

## Policy Brief

# Dogs

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## Introduction

This paper briefly provides some basic information about dogs in Jersey – their number and characteristics, laws and regulations governing their ownership and control, and policy issues. Where possible comparisons are made with the UK, Guernsey and other jurisdictions. The co-operation of the Comité de Connétables in providing information about dog licences and more generally is gratefully acknowledged. Much of the information in this paper is taken from the website <https://comite.je/dog-licence/>.

## Summary

There are over 10,000 licensed dogs in Jersey. Between 2013 and 2025 the number of licensed dogs increased by 49%, and as a percentage of the population from 6.3% to 10.1%.

Of households with dogs, 77% have one, 19% have two and 4% have three or more.

Jersey is well down the international league table in respect of dog ownership. The dog/people percentage is highest in Hungary (28%), Brazil (26%) and USA (26%). The figure in the UK is 17% and in France 11%. About 20% of Jersey households have dogs compared with a third of UK households. The percentage in Guernsey is nearer that of the UK.

The dog/households percentage is highest in St Ouen (40.8%) and is over 34% in St Martin, St Peter, Trinity, St John, Trinity and St Mary. It is lowest in St Helier (11.6%). Between 2017 and 2025 the licensed dog population increased by 61% in St Lawrence, 38% in Grouville, 37% in St Saviour and 25% in St Clement and St Helier.

The most common dog breeds given on licence applications are Labrador Retriever (8.0%), Cockapoo (6.7%), Cocker Spaniel (6.0%) and Jack Russel Terrier (5.3%).

The most common dog names given on licence applications are Bella, Luna, Poppy, Lola and Buddy. In the UK the most common names are Luna, Bella, Poppy, Teddy and Milo.

Average household expenditure on pets in 2022 was £10.70 a week out of £900.80 (1.2%). But for those households with pets, it was more like £40. With 45,000 households in Jersey this implied annual expenditure on pets of £25 million, about 75% of which was on dogs. The dog economy includes sales of dog food, breeding and sales, veterinary services, kennels and dog sitting and walking.

Dogs in Jersey have to be licensed, unlike in the UK where they have to be microchipped. There are laws governing the conduct of dogs.

Public policy issues in respect of dogs include excessive barking, dogs disturbing other livestock, not cleaning up poo, dog walking on beaches, and the need for dogs to be licensed.

The JCRA has published an open letter to vet businesses asking them to consider proposals by the UK Competition and Markets Authority on how the delivery of veterinary services in Jersey may be improved for the benefit of their business and pet owners.

## The dog population

In 2025, 10,547 dogs were licensed in Jersey. The total number of dogs in the Island was higher than this; dogs younger than six months and support dogs for blind or deaf people do not need to be licensed. It is also likely that not all dogs that should be licensed are licensed.

Table 1 show the number of dog licences issued each year since 2013.

**Table 1 Dog licences and population, Jersey, 2013-2025**

Year	Dog licences Issued	Change %	Population	Dogs/people %
2013	7,080	14.3	98,600	6.3
2014	7,198	1.7	99,300	7.2
2015	7,754	7.7	100,100	7.2
2016	8,269	6.6	101,200	7.7
2017	8,462	2.3	102,200	8.3
2018	8,457	-	102,700	8.2
2019	8,754	3.5	103,300	8.5
2020	8,456	-3.4	103,500	8.2
2021	8,693	2.8	103,200	8.4
2022	8,955	3.0	103,300	8.7
2023	9,166	2.3	104,000	8.8
2024	9,674	5.5	104,500	9.3
2025	10,547	9.0	[104,500]	[10.1]

Note: the dog licence figures are recorded between April and June each year although the 2025 figure is at December. The population figures are for the end of the previous year and are published by Statistics Jersey. The end-2025 population estimate assumes that it is unchanged from 2024.

Between 2013 and 2025 the licensed dog population increased by 49.0%. Over a comparable period, the population increased by 6.0%. Accordingly, the dog/people percentage increased from 6.3% to an estimated 10.1%. The dog/household percentage is 24%. However, this does not mean that 24% of households have dogs, as some households have more than one dog. Of households with dogs, 77% have one dog, 19% have two and 4% have three or more. Allowing for multiple dog ownership, 20% of Jersey households have dogs.

52% of licensed dogs are male and 48% are female. On age –

22% of dogs were born before 2015  
36% between 2015 and 2019  
43% between 2020 and 2025.

It is estimated that there are about 13 million dogs in the UK. The most comprehensive analysis is the Dogs Trust report [The 2024 National Dog Survey](#). This reported that over one-third of households include at least one dog and around four in ten people live with a dog. The average number of dogs in dog-owning homes nationally was 1.36. 74% of dog-owning homes had one dog, 20% had two, 4% had three and 2% had four or more.

There is no accurate figure for the number of dogs in Guernsey, but estimates put it at about 10,000. If this is correct then the dog/people percentage would be 14.8%, much higher than Jersey but lower than the UK.

The World Population Review website publishes a table of dogs per capita. Selected figures are shown in Table 2 below, with Jersey's figure added.

**Table 2 Dogs/people percentage, selected countries.**

Country	Percentage	Country	Percentage
Hungary	28	Italy	16
Brazil	26	Japan	16
USA	26	Germany	12
Portugal	20	France	11
Canada	20	Belgium	11
Spain	19	Netherlands	10
UK	17	<b>Jersey</b>	10
Estonia	17	Ireland	9
Poland	17	Switzerland	6

It will be seen that Jersey is well down the table.

The dogs/people percentage varies significantly between parishes. As expected, the country parishes have a much higher percentage than the more urban parishes. Table 3 shows that the dogs/dwellings percentage (in practice the dogs/households percentage) was highest in St Ouen (40.8%) and was over 34% in St Martin, Trinity, St John, St Peter and St Mary. It was by far the lowest in St Helier (11.6%). It should be noted that the official statistics show significant year-to-year variations for individual parishes, suggesting that there is quite a high number of dogs that should be licensed but have not been.

**Table 3 Dog numbers by parish, 2025**

Parish	Population, 2021	Occupied private dwellings 2021	Dogs, 2025	Dogs/ population	Dog/ dwellings
St Helier	35,822	17,411	2,015	5.6%	11.6%
St Saviour	13,904	5,596	1,424	10.2%	25.4%
St Brelade	11,012	4,428	1,419	12.9%	32.0%
St Clement	9,925	4,023	1,126	11.3%	28.0%
St Lawrence	5,561	2,281	654	11.8%	28.7%
Grouville	5,401	2,193	694	12.8%	31.6%
St Peter	5,264	2,156	745	14.2%	34.6%
St Ouen	4,206	1,661	678	16.1%	40.8%
St Martin	3,948	1,601	583	14.8%	36.4%
Trinity	3,355	1,330	454	13.5%	34.1%
St John	3,051	1,194	453	14.8%	37.9%
St Mary	1,818	709	265	14.6%	37.4%
<b>Jersey</b>	<b>103,267</b>	<b>44,583</b>	<b>10,547</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>23.7%</b>

There have been significant variations in the growth of the dog population between parishes. Between 2017 and 2025 the licensed dog population increased by 61% in St Lawrence, 38% in Grouville, 37% in St Saviour and 25% in St Clement and St Helier. By contrast, the increase in St Mary was just 1% and in St Ouen and Trinity 9%. These changes may reflect to some extent changes in the number of unlicensed dogs.

## Breeds and names

Table 4 shows the most common dog breeds recorded on licence applications.

**Table 4 Most common dog breeds, Jersey, 2025**

Breed	Jersey Percentage of total
Labrador Retriever	8.0
Cockapoo	6.7
Cocker Spaniel	6.0
Jack Russel Terrier	5.0
Dachshund	3.6
French Bulldog	2.9
Golden Retriever	2.5
Border Collie	2.5
Staffordshire Bull Terrier	2.4
Chihuahua	2.2

Since 2024, Lhasa Apso and English Springer Spaniel have dropped out of the top 10. For comparison, the leading dog breeds in the UK are Labrador Retriever, Cocker Spaniel, French Bulldog, Cockapoo, Dachshund, Golden Retriever, English Springer Spaniel, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, German Shepherd Dog and Border Collie.

There are differences between the parishes in respect of breeds. Labrador Retriever is the most common breed in St Martin, St Mary, St Ouen, St Peter, St Saviour, St Helier, Grouville and Trinity. In St Clement and St Brelade, the cockapoo is the most common breed. Cocker Spaniel is the most common breed in St Lawrence and St John.

It should be noted that dog breeds are not precise and for many dogs the exact breed is not known. The dog licence application asks for identifying features including breed though an owner may describe a dog as a 'mutt (mixed)' or 'breed not listed'.

Table 5 shows the top dog names in Jersey and the UK.

**Table 5 Top 10 dog names, Jersey and UK**

<b>Jersey</b>	<b>UK</b>
Bella	Luna
Luna	Bella
Poppy	Poppy
Lola	Teddy
Buddy	Milo
Teddy	Daisy
Alfie	Charlie
Daisy	Budy
Ruby	Lola
Molly	Ruby

The most common dog names given on licence applications in Jersey and the UK are Bella, Luna and Poppy.

## The dog economy

The [Household Spending 2021 – 2022](#) report showed that average household expenditure on pets was £10.70 a week out of total expenditure of £900.80 (1.2%). The range was from £7.20 (1.5%) for the lowest income group to £18.30 (1.1%) for the highest income group. Owner-occupiers with mortgages spent £18.10 (1.2%), social renters £6.80 (1.6%) and unqualified renters £4.50 (0.8%). With 45,000 households in Jersey this implies annual expenditure on pets of £25 million, of which expenditure on dogs probably accounts for three quarters.

It should be noted that all these figures are for expenditure for all households, whether they have a pet or not. As only 20% of households have dogs these figures can be multiplied by a factor of five for those households with dogs – so an average of around £50 a week or £2,500 a year. That is also the figure widely quoted for the cost of owning a dog. These figures apply to 2021-22. Inflation since then has been around 13%, so the current figure is around £2,800.

The dog economy has several components -

- Sales of dog food.
- Breeding and sales.
- Grooming – 25 licensed businesses offer pet grooming.
- Veterinary services. There are three companies providing veterinary services for dogs in Jersey: New Era Vets (with centres in St Brelade, St Helier and St Saviour), Jersey Village Vets (with centres in St Clement, St Martin, St Mary and St Brelade) and All Pets (based in St Peter).
- Kennels – four companies offer this service: Pine Tree, Classic, Pont du Val and Paws R Us.
- Dog sitting and dog walking – far more like cottage industries. There are 101 licensed businesses where the nature of the work includes dog walking, 46 of which also specify dog sitting.

### The role of the JSPCA

The Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals JSPCA is a Jersey charity with a mission to “prevent cruelty, promote knowledge, and provide for the aged, sick, lost and unwanted animals in Jersey”. Its services include a 24-hour animal ambulance, lost and found, rehoming, an animal crematorium, and education and training, for example a canine first aid course for pet professionals and dog owners.

### Legislation and regulation

All dogs aged six months or more must be licensed each year under the Dogs (Jersey) Law 1961. Each licence is specific to one dog and cannot be transferred to another dog. A licence is not needed if the dog is used solely by a blind or deaf person for their guidance. The licence fee is £10 a dog, lasts for one year and must be renewed by 31 January each year. Late renewal applications may pay a double fee as an alternative to legal proceedings.

Dog licensing is the responsibility of the parishes. Although each parish maintains its own licences, they have collectively introduced an on-line dog licensing website.

The Jersey practice differs from that in Britain. There is no requirement to have a dog licence, but with some exceptions dogs over eight weeks old must have a microchip which gives a dog a unique ID number and details of the owner. The details are registered with one of a number of government approved registers. Microchipping enables lost dogs to be identified and reunited with their owners. However, no data are recorded on breeds or names.

The Jersey Dog Licences website sets out the [responsibilities](#) for a dog owner -

- A dog must wear a collar inscribed with the owner's name, address, and contact number when in any public place or road. New legislation will change this requirement to the dog's name, licence number and a contact number for the owner.
- Dogs can be exercised on Jersey beaches at any time, but between 1 May and 30 September, they must be kept on a lead between 10.30 am and 6.00 pm.
- Dogs are allowed in many parks but most have specific rules.
- Cleaning up after a dog. This applies to all beaches and parks and to all public areas, including roads and pavements.
- Dogs are not allowed to worry livestock.

Under the Dogs Law (Jersey) Amendment Regulations 2025, which came in to force in December 2025, dog owners must declare if their dog is a “dangerous dog” when applying for a licence. Guidance has been published on the breeds that are considered to be dangerous. Owners of dangerous dogs must comply with strict conditions.

## Public policy issues

There are several public policy issues relevant to dogs in Jersey.

**Dogs barking** for long periods particularly at night. This is a difficult issue to resolve because of differing views between dog owners and those without dogs. The Government of Jersey website has a page [Barking Dogs Complaints](#).

**Dogs disturbing other livestock**, although enforcement of the law is difficult.

**Dog poo** not being cleaned up. This is an offence for which a fine of £1,000 can be levied. But in practice catching the dog owners is nearly impossible. Only one fine has been issued in the last five years. It is estimated that UK dogs produce around 1,000 tonnes of waste every day, with much of it deposited in public areas. This would equate to a figure of about one tonne in Jersey.

**Dog walking on beaches** – where there are significantly different views between dog owners and people who do not own dogs. A petition to the States Assembly requested: “Have dedicated dog friendly beaches where dogs can run freely all year round and close the popular beaches to dogs 24/7 during summer months.” This would follow the Guernsey practice. The petition attracted 1,178 signatures and therefore required a ministerial response. The response, on 10 September 2024, was –



Ministers are mindful of the need to balance the interests of all beach users.

When considering changes to the Regulations that govern dogs on beaches, it is important to balance the interests of all beach users and to provide an opportunity for people to express their views or concerns, especially if they are not dog owners.

I have written to the Comité des Connétables to ask their views and seek suggestions for beaches that might be appropriate for dogs to be walked off the lead at any time. I will also raise the issue at the Council of Ministers.

I have also asked officers to explore additional options, including:

- Changing the start time.
- Reviewing the arrangements for May.
- Maintaining the current regime.

The solution must be proportionate and ensure that due consideration is given to all points of view. Islanders and visitors must be able to use Jersey's beaches without being unduly affected by other people's pets.

**The need for dog licences.** It is not clear what purposes dog licences serve. There is no test for obtaining a dog licence and in reality it is a dog registration scheme. Even this is questionable as no useful activity can take place using the licence data. Dog owners are required to ensure that their dogs have a collar with contact details, something that people do as a matter of course. If a lost dog is discovered, then the owners are contacted through the information on the collar or through messages on Facebook. It seems that the practice of dog licensing continues because it has always done so. Whatever objectives are being pursued by having a licensing system could be equally well pursued by simply retaining the provision that dogs must have a collar with contact details and perhaps adding the requirement as in the UK that they must be chipped, with data held on one of several UK recognised registers.

Although it is an offence not to have a licence for a dog which should be licensed, enforcement is difficult. Only four fines have been issued since 2019. It is probably the case that there are many unlicensed dogs.

**The cost of Veterinary services.** The UK Competition and Markets Authority has been reviewing the cost of veterinary services. On 15 October 2025 it published its [Provisional Decision](#). Its market investigation, which was principally into vet businesses, not individual vets – identified concerns, including that pet owners:

- are often unaware of the prices of commonly used services and whether their local practices are part of large national chains
- have no effective way of comparing vet prices when they get a pet or move areas
- may be paying twice as much for commonly prescribed medicines from vet practices than they could pay online, amounting to hundreds of pounds more than they need to pay
- often receive no written estimate for courses of treatment running to hundreds – or even thousands – of pounds
- are often unable to tell if they are getting good value for money from pet care plans
- may be overpaying for individual cremations
- often have no effective means of complaining when things go wrong.

It published a series of proposed remedies, mainly to achieve greater transparency on pricing.

This review does not apply to Jersey. However, on 1 November 2025 the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority published an [Open Letter to Vet Businesses](#) referring to the CMA report. Following is an extract from the letter –

The CMA has proposed a series of remedies to improve the situation:

- Requiring vets to publish price lists and provide itemised bills for treatments.
- Ensuring that vets provide written estimates for treatments over a certain threshold, allowing pet owners to better plan for the costs.
- Mandating that vets have a published complaints procedure, which helps resolve issues and keeps the relationship between pet owners and vets positive.
- Encouraging vets to inform pet owners about cheaper options which may be available such as online prescriptions, when available.
- Finally, requiring vets to disclose the ownership of practices to avoid any potential conflicts of interest.

#### *Veterinary services in Jersey*

We are not suggesting Jersey has the same issues. For example, we recognise vet businesses do typically publish prices for certain services. However, the benefits of the CMA's recommendations for pet owners are clear and we see this as a good opportunity for vet businesses to consider whether, in light these provisional findings, improvements can be made in Jersey. It may be that implementing the CMA

recommendations could lead to improvements which will enable consumers to make better informed decisions, compare prices, and feel more confident about the choices they are making for their pets' care. Ultimately, the goal is to make sure that the veterinary sector in Jersey remains competitive, transparent, and consumer friendly.

### *Closing*

At this stage we are encouraging vet businesses to consider the UK proposals and how the delivery of veterinary services in Jersey may be improved for the benefit of their business and pet owners.

We will continue to follow the CMA's work in this area closely and when the UK investigation has concluded, consider whether we can add further value by doing more work in this market in Jersey.