

Licensed dog breeding in the UK and Ireland **2025**



Contents

Introduction	2
Methodology	3
10 local authorities with the most licensed dog breeders	4
Number of licensed dog breeders in the UK and Ireland	5
Scale of licensed dog breeding operations	6
10 largest licensed breeding businesses in UK and issuing local authority	11
Scale of licensed dog breeding operations continued	12
England's star rating system	13
Licensed pet sellers of dogs and puppies	16
Public licensing registers and transparency	18
Recording of dogs by local authorities	20
Conclusions and recommendations	22
Endnotes	25
Annex A: FOI questions	26
Annex B: Nations at-a-glance	31

Introduction

The **Dog Breeding Map of the UK and Ireland** by Naturewatch Foundation helps the public find out about dog breeding in their area and gives potential puppy buyers the tools to check if a breeder is licensed.

First launched in June 2024 and updated in January 2025, this interactive map - and the data obtained to produce it - provides valuable insights into licensed dog breeding and the wider domestic puppy trade. Read on to explore the latest findings about dog breeding in the UK and Ireland.

Explore the map at naturewatch.org/dog-breeding-map.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of the local authorities that provided responses to our freedom of information requests. Thank you also to Demi Mullen (Dog Law Ireland) and Tara Cunningham (Causeway Coast Dog Rescue) for reviewing draft FOI questions to councils in Ireland and for their suggestion that we extend the map to the Republic of Ireland.

Methodology

Freedom of information requests regarding dog breeding licensing were sent by Naturewatch Foundation to **391 local authorities across the UK and Ireland**, predominantly in November 2024. Responses were collected throughout December 2024 and January 2025, with **98% (384) of councils providing full or partial responses**. Seven councils failed to provide any response.

Data was analysed in February and March 2025 and the findings are described in this short report, focusing on:

- The **number of licensed dog breeders** in the UK and Ireland.
- The **scale** of licensed dog breeding operations.
- The **star-rating system** in England.
- The **number of licensed pet sellers of dogs and puppies** in Wales and the Republic of Ireland.
- The availability of **dog breeding licensing registers** to the public.
- Local authority **recording of dogs** kept by licensed dog breeders.

See **Annex A** for the FOI questions asked and **Annex B** for at-a-glance nation-specific statistics. **N.B.** all percentages have been rounded to one decimal place.

10 local authorities with the most licensed dog breeders

North Yorkshire Council (England)	72
Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (England)	62
Carmarthenshire County Council (Wales)	55
Shropshire Council (England)	53
Durham County Council (England)	44
East Riding of Yorkshire Council (England)	44
Fenland District Council (England)	43
Somerset Council (England)	42
Cumberland Council (England)	41
Doncaster City Council (England)	38

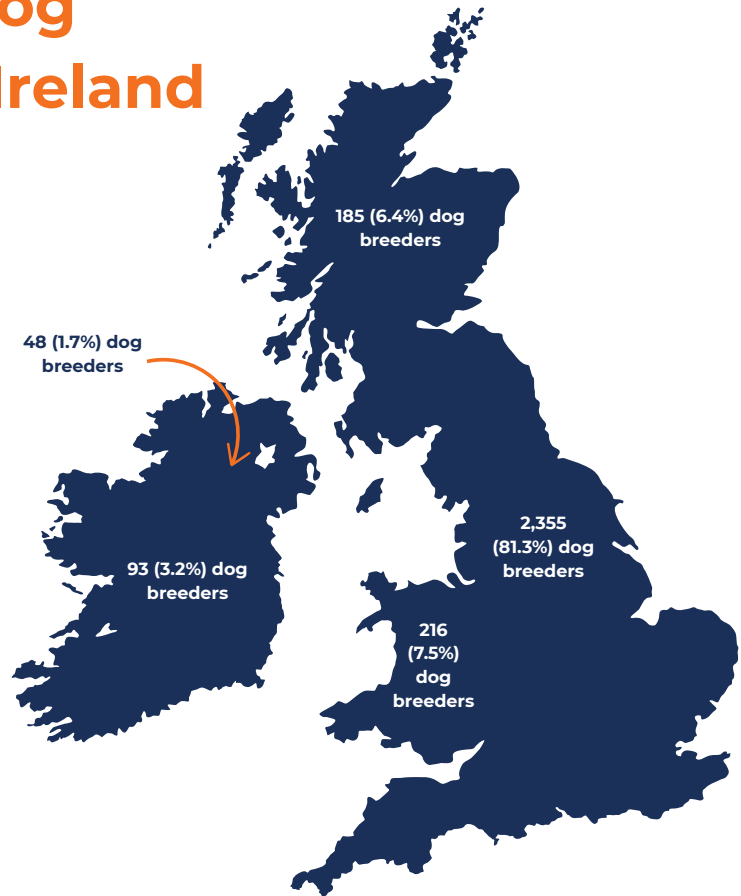
Number of licensed dog breeders in the UK & Ireland

There are in the region of **2,897 licensed dog breeders** in the UK and Ireland. The **majority (81.3%) are in England**, with 2,355 licensed dog breeders.

62 local authorities (15.9%) don't license any dog breeders.

England accounts for 39 of these councils.

The **local authority with the most licensed breeders is North Yorkshire Council** in England with 72 dog breeders.



Scale of licensed dog breeding operations

Across the UK and Ireland, **licensed breeders keep approximately 25,998 adult female dogs for breeding** between them.



Irish dog breeders keep a disproportionately high number of breeding females.

Despite Irish councils issuing only 4.9% of dog breeding licences overall, **18.5% (4,825)** of the adult female dogs kept for licensed breeding are in Ireland.

Scale of licensed dog breeding operations

23,022 (88.6%) female dogs used for breeding are kept in the UK. Based on this figure, **we estimate in the region of 14.6-19.5% of UK dogs are currently bred by licensed breeders.** [1] Between 2018 - 2022, an average of 54,455 dogs were commercially imported into the UK annually, accounting for approximately 5.8% of the UK dog population. [2]

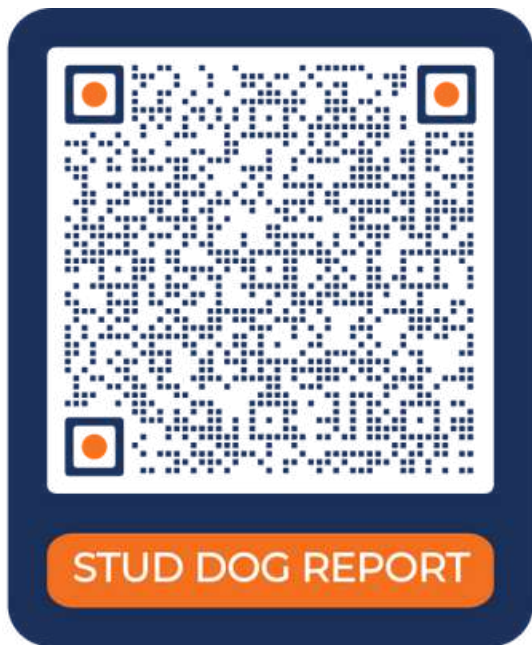
We infer from these estimates that **in the region of 75-80% of UK dogs come from other sources**, including unlicensed breeders falling below the commercial thresholds, illegal breeders and puppy smugglers. It is unclear what proportion of dogs comes from each of these sources.

4 in 5
UK dogs come from unknown sources

However, it is clear that **there is still insufficient oversight and visibility of the trade in puppies and dogs in the UK**, despite regulatory reforms in the past decade.

Scale of licensed dog breeding operations

It is further estimated that total puppy sales revenue to licensed dog breeders in the UK and Ireland is in the region of at least **£156,000,000 - £208,000,000 annually**. [3]



Licensed breeders across the UK and Ireland also keep **at least 3,753 adult male dogs for breeding**. However, it should be noted that not all local authorities keep a record of this information (see pages 20-21 for more about the recording of dogs by local authorities).

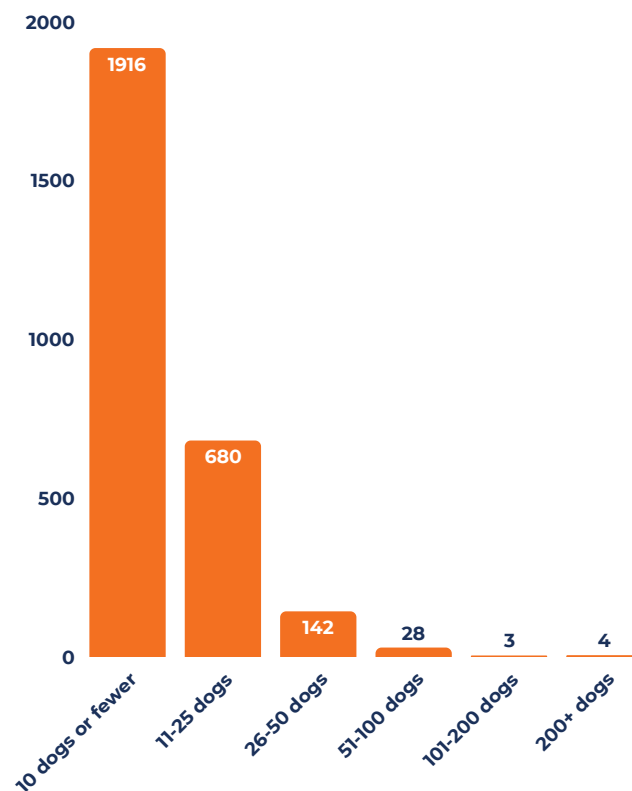
Scan the QR code to read Naturewatch Foundation's recent **Forgotten Dogs report** to discover more about the specific welfare risks male 'stud' dogs face.

Scale of licensed dog breeding operations

Local authorities were able to provide full or partial data about the **size of 2,773 (96%) licensed dog breeding businesses** across the UK and Ireland, which shows:

- **66.1% (1,916)** are licensed to keep **10 or fewer** adult dogs for breeding.
- **23.5% (680)** are licensed to keep **11-25** adult dogs for breeding.
- **4.9% (142)** are licensed to keep **26-50** adult dogs for breeding.
- **1% (28)** are licensed to keep **51-100** adult dogs for breeding.

Three businesses are licensed to keep between **101-200** adult dogs for breeding, and **four businesses** are licensed to keep **over 200** adult dogs for breeding.



Scale of licensed dog breeding operations

There are some noticeable contrasts between the size of breeding businesses in different parts of the UK and Ireland. For example, **71.8% of licensed breeders in England keep 10 or fewer adult dogs for breeding, whereas just 6.5% of breeders in the Republic of Ireland fall within this category. Dog breeders in the Republic of Ireland are more likely to operate on a larger scale** and be licensed to keep between 11-25 adult dogs for breeding (55, 59.1%) or 26-50 adult dogs for breeding (20, 21.5%).

The **four largest licensed dog breeders are all based in Ireland. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council** in Northern Ireland has issued three licences permitting the keeping of 1). **300 female dogs** for breeding, 2). **250 breeding female dogs and 100 male dogs** for breeding, and, 3). **250 females** for breeding. **Cavan County Council** in the Republic of Ireland has issued a commercial dog breeding licence permitting the keeping of **up to 300 female dogs for breeding**.

In Britain, the largest licensed dog breeding business is based in the **Carmarthenshire County Council** area in Wales, where **101 adult female dogs and 13 adult male dogs are permitted on a single licence**.

10 largest licensed breeding businesses in UK and issuing local authority

	# Adult dogs permitted	Female dogs	Male dogs
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (NI)	350	250	100
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (NI)	300	300	0
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (NI)	250	250	0
Mid Ulster District Council (NI)	180	180	0
Carmarthenshire County Council (Wales)	114	101	13
Carmarthenshire County Council (Wales)	104	93	11
Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (England)	100	88	12
Wrexham County Borough Council (England)	98	80	18
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (NI)	79	65	14
Ceredigion County Council (Wales)	78	69	9

Scale of licensed dog breeding operations

There is **no legal cap on the number of adult dogs a breeder can apply to keep for licensed breeding in any part of the UK or Ireland**. Additionally, staffing requirements vary between nations, with some lacking clear guidelines about minimum ratios.

In **England and Wales**, a **minimum staffing ratio of one staff member per 20 adult dogs** is specified in dog breeding regulations, **[4]** while in the **Republic of Ireland**, the requirement is **one staff member per 25 adult female dogs**. However, **Scotland and Northern Ireland do not set specific staffing ratios**.

Scottish regulations state that “sufficient numbers of people” must be available, but do not define what constitutes sufficiency, leaving it to the discretion of the licensing authority. **Northern Ireland’s regulations make no reference to staffing requirements at all**, leaving a concerning gap in licensing conditions.

Reform of regulatory staffing conditions for dog breeding is desperately needed across the UK and Ireland to ensure the welfare needs of adult dogs kept for breeding and their offspring can feasibly be met.

England's star rating system

England is the only country in the UK and Ireland to operate a star-rating system for licensable animal activities, including dog breeding.



Of the **2,355 licences** in England:

- **55.8% (1,314) are rated five-stars.**
- **12.9% (304) are rated four-stars.**
- **22.4% (528) are rated three-stars.**
- **5.2% (123) are rated two-stars.**
- **2.3% (55) are rated one-star.**

Star rating information was not held or withheld in relation to **31 (1.3%) licences.**

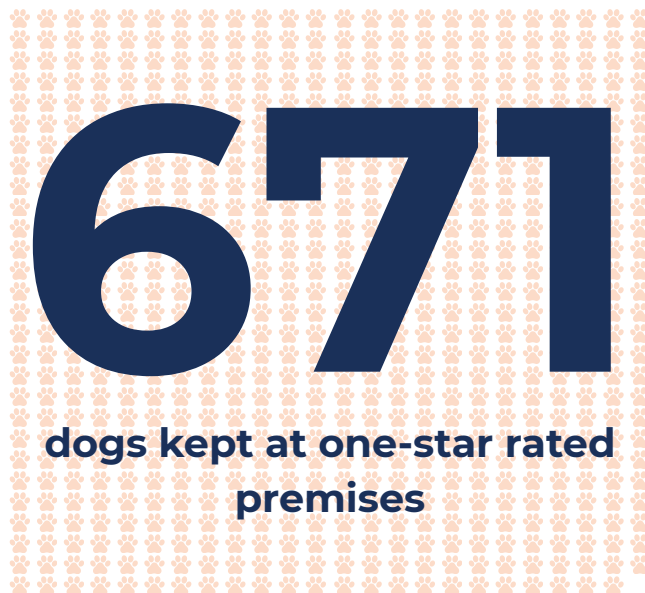
England's star rating system

Similar to the food hygiene rating scheme, star ratings are intended to help the public identify licence holders who are operating to higher standards and incentivise those with lower ratings to improve.

Excluding puppies, based on information supplied by local authorities, it is estimated that **at least 671 dogs are kept at one-star rated dog breeding businesses in England.**

A one-star rated business is one where **minor failings** in compliance with licence conditions have been identified.

One-star rated businesses are subject to at least one unannounced inspection within 12 months of the licence being issued.



England's star rating system

Higher risk breeding businesses, such as those rated one-star, naturally pose greater risks to dog welfare and to the licensing authority. Statutory guidance states that licences should not be granted or renewed if any failures to comply with licence conditions are identified that would compromise animal welfare.

Nevertheless, **we have concerns about a licensing regime that permits businesses to operate with known minor failings** and believe reform is needed to ensure all licensed dog breeders are compliant with at least minimum standards to be able to operate.

More information is needed to evaluate whether the star-rating system is fulfilling its intended purpose of incentivising businesses to improve their standards or not. In the meantime, **interventions to help raise standards initially at one-star rated premises could be considered as a collaborative project between relevant local authorities and animal welfare experts.** Success could lead to tangible improvements to the living conditions of almost 700 dogs and better outcomes for potentially many hundreds of puppies, as well as a reduction in risk for the licensing local authorities, if higher standards are achieved.

Licensed pet sellers of dogs and puppies

In **Wales and the Republic of Ireland**, dog breeders who fall below the licensing thresholds in each country's dog breeding regulations **may need to adhere to pet selling regulations instead**.

Republic of Ireland

In the Republic of Ireland, breeders who fall below, or otherwise do not meet the requirements of, the dog breeding licensing threshold but sell or supply six or more dogs or puppies in a year should register as a seller of pets with the Department of Agriculture. There are **721 pet sellers registered to sell dogs and puppies**.

407 (56.4%) are registered to sell 10 dogs or fewer per year, 307 (42.6%) are registered to sell 10-50 dogs per year and seven (1%) are registered to sell 50-100 dogs per year.

Third party sales of dogs is not currently prohibited in the Republic of Ireland.

Licensed pet sellers of dogs and puppies

Wales

In Wales, breeders who do not meet the requirements for a dog breeding licence but **sell dogs in the course of a business** may need to obtain a pet selling licence in accordance with the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Wales) Regulations 2021.

Currently, **only two pet selling licences have been issued to sellers of dogs/puppies in Wales** (one by Cardiff Council and one by Carmarthenshire County Council).

It would appear **awareness of the potential need to obtain a pet selling licence is low amongst dog breeders in Wales** who are operating commercially but below the current dog breeding licensing threshold.

A joint campaign by the Welsh Government, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders is recommended to help increase awareness and compliance.

Public licensing registers and transparency

Greater transparency around dog breeding is needed to **deter bad actors, ensure the public can make informed decisions if purchasing a puppy and, ultimately, improve dog welfare.**

We believe a **central animal activity licensing register** would help so that checks can be made by the public quickly and easily. In addition, we think all local authorities should publish animal activity licensing registers on their websites.

The Dog Breeding Map of the UK and Ireland by Naturewatch Foundation signposts users to dog breeding licensing registers that have been published or (if unavailable) contact information for the council so they can make enquiries.

The opposite page shows how many local authorities currently publish licensing registers on their website.

We urge all local authorities to publish animal activities licensing registers and governments in the UK to support the creation of national animal activities licensing registers.

Public licensing registers and transparency

- 68% (266) of councils publish a dog breeding register in some form. [5]
- England leads with 70.8% of councils publishing a register.
- Northern Ireland is the least transparent nation, with 0% of councils publishing registers.
- Despite being a legal requirement, only 62.5% of Scottish councils publish their register. [6]
- A national register of Dog Breeding Establishments (DBEs) is publicly available in the Republic of Ireland.



Recording of dogs by local authorities

There is significant variation across local authorities in their recording of the numbers of dogs kept by breeders they have licensed.

Only 34% (134) of local authorities across the UK could tell us how many adult females, adult males, litters of puppies and other (non-breeding) dogs were specified on dog breeding licences they have issued. In the Republic of Ireland, local councils could only specify the maximum number of females who may be kept.

Nine local authorities in England and three local authorities in Scotland indicated they did not have a record of any numbers of dogs kept by breeders licensed by their council.

Between them, these councils currently have **86 dog breeding licences.**

Only 1/3

local authorities record exactly how many dogs are kept by breeders they have licensed

Recording of dogs by local authorities

In **England**, licences should specify the total number of dogs kept on the **premises**, including breeding bitches, stud dogs, litters on site and other (non-breeding) dogs. [7]

In **Scotland**, local authorities should specify the maximum number of breeding **bitches** who may be kept at one time when licences are granted or renewed. [8]

For local authorities that supplied this information, there was also **significant variation in how litters of puppies are recorded**. Some local authorities indicated they record how many litters a licensed breeder can keep on the premises at one time, some indicated how many litters were permitted in a 12-month period, others indicated how many individual puppies were permitted, whilst some indicated they rely on the breeder to tell them how many litters they have bred.

Standardised recording across local authorities is essential to improve welfare monitoring and transparency. All dogs permitted to be kept on a licensed dog breeding premises should be recorded by the licensing authority and specified on the licence. Microchips of adult dogs should be recorded and checked at inspection.

Conclusions and recommendations

These findings show that **the majority of the puppy and dog trade is still taking place outside of dedicated regulatory frameworks**, despite regulatory reforms in the past decade.

There are additional **issues with transparency and consistency** across local authorities.

To better ensure the welfare of dogs kept for breeding and puppies who are traded in the UK and Ireland, we recommend the following:

- **Improved transparency**
 - All local authorities should publish licensing registers to help the public verify if a breeder is licensed. The type of information published in such registers should be standardised.
 - UK nations should support the introduction of national animal activities licensing registers.

Conclusions and recommendations

- **Collaboration to increase welfare standards at high-risk breeding establishments**
 - Local authorities and animal welfare experts could collaborate on designing interventions to improve standards at known higher-risk breeding premises, including one-star rated premises in England, where appropriate.
 - Minimum staffing ratios of one full-time staff member to every ten adult dogs should be introduced across the UK and Ireland to better ensure the welfare of dogs kept for breeding, particularly at larger-scale breeding premises.
- **Standardise recording and monitoring**
 - All local authorities should record and specify all dogs kept on licensed breeding premises, including adult female dogs kept for breeding, adult male dogs kept for breeding, litters of puppies and other dogs who are not kept for breeding (such as pet dogs and retired dogs). Microchips of adult dogs should be recorded and checked during inspections.

Conclusions and recommendations

- **Tackle unregulated and illegal trade in puppies and dogs**
 - With the majority of dogs and puppies still coming from unknown, unregulated or illegal sources, there is an urgent need for more consistent enforcement of dog breeding regulations and, where applicable, pet selling regulations (for instance, in Wales).
 - Existing frameworks can be confusing for the public and we support calls for more fundamental reform by way of a reduction in commercial licensing thresholds to two litters in a 12-month period and accompanying introduction of schemes of registration for those falling below the commercial threshold. Systems of registration should require adherence to a reasonable set of registration conditions intended to promote responsible breeding and ensure the welfare of dogs kept for breeding and their offspring. As the trade in dogs and puppies can easily cross domestic borders, we think greater regulatory alignment across UK nations is highly desirable for this animal activity.
 - A ban on puppy smuggling should be enacted as soon as possible.
 - The Animal Sentience Committee's recommendation that a wholesale review of animal welfare law enforcement be carried out [9] should be taken forward.

Endnotes

[1] Based on one litter per dog per year of 6 and 8 puppies, we estimate that licensed dog breeders in the UK currently produce between 138,132 and 184,176 puppies annually. According to the PDSA, the UK dog population is approximately 10.6 million, and VetCompass research suggests the average life expectancy of dogs in the UK is 11.2 years. This suggests around 946,429 puppies and dogs join the UK dog population annually. Based on these figures, we estimate that licensed breeders are currently responsible for breeding 14.6% to 19.5% of these dogs.

[2] See APHA Freedom of Information request ATIC2971 (February 2023) available at <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ccd503ef14e6000d178984/ATIC2971.pdf>.

[3] Based on an average selling price of £1,000 per puppy.

[4] In England, breeders adhering to higher standards should ensure at least one staff member for every ten adult dogs.

[5] It should be noted that information contained in existing registers varies considerably across local authorities.

[6] See reg 28 of the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021.

[7] See section 3.2 of the 'Dog breeding licensing: statutory guidance for local authorities' (Updated 1 June 2024) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/dog-breeding-licensing-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities>.

[8] See reg 6 para (6)(b) of the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021.

[9] Animal Sentience Committee, 'Report on the due regard to animal welfare – legislative compliance and enforcement' (February 2025) available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-sentience-committee-report-on-the-due-regard-to-animal-welfare-legislative-compliance-and-enforcement/animal-sentience-committee-report-on-the-due-regard-to-animal-welfare-legislative-compliance-and-enforcement#asc-conclusions>.

Annex A: FOI questions

Local authorities across the UK and Ireland were asked the following questions in November 2024:

England

How many dog breeding businesses does your local authority currently license pursuant to the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018?

Please provide a breakdown by licence of the number of 1. breeding female adult dogs, 2. breeding male adult dogs, 3. litters of puppies 4. other (non-breeding) dogs specified on each licence and, 5. the star rating of each licence currently in effect.

Annex A: FOI questions

Wales

How many dog breeding businesses does your local authority currently license pursuant to the Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2014?

Please provide a breakdown by licence of the number of 1. breeding female adult dogs, 2. breeding male adult dogs, 3. litters of puppies and 4. other (non-breeding) dogs specified on each licence currently in effect.

How many pet sellers do you currently licence pursuant to the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Wales) Regulations 2021 that are permitted to sell dogs/puppies?

Please provide a breakdown by licence of the number of dogs/puppies specified on each pet selling licence currently in effect.

Annex A: FOI questions

Scotland

How many dog breeding businesses does your local authority currently licence pursuant to the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021?

Please provide a breakdown by licence of the number of 1. breeding female adult dogs, 2. breeding male adult dogs, 3. litters of puppies and 4. other (non-breeding) dogs specified on each licence currently in effect.

Annex A: FOI questions

Northern Ireland

How many dog breeding establishments does your council currently license pursuant to the Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013?

Please provide a breakdown by licence of the number of 1. breeding female adult dogs, 2. breeding male adult dogs, 3. litters of puppies and 4. other (non-breeding) dogs specified on each licence currently in effect.

Annex A: FOI questions

Republic of Ireland

How many dog breeding establishments are currently registered with your council pursuant to the Dog Breeding Establishments Act 2010?

Please provide a breakdown by establishment of the number of 1. breeding female adult dogs, 2. breeding male adult dogs, 3. litters of puppies and 4. other (non-breeding) dogs permitted at each dog breeding establishments currently registered with your council.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in Ireland was also asked:

Please provide a breakdown by county of how many sellers or suppliers of dogs are currently registered with the Department pursuant to the Animal Health and Welfare (Sale or Supply of Pet Animals) Regulations 2019?

In connection with sellers or suppliers of dogs only, please indicate, for each county area, how many are registered to sell or supply: a. Less than 10 dogs; b. 10-50 dogs; c. 50-100 dogs; d. 100+ dogs.

Annex B: England at-a-glance

- 295 local authorities (excluding County Councils).
- 2,355 licensed dog breeders.
- 39 councils have no licensed dog breeders.
- North Yorkshire Council has the most licensed dog breeders (72).
- 1,690 licensed breeders keep 10 adult dogs or fewer. 481 keep 11-25 adult dogs. 69 keep 26-50 adult dogs. Eight keep 51-100 adult dogs. Data was not provided about 107 licensed breeders.
- The largest licensed breeder keeps 100 adult dogs for breeding (88 females and 12 males).
- Overall, 16,617 female dogs are kept for licensed breeding.
- 209 (70.8%) local authorities publish a dog breeding licensing register.
- There are 55 one-star rated businesses, 123 with two stars, 528 with three stars, 304 with four stars, and 1,314 with five stars.
- Only 112 councils could confirm how many females, males, litters of puppies and non-breeding dogs were permitted on licences they'd issued.
- A dog breeder in England requires a licence if they are 1. breeding three or more litters of puppies in a 12-month period and/or 2. breeding dogs and advertising a business of selling dogs.

Annex B: Scotland at-a-glance

- 32 local authorities.
- 185 licensed dog breeders.
- Nine councils have no licensed dog breeders.
- Dumfries & Galloway Council and South Lanarkshire have the most licensed dog breeders (both 26).
- 108 licensed breeders keep 10 adult dogs or fewer. 57 keep 11-25 adult dogs. 14 keep 26-50 adult dogs. Data was not provided about six licensed breeders.
- The largest licensed breeder keeps 45 female adult dogs for breeding.
- Overall, 1,936 female dogs are kept for licensed breeding.
- 20 (62.5%) local authorities publish a dog breeding licensing register. Councils in Scotland have a statutory duty to publish this information.
- Only eight councils could confirm how many females, males, litters of puppies and non-breeding dogs were permitted on licences they'd issued.
- A dog breeder in Scotland requires a licence if they are breeding three or more litters of puppies in a 12-month period.

Annex B: Wales at-a-glance

- 22 local authorities.
- 216 licensed dog breeders.
- Two licensed pet sellers of dogs/puppies.
- One council has no licensed dog breeders.
- Carmarthenshire County Council has the most licensed breeders (55).
- 101 licensed breeders keep 10 adult dogs or fewer. 73 keep 11-25 adult dogs. 24 keep 26-50 adult dogs. Five keep 51-100 adult dogs. Two keep 101-200 adult dogs. Data was not provided about 11 licensed breeders.
- The largest breeder keeps 101 female and 13 male adult dogs for breeding.
- Overall, 2,620 female dogs are kept for licensed breeding.
- Six (27.3%) local authorities publish a dog breeding licensing register.
- Only 12 councils could confirm how many females, males, litters of puppies and non-breeding dogs were kept by breeders they'd licensed.
- A dog breeder in Wales requires a dog breeding licence if they keep three or more breeding bitches and 1. breed three or more litters of puppies in a 12-month period and/or 2. supply or advertise puppies for sale. People who are breeding dogs below this threshold require a pet selling licence if they are selling puppies and/or dogs in the course of a business.

Annex B: Northern Ireland at-a-glance

- 11 local authorities.
- 48 licensed dog breeders.
- Three councils have no licensed dog breeders.
- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has the most licensed breeders (11).
- 11 licensed breeders keep 10 adult dogs or fewer. 14 keep 11-25 adult dogs. 15 keep 26-50 adult dogs. Four keep 51-100 adult dogs. One keeps 101-200 adult dogs. Three keep 200+ adult dogs.
- The largest licensed breeder keeps 350 adult dogs for breeding (250 females, 100 males).
- Overall, 1,849 female dogs are kept for licensed breeding.
- Zero (0%) local authorities publish a dog breeding licensing register.
- Only one council could confirm how many females, males, litters of puppies and non-breeding dogs were kept by breeders they'd licensed.
- A dog breeder in Northern Ireland requires a dog breeding licence if they keep three or more breeding bitches and either 1. breed, supply and/or advertise three or more litters of puppies in a 12-month period, or 2. advertise a business of breeding or selling puppies.

Annex B: Republic of Ireland at-a-glance

- 31 local authorities.
- 93 licensed dog breeders.
- 721 registered sellers/suppliers of dogs.
- 10 councils have no licensed dog breeders.
- Limerick City & County Council has the most licensed breeders (15).
- Six licensed breeders keep ten adult dogs or less. 55 keep 11-25 adult dogs. 20 keep 26-50 adult dogs. 11 keep 51-100 adult dogs. One keeps 200+ adult dogs.
- The largest licensed breeder is permitted to keep up to 300 adult females for breeding.
- Overall, 2,976 female dogs are kept for licensed breeding.
- A national register of dog breeding establishments is available.
- Zero councils could confirm how many females, males, litters of puppies and non-breeding dogs were kept at commercial dog breeding establishments they'd licensed.
- A dog breeder in the Republic of Ireland requires a dog breeding licence if they keep six or more breeding bitches over six months of age who are capable of being used for breeding. A person who breeds dogs below this threshold should register with the Department of Agriculture as a Seller of Pets if they sell or supply six or more puppies and/or dogs in a year.

Notes

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Contact us at info@naturewatch.org for more information about our campaign to end low-welfare and illegal dog breeding.

Visit naturewatch.org



Copyright © 2025 | All rights reserved | Naturewatch Foundation
Registered Charity No. 1039679 | Company No. 02944372
49 Rodney Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 1HX
Cover photo credit © [przemyslawiciak](#) via Canva.com

