

Dog Breeding Establishments Guidance for Local Authorities

Welsh Minister's Guidance to Local Authorities
issued pursuant to Regulation 13 of the
Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2014

Contents

OVERVIEW

1. ACCOMMODATION & ENVIRONMENT

- 1.1 Construction
- 1.2 Size of Quarters
- 1.3 Bedding
- 1.4 Temperature & Heating
- 1.5 Lighting
- 1.6 Ventilation
- 1.7 Cleanliness
- 1.8 Pest Control
- 1.9 Waste Disposal
- 1.10 Whelping
- 1.11 Puppy Facilities

2. DIET AND NUTRITION

- 2.1 Food & Drink
- 2.2 Food Preparation Facilities

3. NORMAL BEHAVIOUR

- 3.1 Enhancement & Enrichment
- 3.2 Socialisation of Puppies
- 3.3 Staff: Adult Dog Ratio
- 3.4 Kennel Layout

4. HEALTH AND WELFARE

- 4.1 Registration with a Veterinary Surgeon
- 4.2 Health and Welfare Plan
- 4.3 Medicines
- 4.4 Health Status of dogs
- 4.5 First Aid kit
- 4.6 Protection from Fire
- 4.7 Strategy for the Retirement of Breeding Bitches and Stud Dogs
- 4.8 Transport of Dogs

SCHEDULE 1: DOG BREEDING RECORD

SCHEDULE 2: PUPPY LOG BOOK

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to Local Authorities when they are considering or carrying out any function pursuant to the Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2014 (the “Regulations”).

This Guidance seeks to ensure the needs of a dog, as set out under Section 9(2) of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, are met, i.e. to include:

- (a) its need for a suitable environment,
- (b) its need for a suitable diet,
- (c) its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns,
- (d) any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals, and
- (e) its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

However, this guidance is not intended to be exhaustive, and Local Authorities are encouraged to take into account any other matter they consider relevant to the exercise of their functions under the Regulations. Any legal queries should be referred to the respective legal departments of the Local Authorities.

Overall, numbers of staff should be sufficient to allow staff to provide the level of care set out in the Licence Conditions and this Guidance document. This includes the interactions and procedures outlined to ensure that the welfare needs of the dog are being met, in addition to routine care and management.

Unless stated otherwise, any reference to ‘dog’ in this Guidance relates to all dogs kept on the breeding premises. ‘Adult dog’ refers to dogs not less than 6 months old and ‘puppies’ refers to dogs which are less than 6 months old.

1. ACCOMMODATION & ENVIRONMENT

Under Regulation 9 of the Regulations, before granting or renewing a licence, the Local Authority must be satisfied that all dogs are at all times kept in accommodation that is appropriate in construction, size, exercise facilities, temperature, lighting, ventilation, cleanliness and with appropriate bedding and whelping facilities. It also requires Local Authorities to be satisfied that dogs are supplied with suitable food, drink and adequate facilities to enable them to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.

The Local Authority must consider the following matters in deciding whether it is so satisfied.

Where small scale breeders use purpose built kennel facilities outside of the home environment, they must comply with the full accommodation requirements.

Where dogs are kept as part of the family within the home environment, it is accepted that enrichment and enhancement could be provided by a comfortable home environment. However, consideration of available space and numbers of dogs within that space must be complied with.

Standards Expected in a Home Environment:

- The home should be well maintained and in good repair. There should not be any sharp edges, projections, rough edges or other hazards, such as chemicals and loose cables, which may present risk of injury to a dog.
- No standing water from cleaning or urine is acceptable.
- Doors to the outside should be escape proof, securable, strong enough to resist impact and scratching, and to prevent injury. External doors/gates should be lockable.
- Those involved in the care of the dogs and residents should have easy access to keys and/or any key code in case of emergency. Doors should have secure latches or other secure closing devices.
- All outdoor fencing should be strong and rigid and kept in good repair to provide an escape and dig proof structure.
- Where dogs have access to mesh, the diameter of the wire should not be less than 2.0 mm (British Standard 14 gauge welded mesh). Mesh size must not exceed 50 mm in any direction.
- Each room used for breeding should have a securable, full height door for access and security. Internal doors should open inwards in order to protect the health and safety of attending people and reduce the risk of escape. Where this is not feasible there should be a documented procedure in place to demonstrate the safety of the licensee / attending people.
- Where appropriate, doors to rooms should be kept shut at night. Each dog room should have a secure latch or other secure closing device.
- All interior surfaces to which dogs have access should be maintained in good order and repair. Wherever possible, interior surfaces should be

smooth, impervious and able to be cleaned, with no gaps or protrusions on which claws can be caught.

- All floors should be suitably clean. Floors should be non-hazardous for dogs to walk on, in particular to avoid slipping.
- Any electrical sockets and appliances in the dog room should be secure and protected against damage.

Accommodation Requirements

1.1 Construction

The Local Authority should be satisfied that all internal surfaces used in the construction of walls, floors, partitions, doors and door frames are durable and impervious and can be easily cleansed and disinfected. There should be no projections or rough edges liable to cause injury.

When washed out, all areas (to include kennel floors, exercise areas, passageways and kitchen area) should not be subject to pooling and should be able to dry easily.

Partitions between kennels and individual exercise areas should normally be of solid construction sufficiently high to prevent nose-nose contact.

Kennel doors should be strong enough to resist impact chewing and scratching and should be capable of being effectively secured. Ideally, kennel doors should open inwards for health and safety reasons, i.e. in cases of large dogs pushing against them.

Where metal bars and frames are used, they should be of a suitable gauge with spacing adequate to prevent dogs escaping or becoming entrapped. Where metal edging is used, this should not present a risk of injury to the dog.

1.2 Size of Quarters

The following units of measurement, e.g. height, temperatures etc. provide advice to enforcement officers. It should be borne in mind that some dogs, such as working gundogs due to their type and nature may be kept in accommodation other than that which is laid out in the guidance. Each individual situation should be considered on its own merits.

Kennels should be divided into sleeping and activity areas. Kennels should be provided with an adequate size of sleeping area, such that dogs can stand, turn around, stretch and lie down flat in a natural position, with sufficient space for the door to open fully.

Special consideration should be given to whelping bitches and bitches in season. Kennels should cater for the maximum number of puppies having regard to the size of the breed and litter size.

The following are the recommended minimum requirements of enclosures for small, medium and large adult dogs.

Note:

Free access to exercise means the dogs have unrestricted daily access to an exercise area.

Limited access to exercise means the dogs have restricted access to an exercise area.

Calculations for size of quarters may not be suitable for hunt kennels or lodges. See 3.4 Kennel Layouts.

Small Size Dogs

No. of adult dogs	Free access to Exercise	Limited access to Exercise
1	2.5 sq m	4.5 sq m
2	2.5 sq m	4.5 sq m
3	4.5 sq m	6.5 sq m
4	6.0 sq m	8.5 sq m

Medium Size Dogs

No. of adult dogs	Free access to exercise	Limited access to exercise
1	2.5 sq m	4.5 sq m
2	4.5 sq m	6.5 sq m
3	6.0 sq m	8.5 sq m

Large Size Dogs

No. of adult dogs	Free access to exercise	Limited access to exercise
1	4.5 sq m	6.5 sq m
2	6.0 sq m	8.5 sq m

If the licenced premises operate in a domestic home and dog cages are used, the Local Authority should consider whether the cages are suitable for the size of dog kept.

Where used, cages should be of sufficient size to allow each dog to be able to sit and stand at full height, step forward, turn around, stretch and lie down in a natural position and wag its tail, without touching the sides of the crate. Dogs should not normally be confined to a crate for more than a total of a nine-hour period during any 24 hours.

1.3 Bedding

Beds and bedding should be provided and be suitable to allow dogs to be comfortable. A dog bed should be of a durable construction, away from draughts, and be a suitable size for the breed of dogs kept. It should be large enough for each dog to be able to lie flat on its side.

Bedding should be capable of being easily cleaned, disinfected and all bedding material in use should be clean, non-irritant and dry. If dogs chew their beds, alternative bedding should be sought.

In most circumstances it would be advisable that each adult dog should have access to a bed of its own*, however the Local Authority may be satisfied that this is not necessary in all circumstances.

If it is the intention for the premises to use animal bedding sourced from waste (e.g. wood, textiles etc.) the licence holder will need to ensure that it is suitable and that they have the relevant permissions in place. Further advice can be sourced from Natural Resources Wales on 0300 065 3000 ([Natural Resources Wales / Waste management](#)).

* Hounds kept at hunt kennels are pack animals and therefore should be housed together. Hounds are usually kept in groups of 20–40 animals in compartments or lodges with a raised, insulated sleeping area or bed

Further information on recommended standards at hunt kennels can be found in the Master of Fox Hounds “The Code of Practice for the Welfare of Hounds in Hunt Kennels”.

1.4 Temperature & Heating

The Local Authority should consider whether kennels should be insulated so as to prevent extremes of temperature and whether heating and cooling facilities are necessary.

There should be some part of the sleeping area where the dog is able to enjoy a minimum temperature relevant to the breed/type of dog. For most this is likely to be between 10°C and 26°C (this may require consideration for certain breeds e.g. Huskies), except for puppies under four weeks of age where the Local Authority should consider whether the temperature should be between 26°C (79°F) to 28°C (82°F).

The Local Authority should consider whether any heat sources used appear safe for use and comply with all regulatory requirements.

1.5 Lighting

The Local Authority should consider whether there is sufficient light provided in exercise and sleeping areas so that all parts are clearly visible. Where practicable this should be natural light. Alternatively an artificial lighting system that can be switched off at night to allow proper sleep patterns can be used.

1.6 Ventilation

The Local Authority should consider whether ventilation is adequate in all interior areas and avoids the creation of excessive localised draughts in the sleeping areas.

1.7 Cleanliness

The Local Authority should consider whether there is an adequate cleansing schedule for purposes of disease control and wellbeing of the dogs.

A documented cleansing schedule should include a suitable disinfectant effective against micro-organisms responsible for canine diseases and should be put in the health plan. Dilution rates must be at least those specified in the approval.

1.8 Pest Control

The Local Authority should consider whether the licence applicant has taken adequate measures to minimise the risks from rodents, insects and other pests on the premises. As an example, all food should be kept in rodent proof containers.

If any pest control treatments containing poisonous or irritant materials are on the premises, they should be safely positioned so as not to allow dogs contact.

1.9 Waste Disposal

The Local Authority should consider whether the licence applicant's premises have adequate facilities for storage and disposal of waste in accordance with the appropriate legislation on waste disposal.

The relevant waste legislation includes controls on onsite treatment and disposal and the onward transfer of wastes from the breeding premises. These controls are in place to protect human health and the environment (including animals and plants.).

Natural Resources Wales has produced a guidance document that will support Local Authorities and licence holders in understanding their obligations. A copy of this guidance can be obtained by contacting Natural Resources Wales on 03000 065 3000. ([Natural Resources Wales / Waste management](#)).

1.10 Whelping Facilities

The Local Authority should be satisfied that whelping facilities provide bitches with a designated area/kennel prior to whelping, with a suitable whelping box/bed. However, they should not be completely isolated from the sight, sound and smell of other familiar bitches and daily contact with humans. Heating facilities should be adequate, secure, safe and capable of providing the range of temperatures suitable for both pups and bitch.

The facilities should cater for the maximum number of puppies, and take account of breed size and litter size. An area should be provided within the whelping area where a bitch can rest away from her puppies. The bed should contain bedding to ensure a soft surface for the bitch and to enable the absorption of birthing fluids resulting from whelping.

Bedding should be of soft material that may be covered by absorbent material. The use of newspaper alone is not acceptable other than for short periods during whelping. Sawdust and straw should not be used in whelping beds. Cleanliness of the whelping and surrounding areas is paramount and all materials used in the construction and maintenance of these areas should be capable of being easily cleaned on a regular basis.

1.11 Puppy Facilities

The Local Authority should consider whether there should be a specific area set aside for the socialisation of all litters e.g. in mimicking environmental conditions in a home or work environment.

2. DIET AND NUTRITION

Regulation 9 of the Regulations requires a Local Authority to be satisfied that dogs are supplied with suitable food and drink. The Local Authority should be satisfied that fresh clean water is available at all times and changed at least daily and that adequate and suitable food is available.

2.1 Food & Drink

The Local Authority should consider whether eating and drinking equipment is suitable and capable of being easily cleansed and disinfected. In particular, that there is a system to ensure an adequate supply of water and consideration of whether fixed water bowls are advisable.

All dogs should be supplied with adequate food suitable to their age, breed, activity level and stage of breeding cycle. Puppies should start the weaning process as soon as they are capable of ingesting food on their own. The food offered must be appropriate for the stage of development of the puppies.

Weaning should normally commence at 3-4 weeks old. The weaning process should be gradual and aim to be completed by the time the puppy is six weeks old. Care should also be taken to allow the bitch gradually to reduce the production of milk. The initial diet may be liquid progressing to solid food over the ensuing period. Puppies should initially be offered food up to five times a day and care must be taken to ensure that each takes the correct share of the food offered. Monitoring weight gain is important. Food intake should be monitored to ensure that each dog receives an adequate quantity of food.

Dogs should normally be fed from individual bowls. Adult dogs should normally be offered at least two meals per day, dependant on breed and type of dog, and in accordance with veterinary advice and food manufacturers' recommendations.

'Ad lib' or continuous feeding is not desirable and should only be practised if specifically or instructed by a veterinary surgeon.

Adequate routine cleaning procedures should be in place to ensure that the environment remains clean and free from infectious diseases. A standard operating procedure to administer this should be in place.

2.2 Food Preparation Facilities

The Local Authority should consider whether there are suitable and hygienic facilities for the storage and preparation of food for the dogs. A sink with hot and cold running water should be available for washing utensils and eating and drinking vessels. Where fresh and cooked meats are stored refrigeration facilities should be used. Food contamination should be prevented.

If hunt kennels are feeding flesh from fallen stock this should be carried out in line with the Animal By-Products (Enforcement) (Wales) Regulations 2014.

3. NORMAL BEHAVIOUR

Regulation 9 of the Regulations also requires that the Local Authority be satisfied that dogs are supplied with adequate facilities to enable them to exhibit normal behaviour patterns. The Local Authority should consider the following issues in deciding if it is so satisfied.

3.1 Enhancement & Enrichment

Under Regulation 7 of the Regulations an application for a licence must include a draft written programme detailing how the dogs on the premises will have the opportunity to express normal behaviour patterns.

In considering whether the draft programme does provide that opportunity, the Local Authority should consider whether it provides for:

- A suitable amount of human contact (e.g. grooming, training, handling and/or playing).
- A written exercise programme to include sufficient exercise considered to be at least 30 minutes a day for dogs and puppies over 6 weeks old.
- A suitable amount of access to outdoor environments which should be as varied as safety and cleanliness allows.
- If appropriate, access to play items which should be rearranged regularly and swapped (after cleansing) between runs.

3.2 Socialisation of Puppies

Under Regulation 7, an application for a licence must include a draft socialisation programme detailing how puppies will be introduced to human handling, domestic environments, play and how they will be prepared for separation from the dam.

A draft programme should provide for a number of activities that may include:

- Gently handling each puppy.
- Gradual introduction of low-level noise from 14 days onwards.
- Introduction to a variety of human contact daily from 21 days on.
- Play with suitable toys organised to play away from the mother.
- Where biosecurity and kennel health allows, puppies of different litters should mix in suitable environments. Care should be taken that removal of puppies for handling is done in such a way that it does not distress the dam.

If training is included in the programme it should be reward-based; harsh training methods which may result in pain or fear must not be used.

3.3. Staff:Adult Dog Ratio

The Regulations state that the Local Authority must attach to each licence granted, a condition specifying the maximum number of adult dogs and puppies to be kept under the terms of the licence.

The Local Authority should have regard to factors such as the size and type of dogs kept (including expected litter size) at a dog breeding establishment when deciding the most appropriate staff: adult dog ratio to apply. The welfare needs must be met for both the adult dogs and expected puppies on the premises.

In particular this relates to accommodation, the dogs' health and environmental and socialisation needs and staff expertise/skill levels. The Regulations state that the maximum number of adult dogs and puppies kept at any one time is stated on the licence. **In no case will it exceed 20 adult dogs per full time attendant or 10 adult dogs per part time attendant** in line with the definitions provided in the Regulations.

The maximum of 20 adult dogs per full time attendant or 10 adult dogs per part time attendant should not be applied as the benchmark. This is a **MAXIMUM** amount of adult dogs. Inspecting officers should consider this ratio on a case by case basis, being proactive in applying an appropriate ratio for the specific premises in order to make sure that all required tasks, including adequate exercise and socialisation programmes for puppies, are realistically able to be completed during the working day.

If the conditions of the licence are not being met within the stipulated ratio, consideration should be given to amending the ratio to reduce the number of animals permitted per member of staff or increase the staffing level.

Supervision should be by a suitable and competent person who should be at least 16 years of age. They should be available and capable of dealing with emergencies.

Examples of how staffing/attendance levels could be evidenced (this list is not exhaustive):

- Proof of residence at the premises
- Payslips/timesheets
- Confirmation of volunteering from recognised charity/organisation
- Witness of attendance at inspection

If the number of dogs on the premises exceeds the specified ratio, actions to reduce the dog count or increase staffing levels over a specified time frame should be evidenced by the breeder.

3.4 Kennel Layout

Dogs used for breeding must be kept in an environment that allows adequate social contact. The Local Authority should consider if it is appropriate for dogs

to be housed in the company of others, unless for reasons of safety and wellbeing they are better kept in isolation.

Hounds kept at hunt kennels are commonly housed in lodges. Each kennel / lodge should provide a raised area where adult dogs can enjoy an elevated view of their surroundings.

The kennel environment should be designed to ensure the safety, wellbeing and welfare of the occupants. This should be reflected in the enhancement and enrichment plan.

4. HEALTH AND WELFARE

It is a condition of all licences issued under the Regulations that the licence holder must take all reasonable steps to protect dogs from pain, suffering, injury and disease. The Local Authority should consider the following in deciding whether that condition is met.

4.1 Registration with a Veterinary Surgeon

The Local Authority should be satisfied that all licence holders are registered with a Veterinary Practice with full details made available to the Licensing Authority.

The Role of Veterinary Inspectors

Under these Regulations, the Local Authority may authorise a veterinarian to be inspector (“Veterinary Inspector”) and may request them to:

- Conduct the initial or renewal inspection of a dog breeding establishment.
- Provide advice to other inspectors.
- For the purposes of ensuring the licence conditions are being complied with, take samples for laboratory testing from any dogs on premises occupied by the licence holder.
- Produce an inspector’s report following an inspection stating whether it is expected that the business will be able to meet the licence conditions (both the general and specific conditions).

Veterinary inspectors should agree their role with the Local Authority in advance, and be clear on whether they will be expected to accompany a Local Authority animal welfare-trained officer or conduct the inspection themselves. If a veterinary inspector is to undertake an inspection on behalf of the Local Authority without a suitably qualified officer present, then the Local Authority should appoint the vet as an inspector under section 51 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Veterinary inspectors must only inspect as to the conditions set out in the License and the statutory guidance, and follow the [RCVS Principles of Certification](#).

The Role of Private Veterinary Surgeons

Private veterinary surgeons who are not veterinary inspectors may be asked to:

- Agree a preventative healthcare plan (PHP) with a licence holder who is registered to their practice for the animals in the licence holder’s care. Read the [BVA, BSAVA, BVZS, CASC and CFSG preventative healthcare plan \(PHP\) guidance notes for private veterinary surgeons](#) and [download our template preventative health care plan](#).
- Conduct a puppy veterinary health check before the sale of a puppy to a new owner;

- Signpost and help the licence holder or prospective buyer to complete a puppy contract, such as [The Puppy Contract](#); or
- Provide appropriate isolation facilities to a licence holder for the care of sick, injured or potentially infectious animals in the event that they are not able to provide separate, self-contained facilities at the licensed establishment. In this scenario, Local Authority inspectors would require from the licence holder a letter from the practice confirming that they would accept an animal with signs or suspicions of infectious disease into their isolation facility.

The role of the private veterinary surgeon, and that of veterinary inspectors should be kept separate and clearly defined. Veterinary inspectors, when acting in that capacity, should act independently and should therefore not inspect their own clients' premises (so as to avoid any potential for a conflict of interest arising).

4.2 Health and Welfare Plan

The Local Authority should be satisfied that the licence holder has agreed a documented Health and Welfare Plan with their Veterinary Surgeon. The Health and Welfare Plan should be a working document used in the daily husbandry and management of the establishment. This should include a vaccination plan and methods of parasitic control.

Early vaccination is recommended against Canine Distemper, Infectious Canine Hepatitis (Canine Adenovirus), Leptospirosis and Canine Parvovirus unless vaccination is contra-indicated on the direction of their Veterinarian.

Vaccination records should be kept for each dog (adult(s) and puppies) and be up to date.

Agreements with their vet should be evidenced by vaccination records, medical checks and any other agreements for each adult dog and puppy.

4.3 Medicines

All medication must be used as per manufacturer's instruction or veterinary prescription.

4.4 Health Status of Dogs

The Local Authority should require the licence holder to undertake daily physical inspection of every animal to check for any signs of illness or distress and record those checks. Particular attention should be taken on recording abnormal observations.

All breeding animals should receive an annual health examination from a veterinary surgeon and be recorded including microchip number.

The Local Authority should also be satisfied that a licence holder will seek advice from a veterinary surgeon where a dog shows signs of significant injury, illness or behavioural disorder and when these deteriorate following advice and treatment.

Puppies should receive a veterinary health examination prior to sale. Details of which should be recorded including the registered microchip number.

4.5 First Aid kit

A fully stocked First Aid kit suitable for use on all dogs should be available and accessible on the premises.

4.6 Protection from Fire

There should be a documented emergency evacuation plan and fire warning procedures in place. This should be posted where staff can easily see and become familiar with it.

Firefighting equipment and detectors should be properly maintained and fire extinguishers serviced or replaced as required.

Heating appliances should not be sited in a location or manner where they may present a risk of fire or risk to dogs.

Precautions should be taken to prevent any accumulation of material, which may present a risk of fire.

4.7 Strategy for the Retirement of Breeding Bitches and Stud Dogs.

The Local Authority should consider the licence holders strategy for dealing with retired dogs including means of disposal and/or methods of re-homing that ensures the welfare of the dog as far as possible.

The Retirement Plan should include neutering by the breeder's veterinary surgeon of ex-breeding animals, prior to re-homing.

4.8 Transport of Dogs

When stud dogs, breeding bitches and puppies are being transported, licensees should ensure full compliance with the Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Wales) Order 2007 and relevant provisions of the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Transportation of young dogs (less than 8 weeks old) in a commercial enterprise is subject to the requirement in Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1/2005, i.e. to be accompanied by their mother.