

NI PET TRAVEL

WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM UNDER THE OLD PROTOCOL?

Pets travelling between Great Britain and Northern Ireland currently have to follow the European Union's rules. They must:

- have an up-to-date and expensive rabies vaccination (c.£102)
- acquire an animal health certificate from their vet for each visit (costing on average £230.40 per certificate);
- enter through a designated Northern Ireland point of entry; and
- dogs must have a tapeworm treatment (costing £40-£50) for each visit.

These are costly burdens for pet owners which are also contrary to animal welfare as they are completely unnecessary - the UK is recognised by the EU as tapeworm-free and has been rabies-free since 1922. None of these requirements apply to movements within GB.



WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED IN THIS AGREEMENT?

- Smooth flow of pets between Northern Ireland and Great Britain without needless costs, health treatment or red tape.
- Replaced all cumbersome, costly requirements for pets moving from GB to Northern Ireland with a smooth, free and virtually invisible experience for microchipped pets;
- Removed the requirement for a rabies vaccine
- Removed the requirement for tapeworm treatment
- Removed unnecessary checks, without jeopardising the single epidemiological status of the island of Ireland.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

If you are travelling with pet dogs, cats, and ferrets you can now do so without needing extra health treatments, new costs or documentation from a vet:

- Microchipped pets can travel with a life-long 'pet travel document', issued for free by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and available in hard copy and on a smartphone app; and
- Owners will complete a simple tick box as part of their travel booking, acknowledging they accept the scheme rules and that they will not move their pet into the European Union
- There will be no routine additional checks by the NI authorities. Any checks carried out will be risk-based, focused on real-world welfare, disease or puppy smuggling risks.

For pets travelling NI to GB and back, no documentation, declarations, checks or health treatments will be required.

A contingency option, in the form of easily completed on-the-day documentation, will be in place to ensure no-one will be prevented from travelling unless there is a genuine reason for concern (e.g. a dog is unlawfully not microchipped).

IMPLEMENTATION

- Pet owners do not need to take any immediate action.
- The new arrangements will take effect in Autumn 2023 - further guidance on what pet owners will need to do will be provided in due course.
- We will consult and work with business over the coming months ahead of implementing any changes required by these arrangements.

