

# A Healthier Future for Pedigree Dogs

Update Report



# 2

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# 1. Introduction

## i) The Importance of Healthy Dogs

It has been over 3 years since the airing of *Pedigree Dogs Exposed*<sup>1</sup> which then led to a number of reports investigating the extent of the problems set out in the documentary.<sup>2</sup> From this, it was clearly established that there was a serious problem with the way in which dogs are bred in the UK and it is certainly not limited to registered pedigrees. In fact, it would seem that it is difficult to look at breeding in isolation and that a whole host of other issues fall under the same considerations including stray dogs, dangerous dogs, puppy farming and general irresponsible pet ownership.

'Pedigree Dogs Exposed, Three Years On' was aired in February 2012 and revealed some progress. It also set out that there is much more to be done to tackle irresponsible dog breeding and asserted that breeding for extreme characteristics is still prevalent and inherited diseases are still a serious concern for many breeds. However, the documentary did not have all the time necessary to explore all the actions that have been taken nor to look at all of the suggestions for improvements from relevant groups. It has become increasingly clear that there is a great deal of consensus from stakeholders over what should be done to improve the situation and some good work ongoing.

The Associate Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare (APGAW), stated at the December 2011 meeting, following a discussion which included the chairman of the Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding, the RSPCA, Dogs Trust and British Veterinary Association, that it would produce a short update report on dog breeding issues for Members of Parliament and Associate members.<sup>3</sup> Input was requested from a small selected group and involved a questionnaire which did not seek to establish the extent of the problem or the cause of it. This may be seen as limitative, but in view of the reports that have already been published, it was felt that there was no need to repeat the work that had been undertaken previously. The purpose of this mini report is to set out the areas of agreement and identify what has been done and what needs to be done.



<sup>1</sup> *Pedigree Dogs Exposed*, 2008 documentary showed of dogs suffering from hereditary diseases such as Syringomyelia and epilepsy or unable to breathe or run owing to extreme characteristics

<sup>2</sup> Reports including *Breeding and Welfare in Companion Animals* (CAWC 2006), *Pedigree Dog Breeding in the UK: a major welfare concern?* (RSPCA 2008), *A Healthier Future for Pedigree Dogs* (APGAW 2009), *Independent Inquiry into Dog Breeding* (Professor Bateson 2010)

<sup>3</sup> APGAW minutes December 2011 [http://www.apgaw.org/images/stories/6th\\_December\\_2011\\_Meeting\\_Minutes.pdf](http://www.apgaw.org/images/stories/6th_December_2011_Meeting_Minutes.pdf)

## ii) Collective working

*“All those who benefit from dogs have a collective responsibility to work together to protect dog welfare.”<sup>4</sup>*

This statement is undoubtedly true and can include dog breeders, dog owners, show judges and owners of working dogs who can all be involved in making improvements. However, leadership is required to drive progress and ensure that information is gathered and released and the right measures are put in place. This leadership takes the form of the UK’s leading organisation on pedigree dogs: The Kennel Club (KC), the key welfare charities, the Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding and the experts within the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). There are also a number of smaller charities that have expertise and wide membership to disseminate information. Finally, there are the Breed Clubs and Show Judges who need to drive forward the direction given by the Kennel Club and welfare organisations.

*“Improving the situation will require cooperation and action at many different levels and by many different people: research scientists, the specialist dog breeders and the clubs to which they belong, the vet–erinary profession, the dog protection and re-homing charities, the members of the public who buy dogs, Local Authorities, Central Government and Devolved Administrations, when breaches of the law persist. The means for effecting change are those that encourage, guide and (where necessary as a last resort) enforce beneficial changes in the behaviour of those connected with the breeding of dogs.”<sup>5</sup>*

APGAW wholly agrees with Professor Bateson’s view that there needs to be cooperation. As its membership incorporates individuals from all of these mentioned bodies it seems relevant that the group continues to allow debate and assists with progress. Without collective working, the problems will not be solved and dogs will continue to suffer which is contrary to the interests of the KC, vets, welfare organisations and of course, most significantly, the dog owning public.



<sup>4</sup> British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation stakeholder group welfare principles 2009

<sup>5</sup> Professor Bateson Independent Inquiry into Dog Breeding 2010 p7

## 2. Where are we today?

### i) Increased awareness

In March 2012, we saw that 40% of dogs examined failed to pass veterinary checks which resulted in being disqualified from winning 'best of breed' status at Crufts, a move introduced by the Kennel Club to send out a strong message to those viewing on More4. Some breeders have described the checks as unnecessary and there is a feeling the process around them needs to be changed as they are only for a number of breeds but there is no doubt it is a step in the right direction. The vet checks, to ensure the winning dog is not suffering any health consequences as a result of extreme conformation, will continue at all championship dog shows throughout the year. The problems is that in the meanwhile, puppy farms, backyard breeders and unregistered breeders who are not doing any testing have continued unabated and a real part of the solution is to find a way of curbing this. Nonetheless, the positive outcome from the vet checks at Crufts is increased public awareness and a clear message that health is important. The Bateson, RSPCA<sup>6</sup> and APGAW reports all recommended greater public awareness:

*"Prospective dog owners should be advised on what constitutes good welfare in dogs, how to identify a dog breed or type suitable for their personal circumstances, and how to find a dog breeder or other source that will reliably provide a fit, healthy dog plus necessary documentation covering identification and guidance."*<sup>7</sup>

We already know that with a public that is informed and aware, the pressure will mount to breed puppies that meet their demands, are healthy and well socialized and come from responsible and communicative breeders. The public must realise that it is wrong to buy a puppy from a source that gives no opportunity to see the parents or record of health checks or from kennels with a myriad of different puppies living in sub-standard conditions or even from highly competitive show breeders if their main interest lies in outward appearance rather than how genetically and physically healthy the dogs they breed are.

That message is beginning to permeate from stakeholders through to the public thanks to various campaigns, TV documentaries and the reports. Dog breeding has featured on prominent pages in newspapers including The Telegraph, The Times, The Daily Mail and the BBC pages<sup>8</sup> revealing the editors' recognition that the public are interested. So whilst APGAW wanted to know from members if dog breeding is still such a significant issue, the fact that the debate has continued provides a clear answer to this.

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<sup>6</sup> RSPCA report "Pedigree Dog Breeding in the UK: A Major Welfare Concern" <http://www.rspca.org.uk/ImageLocator/LocateAsset?asset=document&assetId=1232712491490&mode=prd>

<sup>7</sup> Professor Bateson Independent Inquiry Into Dog Breeding 2010 p8

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/petshealth/9105682/Crufts-hit-by-row-over-health-of-pedigree-dogs.html>, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/wildlife/6493095/Puppy-health-certificates-recommended-after-Crufts-scandal.html>, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2106592/Leading-vet-calls-pugs-bulldogs-ban-pedigree-dogs-struggle-breathe.html>, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7569064.stm>

## ii) What actions have been taken so far?

### a. Kennel Club

In 2004 in conjunction with the BSAVA, the Kennel Club (KC) distributed the Purebred Dog Health Survey to all breed clubs to pass onto their members. In 2004, they launched the Accredited Breeder Scheme, now renamed the Assured Breeder Scheme, and currently they are seeking to obtain UKAS accreditation. In the case of 'required' tests, checks are performed on both sire and dam prior to litter registration. There are limited formal checks on breeder compliance with 'recommended' tests.

In 2008 the "Fit for Function, Fit for Life" campaign revealed that the KC were already aware of the problem before the "Pedigree Dogs Exposed" documentary. The KC donated £250,000 to the AHT for two years and £1.2m over five years was committed. The KC developed a genetic centre with the AHT to investigate 25 inherited diseases. In 2008 the KC announced a review of the breed standards of every pedigree dog and also instigated regional advisors and mentors for the Accredited Breeder Scheme. In December 2008 Breed Health Plans were sent to all breed clubs listing some of the health problems and minor changes to their breed standards. Clubs were also asked to nominate a single Health Representative for their breed.

BVA/KC canine health schemes and DNA tests analyse results using advanced statistical techniques to calculate the extent to which a disease is hereditary. Further calculation can give any individual dog within a breed population an estimated breeding value (EBV). By using EBVs, it is possible to distinguish between dogs of high and low genetic risk when selecting parents. Additionally, the KC, in conjunction with the Animal Health Trust, set up Mate Select, an online tool to assist breeders in assessing the impact that their proposed mating will have on genetic diversity within breed populations.

The KC has been working with some individual breeders and breed clubs to look at suitable outcrossing programmes and importing dogs from abroad to widen the gene pool.

Breed Watch was established so that breeders and judges can report any changes that they believe are having a negative effect.

From January 2012 the KC has not registered puppies from a bitch that has previously had 2 caesarean sections as well refusing to register puppies from a bitch that has had more than 4 litters. The KC has repeated its request that vets inform them about any surgical conformational alteration to dogs. However, it has been pointed out that some vets can be bad at reporting and they may perceive a conflict in reporting a good client.

### b. Government

In Northern Ireland and Wales ministers are seeking to crack down on irresponsible breeders by tightening up licensing of breeding establishment regulations. The Welsh Government has

produced a second draft of regulations to tackle the issues of puppy farming and irresponsible breeding following an initial consultation which ran from October 2010 to January 2011. The deadline for this second consultation was 23rd May 2012. The Environment Minister also announced a consultation on making it compulsory for all dogs in Wales to be microchipped.

However Defra has no plans to review existing laws on dog breeding in England as confirmed by a Parliamentary Question to the Minister in February 2012.

The Government published the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs and has assisted in the setting up of the Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding and has stated they will consider the advice of that Council.

In April 2012, Defra announced measures intended to address the issues surrounding irresponsible dog ownership which included compulsory microchipping in England.

In May 2012, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee announced their decision to examine the Government's policies on irresponsible dog ownership and welfare issues related to dog breeding.

#### c. Welfare Organisations

The key organisations including RSPCA, Dogs Trust, Blue Cross, PDSA, British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation (BVA AWF) and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons have been participating along with the KC in two stakeholder groups that were set up after 'Pedigree Dogs Exposed' to look at improvement actions.

The RSPCA are collaborating with the Royal Veterinary College and the University of Sydney on a three-year PhD research project to develop a new system for data collection, analysis and interpretation on the prevalence of inherited and acquired disorders in dogs.<sup>9</sup> The aims of this project are to investigate the range and frequency of small animal health problems seen by veterinary surgeons working in general practice and highlight major risk factors for these conditions. They are doing this via electronic patient records held with practices<sup>10</sup> and it is being funded by the RSPCA, Pfizer, the Kennel Club Charitable Trust and BBSRC and also supported by the KC through the supply of data.

The RSPCA set up the Get Puppy Smart campaign which launched in early 2011 aiming to provide potential owners with the information they need to make properly informed decisions when choosing a happy, healthy puppy. It also aims to change the behaviour of buyers from making decisions based solely on appearance to behaviour, health and welfare instead. The RSPCA has more recently launched the Born to Suffer campaign, highlighting the issues associated with some conformation and breeding practices, including engaging supporters.

The BVA Animal Welfare Foundation (BVA AWF) and the RSPCA worked together to develop a puppy contract to enable the public to make properly informed decisions when buying a

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.rvc.ac.uk/VetCOMPASS/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.rvc.ac.uk/VetCOMPASS/Index.cfm>

puppy. The concept is that a seller of any puppy (including pure bred and crossbreed dogs) should provide a 'Puppy Information Pack' ('PIP'). This will provide the buyer with information about the puppy and its parents. The PIP would be tied into a simple Puppy Contract containing a warranty from the seller that the information in the PIP is true and complete.

Dogs Trust and the Kennel Club have also launched a Puppy Plan which complements the Puppy Contract and PIP by providing further information on the socialization and habituation of a puppy. The Kennel Club website provides information on every breed of dog and advice on choosing the right breed based on health, temperament, behaviour characteristics and owner life style.

The key welfare organizations are also part of the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG), which is currently working with a number of internet sites to ensure the responsible advertising of puppies for sale. Similarly the Kennel Club has produced 'apps' to help puppy buyers make sensible selection choices and continues to run the annual Discover Dogs and Crufts events to inform and educate puppy buyers.

The University Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) have set up an information resource for prospective dog owners outlining the genetic welfare problems associated with certain breeds.<sup>11</sup> The University of Cambridge, under the guidance of David Sargan (a member of the Advisory Council) also have a website on inherited diseases of dogs.<sup>12</sup>



Independent dog owner and campaigner, Carol Fowler, has set up a website entitled Dog Breed Health<sup>13</sup> aimed at dog and puppy buyers and outlining the needs of each type of breed as well as providing the main genetic health problems related to that breed and available health screening and DNA tests. The website links to UFAW and includes information from a number of specialists such as Dan O'Neil who is involved with the RVC Vet Compass project.<sup>14</sup>

There have been many other actions carried out by smaller groups including Breed Clubs which are too lengthy to set out in this report. However, some of these actions have had a significant impact on individual breeds and involve health and welfare action plans tackling individual issues in breeds.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ufaw.org.uk/dogs.php>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.vet.cam.ac.uk/idid/>

<sup>13</sup> [www.dogbreedhealth.com](http://www.dogbreedhealth.com)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.rvc.ac.uk/VetCOMPASS/>



# 3. Report Objectives

## **i) An overview**

APGAW did not want to re-visit the debate about the extent of the problem, the specifics of it or to focus on individual organisations. Consequently, there was no collection of evidence from a wide remit including breeders and dog-owners' as was the case with the first report. Instead it was limited to members of the APGAW and took the form of a questionnaire. It was felt that the members had a good understanding of the history and would be able to present the work they had been doing and what they would like to see done. The questionnaire sought to gather quantitative data with some opportunity to expand and move into qualitative responses when respondents were able to elaborate on their answer. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B and the responses can be seen under section 4.

APGAW asked representatives from the BVA, RSPCA, Dog's Trust and Kennel Club to look at the responses and set out their understanding of it to the chairman during a meeting that took place in May 2012. The chairman was keen to ensure that the process was open and transparent, as the main objective of the report is to promote working together. The chairman of the Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding was also asked to give views on the draft report.

## **i) Political Position**

In 2009, there were a number of MPs and Members of the House of Lords who were involved in discussions around dog breeding and demonstrated support for suggested measures that may involve Government action. The General Election changed the political landscape and whilst we have some idea of those who are still interested in the issue, research has revealed that many politicians not know much about it and do not regard it as a serious problem. However, there remains political interest around dangerous dogs and the suggestions of compulsory micro-chipping and a registration system. The report is a way of highlighting the problems around dog breeding again and ensuring Members of the House of Commons and House of Lords have an understanding of the mutual concerns of a number of high profile organisations. Additionally, it links to the other concerns around dog ownership in the UK and these are all issues that are not going to disappear until a better way of regulating them is found. The report will be issued to all political members.

## **i) Defra**

In 2009, The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), stated they were awaiting the publication of the reports before deciding what action to take. In 'A Healthier Future for Pedigree Dogs', APGAW made a number of recommendations which would involve Government action, including a Code of Practice for buying a puppy, a public awareness

campaign and regulations if the softer measures fail to ensure adequate health and welfare of dogs in the UK. Professor Bateson's report and the RSPCA report also made some similar recommendations and one of them, the Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding, was set up with the support of Defra as a result. The purpose of the council is:

*"To provide independent, expert advice and make recommendations on methods and priorities for improving the welfare issues of dog breeding with particular regard to:*

- *Surveillance, research and development*
- *Breeding strategies*
- *Legislation and regulation*
- *Education and publicity.*<sup>15</sup>

Legislation was something the Government was very reluctant to discuss and it was clear that Defra wanted to see the softer measures used first and the collection of accurate data. Since then a General Election has resulted in a change of Government and decision-makers appointed who have not been involved in the debate before. Whilst the Ministers appointed to Defra are aware of the issue owing to organisational campaigns from, for example, the Kennel Club and RSPCA, they remain uncommitted to the idea of regulatory measures. A Parliamentary Question asked on 28th February 2012 confirms that currently Defra is not considering reviewing laws on dog breeding or introducing new laws;

**Justin Tomlinson MP:** *To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if her Department will consider revising the breeding regulations for dogs to reduce the practice of (a) puppy farming and (b) irresponsible breeding.*

**James Paice:** *There are no plans to review existing laws on dog breeding. However, in response to concerns over the health and welfare of pedigree dogs, an independent Dog Advisory Council was set up in 2010, under the chairmanship of Professor Sheila Crispin. The Council works with key dog interest groups such as the Kennel Club and Dogs Trust to try and tackle problems associated with genetic defects in pedigree dogs. The Government will of course consider any recommendations that the Dog Advisory Council make.*<sup>16</sup>

The positive aspect of the Secretary of State's answer here is that he reiterates that the Government will consider recommendations made by the Advisory Council. The Council has participated in this report and hopefully their future recommendations alongside APGAW's will be considered by Defra and will gain the support of Government in tackling this problem. At an APGAW meeting on 24th April 2012, Lord Taylor (Minister with companion animal welfare in his portfolio), stated *"I am concerned about dog breeding practices. It is currently covered under the Animal Welfare Act and local authorities are responsible for prosecutions. Having said that, I am prepared to consider any proposals which would improve the welfare of dogs*

<sup>15</sup> Objectives of the Council - <http://dogadvisorycouncil.org.uk/council-programme-for-2011/>

<sup>16</sup> Parliamentary question February 2012 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201212/cmhansrd/cm120228/text/120228w0001.htm>

*at breeding establishments as long as it does not place a disproportionate burden on those running such establishments.” However, he also added he “would like to consider aspects of what you are suggesting which are not based on legislation because it is difficult to get a slot to get legislation through.”<sup>17</sup>*

Both the Secretary of State and Lord Taylor will be given the report by the APGAW chairman. Their views sought on the points set out within will be asked for by the Chairman.

#### **iv) EFRA Select Committee**

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee have agreed to look more closely at irresponsible dog ownership and breeding which was encouraged by the APGAW chairman, Neil Parish MP, also a member of the EFRA Committee. Mr Parish is well placed to give the Chairman a copy of the update report and to continue to inform committee members of the views of stakeholders. The Select Committee inquiry is an ideal opportunity to look at the existing laws and where the problems lie, whether it is enforcement, interpretation or understanding.

#### **v) Eurogroup**

The EU wide equivalent of APGAW is doing work on the issue of dog breeding and raising the subject across the member states. They have liaised with the APGAW chairman about working together and have a conference scheduled for the Autumn on breeding. One of their key aims as stated on the website is to work for the introduction of:

*“Policies to restrict the breeding of dogs and cats in a way which is likely to cause health and welfare problems*

*Policies and regulations to restrict the breeding and sale of dogs and cats in a way which is likely to cause health and welfare problems*

*Information and education of consumers and the general public to promote responsible ownership and duty of care.”*

APGAW will share information with Eurogroup including relevant reports and support them in raising the issue within the EU in whatever way possible.<sup>18</sup>

#### **vi) Local Government**

Too often local government is forgotten about as regulation is sought yet animal welfare legislation is in practice implemented and enforced by these authorities. The dog wardens and licensees sitting within councils see the breeding premises and pet shops first hand and are

<sup>17</sup> APGAW meeting 24th April 2012. [www.apgaw.org](http://www.apgaw.org)

<sup>18</sup> <http://eurogroupforanimals.org/what-we-do/category/companion-animals/companion-animals>

often the ones picking up the results of irresponsible breeding and ownership. Local authorities must implement legislation within their current frameworks, or develop new structures to support their duties and these can vary, meaning different standards of breeding practice going on across the country. Additionally, the degree of relevant knowledge and expertise of local authorities varies, as does their experience of implementing animal welfare legislation. A more consistent approach to implementing legislation would make things clearer for breeders and the public and assist with educational messages too.

It would be useful to see local authorities looking at how they would like their licensing and dog control measures to operate and feeding into us what would help make it better. APGAW will seek to get the report out to relevant departments within interested councils.



# 4. Responses to the Questionnaire

## i) Who responded?

<b>Organisations</b>	<b>Veterinary Professionals</b>	<b>Independent Veterinary Professional</b>
Anti-Docking Alliance		Dan O'Neil
Ass of Animal Physiotherapy	Dr Gail Williams	Emma Milne
Battersea Cats & Dogs Home		Mark Evans
BSAVA British Small Animal Veterinary Association		Nicola Rooney
British Veterinary Association	Harvey Locke	Steve McCulloch
CAWC Companion Animal Welfare Council		
Cavalier Campaign		
Chance Pixies Animal Rescue		
Conservative Against Foxhunting		
Dogs Trust	Paula Boyden	
Dog Theft Action		
HSI		
The Advisory Council on Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding	Professor Sheila Crispin	
The Blue Cross		
The Kennel Club		
Pets as Therapy		
Poole Dog Wardens		
RSPCA	James Yeates	
Mayhew Animal Rescue		
WAG		

APGAW then went into more depth with the Kennel Club, The Advisory Council on Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding, the RSPCA, the Dog's Trust and the BVA as it was felt these had been the key leaders in acting on dog breeding.

## ii) Statistical results

The quantitative results can be seen in the table below:

Q1. Do you still feel that dog breeding is a significant animal welfare issue that requires priority time and attention?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>23</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>2</b>
Q2. Which body has the most relevance and ability to solve the welfare issues surrounding dog breeding (NB. the lower the number the most relevant and able.	<b>Animal Welfare Bodies</b>	<b>48 points</b>
	<b>Government and Local Gvt.</b>	<b>41 points</b>
	<b>Breeding Groups</b>	<b>49 points</b>
	<b>Veterinary organisations</b>	<b>44 points</b>
3a. Are you aware of the work of the independent advisory council on the welfare of dog breeding?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>25</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>0</b>
3b. Do you think the setting up of this Advisory Council has been a positive step and that it is on the right track?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>In some ways</b>	<b>13</b>
	(elaboration later in report)	
4. Do you agree with some views that we have to take things slowly and that we should not expect to see significant changes immediately or do you feel more should have been done by now?	<b>Agree it will take time</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Disagree/more should have been done by now</b>	<b>18</b>
6. It has been suggested that not enough has been done to improve breeding practice and reward responsible breeders. Do you agree or disagree, and if so, what more needs to be done and how?	<b>Agree</b>	<b>22</b>
	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>2</b>
7. Do you believe that education plays the most significant role in improving the welfare of dogs	<b>Yes</b>	<b>14</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Important but not most significant</b>	<b>11</b>

NB Not all respondents answered all questions hence variation in numbers.

### iii) Qualitative results

#### Question 3b

The 12 who ticked box 3 on question 3b were asked to explain why they felt that the setting up of the advisory council has been a positive step forward and is on the right track in some ways but not all.

**50%** of respondents in this category believe that the Council does not have sufficient powers to make effective change. Individual comments were also made that:

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- a) It was too early to say whether the Council was effective and positive

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  - b) It needed long-term secure funding to give it the time to initiate change

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  - c) It needed to give more information on its strategy

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  - d) It is under-resourced.

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  - e) Some of the work it was doing could be an unnecessary duplication of work being undertaken by other groups.<sup>19</sup>

#### Question 4

In response to Question 4 which asked 'are there any 'no brainer' changes or reforms that you believe could have been introduced', the comments are as follows:

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- 1) Compulsory microchipping or registration to improve traceability

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  - 2) An end to free ad style advertising and sale of dogs in pet shops or unsuitable outlets

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  - 3) Limiting use of popular sires

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  - 4) More data gathering to identify heritable diseases

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  - 5) Code of Practice for Dog Breeding

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  - 6) Revise AWA to protect unborn progeny

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  - 7) Restriction on breeding from animals unable to give birth naturally and where veterinary assessment suggests this is the case breeding should be prohibited on welfare grounds

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  - 8) A clear statement that the person recorded on the permanent identification database is the person with duty of care under the Animal Welfare Act

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  - 9) Removal of all ambiguous language in the breed standards that can encourage deviation from the normal.

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<sup>19</sup> Kennel Club Health Group set up in 2002 which the Chairman of the Advisory Council also sits on. <http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/item/3671>

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10) Tighter regulation of The Breeding of Dogs Act 1973 (as amended by the Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999) as the extent to which it is being enforced varies significantly.

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11) Simple change to the licensing regulations as the current situation is that a person can have up to 5 litters before being licensed leads to lack of control.

### **Question 6**

Question 6 asked those who agreed with the suggestion that 'not enough has been done to improve breeding practice and reward responsible breeders' to state what more could be done? Comments which had large consensus are as follows:

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1) More protection of whistle blowers and responsible breeders, find a way of reward as well as punishment.

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2) Outside the KC and breed clubs there is an almost total lack of regulation to guide and educate breeders. Should be more.

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3) A good licensing scheme as part of a Government recognised scheme that gives confidence to consumers and public could be advised not to buy from breeders who do not have this licence.

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4) Breeders of dogs that have failed screening tests should not be registered by any organisation

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5) All breeders should have an identification number that forms part of the permanent identification of any puppy. Registered number should appear on advertisements

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6) Inform consumers more so they drive improvements

### **Question 8**

Question 8 asked what more could be done to 'assist with education and who should it be targeted at?' This has been listed in order of most agreement:

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1) Education in schools and young people

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2) Education must be targeted at puppy buyers

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3) The education of breeders (opportunities exist through the KC who have services like Mate Select<sup>20</sup>).

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4) Joint working between the related groups to reach as wide an audience as possible

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5) National campaign – media, newspapers, T.V, internet

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6) Vets playing a key role in educating clients

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<sup>20</sup> Kennel Club Mate Select: <http://www.the-kennelclub.org.uk/services/public/mateselect/Default.aspx>



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7) Focus on key messages rather than the complex details – breeding – problems – pain, simple tools not genetics

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8) Better use of the DEFRA Code of Practice for Dogs – should be in vets, pet shops, websites selling puppies.

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9) All related groups should offer sound advice on websites for general public

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### **Question 9**

Question 9 was split into 4 sections asking for views on Dog Shows/Judges, Registration, Genetic Diversity and the Assured Breeders Scheme. The main points are as follows:

#### **a. Dog Shows/Judges**

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1) Health and temperament checks should occur in primary rounds of showing

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2) Where schemes exist, dogs must pass health tests before being allowed to show

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3) Health test results should be available to the judge in the ring

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4) Breeders who continue to breed from dogs with health conditions or overly enhanced characteristics should be banned from showing

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5) Inspection should be as effective at minor shows as major ones

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6) Judges should never be breeders of the breed they are adjudicating

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7) More scope in shows for cross-bred dogs

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8) Veterinary checks at shows to be done by independent vets including full clinical examination on all dogs that win any class/breed and findings to be public.

#### **b. Registration**

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1) Dogs should not be eligible for registration unless parents have had appropriate health checks [and the results of those checks must be taken into account?].

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2) Dogs should not be registered with the KC unless they have a COI of <12.5 measured over 5 generations

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3) Registration should be reliant upon all current health and DNA screens for all breeds [not as simple as appears and could argue the results are as important as the tests, as is the regularity of testing on a breed by breed basis – needs more thought]

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4) Revision of registration rules should permit outcrossing to overcome health issues.

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5) The database that records the puppy's identity should be linked to individual breeder registration

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6) The registration database should be co-ordinated centrally and funded by bodies with major stake in canine welfare.

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7) Not registering more than 5 litters from one father.

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8) Ban on registration of dogs born from dam's second caesarean

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### **c. Genetic Diversity**

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1) Maximum number of matings for sires should be set.

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2) Outcrossing should be enforced for breeds which are clearly beyond saving within the current gene pool and hence registration rules to permit outcrossing to overcome health issues.

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3) Dog Advisory Council should develop actions to help all breeds but also tactical breed specific rescue plans to solve issues faced by each breed. This is unrealistic – there are a number of breeds that do not have “issues”. Any actions must involve other organisations with greater resources than those of the Council. As one example, accurate prevalence data were regarded as a priority by Prof Bateson – to collect such data takes time.

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4) An emphasis on selection for desired behavioural characteristics

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### **d. Assured Breeders Scheme**

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1) Needs to be an independent scheme under the UK Dogs and Society strategy.

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2) Health screening tests need to be obligatory and be enforced and membership reliant upon positive and unaffected tests.

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3) Breeders needs to be inspected regularly – unannounced spot checks

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4) Link it with Local Authorities in some kind of breeder licensing scheme

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5) Make the public more aware of Assured Breeders Scheme.

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6) Inspections need to be independent as self-governing currently.

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7) Incentives for good breeders with fewer inspections and reduced registration costs

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8) Advice too ambiguous on health tests, vaccinations and general care

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9) UKAS Accreditation needed.<sup>21</sup>

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10) The ABS needs to implement any advice from the Advisory Council (see AC document on Standard for Breeding)

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<sup>21</sup> Kennel Club is going through the process currently. [http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=3839&d=pg\\_dtl\\_art\\_news&h=242&f=0](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=3839&d=pg_dtl_art_news&h=242&f=0)

# 5. Analysis of Results

## a) Priority Issue

With 90% of respondents ticking 'yes' it is clear that dog breeding remains a significant animal welfare issue. 72% feel that more should have been done to improve the welfare issues of dog breeding by now whilst 28% disagreed and were of the view that it will be a slow process to achieve improvement. It is clear that APGAW should continue to put time aside to assist in whatever ways possible.

## b) Relevant Bodies

Respondents put National Government and Local Government as being the most relevant and able to solve the welfare issues surrounding dog breeding followed by veterinary organisations, then animal welfare bodies and lastly breeding groups. It is likely that it was felt that in terms of power, action from Government could help to solve the problem quickly and that would filter down to the vets, breeders and welfare groups. This does indicate that it is right to keep the pressure on politicians to see this as a serious issue and to consider regulatory measures, but it would be unwise to rely on regulation firstly happening and secondly completely solving the problem.

## c) Advisory Council

All respondents are aware of the Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding and 48% agreed that setting it up was a positive step and it was on the right track. Nobody disagreed with this but 52% had reservations based mainly on the lack of power given to the Council. Defra has stated it will 'consider the recommendations made to them' by the Council but it appears respondents feel the Council should have more statutory power to apply recommendations immediately. There were also concerns over whether it had the resources both with regard to people and money to enable it to reach its full potential as the council is currently voluntary. It would be useful to secure long-term funding to provide the time to initiate change and expedite the work. There was also concern about how limited resources are used in the meantime. With so many organisations doing work on this issue, it is likely there will be duplication which is unnecessary and communication is important to prevent this from happening. However, the chairman of the Council is well-placed to be aware of other work being undertaken and is able to adapt the agenda as required.<sup>22</sup>

## d) Education

56% agree that education plays the most significant role in improving the welfare of dogs with 44% seeing it as important but not the most significant way of improving welfare. No respondents disagreed that education was important. 48% felt that the best way to educate

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<sup>22</sup> Sheila Crispin biography and list of appointments: <http://www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/rcvs-council/council-members/sheila-crispin/>

was through the younger generations and through schools. Whilst it was strongly set out that puppy buyers have to be targeted, 20% of respondents did point out that it was also important to educate breeders because some of the problems may arise from ignorance and simply not being aware that hereditary diseases were being caused by wrong choice of sire or the need for screening. Whilst there seems to be tools to use such as Mate Select<sup>23</sup> and the Defra Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs,<sup>24</sup> it was felt they are not used to best effect, needed to incorporate more on puppies as it is currently ineffective regarding breeding and could benefit from better exposure. It was also felt the Code needed to be more user-friendly and perhaps could have two versions; one which is the full length one and a précis that can be used to flash up on websites or be displayed in pet shops. There was agreement that it is important to send out a clear and uniform message from all the welfare and veterinary organisations so that the public do not get confused. Key messages are important and there will be much better chance of changing behaviour and developing awareness if all stakeholders deliver the same concise message – that puppy health is important and to choose your breeder carefully.

#### **e) No brainer reforms**

The 'no brainer' changes or reforms show that the majority of stakeholders strongly believe that compulsory micro-chipping is an easy solution. Since the questionnaire was sent out, Defra has announced micro-chipping for all puppies but this is not a perfect solution as it currently stands. It will be important to ensure all puppies are identified before leaving the breeder and also that the registration is amended as ownership changes. A number of respondents also felt another 'no brainer' is changing the way in which puppies are sold through uncontrolled free ads or unsuitable outlets.

#### **f) Breeding practice and standards**

In order to improve breeding practice, which was considered necessary by 84% of respondents, the issue of identification arose again with the need for the tracking of the puppy to the breeder throughout the process including advertising to develop the feeling of responsibility. This would need to be done alongside Government advice to the public not to purchase a puppy from breeders who do not possess any identification. It was clearly recognised that apart from the Kennel Club there is a lack of guidance and education for breeders and this needed to be improved. There was also the suggestion that there be more reward and punishment schemes in place. There needs to be a way of signposting good breeders and finding ways of supporting and promoting them.

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<sup>23</sup> Kennel Club Mate Select: <http://www.the-kennelclub.org.uk/services/public/mateselect/Default.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> Defra Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13333-cop-dogs-091204.pdf>

There remains a concern over the breed standards and the ambiguity of the language within them with words such as 'relatively' or 'slightly' used rather than clear definition, which then leads to different interpretations. It is acknowledged that the KC has done some work on the breed standards but the feeling is that it is still not enough. The KC's explanation of this is that they do not deny there may be some changes still needed but it cannot be done in one move, which would risk losing the co-operation of the breed groups. It is something they are doing in stages to ensure compliance. It would be useful for the KC to be transparent about what the stages are and when the stages will be actioned. The BVA has written to the KC setting out where they feel problems remain within the breed standards and the KC has acknowledged there may still be amendments to be made and stated that it is willing to discuss those possible amendments with outside organisations. Further independent input into the breed standards is something most stakeholders would welcome and would be seen as very positive steps in the right direction.

Concern over the term 'fit for function' was expressed as it can be interpreted as the function the breed was originally bred for, rather than the function of being a pet, as the majority of dog breeds now are. For example, it was pointed out that the Lhasa apso that won Crufts 2012, had long sheets of hair over her face which impaired her vision. This was commented on during showing but was defended by saying that Lhasas are originally from Tibet where the climate is severe and they needed the hair to protect their eyes. A better focus might be simply that pet dogs are bred to be for the function of being a pet.

### **g) Showing**

With regard to showing, collation of the comments made reveals that most respondents want to see health checks taking place in the primary rounds of showing or even before, so that dogs not clear of hereditary disease or overly enhanced characteristics do not even enter the show ring. Currently it is only the best of breed winners of the 15 high profile breeds at all championship dog shows which are checked, an approach started at Crufts in 2012. The breeds were identified as having particular health problems often due to poor conformation as a result of having been bred with exaggerated characteristics. The veterinary surgeon checks the dog which has been chosen as best of breed in four areas: eye problems, lameness, skin disease and respiratory difficulties. Therefore, it is looking at the health consequences of conformation rather than areas like hip dysplasia or internal conditions. Stakeholders clearly want to see more than this with any health tests ready upon demand by a judge at any point during the show. Subsequent discussions with the KC have set out the reasons why they consider it would be difficult to insist on health testing for all dogs. It would take too long to health check every dog at a show as there are 210 KC registered breeds and so they have focused on the breeds that have the most problems. The aim is to stop badly bred dogs winning at shows so that the health and welfare issues are not perpetuated.

APGAW understands the point about it taking too long to health check every dog but feels there could be a way around this by requesting that entry to dog shows is done by each exhibitor filling in a form that includes relevant health tests as a way of demonstrating how seriously the KC regard the showing of untested dogs. However, at the least the KC should be open to adding to the list of 15 if there is scientifically proven reason to do so and that they should be open to suggestions on this basis. They have indicated that this is already the case. Of course, the ideal aim is to reduce the list as an indication that health problems are being solved but it is important that showing continues to send the message that health is of utmost importance and a dog which is suffering from health problems owing to conformation errors is not going to be used as a good example of its breed. It is perfectly possible to assess health and the important attributes without turning it into a full clinical examination and shows should involve vets and judges who are capable to doing this before choosing winning dogs.

#### **h) Registration & Identification**

Under registration there was a similar consensus that pedigree dogs should not be registered unless they have had all current health and DNA checks beforehand. However, the Kennel Club is the only registration organisation that is actively taking action on pedigree dog health. It will encounter difficulties convincing breeders to health check dogs and to follow a number of rules which are all ultimately a choice although many breeders are supportive of these changes. Pressure is going to grow to ensure that these dogs meet the quality standard expected from such an organisation and the welfare groups can help to ensure breeders have to consider these issues. If the message sent out is that no buyer should accept a puppy without health checks then any good breeders are going to have to realise the Kennel Club is doing the right thing. Therefore, all stakeholders need to ensure that they speak with one voice and issue one message.

Permanent identification is seen as a crucial part of improving the problems associated with irresponsible breeding and in fact many other dog related problems. Compulsory micro-chipping was heavily favoured by the respondents, to which the Government has now agreed. However, what is also needed for it to work is the requirement to amend the ownership of the dog every time it changes and to set out that the person recorded via the micro-chip is the one responsible for the dog. The micro-chipping needs to start with the breeder who then has it changed to the puppy buyer. In essence, bad breeders will feel that any health problems will be traceable and unable to evade their responsibilities. This will make it more difficult for the backyard breeder and those selling puppies in random locations with no traceability, as it could also work alongside an improved licensing system.

## i) Breeders Licence

Currently, a licence must be held if “during any 12-month period, five or more litters of puppies are born to bitches which you keep on your premises (or elsewhere).”<sup>25</sup> The majority of respondents feel that this current 5 litter before licence requirement is too high. The KC has pointed out that for some breeds there may only be one or two puppies and therefore the five-litter rule is appropriate. However, APGAW sees this as relevant to only a small number of breeds and on the whole believes that most litters will be around four or five puppies. The RSPCA believes that all breeds should be able to meet the minimum standards and whilst they understand that licensing everyone who breeds one litter could cause enforcement issues, particularly if that litter is an accident, they feel that licencing should be triggered at two litters. Additionally in the minutes of their meeting on 30 November 2011, the Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding noted that when discussing a review of the current legislation relating to the breeding of dogs, it was recognised that “negligent care on the part of smaller breeders could cause just as serious welfare problems for individual dogs, that the numbers of dogs affected per breeder were likely to be very much lower than for larger commercial breeders, but that while small breeders might not produce many dogs each, collectively they did produce a large proportion of the UK total.” This led to an agreement that “it was important that the same standards of welfare should be required of everyone.” APGAW is aware of the concern over enforcement and also the KC point about hobby breeders so feels that 3 litters is a good compromise allowing those hobby breeders to still have two litters without needing to engage with Local Authorities.

There is scope for Local Authorities to set their own fees to assist them in managing the inspection responsibility. The Breeding of Dogs Act 1973 states:

*‘Fees (3) A local authority may set the level of fees to be charged by virtue of subsection (2) of this section-*

*(a) with a view to recovering the reasonable costs incurred by them in connection with the administration and enforcement of this Act and the Breeding of Dogs Act 1991; and*

*(b) so that different fees are payable in different circumstances.’<sup>26</sup>*

It is felt that there should be incentives within the fee setting and the inspection in a way which will lessen the burden on good breeders. The authority could potentially work in conjunction with the KC on the Assured Breeders Scheme if the standard was acceptable, use the Puppy Contract and Puppy Information Pack (PIP) and Puppy Plan, or introduce its own standards that result in a lower priced fee. Meeting higher standards will mean the inspection burden lessens to perhaps annual visits by either the KC or LA and by seeking to also improve socialization of puppies it can impact on dogs being relinquished which will lessen the burden on the authority dealing with stray dogs. This system could work in conjunction with Trading Standards then

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/64/contents>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/64/contents>

being able to endorse the breeding premises that meet certain conditions. The breeders could use the endorsement on their advertising. The aim is to find a way of rewarding those who achieve high standards and encourage others to improve from satisfactory to high standards whilst giving potential buyers the opportunity to select from the best establishments/breeders.

### **j) Outcrossing**

It has been suggested by some of the key welfare groups that there needs to be a revision of rules to permit outcrossing in the tackling of very serious breed issues. The point on outcrossing was also raised a number of times under Genetic Diversity. The production of policy which allows for new genetic material to be introduced to breeds whose effective population size falls below a viable level or where a breed related disease is very widespread is quite an obvious solution but one that could face resistance from some breed groups, although the Kennel Club has already put this into effect in Dalmatians, Bloodhound, Otter hound, Foxhound, Poodle, Miniature Bull Terrier, Dachshund and Belgian Shepherd<sup>27</sup> This is something which could be further looked at through the Advisory Council on the Welfare Issue of Dog Breeding via breed specific rescue plans if it was considered part of the Council's remit and with the input of geneticists. The KC has confirmed that it is willing to look at crossbreed programmes as long as they are scientifically based and furthermore that it will register these crossbreeds and allow them to be shown. Further clarification on at what point the KC would register offspring would be useful, e.g. F1 generation? Nonetheless the fact the KC are addressing this important area is indeed a positive step.

There was also a lot of support for a limit on the number of matings permitted for each sire to allow registration. Currently the KC has a limit of 4 litters per bitch but no limits on sires. Other organisations feel there should be some sort of upper limit set even if it starts at a high number to prevent reducing the gene pool. The KC is wary of doing this as its view is that if the sire has been health checked and can produce disease free offspring it is better that it be allowed to continue siring rather than unhealthy sires being used. There is currently work being done on this, on a breed by breed basis, to ensure that if a limit was to be put in place it would be done based on scientific information to ensure it does not worsen any genetic disease issues. This work should be expedited to prevent the overuse of specific highly sought after sires that risk shrinking the gene pool further as health checking a sire will not detect recessive genes that may only become apparent once he has bred with certain bitches.

### **k) Assured Breeder Scheme**

According to the majority of respondents, the Assured Breeder Scheme is not a perfect solution but it is a good concept and something that could potentially be expanded, especially if the protocol set out in the Advisory Council's Standard for Breeding was adopted. A number

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=4204&d=pndpr&h=pnhpr&f=pnfpr>



of respondents did state they felt it should be independent, but the KC is the only organisation running such a scheme. The majority felt that the health screening tests needed to be obligatory and enforced and membership reliant upon tests being carried out. Currently results are published on the KC's online Health Test Results Finder, and in the Kennel Club Breed Record Supplement, but in the majority of cases the requirement is for the test to be carried out and there is limited restriction on breeding for an animal that has a poor test result. There is however a requirement that no mating should take place if the test results indicate that it would be inadvisable in the sense that it is likely to produce health or welfare problems in the offspring and/or it is advisable in the context of a relevant breeding strategy. The minimum standards that are required in order to breed should be revised. It is very clear that inspections and spot checks need to increase significantly but there would certainly be resource implications. There was the suggestion that the Scheme be linked to the Local Authorities as part of their licensing arrangements and this has been touched upon earlier in this chapter.

Discussions with the key organisations suggest that they would direct the public towards the ABS if they were satisfied with the requirements set out within it. This could then be used with the new BVA Animal Welfare Foundation/RSPCA Puppy Contract and lead into the KC/Dog's Trust Puppy Plan. 8,000 ABS individuals are currently using a KC issued contract and all stakeholders agree that a contract is a needed. There are elements in the Puppy Contract devised by the BVA Animal Welfare Foundation and the RSPCA with endorsement from CAWC, UFAW, PDSA, Dog's Trust and the Advisory Council, that the KC are not happy with so they are using their own version which is seen as a lot less stringent by stakeholders. It would be much more useful if there was just one contract promoted and used. The Puppy Contract is due for review in 12 months and it is hoped that a resolution can be found which results in a single contract promoted and used by all stakeholders.



## **Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding (Council)**

- i. Council to continue to provide advice on the priority welfare issues associated with dog breeding.
- ii. Pressure on Defra and other bodies to supply long-term funding to the Council
- iii. Council's powers to be extended so that it becomes an independent regulatory body.
- iv. Close partnership working with APGAW, Welfare Organisations, the veterinary profession, academic institutions, other committed expert bodies and individuals, lending support to Council recommendations

## **Breed standards and showing**

- i. Whilst the KC is constantly looking at the breed standards, it is felt it would be vital to have an annual review of progress on the standards and to progress improvements involving all key stakeholders and to seek to remove any ambiguity in the language used within them.
- ii. Consideration given to the meaning of "fit for function" and being a pet.
- iii. The KC should add to the list of 15 high profile breeds which are health checked before obtaining Best in Breed prizes if the science suggests there may be a problem with any other breed. This is in hand, as are the ways in which the High Profile Breeds can come off the list as the problems have been solved. It makes it much fairer if the traffic is two way and breeds can be removed once the problems have been tackled, as well as added

## **Microchipping and identification**

- i. Permanent identification in the form of compulsory micro-chipping provides a means of tracing individual animals. However, the recoding system must ensure that the person registered on the database is the one responsible for the dog, so that any change of ownership and address is recorded. The first name to appear on the micro-chip database must be that of the breeder and the data must be updated when the puppy is sold; much like the current V5 for car ownership with failure to report changes of ownership resulting in a penalty.
- ii. Those breeding on a commercial basis of 3 litters or more will have a licence number with licence conditions and enforcement improved which should be recorded on adverts as another way of improving accountability and also allowing the creation of a system which rewards good breeders as local authorities could endorse them.

### **Dog Breeding Licence**

- i. Licensing requirement should be reduced to 3 or more litters.
- ii. The Local Authority should consider setting the licensing fee based on standards of breeding. Those who are operating to a high standard using tools such as the Assured Breeder Scheme, Puppy Contracts & Puppy Plan, Health testing should pay a smaller fee. Those who are doing the bare basics should pay more, as there will be a requirement for more inspection and work for the Local Authority.
- iii. The Local Authority should consider operating an endorsement system for good breeders who are reducing their workload which they can signpost puppy buyers towards and allow them to use the LA Approval badge on their advertising.

### **Better Breeding Standards**

- i. The KC should adopt the Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding standards.
- ii. There should be a reward and punishment scheme set up between KC and licensing authorities that encourages whistleblowers, offers protection and anonymity to those who come forward to report bad breeding practice and removal from the ABS or any kind of accreditation available for those failing to meet a set standard. The Kennel Club currently use complaints as a basis for carrying out informed and targeting inspections, in addition to their routine inspections and this could be expanded where either the KC or Local Authority sees the necessity for spot checks and more self-policing of breeders.

### **Education**

- i. Animal welfare should be part of the core curriculum as opposed to a 'bolt on' as part of citizenship. Dog breeding and genetics could be used as a teaching tool in biology as well as under citizenship. It has been agreed by all stakeholders that irresponsible dog ownership can be tackled early on by teaching children and young people about pet ownership and care and this should be advocated by Government.
- ii. All stakeholders must ensure a consistent message is sent out to educate puppy buyers and that it is clear and easy to understand. Similar to the Dogs Trust 'A Puppy is for Life and Not Just for Christmas', a key message could be used between all organisations such as 'Healthy from Birth, Fit for Life' with further expansion on "key signs to ensure your new puppy is free from disease and pain" set out on websites and leaflets.

- iii. More engagement should take place with business like the Petfood Manufacturing Association (PFMA) and Pet Care Trust to ensure the key message is delivered through retailers and those involved in pet care.

### **Code of Practice**

- i. These Codes should have included breeding with hereditary disease and exaggerated features under Section 5. The Need to be Protected from Pain, Suffering, Injury and Disease. Defra should consider amending.
- ii. As it is currently not used to its best potential and could benefit from better exposure, it is recommended that the Code of Practice should be in veterinary practices, pet shops and flashing up on websites selling puppies.

### **Puppy Contracts**

- i. All stakeholders believe that a puppy contract is a good tool to use in the buying and selling of puppies. However, it would be useful to get the KC, Blue Cross together with the remaining breed clubs to join the main stakeholders who have already endorsed the BVA AWF and RSPCA Puppy Contract Therefore APGAW would like to see full agreement when the Contract is reviewed in 12 months.

# 7. Conclusion



APGAW has deliberately set out feasible action points as opposed to a 'wish list' of legislation from the Government and demands from the KC. Some may believe the actions points do not go far enough but this is not the end of the debate, merely a consideration of where we currently stand. There is no sign that the fortitude of stakeholders to address this issue is slowing down and we have seen lots of ongoing activity including the Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding setting out their action plan and the Welfare Groups developing the Puppy Contract. Of course, concern remains that some measures are taking too long to initiate and more extreme controls need to be put in place. There are elements of truth to this but also APGAW has found that a lot of work has been done which is not known. It is important that the larger stakeholders find ways of keeping the smaller groups informed and involved in activities, as it is those smaller groups who are doing a great deal to create awareness and assist in the education of puppy buyers and breeders.

APGAW along with stakeholders will continue to put pressure on Government to take action to prevent dogs from suffering and to ensure the public is aware and protected from poor breeding practice. APGAW will also encourage debate within Parliament and in the EU and support the stakeholders in their campaigns on this issue. There is a commitment to preventing further poor welfare caused by irresponsible breeding and there remains a large amount of work to be done in achieving this. However, it is clear that there is tremendous dedication to resolving the existing problems and that progress has been made.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Parish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Neil Parish MP

Chairman of the Associate Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare

# 30 Appendix A

<http://www.apgaw.org/images/stories/PDFs/a-healthier-future-for-pedigree-dogs.pdf>



## Dog breeding update questionnaire

1 Do you still feel that dog breeding is a significant animal welfare issue that requires priority time and attention?

YES

NO

2. Which body has the most relevance and ability to solve the welfare issues surrounding dog breeding? (in order of relevance with 1 being most relevant)

Animal Welfare Bodies

Central and Local Government

Breeding Groups

Veterinary organisations

3. a) Are you aware of the work of the independent advisory group on dog breeding?

Yes

No

b) Do you think the setting up of this advisory group has been a positive step forward and that it is on the right track?

Yes

No

In some ways but not all (briefly explain why)


4. Do you agree with some views that we have to take things slowly and that we should not expect to see significant changes immediately or do you feel more should have been done by now?

Agree that it will take time and we need to be patient

Disagree and feel more should have been done by now

5. Are there any 'no brainer' changes or reforms that you believe could have been introduced?


6. It has been suggested that not enough has been done to improve breeding practice and reward responsible breeders. Do you agree or disagree, and if so, what more needs to be done and how?


7. Do you believe that education plays the most significant role in improving the welfare of dogs?

Yes       No       It is important but not the most significant

8. What more can be done to assist with education and whom should it be targeted at?




9. There have been specific areas highlighted where work can be done to improve welfare. What are your brief views on these areas which include:

Dog shows/judges


Registration


Genetic Diversity (popular sires & opening of stud book)


Assured Breeders Scheme


# 34 Appendix C

## Summary of Dog breeding licence (England, Scotland & Wales)

If you breed dogs for sale you may need a licence from your local authority.

You will be presumed to be carrying on a dog breeding business if, during any 12-month period, five or more litters of puppies are born to bitches which you keep on your premises (or elsewhere).

In Scotland, a licence is also required to rear dogs for sale.

Applications must include details of your premises and the dogs kept and should be accompanied by a licence fee. Fees are set by local authorities, and may vary from area to area.

Before a licence is granted, your premises will be inspected for suitability by a veterinary surgeon or practitioner and/or a local authority inspector.

In particular, you will need to demonstrate that:

- the dogs are kept in suitable accommodation
- the dogs are adequately supplied with food, water and bedding
- the dogs receive adequate exercise
- the dogs continue to receive adequate food, water, bedding materials and exercise when being transported to or from your premises
- you have taken appropriate steps to protect the dogs in case of fire or other emergency, eg by providing fire extinguishers
- you have taken all reasonable precautions to prevent and control the spread of disease among the dogs, e.g. by providing isolation facilities

Licences are valid for one year and must be renewed before the expiry date if you wish to continue as a dog-breeding establishment.

Licences will be subject to conditions including:

- not mating bitches until they are at least one year old
- ensuring that bitches do not give birth to more than one litter per year and six litters in their lifetime
- maintaining accurate breeding and sale records

If you are a licensed dog breeder, you must:

- only sell dogs at a licensed breeding establishment, a licensed pet shop or a licensed Scottish rearing establishment

- not sell dogs (except to a licensed pet shop owner or rearing establishment) if you know or suspect that the buyer intends to re-sell them
- not sell a dog which is less than eight weeks old, unless it is to a licensed pet shop or rearing establishment
- not sell to the keeper of a licensed pet shop or rearing establishment a dog which was not born at a licensed breeding establishment
- ensure that any dog sold to a licensed pet shop or rearing establishment is wearing a collar with an identifying tag or badge when delivered

Similar requirements regarding the sale of dogs apply to licensed rearing establishments in Scotland.

**Useful Links:****Independent Inquiry into Dog Breeding by Professor Bateson**

<http://breedinginquiry.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/final-dog-inquiry-120110.pdf>

**RSPCA report – Pedigree Dog Breeding in the UK: A Major Welfare Concern?**

<http://www.rspca.org.uk/ImageLocator/LocateAsset?asset=document&assetId=1232712491490&mode=prd>

**CAWC – Breeding and Welfare in Companion Animals report**

<http://www.cawc.org.uk/sites/default/files/CAWCModifications.pdf>

**Pedigree Dogs Exposed Blog Spot**

<http://pedigreedogsexposed.blogspot.co.uk/>

**APGAW report – A Healthier Future for Pedigree Dogs**

<http://www.apgaw.org/reports-a-publications/pedigree-dog-report>

**Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding**

<http://dogadvisorycouncil.org.uk/>

**Kennel Club – Health and Welfare**

<http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/item/3315>

<http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/breeding/index.html>

**Carol Fowler – Dog Breed Health**

<http://www.dogbreedhealth.com/>

**UFAW report – Genetic Welfare Problems of Companion Animals**

<http://www.ufaw.org.uk/geneticwelfareproblems.php>

**David Sargan, University of Cambridge – Inherited Diseases in Dogs**

<http://www.vet.cam.ac.uk/idid/>

**Clare Rusbridge – Veterinary Neurologist**

<http://www.veterinary-neurologist.co.uk/>

## Contracts

### **BVA AWF and RSPCA Puppy Contract**

<http://puppycontract.rspca.org.uk/home>

### **Kennel Club Contract**

<http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/download/9042/ABS-Sales-contract.pdf>

### **Dogs Trust and Kennel Club Puppy Plan**

<http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/item/4161/23/5/3>



APGAW

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