



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

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[REDACTED]  
{By Email}

Our Ref: ATIC1289

9 April 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

## PROVISION OF REQUESTED INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information about puppy smuggling in the UK which we received on 13 March 2018. Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The information you requested and our response is detailed below:

'I want to find out information about the number of puppies that have been illegally smuggled into the UK for the years 2016 and 2017.

Please note that APHA holds data for Great Britain only. Information for Northern Ireland should be requested from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/>

The definition of 'illegally landed' does not necessarily mean the animal was smuggled into Great Britain (GB). Our definition of an illegal landing is any dog, cat or ferret that is landed in GB which does not meet the import requirements and therefore requires quarantine under the Rabies Importation Order. While these figures may include some smuggled animals, and it also includes:

- pet animals that arrive at GB airports and during the pets check are found to be non-compliant for some reason
- animals that are found 'inland' and after a trading standards investigation are found to be non-compliant

While we do record whether the animal is a puppy on our licencing spreadsheet we rely on Trading Standards to advise us if an animal is a puppy when they submit the paperwork to us. There is no requirement for Trading Standards to inform us of the age of the dog, we only record this if it is mentioned on any paperwork sent to us. So while the information that we have provided is a true reflection of the information that we have access to, we cannot guarantee the accuracy of this data as we can only rely on the information that has been provided to us by a third party.

Total numbers of illegally landed puppies in GB, as defined above, are as follows:

2016 - 688

2017 - 486

‘How many puppies are being seized at the ports in Dover over each of these years, and how many is it expect that are slipping through the net and being sold to people in the UK?’

Please note, since December 2015 APHA has been taking an intelligence-led approach at Dover Port aimed at disrupting the illegal importation of puppies and abuses of the Pet Travel Scheme, which is yielding positive results. As part of this activity APHA is working with Dogs Trust and Kent County Council to facilitate the rehoming of underage dogs abandoned in quarantine at Dover Port and Eurotunnel.

The numbers of puppies quarantined after being intercepted at Dover and Eurotunnel as part of this activity are as follows (note that these animals are included in the above total figures):

	2016	2017
Eurotunnel	184	176
Dover	220	157

We take the issue of illegal trafficking of puppies very seriously, and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) are gathering intelligence to help us understand the size of the problem regarding puppy smuggling.

Defra and APHA work constructively with other government agencies and charities to share intelligence on illegal movements of pet animals. APHA has established an intelligence team which will gather data, intelligence and information on illegal movement of dogs and puppies and, as appropriate, share with enforcement bodies.

Information disclosed in response to this EIR/FOI request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIR/FOIA and the government’s Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on GOV.UK, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

I attach an Annex which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you and contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Access to Information Team at the email address below or postal address at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION TEAM**

Email: [enquiries@apha.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@apha.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Annex**

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### **Complaints**

If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information you may request an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this letter.

If you wish to request an internal review, please contact: The Access to Information Team at [enquiries@apha.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@apha.gsi.gov.uk) or at the postal address at the top of this letter, who will arrange for an internal review of your case.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted APHA's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF