

LHASA APSO

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/01/2026

ORIGIN

Tibet (China). (Patronage: Great Britain)

UTILISATION

Toy dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Lhasa Apso comes from Tibet where many live at high altitudes and the climate can be severe. He has to be a hardy little dog to withstand these conditions, and this has had a great influence on his development. His long, hard coat with its dense undercoat acts as insulation during winter, and the fall of hair over his eyes protects them from the wind, dust and glare. The Apso is one of several

Eastern breeds to come to the West. The first Apsos arrived in Britain in the early 1920s and were being shown in London soon after. When they were first seen in Britain they were confused with other shaggy Oriental dogs and all were labelled 'Lhasa Terriers'. Later a distinction was made, especially between the Apso and the Tibetan Terrier which is thought to have been behind the early Apsos. A breed club for the Lhasa Apso was established in Britain in 1933.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Well-balanced, sturdy, heavily coated, without excess.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

Length from point of shoulders to point of buttocks greater than height at withers.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Gay and assertive. Alert, steady, but somewhat aloof with strangers.

HEAD

Head furnishings with fall over eyes, but not affecting the dog's ability to see; good whiskers and beard.

Cranial Region:

Skull: moderately narrow, falling away behind eyes, not quite flat, but not domed or apple-headed.

Stop: Medium.

Facial Region:

Nose: Black.

Muzzle: About 4cm (approx. 1½"), but not square; length from tip of nose roughly one-third total length from nose to back of skull. Foreface straight.

Jaws/teeth: Upper incisors close just inside lower i.e. reverse scissor bite. Incisors in a broad and as straight a line as possible. Full dentition desirable.

Eyes:

Dark. Medium size, frontally placed, oval, neither large nor full, nor small and sunk. No white showing at base or top.

Ears:

Pendant, heavily feathered.

NECK

Strong and well-arched.

BODY

Balanced and compact.

Topline: Level.

Loins: Strong.

Chest: Ribs extending well-back.

TAIL

High-set, carried well over back but not like a pot-hook. Often a kink at end. Well-feathered.

LIMBS

Forequarters:

Shoulder: Well laid back.

Forearm: Straight, heavily furnished with hair.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: Well-developed with good muscle. Good angulation. Heavily furnished with hair.

Metatarsus (Rear pasterns): Hocks when viewed from behind parallel and not too close together.

FEET

Round, cat-like with firm pads. Well-feathered.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Free and jaunty.

COAT

Hair:

Top coat long, heavy, straight, hard, neither woolly nor silky. Moderate undercoat. Coat never impeding action.

Colour:

Golden, sandy, honey, dark grizzle, slate, smoke, particolour, black, white or brownish. All equally acceptable.

COLOUR

Golden, sandy, honey, dark grizzle, slate, smoke, parti-colour, black, white, or brown. All equally acceptable.

SIZE

Ideal height at withers:

Males: 25cm (approx. 10").

Females: slightly smaller.

N.B. Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.

FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.

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FCI Standard No. 227: LHASA APSO:

FCI Classification: Group 9 – Companion and Toy Dogs.

Section 5.1. Tibetan breeds

Without working trial.