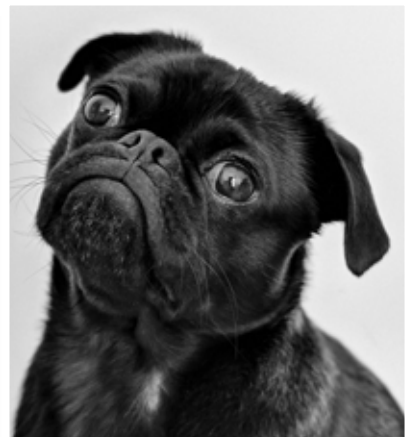




CFSG Guidance on Dog Conformation





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Google, for any images made available through their re-use policy

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Points to consider specifically about the breeding sire

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Kennel Club

Cambridge University

Royal Veterinary College (RVC)

Universities Federation of Animal Welfare (UFAW)

Dog Breeding Reform Group (DBRG)

Dog Breed Health (DBH)

Independent Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding

Brachycephalic Working Group UK (BWG)

World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA)

Federation of Vets in Europe/European federation of Companion Animal Associations (FVE/FECAVA)

British Veterinary Association (BVA)

British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA)

Animal Health Trust (AHT)

RSPCA

PDSA

The Puppy Contract

Guidance on Dog Conformation

1. Introduction

The CFSG sub-Group's *Guidance on Dog Conformation* is intended to educate, inform and improve public awareness about dog conformation and its impact on dogs and wider society. It supports the Regulations relating to breeding and provides practical guidance for anyone breeding, selling or buying a dog whether for the purpose of further breeding or as a domestic pet. It highlights some of the key conformational aspects to look for in a dog when making decisions on whether to breed from or acquire a dog.

As with humans, all dogs can have health problems however some dogs are more prone to diseases that are linked to their conformation than are others whether they are pedigree, non-pedigree or crossbreeds. It is important to note that just because a dog is prone to a condition linked to conformation, it doesn't mean it will develop the condition. In this Guidance, specific breeds are not named and conditions covered potentially apply to any breed or crossbreed.

If intending to breed from a dog, the Guidance can be used in conjunction with the legislation and its related guidance to determine whether or not to breed from either potential parent. If acquiring a puppy or adult dog, this *Guidance on Dog Conformation* can be used to look for physical aspects either in the parents or the dog being acquired.

This Guidance is not intended to cover specific breeds and their potential genetic conditions or related tests. However, it sign-posts resources that can be accessed to inform and support awareness of genetic testing where needed.

2. Conformation

Conformation is the physical appearance of a dog. It refers solely to the externally visible details of a dog's overall structure and appearance. Conformation can affect a dog's health and welfare. Good conformation should have minimal adverse impact on the dog's physical well-being and welfare. Ensuring that a dog is bred to have moderate, and not exaggerated, conformation is important. Section 5 of the Guidance outlines some of the key points to be aware of when considering dog conformation.

3. Legislation

Legislation & its related guidance is currently in place that covers breeding of some dogs in England. The current legislation and related guidance only covers a proportion of the dogs bred in the UK however, it is good practice to refer to the legislation when considering the criteria relating to dog conformation and applying them to any dog within the UK population. The legislation can be accessed by the following links:

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2018/9780111165485/pdfs/ukdsi_9780111165485_en.pdf

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 Guidance notes for conditions for breeding dogs November 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities>

For ease of reference, the specific areas of the legislation that refer to responsible breeding and resulting offspring are at **Annex 1** of the Guidance. Additional legislation relating to animal welfare is also available at Annex 1.

4. Impact of poor conformation

Poor conformation in any dog can have the following impact:

- The health & welfare of a dog can be adversely affected
- A dog's poor health can adversely affect the human animal bond (HAB) & the dog's integration as a pet into family life
- Increased levels of care may be required for a dog
- Increased care requirements and health problems result in an increase in expense for the owner, including veterinary care costs and potentially the relinquishment of the dog.

5. Conformation & physical appearance

Various body parts of dogs may be affected by poor conformation which may lead to a range of health problems. Some of these problems are outlined below. The problems mentioned are not intended to be exhaustive but are intended to provide general guidance for those individuals intending to breed from or buy a dog. If intending to breed from a dog, the guidance can be used to determine whether or not to breed from either potential parent and if acquiring a puppy or adult dog, those physical aspects to look for either in the parents or the dog being acquired.

It is important to bear in mind that many conformational features tend to develop and can become more pronounced as an animal grows and ages. Therefore any negative effects that are dependent on conformation will likely become more visually apparent over time as the dog reached adulthood.

Breeders must not breed from dogs that have undergone surgical correction for any conformational hereditary health issues. When acquiring a dog, always ascertain if any surgical procedures have been undertaken to correct conformational health issues and the reasons for these and where possible, obtain a written declaration from the seller.

Conformational variation can affect the **physical features** of the following aspects of the body:

- Eyes, eyelids & area surrounding the eye
- The shape of the face, for example in flat-faced (brachycephalic) dog types
- Mouth, dentition & jaw
- Ears
- Skin and coat
- Back, legs & locomotion
- Tail

An outline of health problems related to conformation can be found on the Kennel Club's website:

<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health/for-breeders/conformation-related-health-problems/>

A more detailed look at these areas is outlined below.

Eyes, eyelids & area surrounding the eye

Ideally, eyes should be clear and the area surrounding the eye should be free of discharge (Fig 1)



Fig. 1

Visible, physical features to look for include the following:

The **eyelids** should not roll outwards (ectropion) or inwards (entropion).

- If they are rolling inwards, the eyelashes or fur around the eye may be seen touching the eyeball.
- If they are rolling outwards, the skin of the lower eyelid may appear to hang loose and the pink of the inside of the eyelid (the conjunctiva) will be clearly visible.



Fig 2a Entropion - eyelashes or fur touching the eye



Fig 2b Ectropion - conjunctiva is visible & loose skin is present



Fig 3 A combination of ectropion and entropion: 'Diamond' eye

The **Third Eyelid** (the pink area of conjunctiva at the inner corner of the eye) should not be bulging ('cherry eye')



Figs 4a & 4b Prolapsed gland of third eyelid ('cherry eye')

The **skin folds** surrounding the eye should not touch the eyeball or obstruct vision as in the image below (fig 5).



Fig 5

Eyes should not be excessively prominent (Figs 6a & 6b) with an excessive amount of sclera (the white area surrounding the dark area of the eye) on show (Fig 6b)



Fig 6a Excessively prominent eyes



Fig 6b Excessive amount of sclera

Eyelids should fit neatly around the eyeball (Fig 7)



Signs of health problems potentially related to conformation could include the following:

- Eye discharge or significant discolouration of the coat beneath the eye
- Marks or cloudy areas (corneal opacity) on the surface of the eyeball
- Squinting

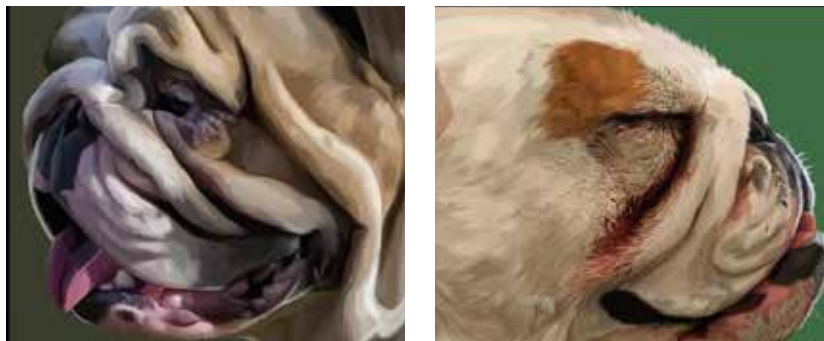
Face shape - Flat-faced (brachycephalic) dog types

Visible, physical features to look for include the following:

The **muzzle** (the projecting part of the face forward of the eyes, including the nose and mouth) should protrude forward of the eyes



Fig 8 Muzzle protruding forward of the eyes



Figs 9a & 9b Minimal protrusion of muzzle forward of the eyes

The **nostrils** should be clearly open and not appear closed or blocked (stenotic)



Fig 10 Open nostrils – allow free circulation of air through them



Fig 11 Closed nostrils which hamper air flow

Skin folds should not obscure the opening of the eye or the nostrils/nose and should not be infected



Fig 12 Over-the-nose skin encroaching on eyes & nose



Fig 13 Infected skin fold under eye (discoloured fur & inflamed/red skin)

Teeth should not be visible when the mouth is closed.



Fig 14 Teeth of lower jaw clearly visible when mouth closed.

Signs of health problems potentially related to conformation could include the following:

- Infected, red (inflamed) mal-odorous (pungent smell) facial skin folds
- Laboured breathing that may sound noisy, rasping or distressed
- Breathing through the mouth when at rest

Mouth, dentition and jaws

Ideally:

- Teeth should be evenly positioned and aligned so that adjacent teeth do not overlap.
- When the mouth or jaw is closed and the lips are relaxed, the teeth or tongue should not be visible.

Note: A puppy's teeth will go through developmental stages and therefore the teeth and 'bite' may change significantly during growth.



Fig 15 Correct teeth alignment in an adult dog

Visible physical features to look for which can lead to health and welfare problems include:

- An excessively undershot lower jaw
- An excessively overshot upper jaw
- A permanently protruding tongue
- A mouth overcrowded with teeth
- Constant drooling of saliva



Fig 16 Undershot lower jaw



Fig 17 Teeth of lower jaw protrude beyond upper teeth



Fig 18 Overshot upper jaw



Fig 19 Permanently protruding tongue

Signs of health problems potentially related to conformation could include the following:

- Gums or lining of inside of mouth is red (inflamed) and not a healthy pink colour
- Sores on inside of mouth or gums where teeth rub or dig into the lining/gums
- Food trapped in many gaps between the teeth
- Difficulty picking up or chewing pieces of food
- Dry, traumatized (injured) tongue tip
- Moist and red (inflamed) skin folds around the chin and mouth

Ears

Ideally, ears should be clean with the inside of the ear showing a clearly visible, open ear canal (the link from the outside to the inside of the ear). The canal should not be blocked with wax, debris or hair.

Physical features to look for in dogs with ear flaps include the following:

- Ears should not touch the ground when the dog is standing still
- Ears should not interfere with walking

Signs of health problems potentially related to conformation could include the following:

- Injury to the ear flaps
- Head shaking or excessive scratching of the ears
- Pungent odour/strong smell from the ears
- Skin inside the ear is inflamed (red) & may be itchy



Fig 20 Inflamed (red), infected inside of earww

Skin & Coat

Ideally the dog should be free from excessive amounts of both loose skin and folds. Extreme thickness, length or absence of coat may also reduce the dog's ability to cope with environmental variations eg high or low temperatures, wetting, exposure to direct sunlight.

Visible, physical features to look for where skin folds do exist:

- There should be as few as possible
- They should be shallow and open or wide
- They should not have a negative effect on function or movement.

Signs of health problems potentially related to conformation could include the following:

- Infected, red (inflamed) mal-odorous (pungent or strong smell) facial skin folds
- Particular locations to check include:
 - The face or muzzle
 - The chin
 - The legs (in particular for dogs with very short legs)
 - Where the tail attaches to the body
 - The vulva (for females)



Fig 21 Infected facial skin fold under eye (discoloured fur & inflamed/red skin)

Back & legs

Ideally:

- The back (spine) should gently curve downwards from behind the shoulders to gently rise upwards to meet the hips.
- The front legs when viewed facing the front of the dog should be as straight as possible with minimal bowing.
- The back legs when viewed facing the back of the dog should be parallel and relatively straight



Fig 22 Ideal back leg conformation

Visible physical features to look for which can lead to health and welfare problems include:

- Humped, twisted or excessive downward curve of the back (spine)
- Joints of hind legs not aligned with each other such that they point inwards e.g. cow hocks



Fig 23a Severe cow hocks



Fig 23b Moderate cow hocks

Signs of health problems potentially related to conformation could include the following:

- Lack of free movement
- Stiffness when moving
- Swaying of the hind legs from left to right when walking
- Hopping or intermittently holding up one leg when walking or running
- Imbalance or weakness of the hind limbs

Physical features to look for in **dogs with long backs and short legs** which may cause health problems are outlined below:

- The **length of the spine** relative to the legs should be considered and dogs of these types ideally should display a reasonable balance between the length of back and the length of leg.
- There should be clearly visible **space between the chest and the ground** when standing still on all four legs and when moving.



Fig 24 Proportionate back/leg length & space between chest & ground

Signs of health problems potentially related to conformation could include the following:

- Reluctance to jump or go up and down stairs/steps
- Scuffing of the lower chest skin
- Scuffed nails
- Urinary or faecal incontinence.

Tail

Ideally, a dog should have a functional tail such that it moves freely, can be easily lifted from the body and can express the dog's emotions and behaviour through body language.

Visible, physical features to look for which can lead to health and welfare problems include:

- Excessive skin folds where the tail attaches to the body which obscure the tail or impede movement of the tail
- Tight tail or tightly wound tail stump
- Inverted tail
- Screw tail



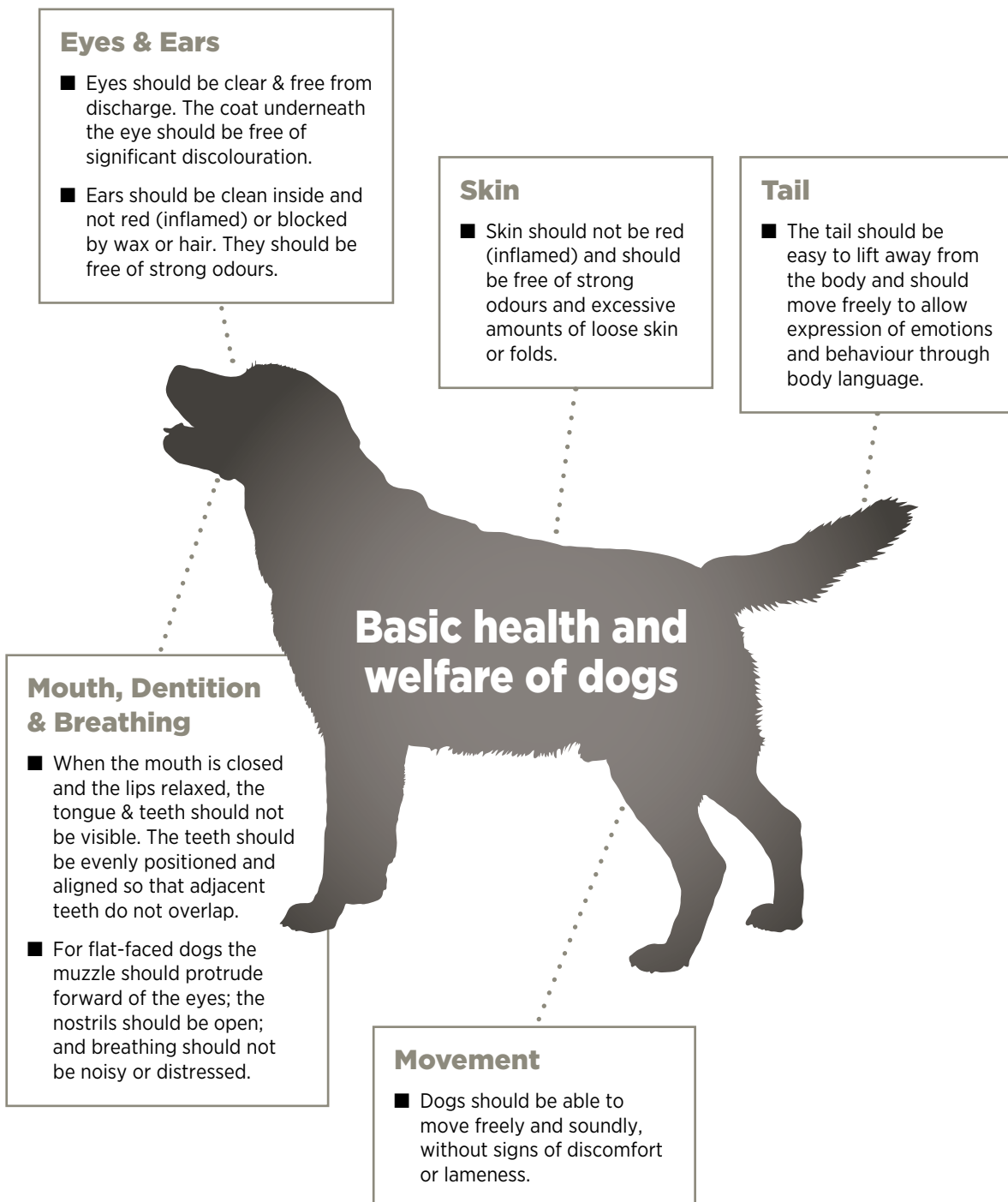
Fig 25 Inverted tail which is inflamed (red) & infected.

Signs of health problems potentially related to conformation could include the following:

- Infected, red (inflamed) mal-odorous (pungent smell) skin folds

6. Summary of Key Points

In summary, some of the key body areas to consider in making decisions to breed from or acquire a dog are highlighted in the diagram below. This can be used as an aide-memoir to help individuals assess and make pragmatic, informed decisions.



7. Resources for specific audiences & actions they can take to support good dog conformation

Breeders

Refer to:

- CFSG's Guidance on Dog Conformation
- Legislative requirements and supporting Guidance at **Annex 1** of this Guidance
- CFSG 'Key Points to Consider Guide' at **Annex 2** of this Guidance
- Relevant resources (these are not exclusive or definitive) at **Annex 3** of this Guidance:
 - Kennel Club website & publications
 - BVA (Health Schemes)
 - Brachycephalic Working Group (BWG)
 - Dog Breeding Reform Group (DBRG)

Sellers/vendors

Refer to:

- CFSG's Guidance on Dog Conformation
- Legislative requirements and supporting Guidance at **Annex 1** of this Guidance
- CFSG 'Key Points to Consider Guide' at **Annex 2** of this Guidance
- Relevant resources (these are not exclusive or definitive) at **Annex 3** of this Guidance:
 - Kennel Club website & publications
 - BVA (Health Schemes)
 - Brachycephalic Working Group (BWG)
 - Dog Breeding Reform Group (DBRG)
- If selling a puppy, consider using a **puppy contract** or the **Kennel Club Assured Breeder Scheme**

Purchasers

Refer to:

- CFSG's Guidance on Dog Conformation
- CFSG 'Key Points to Consider Guide' at **Annex 2** of this Guidance
- Relevant resources (these are not exclusive or definitive) at **Annex 3** of this Guidance:
 - Kennel Club website & publications
 - BVA (Health Schemes)
 - Animal welfare charities' websites
- If buying a puppy, consider using a **puppy contract** or buying a puppy from a **Kennel Club Assured Breeder**

Vets

Refer to:

- CFSG's Guidance on Dog Conformation
- Legislative requirements and supporting Guidance at **Annex 1** of this Guidance
- Fulfil the **veterinary requirements** under legislation e.g. Condition 6.7 relating to puppy check
- Relevant resources (these are not exclusive or definitive) at **Annex 3** of this Guidance:
 - Academic websites; scientific resources e.g. publications, websites
 - Veterinary Association websites incl. BVA & BSAVA websites & resources
 - Kennel Club website & publications
 - Brachycephalic Working Group (BWG)

- Dog Breeding Reform Group (DBRG)
- Provide **veterinary advice** on conformational-related health issues
- Be aware of **good practice** and RCVS guidelines when advising on breeding issues and surgical procedures i.e. c/s or surgical alterations

Local Authority Inspectors

NOTE: Please be aware that not all of the content of this Guidance will be suitable for Local Authority enforcement purposes. The Guidance is intended to guide and support your decision-making. It must be used in conjunction with training provided by Local Authorities.

Refer to:

- CFSG's Guidance on Dog Conformation
- Legislative requirements and supporting Guidance at **Annex 1** of this Guidance
- CFSG 'Key Points to Consider Guide' at **Annex 2** of this Guidance
- Relevant resources (these are not exclusive or definitive), at **Annex 3** of this Guidance:
 - Kennel Club website & publications
 - BVA (Health Schemes)
 - Brachycephalic Working Group (BWG)
 - Dog Breeding Reform Group (DBRG)



CFSG Guidance on Dog Conformation Annex 1

Legislation, Guidance & Codes of Practice

1. Legislation in England

The Regulations & related Guidance and their key sections of relevance to the work of the CFSG Working Group on Dog Conformation are outlined below. Although the majority of the dogs in the UK are not captured by the scope of the legislation and related Guidance, it is good practice to refer to the legislation when considering the criteria relating to dog conformation.

Points other to those relating to conformation have been included to reflect good practice and potentially inform sellers and buyers of what both parties can expect from each other when selling and buying a puppy. If both parties adhere to some key basic principles it will indicate an awareness and willingness to comply with the Regulations and related Guidance.

Regulations & related Guidance

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/486/contents>

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018: Guidance notes for conditions for breeding dogs November 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/dog-breeding-licensing-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities>

Key sections of Regulations & related Guidance relevant to CFSG sub-group on dog conformation

Note: For ease of reference the following are the key elements of the Regulations and related Guidance of relevance to the work of the CFSG sub-Group. If full detail of all points in each section are required, please read detailed guidance as per links above.

- Overview of the Conditions & Explanatory Guidance (page 6)
- Part B – Specific conditions: breeding dogs (Schedule 6 of the Regulations) (page 24)
 - Schedules 6.0, 6.1, 6.3 (page 30)
 - Schedules 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.8 (pages 31/32)
 - Higher Standards (pages 35/36)

Overview of the conditions and explanatory guidance of the Regulations (page 6)

1. These outline the conditions that must be complied with in order to receive an animal activities licence for the activity of breeding dogs. The conditions set out in schedules to the regulations are given in bold throughout this document, whilst the explanatory guidance notes are provided as bullet points.
2. In order to receive a licence a business will need to meet all of the minimum standards outlined in this document. In addition, businesses are encouraged to apply higher standards. A business that meets the higher standards will be able to gain a 4 or 5 star rating in the Animals Activity Star Rating System and will qualify for a longer licence (e.g. two or three years as opposed to a one-year licence) and thereby pay a lower licence fee.

3. Whilst applying the higher standards is optional, certain standards are required in order to attract the higher star ratings. To distinguish required higher standards from optional ones they have each been given a specific colour which is used in each guidance document. Higher standards that appear in blue text are required in order for a business to be classed as high standard, whereas those that appear in red text are optional. See the Procedural Guidance for a full explanation of the Animals Activity Star Rating System and how it incorporates a risk assessment of the business.
4. Paragraph numbering in the following parts of this guidance document relate to the numbering of the conditions in the relevant Schedules of the regulations.

Part B – Specific conditions: breeding dogs (Schedule 6 of the Regulations) (page 24)

Schedule 1.0

Advertisements and sales

Condition

1.5 No puppy aged under 8 weeks may be sold or permanently separated from its biological mother

Guidance

- Dogs must remain with their mother for the first eight weeks of life unless the mother dies or there is a health risk to the puppy or its littermates or the mother from remaining with her. Where necessary, a veterinarian may certify that it is in the best interests of the animal to be removed earlier.

Condition

1.6 A puppy may only be shown to a prospective purchaser if it is together with its biological mother.

Guidance

- Puppies must be seen interacting with the mother and any siblings.

Condition

1.7 Sub-paragraphs (5) and (6) do not apply if separation of the puppy from its biological mother is necessary for the health or welfare of the puppy, other puppies from the same litter or its biological mother.

- In the event of the mother's death before the puppy is sold, or if her health or that of the puppy would be compromised by interacting with each other, this must be documented in the records and explained to the buyer.
- Buyers must be able to access the environment in which the mother and her puppies are kept.

Higher standards

- The breeder will ensure all breeding stock or puppies are recorded in the UK with a registration organisation which must make available record of parent or lineage including coefficient of inbreeding and record of health screening test results
- Optional higher standards for advertisements and sales
The breeder must give all details of the sire and bitch to the buyer including:
 - date of birth
 - microchip number
 - registration body (if applicable)
 - details of any inherited diseases that the breed is prone to
 - any screening test

Schedule 4.0

Monitoring of behaviour and training

Condition

4.1 The licence holder must implement and be able to demonstrate use of a documented socialisation and habituation programme for the puppies.

Guidance

- The facility must have in place an adequate programme to socialise puppies and prepare them for life in the environment in which they are going to live. Procedures must be available so that all staff know how to appropriately socialise puppies.
- Where bitches are anxious or aggressive when puppies are approached, this process must be gradual.
- Puppies must be handled regularly from shortly after birth for short periods (e.g. gently picking up and examining) to habituate them to human contact and to examine them for any sign of disease and to ensure they are feeding properly.
- Toilet training of puppies must be started before sale.
- Harsh handling or potentially painful or frightening equipment must not be used.

Schedule 6.0**Protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease****Conditions****6.1 All dogs for sale must be in good health.****6.3 The licence holder must ensure that no bitch -**

- (e) **is mated if aged less than 12 months;**
- (f) **gives birth to more than one litter of puppies in a 12 month period;**
- (g) **gives birth to more than six litters of puppies in total;**
- (h) **is mated if she has had two litters delivered by caesarean section**

Guidance

- Mating must not begin until the appropriate time after the previous mating.
- Breeders must not permit mating of any bitch beyond her sixth litter.

Higher standards

- All bitches must be at least 18 months old before they are used for mating.
- A bitch must not be mated if she is 8 years of age or older.
- A bitch must not give birth to more than four litters of puppies in total.
- A bitch must not be bred from if they have had one caesarean.

6.4 The licence holder must ensure that each puppy is microchipped and registered to the licence holder before it is sold.**Guidance**

- It is the responsibility of the breeder to get the dog microchipped by a suitably qualified professional, as it must be done by eight weeks after birth and it is not possible to rehome before eight weeks. Any health exemptions must be supported by a veterinary certificate. The details must be recorded on a compliant database.
- The breeder must be registered as the first keeper.

Higher standard

- The licence holder must ensure that the microchipping database is amended with the puppy buyer's details.

6.5 No dog may be kept for breeding if it can reasonably be expected, on the basis of its genotype, phenotype or state of health that breeding from it could have a detrimental effect on its health or welfare or the health or welfare of its offspring.**Guidance**

- Licence holders must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the dogs are of good physical and genetic health, of acceptable temperament and fit for function (e.g. be able to see, breathe normally, and be physically fit and able to exercise freely). Licence holders must be aware of any health risks that may be specific to that type or breed. Where appropriate veterinary advice on the suitability of an animal for breeding must be sought.

- Dogs that have required surgery to rectify an exaggerated conformation that has caused adverse welfare, or require lifelong medication, must not be bred from.
- Bitches that have had two litters delivered by caesarean section must not be bred from.
- The prospective purchaser must be provided with written guidance on any relevant conformation issues and how to manage them in the relevant literature handed over with each sale.
- Licence holders must not breed from stock which shows fear or aggression.

Higher standards

- All bitches must be at least 18 months old before they are used for mating.
- A bitch must not be mated if she is 8 years of age or older.
- A bitch must not give birth to more than four litters of puppies in total.
- A bitch must not be bred from if they have had one caesarean.
- Licence holders must test all breeding stock for hereditary disease using the accepted and scientifically validated health screening schemes relevant to their breed or type.
- No mating must take place if the test results indicate that it is likely to produce health or welfare problems in the offspring or affect negatively the relevant breeding strategy (or both).
- Surgery to correct exaggerated conformation must be reported to the registration organisation

Condition

6.7 Breeding bitches must be adequately supervised during whelping and the licence holder must keep a record of -

- (a) the date and time of birth of each puppy,
- (b) each puppy's sex, colour and weight,
- (c) placentae passed,
- (d) the number of puppies in the litter, and
- (e) any other significant events.

Guidance

- Puppies must be checked for birth defects and medical conditions and the buyer made aware of such.

Higher standard

- The puppy must be checked by a veterinarian before sale with proof of such held and available to the puppy buyer.

Condition

6.8 The licence holder must keep a record of each puppy sale including -

- (a) the microchip number of the puppy,
- (b) the date of the sale, and
- (c) the age of the puppy on that date.

Higher standard

- A puppy contract must be used, which must include undertakings and warranties around health, vaccinations and socialisation carried out by the seller prior to sale, and also make clear the responsibilities of the buyer relative to the dog.

Higher Standards (pages 35/36)

For each activity, a number of higher standards have been agreed. Meeting the higher standards is optional but is the only way to gain a higher star rating. The higher standards are classified in to two types: **required** and **optional** and are outlined in the relevant guidance documents for the activity in question. To distinguish required standards from optional ones they have each been given a specific colour which is used in each guidance document. **Higher standards that appear in blue text are required, whereas those that appear in red text are optional.** To qualify as meeting the higher standards, the business needs to achieve all of the required higher standards as well as a minimum of 50% of the optional higher standards. During an inspection, the inspector should assess whether or not the business meets the required number of higher standards.

NOTE: The following points have been selected as they are of relevance to CFSG's Dog Conformation Guidance. For a complete list, please refer to the Regulations & Guidance.

Required

- The breeder will ensure all breeding stock or puppies are recorded in the UK with a registration organisation compliant with BSI 9001 which must make available record of parent or lineage including coefficient of inbreeding and record of health screening test results.
- All bitches must be at least 18 months old before they are used for mating.
- A bitch must not be mated if she is 8 years of age or older.
- A bitch must not give birth to more than four litters of puppies in total.
- A bitch must not be bred from if they have had one caesarean.
- Licence holders must test all breeding stock for hereditary disease using the accepted and scientifically validated health screening schemes relevant to their breed or type, and must carefully evaluate any test results as well as follow any breeding advice issued under each scheme, prior to breeding. No mating must 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 inadvisable in the context of a relevant breeding strategy.
- Surgery to correct exaggerated conformation must be reported to the appropriate organisation.
- The puppy must be checked by a veterinarian before sale with proof of such held and available to the puppy buyer.
- A puppy contract must be used, which must include undertakings and warranties around health, vaccinations and socialisation carried out by the seller prior to sale, and also make clear the responsibilities of the buyer relative to the dog. This must then give both parties confidence that a transaction has taken place in good faith.

Optional

- The breeder must give all details of the sire to the buyer including date of birth, microchip number, registration body if applicable and details of any inherited diseases to which the father's breed is prone and any screening tests or surgery to amend conformation the father received.
- The breeder must give all details of the bitch to the buyer including date of birth, microchip number, registration body if applicable and details of any inherited diseases to which the bitch's breed is prone and any screening tests or surgery to amend conformation that the bitch received
- No bitch will be intentionally mated when the Coefficient of Inbreeding of the puppies would exceed the breed average or 12.5% if no breed average exists as measured from a minimum five generation pedigree.

2. How Welfare Codes of Practice support Animal Welfare legislation

The following outlines **Defra's Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs** and the related section of the **Animal Welfare Act 2006**, which are of relevance to the aims of the CFSG sub-group on Conformation.

Defra's Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs, supports **Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006**

Defra's Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-dogs>

Animal Welfare Act 2006

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/contents>

Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/section/9>

Duty of person responsible for animal to ensure welfare

1. 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.
2. For the purposes of this Act, an animal's 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.
3. The circumstances to which it is relevant to have regard when applying subsection (1) include, in particular –
 - (a) any lawful purpose for which the animal is kept, and
 - (b) any lawful activity undertaken in relation to the animal.
4. Nothing in this section applies to the destruction of an animal in an appropriate and humane manner.

Other legislation of relevance to CFSG's Guidance on Dog Conformation

■ The Docking of Working Dogs' Tails (England) Regulations 2007

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/1120/contents/made>

This legislation outlines instances when a dog's tail may be docked and by whom

Application of the Defra Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs in supporting dog welfare

This **Defra Code of Practice** applies to all dogs. The purposes of the Code is to provide practical guidance to help comply with the provisions set out under Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/section/9). It does not indicate precisely how an owner should care for a dog but it does summarise important things the owner should know and what to do when making decisions about how best to care for their dog.

Breach of a provision of this Code is not an offence itself but if proceedings are brought against you for an offence under Section 9 of the Act, the Court will look at whether or not you have complied with the Code in deciding whether you have committed an offence. If you are unsure about anything to do with the care and welfare of your dog, you should always seek advice from an expert such as a veterinary surgeon, mainly referred to as vet.

A list of suitable organisations and places to find help are provided on page 13 of this Code. More can be found about the legislation relating to dogs at www.defra.gov.uk

3. The role of the CFSG Guidance on Dog Conformation in supporting dog welfare

The CFSG Guidance on Dog Conformation is intended to support the Animal Licensing Regulation & Guidance on Dog Breeding and therefore mirror how the Defra CoP on Dog Welfare supports the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

CFSG Guidance on Dog Conformation Annex 2

Key points to consider if intending to breed from or acquire either an adult dog or a puppy

The Legislation & Guidance currently in place covers breeding of some dogs in England. Although the majority of the dogs in the UK are not captured by the scope of the legislation and Guidance, it is good practice to refer to the legislation when considering the criteria relating to dog conformation. Therefore if intending to breed from a dog or acquire either a puppy or an adult dog **consider the following points**, which reflect regulations and guidance, to support any final decision-making in relation to conformation on whether to breed from or acquire an adult dog or puppy.

Points other to those relating to conformation have been selected and included to reflect good practice and potentially inform sellers and buyers of what both parties can expect from each other when selling and buying a puppy. If both parties adhere to basic principles it will indicate an awareness and willingness to comply with the Regulations and Guidance.

Points to consider about the parents and specifically the breeding bitch

- The **age** of the bitch at the time of mating (minimum age 12 months; best practice 18 months; maximum age 8 years).
- The **number of litters** the bitch has had (A maximum of one litter per year and six in a lifetime or as best practice, four in a lifetime).
- Any **caesareans** the bitch has required and if so, the number (If more than two litters were by caesareans then bitch should not be bred from. As best practice, she should not be bred from if one litter has been delivered by caesareans).
- Obtaining appropriate **veterinary advice** on the suitability of an animal for breeding.
- Any **health risks** that may be specific to that dog type or breed. (Refer to the *CFSG Guidance on Dog Conformation for general advice*.)
- Any hereditary disease within breeding stock and the use of accepted and scientifically validated health screening schemes relevant to their breed or type. Where applicable:
 - Have any test results been evaluated and where needed, has any breeding advice issued under each scheme been followed prior to breeding?
 - Has mating occurred despite test results indicating that it would be inadvisable as offspring would likely produce health or welfare problems?
- Any **surgery** that has been required to correct exaggerated conformation that has caused adverse welfare, or require lifelong medication. If surgery has been required, has it been reported to the appropriate organization?
- **Where applicable**
 - Has the bitch been mated where the **Coefficient of Inbreeding** of the puppies would exceed the breed average or 12.5% if no breed average exists as measured from a minimum five generation pedigree.
 - Has the breeder ensured that all breeding stock or puppies have been recorded in the UK with a registration organisation compliant with **BSI 9001** which must make available record of parent or lineage including coefficient of inbreeding and record of health screening test results.
- Has either parent exhibited **fear or aggression** type behaviours?
- As a breeder, provide to the new owner all **details of the bitch** including date of birth, microchip number, registration body if applicable and details of any inherited diseases to which the bitch's breed is prone and any screening tests or surgery to amend conformation that the bitch received

Points to consider specifically about the breeding sire

- Obtain all relevant **details of the sire** including date of birth, microchip number, registration body if applicable and details of any inherited diseases to which the father's breed is prone and any screening tests or surgery to amend conformation the father received.

Points to consider when acquiring a puppy or adult dog

All dogs

- Obtain a **date of birth**
- The dog should be **microchipped**, registered to the licence holder and relevant paperwork available.
- Relevant **vaccinations** should be up-to-date and a record available eg completed vaccination card.
- Obtain written guidance on any relevant **conformation issues** and how to manage them in the relevant literature handed over at the point of sale.
- Licence holders/breeders must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the dogs are:
 - Of good physical and genetic **health**
 - Of acceptable **temperament** and fit for function (e.g. be able to see, breathe normally)
 - **Physically** fit and able to exercise freely.
- Licence holders/breeders must be aware of any **health risks** that may be specific to that type or breed. Where appropriate veterinary advice on the **suitability of an animal for breeding** must be sought.
- Obtain from the breeder all **details of the bitch** including date of birth, microchip number, registration body if applicable and details of any inherited diseases to which the bitch's breed is prone and any screening tests or surgery to amend conformation that the bitch received.
- Obtain from the breeder all relevant **details of the sire** including date of birth, microchip number, registration body if applicable and details of any inherited diseases to which the father's breed is prone and any screening tests or surgery to amend conformation the father received.

Points to consider when selling or acquiring a puppy

- A **puppy must be 8 weeks or more** if it is to be separated from its mother for either sale or re-homing unless supported by veterinary certification.
- Puppies must be checked for **birth defects and medical conditions** and the buyer made aware of such.
- Ideally, the puppy should be **checked by a veterinarian** before sale with proof of such held and available to the puppy buyer.
- See the **mother with the puppy** and if possible, the litter-mates at the place where they are usually kept and observe them interacting with each other. (This may not be possible when acquiring a dog from a re-homing centre.)
- Ask to see the seller's **socialisation and habituation** programme for the puppy.
- Ask what has been done to start **toilet training**.
- Any visually obvious signs of **health** problems (Refer to the *CFSG Guidance on Dog Conformation*)
- A **puppy contract** where used, must include undertakings and warranties around health, vaccinations and socialisation carried out by the seller prior to sale, and also make clear the responsibilities of the buyer relative to the dog. This must then give both parties confidence that a transaction has taken place in good faith. Further information can be accessed here: <https://puppycontract.org.uk/>



CFSG Guidance on Dog Conformation Annex 3

Resources: Sources of Information

There is a wide range of resources available for dog breeders, vendors and also, for potential or existing dog owners, that can provide information which supports understanding of conformation related health issues. These resources can support decision-making whether in relation to breeding or acquiring a dog. The following examples sign-post individuals to available resources and albeit the resources can provide valuable information, they are not intended to be exclusive or definitive.

Kennel Club

Breed Watch Booklet

A guide for some conditions related to conformation www.breedwatch.org.uk

Conformation related health problems

<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health/for-breeders/conformation-related-health-problems/>

Veterinary Health Check Booklet

www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/1097070/veterinary_health_check_booklet.pdf

Other Kennel Club resources

Breed Information Centre www.breedinformationcentre.org.uk

BVA/KC Canine Health Schemes www.bva.co.uk/Canine-Health-Schemes/

Canine Genetics and Epidemiology <http://cgejournal.biomedcentral.com/>

Kennel Club Charitable Trust www.kccharitabletrust.org.uk

Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/ebv-faqs>



Royal Veterinary College

<https://www.vetcompass.org>

The RVC's VetCompass Programme shares anonymized clinical records from veterinary practices in the UK. These data are used for research that aims to improve the welfare of companion animals. Links to VetCompass publications are available on this website.

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)

Guidelines on surgical procedures that could be considered cosmetic

<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/supporting-guidance/miscellaneous/>

Universities Federation of Animal Welfare (UFAW)

<https://www.ufaw.org.uk/>

<https://www.ufaw.org.uk/genetic-welfare-problems-intro/genetic-welfare-problems-of-companion-animals-intro>

<https://www.ufaw.org.uk/dogs/dogs>

Genetic Welfare Problems of Companion Animals: An information resource for prospective pet owners

Click on a breed to go to the list of conditions for which information is available on this site:

(Website users can click on a breed to go to the list of conditions for which information is available on the site)

Dog Breeding Reform Group (DBRG)

The DBRG provides information on genetics and breed related health, breeding, rearing and selling practices with the intention of providing information on how irresponsible dog breeding can have a potential impact on dogs' health and welfare.

<http://www.dogbreedingreformgroup.uk/>

Dog Breed Health (DBH)

Provides guidance on genetic health issues for dog breeds

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

Brachycephalic Working Group UK (BWG)

<http://www.ukbwg.org.uk/>

Framework

http://www.ukbwg.org.uk/?page_id=167

World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA)

<https://www.wsava.org/>

<https://www.wsava.org/Guidelines/Hereditary-Disease-Guidelines>

Federation of Vets in Europe/European Federation of Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FVE/FECAVA)

Breeding healthy dogs: The effect of selective breeding on the health & welfare of dogs 2018.

https://www.fecava.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2018_06_Extreme_breeding_adopted.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1xVyGTY7nmrUpoGKkdjxFum2VblWR8d7c8H8j6ckcxMv-47cUqIVG9XiQ

Related FVE/FECAVA flyer

https://www.fecava.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/FLYER_Extreme-breeding_RVau21_06_18_BAT.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3vA2AgxsSeoZ0Zs0e6rnstWpMoDxBOCiGpL7X3XR-Vdmfv-17le4BIPis

British Veterinary Association (BVA)

BVA Position Statement on extreme conformation

<https://www.bva.co.uk/take-action/our-policies/extreme-conformation/>

RSPCA

The RSPCA has a variety of information available relating to dog health problems, inherited disease and exaggerated features. Information is also available on buying a puppy

<https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/dogs/puppy/pedigreedogs/health>

PDSA

PDSA PetWise Pet Health Hub, free, factual information about your pet's health, written by vets and vet nurses.

www.pdsa.org.uk/phh

PDSA Breed information www.pdsa.org.uk/taking-care-of-your-pet/looking-after-your-pet/puppies-dogs

The Puppy Contract

The **Dog Breeding Stakeholder Group** was formed in 2008 in response to growing concerns about welfare in dog breeding. It is comprised of the following organisations or Groups: APGAW, Animal Welfare Foundation, Blue Cross, British Veterinary Association, DEFRA, Dogs Trust, The Kennel Club, PDSA and the RSPCA. The group looked at ways all members could work together to address issues relating to dog breeding and **the Puppy Contract** was identified as an one way of tackling the issues involved.

The Puppy Contract is a tool to encourage the responsible breeding and buying of puppies - ensuring buyers have all of the information they need to make an informed decision when buying a puppy and allowing responsible breeders to set themselves apart by demonstrating the care and attention they have put into breeding puppies with the best chance of being happy and healthy.

Further information can be accessed here: <http://puppycontract.org.uk>



CFSG Members



THE KENNEL CLUB
Making a difference for dogs



With grateful thanks to the members of the CFSG Working Group on Dog Conformation:

- Kennel Club
- Dogs Trust
- Dog Breeding Reform Group (DBRG)
- RSPCA
- British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA)



The Canine & Feline Sector Group

www.cfsg.org.uk

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