

Scotland to introduce mandatory microchipping next year

✘ Lost dogs may become a thing of the past as plans to make dog microchips compulsory in Scotland have taken a major step forward this week, as legislation is laid before the Scottish Parliament.

The law change – which received overwhelming support in a public consultation last year – is due to come into effect in Scotland in April 2016, the same time as in England and Wales.

Under the new rules, all dogs will need to be microchipped and their owners' details registered and kept up to date in a database complying with certain conditions.

Rural Affairs Secretary Richard Lochhead – the Scottish Government Minister with lead responsibility for animal welfare – said:

“Today marks an important milestone towards compulsory microchipping, which will help reduce the number of lost and abandoned dogs in Scotland – safeguarding animal welfare and promoting responsible ownership.

“As well as reuniting pets with their owners, it will allow authorities to directly identify dog owners and hold them accountable for their dogs' behaviour and welfare.

“With less than six months to go until the law changes, I encourage all dog owners to ensure that their dogs are microchipped and, just as importantly, that their details are up to date.”

Ahead of the new rules coming into force, Dogs Trust, the UK's

largest dog welfare charity, is offering free microchipping to all unchipped dogs in Scotland at mobile drop-in events and at its two rehoming centres.

Dogs Trust Veterinary Director Paula Boyden said:

“For many years Dogs Trust has been working with the Scottish Government to bring about the introduction of compulsory microchipping. We are therefore very pleased to welcome the legislation, which will improve dog welfare and responsible ownership.

“As the UK’s largest dog welfare charity, reducing Scotland’s stray dog population of over 1,400 dogs* is at the very heart of Dogs Trust’s ethos. This is why we have committed to ensuring dog owners have access to free microchipping at our two Scottish rehoming centres in Glasgow and West Calder, or at one of our many drop-in events across the country.

“So far this year Dogs Trust has microchipped over 11,000 dogs across Scotland. We continue to remind owners that no matter how responsible they are, there is a chance their dog could get lost or stolen – microchipping is the most effective way to assist in a lost dog being returned to their owner. However, to enable this it is important that owners keep their database details up to date.”