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## **UK Brachycephalic Working Group Position Statement on Legislation relating to Brachycephalic Dogs in the UK**

**June 24th, 2021**

The Brachycephalic Working Group (BWG) believes that the welfare of brachycephalic breeds will only be improved by taking a broad and common-sense approach whereby the majority of current and future dog owners, breeders, vets, animal welfare scientists, government and the media each plays their part.

In recent years, there has been significant development and introduction of legislation pertaining to issues around the health and welfare of brachycephalic dogs in countries outside of the UK. Legislative developments outside the UK have raised questions and opportunities around whether there is a need for similar additional legal provisions in the UK. BWG is closely observing the impact (including both intended and unintended consequences) from these legislative actions outside the UK, with a view to considering the benefits and risks from introducing new UK legislation.

Regardless of the introduction of new UK legislation, it is the view of the BWG that there already exists sufficient legal provision in the UK to provide reasonable protection of welfare relevant to the breeding of brachycephalic dogs and the dominant current legal issues relate to enforcement rather than to the legislation itself. Currently available legislation includes the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) ((England) Regulations 2018) and ((Scotland) 2021).

1. The BWG supports greater use of existing legislation that is effectively and reasonably enforced using currently available scientific evidence.
2. In October 2020, the BWG published its concerns around the recent moves to introduce new breed variants of some brachycephalic breeds with extreme exaggerations to the UK e.g. exotic bullies, toadlines, by both importation of new breed types and selecting for more extreme conformations within current UK dogs <http://www.ukbwg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/201030-Full-version-BWG-Position-on-Setting-a-limit-for-conformational-exaggerations-in-dog-breeds-.pdf> . BWG has concluded that the current legislative framework already provides a means for the urgent action required to curb the further growth and popularisation of these types of dogs within the UK.