appears that crates and carriers were used although one inspection report describes puppies transported in 'containers and plastic tubs'.

Enforcement of these regulations appears to be almost non-existent for the establishments covered in this report. While a number of local authorities were aware of and made reference to the legislation in inspection reports, only one expressed a desire to monitor deliveries. It is a requirement that puppies under eight weeks are transported with their mothers and this was included in the conditions for some establishments, but none of the information received gave any indication that this is happening.

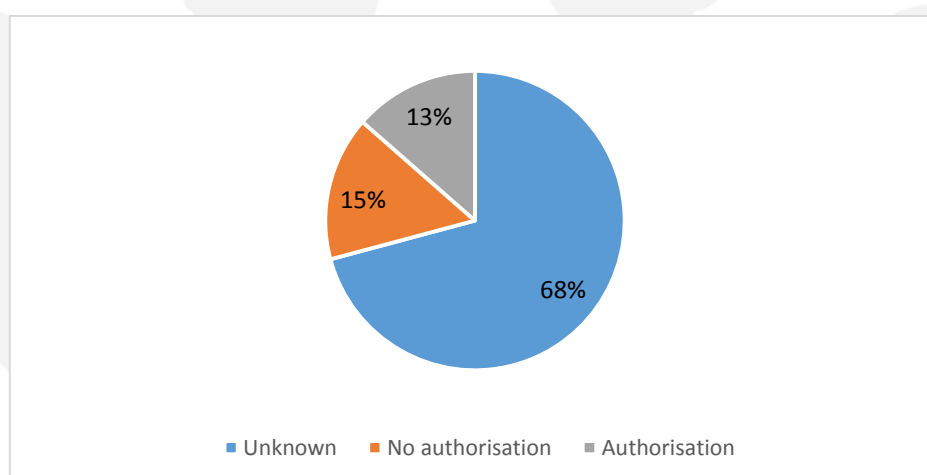


Fig. 11 Local authority knowledge of transporter authorisation status for pet shop licence holders

FEES

We did not ask local authorities for the amount of licence fee charged but as this information was frequently noted on licenses or was available through the authority websites we were able to obtain this for 53 of 80 (66%) premises. The average fee charged was £155.33 with the highest set at £499 and the lowest at £68. Where establishments were subject to multiple visits during the year in response to complaints, these fees are unlikely to cover the costs incurred.

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS

As part of the background research conducted in combination with this survey we discovered that at least three of the licence holders or close family had previous relevant convictions. In one instance the licensee had received a three-year ban on keeping equines as a result of "horrific neglect" but this species specific ban is insufficient to disqualify the individual from either holding a pet shop or a dog breeding licence. In another example, the disqualified licensee is working in an establishment licensed under a close relative's name.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES/TRANSPARENCY

While the majority of local authorities provided quick and detailed responses to the request, in a number of cases we had to apply for a review to obtain the requested information. Some local authorities were reluctant to divulge any details about the licensed premises (either pet shops or dog breeders) although the very requirement for a licence means that these establishments are deemed to be operating as businesses. This lack of transparency and apparent protectionism by some authorities means that it is very difficult for consumers to easily identify premises that are operating as businesses or understand the nature of the business. In fact, this Freedom of Information request survey stemmed from our own difficulties in ascertaining which premises were legitimately trading as licensed pet shops. We have considerable experience and knowledge but it is impossible to accurately tell from advertisements which vendors are just breeders and which hold pet shop licenses. This means that consumers are inadvertently and routinely purchasing puppies from third party vendors. The overall lack of transparency in this industry is a huge cause for concern, from the perspective of animal welfare, consumer protection and economics (fraud and tax evasion). It also means that identifying illegally operating establishments becomes extremely difficult as they are masked by a hidden legal trade.

UNSOLD PUPPIES

Few inspection reports included any references to protocols for unsold stock. In some cases, the licensee had stated that the situation did not arise. In another example, imported puppies with anomalies were returned to the country of origin. We noted that some licence conditions appeared to include a maximum age for puppies to be kept on the premises (12 weeks) which would appear to imply a necessity for quick sales or removal of puppies that exceeded this age limit. In another example, the establishment closes for several months during the winter and puppies would need to be sold prior to this. Only one establishment is known to retain older puppies until they are sold, but this raised further concerns as puppies aged between five and fifteen months were being advertised. Although this is a domestic dealer and potentially puppies will be receiving some additional handling and interaction, institutionalisation is highly likely under these circumstances and puppies/dogs will probably require rehabilitation and experienced training to counteract the effects of being in this situation for a prolonged period. Additionally, pens which are of a suitable size for young puppies will not be suitable for older puppies or full grown dogs.

QUOTES

“...Council issues existing licence conditions to these types of premises in accordance with existing legislation and issued guidance, therefore any amendments or revocations would need to be due to non-compliance.”

“Due to the on-going number of complaints this Directorate receives in terms of kittens dying, action needs to be taken to prevent this from recurring. It is very important to thoroughly clean and disinfect the cages between litters, including bedding, litter trays and toys but also verifying the conditions of where the kittens have been brought up. This Directorate is also considering imposing an additional condition to your licence to ensure that kittens are vaccinated before sale. This will be monitored over the next 12 months and a decision will be made at the next licensing inspection.”

“The council can only operate within those regulations. Compliance conditions have to be established through an on-site inspection and again can only be enforced through similar on-site visits. If nothing untoward is seen during the visits and the inspectors consider that licence conditions are met, the council cannot refuse to grant a licence or take any enforcement actions against an existing licence holder.”

"We do not carry out full annual inspections prior to renewal of licences each year, and tend to carry out more unannounced risk based visits rather than formal inspections, in these circumstances no report would be completed."

"There is clearly no requirement, nor is it practicable for our veterinarian to test all dogs and puppies on the premises for diseases such as parvo virus."

"The Borough does not carry out a yearly inspection of every licensed premise, therefore do not hold yearly inspection reports. Inspections are carried out on a risk based criteria, or may be prompted by complaints received throughout the year. When inspecting the premises, the Animal Welfare Officer will refer to the licence conditions of the premises to ensure these are being adhered to. Any non-compliance will be dealt with accordingly."

"You will be able to act as though your application is granted if you have not heard from us within 45 days."

"Complaints against any premises are made for a number of reasons, some are vexatious or frivolous, a complaint may relate to an item that is not directly related to the premises and the shop in question with them doing no wrong they are just the last in a chain of possible persons causing the problem. We are unable to give the details of the establishments that the complaints relate too as it may be prejudicial to the business concerned."

CASE STUDIES

Case Study One:

An establishment which held a pet shop licence applied for a breeding licence in 2013. An extensive schedule of non-compliance was recorded, including exceeding the numbers of puppies being sold from the premises under the pet shop licence (an extension had also been applied for) and unsuitable accommodation – housing puppies in trailers. The inspecting officer stated that trailers were not currently approved and must not be used as a permanent on-going solution but the inspecting vet stated that the trailers were unsuitable, had not been licenced and should not be used. Additional issues with accommodation included a biosecurity hazard as litters of puppies were not adequately separated and there was some leakage between divisions. There were also no facilities for isolating sick puppies. The veterinary surgeon highlighted the risks posed by these types of businesses:

"With multiple sources of puppies there will always be a disease risk".

"There is a real risk of Giardia."

"Beware injections before six weeks if the bitch is vaccinated." (conflict with maternal antibodies reduces the protection offered by vaccination.)

"Cryptosporidia is also a risk."

"Breeding bitches and puppies face a risk of infection from the bought in puppies."

In spite of the levels of non-compliance and inadequate facilities, an extension was granted to the pet shop licence and a breeding licence was issued. The local authority stated that announced and unannounced visits would be made and that further breaches may result in formal enforcement action – although the licensee had effectively been 'rewarded' for the previous noted breaches through additional licensing. Curiously the local authority also

stated that exceeding the number of puppies to be sold through the pet shop would be strictly enforced if the condition was breached within two months. It is not known why this timeframe was specified.

The next inspection report letter (dated fourteen months later) noted that two bitches were due to give birth less than twelve months after the birth of their previous litter – an offence under the Breeding of Dogs Act 1973 carrying a penalty of imprisonment and/or a fine on summary conviction. Although improvements had been made to the facilities and the trailers were apparently no longer in use as accommodation, the inspection report referred to a “parvo virus issue” which had apparently occurred at some time during the previous year.

Case Study Two:

A domestic dealer licensed under the 2013 CIEH Model Conditions had 21 complaints relating to sick puppies made between 2013 and 2015 and continues to be licenced to trade in spite of extensive investigations by the licensing authority. The authority comments that heavy dependence is placed upon evidence supplied by purchasers but no testing of animals on the premises appears to have been carried out to establish the presence or absence of disease.

Case Study Three:

The 2013 inspection report for a retail pet shop states that puppies are obtained from Ireland but the shop owner could not say whether this was Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland as puppies were being sourced through a ‘consolidator’. The inspector makes the point that as the origin of the puppies was unknown the vendor would need to be ‘extra vigilant’ in regards to their health status as there was no way of “verifying whether they came from puppy farms or reputable breeders.” (NB. By definition, responsible breeders would never sell puppies in this way). The inspection also notes that vaccination certificates accompanying the puppies do not include veterinary surgeon details and that puppies supplied from ROI would need to be compliant with import regulations. The subsequent inspection report for 2014 states that the licensee will no longer be accepting dogs from ROI but the inspector suggests that the vendor “meets and vets” breeders supplying the shop.

Case Study Four:

An application was made for a pet shop licence to be granted to residential premises in 2014 (no dog breeding taking place). Inspection reports and the accompanying letters indicate that a thorough and detailed assessment was made prior to granting the licence against the authority’s own model conditions. This assessment took 50 minutes and demanded high standards of welfare. Additionally, the licensee was required to submit detailed protocols for all aspects of the business. However even with this degree of attention to detail, there were areas of concern. Isolation facilities were stated to be in the house (the puppy kennels were in an out building) but were not apparently checked. This is common to many premises, although isolation facilities should be inspected to ensure they are compliant with the standard accommodation requirements. There was also concern about the licensees’ level of knowledge and the accompanying veterinary surgeon highlighted the risk posed from unvaccinated puppies from ‘less safe sources’.

The pet shop licence was granted; however, the information shows that a complaint had been received within a month which resulted in an unplanned visit where records were found to be unsatisfactory. This establishment continued to be problematic as during the first twelve months of holding a pet shop licence, it necessitated five further visits, with a total inspection time of six hours. An unconfirmed outbreak of parvo virus was reported within two months of trading with another confirmed outbreak some months later. Three of the visits (including one planned) found incomplete records. Yet another outbreak of parvo virus was reported the following year and the inspector recommended quarantine as ‘best practice’ for this highly contagious and often fatal disease. A full planned inspection report contained a number of blank fields. The local authority has received seven complaints relating to this establishment in the space of twenty months since the licence was granted and the latest inspection report again indicates issues with incomplete records.

This case study in particular shows that even where local authorities are proactive in implementing high welfare standards, third party trading results in on-going issues with transparency and serious outbreaks of disease. No formal enforcement action has been taken against the establishment and it continues to operate under licence.

Case Study Five:

A large scale hybrid seller has only been inspected against conditions for dog breeding establishments as the local authority deemed these to be more detailed. However, dog breeding conditions do not include any provision for maintaining a purchase and sales register and therefore the full criteria of the pet shop conditions under which the licence is granted are not being checked or potentially adhered to.

Case Study Six:

One establishment was licensed as a breeding facility and a pet shop licence was subsequently granted following inspection in July 2014. Less than two months later, a letter from the inspecting veterinary surgeon refers to two separate complaints from members of the public who had purchased puppies that died shortly after purchase of 'parvo virus related conditions'.

Case Study Seven:

Two separate complaints were made against a trader who was operating without appropriate licenses. The first complaint resulted in a pet shop licence being granted and the second resulted in a dog breeding licence. In both cases, trading without a licence is an offence which can result in either a fine or imprisonment but the authority has confirmed that no formal action will be taken. Granting licences under these circumstances is effectively rewarding illegal activity.

SCIENCE PAPERS SUPPORTIVE EVIDENCE

TITLE: Differences in behavioural characteristics between dogs obtained as puppies from pet stores and those obtained from non-commercial breeders.

REFERENCE: Franklin D. McMillan, DVM, DACVIM; James A. Serpell, PhD; Deborah L. Duffy, PhD; Elmabrok Masaoud, PhD; Ian R. Dohoo, DVM, PhD

OBJECTIVE: To compare the owner-reported prevalence of behavioural characteristics in dogs obtained as puppies from pet stores with that of dogs obtained as puppies from non-commercial breeders.

LINK: <http://avmajournals.avma.org/doi/abs/10.2460/javma.242.10.1359>

RESULTS: Pet store-derived dogs received significantly less favourable scores than did breeder-obtained dogs on 12 of 14 of the behavioural variables measured; pet store dogs did not score more favourably than breeder dogs in any behavioural category. Compared with dogs obtained as puppies from non-commercial breeders, dogs obtained as puppies from pet stores had significantly greater aggression toward human family members, unfamiliar people, and other dogs; greater fear of other dogs and non-social stimuli; and greater separation-related problems and house soiling. Frank McMillan commented that the extent of the abnormalities in dogs sourced from large-scale breeders was a surprise. He said, "The problems span so many different types of behaviours, and the differences are rather extreme for some of the behaviours."

The authors conclude that until the causes of the unfavourable differences detected in this group of dogs can be specifically identified and remedied, they cannot recommend that puppies be obtained from pet stores.

TITLE: Mental health of dogs formerly used as 'breeding stock' in commercial breeding establishments.

REFERENCE: Franklin D. McMillan, Deborah L. Duffy, James A. Serpell

OBJECTIVE: Numerous anecdotal reports have suggested that after removal from CBEs many of the former breeding dogs display persistent behavioural and psychological abnormalities when compared with the general pet dog population. The purpose of this study was to determine if this anecdotal evidence could be confirmed empirically.

LINK: [http://www.appliedanimalbehaviour.com/article/S0168-1591\(11\)00300-5/abstract](http://www.appliedanimalbehaviour.com/article/S0168-1591(11)00300-5/abstract)

RESULTS: When compared with a convenience sample of pet dogs matched for breed, sex, age and neuter status, former CBE breeding dogs were reported as showing significantly higher rates of health problems (23.5% versus 16.6%, $P = 0.026$). With respect to behaviour, CBE dogs displayed significantly higher rates of fear (both social and non-social; ordinal GLM models, $P < 0.001$), house-soiling ($P < 0.001$), and compulsive staring ($P < 0.005$); and significantly lower rates of aggression (toward strangers and other dogs; $P < 0.0001$), trainability ($P < 0.0001$), chasing small animals ($P < 0.0001$), excitability ($P < 0.0001$), and energy ($P < 0.0001$).

By demonstrating that dogs maintained in these environments develop extreme and persistent fears and phobias, possible learning deficits as evidenced by lower trainability, and often show difficulty in coping successfully with normal existence, this study provides the first quantitative evidence that the conditions prevailing in CBEs are injurious to the mental health and welfare of dogs.

TITLE: Association between prospective owner viewing of the parents of a puppy and later referral for behavioural problems.

REFERENCE: C. Westgarth, BSc(Hons) PhD1, K. Reeve, BSc(Hons) MSc(CABC) KCAI CCAB1 and R. Barclay, BSc(Hons) MPhil CCAB2

OBJECTIVE: A case-control study was designed to test whether there is an association between the owners seeing the mother of a puppy, and later development of behavioural problems.

LINK: <http://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/170/20/517>

RESULTS: After adjustment for confounding factors using multivariable logistic regression, case dogs were more likely to be younger than controls ($P < 0.001$); less likely to be obtained at six (OR = 0.27, 95 per cent CI = 0.09 to 0.85, $P = 0.03$), nine (OR = 0.22, 95 per cent CI = 0.06 to 0.80, $P = 0.02$) or 10 weeks (OR = 0.35, 95 per cent CI = 0.12 to 1.01, $P = 0.05$), than eight weeks; more likely for the owner to have seen only one parent (OR = 2.49, 95 per cent CI = 1.15 to 5.37, $P = 0.02$) than both parents, and more likely to have not seen either parent (OR = 3.82, 95 per cent CI = 1.12 to 12.97, $P = 0.03$) than both. Advice to 'see the mother' has been shown to be partly scientifically accurate in relation to future unwanted behavioural problems among dogs; in fact, it may be better for prospective owners to be recommended to view both parents.

TITLE: The Domestic Dog - Its Evolution, Behaviour and Interactions with People

REFERENCE: James Serpell (contributors - James Serpell, Juliet Clutton-Brock, Raymond Coppinger, Richard Schneider, M. B. Willis, Benjamin L. Hart, J. A. Jagoe, Chris Thorne, John W. S. Bradshaw, Helen M. R. Nott, Randall Lockwood, Roger A. Mugford, Valerie O'Farrell, Lynette A. Hart, Robert Hubrecht, D. W. Macdonald, G. M. Carr, L. Boitani, F. Francisci, P. Ciucci, G. Andreoli)

OBJECTIVE: This unique book seeks to expose the real dog beneath the popular stereotypes. Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive, state-of-the-art account of the domestic dog's natural history and behaviour based on scientific and scholarly evidence rather than hearsay.

LINK: <http://www.cambridge.org/qb/academic/subjects/life-sciences/animal-behaviour/domestic-dog-its-evolution-behaviour-and-interactions-people>

RESULTS: '... is not just for dog lovers but also for the curious. With enough detailed studies to interest specialists, this book is readable and stimulating. It ranges from the psychology of pets and their owners to the fascinating history of dogs' domestication and diversification as a species.' New Scientist

TITLE: Puppy socialisation and the prevention of behavioural problems.

REFERENCE: Irish Veterinary Journal 2010 Vol. 63 No. 10 pp. 630-633

OBJECTIVE: Establishing the importance of socialisation in ensuring a puppy is friendly and well-adjusted.

LINK: <http://www.cabdirect.org/abstracts/20103297484.html>

RESULTS: The most common cause of fear and aggression is lack of socialisation and behavioural problems often originate from fearful dogs. Indeed, behavioural issues are the most common cause of euthanasia in dogs under two years of age.

TITLE: Relationship between aggressive and avoidance behaviour by dogs and their experience in the first six months of life.

REFERENCE: Appleby, D., Bradshaw, J. and Casey, R

OBJECTIVE: To test behavioural signs for association with the dog's maternal environment, the environment it experienced between three and six months of age, and the age at which it has been acquired.

LINK:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/11376544_Relationship_between_aggressive_and_avoidance_behaviour_by_dogs_and_their_experience_in_the_first_six_months_of_life

RESULTS: Non-domestic maternal environments, and a lack of experience of urban environments between three and six months of age, were both significantly associated with aggression towards unfamiliar people and avoidance behaviour. Aggression during a veterinary examination was more likely in dogs from non-domestic maternal environments.

TITLE: Human directed aggression in domestic dogs (*Canis familiaris*): Occurrence in different contexts and risk factors.

REFERENCE: Rachel A. Casey, Bethany Loftus, Christine Bolster, Gemma J. Richards, Emily J. Blackwell. School of Veterinary Science, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK

OBJECTIVE: The consequence for dogs of showing aggression towards people is often euthanasia or relinquishment. Aggression is also a sign of compromised welfare in dogs, and a public health issue for people. The aims of this study were to estimate the numbers of dogs showing aggression to people in three contexts (unfamiliar people on entering, or outside the house, and family members); identify whether these co-occur, and investigate risk factors for aggression in each context using multivariable analyses.

LINK: [http://www.appliedanimalbehaviour.com/article/S0168-1591\(13\)00292-X/abstract](http://www.appliedanimalbehaviour.com/article/S0168-1591(13)00292-X/abstract)

RESULTS: These data suggest that although general characteristics of dogs and owners may be a factor at population level, it would be inappropriate to make assumptions about an individual animal's risk of aggression to people based on characteristics such as breed.

TITLE: Prevalence of owner-reported behaviours in dogs separated from the litter at two different ages.

REFERENCE: Pierantoni L1, Albertini M, Pirrone F.

OBJECTIVE: The present study examined the prevalence of behaviours in dogs separated from the litter for adoption at different ages.

LINK: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21865608>

RESULTS: These findings indicate that, compared with dogs that remained with their social group for 60 days, dogs that had been separated from the litter earlier were more likely to exhibit potentially problematic behaviours, especially if they came from a pet shop.

TITLE: Owner-Reported Aggressive Behavior Towards Familiar People May Be A More Prominent Occurrence in Pet Shop Traded Dogs.

REFERENCE: Federica Pirrone, Ludovica Pierantoni, Giovanni Quintavalle Pastorino, Mariangela Albertini

OBJECTIVE: There is longstanding recognition of the adverse effect of stressful experiences during early critical developmental periods and the later association with problematic behavioural issues in dogs. The aim of this study was to evaluate whether the origin/source of puppies (pet shop vs. breeder) was associated with later potential problematic behaviours.

LINK: [http://www.journalvetbehavior.com/article/S1558-7878\(15\)00197-5/abstract](http://www.journalvetbehavior.com/article/S1558-7878(15)00197-5/abstract)

RESULTS: The odds of displaying owner-directed aggression were significantly greater for the dogs that had been purchased from a pet store as puppies than those purchased from a breeder (control group). We also found an association between a dog's pet store origin and other potential problem behaviours, including house soiling, body licking, and separation-related behavior, but this relationship was confounded by the effect of a set of owner-related factors. These findings indicate that obtaining puppies from pet stores may predispose them to potentially exhibit owner-directed aggression as adults. We suggest that further research in prevention of problem behaviours in adult dogs should be aimed at identifying the root causes of pet store-related behavioural issues, without ignoring confounding at a household level.