

Illegal puppy breeder awaits sentencing

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An illegal puppy breeder has pleaded guilty to charges relating to the sale of puppies and money laundering.

The case involved several complainants - including a couple from Barrow - who bought one of the puppies after seeing them offered for sale online.

At Cheltenham Magistrates Court last Friday, Leigh Hancock formerly of Rodley Road, Lydney pleaded guilty to a total of nine offences for not declaring he was a breeder in advertisements, making misleading statements to buyers and money laundering.

He admitted placing more than 60 advertisements between July 2016 and March 2017 implying that the puppies were from a family home. He made false statements about the puppies' parents and how they became pregnant to make buyers think that the puppies they were buying had come from a family pet not a breeder.

Gloucestershire County Council Trading Standards officers started to receive reports of puppies being sold and launched an investigation and a warrant on Hancock's home in March 2017.

They found around 20 adult Golden Retrievers and Labradors kennelled at the rear of the property. There were also litters of puppies in the back garden in an adapted shed. In addition, more than 5,000 in cash hidden at the property was seized.

Receipt books and business records retrieved from Leigh's home showed that puppies were being sold on a regular basis.

Hancock subsequently faced one charge of money laundering for the transfer of money made through criminal activity by withdrawing 23,134.56 from his bank account.

Hancock is due to be sentenced at Gloucester Crown Court on 30 November. If you are looking to buy an animal, you can find all of the necessary safety information at <http://www.gov.uk/guidance/buying-a-cat-or-dog>