

Licensed Dog Breeding in Great Britain

Battersea Breeding Report 2015



Dog on cover: **Marjorie**

Marjorie was one of the worst cases of backstreet breeding Battersea has ever seen – forced to produce multiple litters one after the other.



Polly

Polly was found abandoned in the park in the middle of winter, showing all the signs of having been bred from repeatedly. She was then callously discarded.

Foreword

For 155 years, Battersea has been a haven for the abused, neglected and forgotten dogs and cats of London. Our ethos is simple – we take in any animal needing our help, and we do everything within our expert ability to find them a new chance for a better life. Many of these animals come to us from the often murky world of the puppy trade, whether as discarded, unwanted puppies, or as mothers who have been forced to have multiple litters and then cast aside when their profitability wanes.

Battersea believes it is our duty to speak up for these animals, and to provide a voice for their suffering. We see the consequences of backstreet breeding come through our doors every day, and we recognise that this is a national problem which does not respect political boundaries. Every dog shown in this report is a real Battersea dog, showing clear evidence of a life of backstreet breeding.

This is why we established our “End Backstreet Breeding” campaign in 2015, focused around two key asks that we believe would make a significant difference to the plight of these animals: lowering the licensing threshold to the second litter and closing loopholes to stop the sale of dogs below eight weeks to pet shops and dealers.

A key aspect of this campaign has been the need to shine a powerful light onto breeding practices, which exist so often in the shadows, away from the public eye. Through this report we have looked at the scale of licensed breeding operations across Great Britain. We contacted every Local Authority responsible for issuing licences in England, Wales and Scotland, to find out how much licensed breeding takes place, where, and how much a licence application costs. Northern Ireland was not included owing to the current Local Government reorganisation there.

This report is the outcome of that work. It exposes some remarkable findings - the concentration of breeders in areas such as mid and west Wales, the number of puppies born outside of licensing and the huge variation in licence application fees. These findings raise some serious questions. How can the current breeding regulations work when around 88% of puppies appear not to be born to the care of licensed breeders? Where are Great Britain’s dog breeding hot spots? Why is a breeding licence 32 times more expensive in one area than another?

Battersea believes this report shows clearly that licensing is in need of a radical rethink, as we have consistently argued through our ‘End Backstreet Breeding’ campaign, for the benefit of the animals we see in our centres every day.

Claire Horton
Chief Executive
Battersea Dogs & Cats Home

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Executive summary

Local Authorities are responsible for licensing dog breeders. However, enforcement and its effectiveness can vary markedly from one area to another.

This report provides a national picture of licensed dog breeding across Great Britain.

It shows

- There are currently 895 licensed dog breeders in Great Britain
- 40% of these breeders are located in just 6% of Local Authorities
- Over 1/3 of Local Authorities do not have any licensed breeders
- Less than 12% of puppies born in Great Britain each year are bred by licensed breeders
- Most breeding establishments are relatively small, having 10 or fewer breeding bitches
- A few are very large - five have over 100 breeding bitches and the largest has 200
- Licensed dog breeders produce an estimated 67,125 puppies in a year
- The licence fee charged by different Local Authorities varies greatly, from £23 to £741
- 90% of licence applications are renewals rather than first-time applications

These findings expose some serious gaps in a system which is supposed to safeguard the welfare of dogs and puppies, protect the interests of the puppy buying public and ensure a level playing field for small businesses.

With a third of the country not licensing any breeders, less than 12% of puppies are born to the care of a licensed breeder. This opens up the question as to what happens to the other 88%? Furthermore, with huge variations in the licence fee, questions must also be asked about the effectiveness of the current licensing system in achieving these aims – both of the legislation and its implementation.

This report provides strong evidence for Battersea's End Backstreet Breeding campaign which calls for a change in the dog breeding regulations, to simplify the law and pull more breeders into the regulatory net.

1. The survey

Local Authorities are responsible for licensing dog breeders. This survey aims to provide a national picture of the current situation, and the scale of licensed breeding across the country.

In April 2015, Battersea issued a Freedom of Information request on licensed dog breeding to all 379 Local Authorities in England, Wales and Scotland with responsibility for licensing of dog breeders. Northern Ireland was not included on this occasion as its Local Authorities were undergoing a reorganisation at the time of data gathering.

A total of 379 Local Authorities were asked to provide

- a) For each of the last five calendar years (2010 - 2014 inclusive):
 - Number of first-time applications for a dog breeding licence
 - Number of renewal applications for a dog breeding licence
 - Number of applications refused (with reasons for refusal if possible)
 - Number of licences issued
- b) In addition:
 - The number of breeding bitches in each currently licensed establishment
 - The current fee charged for a first-time application
 - The current fee charged for a renewal application

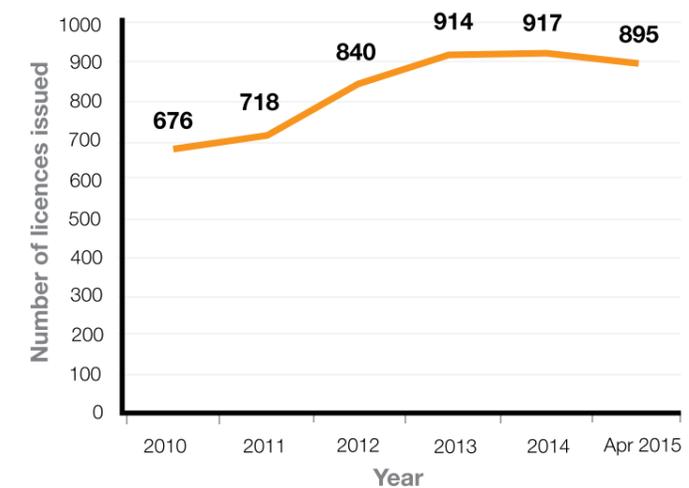
A 100% response rate was achieved, however some Local Authorities were unable to provide all of the data in the format requested. This report summarises the national picture. Full details for any Local Authority or region are available on request.

2. Licensed dog breeders in Great Britain

Every day there is a constant flow of dogs coming in to Battersea who have been the victims of backstreet breeding. The purpose of licensing is to ensure breeders are respecting dog welfare. We wanted to investigate how effective it is in practice.

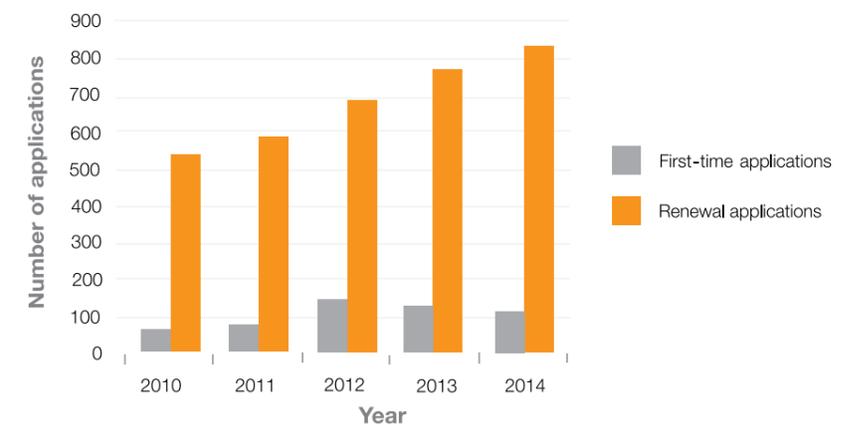
In April 2015, there were 895 currently licensed dog breeding establishments in Great Britain. This represents an increase of 32% since 2010.

Figure 1 Number of licensed dog breeders in Great Britain 2010 – April 2015



The vast majority of applications are to renew an existing licence. In 2014, 89% of licence applications were renewals, up from 80% in 2010.

Figure 2 Types of licence application 2010 – 2014



Few applications are refused - only 5 in 2014 for failing to meet licensing standards such as providing inadequate accommodation or levels of supervision for the dogs.

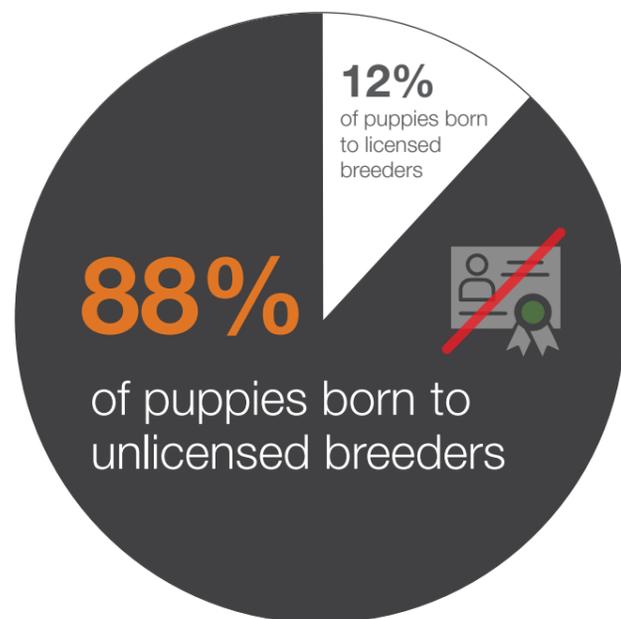
3. The scale of licensed breeding

Numbers of puppies produced

We are able, from our survey, to estimate the number of puppies produced by licensed breeders each year. From this we can assess the scale of the gap between puppies born inside the licensing system and those born outside it.

Our survey shows that 13,425 breeding bitches are kept by currently licensed breeders. The law says that bitches can only have one litter every 12 months. As the average size of a litter is five puppies, this would mean that licensed dog breeders would produce 67,125 puppies a year.

According to UK Government estimates, a minimum of 560,000 puppies are born in Great Britain each year¹. This means that less than 12% of puppies born in Great Britain every year are bred by licensed breeders.



¹ DEFRA, Microchipping of Dogs Impact Assessment (2012)

Case Study: Licensing Reform in Wales

There is a clear precedent from Wales that shows the impact of reducing the threshold for licensing to one flat level, irrespective of whether the breeding is for commercial or other purposes. In April 2015, the change by the Welsh Government to license all breeders at the third litter brought some 500 further breeders into the scope of licensing in Wales alone. As the costs of inspection can be reclaimed through the application fee, the financial burden on Local Authorities need not be significant. It has also simplified the law, which had been difficult for Local Authorities to interpret and enforce.

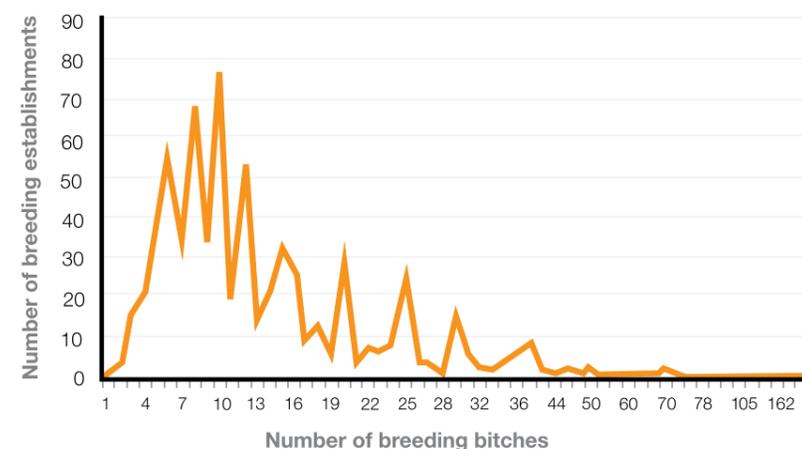
The size of breeding establishments

233 Local Authorities were able to provide the number of breeding bitches kept by each of their currently licensed breeders. Figure 3 gives a picture of the varying sizes of these 755 breeding establishments.

Most breeding establishments are at the smaller end of the scale, below the average of 15 breeding bitches. 52% have ten or fewer, with ten being the most common size of establishment. 3% of establishments have 50 or more on their premises, and there are five which each have over 100. The largest establishment has 200 breeding bitches.

Although few in number, large establishments are responsible for a disproportionate amount of breeding. Small establishments (those with 10 or fewer bitches) keep just 25% of all the breeding bitches, while 14% are kept by just 3% of establishments (those with 50 or more bitches).

Figure 3: The number of breeding establishments and breeding bitches

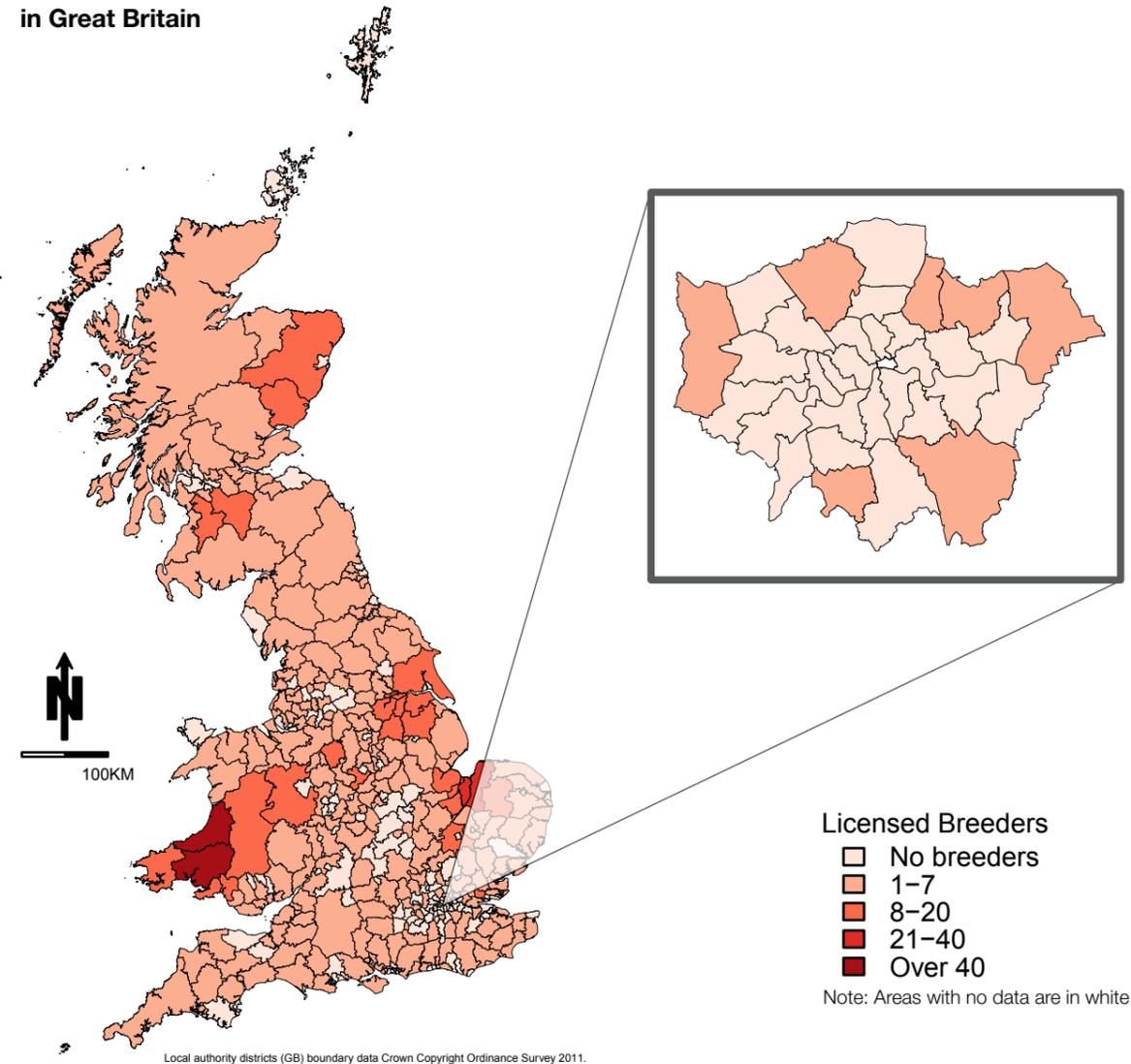


4. The Local Authority landscape

The law around dog breeding is currently complicated enough for Local Authorities to enforce, however for many Councils the problem is compounded by how rarely they are required to do so. Figure 4 shows which Local Authorities are required to be particularly active – with hotspots in mid and west Wales, Lincolnshire, East Anglia, and some rural areas of Scotland.

The scarcity of breeding applications in some Council areas means that dog breeding premises may be regulated by staff whose expertise lies primarily in inspecting taxis, restaurants or other non-animal premises.

Figure 4 The distribution of licensed dog breeders across Local Authorities in Great Britain



34% (130) Local Authorities have no licensed dog breeders, while 40% of dog breeders are concentrated in just 6% (22) of Local Authorities.

Table 1 The top ten areas with the highest number of currently licensed breeders

Local Authority	N licensed breeders
Carmarthenshire	81
Ceredigion	41
King's Lynn & West Norfolk	21
Shropshire	19
East Ayrshire	15
Bassetlaw	15
Angus	14
West Lindsey	13
South Lanarkshire	13
Pembrokeshire	13



5. The licence fee

Our heat maps show the vast discrepancies between Local Authorities registering breeders and their establishments – with some Local Authorities charging 32 times as much as others for the same service. Clearly it is going to be difficult for a central law to be effective, when it is administered so vastly differently across the country.

Local Authorities have different licence fee structures. Most do not include the cost of an inspection by a vet. If one is needed, which it often is for first-time applicants, this is charged on top of the licence application fee or applicants have to arrange this themselves. This can cost additionally anywhere between £100-£300.

Some Local Authorities have a sliding scale of fees, with larger establishments paying higher application fees, others reduce the fee for renewal licences.

Table 2 shows the range of fees charged by Local Authorities for a first-time application for a dog breeding licence.

Table 2 Fees charged by Local Authorities for a first-time dog breeding licence

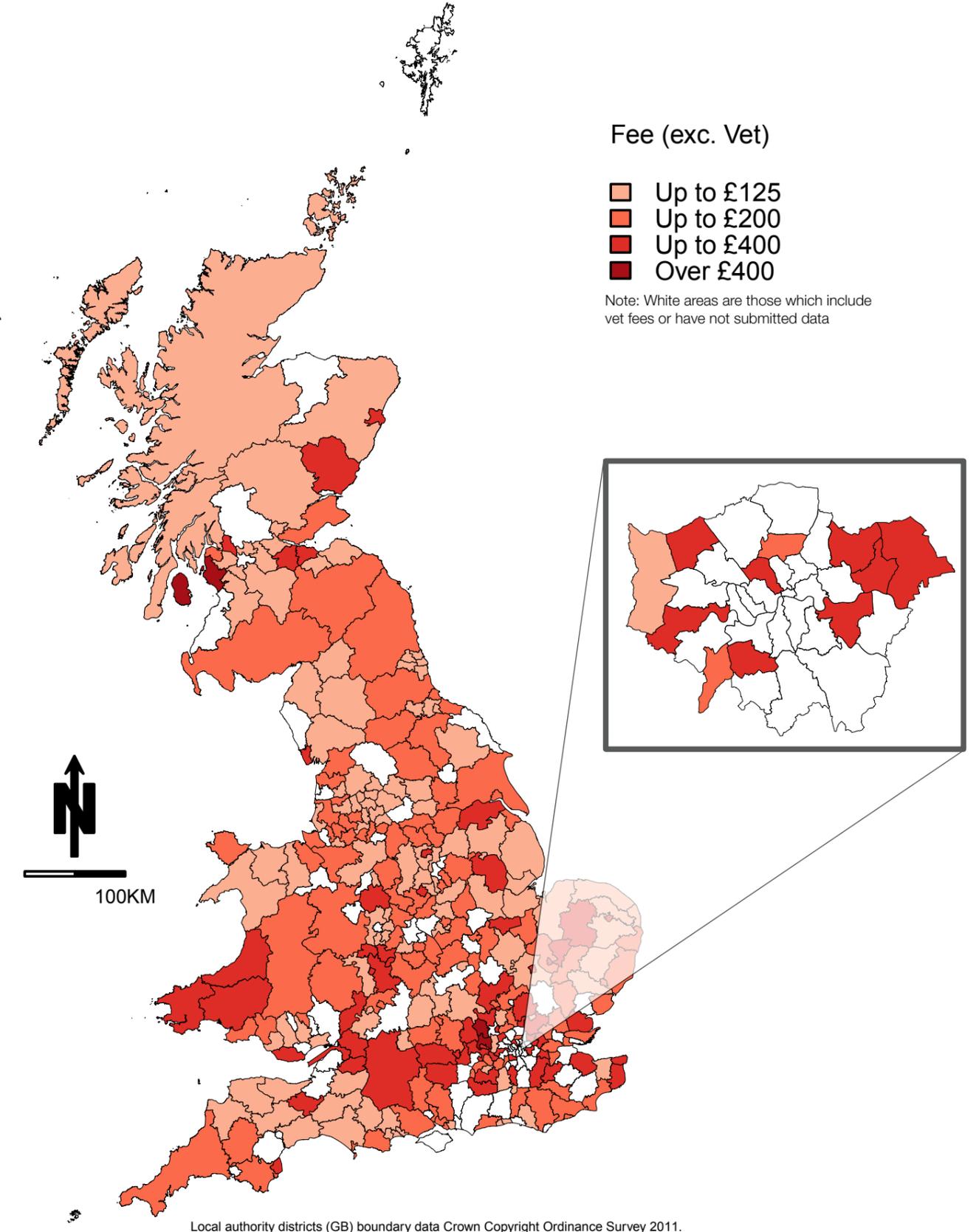
	Excluding vet inspection fees	Inclusive of inspection fees	Not known/not set
Number of Local Authorities	298	41	40
Average fee	£159	£240	
Minimum fee	£43 (St Albans City)	£23 (Glasgow)	
Maximum fee	£525 (Chiltern & South Bucks)	£741 (Lambeth)	

The variation in fees is surprisingly large, particularly since there are strict rules about what Local Authorities can charge for. Local Authorities can only charge to recover the reasonable costs of processing the licence application. They cannot aim to make a profit from the licence fee, set the fee so high as to deter businesses from the area or set the fee low to subsidise businesses and attract them to the area.

Some fees cost up to **32x** more than others

Figure 5 takes a closer look at the variation in fees for those Local Authorities that exclude vet inspection costs. It shows how even neighbouring Local Authorities can charge very different fees.

Figure 5 Cost of licence application (exc. vet fees)



Conclusion

This report sheds light on the national picture of licensed dog breeding, and in doing so raises some serious questions about the regulation of dog breeding. It is clear there are some very large gaps in the system. It is surprising, for example, that

- There are so few licensed dog breeders
- Licensed breeders produce such a small proportion of the total number of puppies born each year in Great Britain
- So many Local Authorities have no licensed breeders

Also striking is the very large variation in licence fee charged by Local Authorities. This again is surprising given the strict rules and guidance on local fee setting, which mean that Local Authorities can only set the fee to recover their costs in processing the licence application. They cannot use it for profit, or to deter or attract businesses to the area.

These findings provide strong evidence of the need for a serious review of the current system for safeguarding the welfare of breeding dogs and their puppies, protecting the interests of the buying public and ensuring fair treatment of small businesses.

There is a real need for a regulatory system that both encourages dog breeding businesses into the licensed market while also providing sufficient safeguards for dogs and consumers. Battersea is calling on the Government to make licensing compulsory for the second litter produced in a year, and to close loopholes that allow puppies to be removed from their mothers before they are eight weeks old. This report points to the current system achieving neither, and supports Battersea's End Backstreet Breeding campaign for changes in the law.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the Local Authorities who took part in this survey and who supplied the information on licensed breeders in their area. We hope they will find this report useful.

We would also like to thank Oli Hutt at the UCL Department of Security and Crime Science for producing the maps used in this report.

Barbara

Barbara came to us with painfully swollen teats – she had clearly been used constantly for breeding litters of puppies.



Appendix

Appendix: Number of currently licensed dog breeders in each Local Authority

Aberdeen City	0	Castle Point	0	East Staffordshire Borough	3
Aberdeenshire	10	Central Bedfordshire	1	Eastbourne	0
Adur District	0	Ceredigion County	41	Eastleigh Borough	1
Allerdale Borough	2	Charnwood Borough	2	Eden District	3
Amber Valley Borough	5	Chelmsford Borough	1	Edinburgh City	1
Angus	14	Cheltenham Borough	0	Elmbridge Borough	0
Argyll & Bute	1	Cherwell District	0	Epping Forest District	5
Arun District	3	Cheshire East	5	Epsom & Ewell Borough	0
Ashfield District	2	Cheshire West and Chester	4	Erewash Borough	1
Ashford Borough	6	Chesterfield Borough	0	Exeter City	1
Aylesbury Vale District	2	Chichester District	5	Falkirk District	2
Babergh District	0	Chiltern District	2	Fareham Borough	1
Barnsley Borough	5	Chorley Borough	2	Fenland District	8
Barrow-in-Furness Borough	1	Christchurch Borough	0	Fife	4
Basildon District	10	Clackmannanshire	1	Flintshire County	4
Basingstoke & Deane Borough	1	Colchester Borough	1	Forest Heath District	3
Bassetlaw District	15	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	1	Forest of Dean District	3
Bath & North East Somerset	1	Conwy County Borough	2	Fylde Borough	3
Bedford Borough	1	Copeland Borough	0	Gateshead Metropolitan Borough	2
Birmingham City	2	Corby Borough	0	Gedling Borough	3
Blaby District	2	Cornwall	6	Glasgow City	0
Blackburn with Darwen Borough	0	Cotswold District	0	Gloucester City	0
Blackpool	3	Coventry City	0	Gosport Borough	1
Blaenau Gwent County	0	Craven District	1	Gravesham Borough	2
Bolsover District	1	Crawley Borough	0	Great Yarmouth Borough	0
Bolton Metropolitan Borough	1	Dacorum Borough	1	Guildford Borough	0
Boston Borough	3	Darlington Borough	2	Gwynedd	1
Bournemouth Borough	0	Dartford Borough	0	Halton Borough	0
Bracknell Forest	0	Daventry District	0	Hambleton	4
Bradford Metropolitan	4	Denbighshire	2	Harborough District	0
Braintree District	4	Derby City	0	Harlow	0
Breckland District	8	Derbyshire Dales	5	Harrogate Borough	1
Brentwood Borough	1	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough	8	Hart District	0
Bridgend County Borough	2	Dover District	2	Hartlepool Borough	0
Brighton and Hove City	1	Dudley Metropolitan Borough	0	Hastings Borough	0
Bristol City	1	Dumfries and Galloway	6	Havant District	0
Broadland District	2	Dundee City	0	Herefordshire	4
Bromsgrove District	1	Durham County	6	Hertsmere Borough	0
Broxbourne	1	East Ayrshire	15	High Peak Borough	1
Broxtowe Borough	2	East Cambridgeshire	7	Highland	1
Burnley Borough	1	East Devon	1	Hinckley & Bosworth District	2
Bury Metropolitan Borough	2	East Dorset District	0	Horsham District	5
Caerphilly County Borough	1	East Dunbartonshire	2	Hull City	0
Calderdale	0	East Hampshire District	1	Huntingdonshire District	3
Cambridge City	0	East Hertfordshire	0	Hyndburn Borough	1
Cannock Chase District	0	East Lindsey District	7	Inverclyde	0
Canterbury City	1	East Lothian	0	Ipswich Borough	4
Cardiff	1	East Northamptonshire	1	Isle of Anglesey	0
Carlisle City	5	East Renfrewshire	1	Isle of Wight	1
Carmarthenshire County	81	East Riding of Yorkshire	9	Isles of Scilly	0

Kettering Borough	0	Mendip District	2	Reading Borough	1
King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough	21	Merthyr Tydfil	0	Redcar and Cleveland	1
Kirklees Metropolitan Borough	0	Mid Devon District	1	Redditch Borough	0
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough	1	Mid Suffolk District	1	Reigate and Banstead Borough	0
Lancaster City	3	Mid Sussex District	1	Renfrewshire	0
Leeds City	3	Middlesbrough Borough	2	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough	1
Leicester City	0	Midlothian	1	Ribble Valley Borough	1
Lewes District	0	Milton Keynes	0	Richmondshire	2
Lichfield District	3	Mole Valley	4	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough	4
Lincoln City	0	Monmouthshire	5	Rochford District	2
Liverpool City	0	Moray	1	Rosendale	0
London Borough - Barking & Dagenham	0	Neath Port Talbot	9	Rother District	3
London Borough - Barnet	2	New Forest District	6	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough	1
London Borough - Bexley	0	Newark and Sherwood District	6	Rugby Borough	1
London Borough - Brent	0	Newcastle upon Tyne City	1	Runnymede Borough	2
London Borough - Bromley	2	Newcastle-under-Lyme	3	Rushcliffe	1
London Borough - Camden	0	Newport	1	Rushmoor Borough	1
London Borough - Croydon	0	North Ayrshire	2	Rutland County	0
London Borough - Ealing	0	North Devon District	4	Ryedale District	4
London Borough - Enfield	0	North Dorset District	1	Salford City	0
London Borough - Greenwich	0	North East Derbyshire	2	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough	0
London Borough - Hackney	0	North East Lincolnshire	1	Scarborough Borough	3
London Borough - Hammersmith & Fulham	0	North Hertfordshire District	1	Scottish Borders	2
London Borough - Haringey	0	North Kesteven District	5	Sedgemoor District	1
London Borough - Harrow	0	North Lanarkshire	2	Sefton Metropolitan Borough	1
London Borough - Havering	3	North Lincolnshire	10	Selby	2
London Borough - Hillingdon	1	North Norfolk District	3	Sevenoaks District	1
London Borough - Hounslow	0	North Somerset	4	Sheffield City	4
London Borough - Islington	0	North Tyneside	0	Shepway District	2
London Borough - Kensington & Chelsea	0	North Warwickshire Borough	2	Shetland Islands	0
London Borough - Kingston upon Thames	0	North West Leicestershire	4	Shropshire	19
London Borough - Lambeth	0	Northampton Borough	2	Slough Borough	0
London Borough - Lewisham	0	Northumberland County	5	Solihull Metropolitan Borough	4
London Borough - Merton	0	Norwich City	0	South Ayrshire	3
London Borough - Newham	0	Nottingham City	0	South Bucks District	0
London Borough - Redbridge	1	Nuneaton & Bedworth	1	South Cambridgeshire	9
London Borough - Richmond upon Thames	0	Oadby & Wigston District	0	South Derbyshire	8
London Borough - Southwark	0	Oldham Metropolitan Borough	0	South Gloucestershire District	4
London Borough - Sutton	1	Orkney Islands	0	South Hams District	0
London Borough - Tower Hamlets	0	Oxford City	0	South Holland	8
London Borough - Waltham Forest	2	Pembrokeshire	13	South Kesteven	4
London Borough - Wandsworth	0	Pendle Borough	3	South Lakeland District	3
Luton Borough	2	Perth & Kinross	6	South Lanarkshire	13
Maidstone Borough	2	Peterborough City	3	South Norfolk	3
Maldon District	4	Plymouth City	1	South Northamptonshire	0
Malvern Hills District	2	Poole Borough	0	South Oxfordshire District	3
Manchester City	0	Portsmouth City	0	South Ribble Borough	5
Mansfield District	2	Powys County	10	South Somerset District	1
Medway	0	Preston City	0	South Staffordshire	3
Melton Borough	3	Purbeck District	1	South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough	0

Southampton City	1	Tendring District	1	West Dorset District	1
Southend-on-Sea	0	Test Valley Borough	2	West Dunbartonshire	0
Spelthorne Borough	0	Tewkesbury Borough	2	West Lancashire District	5
St Albans City & District	0	Thanet District	0	West Lindsey	13
St Edmundsbury Borough	1	Three Rivers District	0	West Lothian	1
St Helens Borough	4	Thurrock	2	Westminster City	0
Stafford Borough	2	Tonbridge and Malling Borough	0	West Oxfordshire	1
Staffordshire Moorlands District	9	Torbay	0	West Somerset	0
Stevenage Borough	0	Torfaen County Borough	0	Weymouth & Portland Borough	0
Stirling	1	Torridge District	1	Wigan Metropolitan Borough	2
Stockport Metropolitan Borough	3	Trafford	1	Wiltshire	6
Stockton-on-Tees Borough	1	Tunbridge Wells Borough	2	Winchester City	1
Stoke-on-Trent City	4	Uttlesford District	2	Windsor and Maidenhead	1
Stratford-on-Avon	2	Vale of Glamorgan	2	Wirral Metropolitan Borough	1
Stroud District	1	Vale of White Horse District	2	Woking Borough	0
Suffolk Coastal District	3	Wakefield City Metropolitan District	2	Wokingham	0
Sunderland City	1	Walsall Metropolitan Borough	0	Wolverhampton City	0
Surrey Heath Borough	0	Warrington	2	Worcester City	0
Swale Borough	2	Warwick District	1	Worthing Borough	0
Swansea City & County	12	Watford Borough	0	Wrexham County Borough	3
Swindon Borough	0	Waveney District	3	Wychavon District	1
Tameside Metropolitan Borough	1	Waverley Borough	3	Wycombe District	2
Tamworth Borough	0	Wealden District	3	Wyre Borough	1
Tandridge District	2	Wellingborough	3	Wyre Forest District	2
Taunton Deane Borough	0	Welwyn Hatfield	1	York City	0
Teignbridge District	2	West Berkshire	4		
Telford & Wrekin	0	West Devon Borough	4		

Boo

Boo came to Battersea sad and lonely, showing all the signs of excessive breeding, was covered in flea bites and had a skin infection.



Dog on back: Pippa

Pippa's distorted facial features and an unusually long neck point to her being born with genetic deformities as a result of backstreet breeding.

Further Information

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#MotherAgain

