



**Isle of Man
Government**

Reiltys Ellan Vannin



Consultation Document

Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture

Compulsory Micro Chipping of Dogs

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This consultation seeks views on the proposal to introduce a regime whereby all dogs will be required to be micro-chipped. This will effectively lead to the demise of the current dog licensing system.
- 1.2 If you have any queries regarding this proposal please contact **John Howie, Environment, Safety & Health Directorate**, on **685884** or **john.howie@gov.im**

2. Background

- 2.1 Currently it is a requirement of the Dogs Act 1990 that owners of dogs pay an annual duty for a dog licence. The full rate of duty is £20.00 and a reduced duty of £10.00 is payable for dogs that are neutered, dogs owned by persons over the age of 60 and dogs already fitted with a micro-chip.

The Act provides for dogs that are specifically exempt from the licence duty requirements:

- a) under the age of 6 months, unless its keeper is a person other than the person by whom it was kept immediately after its birth
 - b) kept and used solely by a blind person for their guidance
 - c) kept and used solely for law enforcement purposes or search and rescue purposes
 - d) kept solely for sporting purposes, catching or destroying vermin, driving or tending cattle or sheep
 - e) brought to, and remaining on the Island for a period of not more than 28 days in any one year
 - f) a recognised assistance dog
- 2.2 Whilst the licensing system generates an income for Government, it is an old system and does not fully address the problems associated with irresponsible dog ownership. Accessing details of ownership of dogs on the existing database is slow and unreliable and there are no records of ownership of all dogs due to the aforementioned exemptions etc. There can, therefore, be delays in returning stray dogs to their owners. The current licensing system database is no longer supported by Government Technology Services and any malfunction or failure could result in significant operational difficulties.
- 2.3 The reduction in the duty payable for dogs fitted with a micro-chip was introduced by the Department on 1st April 2013. This was the first step towards making it more affordable and encouraging responsible dog owners to micro-chip their dogs.

- 2.4 Research into costs of micro-chipping has identified an approximate figure of £15.00 to £20.00. This payment would be payable as a 'one off' and made to any person properly trained to provide the service.

3. Objectives of the proposal

- 3.1 The Department is of the opinion that compulsory micro-chipping of dogs could:
- a) Improve animal welfare by making it easier to reunite a stray dog with its owner. The period of confinement for micro-chipped stray dogs may be reduced, therefore reducing the level of stress for the dog when separated from its owner.
 - b) Develop further responsible ownership by introducing improved traceability of owners.
 - c) Help establish liability and prove ownership.
 - d) Assist control measures in case of any diseases that can be transferred to humans
 - e) Act as a deterrent against dog theft – the micro-chip relates the dog to its owner and therefore it can be determined if the dog is stolen.
 - f) Relieve pressure on DEFA Dog Wardens and the MSPCA (who provide kennelling and a limited 'out of hours' service) in the short to medium term. This should help to reduce the costs involved and the number of strays and dogs that need to be rehomed. All owners would have much greater chance of getting back their dogs if lost.

4. Scope of the proposed new Legislation

- 4.1 The proposal is to introduce compulsory micro-chipping thus requiring all dogs to be micro-chipped, including those currently exempt under the provisions of the Dogs Act 1990.
- 4.2 Puppies born after the commencement of the proposed new legislation would be required to be micro-chipped prior to transfer of ownership, sold or homed by the breeder.
- 4.3 Older dogs would be micro-chipped if they were sold, gifted or rehomed.
- 4.4 All remaining dogs should be micro-chipped within 12 months of the introduction of the new legislation. Such dogs would have to be licensed, as is current, during this 12 month interim period.
- 4.5 This would give a clear enforcement date after which all dogs must be micro-chipped.

4.6 **This proposal does not give existing owners of dogs the freedom not to micro-chip their dogs.**

4.7 The amendments will also provide for offences related to micro-chipping of dogs becoming compulsory.

- Failure to micro-chip
- Failure to amend ownership details at point of sale or rehoming dogs
- Financial penalties will be provided for such offences

5. Submissions

5.1 Submissions, including names and addresses of respondents, may be made public unless confidentiality is specifically requested.

5.2 You may wish to answer some or all of the following questions as your submission to this consultation:

- Do you think that all dogs on the Isle of Man should have to be micro-chipped?
- Should there be any exemptions from compulsory micro-chipping?
- When a micro-chipped dog changes ownership, the registration details on the database would need to be updated. With whom should this responsibility lie: the seller, the buyer, or both?
- The compulsory micro-chipping of dogs would require owners to pay to micro-chip their dog. What are your thoughts on this issue?
- We have set out what we think are the benefits to micro-chipping your dog. We would like to know your views on compulsory micro-chipping.

5.3 Anyone wishing to submit their views in relation to the topics in this document or any other issue related to the policy on agricultural tenancies is invited to do so by **Friday 1 May 2015** to:

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