



# **Ireland's Dog Census 2025**



# Welcome to the results of **Ireland's Dog Census 2025!**

The landscape for our canine companions is constantly evolving, and understanding those changes is essential if we are to meet their needs.

Ireland's Dog Census plays a vital role in helping us do just that, offering unique insight into the lives of dogs and the people who love them all across the country.

Now with two years' worth of data, the Census is helping us build a more detailed picture of dog ownership in Ireland: from the everyday joys of sharing life with a dog, to the challenges owners face and the support they need.

**As the Census grows, so too does its potential to improve our understanding of the changing needs of dog owners and their canine companions alike, inform our decision-making, and help more dogs through our services, campaigns and advocacy work nationwide.**

**The  
geeky  
bit!**



**We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has joined us on this journey so far.** In 2025, **22,366** dog owners took part, alongside **2,933** dog lovers who shared their views. Together, they helped us count **26,289** dogs, creating one of the most detailed snapshots yet of the lives of dogs across Ireland.

This report is another important step forward in our mission to **'count every dog, so every dog counts.'**



**Hi, I'm Keith!  
Join me and my  
Census Squad pals  
to see what fun  
facts we've dug up**

## **Want to know how long the survey ran for and who helped us? You've come to the right place!**

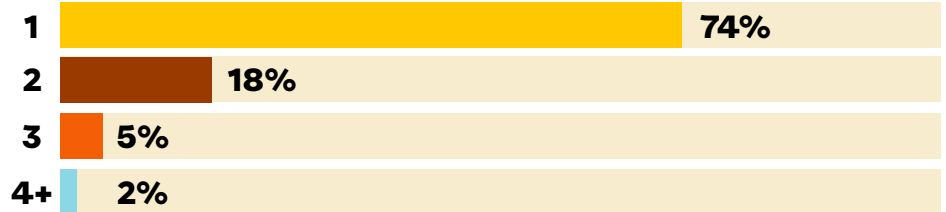
Ireland's Dog Census ran between October 10<sup>th</sup> and December 8<sup>th</sup> 2025. Achieving a sample size of 2,933 Dog Lovers (those who don't currently own a dog) and 22,366 Dog Owners. The survey appeared on social media and was not quota controlled.

Dogs Trust Ireland engaged Ireland's leading research, insights and polling agency, Ipsos B&A, to process and analyse the data as well as report the results. The data was weighted to match a nationally representative survey conducted by Ipsos B&A between July 24<sup>th</sup> and August 13<sup>th</sup> for Dogs Trust to ensure the results of the Census are nationally representative.

## The fun stuff

### Most dog owners have a single dog

Just under **three in four** owners have a single dog, with **7%** having 3 or more dogs.



### Which breed is top dog?

Jack Russells hold onto the top spot for the second year running.

Could it be their big personalities and cute little faces? They're hard to resist!

In second place, we have mixed breeds – because who doesn't love the best of both worlds?

And in third place, the clever Border Collie!

Great work  
JRTs. But I  
think we're  
all winners!



- |                      |                                 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Jack Russell       | 6 Bichon Frise                  |
| 2 Mixed breed        | 7 Golden Retriever              |
| 3 Border Collie      | 8 Cavalier King Charles Spaniel |
| 4 Labrador Retriever | 9 German Shepherd               |
| 5 Cocker Spaniel     | 10 Shih Tzu                     |



## 10 most popular dog names

Luna is top of the pup names. Closely followed by Bailey, and Bella in third place.

Are any of your furry friends' names in the top 10?

You crazy cats, you like most of the same names as last year but in a different order! And still no Keith. Maybe next year?

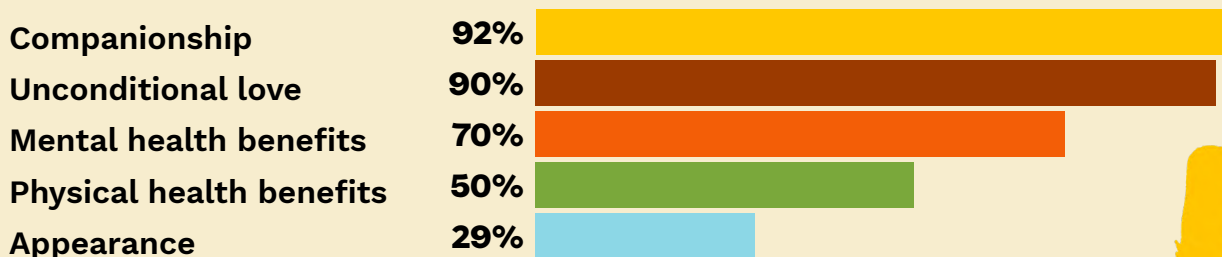


★ 2 new entries!



## Why do we love dogs?

When asked what you love most about dogs, **92%** of you agreed it was the companionship, with **90%** stating unconditional love. These results were consistent with the answers from our dog lover cohort too!



Aw, we love you too!





## The serious stuff

### Where did all these much-loved mutts come from?

When it comes to finding a furry friend, dog owners in Ireland are taking a variety of routes.

Breeders and rescue organisations are equally popular, with **27%** of owners getting their dog from a breeder and the same proportion welcoming their pet home through a rescue or shelter.

Among respondents who bought their dog from a breeder, **59%** said they sourced their dog from a licensed breeder in Ireland and had checked the breeder's licence details, and **31%** were **unsure** whether the breeder they used was licensed.

#### When asked how they knew the breeder was licensed:

**36%** said they were shown the license

**29%** were told they were licensed and relied on the breeder's word

**25%** were referred to the breeder by the Irish Kennel Club

**11%** looked them up on the National Register of Dog Breeding Establishments

The experience appears to have been a positive one for many, with **86%** of owners who got their dog from a breeder they believe was licensed, saying they would return to the same breeder again in the future.

Rescue organisations also continue to play a vital role in helping dogs find loving homes. Among those who adopted, **17%** found their four-legged companion through Dogs Trust, while nearly **two-thirds (65%)** welcomed their dog from another rehoming or adoption centre.

#### Where did you get your dog from?

|                                             |     |
|---------------------------------------------|-----|
| A breeder                                   | 27% |
| Adopted from a rescue/shelter               | 27% |
| From a friend or family member              | 17% |
| From an online marketplace or classified ad | 13% |
| Rehomed from a previous owner               | 8%  |
| Someone in my locality was selling dogs     | 6%  |
| Found as a stray                            | 2%  |



# Choosing your furry best friend

When it comes to doing research prior to getting a dog, worryingly, **31%** of owners didn't do any research before welcoming a furry friend into their life, highlighting the need for more education in the space.

**Do your research!**

## What research did you do prior to getting your dog?

|                                                         |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>I didn't do any research</b>                         | <b>31%</b> |
| Breed characteristics                                   | <b>49%</b> |
| Temperament and behaviour                               | <b>46%</b> |
| Exercise and activity needs                             | <b>41%</b> |
| Size and space considerations                           | <b>36%</b> |
| Average lifespan and typical health issues              | <b>31%</b> |
| Training and socialisation needs                        | <b>26%</b> |
| Grooming requirements                                   | <b>22%</b> |
| Time commitment                                         | <b>21%</b> |
| Adoption vs. breeder options and ethical considerations | <b>20%</b> |
| Nutritional needs                                       | <b>18%</b> |
| Cost of ownership (food, vet care, supplies)            | <b>16%</b> |
| Dog/Breed ownership laws and regulations                | <b>11%</b> |
| Support and resources for new dog owners                | <b>8%</b>  |



We want every future dog owner to feel confident and prepared. That's why we've developed our **online breed checker** to help people find the right match for their lifestyle.

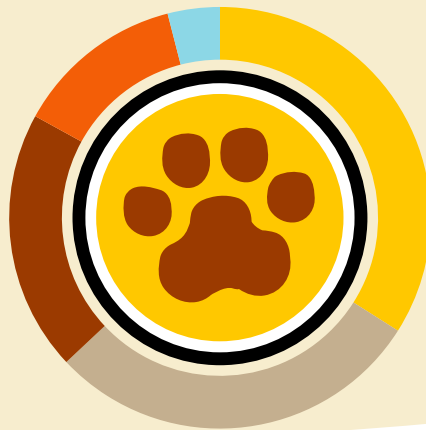
# The biggest dog welfare issues in Ireland

The welfare issue that most concerns you - Ireland's dog owners and dog lovers - is irresponsible breeding (**34%**).

This is closely followed by irresponsible ownership (**29%**), then neglect (**20%**) and abandonment (**13%**).

## What do you see as the biggest dog welfare issue in Ireland currently?

|                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Irresponsible breeding  | 34% |
| Irresponsible ownership | 29% |
| Neglect                 | 20% |
| Abandonment             | 13% |
| Other                   | 4%  |



You know only too well how poor breeding affects mums and their puppies for a lifetime. In poorly managed Dog Breeding Establishments, the mums may be forced to have litter after litter, becoming weak and exhausted, while living in poor conditions.

As a result, the pups are born into environments that can lead to ill-health and issues with behaviour, that sometimes can last a lifetime.

To find out more on how to get a puppy safely, and the puppy farm red flags to watch out for, [visit our website](#).

In fact, **18%** of dog owners who filled in the Census stated that their dog experienced serious health issues in the first year of their life.

**That's why we continue to put pressure on the Irish government to bring about change.**

Our 2025 Christmas campaign focused on ending breeding cruelty and drew over **14,000** signatures of support from the public, helping to strengthen our conversations with key stakeholders in government.

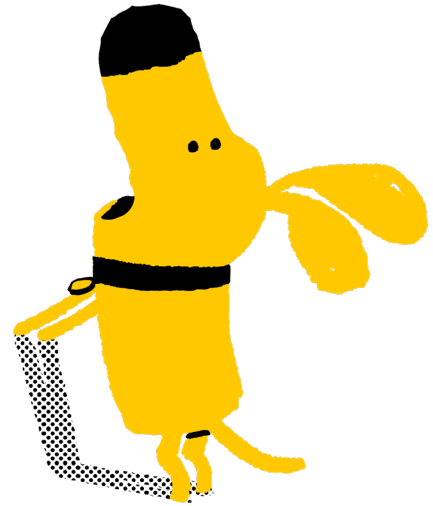


## Breeding reform is needed

You agree with us that breeding reform is needed.

**95%** of you agreed that anyone breeding, selling, or transferring the ownership of a puppy, or litter of puppies, should be recorded on a centralised database.

Moreover, **63%** of you believe current laws against irresponsible dog breeding aren't being enforced effectively, while **91%** believe the government should urgently reform Ireland's dog breeding laws to ensure stronger welfare protections.



In December 2025, we met with Deputy Jennifer Whitmore, Social Democrats, who introduced to the Dáil the Dog Welfare (Amendment) Bill 2025, calling for stronger dog breeding regulations in Ireland.

And in May 2026, we saw Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Martin Heydon, propose a series of new measures as part of the Dog Breeding Establishments (Amendment) Bill 2026, including litter limits, age restrictions and a better staff-to-dog ratio.

If passed into law, these measures would represent a significant step forward in raising breeding standards and tackling irresponsible breeding practices across Ireland.

**But legislation alone will not solve the issue. To deliver meaningful change for dogs, these reforms must be properly resourced and enforced.**

We will continue to campaign for better welfare standards for mums and pups, while working closely with government to help drive lasting reform and make sure every dog gets the best possible start in life.





## Having to give up your dog

Sadly, **453** dog owners had to give up their dog. These were the reasons why:

**Changes in living situation 39%**

**Unwanted behaviour 18%**

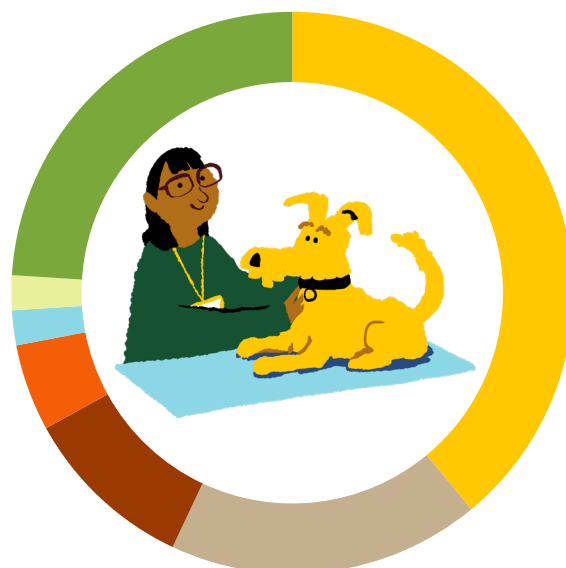
**Time constraints 10%**

**Personal health issues 5%**

**Financial difficulties 2%**

**Work circumstances 2%**

**Other 24%**



### Changes in living situation – broken down into further categories:

**My relationship broke down 39%**

**I moved and my new landlord doesn't allow dogs 31%**

**I had to move to a smaller house/apartment 12%**

**I moved and I no longer have a garden 8%**

**I moved and the management company don't allow dogs 6%**

**My neighbours complained about my dog 3%**

**Other 21%**

Housing continues to be a major issue when it comes to keeping a dog.

This tallies with our own data: between 2019 and 2024 alone, we have noted a **112%** increase in families contacting us to give up their dog due to rental restrictions.

## Bans on dogs in tenancy agreements

Dogs Trust has been campaigning on the issue of bans on dogs in tenancy agreements for many years, including our **“Good boy, not goodbye” campaign and petition** calling for an end to blanket bans on dogs in tenancy agreements, which over 20,000 people supported in 2025.

Your signatures helped us open a dialogue with the government on this important issue, and in November 2025, we were pleased to see the government announce that its **Housing Action Plan 2025-2030** would include measures to end ‘blanket bans’ on pets in tenancy agreements, beginning with Approved Housing Body properties.

We would like to see this extended into private tenancy agreements too, but this is a great step forward.

## Toby's Story

**Toby's story is one of the most heartbreaking stories highlighting the rental crisis in Ireland.**

Toby is a twelve-year-old Spaniel, who was adopted from us as a puppy.

When his family's landlord decided to sell the property they were living in, Toby's family began looking for suitable accommodation right away.

But unfortunately, despite months of searching, they couldn't find somewhere to live that would accept Toby.

With nowhere left to turn, Toby's family reached out to us for help.

**Speaking on the devastating decision, Toby's previous owner said:**

“““

**“Giving up Toby was one of the hardest things we've ever had to do.**

**He was the family dog and had grown up alongside our kids. He was part of every memory and every milestone, and it's been very tough on them.**

**We spent over eight months desperately trying to find pet-friendly accommodation, but nothing came through.**

**When we faced the reality of homelessness, we had no choice.**

**It felt like we were being forced to give up a member of our family just to keep a roof over our heads.”**



Thankfully, Toby's story had a happy ending. His life changed forever when an adopter heard about him on the radio and chose to give him a loving, forever home.

While Toby now enjoys the safety and comfort of a family, sadly, countless other dogs are still waiting in rescues all across the country, surrendered through no fault of their own because rental restrictions left their families with no other choice.

**No family should ever have to face the impossible choice between keeping their dog or their home due to rental restrictions.**

**That's why we will continue to campaign for legislative change to end blanket bans on pets in rented homes. By creating a fairer system for responsible pet owners, we can prevent more heartbreaking stories like Toby's.**

## Solving one behaviour at a time

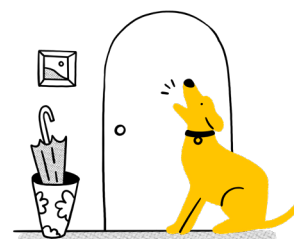
The Census has shown us that many dog owners have experienced tricky behaviours that will be familiar to anyone sharing their life with a furry friend!

**More than a third (36%)** of you said that your dog doesn't always come back when called, while **34%** struggled with lead pulling on walks. A further **33%** of you reported that your dog finds it difficult to settle when visitors arrive, or when the doorbell rings.

**The good news is that most owners are taking positive steps to help their dogs.**

Encouragingly, more than **eight in ten dogs (82%)** have received some form of training, with **64%** being trained by their owner, reflecting the commitment owners have to building strong bonds and helping their dogs thrive!

However, when viewed alongside the behavioural challenges reported above, these positive findings equally highlight the need for accessible and reliable guidance and training resources to support dog owners in their training efforts.



### Has your dog ever received any form of training?

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| I trained my dog myself   | 64% |
| Dog training classes      | 18% |
| One-to-one with a trainer | 15% |
| No training               | 18% |



## Dogs Trust digital training courses

We know what it can be like to have a dog who doesn't behave in the way you'd like them to.

Perhaps they have forgotten their manners and jump up at every person they meet.

Maybe dog walks are a struggle because they are constantly pulling or you worry they won't come back if you let them off.

Or perhaps, they're more vocal with the postman than you'd prefer!

**We understand, and we want to help.**

In 2026, we launched a new series of **digital adult dogs training courses** with modules that tackle the most common behaviour challenges, from excessive barking and jumping up, to lead walking and recall training.

We also have our **Puppy Toolkit** to help owners build those crucial bonds and routines with their pups, as well as nip problems in the bud from day one.



# Tackling the teenage years

## Did you know dogs also have a teenage phase?

It covers the critical 6-24 month age period, and while they may not be eye-rolling or slamming doors like their human counterparts, it can be a challenging time.

Sadly, in 2025 alone, we received **885** requests from people looking to give up their adolescent dogs.

This was **42%** of all surrender requests, and means that adolescent dogs are currently the group most at risk of being given up.

To support owners through this stage and help keep dogs and their owners together, we launched a digital **Teenage Dogs Training Course**.

Available on demand, the course helps owners understand what's really going on, from hormonal changes to fear periods, and how to guide their dogs through this tricky time. Owners can pick from individual mini-courses tackling specific behaviours that they'd like to focus on or buy the whole course in a bundle.

**Moody? Me?  
Never!**



## Making sure you are 'dog ready'

Time constraints are one of the top reasons people give for why they had to give up their dog.

Of those who have had to give up a dog due to a lack of time, **44%** state their work schedule changed, **29%** had a new baby, and **24%** stated their children need more of their time.

While people's lives can change unexpectedly, we want to make sure that future dog owners know exactly what they're letting themselves in for. This is why we created the **'Are you dog ready?' quiz**.



The interactive online quiz outlines key aspects of dog ownership, such as the time commitment required, the expenses involved, and the training necessities, to name just a few.

## The cost of living is still having an impact

Life with a dog is full of joy, companionship, and plenty of memorable moments, but keeping them well looked after can be a financial strain.

The 2025 Census data has shown us that many of you are struggling with the costs of owning a dog, particularly vet bills (**36%**), with nearly **4 in 10** of you finding trips to the vet a struggle financially.

Insurance (**14%**), grooming (**13%**), boarding (**12%**), training (**9%**), and food (**10%**) are also areas dog owners struggle with.

## Raising awareness of vaccinations

We know vet bills can be a strain, and it's easy for things like vaccinations to slip our minds.

Unfortunately, in recent years, we have seen too many dogs coming into our care unvaccinated and then suffer from preventable diseases. And, sadly in some cases, passing away.

That's why, in February 2026, we launched **a campaign** to raise awareness of the importance of annual vaccinations.

**Thankfully, the 2025 Census results paint a more positive picture as 78% of dog owners told us their dog's vaccinations are up to date, having been vaccinated within the last 12 months.**

On the other hand, the key reasons for the **22%** of dog owners whose dog hasn't received their annual vaccination is that their dog is 'healthy and doesn't need to be vaccinated' (**39%**) and 'forgetting to do the annual vaccination' (**22%**).



**Note to self:  
thank Mum for  
vaccinating me!**

# The biggest issues facing dog owners

There's nothing like that dog-owner bond, is there?

So, it stands to reason that your biggest issue is not your own dog, but the environment that Ireland creates for you and your pooch.

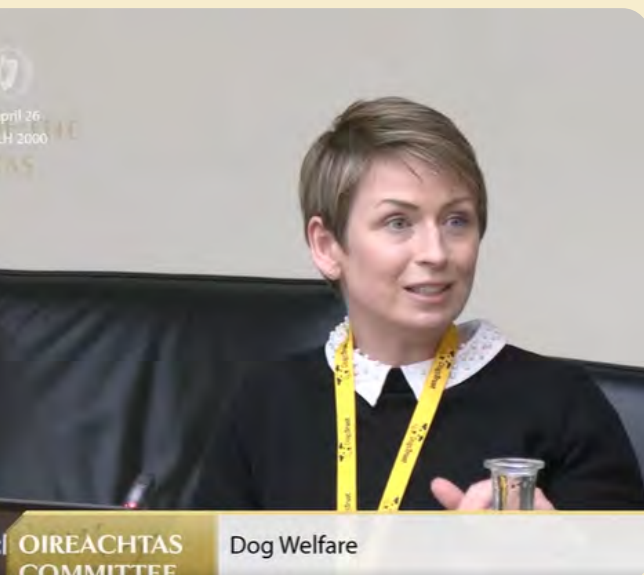
For the second year running, the Census shows that the biggest problem for dog owners is other owners not taking responsibility in public places (**31%**), as well as the lack of dog-friendly spaces (**28%**).

In third place is a lack of rental accommodation for dog owners at **9%**.

When it comes to **irresponsible dog ownership**, these are the problems you told us about:



We're addressing all these issues through our advocacy work and campaigns:



In April 2026, our **Policy, Compliance and Research Manager, Sarah Lynch** alongside our **Veterinary and Welfare Manager, Niamh Curran-Kelly** spoke at the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture and Food – affording Dogs Trust the opportunity to reach those at the heart of government, who can bring about change.

We shone a light on three areas where change is needed:

1

The key policy measures which we believe would deliver a positive change in dog welfare and control in Ireland;

2

The need to professionalise the dog care sector;

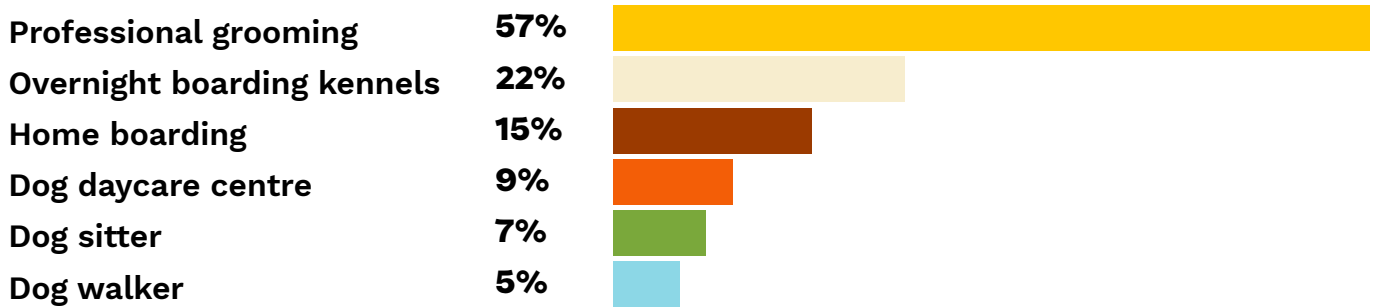
3

The infrastructure and education needed to help Ireland become more dog friendly.



## Raising professional standards

The use of professional dog care services remains high, with these being the top services used by dog owners in the last 12 months:



57% of dog owners surveyed in a separate piece of our research said that they have struggled to access professional dog services in the past due to a lack of availability, while 87% confirmed that they would feel more confident using a professional dog service if they knew the provider received a certificate from Dogs Trust.

This is why we have set up the **Dogs Trust Lead and Learn Academy**. A virtual learning environment which encourages responsible dog ownership, as well as being aimed at existing and aspiring dog-care professionals across the country.

And if you're a dog owner who wants more in-depth knowledge on dogs, you're welcome too!

Our academy offers accessible, self-paced CPD-certified short courses in topics ranging from what good dog welfare looks like in practice, how to read and respond to dog body language, and canine disease and prevention.

And for those who want a more in-depth learning experience, **Dog Training Essentials** is our blended pathway, offering a mix of online self-paced learning combined with weekly live virtual workshops.





## Love hurts

They're our best friends, our constant companions, so it's no surprise that when a dog passes away, it leaves a big hole in our hearts.

**Nearly a third (31%)** of you have had a dog pass away, and **over a quarter (27%)** have lost two dogs. **41%** had to say goodbye to three or more dogs.

Interestingly, **9 in 10 dog lovers** have owned a dog at some point in their life with **55%** having owned a dog that has passed away, underlining the widespread and visceral experience of pet bereavement. This finding suggests many might have chosen not to have another dog due to the intensity of the loss.

### You've got a friend in us

**47%** of current dog owners turned to family and friends for support when they lost their dog, **43%** didn't seek any help, and **1%** had counselling, **but did you know Dogs Trust can help?**

We have a range of expert grief resources, including articles from psychologists and grief specialists **available on our website** to offer support.

In January 2026, we held **The Big Paws**, a campaign and remembrance walk aimed at highlighting the often-unspoken grief that comes with losing a dog, and remembering all the dogs we have lost.

Irish chef and writer Clodagh McKenna helped us raise awareness with a **special podcast episode** where she shared about the loss of her beloved dog, Nollie.





## Barriers to dog ownership

When asked about the biggest barriers to dog ownership, our dog lover cohort pointed out housing/rental restrictions (**31%**) and work circumstances (**31%**), while **24%** admitted their dog passed away and it feels too soon.

However, our results show that **69%** of dog lovers will get a dog when their situation allows it, with **1 in 10 (10%)** actively looking for a furry best friend.



**Thank you to everyone who took part in Ireland's Dog Census 2025, and for coming on this journey of understanding more about the nation's dogs with us.**

**The answers you gave us will help shape our future work allowing us to provide advice and support where it matters most.**

**Don't forget to take part in Ireland's Dog Census 2026.**

**click  
here** 

**A dog is for life®**

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