

You are here: > [Home](#) > [News](#) > [Business](#) > Trading standards issues advice on buying puppies

Following the conviction, in Peterborough, earlier this year of one of the country's most prolific illegal puppy traders, the city's Trading Standards Team is reminding people to look into the background of any puppy they are hoping to buy as a Christmas present.

Increasing numbers of puppies are being imported illegally into the UK from puppy farms across Europe. These animals may have started life in appalling conditions, been removed from their mothers too early and could be suffering from a number of serious health issues.

In February this year, following a Trading Standards investigation, Aidas Gostautas was sentenced to 34 months in prison after pleading guilty to 14 cases relating to animal health and welfare.

Gostautas was found to have sold more than 120 dogs illegally imported from Lithuania - designated by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) as a country of high risk for the transmission of rabies.

Councillor Irene Walsh, cabinet member for communities and environment capital said: "Illegally imported puppies are often sold via adverts on pet websites and small newspaper ads.

"Paperwork can be missing or falsified giving no guarantee that the puppy is healthy, rabies-free or has had all of the other necessary vaccinations.

"This can lead to the new owners being faced with expensive vet and quarantine bills and their new pet at risk of significant, life threatening illness. Guidelines have been issued which I urge all would-be dog owners to follow when looking for a new puppy."

In other cases investigated by the team a number of puppies have had to be placed in quarantine at the owner's expense, after it was discovered that they were imported directly from other Eastern European countries.

By law, pet owners in this situation who decide to keep the dog have to pay any quarantine fees, which can range from £750 - £1000.

The Trading Standards Team offers the following advice to buyers to help them avoid purchasing an illegally imported pet:

- > Get as much information as possible about where the puppy has come from.
- > Be suspicious if the seller cannot show you the puppy with its mother and litter mates. View the puppy where it was bred.
- > If the puppy has been vaccinated, ask to see the documentation. This must clearly state the veterinary practice where this was carried out.
- > If the seller informs you that the puppy has been brought in from another country, it should have a pet passport with a valid rabies vaccination recorded in it. The date of the import must be at least 21 days after the date of the rabies vaccination. The puppy must also be a minimum of 15 weeks of age.
- > Never agree to have the puppy delivered to your home address.

Anyone who has concerns about a puppy they have bought should contact their vet in the first instance.

If you would like to contact someone about suspected illegal puppy trading please call Citizens Advice on 03454 04 05 06 who will pass the details to the relevant local authority or alternatively email [tradingstandards@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:tradingstandards@peterborough.gov.uk).

For further advice visit the [Government website \(http://www.gov.uk/buying-a-cat-or-dog\)](http://www.gov.uk/buying-a-cat-or-dog).