

Dog Groomer

Business Opportunity Profile

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Introduction

Dog groomers are qualified professionals who specialise in the care and maintenance of dogs' coats and overall appearance. Groomers typically bathe, brush and trim coats, trim nails and clean ears. Some also provide teeth cleaning, microchipping and flea and tick treatments.

This profile provides information about starting up and trading as a dog groomer. It describes the training available, the current market trends and the key trading issues.

Qualifications and skills

Suitable qualifications and courses for anyone starting up as a dog groomer include:

- The Level 3 Diploma in Dog Grooming and the Level 2 Certificate for Dog Grooming Assistants, which are provided by the College of Animal Welfare. The Diploma covers health checking dogs, legislation, customer service and record keeping. The Certificate covers bathing and drying dogs, basic coat trimming and maintaining a clean grooming environment. Go to www.caw.ac.uk/subject/dog-grooming for more information.
- The Level 3 Diploma in Dog Grooming and Salon Management provided by the Dog Grooming Training Academy. The course covers health and safety, dog welfare, grooming styles and equipment, emergency first aid and running a small canine business. The course costs £5,000. Go to www.doggroomacademy.co.uk/ipet-network-level-3-diploma-in-dog-grooming-and-salon-management for more information.
- Canine First-Aid, which is an online course provided by the Pet Industry Federation. The course costs £50 and covers the main principles of applying first aid for dogs (www.pifeducation.co.uk/course/canine-first-aid-course).

Groomers who provide dog microchipping must have completed a government-approved microchipping training course. Example of approved training providers include:

- Pet Scanner (<https://petscanner.com/index.php/implantertraining>).
- Vet Skill (www.vetskill.com/quals/p/level-3-microchipping).
- PeddyMark (www.peddymark.com/microchip-training-courses).

Industry resources

There are various resources and events to help dog groomers develop their knowledge and skills, including:

- Online courses provided by the College of Animal Welfare, which cover topics such as dog behaviour, handling, and health and safety. Go to www.caw.ac.uk/cpd for details.
- 'Total Grooming Magazine' (<https://totalgroomingmagazine.co.uk>), which is a monthly magazine for groomers in the UK.
- 'Pet Business World' (www.petbusinessworld.co.uk), which is a monthly trade publication providing news, product reviews, details of events and a directory of pet business suppliers.
- PATS (www.patshow.co.uk), which is a three-day pet trade event held at the NEC, Birmingham, in September.
- Regional and breed-specific dog shows, which provide an opportunity to network with pet owners and share best practice with other pet professionals. Go to www.thekennelclub.org.uk/search/find-a-show and www.bradfordpremiersmallanimalshow.co.uk for details of upcoming shows.
- Online communities and forums for dog owners, which provide opportunities to discuss owners' concerns and expectations in relation to grooming. Examples include Dog Forum (<https://dogforum.co.uk>) and UK Pet Forums (www.petforums.co.uk).

Key market issues and trends

Current market issues affecting start-up and established dog groomers include the following:

- In 2024, around 28% of UK households owned a dog, making them the most popular pet. In 2021, there were around 10 million pet dogs in the UK compared to around 9.6 million in 2021 (www.pdsa.org.uk/what-we-do/pdsa-animal-wellbeing-report/uk-pet-populations-of-dogs-cats-and-rabbits).
- Dog grooming is increasingly being recognised as a health service rather than just a grooming treatment. In 2025, grooming techniques and treatment that support pet health in addition to their appearance were predicted to increase. Examples include skin and coat treatments and ear and dental care (<https://britishschoolofgrooming.com/news/top-trends-in-pet-grooming-for-2025-whats-shaping-the-industry-this-year>).
- Some dog groomers provide medical grooming, which involves working with veterinary professionals to assist pets with specific health needs. This could include special care for older pets, pets with skin conditions, or those with limited mobility.
- In 2023, there were 10,600 pet groomers in the UK. Around 2,500 had high street premises, with the remainder working from home-based salons. The biggest chain of groomers was Pets at Home, which offers grooming in 339 stores (<https://globalpetindustry.com/article/transitioning-uk-grooming-industry-maturity-it-time>).

Trading, commercial and legal issues

Start-up and established dog groomers face the following trading, commercial and legal issues:

Trade bodies

Membership of a trade body can provide a wide range of individual and business benefits. Relevant bodies include:

- The Pet Industry Federation (<https://petfederation.co.uk>), which is a membership body for pet businesses, including dog groomers. Groomers who join the Federation are automatically enrolled into the British Dog Groomers' Association (<https://petfederation.co.uk/british-dog-groomers-association>), which is a specialist division of the Pet Industry Federation. Members have access to free legal, tax, HR and health and safety helplines and a wide range of free business templates and documents. Membership fees are tiered depending on turnover and start from around £194 (excluding VAT).
- The British Isles Grooming Association (www.mybiga.org), which represents pet groomers across the UK. Members receive a listing on MyPetGroomer.co.uk, as well as regular e-newsletters and professional support. The annual fee for business membership is £50.
- The National Register of Petcare Professionals (www accreditedpetcareprofessional.org.uk), which is a register of qualified professionals. Dog groomers who have been working within the industry for at least three years and have a relevant Level 3 qualification can join as a full member. Membership fees start from £30 per year.

Start-up options

Most dog groomers start up and run their business from a home base or operate on a mobile basis using a specially adapted van or trailer. Some start ups take over an existing grooming business, while others convert existing high street premises into a grooming salon.

Groomers starting up from home should contact their local authority to find out whether they will need planning permission to use part of their home or an outbuilding as a grooming salon. Permission may not be granted if noise could impact on neighbouring households and businesses.

Pet grooming vans and trailers cost from around £10,500 to £25,000. For examples of suppliers, go to Pro Dog Hydrobaths (<https://prodogbaths.com/products/mobile-dog-grooming-van-conversions>) and Wet Pets Conversions (www.wetpetsconversions.co.uk).

Starting up and fitting out a grooming salon from scratch typically costs around £30,000, depending on the quality of equipment and location.

Details of grooming salons for sale on a leasehold or freehold basis are available at <https://uk.businessesforsale.com/uk/search/pet-grooming-businesses-for-sale> and www.daltonsbusiness.com/listing-businesses-for-sale/?search_by_keyword=pets%20grooming.

Grooming equipment and products

Examples of grooming equipment used by dog groomers (with costs including VAT) are as follows:

- Baths (from £40 for a plastic puppy bath to £1,250 for a large, height-adjustable stainless steel bath).
- Shower baths, meaning baths fitted with a shower (from £600 to £1,300).
- Grooming tables (from around £350 for a basic table to £950 for a table featuring remote control, an H-bar and two grooming nooses).
- Stand dryers (from £230 to £475), 'blaster' dryers (from £140 to £595) and hand-held dryers (from £20 to £60).
- Dog crates (from £15 for a portable animal carrier to £700 for a stainless steel 'waiting' cage).
- Brushes and combs (from £10 to £90).
- Scissors, clippers and trimmers (from £10 to £420).

Examples of specialist suppliers of grooming equipment and products such as shampoos and conditioners, coat conditioning sprays, pet-safe disinfectants and pet colognes include Groomers (www.groomers-online.com), Mutneys (www.mutneys.com), Simpsons (<https://simpsons-online.co.uk>) and Christies Direct (<https://christiesdirect.com>).

Dog microchipping

Groomers who provide microchipping must have completed a government-approved training course.

A full starter kit containing microchips, an implanter, a scanner and a sharps bin costs from £150. Petlog provides a list of recognised suppliers at www.petlog.org.uk/implanters-and-welfare/microchip-suppliers.

Pet health questionnaire

As best practice, groomers usually require customers to complete a pet health questionnaire before their dog's first groom. The questionnaire should include:

- The customer's name and contact details.
- The dog's name, age and breed (where known) and whether it has been spayed or neutered.
- Any health problems the dog has, including allergies, and their most recent vaccinations and flea and worming treatments.
- Any behavioural problems.
- The name and address of the dog's regular vet.

Pricing and VAT

The average price charged for a full groom, which includes shampoo, blow dry, nail clip and hand stripping or clipping is around £50 for a medium-sized dog. However, prices vary depending on the size of dog and the type of coat.

Go to www.nimblefins.co.uk/average-cost-dog-grooming-uk for more information about pricing.

Dog grooming is standard-rated for VAT and the groomer must register for VAT once their turnover reaches the mandatory threshold. Go to www.gov.uk/guidance/rates-of-vat-on-different-goods-and-services for more information about VAT rates.

Specialist software

Most dog groomers use specialist software to manage bookings, process payments and keep customer records. Examples of specialist software include:

- ShakeYourTail (www.petstar.co.uk).
- Savvy Pet Spa (www.savvypetspa.com).
- Topline Dogs (www.toplinedogs.co.uk).

Consumer and business protection legislation

Under the Consumer Rights Act 2015, grooming must be provided with reasonable care and skill and for a reasonable charge. Grooming products must be as described and fit for purpose.

The Business Protection from Misleading Marketing Regulations 2008 make it an offence for dog groomers to make unfair comparisons with other groomers or salons.

Workplace health and safety

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 place a general duty of care on dog groomers to protect the health and safety of their employees, customers and anyone else who may be affected by their business activities.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland, all employers, and those who are self-employed, are required to identify and assess any work-related risks and provide employees with adequate health and safety training. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published a guide to managing risk at www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm.

Under the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (PPE) and equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland, dog groomers should ensure that they and their staff use protective workwear such as gauntlets and disposable gloves when appropriate. The HSE has published a guide to PPE at www.hse.gov.uk/ppe/index.htm.

Under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) and equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland, dog groomers must ensure that all equipment used in their business is suitable for use and properly maintained. Employees must be trained in the safe use of equipment. The HSE publishes a guide to PUWER at www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/puwer.htm.

Waste disposal

Animal faeces as well as any needles, swabs, gloves and dressings (that are used when microchipping, treating and cleaning) are classed as clinical waste and should be stored separately from general trade waste.

Examples of waste carriers registered to collect clinical waste from dog groomers include Professional Hygiene (<https://professionalhygiene.co.uk/waste-management/#pet-waste>) and TBS Hygiene Ltd (www.dogwastecollection.co.uk).

Insurance

Dog groomers require several types of insurance cover, including:

- Public liability insurance, which covers a dog groomer against claims for compensation from anyone injured or adversely affected as a result of their activities.
- 'Care, custody and control of animals' insurance, which provides cover against claims for compensation from customers for veterinary fees, the death of an animal, or if a dog is lost or stolen while in the groomer's care.
- Professional indemnity insurance, which covers the groomer against claims of negligence or breach of professional duty.
- Employers' liability insurance, which is mandatory as soon as the dog groomer employs anyone.
- Legal expenses insurance, which provides a dog groomer with cover for defending disputes with clients, suppliers or landlords or to defend employment tribunal cases.
- Premises and contents insurance, which will be needed to cover the salon and equipment against accidental damage, fire, flood, theft and any business interruption arising as a result.
- Van and equipment cover, which will be needed to cover the grooming van, equipment and supplies against accidental damage, theft and any business interruption arising as a result.

Specialist insurance for dog groomers is available from insurers and brokers including Petplan Sanctuary (www.petplansanctuary.co.uk/pet-business-insurance-policies/pet-grooming-insurance) and Pet Business Insurance (www.petbusinessinsurance.co.uk/dog-grooming-insurance-cat.aspx).

Legislation

This section provides an at-a-glance list of the key legislation that dog groomers must comply with.

Animal welfare

- The Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023 require anyone carrying out dog microchipping, other than a veterinary surgeon or nurse, to have completed government-approved training. In Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Microchipping of Dogs (Wales) Regulations 2015, the Microchipping of Dogs (Scotland) Regulations 2016 and the Non-commercial Movement of Pet Animals Order (Northern Ireland) 2011 apply.

Consumer and business protection

- The Business Protection from Misleading Marketing Regulations 2008 make it an offence for dog groomers to make unfair comparisons with other dog grooming salons or mobile pet groomers.
- Under the Consumer Rights Act 2015, grooming must be provided with reasonable care and skill and for a reasonable charge. Grooming products must be as described and fit for purpose.

Health and safety in the workplace

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 place a general duty of care on employers to protect the health and safety of their employees and anyone else that may be affected by their business activities.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 require employers and self-employed people to identify and assess any work-related risks and to provide adequate health and safety training for employees.
- The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (PPE) (as amended in 2022) and equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland set out requirements regarding the provision and use of protective workwear, such as gauntlets, which should be worn by dog groomers.
- Under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) and the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999, employers must ensure that equipment used at work is suitable for its purpose and properly maintained. Employees must be trained in the safe use of equipment.

Related factsheets

SEC020 Pets and Pet Care - Sector Update

BOP308 Dog Walker

BOP382 Dog Home Boarder

MBP003 Canine Hydrotherapist

MBP408 Dog Daycare Centre

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