



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

# Commercial Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets Import Information Note (IIN) BLLV/5b

January 2024

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## 1. General Information

**This Import Information Note (IIN) must be read in conjunction with the IIN for general information for imports of live animals and germplasm, which provides information on pre-notifications, veterinary checks, risk categories etc.**

**[General information for imports of live animals and germplasm \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://www.defra.gov.uk)**

References to European Union (EU) legislation within this document are references to direct EU Legislation which has been assimilated in Great Britain (assimilated direct

legislation), as defined in the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 and can be viewed on the UK legislation website ([legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk)).

## 2. Scope

The movement of cats, dogs and ferrets is governed by two regimes, the “Balai regime” (including the Trade in Animals and Related Products Regulations 2011, which implemented the ‘Balai’ directive (92/65/EC)) for what are termed ‘commercial movements’ and the Pet Travel Regulation (Regulation (EU) 576/2013) for cats, dogs and ferrets that comply with pet requirements. It is important that cats, dogs and ferrets travel under the correct regime for the type of movement.

**This IIN covers the commercial movement for the trade in cats, dogs and ferrets, which are governed by the Balai regime.** It also covers:

- The movements of groups of more than five cats, dogs or ferrets per person travelling;
- The movement of cats, dogs and ferrets involving a change of ownership and/or for rehoming, including rescue animals (see below);
- Pet animals that are not able to fulfil the requirement of the Pet Travel regulation for travelling within five days of their owner or owner’s representative.

This IIN does not cover the movement of pet animals that comply with the Pet Travel rules (Regulation (EU) 576/2013) i.e. five or fewer cats, dogs or ferrets, being accompanied by their owner or owner’s representative within five days of movement, and not intended to be sold or transferred to another owner or travelling for a competition or event. Information for these movements can be found at: [Pet Travel - Information for pet owners](#)

Rescue animals or animals being moved for rehoming are classed as commercial movements. This was re-confirmed at the Working Party of Chief Veterinary Officers on 13 November 2013. They must therefore travel under the Balai regime.

## 3. Great Britain and Crown Dependencies

Trade movements between Great Britain, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are treated as national movements and as such, no animal health conditions are applicable.

## 4. Northern Ireland

Trade movements from Northern Ireland to Great Britain are treated as national movements and as such, no animal health conditions are applicable. You can find additional information on movements from NI to GB [here](#).

## 5. Country of origin

Imports of dogs, cats or ferrets into Great Britain (GB) are authorised only from trading partners listed in:

- Annex II to [Regulation \(EU\) 577/2013](#),
- the documents published by the Secretary of State, with the consent of the Scottish and Welsh Ministers for Equidae or Fresh meat of ungulates for:
  - [Non-EU countries](#)
  - [EU and EFTA countries](#)

Under The Aquatic Animal Health and Alien Species in Aquaculture, Animals, and Marketing of Seed, Plant and Propagating Material (Legislative Functions and Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020, **all EU Member States have been added to the list contained in Part I of Annex II of Regulation (EU) 577/2013**. This means movements from the EU should be treated in accordance with the conditions laid down in section 6.

## 6. Imports from approved countries listed in Regulation (EU) 577/2013

Cats, dogs and ferrets imported from countries listed in Annex II to [Regulation \(EU\) 577/2013](#) must come from a premises registered by the competent authority of origin and meet the following health requirements:

- they have been identified by a microchip (or a clearly readable tattoo applied before 03 July 2011) prior to vaccination;
- after 12 weeks of age, have been vaccinated against rabies;
- after vaccination (or the last of the primary course of vaccinations) they must wait for a minimum of 21 days before travelling;
- in the case of dogs be treated for *Echinococcus multilocularis* (tapeworm) with an approved product not less than 24 hours and not more than 120 hours prior to arrival in GB.

If these conditions can be met, no licence will be required under the Rabies (Importation of Dogs, Cats and Other Mammals) Order 1974. If these conditions cannot be met the animals will require a licence and must be quarantined. Contact the Imports team - Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) for further information.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/put-your-pet-in-rabies-quarantine>

## 7. Imports from approved countries that are not listed in Regulation (EU) 577/2013

Dogs, cats and ferrets from countries not listed in Annex II to Regulation (EU) 577/2013 can still be imported to GB provided they come from territories and countries listed in the documents for Equidae or Fresh meat of ungulates published by the Secretary of State, with the consent of the Scottish and Welsh Ministers for:

- [Non-EU countries](#)
- [EU and EFTA countries](#)

Cats, dogs and ferrets imported from these approved countries must come from a premises registered by the competent authority of origin and meet the following health requirements:

- they have been identified by a microchip (or a clearly readable tattoo applied before 03 July 2011) prior to vaccination;
- after 12 weeks of age, have been vaccinated against rabies;
- at least 30 days after the preceding primary vaccination within a current valid vaccination series (or the last of the primary course of vaccinations) a blood sample must be drawn and sent to a European Union (EU) approved laboratory for testing;
- a satisfactory blood test result must show the rabies antibody titre was equal to or greater than 0.5 IU/ml;
- the animal must complete a waiting period of 3 calendar months after the date that the sample was drawn;
- in the case of dogs be treated for *Echinococcus multilocularis* (tapeworm) with an approved product not less than 24 hours and not more than 120 hours prior to arrival in GB.

If these conditions can be met, no licence will be required under the Rabies (Importation of Dogs, Cats and Other Mammals) Order 1974. If these conditions cannot be met the animals will require a licence and must be quarantined.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/put-your-pet-in-rabies-quarantine>

## 8. Health certification/documentation

Imports to Great Britain must be accompanied by the appropriate health certificate, which can be found on GOV.UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pets-health-certificates>

## 9. Additional Information for Hybrid Cats and Dogs

The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) applies to the species in Annex I of Regulation (EU) 576/2013, which are Dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*), Cats (*Felis silvestris catus*) and Ferrets (*Mustela putorius furo*).

Please be aware that an F1 hybrid cat or dog **cannot** enter Great Britain under the scope of Regulation (EU) 576/2013.

F1 hybrids and other non-domestic species should be imported in line with the requirements of the Import Information Note for the [Import of Certain Rabies Susceptible Animals under the Balai Directive \(IIN BLLV/5a\)](#).

In addition, the import of some hybrid cats and dogs, up to and including F4 generation may require export and import certificates under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and/or under Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976.

[Import or export endangered species: check if you need a CITES permit - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## 10. Contact for further information

For further information regarding import requirements, contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) Imports team:

Centre for International Trade - Carlisle  
Eden Bridge House  
Lowther Street  
Carlisle  
CA3 8DX

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

Telephone: 03000 200 301



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The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government and Welsh Government.