BSAVA
BRITISH SMALL ANIMAL VETERINARY ASSOCIATION









BSAVA Microchipping & Scanning Advice

on dogs, cats, ferrets & other species for Veterinary Professionals

The Power Of Association

BSAVA
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The British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) supports the permanent identification and registration of all dogs and cats, and other companion animals as appropriate. Microchipping is in general a safe, effective, and permanent way to identify individual animals.

You can read our full scientific position statement (SPS) (from February 2024) here: **https://www.bsava.com/position-statement/pet-identification/**

You can also read our joint BVA, BSAVA, SPVS Policy Position (PP) on Microchipping and Scanning (dogs and cats) and Microchip Databases (from July 2024) **here** and our joint BVA, BVNA, BSAVA and SPVS PP on the microchipping of cats (from September 2020) **here**. Please note, since this Policy Position was created some content has been superseded by subsequent legislation.

Our microchipping advice has been divided into sections as detailed in the Table of Contents below.

Our BSAVA Microchipping Advice aligns with BSAVA Scientific Position Statements and Policy Positions on microchipping and scanning.

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Legislation

Compulsory microchipping

Legislation related to Animal Health and Welfare is devolved within the UK, therefore there are different regulations for different countries of the UK. Microchipping of dogs over the age of 8 weeks in England, Scotland and Wales has been mandatory since 6th April 2016, and microchipping of owned cats over the age of 20 weeks in England has been mandatory since 10th June 2024. The relevant legislation is as follows:

The Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023 came into effect on 10th June 2024, replacing **The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015** to incorporate the additional requirement for all owned cats over the age of 20 weeks to be fitted with a microchip. Defra have confirmed that microchipping is not compulsory for free living cats that live with little or no human interaction or dependency, such as farm, feral or community cats.

As of April 2025, the mandatory microchipping of cats has not been added to any of the other devolved nations' regulations.

- **The Microchipping of Dogs (Wales) Regulations 2015**
- **The Microchipping of Dogs (Scotland) Regulations 2016**

Microchipping of dogs over the age of 8 weeks has been mandatory in Northern Ireland since 2012. The **Dogs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011** requires the microchipping of dogs before a dog licence can be issued. The Act also includes provisions relating to the control of dogs. Further information is available from **www.nidirect.gov.uk/dog-licensing-and-microchipping**, which states that all dogs in Northern Ireland must be microchipped at 8 weeks old and that dog owners are responsible for ensuring that the contact details held against their dog's microchip number are accurate. If the details are not accurate, the dog is not considered as microchipped, and the dog licence will not be valid.

Microchipping of dogs over the age of 8 weeks in the Isle of Man has been mandatory since December 2018 under the **Dogs Regulations 2018**, which mirrors the English legislation.

Details within the BSAVA microchipping advice refer to the regulations in England. Where there are **differences** in the regulations in the devolved administrations, these are highlighted and shown in the following colours:

Northern Ireland
Scotland
Wales

Other legislation that includes requirements for microchipping

Racing Greyhounds

The Welfare of Racing Greyhounds Regulations 2010 (condition 4) which applies in England requires that a Greyhound only be permitted to enter a race or trial if it is identified by a microchip that:

(a) Has a unique number;

(b) Complies with both ISO standard 11784 and ISO standard 11785 that define the bit content and communication protocol of microchips that adhere to International Standards Organisation standards for microchips

(c) Is registered on a database in relation to which the operator reasonably believes the requirements set out in Part 2 of this Schedule are met

Pet Travel Regulations

The requirements for both the non-commercial and commercial movements of pet animals susceptible to rabies require that the animal (dog, cat or ferret) is identified by a microchip, and that this should be inserted before rabies vaccination is carried out. Tattoos are only an acceptable method of identification if they were applied before 3rd July 2011 (and are still legible). The Pet Travel Regulations which apply in the UK are **The Non-commercial Movement of Pet Animals (Amendment) Order 2014** and **The Non-Commercial Movement of Pet Animals (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015**. These state the requirement for qualifications for any person undertaking the microchipping of pet animals (see **Implantation** section). It should be noted that with respect to pet travel this requirement applies to dogs, cats and ferrets. However, where the animal has been previously microchipped, the veterinary surgeon does not have any responsibility to check on the qualifications of the implanter or to implant another microchip.

Northern Ireland Pet Travel scheme

Under the Windsor Framework (the agreement with the EU which replaced the old Northern Ireland Protocol), from 4th June 2025 the Northern Ireland Pet Travel scheme allows movement of pet dogs (or assistance dogs), cats and ferrets from Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) to Northern Ireland with a pet travel document, valid for the lifetime of the pet. The pet must be microchipped with registered details up to date. Documentation is not required to travel from Northern Ireland to GB, however, the pet must be microchipped. For full details, please refer to the Government guidance **here**.

Pet travel under the scheme is not allowed for the commercial movement of pets, or for owners travelling with more than 5 pets unless for a competition, exhibition or sporting event, in which case written proof of registration for the event, or with an association organising such events is required. Additional requirements for the commercial movement of pets between GB and Northern Ireland can be found **here**.

Tail docking

Animal Welfare legislation in each devolved nation (**Section 6 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006** in England and **Wales**, the **Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006**) in **Scotland** and the **Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011** in **Northern Ireland**) make it an offence to remove the whole or part of a dog's tail other than for the purpose of medical treatment, subject to the exemption for docking the tails of certain working dogs subject to veterinary certification. All the Acts state that dogs must be no older than 5 days when docked, but the exact requirements for certification differ slightly as outlined below.

The Docking of Working Dogs' Tails (England) Regulations 2007 and **The Docking of Working Dogs' Tails (Wales) Regulations 2007** specify the certification requirements for veterinary surgeons docking working dogs' tails in England and **Wales**, which includes that the dog must be microchipped before it is 3 months old. The regulations specifically state the microchip must be implanted by a veterinary surgeon or a veterinary nurse acting under the supervision of a veterinary surgeon and that the veterinary surgeon who carries out or supervises the microchipping must certify that fact in Part 5 of a certificate in the form prescribed in **Schedule 2** of the regulation.

Where a puppy is presented to a veterinary surgeon and is already microchipped with a working microchip, a strict legal interpretation of the regulations requires the veterinary surgeon to insert a second microchip in order to be able to sign the certificate in Schedule 2 and for the dog to be identified in accordance with the regulations. We have been informed that Defra recognises that it is not in the best welfare interests of the dog for a second working microchip to be inserted and will explore the scope for amending the regulations at the earliest opportunity.

In the meantime, we strongly urge any veterinary surgeon undertaking docking of working dogs' tails to stress that the breeder must have the puppy microchipped by a veterinary surgeon, or veterinary nurse acting under the supervision of a veterinary surgeon, in order to comply with the legislation. If a second microchip has to be inserted for any reason it is important to make this clear in any documentation.

In **Scotland**, under **The Prohibited Procedures on Protected Animals (Exemptions) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2017** the certificate must state the microchip of the dam of the puppy docked and the puppy's microchip if placed. There is currently no template certificate from the Scottish Government for this.

In **Northern Ireland** under **The Welfare of Animals (Docking of Working Dogs' Tails and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012**, the dog must be microchipped by the time they are 8 weeks old by a competent person working in the same practice as where the tail docking procedure was performed. The competent person who carries out the microchipping must certify that fact in paragraph 4 of a **certificate** in the form prescribed in the Schedule in respect of that dog. The dog should only be microchipped after the owner has made a signed and declared statement in paragraph 3 of the certificate. Where a veterinary practice ceases to operate after the docking of a dog's tail, the owner of the dog may take the dog to a different veterinary practice to have the microchipping procedure carried out and a competent person at that veterinary practice must record the reason in paragraph 4 of the certificate in the form prescribed in the Schedule.

Dangerous Dogs Exemption Scheme UK

There is also a requirement for microchipping under **The Dangerous Dogs Exemption Schemes (England and Wales) Order 2015**, the **Dangerous Dogs (Compensation and Exemption Schemes) (Scotland) Order 2024** and **The Dangerous Dogs (Compensation and Exemption Schemes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024** which state that a dog that is to be exempted from the prohibition in **section 1(3) of the (Dangerous Dogs) Act** must be implanted with a microchip, unless already microchipped to the satisfaction of the Agency, by a person who:

(a) Is a veterinary surgeon or a veterinary nurse acting under the direction of a veterinary surgeon;

(b) Is a student of veterinary surgery or a student veterinary nurse and in either case is acting under the direction of a veterinary surgeon; or

(c) Is satisfactorily assessed on a training course approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of implanting microchips.

Where the animal has been previously microchipped, the veterinary surgeon does not have any responsibility to check on the qualifications of the implanter or to implant another microchip.

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Requirements and exemptions

Requirement for microchipping

Dogs and cats

The microchipping regulations include provision that all dogs (and owned cats in England) are microchipped and their details recorded on a **Government approved database**.

Dogs

Puppies need to be microchipped by the age of 8 weeks or within 30 days of the date they entered the country and before transfer to a new keeper unless one of two exemptions apply:

Exemption for working dog

1. Where a veterinary surgeon has certified the dog as a working dog (England and **Wales**) and docked its tail as allowed under section 6 of **The Animal Welfare Act 2006**. In such cases the time limit for the dog to be microchipped and details recorded with a database is 12 weeks. The reason given for this is that the new microchipping regulations are only a Statutory Instrument made under the Animal Welfare Act and therefore cannot amend the Animal Welfare Act itself. However, there is no reason why the dog cannot be microchipped before this time.

Exemption for health reasons

2. Where a veterinary surgeon certifies that a dog should not be microchipped for reasons relating to the health of the animal. In **Wales**, the exemption requires certification that microchipping would significantly compromise the dog's health, and in **Northern Ireland** that implantation (or continued implantation) of a microchip in the dog would have an adverse effect on the health of the dog. In such cases the form of the certification issued by the veterinary surgeon must be approved by the Secretary of State for either England or **Wales**. The required form is provided **here for England** and **here for Wales**, and must state when the exemption expires (the **Welsh** certificate of exemption allows for a permanent exemption if the health concerns warrant it). There is no certificate template available for **Scotland** or for **Northern Ireland** – see **here** for the **Scottish** requirements for certification for exemption on health grounds. The dog must be microchipped on expiry of a time limited certificate unless a veterinary surgeon issues a further exemption certificate because s/he still has concerns over the dog's health. Ensuring that the dog is implanted with a microchip following expiry of the exemption certificate is the responsibility of the owner/keeper and the veterinary surgeon does not have any specific responsibility to enforce this.

Cats

In England, owned cats need to be microchipped by the age of 20 weeks, unless a veterinary surgeon certifies that a cat should not be microchipped because it would adversely affect its health, in which case the same applies as for provision 2 above for dogs. For further guidance on using dentition to determine the age of kittens, see **here**.

Exemption from microchipping: potential scenarios

The BSAVA considers that the situations in which exemption would be necessary are limited and would very rarely require permanent exemption. However, the following situations may require exemption for a temporary period:

- **Size of animal** – while the majority of dogs and cats can be safely implanted with a microchip before 8 or 20 weeks of age respectively there may be cases in toy or miniature breeds where, in the professional judgement of the veterinary surgeon, microchipping should be delayed for a matter of weeks to allow the puppy or kitten to grow.
- **Severe illness** – where a dog or cat has a severe debilitating illness it may be appropriate for the veterinary surgeon to recommend that microchipping is delayed for a short period to enable recovery to take place.
- **Infection or injury or adverse reaction at the normal site of microchipping** – where a dog or cat has an infection or injury at the normal site of microchipping it may be appropriate for the veterinary surgeon to recommend that microchipping is delayed for a short period to enable recovery to take place. If the injury is likely to permanently preclude microchipping at the normal site, the veterinary surgeon should consider implanting the microchip at a different site. The implantation site should be as close to the normal implantation site as possible to maximise the chance that the microchip will be located by routine scanning processes. Where a microchip is deliberately implanted at a different site this should be recorded in the clinical records and on any records relating to the microchip e.g. database records or travel documentation.
- **Abnormalities of blood clotting** – where a dog or cat has any condition that interferes with blood clotting it may be appropriate to delay microchip implantation until the situation has been rectified or stabilised.
- **Behavioural concerns** – where implantation of a nervous dog or cat is considered likely to reinforce negative/fearful responses and adversely affect ongoing management and handling of that pet in future consultations, it may be appropriate to delay microchip implantation temporarily until the behaviour can be suitably addressed.

It is important to ensure that either the owner of the dog or cat or person authorised to represent the owner, signs the certificate to confirm that they understand that the certificate is only valid for the period of time stated.

Exemption Certificates or Letters

- **Download the Certificate of Exemption for England**
- **Download the Certificate of Exemption for Wales**
- **Exemption certificate requirements for Scotland**

Although not required on the Certificate of Exemption for **Wales**, BSAVA recommend that the veterinary surgeon includes the reason for the exemption by noting it on the certificate.

In **Scotland**, if a dog is exempted from having a microchip implanted for health reasons, the veterinary surgeon should provide a signed letter with the following details as an exemption certificate:

- the dog's name and description
- owner name and contact details
- name and address of the veterinary practice
- why the dog can't be microchipped
- how long the exemption will last
- owner name and signature
- vet name and signature

BSAVA suggests the Certificate of Exemption for England can be used for this purpose. Further information can be found on the Scottish Government website **here**

The legislation in **Northern Ireland** states that a veterinary surgeon can certify to the effect that implantation (or continued implantation) of a microchip in the dog would have an adverse effect on the health of the dog but does not have specific requirements listing the details required for the certificate. The BSAVA recommends that any such certification should provide all the information requested in the Scottish legislation above.

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Implantation

Legislation relating to implantation

From the 24th February 2015 anyone wishing to implant microchips in dogs in England may only do so if:

1. They are a veterinary surgeon or a veterinary nurse acting under the direction of a veterinary surgeon
2. They are a student of veterinary surgery or a student veterinary nurse and in either case acting under the direction of a veterinary surgeon
3. They have been satisfactorily assessed on a training course approved by the Secretary of State for that purpose
4. Before these Regulations come into force they received training on implantation which included practical experience of implanting a microchip.

Provisions 1 and 2 also apply to anyone wishing to implant microchips in cats in England from 10th June 2024. In addition, cats can be microchipped by:

- someone who has been satisfactorily assessed on a training course approved by the Secretary of State on or after 16 May 2023 for implanting a microchip in a cat
- someone who has been trained in implantation which included practical experience of implanting a microchip in a cat before 16 May 2023

Similar provisions for the implantation of dogs are included in the regulations that apply in **Wales** and **Scotland**, although the **Welsh** Regulations indicate that the 'grandfather' rights of provision 4 above ceased 2 years after the regulations came into force (i.e. April 2018).

In **Northern Ireland**, a dog must be microchipped by a 'competent person', defined as a veterinary surgeon or person who has received instruction on how to implant a microchip.

Once these regulations are in force, anyone implanting a microchip who is not covered by groups 1–4 above is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500).

Lantra has developed a Level 3 Award in Performing Microchip Implantation in Animals. The Lantra qualification covers:

- Knowledge and understanding of current legislation and safety requirements
- Knowledge and understanding of the use of microchips in animals
- How to safely handle and restrain animals
- How to select and prepare the animal for microchipping
- How to safely perform microchip implantation
- How to carry out post-implantation procedures

As far as BSAVA is aware, microchipping courses are available from the following providers:

The Microchip Trade Association
Peddymark
VetSkill
iPet Network

Some of these courses may be approved by Lantra. If individuals are interested in participating in a course specifically approved by Lantra, they should contact Lantra or the course provider to verify this.

There is currently no list of those qualified to implant microchips and it is not the responsibility of the veterinary surgeon to check on the qualification of the implanter of any animal that has already been microchipped. However, it is now a legal requirement in England, **Wales** and **Scotland** to **report adverse events** (reaction, migration, failure) to Defra. For further information see the **Adverse reactions** section.

It should be noted that definition of adverse reactions in the regulations includes 'any suffering or pathology on the part of a dog which is caused, or appears to be caused, by a microchip implanted in the dog' and therefore mis-implantation of a microchip causing suffering or pathology should also be reported.

These definitions and the requirement to report adverse events also apply to owned cats in England.

Form of microchip

All dogs and puppies **requiring implanting** after 6th April 2016 need to be implanted with an FDX-B microchip conforming to **ISO standard** 11784, operating at 134.2 KHz and programmed with a unique number starting with a manufacturer code*.

All dogs and puppies over 8 weeks of age by 6th April 2016 **that have already been microchipped** but have a microchip other than the type specified above, will need to be re- implanted with a compliant microchip conforming to the above requirements. Non-conforming implant types include FDX-A microchips which all have 10 digit numbers, encrypted microchips, or any other not able to be read by an ISO-compliant transceiver reading at 134.2KHz.

For dogs that have been imported, implantation with an appropriate microchip (if not already in place) and registration must occur within 30 days of arrival unless the keeper has an exemption certificate for the dog. If the dog is intended to be transferred to another keeper the dog must be microchipped with a compliant microchip before it is transferred.

Imported dogs already carrying a microchip that conforms to ISO 11784 and ISO 11785 where the number starts with a country code* comply with the UK regulations and do not have to be implanted with a second microchip. However, they do need to be registered on an appropriate database to comply with the regulations.

* All manufacturer codes are three digits long and start with a 9 e.g.: **958**000010123456
Country codes are also three digits long but the first digit is never a 9.

These regulations also apply to owned cats over the age of 20 weeks in England from 10th June 2024.

Implantation procedure

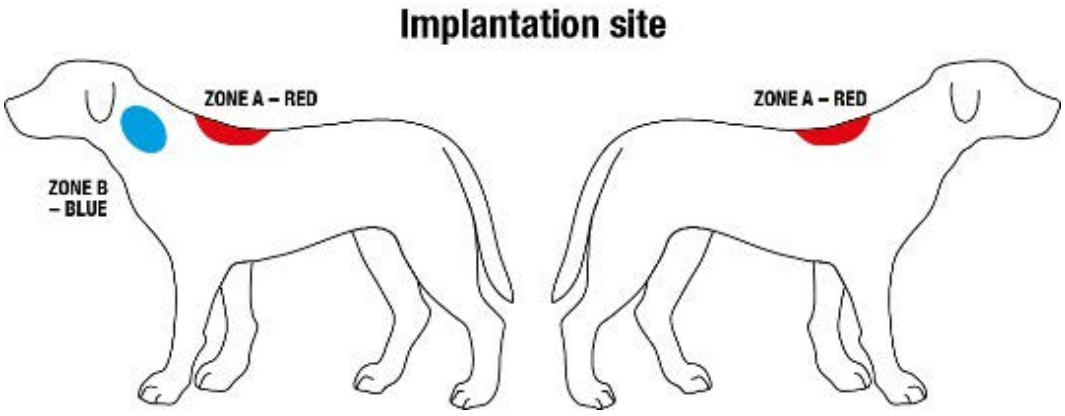
In the UK, implantation of a microchip by the subcutaneous route is not considered to be an act of veterinary surgery. However, under the following circumstances even subcutaneous implantation may be classed as an act of veterinary surgery and therefore will need to be carried out by, or under the direction of, a veterinary surgeon:

- Where repair or closure of the entry site is required;
- Where sedation and analgesia are required to facilitate safe implantation;
- If there is special risk to the health or welfare of the animal.

Although the regulations do not specify the site of implantation it is recommended that microchips are implanted at the standard implantation site to minimise the risk of migration and to maximise the chance that the microchip is found on scanning.

There are two standardized injection sites for microchip implantation in dogs and cats which are described in ISO 15639-1.

In the **UK and the Republic of Ireland** the standard implantation site for dogs and cats is subcutaneous on the dorsal midline so that the transponder lies halfway between the anterior and posterior edge of the scapulae after implantation (the middle of Zone A – coloured in red below). For the purposes of scanning, it should be noted that the standard implantation site for both dogs and cats in **continental Europe** is subcutaneously on the left side of the body in the cranial third of the neck between the ear and shoulder (Zone B – coloured in blue).



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Scanning

Scanning procedure

Before scanning an animal, check that the scanner is working and that you know the correct orientation for the make of scanner being used to maximise the likelihood of detection of the microchip. It may be appropriate to remove the dog's collar before scanning, both to avoid interference and because there have been reports of microchips being inserted into the collar rather than the dog for smuggling purposes.

The microchip scanner should be passed slowly over the surface of the animal, moving the scanner in an 'S' shaped pattern over the dorsum of the animal. Scanning should begin and concentrate over the standard implantation site in the UK, which is midway between the shoulder blades (this should take 10–20 seconds). If no chip is detected, rotate the scanner by 90 degrees and rescan the animal.

If the microchip is not detected here, you should scan down the left side of the neck (the standard implantation side in Europe) then down the back, on the sides, over the shoulders and down to the elbows.

If a microchip is still not detected where there is evidence that a microchip has been implanted, the following should be considered:

- Scan other areas of the body to see if the microchip has migrated. Start at the pet's head and slowly scan side-to-side all the way to the pet's tail, making several passes over each area. Then, slowly scan down the sides of the pet's leg, across its neck, along and under its chest and behind its front legs;
- Change the orientation of the scanner and rescan the animal;
- Rescan the animal with a different scanner.

Legal obligations

If it is found that a dog or cat has not been microchipped after the introduction of compulsory microchipping the veterinary surgeon does not have any responsibility to report the owner but whenever possible should advise the owner of their legal responsibility to have the pet microchipped. BSAVA recommends that this advice is recorded in the animal's clinical record.

There is currently no legal requirement for a veterinary surgeon to scan a dog or cat for a microchip except before rabies vaccination and the issuing of travel documentation such as an Animal Health Certificate or completing other official documentation that requires identification of the animal. However, there are many circumstances in which it is advisable to do so:

- Prior to implanting a microchip, in order to ensure that no microchip is present;
- When a lost or stray animal is presented, in order to facilitate reunification with the owner;
- To ensure that a previously implanted microchip is still working and has not migrated significantly from its site of implantation. This is particularly important before an animal travels abroad;

- On first presentation at the practice, in order to ensure that the animal is correctly identified;
- Prior to carrying out official health screening/tests – to ensure that the animal is correctly identified. Many tests require the microchip number to be included on the form, and in the case of radiographs for BVA/KC schemes the microchip number must be radiographed on to the film at the time of exposure.
- Prior to euthanasia, where appropriate (see below).

Additional considerations at euthanasia

In addition, the **supporting guidance for the RCVS code of professional conduct** for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, updated December 2024, states:

29.30 There may be circumstances where a request is made by a client for the destruction of a dog or cat, where in the clinical/professional judgement of the veterinary surgeon destruction of the dog or cat is not necessary, for instance where there are no health or welfare reasons for the dog or cat to be euthanised.

29.31 In these circumstances, before carrying out the request for euthanasia the veterinary surgeon should scan the dog or cat for a microchip and check the relevant database if a microchip is found.

29.32 In relation to both dogs and cats, clients may have a contract with the shelter from which they acquired the animal such that it can be returned to that shelter, and that it may be appropriate to discuss this with them prior to euthanasia. Alternatively, there may be another individual willing to take responsibility for the animal (who may be named on the microchip database), and this may also be discussed with the client. If no microchip is found, this should be recorded on the clinical record.

29.33 In relation to cats, clients may request that a healthy cat be euthanised under the mistaken impression that the cat is a stray. It is therefore important to check whether there is another owner who has responsibility, or is willing to take responsibility, for the cat, who may be named on the microchip database.

Ownership disputes

On occasion, veterinary professionals may become aware that the animal presented is registered to another keeper. While it is not essential or even always possible to obtain consent from an owner before scanning, consideration should be given to how these issues will be dealt with should they arise.

Section 29 of the **RCVS guidance supporting the Codes of Professional Conduct** for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses provides detailed information on how to deal with issues relating to microchipping, including potential ownership disputes. RCVS has also produced a **flow chart** outlining how to deal with issues relating to microchipping and client confidentiality in difficult situations, such as where the animal may have been stolen or in potential ownership disputes. This advice covers:

- Seeking prior agreement to disclose
- Seeking consent to disclose
- What to do when consent is not given.

The BSAVA recommends that veterinary practices should be aware of their obligations under GDPR with respect to the release of any personal information and follow RCVS Guidance. The RCVS states that if it is suspected that the animal is stolen, veterinary surgeons or the owner may involve the police. In the case of a potential dispute we recommend that you:

1. Read the RCVS Guidance in detail
2. Consult your professional indemnity provider
3. Keep detailed notes.

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Registration

Once a microchip has been implanted the details must be recorded on a Defra approved database in order to comply with the definition of 'microchipping' included in the regulations. A full list of databases which meet government standards is available on the **Gov.uk** website.

The following information is required in the English regulations, please be aware that there are slight differences in requirements in the **Welsh** and **Scottish** regulations, see below. For the following, the requirements for cats applies to the English regulations only.

1. The **full name, address and telephone number of the keeper;** A keeper is defined at regulation 2(2):

   (a) For an assistance dog (**as defined in section 173(1) of the Equality Act 2010**) the body responsible for its training and allocation up until the dog stops working as an assistance dog; once it stops working as an assistance dog the keeper is the person it lives with;

   (b) For a newborn puppy, the owner of a bitch that gives birth to that puppy, the fact that this is the breeder is also required (this means that the breeder is the first keeper of any dog that has been bred by the owner of the bitch); or

   (c) For any other dogs or cats, the person with whom the animal normally resides.

   If the keeper is homeless, contact details for someone the keeper stays in touch with may be entered.

   In this regulation 'breeder' means any keeper of a bitch that whelps, whether or not they carry on a business as a breeder of dogs; if the keeper is the breeder and is licensed by the local authority under **the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018*** the following should also be recorded:

(i) the breeder's licence number; and

(ii) the name of the local authority by which they are licensed;

2. The **original name or identification number** given to the dog or cat; and the name given to the dog or cat by the current keeper, if that is different
3. The **sex** of the dog or cat;
4. The **breed** of the dog or cat, or a description if it is a cross-breed;
5. The **colour** of the dog or cat;
6. The dog or cat's **date of birth** to the best of the keeper's knowledge – in the case of the breeder this should be the exact date of birth;
7. The **unique number of the microchip** implanted in the dog or cat.

*equivalent legislation in devolved nations:

- **The Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2014**
- **The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Scotland) Regulations 2021**

In addition:

The **Welsh** legislation states that the date of birth entered should be 'the most accurate estimate of the dog's date of birth which the keeper of the dog is capable of giving' and also requires the keeper's email address (if any) and any distinguishing features of the dog.

The **Scottish** legislation states that the date of birth entered should be 'the most accurate estimate of the dog's date of birth which the keeper of the dog is capable of giving' and also requires the keeper's email address (if any).

In **Northern Ireland**, dog owners are responsible for making sure that the contact details held against their dog's microchip number are accurate and recorded on a database accessible to Council officers. BSAVA recommends it is sensible to record the same information as required in the English legislation.

While the responsibility for ensuring details are recorded or updated on the database legally sits with the keeper, in reality many veterinary practices will take on the responsibility for registering details of the keeper for any microchips that they implant. While the veterinary practice should make normal enquiries and take care to ensure that the details are entered accurately, they are not expected to make documentary checks on the information provided by the keeper.

Transfer of ownership

From 6th April 2016, no keeper may transfer a dog to a new keeper until it has been microchipped unless an exemption certificate that the dog should not be microchipped for reasons of the animal's health has been issued by a veterinary surgeon (see **Requirements and Exemptions** section).

From 6th April 2016, where a dog is transferred to a new keeper the new keeper must, unless the previous keeper has already done so, record their full name, address and contact telephone number (if any) and any change in the dog's name with the database on which the dog's details are recorded.

From 10th June 2024, the above provisions also apply in England to all owned cats over 20 weeks of age.

Veterinary surgeons are not expected to enforce these regulations but do have a role in ensuring that their clients are aware of their responsibilities under the law, and registration is an essential part of compliance with the regulations.

Where a new keeper presents with a dog or cat that is already microchipped and still registered to the previous keeper they should be advised to contact the appropriate database.

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Adverse reactions

An adverse reaction is defined in the regulations as a microchip that causes any unnecessary pain or suffering or any pathology that is or seems to be caused by the implantation of a microchip, or a microchip that has migrated from the implantation site or failed (failure to transmit the number encoded in the microchip when scanned by an appropriate transceiver). Although the regulation only applies to dogs (and in England, cats) it would be good practice to report adverse reactions to microchips in other species as well. Similarly, although the **Northern Ireland** legislation does not make a specific requirement to report adverse reactions, the BSAVA recommends these should be reported.

The regulations in England, **Scotland** and **Wales** make it a legal requirement to report adverse reactions/events relating to microchips and microchip failure in dogs, and in England this also applies to cats from 10th June 2024. Where there is evidence of any adverse event in relation to a microchip this must be reported to Defra using the **microchipping adverse event form**. Although this requirement applies to everyone, it is likely that those in veterinary practices may be the first to become aware of these problems, because they regularly scan microchips. The RCVS has now included guidance that veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses should report any adverse reaction to a microchip or the failure of a microchip in the **supporting guidance to the Code of Professional Conduct**.

The **Scottish Regulations** require reports to be made within 21 days beginning with the day the adverse reaction, migration or failure is identified.

If you are in contact with the microchip provider, they may offer to report the adverse reaction to Defra on your behalf; in order to facilitate this make sure you have all the details to hand to pass on to them. Where the report of an adverse event is not made directly by the veterinary practice we recommend that you record arrangements for reporting, for future reference.

It is important to report all adverse reactions/events in order to monitor any problems with microchips or implantation standards so that steps can be taken to resolve any problems.

- Further details of the scheme can be found on the **Gov.uk website**
- Reports should be submitted by emailing the **microchipping adverse event form** to **microchipping@defra.gov.uk**
- Queries can be addressed to Defra at: **microchipping@defra.gov.uk**.

Types of adverse event

Please note that while the legislation refers to 'adverse reactions' the Defra reporting scheme refers to 'adverse events'. In this document we have treated these terms as synonymous.

Implantation reactions

These usually occur relatively soon after implantation and are commonly linked to the implantation procedure e.g. haematomas (bleeding under the skin) or infection (an abscess near the site or an infection spreading systemically, making the animal ill).

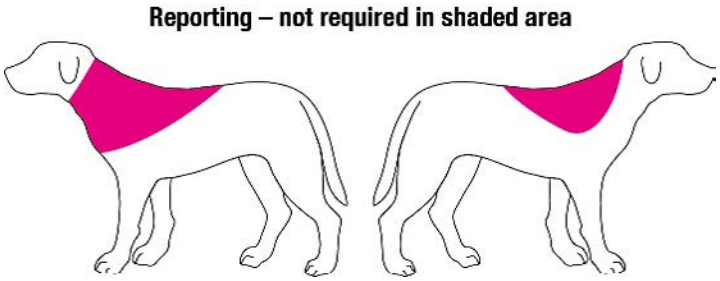
At the time of implanting the microchip, it is not unusual for there to be an initial pain response, and sometimes a little bleeding at the implantation site. This should stop within a minute or two and would not be considered as an adverse event.

On rare occasions, an animal may react to an implanted microchip, as with any foreign material introduced into the body, with an inflammatory response. These along with any evidence of infection or other pathology should be reported as adverse events.

There are a very small number of reports of paralysis resulting from implantation into the spinal cord. Although these relate to problems with implantation technique rather than a problem with the microchip, these should also be reported. There have also been a very small number of cancers reported around the site of microchip implantation. Although these may or may not be related to the implantation of the microchip (c.f. feline injection site sarcomas) these should still be reported so that Defra is able to collect accurate data on the incidence of these types of reaction.

Microchip Migration

Migration from the site of implantation is classed as an adverse event, and there is some logic in this in that it enables problems with certain brands or batches of microchips, or with the technique of certain implanters, to be detected. However, as there is no requirement to record the site of microchip implantation on the animal's record or microchip database, actual migration – as opposed to incorrect placement at initial implantation – is difficult to ascertain. For this reason we recommend that unless the veterinary surgeon has more detailed evidence on implantation site, for example from their own records or through entry in a Pet Passport, microchips located within the areas indicated in red on the diagram below, which covers the recommended UK and European sites for implantation in both dogs and cats (see **Implantation section** for recommended sites) do not need to be reported as having migrated, allowing for minor errors of positioning at implantation.



Microchip Failure

Before assuming a microchip has stopped working it is good practice to ensure that the scanner is fully powered and working correctly and is compatible with the microchip in the animal (some microchips used in other countries will not work with all scanners available in the UK). The whole animal should be scanned and re-scanned in case the microchip has moved from the implantation site or has been implanted in a different part of the dog. If in doubt, try using a different scanner. If the microchip still cannot be read an attempt should be made to palpate the microchip under the skin or, if the owner wishes to confirm the presence of an unresponsive microchip, diagnostic imaging such as radiography or ultrasound can be used. It is worth noting that the most common reason for failing to detect an implanted microchip is that it migrated out of the animal shortly after implantation.

The veterinary surgeon is only expected to report microchip failure where they have some evidence that a microchip had been present, for example through a registration document or patient record that provides details of a microchip number. As the microchip number is essential for reporting to Defra the owner should be strongly encouraged to locate this information.

If an owner presents an animal without a working microchip and with no evidence of a microchip having been present, the veterinary surgeon can offer diagnostic imaging to ascertain if a microchip is present. Please note that members of the Microchip Trade Association are only likely to consider payment for imaging if a non-functioning chip is detected (see **https://microchiptradeassociation.org/page8/page5/**).

Microchip failure – practical considerations

With the introduction of compulsory microchipping, an animal with a failed microchip will need to have a new microchip implanted unless it qualifies for exemption (as detailed in the **Requirements and Exemptions** section). Where a second microchip is implanted it is recommended that the veterinary surgeon records details of the reason for re-implantation and where appropriate provides a written declaration to the owner with information about both the old and new microchip.

Failed microchips and travel documentation

Given the potential implications if a microchip fails on entry to the UK – such as the cost to the owner of resulting time in quarantine – veterinary surgeons should encourage their clients to have their pet's microchip checked before travel. BSAVA strongly recommends that owners and vets check the Defra website for up-to-date requirements for travel: **https://www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-great-britain**.

Defra provides the following advice on unreadable microchips:

- If the original microchip cannot be read, the pet must be re-implanted;
- If the pet has been previously prepared for travel, then it must be re-prepared in accordance with pet travel rules and new travel documentation (such as an Animal Health Certificate) issued;
- The issuing veterinary surgeon should note in the 'Marking of animals' section of the Animal Health Certificate that there is another microchip present (and the number of that microchip) that cannot be scanned and read, in case the fault is intermittent and the chip is picked up at the port when the pet is checked for compliance for entry to the UK.

Intermittently working microchips and travel documentation

If the microchip has not failed completely, **Defra** recommends that a new microchip is inserted in case the existing microchip fails at some point in the future. The following procedure must be carried out in order to maintain a pet's compliance:

- The original microchip, implanted prior to the initial rabies vaccination, must be scanned and a reading made. If a reading is not possible it will be necessary to complete the procedures for a failed microchip;
- Having gained a reading, a new microchip may then be inserted. In cases where a second microchip is inserted, in the 'Marking of animals' section of the Animal Health Certificate the Official Veterinarian (OV) should write: "On (date), I scanned and read microchip number (original). Upon gaining a reading, I inserted microchip number (new) on the same day, in accordance with Defra requirements" (or similar wording).

This statement does not need to be exactly as shown, but the dates of microchip readings and the numbers of the microchips must be stated, and this statement should be signed and stamped by the OV. Provided this procedure is carried out as stated above, the pet will remain fully compliant with UK entry requirements under pet movement rules.

Removing microchips

It is not necessary to remove a failed microchip, unless it is associated with some pathology. The RCVS provides the following **guidance** on the removal of microchips:

- 29.25 Because of the importance attached to the accurate identification of animals and the potential for fraud, a microchip must only be removed where this can be clinically justified. This justification should be documented and where required another microchip or alternative method of identification used;
- 29.26 Removal of a microchip in any other circumstances would be an unnecessary mutilation. While the insertion of a second microchip may be problematic, this in itself does not justify removal of a microchip and an audit trail must be maintained.

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Offences and penalties

In England, **Wales** and **Scotland**, the offences and penalties are as follows.

Database operators

Failure to comply with a notice served on an operator under **regulation 8** is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 4 on the standard scale (currently £2,500).

Keepers

- Failure to microchip and record relevant details with a database in relation to a dog before transferring to a new keeper is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500);
- Failure to comply with a notice to properly microchip a dog (which includes updating database records) is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500);
- Where a notice to microchip and record relevant details with a database in relation to a dog is not complied with, obstructing an authorised person arranging for the dog to be properly microchipped is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500);
- Obstructing an authorised person taking possession of a dog to check if the dog is microchipped or to arrange for it to be microchipped is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500).

These penalties also apply for cats in England from 10th June 2024.

In **Scotland** it is also an offence for a keeper of a dog to notify to a database operator any of the details knowing them to be false in 'a material particular'.

Microchip implanters

- **Implantation** of a microchip by anyone who is not a veterinary surgeon, veterinary student, or veterinary nurse/student veterinary nurse acting under the direction of a veterinary surgeon or who has not completed approved or satisfactory training is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500);
- Implanting microchips in contravention of a notice not to do so until further training is received or at all is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500).

These penalties also apply for owned cats in England from 10th June 2024.

Adverse reaction reporting

Failure to report an **adverse reaction** or a microchip that has failed is punishable on conviction by a fine of up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500) in England, **Wales** and **Scotland**. This requirement applies to anyone who becomes aware of an adverse reaction relating to microchips, not just veterinary surgeons. However, in the case of adverse reactions relating to suffering or pathology, veterinary advice should be sought before reporting.

In **Northern Ireland**, the offences and penalties relate to keeping a dog without a valid licence, which can result in a fixed penalty or prosecution and a fine of up to £1,000. If a dog is not microchipped with accurate details recorded on an accessible database, the dog licence will not be valid. It is also an offence to take possession of a dog (whether you paid for it or not) before a licence has been obtained for it, with a maximum fine of £1,000. The person who transferred the dog is also guilty of an offence. The regulations also state that a dog is only considered to be microchipped if the microchip is implanted in the dog by a person of a prescribed class or description.

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Microchipping companion animals other than dogs and cats

There is no specific legislation covering the microchipping of companion small animal species in the UK other than dogs (and in England, owned cats). However, depending on the circumstances, it may be considered an act of Veterinary Surgery, according to the **Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966** and therefore may need to be carried out by a veterinary surgeon.

RCVS Guidance

The **supporting guidance for the RCVS code of professional conduct** states:

29.12 In most species, the following guidance applies:

(a) *implantation by methods other than the subcutaneous route, ear tag or bolus will generally amount to veterinary surgery in view of the potential for pain or stress or for spreading disease, and in some cases the likely handling difficulties;*

(b) *the repair or closure of the entry site, where necessary, will generally amount to veterinary surgery;*

(c) *sedation and analgesia are medical treatment and so amount to veterinary surgery. Depending upon the nature of the treatment which is necessary it may be lawful for it to be carried out by a veterinary nurse under veterinary direction or by the owner;*

(d) *the procedure may amount to veterinary surgery if there is special risk to the health or welfare of the animal.*

Non-Traditional Companion Animals (NTCA)

In many non-traditional companion animal species, the subcutaneous route is not appropriate. In these species, such as birds, intramuscular implantation is often required, which can only be performed by a vet. In some smaller taxa such as invertebrates and small amphibians, the intracoelomic route may be used, but can equally only be performed by a vet. Please refer to RCVS Guidance as above.

Pet Travel Regulations (non-commercial travel): Ferrets and other species

Under the Pet Travel Regulations, **The Non-commercial Movement of Pet Animals (Amendment) Order 2014** and **The Non-Commercial Movement of Pet Animals (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015**, in order to travel abroad, ferrets must be identified by a microchip, and this should be inserted before rabies vaccination is carried out. The legislation specifies who is permitted to carry out the microchip implantation. Other species may also require to be identified, depending on the country they are travelling to or from.

Additional information

When animals, as covered by this section, are microchipped for legal reasons a veterinary signature of microchipping is usually required for any certification. For example, **keeping wild birds of prey in captivity** requires them to be microchipped by a vet if not ringed as a young chick with a closed ring, which would satisfy the requirement for permanent identification.

If you are certifying any animal as covered in this section for export, please refer to guidance specific to Official Veterinarians (OVs) and relevant to the country to which the animal is being exported or is transiting through before reaching its final destination.

CITES

For animals traded under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) see additional guidance **here**.

WSAVA

The WSAVA has produced Global Guidelines setting out the recommended implantation sites for microchips in various species.

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Further resources

Legislation:

- England: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/468/made
- Wales: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2015/1990/made
- Scotland: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2016/58/regulation/6
- Northern Ireland: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2011/9/section/2

Government advice:

- Defra guidance for owners: https://www.gov.uk/get-your-dog-cat-microchipped
- Defra implantation guidelines, microchip exemption, and report adverse reactions https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/implantation-of-cat-and-dog-microchips
- Defra announcement on mandatory cat microchipping: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cat-microchipping-now-mandatory
- Scottish Government advice for owners: https://www.mygov.scot/microchip-dog
- Northern Ireland advice for owners: https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/dog-licensing-and-microchipping
- Northern Ireland travel scheme https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/travelling-pets

RCVS

- RCVS supporting guidance: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/supporting-guidance/small-animals-and-microchips/

Policy and position statements

- BSAVA scientific position statement (SPS) (02.24): https://www.bsava.com/position-statement/pet-identification/
- Joint BVA, BSAVA, SPVS Policy Position on Microchipping and Scanning (dogs and cats) and Microchip Databases (07.24) https://www.bva.co.uk/media/6013/july-2024-position-on-microchip-scanning-dogs-and-cats-and-databases-final-_.pdf
- Joint BVA, BVNA, BSAVA and SPVS Policy Position on the microchipping of cats (09.20) https://www.bva.co.uk/media/3746/full-bva-bvna-bsava-spvs-policy-position-on-the-microchipping-of-cats.pdf

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Differences in devolved legislation

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Legislation	**The Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023**	**The Microchipping of Dogs (Wales) Regulations 2015**	**The Microchipping of Dogs (Scotland) Regulations 2016**	**Dogs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011**
Summary of requirements	All dogs must be microchipped by 8 weeks of age, and all owned cats by 20 weeks of age	All dogs must be microchipped by 8 weeks of age	All dogs must be microchipped by 8 weeks of age	All dogs must be microchipped by 8 weeks of age, before a dog licence is applied for
Additional legislation	Greyhounds only permitted to enter race or trial if identified by a microchip. Puppies who have docked tails must be microchipped by vet or vet nurse by 12 weeks of age	Puppies who have docked tails must be microchipped by vet or vet nurse by 12 weeks of age	The certificate of tail docking must state the microchip of the dam of the puppy docked and the puppy's microchip if placed	Microchip required for travel between GB and NI Puppies who have docked tails must be microchipped by a competent person working in the same practice where the docking procedure was performed
Exemption	A vet can certify that a dog or cat should not be microchipped for reasons relating to the health of the animal using an approved certificate, stating the period for which the dog will be unfit to be microchipped	A vet can certify that a dog should not be microchipped because it would significantly compromise the dog's health using an approved certificate stating the period for which the dog will be unfit to be microchipped	A vet can certify that a dog should not be microchipped for reasons of the dog's health stating the period for which the dog will be unfit to be microchipped.	A vet can certify that a dog should not be microchipped if implantation (or continued implantation) of a microchip in the dog would have an adverse effect on the health of the dog
Implantation	See **Implantation** section for full list of those legally permitted to implant microchips	As for England, except provision 4 allowing for grandfather rights does not apply	As for England	A microchip can be implanted into a dog by a 'competent person', defined as a veterinary surgeon or a person who has received instruction on how to implant a microchip
Registration	See **Registration** section for full list of requirements for both dogs and cats	For dogs only, different to the English requirements in the following: The email address (if any) of the keeper the most accurate estimate of the dog's date of birth which the keeper is capable of giving; any distinguishing features of the dog;	For dogs only, different to the English requirements in the following: the e-mail address (if any) of the keeper; the most accurate estimate of the dog's date of birth which the keeper of the dog is capable of giving	Dog owners are responsible for making sure that the contact details held against their dog's microchip number are accurate and recorded on a database accessible to Council officers.
Adverse reactions	Legal requirement to report adverse reactions	Legal requirement to report adverse reactions	Legal requirement to report adverse reactions within 21 days of identification of reaction	Not required under the legislation, but recommended
Offences and penalties	See **Offences and penalties** section	As for the English regulations	As for the English regulations, except it is also an offence for a keeper of a dog to notify to a database operator any of the details knowing them to be false in 'a material particular'.	Keeping a dog without a valid licence, for which the dog must be microchipped and details registered on an accessible database can result in a fixed penalty or prosecution and a fine of up to £1,000. It is also an offence to take possession of a dog before a licence has been obtained for it, with a maximum fine of £1,000. The person who transferred the dog is also guilty of an offence. A dog is only considered to be microchipped if the microchip is implanted in the dog by a person of a prescribed class or description.

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FAQs

Requirements and exemptions

Which companion animals, other than horses, are legally required to have a microchip implanted in the UK?

- Dogs over the age of 8 weeks and in England, owned cats over the age of 20 weeks. See **Legislation** and **Requirements and exemptions** sections for more details

Do feral cats need to be microchipped?

- Defra have confirmed that microchipping is not compulsory for free living cats that live with little or no human interaction or dependency, such as farm, feral or community cats.

Are there any exemptions to the legal requirement for a microchip?

- A veterinary surgeon can certify that a dog or cat should not be microchipped for reasons relating to the health of the animal. See **Requirements and exemptions** section for more details.

Implantation

Who is legally permitted to implant microchips?

- In England, **Wales** and **Scotland**, a dog (or cat in England) can only be legally implanted by:
  - veterinary surgeons or veterinary nurses acting under the direction of a veterinary surgeon
  - student veterinary surgeons or student veterinary nurses under the direction of a veterinary surgeon
  - someone who has been satisfactorily assessed on a training course approved by the Secretary of State for that purpose
  - someone who before the Regulations come into force received training on implantation which included practical experience of implanting a microchip (this provision does not apply in **Wales**).
- In **Northern Ireland**, a microchip can be implanted into a dog by a 'competent person', defined as a veterinary surgeon or a person who has received instruction on how to implant a microchip. See **Implantation** section for more details.

Registration

Can I register a microchip for my client?

- Many practices will take on the responsibility for registering the details of the pet and keeper for any microchips they implant, however it is the keeper's responsibility to ensure the microchip is registered and their details are kept up to date. It is suggested that all members of staff involved in this process are able to make the owner aware of their responsibilities under the law including keeping the database details up to date.

Should the breeder be listed on a dog's microchip?

- Yes, in England, **Scotland** and **Wales**, the breeder should be registered as the dog's first keeper, whether they are required to be licensed or not. It should also be recorded that they are the breeder.

Can a microchip still be registered if the owner is homeless?

- Yes, contact details for someone the keeper stays in touch with may be entered

Scanning

When am I required to scan a pet for a microchip?

- The only time a vet is legally required to scan a dog or cat for a microchip is before rabies vaccination and the issuing of export documentation such as an Animal Health Certificate, or when completing other official documentation that requires identification of the animal. However, other circumstances in which it is advisable to do so include:
  - prior to implanting a microchip
  - when a lost or stray animal is presented
  - to ensure that a previously implanted microchip is still working and has not migrated significantly from its site of implantation (this is particularly important before an animal travels abroad)
  - on first presentation at the practice
  - prior to carrying out official health screening/tests
  - prior to euthanasia, where appropriate.

  In addition, RCVS Guidance states that veterinary surgeons should scan for a microchip in dogs prior to euthanasia where, in their professional judgement, destruction of the dog is not necessary on animal health or welfare grounds. See **RCVS Guidance** and **Scanning** section for more details.

What should I do if a dog or cat without a microchip is presented to me in practice?

- If no microchip is found, where possible the vet or RVN should advise the owner of their legal responsibility to chip and register the dog or cat. Record this advice in the clinical records. Vets and RVNs do not have a legal responsibility to report owners who have not had their pet microchipped. If presented with a puppy of 8 weeks of age that has not been microchipped, the vet or RVN should advise the owner of their legal responsibility to microchip and register the dog and encourage them to do so. Vets and RVNs do not have a legal responsibility to report the breeder.

Adverse reactions

What is the legal definition of an 'adverse reaction'?

- An adverse reaction is defined in the regulations as a microchip that causes any unnecessary pain or suffering or any pathology that is or seems to be caused by the implantation of a microchip, or a microchip that has migrated from the implantation site or failed (failure to transmit the number encoded in the microchip when scanned by an appropriate transceiver).

What should I do if a microchip has stopped working?

- If the microchip has failed, the dog or cat will need to have a new compliant microchip implanted (unless it qualifies for an **exemption**) and the new details registered on the database. It is recommended that the vet records details of the reasons for re-implantation and provides a written declaration to the owner about the old and new microchip. The microchip failure must be reported to **Defra**. If the owner wishes to confirm the presence of an unresponsive microchip, diagnostic imaging can be used if attempts to palpate the microchip have failed. See **Adverse reactions** section for more detail.

Should I remove a failed microchip?

- A failed microchip should not be removed unless it is associated with some pathology. See **RCVS Guidance** for more information.

What should I do if I find a microchip has failed in a pet I need to certify for travel?

- If the microchip has failed and the pet needs to be certified for travel abroad, **Defra** states that a new compliant chip must be inserted, the pet re-prepared (rabies vaccinated) and new travel documentation (such as an Animal Health Certificate) issued. The issuing veterinary surgeon should note in the 'Marking of animals' section of the Animal Health Certificate that there is another microchip present (and the number of that microchip) that cannot be scanned and read, in case the fault is intermittent. The failed microchip should be reported to Defra as an adverse reaction. See **Adverse reactions** section for more detail.

What should I do if a microchip seems to be working intermittently?

- If the microchip is intermittently failing and the pet needs to be certified for travel abroad, **Defra** recommends that a new microchip is inserted in case the existing microchip fails at some point in the future. The original microchip, implanted prior to the initial rabies vaccination, must be scanned and a reading made. If a reading is not possible it will be necessary to complete the procedures for a failed microchip. If a reading of the original microchip is obtained, a new microchip should then be inserted. In cases where a second microchip is inserted, in the 'Marking of animals' section of the Animal Health Certificate the Official Veterinarian should write: "On (date), I scanned and read microchip number (original). Upon gaining a reading, I inserted microchip number (new) on the same day, in accordance with Defra requirements" (or similar wording). See **Adverse reactions** section for more detail.

Ownership disputes

What should I do If there is a dispute about the ownership of a microchipped pet?

- If there is a potential ownership dispute, the **RCVS** provides detailed guidance on how to deal with such issues, including a **Client Confidentiality and Microchipped Animals Flow Chart**, which should be referred to. The BSAVA advises veterinary practices should be aware of their obligations under GDPR with respect to release of personal information, be aware of the RCVS guidelines in detail, contact their professional indemnity provider and keep detailed clinical notes. See **RCVS Guidance** for more information.

Miscellaneous

Is a dog who has been microchipped still required to wear a collar?

- If the owner wishes to dispense with a collar, they should be reminded that it is still a legal requirement that a non-working dog wears a collar, with a tag or plate or badge attached to it, inscribed with the name, address and postcode of the keeper when in a public place (**The Control of Dogs Order 1992**).

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