

Proposed Responsible Breeding and Ownership of Dogs (Scotland) Bill

Page 1: Introduction

A Proposal for a Bill to improve the health and wellbeing of dogs throughout their lives by strengthening the regulation of the activity of breeding, and of selling or transferring puppies, and by establishing a more responsible and informed approach to acquiring and owning a puppy or dog. The consultation runs from 4 May 2018 to 30 July 2018 All those wishing to respond to the consultation are strongly encouraged to enter their responses electronically through this survey. This makes collation of responses much simpler and quicker. However, the option also exists of sending in a separate response (in hard copy or by other electronic means such as e-mail), and details of how to do so are included in the member's consultation document. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer All responses must include a name and contact details. Names will only be published if you give us permission, and contact details are never published – but we may use them to contact you if there is a query about your response. If you do not include a name and/or contact details, we may have to disregard your response. Please note that you must complete the survey in order for your response to be accepted. If you don't wish to complete the survey in a single session, you can choose "Save and Continue later" at any point. Whilst you have the option to skip particular questions, you must continue to the end of the survey and press "Submit" to have your response fully recorded. Please ensure you have read the consultation document before responding to any of the questions that follow. In particular, you should read the information contained in the document about how your response will be handled. The consultation document is available here: [Consultation document Privacy Notice](#)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice attached to this consultation which explains how my personal data will be used

Page 2: About you

Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

an individual

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

Member of the public

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what expertise or experience you have that is relevant to the subject-matter of the consultation:

I currently have two re-homed dogs and was, in the past, an officer with Beagle Welfare so I have experience with breeders, owners and re-homing issues. Beagles are one of the breeds most commonly puppy-farmed because their pups are extremely cute. However, they are a very challenging breed to train so there is, unfortunately, a high incidence of re-homing for precisely the reasons that your proposed bill addresses - a combination of unscrupulous breeding and lack of homework by prospective buyers.

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

No Response

Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

Please provide your name or the name of your organisation. This will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication". Otherwise this is the name that will be published with your response.

Clare Donaldson

Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number. We will not publish these details.

Page 8: A - Reducing the threshold for a breeding licence to three litters a year

Q1. Which of the following best describes your view of reducing the threshold for a breeding licence from five to three litters in a twelve month period?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response, including any advantages or disadvantages.

No "hobby breeder" should be responsible for five litters over the course of a year - assuming they kept each litter until they were at least eight weeks then it would mean they breeding for much of the year. No one breeding this many litters should be anything other than a licensed breeder.

Page 9: B - Extending the breeding licence regime to any form of transfer, not only sale

Q2. Which of the following best describes your view of requiring people to be licensed as breeders even if they do not sell their puppies, but transfer them/give them away?

Fully supportive

Please give reasons for your answer, including any advantages or disadvantages.

Breeders are responsible for the puppies they breed - transferring/giving them away would provide puppy farmers with a different way of laundering funds and allows them to evade responsibility for their actions. There are already too many unwanted/unhomed dogs - irresponsible breeding, just for the sake of it, just adds to the problem.

Page 10: C - Introducing a temporary registration scheme for those that breed fewer than three litters a year

Q3. Which of the following best describes your view of introducing a temporary registration scheme for those breeding one or two litters in a 12 month period who wish to sell or transfer their puppies?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your answer, including any advantages or disadvantages.

Puppies are not a commodity. Anyone breeding in order to sell should have no issue with having to be registered - only those with something to hide would argue with this scheme. At the end of the day, animal welfare is more important than breeder inconvenience.

Q4. Under the proposal, someone with only one or two litters in a 12 month period found to be selling or transferring puppies without completing an online temporary registration would be committing an offence and may be liable to pay a fine. Which of the following best describes your view on this?

Fully supportive

Please give reasons for your answer, including any advantages or disadvantages.

£200 fine might be acceptable for a genuine mistake but I would suggest it should rise extremely steeply for repeat offenders to ensure that it has a deterrent effect - when puppies are passing hands for well in excess of £5000 a litter, £200 could be considered worth the risk by unscrupulous breeders.

Page 11: D - Ensuring future health and welfare needs of dogs through a more responsible and informed approach to acquiring and owning a puppy/dog

Q5. Which of the following best describes your view of creating an obligation on prospective owners to consider carefully a set of questions related to their capacity to take on a puppy/dog?

Fully supportive

Please give reasons for your answer, including any advantages or disadvantages.

Any reputable breeder would already be vetting prospective owners to ensure that their pups are going to good homes - this should be MANDATORY for all breeders. Just as good breeders will have a clause giving them first option on rehoming if the puppy-owner's circumstances change, I would like to see something similar for ALL breeders. If breeders had to accept some responsibility for the lives they are creating it might make them think twice before having so many litters. Whilst it might not be practical for all breeders to take their pups back, they should be responsible for helping to rehome (using a partial refund from the person who bought the pup in the first instance) I would also like some kind of contract that would allow for shared expenses for vet treatment for any pre-existing health condition the pup has when homed even it is not showing clinical signs at the time.

Q6. Which of the following best describes your view of placing an obligation on the breeder/keeper of a dog to check that any prospective owner is aware that they should have considered these questions?

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Fully supportive

Please give reasons for your answer, including any advantages or disadvantages

Any breeder who fails to do this is not a reputable breeder and is more concerned with income than the welfare of their dogs. If this is found to be the case they should have their licence revoked.

Q7. Which of the following best describes your view of obliging anyone acquiring a puppy from a breeder in Scotland to check that the breeder is licensed or registered?

Fully supportive

Please give reasons for your answer, including any advantages or disadvantages

The more time and energy prospective buyers have to put in to buying their puppy, the better - and hopefully this will put spur-of-the-moment car park sales out of business.

Page 12: Financial impact

Q8. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have on:

	Significant increase in cost	Some increase in cost	Broadly cost neutral	Some reduction in cost	Significant reduction in cost	Unsure
(a) Local authorities			X			
(b) Dog breeders		X				
(c) General public (including dog owners)		X				
(d) Police and animal welfare organisations					X	

Please explain the reasons for your response.

At all stages it was made clear that there should be no financial implication for local authorities so the costs would have to be passed on to breeders and I suspect they will then pass those costs on to the buying public. It would be hoped that these measures would reduce the sale of pups from unscrupulous breeders to unprepared members of the public which would then lead to a decrease in the number of animals in unsuitable homes who go on to become welfare cases. Making breeders more traceable will hopefully contribute to an improvement in breeding standards. Making owners think before they buy will hopefully lead to a decrease in the number of pups in inappropriate environments.

Q9. Are there ways in which the Bill could achieve its aim more cost-effectively (e.g. by reducing costs or increasing savings)?

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Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

I actually think there is something to be said for the re-introduction of the licence for dog owners as well as breeders - as long as it was not prohibitively expensive to set up and the cost was kept affordable. Dogs have come to be seen as a commodity rather than a lifelong commitment and this is a trend I would like to see bucked.

Page 13: Equalities

Q10. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation?

Neutral (neither positive nor negative)

Please explain the reasons for your response.

I don't think dog-breeding and ownership impact on equality issues.

Page 14: Sustainability

Q11. Do you consider that the proposed Bill can be delivered sustainably i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The only people it would impact negatively are unscrupulous breeders and this is an outcome that is desired.

Page 15: General

Q12. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal?

This may be covered by other legislation but I would like there to be an inspection of premises where three or more litters are going to be raised annually and I would like breeders to be vetted by those granting licences, in the same way as breeders are going to vet prospective owners. Too many people just want their dog to have a litter without giving any thought to what happens to that litter. I think vets could be more proactive here but it is not in their financial interests to do so. Just as prospective owners need to be warned away from puppy farms, so those wanting to breed for the sake of it need to be made aware of their responsibilities.

Q13. Could the aims of the Bill be better delivered in another way (rather than by means of a Bill in the Scottish Parliament)?

No

Please explain the reasons for your response

In an ideal world, puppy farmers and car-park sellers would become a thing of the past as prospective owners understood the dangers but without legislation, I can't see that happening. I would like to see the law come down harder on the known puppy-farmers but I would also like people to stop buying those pups because they "feel sorry for them" as they just perpetuate the trade.