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Households are being warned about the dangers of buying puppies from abroad, in the lead up to Christmas, after a puppy was seized.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Trading Standards have issued a warning after they seized a French Bulldog puppy from a home in Ramsey last week. The puppy had been illegally imported into the UK from Poland under a false passport and presented a rabies risk due to invalid vaccinations.

Puppies brought in from EU countries must be vaccinated against rabies and at least 15 weeks old.

Plus, owners who have bought the animals could be liable for quarantine costs of over £1,000 and forced to spend time away from their new pet during this time.

Trading standards officers were given a tip-off from colleagues in Bedford after someone had bought another puppy from the litter and raised concerns with their vets. When they visited the seller they found the one remaining puppy.

Peter Gell, head of regulatory services at Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Trading Standards said: “In the lead up to Christmas, people need to do their research before buying puppies - they are not just for Christmas. In this case, the date of birth on the animal passport had been altered, allowing them to be vaccinated at a younger age, imported into Britain and sold at a premium.

“The practice of illegally importing animals not only increases the risk of spreading disease to the UK, but it also raises serious welfare concerns for the animals, and in many instances results in additional quarantine costs for the unsuspecting purchaser.”

The puppy is in quarantine while further investigations are ongoing.

The team advises anyone thinking of buying a puppy or kitten to:

1. Get as much information as possible about where the puppy or kitten has come from.
2. Be suspicious if the seller cannot show you the puppy or kitten with its mother and litter mates. View the animal where it was bred.

3. If the puppy or kitten has been vaccinated, ask to see the documentation. This must clearly state the veterinary practice where this was carried out.
4. If the seller informs you that the puppy or kitten has been brought in from another country, it should have a pet passport with a valid rabies vaccination recorded in it. The date of the import must be at least 21 days after the date of the rabies vaccination. The puppy or kitten must also be a minimum of 15 weeks of age.
5. Never agree to have the puppy or kitten delivered to your home address.

Anyone who has concerns about a puppy or kitten they have bought should contact their vet in the first instance.

If you would like to contact someone about suspected illegal puppy or kitten trading, please call Citizens Advice on 03454 04 05 06 who will pass the details to the relevant local authority.



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