

Independent Inquiry into Dog Breeding

Professor Sir Patrick Bateson FRS of Cambridge University has been appointed to conduct an independent inquiry into the breeding of dogs. The Inquiry is funded jointly by the Dogs Trust and the Kennel Club but is operating independently of both organisations. The review has the support of the Government's Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), who were involved in the selection of Professor Bateson as Chair.

The terms of reference for the Inquiry can be found here ([link](#)).

In order to inform its deliberations and eventual conclusions, the Inquiry team would like to see evidence from the broadest possible range of interested parties. **Anyone with relevant information and data is therefore invited to submit their evidence well before the deadline of 15 May 2009.** Guidance on the means of submitting evidence is given below.

All submissions should be provided on the form provided ([link](#)) and sent by e-mail to evidence@dogbreedinginquiry.com to arrive by 15 May at the latest. Supporting information, eg scientific papers, data, tables and statistics, should be provided either by attachment to the email or by link to the relevant site.

If submission by email is not possible, please post a hard copy of the form and any supporting evidence (PLUS an electronic copy of the whole submission including supporting evidence either on CD-ROM or memory stick) to The Secretary, The Independent Inquiry into Dog Breeding, PO Box 682, CAMBRIDGE, CB1 0LY.

Independent Inquiry into Dog Breeding – Call for Evidence

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The Irish Wolfhound Health Group (IWHG), formed in 2004, comprises representatives of the three governing bodies of the breed in the UK, The Irish Wolfhound Club, The Irish Wolfhound Club NI and the Irish Wolfhound Society. The following replies to the Inquiry therefore represent a ‘breed voice’ and position.

When canvassing breed members for their thoughts on the attached document we were met with reluctance as they felt that it was geared towards providing specific scientific evidence and that they were not qualified to respond in this way. So we took your Terms of Reference and made that into a Questionnaire that people found more user friendly. The responses from that have informed our replies below and we have also attached this document at the end of this form as supplementary information that we would like included, Appendix 1.

For specific health issues relating to our breed, we have been recognized by the KC as being proactive and aware and we have had research and screening in place for the major diseases that affect the breed for many years. In the case of Heart Testing our screening has been in place for over 25 years now and we have a Regional Heart Testing scheme and ongoing research. For Osteosarcoma we have the AHT conducting specific research into Wolfhounds and have been supporting this since its inception. We regularly Livershunt test litters and have a very low incidence of this and for PRA we also know and publish the carrier lines, and again there is extremely low incidence in the breed. This is only part of the research and co-operation taking

place globally in the breed. For details of this and our ongoing dialogue with the KC, please go to our website www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk

Whilst our own breed remains unexaggerated and fit for purpose, we recognize that this is not the case for all pedigree breeds, and acknowledge that changes to need to be made to protect the health and welfare of some of the more exaggerated breeds. We also have a very strong record of Welfare and Rescue within our breed and have a very strong Code of Conduct that the KC have allowed to remain in place in addition to their own Code of Ethics that was imposed on all breeds last year, but acknowledge that there will always be some breeders in all breeds that continue to operate outside those parameters.

Our concern, however, is that whilst the pedigree dog world is already regulated, registered and easily identifiable, the vast majority of dog breeders operating in the commercial dog industries, such as puppy farmers, pet supermarkets, pet shops, designer hybrids, fighting dogs, racing greyhounds and smaller private breeders breeding for money, are largely going unnoticed, unregistered and unregulated. They operate outside the usual accepted standards for animal welfare and dog breeding and if caught are seldom convicted and if convicted, the sentence is rarely sufficient to fit the crime or deter them from practicing.

Whilst regular pedigree dog breeders are identifiable, they are being targeted when other breeding practices are being ignored. Many of these 'other breeders' are operating without reference to a breed standard and health issues, but responding to a market demand.

Whilst we agree in principle that some change is necessary and overdue within the pedigree dog breeding world, we believe we should avoid imposing restrictions as opposed to guidelines. Restrictions might result in shutting off certain parts of the gene pool that in future years we may well have more information for and ways of breeding intelligently around or with – we don't have all the answers and need to keep our minds open. We would like to exercise caution and would be concerned that over regulating pedigree breeders would lead to narrowing the gene pool.

However, we feel that the bigger welfare issues that affect the dog breeding population as a whole and those that are falling outside the scope of these enquiries (as they are not necessarily the average pedigree breeder or they are not breeding pedigree dogs at all) should be more highly regulated at the level of basic animal welfare. We feel that pedigree breeders have been targeted as they are easily identifiable, but they represent a small proportion of the dog welfare concerns. They at least are monitoring their own breed's health and being encouraged by the KC to do more, whereas people breeding to meet a market need are often breeding outside any recognisable body or guideline and are not easy to pick up.

SECTION ONE – EVIDENCE RELATING TO WELFARE ISSUES, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH
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1. Do you agree or disagree that specific welfare issues arise from dog-
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breeding?

Yes – it is clear and inevitable that health and welfare issues can arise from either good or bad dog breeding

2. If you agree, please list below the welfare issues arising from breeding and indicate whether it relates to specific breeds, cross-breeds or non-pedigree dogs.

Our concerns about welfare issues are primarily related to Puppy Farming where bitches are over-bred, kept in unsuitable conditions and where puppies are often sold with serious health problems. These include parvo virus and other infectious diseases associated with the conditions in which these puppies are reared. Puppy Farmers are solely motivated by money and profit having little concern for health and welfare. Often they are unaware of the breed's own Code of Conduct and the health issues and screenings available specific to the breed or claim to breed to these accepted standards, but without any evidence to support this.

Puppy Farming is also not restricted to pedigree dogs it increasingly involves the breeding of so-called "designer hybrid" dogs, crossbreeds such as Labradoodles, Cockapoos and others. These sell their puppies as healthier as they have hybrid vigour, when in fact there is no knowledge of the health or temperament issues in any of the breeds used in the cross. They also sell their dogs as pedigree, because each side has a pedigree, some even say that they are KC registered, because the sire and dam are registered, but the hybrid progeny are not registered and go unmonitored. As long as a dog is bred as a fashion accessory it will be treated as a commodity, both by the seller and the buyer – this can lead to a 'disposable' mentality towards animals and increase the burden on the rescue services.

We are also concerned that Pet Shops are able to advertise any breed available within 4 to 6 weeks since they are clearly obtaining puppies from Puppy Farms.

There is also an increasing trend in breeding certain breed types and crossbreeds for fighting or as personal weapons – here the concern is that the dogs are treated poorly and trained to encourage vicious temperament.

In all cases, the buyers are not vetted as to their suitability to own a dog or a specific breed of dog, or home-checked to ensure they will be housed and cared for correctly. Puppies are often bought over the internet, which remains unregulated and untraceable and on the basis of a deposit secures. The breeders are aiming for volume sales and a quick turnaround. Although they should be regulated by their local council there are few convictions for poor practice and many are operating without a breeding license, so going unnoticed and without being picked up by the Inland Revenue.

What proportion of dogs is affected in each category of breed or in non-pedigree dogs? A rough estimate may only be possible, but if a precise figure is available, please give it. In either case please give the source for

your evidence.

We cannot quantify the number of breeders or dogs falling under the above categories since the majority of their puppies we believe will not be registered at the Kennel Club or any other governing body. We believe the total number of puppies being bred outside the show community, be that pedigree or non-pedigree far outweigh the numbers registered with the KC. Those in the show community will generally be breed club members and will therefore abide by the KC and Club Code of Ethics and are easily identified and counted. We would like to see some way of tracking all other dog breeding activities.

3. If your evidence relates to genetically transmitted diseases, how are such diseases identified and what measurements are used to assess them?

Obviously, genetically transmitted diseases can affect all dogs being bred, regardless of whether or not they are pedigree, hybrids or cross breeds. However, identifying genetically transmitted diseases is probably easier in pedigree dogs as they tend to be insured more readily and more likely to be taken to the vets. Also pedigree breeders keep better records and pedigrees make transmission easier to trace. However, we would also argue that pedigree breeders are more likely to raise any problems occurring within their breed and work together to try to solve the problem and instigate research and screening programmes.

It is only of interest to the commercial breeders to be aware of something or address such a problem if it affects their sales and reputation. In the case of the commercial breeders they are far more likely to take a puppy back and replace it with another, and see the sick puppy as expendable. As they breed from a very limited stock of dogs/gene pool and within their own, they will only do something when the problem affects the saleability of the pups, and then rather than try to address the problem they are more likely to bring in new stock.

Whilst there is a demand for puppies, especially pedigrees, there will always be unscrupulous breeders to meet that demand. We would argue that the contribution of the puppy farmer/commercial breeder to problems within a pedigree breed is greater than that of the average, responsible small scale breeder, but they are less easy to identify as the source of the problem.

4. Please provide any evidence you may have of any screening tests, DNA tests or other systems relating to the improvement or elimination of canine diseases that are considered to be genetically inherited. Please identify the nature of the test, the breed/s involved, the organisation/s that have developed the test and the source/s of funding for the development of the test.

We are not qualified to answer this, but would refer you to the KC for their latest findings from their work on the Accredited Breeder Scheme health screenings and also the Breed Health Plans.

We would also like to stress again that breeds are very efficient at identifying and instigating breed specific schemes, some of which go back at least 40 years.

5. Are you aware of any other such diseases where no screening tests are available - if so please provide details and suggestions as to how these diseases should be addressed, by whom and how any research and screening developments should be funded.

Although there will be some diseases where no screening or research is available, how that progresses within a breed should largely be dependent on the seriousness of the condition in relation to other conditions that might already exist within a breed and be being researched. Not all conditions are life threatening or affect the quality of life of a dog and, whilst it might be desirable to research and develop screening to help reduce the incidence within a breed, it might be considered a misuse of time and funding that might otherwise be spent on a more life threatening or life affecting condition.

In our experience, breeders and owners are happy to support and co-fund the efforts of research and screening where there is any chance of finding a solution to a major problem within the breed. However, there is a limit to what can be supported as the funds are coming from the same membership/owner source and we have found that we need to stay focused on the major research programmes and screenings that can directly impact our breed. To include less important studies only serves to spread the pot more thinly.

So, we would like to see balance being exercised in any decision concerning future research and screening, in consultation with the breed bodies and in a spirit of working together and co-funding a project. We would expect funding to come from the KC and other charitable bodies, but also other sources where possible. However, we are concerned that conducting studies in partnership with commercial/insurance/pharmaceutical companies may compromise the independence of the study and/or create a conflict of interest in terms of ownership of material and the potential misuse of the findings. Who 'owns' the research could affect the willingness of the breeds to take part.

6. If you have any other evidence or views relating to how future efforts to research and control inherited disease should be led and how these should be paid for, please state what form this might take.

Each breed knows its own problems and should be allowed to set up the scheme which best serves that breed with the appropriate professionals. One size definitely does NOT fit all and we would like the KC to recognize breed schemes, rather than imposing a blanket regime with a standardized set of requirements, some of which might be quite inappropriate.

SECTION TWO – EVIDENCE AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN WELFARE STANDARDS

7. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 imposes a duty of care such that: “ a person commits an offence if he does not take such steps as are reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure that the needs of an animal for which he is responsible are met to the extent required by good practice.”

And states that “ an animals needs shall be taken to include:

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

What are your views about the adequacy of this control to protect the welfare of dogs?

Unfortunately, we are not aware of any cases related to pedigree dogs where The Animal Welfare Act has been invoked and made a real difference. The majority of press reports refer to cases of cruelty to animals such as horses, donkeys and cattle.

On the strength of continuing evidence of Puppy Farming, as shown in the BBC Rogue Traders’ programme, the Animal Welfare Act appears to be completely ineffective and being ignored by welfare organisations such as the RSPCA.

Also, local authorities who are licensing such breeders appear to have a very different interpretation of animal welfare from the majority of the population or not be fulfilling their duty in monitoring and inspecting these establishments and taking action where necessary. The impression is that it is left very much to the pedigree breed bodies, individual breeders and members of the public to monitor and raise awareness of any cases of abuse and neglect.

It is quite apparent that the RSPCA is unable to take action where necessary and also appears reluctant to take action. Whilst the focus is constantly on the individual pedigree dog breeder, who is easy to identify and therefore target, the majority of dog breeding welfare issues fall outside this field and are unidentifiable and unregistered, unmonitored and apparently not taken seriously.

When action should be taken and convictions are applied, the Animal Welfare Act seems to lack teeth. It has so far failed in reducing the amount of welfare abuse and activity in the commercial dog industries, such as greyhound racing and pet supermarkets, puppy farmers and designer hybrids.

Targeting pedigree dog breeders, who are already (in the majority) operating within rules and regulations and codes of conduct set out by their breed bodies and the KC

and registering their dogs, will not reduce the abuses that can take place in all areas of the dog breeding world . This activity appears to remain free to continue unopposed.

Whilst the BBC's Pedigree Dogs Abused programme raised some inevitable and necessary aspects of the pedigree dog breeding and showing world, these are definitely in the minority, and the majority of welfare abuse takes place outside this field and are now going completely unnoticed as a result. Dog Breeding and associated activities extend well beyond the very small world of reputable dog breeding and showing. For all the thousands of dogs being bred and registered with the KC, there will be hundreds of thousands bred and sold as pedigree without any way of being recorded.

Finally, the needs of an animal extend beyond the list stated and an animal can still be suffering abuse and be covered by these criteria. All animals are sentient beings and there is no reference to caring and kindness in any legislation.

8. What is your view of current breed standards for pedigree dogs? Do you believe that these standards are appropriate to protect the health and welfare of pedigree dogs? Please state your reasons and give the name of the organisation that sets the standards.

Breed Standards were originally drawn up to provide a word picture of a dog "fit for function". Over time, some standards became distorted/misinterpreted but with the current amendments by the Kennel Club any areas that could be misinterpreted and result in extreme characteristics have been modified. Therefore, if everyone breeds/judges to the standard, that standard should itself keep the breed on track.

However, they alone will not solve the problems and are only applicable when the dogs are shown and can be seen. How will pedigree dogs not shown be monitored?

What about the designer hybrids that are advertised as pedigree dogs and produced in their thousands to meet a designer trend? Or the fighting dogs, like the Irish Blue Bull Terriers? Who is monitoring and policing the welfare of those 'breeds' and their 'standards' and all the crossbreeds produced by individuals and the pedigree dogs produced by the puppy farmers for a specific market?

The latter may register their dogs with the KC and are therefore identifiable, but the KC wouldn't see itself as the body governing whether or not they meet welfare standards and these breeders would be unlikely to be caring what the breed standard says. The only way they are being monitored, potentially, is through the local councils, if they are licensed breeders and then they would not be looking at breed standards. And Joe Public buying the puppies will simply see a particular breed and that's all they want.

It's not just breed standards that protect the health and welfare of a breed it's the people who use them and interpret them.

9. If you do not believe that current breed standards are appropriate to

protect the health and welfare of dogs, what action should be taken to limit the prevalence of an inherited abnormality or disease when one has been identified?

Breed standards can only be part of the approach to protect the health and welfare of pedigree dogs. They are of no use in the case of cross breeds, and they are completely ignored by Puppy Farmers.

We are in support of making appropriate screening tests available/mandatory for each individual breed, where conditions and screening exist to allow this, but in so doing this would only solve part of the problem. It would need to be under constant review in the light of new information regarding the disease/condition and flexibility should be possible where new developments make alternative diagnosis and prevention possible.

Also within breeds with small gene pools there should be consultation between the breed bodies and professionals and guidance on how to breed away from a problem intelligently and without decimating the breed and its type or allowing an alternative problem to thrive in the absence of genetic diversity.

However, if made mandatory, how would this be implemented and policed, particularly regarding Hobby Breeders and Puppy Farmers and those people producing the hybrids?

There are more 'crossbreeds' in rescue centres than pedigree dogs and the inquiry should extend to include ALL dogs. Pedigrees are not the only ones with health problems and the dogs being bred specifically for the commercial market are equally likely to have health problems, if not more so, and they are currently outside the scope of such studies.

10. If you think further action is necessary to protect the health and welfare of dogs bred in the UK, how should this be achieved?

Options which have been proposed include: *(please mark with a cross (x) all which you think should apply)*

Changes to breed standards Already reviewed by the KC and some breeds under ongoing consideration	←
Changes to showing rules Already Under consideration with the KC	←
Restrictions on the breeding of specific breeds This is not a concept that we feel we could support without further information.	←
Requirements to micro-chip and record the identities of all pedigree dogs This has generated a mixed response in our breed, although the majority are in agreement that permanent ID is a good idea and the recording of identities. However, micro-chipping is not popular with a lot of people and permanent marking through DNA would be more acceptable to those people, provided that the ownership and usage of this	←

material was not abused.	
Re-introduction of dog licensing or registration Please see below, Appendix 1	←
Restrictions on the commercial breeding of dogs (<i>say</i> anyone whose dogs sire more than five litters per year or whose bitches in total rear more than five litters per year?)	
Voluntary guidance for dog-breeders and the purchasing public Most pedigree breeders already do this by being a member of their breed body and also registering their dogs with the KC and providing contracts and advice when selling puppies	X
Voluntary code of practice governing the breeding of dogs – Most pedigree breeders already do this by being a member of their breed body and also registering their dogs with the KC	X
Statutory code of practice governing the breeding of dogs Do we not already have this in the Breeding and Sale of Dogs, (welfare) Act?	X
New regulations under the Animal Welfare Act	X
The broadening of limited pedigree gene-pools by the introduction of genotypes from outside the UK and/or by the facilitation of out-crossing with morphologically similar but genetically less closely related breeds. Whilst recognizing the need to be flexible in considering this option, we want to stress that such an activity cannot/should not be imposed on a breed by the KC or any other external body. Any agreement to pursue this route would need to be made in consultation with the breed bodies and with their express agreement. Conversely, should a breed approach the KC with a view to wanting to pursue this route they should be heard sympathetically and allowed to investigate this option, provided that the proposed out-cross could be proven to demonstrate health and longevity and freedom from illness or poor temperament. In some breeds rules regarding AI may need to be made more flexible in order to investigate all possible options within a breed before considering out-crossing.	←
A publicity campaign to ensure that the public understand the risks associated with inherited disease and/or poor welfare standards in breeding, and demand only puppies bred with high welfare standards We are concerned that whilst this is a good proposal, if the advertising campaign is based on the current Accredited Breeder Scheme that the KC is running, this is not sufficient to filter out the puppy farmers or poor practice. We believe that all breeders should breed to a minimum standard of good practice in order to register their puppies with the KC and those breeders not meeting those standards should be refused registration. The current ABS scheme sets this standard for the scheme members, but not all breeders registering puppies with them and we	←

would be unhappy if this was the basis for a media campaign. Any campaign must make the buying public aware of the puppy farmers and their practices and not confuse them with the average and responsible small scale breeder.

Other please specify below

1. Make it illegal to sell any puppies from Pet Shops and other commercial premises.
2. Give the KC the power to refuse registrations where known puppy farmers are concerned and/or where minimum standards of welfare practice are not being met.
3. The KC should raise the minimum standards to at least comply with the Breeding of Dogs Welfare Act and pay heed to the criteria felt appropriate by the breed bodies who understand the issues affecting their breed.
4. The KC's ABS scheme is a good opportunity to rework some of the registration and welfare issues, but in its current form we do not think it suits this purpose. For a full explanation of our proposals to the KC on this please go to our website www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk
We would like to see the KC apply a basic welfare minimum across the board at the point of registering any puppy and apply stronger criteria for qualifying to be a member of the ABS.
5. KC to support breed clubs to refuse membership or remove membership to those who do not adhere to breed clubs/KC codes of conduct
6. KC to become more democratic, breeders should be associate members if they wish, with general nominations for full membership and ability to vote. It is too closed shop.
7. Because the pedigree breeder is easily identifiable, the pedigree world is an easy target to criticise and impose restrictions on, but it is a small percentage of the total dog breeding population, most of which is breeding for financial gain, outside any registry and beyond the reach of the taxman and local government. These need to be targeted and regulated and monitored and to have a real impact you need to hit them financially - Charge commercial breeders, by number of puppies registered, a higher fee for registrations and higher license fees and local taxation perhaps?
8. We would like to see a survey of how many breeders exist on internet sites and free ads papers at any given time, and also how many different types of dogs pass through rescue centres, to try to establish exactly what percentage of total dog breeding the pedigree dogs actually represent.

9. We would like to see some way of quantifying which non pedigree breeds go through veterinary practices, and the variety of conditions they suffer from. That way, we would begin to see what the extent of health problems across the dog population are, not just in pedigree dogs. That might inform how to start monitoring and policing the total dog breeding industry.

10. It would be useful to know what dog legislation exists in other countries, what measures and how effective. However, while we appreciate it is useful to look at other practices, it is always a concern that they derive from a different cultural starting point and we would guard against adopting wholesale a system that might not take into consideration existing cultural preferences and personal choice.

11. We believe that external and imposed legislation usually comes from those bodies that are academic and have no practical experience of the situation and are perceived to have an anti-dog and -breeder standpoint, which we would not consider to be healthy for the dog breeding world. Any future developments must be created in consultation with the pedigree dog world.

11. Please explain the reasons for the answers you have given to Q 10, providing supporting information wherever possible and stating, if you think it appropriate, who should be responsible for taking action to improve the welfare of dogs and who should pay for it.

Permanent identification could allow the authorities to trace to return lost or stolen dogs to their owners, and identify any breeders who are selling sickly or unhealthy dogs and not meet health and welfare standards, i.e. Puppy Farmers.

However, care should be taken to avoid wrongly accusing responsible breeders. Puppies can get sick and through no fault of the breeder or their practices and we would not want to encourage a litigious culture. Any living creature can get ill, for any number of reasons and even with all the testing and screening and best welfare practices. We would not want to see responsible breeders continue to be regarded with suspicion and prejudice, which could result in those breeders giving up and leaving the way clear for those less scrupulous.

There are no guarantees with animals and we would be unhappy if any further legislation or regulation implied that breeders should or could provide this. What we would like to see is more monitoring and regulation applied to those areas of the dog breeding world that are currently beyond the scope of any inquiries or studies because they can't be identified easily.

Legislation always has a danger of penalizing those who are acting responsibly and lacking the power to enforce laws upon those breeding irresponsibly.

12. Do you believe that in some circumstances the maintenance of breed purity outweighs all welfare considerations? If your answer is “Yes”, please give one or more examples.

No

13. If you wish to make any other points not covered by the questions above, please add them below. These points may relate to aspects of the welfare of dogs other than those that are generated by breeding.

[Please see Appendix 1 below](#)

THERE ARE NO PLANS TO PUBLISH ALL THE EVIDENCE RECEIVED, BUT THE INQUIRY TEAM MAY WISH TO QUOTE SOME SPECIFIC EVIDENCE VERBATIM.

Please indicate below if you are content for evidence to be published by deleting as appropriate.

We are content for our evidence to be quoted, in whole or in part, in the Report of the Inquiry.

Signed: **IWHG**

If you are submitting evidence electronically, please still delete as appropriate.

Appendix 1

Kennel Club/Dogs Trust Independent inquiry into the breeding of dogs.

Terms of Reference

Whether there should be compulsory registration of all dogs used for breeding, and if so how the minimum standards should be set and enforced for those who breed dogs, for the dogs used for such breeding and for those organizations that maintain such registers.

Compulsory registration has proven in the past that it has failed to control or improve the breeding of dogs as the law abiding who breed responsibly are those who adhere to the rule, the irresponsible breeders would evade any such registration wherever possible. With the number of dogs in the UK, pedigree and crossbreed, it is impossible to police compulsory registration.

In an ideal world it would be great if we could register all breeding stock and impose minimum welfare standards for them, their offspring and those breeding from them, but the reality is far removed from that ideal.

We already have the Animal Welfare Act and the Breeding and Sale of Dogs Welfare Act and would think that this would be the benchmark for all aspects of dog breeding, but how often is it monitored and enforced? The impression is that it is not enforced, that it is impossible to monitor those that might not be meeting those standards and there are very few convictions or actions taken as a result of it. The only body officially registering pedigree breeds in the UK is the KC and they have adopted most of the Breeding and Sale of Dogs Act as, but even they have not adopted all of it.

There are large sections of the dog breeding world operating outside its remit.

We already have a compulsory registration for pedigree dogs used for breeding in the KC registrations. Most breeders and buyers want their puppies registered with the KC and to do that they have to be from KC registered parents already. So as far as pedigree dogs are concerned this mechanism already exists, although not everybody uses it and there is no compulsion to use it.

However, within it there is no monitoring of those who register dogs, whether or not they maintain the right welfare standards and there are no consequences if the breeder fails to meet those standards. Puppy farmers are a welfare issue in themselves and they are allowed to register puppies and there is no action taken if those puppies and their practices fall foul of accepted welfare standards.

The KC registrations have no 'teeth' and the KC have to accept all registrations, which begs the question, what purpose does it serve except as a registry of pedigrees. The KC have now introduced the ABS which does specify that certain standards should

and will be met by these ABS breeders, but even this is not being monitored or policed well and if they feel that strongly about the welfare issues, surely they should be applying those criteria across the board as a condition for registering any dogs, not just as an ABS breeder and they should be given the power to withhold registration if those criteria are not met?

However, the area of most concern as far as Welfare Issues are concerned, are those breeders of both pedigree, designer hybrids for the commercial market and designer dogs for the fighting/weapon market and crossbreeds who don't register or register pedigrees falsely - and also racing dogs. How could general compulsory registration solve this? Policing it would be impossible as identifying those who should be registering and policed in the first place would be an impossible task.

The percentage of dogs being bred and puppies being sold of all categories that are not registered but bred for profit and advertised and bred on a regular basis far outweighs those being bred by responsible and reputable pedigree breeders. However, pedigree breeders are easy to identify and easy to monitor already and therefore easy to put under scrutiny, when the real perpetrators of Welfare abuses are left unnoticed and unidentified.

Whether current breed Standards for pedigree dogs are appropriate to protect the health and welfare of pedigree dogs.

See answer to main Document

What is currently being done to improve the health of dogs being bred and by whom

There is a wealth of research and health testing schemes available to breeders. The majority of pedigree breeds are very aware of the issues faced by their breeds and take steps to monitor and get actively involved in supporting research programs into health conditions. There are partnerships between organizations like the Animal Health Trust to name but one and breed bodies working together to support research into conditions affecting their breed.

It is still only a small percentage of irresponsible breeders that have made a bad name for the majority and increasingly peer pressure along with the above initiatives, will 'persuade' those less scrupulous to clean up their acts.

Yet again, we are only talking about pedigree dogs here, there are more 'crossbreeds' in rescue centres than pedigree dogs and the inquiry should extend to include ALL dogs. Pedigrees are not the only ones with health problems and the dogs being bred specifically for the commercial market are equally likely to have health problems, if not more so, and they are currently outside the scope of such studies.

Most agree that a dog/bitch that has a genetically transmitted disease should not be bred from and the information should be passed on to all. Results of screenings should be published.

How efforts to research and control inherited disease should be led and how these should be paid for.

Research should be a partnership between the researcher and the breed bodies supported by the Kennel Club. The Kennel Clubs world wide should be actively involved in funding research and the breed bodies do as much as they can with the funds they can raise.

Most breeders are caring and responsible and are keen to find solutions, however, they must be involved and consulted at all stages and their opinions be heard and respected. Nobody wants to breed unhealthy dogs, but they also need to be given the time to consider and contribute to any decisions that will affect them and how the breed develops into the future.

Whether specific government legislation of other mechanisms are required to protect the welfare of all dogs being bred from

One of the biggest concerns should be breeding by commercial concerns whose main focus is financial. A great many welfare issues arise from dogs bred by people breeding for the pet market to create additional income but it is difficult to make a distinction between this and the small hobby kennel taking its breeding of dogs very seriously.

Legislation always has a danger of penalizing those who are acting responsibly and lacking the power to enforce laws upon those breeding irresponsibly.

However, legislation may be the only way that we have of applying a benchmark across the board for good welfare practices. The danger with legislation is that it always picks on those that it can easily identify and not those that fall outside that, but that probably represent the majority of dog breeding practices.

It also depends on what the mechanisms and measures are. EG we would like to see the KC have the power to refuse registrations, (take out the argument here that the KC would probably find that irksome as they would have to work harder for what might not generate them as much money, unless they enforced a fine on those not complying). Presumably there would have to be some government legislation to allow them to do that, so it would affect us indirectly, rather than directly. Also, the Animal Welfare Act and Breeding and Sale of Dogs Welfare Act already exist, and most people would be happy with that and want to see people comply with them and them enforced, but what are the consequences for them not being enforced?

Legislation and regulations developed by bureaucracies and quangos are usually academic and totally impractical and ill thought out. However, when it comes to basic animal welfare issues, there have to be some parameters in place. However, pedigree breeders do generally practice good animal welfare and operate within an

acceptable code of conduct as the KC and breed bodies have criteria laid out that are there to keep breeders on track – So, it is not this part of the breeding population that needs further constraints, but the wider unregulated breeding world.

The pedigree breeding world, on the whole, is constantly monitoring and improving itself and we would prefer to be given guidelines than have restrictions placed on us. We are already proactive and 'policing' our own. We are already compliant. And would be unhappy to have changes imposed on us from outside.

Whether registries should be obliged to refuse registration in the event that required minimum standards are not met

The Kennel Club should be allowed freedom to refuse registrations without fear of legal action. At present its argument is that it would not be legal to do so they are powerless to refuse registrations from puppy farmers or breeders who fail to meet minimum criteria.

They are in the strongest position to affect the health and welfare of pedigree dogs and perhaps should be encouraged to open the register to include mixed breed dogs.

Recommend actions to be taken.

Allow the KC freedom to refuse registrations from breeders not meeting minimum standards.

The KC should raise the minimum standards to at least comply with the Breeding of Dogs Welfare Act and pay heed to the criteria felt appropriate by the breed bodies who understand the issues affecting their breed.

We live in a world without consequences - if you are in breach of code of conduct or set of minimum criteria, what happens? In most cases, not a lot. At the moment very little is done to monitor and police those breeders that operate outside the KC or that breed for commercial gain where the animals are treated as a commodity/ a product. This includes greyhound racing, pet supermarkets, dealers, puppy farmers, dog fighting breeders etc.

Because the pedigree breeder is easily identifiable, the pedigree world is an easy target to criticise and impose restrictions on, but it is a small percentage of the total dog breeding population, most of which is breeding for financial gain, outside any registry and beyond the reach of the taxman and local government. I think these need to be targetted and regulated and monitored and to have a real impact you need to hit them financially.

We don't need knee jerk legislation, try and avoid further legislation, work with what we have, within that remit.

General health issues MUST include temperament

Judges should take responsibility for assessing obvious physical and temperamental problems in the show ring.[and breeders in their stock]

Continue research and teamwork between different professionals and researchers, work with breeders, publish results, jointly funded and supported by KC, breed clubs, charities, various research funding groups

Survey health problems of crosses and designer breeds e.g. across one county e.g. Berks, I'm sure results would be illuminating when comparing to pedigree dogs [can do via vets, rescue, etc]

It would be useful to know what dog legislation obtains in other countries and is it effective with respect to dog welfare and if so would we be prepared to operate it, or elements of it, in these islands?

In some cases, legislation seems to have taken the route of making it difficult or at least expensive to keep dogs - In California, there is a law (or is it that they threaten to introduce one?) that imposes a punitive license fee for possessing an unneutered dog. Perhaps, the revenue raised goes to towards paying for dog wardens and general dog welfare.

In Australia (at least in the Perth area), the authorities will measure your property and will limit accordingly the number of dogs (even hens and ducks) you can keep.

In Germany, the breed clubs themselves regulate to the nth degree breeding and associated health issues.

All this implies external control over dog ownership, restriction of personal choice. It would be interesting to know effectively these regulations operate in each country with regard to general welfare of dogs (stray population, puppy farming etc), and then to consider which would be acceptable here, given our attachment to freedom of choice.