

**RSPCA** 



# Taking the lead:

**Alternative approaches to  
effective dog control in the UK**

RESPONSIBLE OWNERS | HAPPY DOGS | SAFER COMMUNITIES

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# Foreword

**Chris Sherwood | RSPCA Chief Executive**

“ This report addresses a key knowledge gap about alternative and diverse approaches to effective dog control outside of the UK. ”



For centuries, dogs have fulfilled important roles in our society. Dogs protect, guard, assist, search for and detect important and valuable items, including ourselves. In contrast with the past, many dogs are now beloved companion animals but this role doesn't come without its challenges to our society and communities. For more than 20 years we have unfortunately seen an increase in dog bites and in recent years we've seen an increase in deaths involving dogs, resulting in a major health concern.

Scientific research continues to show that breed is not a good predictor of risk, with dog aggression being a complex behaviour. However, a fifth type of dog – the American bully XL – was added to the list of banned breeds in Wales and England last year after an increase in fatal incidents. This action coincided with initiatives from Westminster and the Welsh Government on reducing dog bites and improving responsible dog ownership. It is critical that this change doesn't halt or delay the development of further dog control policies.

The current dog control framework is complex, with some laws being old and potentially outdated. Because of this, the UK's approach is not always compatible with contemporary evidence, high standards of animal welfare, or desires by governments to attain such standards.

Dog bites are a complex issue. They are also a major health concern that incurs huge enforcement costs while putting pressure on our already-struggling health services. The RSPCA has long shared the concerns of elected officials and the wider public around dog bites and is keen to work towards establishing an effective approach that protects animal welfare while also keeping people safe.

This report addresses a key knowledge gap about alternative and diverse approaches to effective dog control outside of the UK. By looking at how other countries with similarities to the UK approach the relevant issues, we hope to enable informed discussions with key policy makers, law enforcers and other stakeholders. Identifying the key actions that governments can take to shift and enhance the approach to dog control in the UK could enable us to promote and encourage responsible dog ownership while achieving public safety measures that are compatible with good welfare. We all have a role to play in making this a reality and the RSPCA looks forward to working with decision makers of all levels towards a future where happy, healthy dogs live harmoniously in our communities.

## Acknowledgements

The RSPCA is very grateful to Associate Professor Jennifer Maher at the University of South Wales who completed this research. This report is based on a longer report: *Preventing Dog Bites in the UK – Evidencing Alternative Approaches to Responsible Dog Ownership*. This report and two further scoping reviews exploring why dogs bite and how dog bites can be prevented, can be obtained upon request to: [cad@rspca.org.uk](mailto:cad@rspca.org.uk)

## Executive summary

Human-directed aggression is a major public health concern incurring significant costs for medical treatment, work loss, quality of life and enforcement. Over the past 20 years, the number of people seeking hospital treatment for a dog bite has doubled and recent years have seen an increase in deeply distressing and tragic dog bite fatalities. These trends have made dog control issues increasingly a social and political concern, which has led to a greater focus on measures to reduce dog bites. Scottish and Welsh governments, as well as research funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), has highlighted the need to address responsible dog ownership rather than target certain types of dogs.

However, in 2023, the American bully XL was added to Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act (1991). The prohibition of a fifth type of dog and the extension of existing UK breed specific legislation is in stark contrast to scientific evidence which shows that breed is not a good predictor of aggressive behaviour. This approach is also widely condemned by veterinary and animal welfare organisations due to its impact on dog welfare and the need to destroy many dogs whose behaviour poses no risk to public safety.

The urgent need to protect public safety is without doubt, but measures must be evidence-based, effective and compatible with good dog welfare. There is, however, a gap in knowledge about what an effective response is and there is very little attention being paid to international measures. To address this gap, the RSPCA commissioned Associate Professor Jennifer Maher at the University of South Wales to look internationally at alternative strategies that may be relevant to the UK context. The research included a systematic review of global dog control policies, and this identified five mini case studies for further evaluation: Ireland; Victoria (Australia); Multnomah County (USA); Vienna (Austria); and Calgary (Canada). Calgary was explored in further depth due to its international recognition for high licensing compliance rates, low stray and euthanasia rates and the promotion of dog welfare, as well as its rejection of breed specific restrictions and reports of reduced dog bite rates.

The case studies illustrate many examples of good practice and there are notable features that could provide possible measures for enhancing the UK response to dog control, such as the following.

- Making positive human-dog engagement the responsibility of dog owners and the wider community.
- ‘Responsibilising’ dog owners using incentives, punishment and education, and engendering a culture of care and compliance.
- Taking an evidence-based education and information approach.
- Paying attention to wider dog welfare concerns and harms as part of the dog control response.
- Adopting a holistic and collaborative approach or One Health model.
- Using licensing or registration to support traceability, enforcement, and service costs.
- Having IT infrastructure that supports robust data collection and monitoring and enforcement.
- Ensuring consistent and robust enforcement with consequences.
- Having the flexibility to attend to local issues through legislation and bylaws.
- Taking a tiered and nuanced approach to identifying, and responding to, dangerous dogs.

Responsible dog ownership and engagement is a key theme and core focus across the five case studies. Successful approaches to reducing dog bites and increasing responsible dog ownership are holistic, multi-method and multi-agency and are capable of responding to the many variables influencing dangerous dogs via the agreement of, and coordinated action from, multiple stakeholders. Moving towards this sort of model in the UK is critical and, encouragingly, the research has shown that achieving an approach that protects public safety and safeguards dog welfare is possible. However, for the UK to make this shift, we need attitudinal, behavioural and cultural change, as well as funding, to enable the implementation of systems that underpin, promote and support this new approach.

This research has addressed a key gap in knowledge about alternative and diverse approaches to effective dog control outside of the UK. We want to see key policy and decision makers make a clear commitment to focus on the fostering and development of communities where responsible dog ownership and engagement is emphasised. This report provides the basis for these discussions and identifies key actions that governments can take to shift and enhance the UK’s approach to dog control. We are calling for governments to commit to these changes, which are outlined below.

### 1 Address critical data gaps around dog control using centralised and bespoke systems – UK government

- a. Accurate and detailed recording and monitoring of dangerous dog incidents across the UK is key. The UK’s current recording system is inconsistent in its approach and level of detail. In the absence of this information we are unable to fully understand the scale of dog bites and their causal factors, nor to inform effective public health and safety strategies.
- b. Robust traceability of dogs across the UK is necessary for data and to inform enforcement. While microchipping is mandatory for dogs across the UK, it is not comprehensive enough to provide robust data and monitoring. We need to know how many dogs there are in the population, where they are located, and who is responsible for them. Robust traceability coupled with detailed data on dog bites will enable effective monitoring of dangerous dogs and targeted enforcement. Importantly, this also has the potential to fund enforcement.
- c. Defining levels of dangerousness and allowing tailored responses to prevention and intervention recognises the complexity of dog aggression. We need a more nuanced and measured approach to defining and responding to dog bite incidents.

### 2 Create and evaluate innovative multi-agency pilots to test recording of dangerous dog incidents, as well as traceability and dangerousness dog-assessment systems – local governments

- a. Effective dog control is reliant on systems that work for the UK as well as the involvement of a range of agencies, which requires partnership and collaborative working. Pilots will allow the identification of key stakeholders, and testing and modifications, before upscaling for wider rollout. In some cases, pilots will likely be facilitated through the extension of existing collaborative efforts.

### 3 Implement legislation that enables the development of responsible dog ownership and engagement while paying regard to dog welfare – UK, national and local governments

- a. Create laws that allow for flexibility at a local level and can be consistently and robustly enforced by dedicated officers (dog control officers or animal welfare officers) with the use of welfare-compatible, evidence-based powers, including incentives and punishment. This will enable a proportionate response to a range of incidents, with support from other partners.
- b. Introduce measures to better protect the welfare of dogs affected by the legislation. Current legislation compromises both the welfare of dogs it affects and human wellbeing.
- c. Regulate the dog behaviour and training industry. These professionals play a vital role in responsible dog ownership and responding to dangerous dogs, and must be qualified to do so and want to ensure they are doing so in line with best practice.

### 4 Map and evaluate existing initiatives/schemes that encourage a culture of care – local governments

In recognition of the range of initiatives and schemes already in use, research/review is required to identify and evaluate existing initiatives/schemes that encourage a culture of care. This will enable the development of a strategy for wider rollout.

# 1. Introduction and aims

Dogs are a highly valuable part of our society with many providing companionship<sup>[1]</sup> and living harmoniously as part of the family. Nearly one-third of UK households have a dog and, with an estimated population of 10.6 million<sup>[2]</sup>, they are the most popular companion animal. Nonetheless, every year thousands of people seek hospital treatment for a dog bite. Rates of dog bites have been steadily increasing since 1998, with numbers doubling by 2018<sup>[3]</sup>. The rise is characterised by a tripling of incidents in adults, with the greatest growth in women aged 35–64, whereas bites on children have remained stable<sup>[3]</sup>. This trend has continued, and in 2021 reached 7,443 hospital admissions<sup>[4]</sup>. Until recently, dog bite fatalities in the UK were extremely rare with an average of three per year between 2001 and 2021<sup>[5]</sup>. In 2022, according to the Office of National Statistics (ONS 2023), six dog-related human fatalities<sup>a</sup> were reported in England and Wales, rising to 16 (14 in England) for the period January to September 2023.

The physical and psychological consequences of human-directed dog aggression make it a significant public health concern. Further, dog bites incur major costs in terms of treatment, with the direct health care costs of dog bite admissions between the financial years 2009/2010 and 2017/2018 amounting to £174,188,443<sup>[3]</sup>. As well as the impact on public health, there are work loss, quality of life and enforcement activity costs. While estimates of these costs are unavailable in the UK<sup>[6]</sup>, they are likely significant. There are thousands of reports made to the police annually about out of control or injurious behaviour by dogs<sup>b</sup>. Using one police force as an example, the costs of seizing dogs under the Dangerous Dogs Act in 2020/21 amounted to nearly £93,000<sup>[7]</sup>.

In the UK, the legal framework for dealing with dog bite incidents is considered one of the more complex and confusing areas of law<sup>[8]</sup>. There are a myriad of dog control laws but the Dangerous Dogs Act (1991) is probably the most notorious piece of legislation, placing criminal liability on owners of dangerous dogs and a responsibility to keep them under control. Section 3 of the Act creates an offence to have any dog dangerously out of control in a public or private place, while Section 1 of the Act makes it an offence to own, possess, breed, sell, exchange, transfer, advertise or gift five types of dog: pit bull terrier; dogo Argentino; fila Brasileiro, Japanese Tosa and the American bully XL. This approach, commonly known as Breed Specific legislation (BSL), is particularly controversial and has been subject to significant criticism since its enactment. Not only have bodies like the RSPCA been very critical of the approach<sup>[9]</sup>, the law has also been challenged by a select committee<sup>[8]</sup> and government-funded research<sup>[10]</sup>. For example, concerns have been raised around the lack of a robust scientific base to support a breed specific approach to dog bite reduction<sup>[11]</sup>, the potential to inadvertently contribute to dog bites by misleading the public about the role of breed in aggressive behaviour<sup>[12]</sup>, and the impact of BSL on dog welfare<sup>[13]</sup> and human wellbeing<sup>[14]</sup>. Furthermore, ethical and moral issues arise for rescue and rehoming organisations like the RSPCA, which is required to destroy hundreds of dogs, despite them being suitable candidates for rehoming, to ensure they comply with the legislation<sup>[14]</sup>.

The long-standing trend in increasing dog bite admissions across the UK, coupled with further growth of and change in the dog population, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic<sup>[15]</sup>, has made dog control issues increasingly a social and political concern. This has led to an increasing focus on dog control by governments. For example, in 2019 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) funded research aiming to identify methods of reducing dog bite incidents and dog control issues while also providing evidence-based recommendations to promote responsible dog ownership among owners with dog control issues. The study<sup>[10]</sup> made several recommendations on improving knowledge and awareness of dog control issues among dog owners and improving consistency in enforcement practice. These include:

- improving the recording of dog attack data and incident characteristics
- introducing statutory enforcement duty
- promoting better information sharing and introducing model guidance

- implementing greater use of preventative enforcement models
- updating enforcement and prosecutorial guidance
- introducing accreditation of dog trainers and dog awareness courses for those with dog control issues
- putting in place new legal requirements on dog ownership.

In response to the research, Defra created a responsible dog ownership working group, comprising key statutory, professional and NGO stakeholders<sup>[16]</sup>. This focus on responsible dog ownership and the ‘deed’ rather than the ‘breed’ brought England in line with other devolved administrations. For example, in Scotland the focus on responsible dog ownership keeping communities safe is seen in the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010. Further, the 2020 updated guidance emphasised that: “the focus of the legislation continues to be on the ‘deed not the breed’ approach in tackling irresponsible dog ownership”<sup>[17]</sup>. Similarly, in Wales a focus on ‘deed not breed’ was highlighted in the 2014 inquiry completed by Cardiff Council, while a review into responsible dog ownership, on behalf of the Welsh Government, was conducted in 2016<sup>[18]</sup>. Nevertheless, despite the UK approach seeming to shift towards responsible dog ownership and subsequent statements suggesting there were no plans to extend the list of dangerous dogs<sup>[19]</sup>, following a rise in fatal incidents from 2022, the then UK Government announced the addition of the American bully XL to Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act<sup>[20]</sup> in 2023. The addition of a fifth prohibited type has once again placed significant emphasis on the appearance of a dog rather than the behaviour of the dog or their owner.

The prohibition of a fifth type of dog and the extension of existing UK BSL is in stark contrast to scientific evidence, as well as the policies of multiple key stakeholders<sup>[21]</sup>. As such, the implementation of this breed ban has again raised concerns, including from bodies like the Animal Sentience Committee (ASC), which considers how central government policy decisions take into account animal welfare, questioning what alternative approaches to a breed ban had been considered<sup>[22]</sup>. There is, however, a gap in knowledge about what an effective response is, with very little attention being paid to international measures.

To help address this gap, in 2022 the RSPCA commissioned Associate Professor Jennifer Maher at the University of South Wales to look internationally at alternative strategies that may be relevant to the UK context. The aims were:

- to review existing global dog control measures, identifying and evaluating their effectiveness at reducing dog bite incidents, protecting public safety and assessing which appear compatible with good dog welfare
- to highlight key lessons on effectively responding to dog bites in order to inform future discussions about welfare-compatible dog bite prevention measures with key policy, law and enforcement stakeholders.

This report provides an overview of this research. It includes the UK’s current approach to dog control (section 3), an overview of existing global approaches to dog control (section 4) with several mini case studies (section 5), and an in-depth review of the Calgary model (section 6). Key lessons learnt from the research are outlined (section 7) along with a series of asks for governments in order to achieve effective dog control in the UK (section 8). Critically, this report offers much-needed alternative approaches to responsible dog ownership and dog bite reduction for consideration by key policy and decision makers in the UK. Importantly, they could enhance those already used, helping ensure better public safety and dog welfare.

a Defined as the number of deaths where the underlying cause of death was being bitten or struck by a dog; deaths registered between 2019 and 2023 in regions in England and Wales.

b For example, FOI data published by the Metropolitan Police for dogs who were out of control between January 2018 and May 2023: <https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/metropolitan-police/disclosure-2023/august-2023/data-dogs-out-control-january-2018-may2023/>

## 2. How was the research conducted?

The research used a robust mixed-method evidence-based evaluation of the approaches taken elsewhere to reducing dog bites and irresponsible dog ownership, comprising the following.

- A systematic review of 45 countries' dog control policies to identify alternate dog control approaches.
- Identification of mini case studies to determine the different approaches to dog control. Five locations informed by the review and existing research were chosen: Ireland; Vienna (Austria); Calgary (Canada); Multnomah County (USA); and Victoria (Australia).
- An in-depth empirical case study on Calgary, identified for its international reputation for its successful and balanced approach to responsible dog ownership and regulation of dog ownership.

## 3. Dog control regulation in the UK

This section presents an overview of the UK's key pieces of dog control legislation, how they are enforced, the relevant penalties, the key requirements for UK dog control, definitions of dangerous dogs, and a summary of research into UK dog control laws. This information is provided to enable comparison between the UK's approach and other approaches to dog control outside of the UK.

### a. Key legislation

The UK dog control legislative framework comprises a variety of laws, many introduced decades ago, with some specific to dangerous dogs and others that apply to all dogs (see Table 3, Appendix I).

The UK legal approach to dog control places liability both on the dog owner and on the dog – while the owner is required to act responsibly, the restrictions and penalties are commonly directed towards the dog.

### b. Key dog control requirements

The key requirements of UK dog control legislation include:

- leashing dogs in public spaces and stopping them from entering prohibited spaces
- identification, through collar and ID tag, microchipping, and dog licence (Northern Ireland only)
- dogs being under the guardian's control in public and private spaces
- preventing dangerous dog behaviour towards the public, livestock and assistance animals.

### c. Defining dangerous dogs

Dangerous dogs are defined in UK law by the perceived dangerousness of five types<sup>c</sup> and on dog behaviour that is dangerously out of control, whether in public or at home (deed). This definition of dangerousness goes beyond dog attacks to include dog aggression and other behaviours that could escalate to harm (e.g. jumping up on people). Under Section 3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, any dog can be regarded as 'dangerously out of control' in any situation where there are grounds for reasonable apprehension that it will injure any person, regardless of whether it does so. This could include a situation where a dog attacks an animal and any person present at the time of the incident has reasonable apprehension that the dog would injure them.

Under Section 1 (S1) of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (as amended), the five banned breeds/types – the American pit bull terrier (Figure 1), Japanese Tosa, dogo Argentino, fila Brasileiro, and American bully XL – are believed to be breeds, or to be bred from breeds, traditionally produced for fighting. These types are identified by their physical conformation and whether they are deemed to have a 'substantial number of characteristics' so that they can be considered a prohibited type.



Figure 1. Pit bull terrier-type dog

### d. Enforcement and penalties

The enforcement of dog control measures varies across the UK but the police and local authorities are the lead enforcers for dog control legislation. The police lead in incidents concerning a suspected criminal offence, such as a dog being dangerously out of control or acts concerning a prohibited type of dog. Local authorities have responsibilities and powers to take enforcement action against other dangerous and nuisance dog behaviour and irresponsible dog ownership. These include powers to impound stray dogs, impose fines, enter private spaces to access dangerous dogs, and to seize and chip dogs. The funding available for enforcement remains a significant issue for both the police and local authorities and has recently been explored in the context of animal welfare by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare<sup>[23]</sup> (APGAW). The same issues extend to regulating dangerous dogs, with the lack of budget being critical.

A range of measures can be used by enforcers. For persistent irresponsible dog ownership there are a number of powers available. Local authorities can issue Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) to restrict dogs or require dogs to be leashed in certain areas. Community Protection Notices (CPN) and Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO) can also be used to place requirements on dog owners. Local Environmental Awareness on Dogs (LEAD) is a highly regarded police-led initiative adopted by several forces and local authorities to encourage responsible dog ownership and public safety. The initiative aims to provide advice to the public on dog-related issues, including improving dog safety and welfare. It also seeks to identify 'at risk' owners and their dogs to prevent problems escalating by issuing 'Coming to Notice' letters addressing the issue and a LEAD pack. The education pack includes details on the DDA, the Good Citizen Guide from the Kennel Club, as well as information on the dog breed, dog care, training and welfare, and dog socialisation, and park-etiquette from key animal NGOs. Further initiatives are in place to increase public safety and promote animal welfare. For example, in Wales, Yellow Dogs UK promotes the use of yellow ribbons attached to dog leads to identify 'reactive' dogs who require additional space in public. Meanwhile, the Royal Mail's Delivery Office map identifies potential hazards, including properties with dogs encountered on postal workers' rounds, to avoid dog attacks<sup>[24]</sup>.

In cases where a dog is dangerously out of control, the maximum penalty is a six-month custodial sentence, with financial penalties. A Contingent Destruction Order (CDO) can be imposed upon conviction under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or an appropriate Order under Section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871. Owners may also be disqualified from having a dog, and further penalised, depending on the severity of the outcome. Offences that result in a human fatality can carry a penalty of up to 14 years' imprisonment<sup>[25]</sup>.

c The definition of type is broader in scope than breed and intended to capture cross breeds as well as pure breeds.

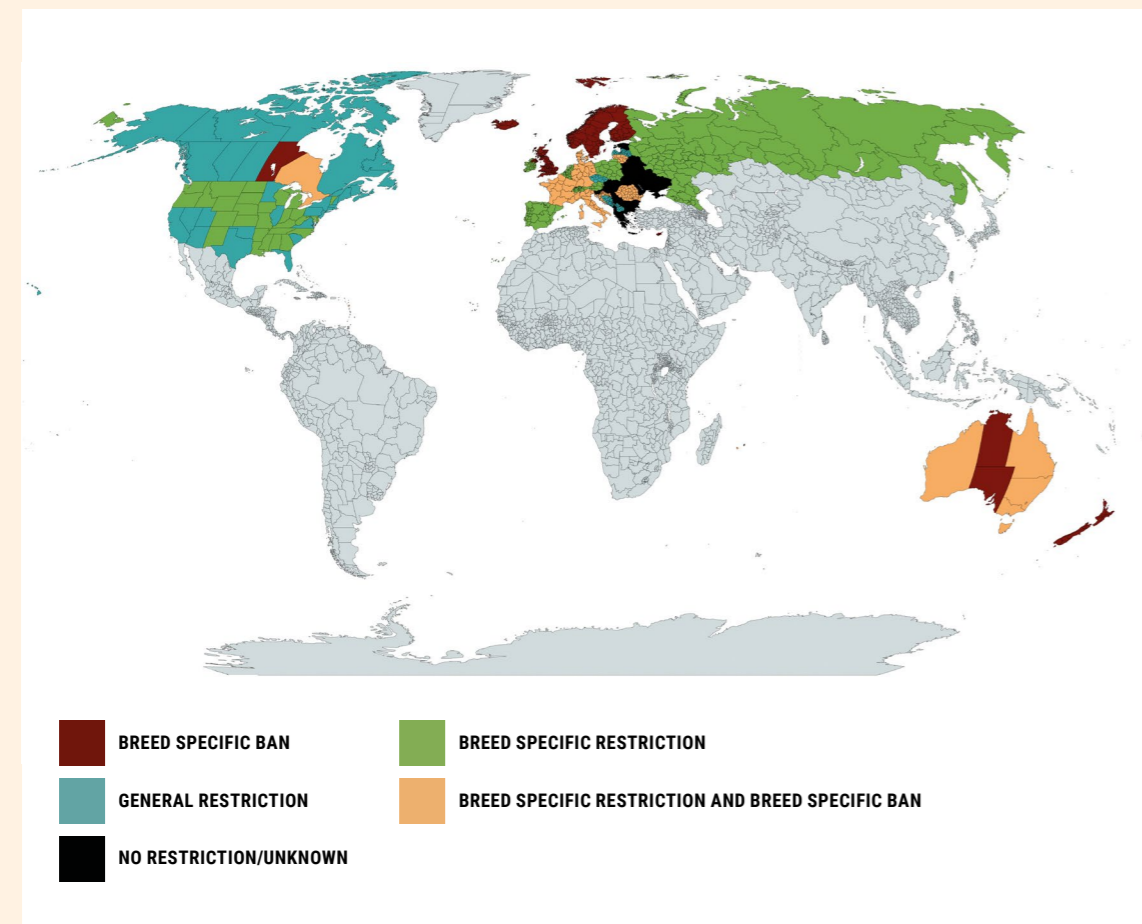
## 4. Dog control regulation outside of the UK

A critical component of the aforementioned research aimed to review existing global dog control measures, identifying and evaluating their effectiveness at reducing dog bite incidents and protecting public safety, while also being compatible with good dog welfare. Further, to inform future discussions about welfare-compatible dog bite prevention measures with key policy, law and enforcement stakeholders, global measures were drawn from countries in the same region and/or those that share similar demographics to the UK, especially in terms of cultural features around dog ownership.

A total of 45 countries across Europe, Australasia, Canada and the United States were reviewed in the scoping review. Figure 2 details their dog control legislation, identifying those that have restrictions and bans. Of the 45 countries, dog control legislation was evident in 35. The legislation broadly aims to enhance public safety, health and welfare, and address county-specific concerns, such as zoonoses, stray dog populations, and nuisance and dangerous dog behaviour. The key requirements of note were:

- identification (through a combination of microchipping, identification tag, registration, or licensing)
- general or breed-specific restrictions and bans
- stray dog policy (varying from immediately returning dogs to owners to immediate euthanasia)
- enhanced dog welfare (including dog control written into animal welfare legislation, and owners required to demonstrate psychological capability to look after a dog).

Figure 2. Map detailing country and territory approach to dog control



In large countries, there were significant regional differences in the ways they approach dog control. These were further separated into the relevant states and territories in Canada, the USA and Australia, providing an overview of 114 countries, territories and states. Training and assessment requirements were documented in some locations, from behaviour assessment tests for all restricted breeds/types and aggressive dogs, to mandatory and optional educational programmes for all dog owners.

The variation in how different countries, and regions within these countries, classified dangerous dogs was of note. Of the 114 locations reviewed:

- 41 locations applied only general restrictions to all dogs (e.g. licensing, leashing)
- 39 locations required additional restrictions on specific breeds/types
- 11 locations banned specific breeds/types (see Table 1, which shows a comparison across five countries)
- 13 applied both a ban and restrictions on particular breeds/types.

Table 1. Comparison of listed restricted or banned breeds or types across five countries

Germany [4+]	Denmark [13]	Australia [7]	New Zealand [5]	Canada – Ontario [4]
American Staffordshire terrier	American pit bull terrier	<b>Banned import of:</b>	Fila Brasileiro	Pit bull terrier
bull terrier	Tosa inu (aka Japanese Tosa)	dogo Argentino	dogo Argentino	American pit bull terrier
American pit bull terrier	American Staffordshire terrier	Fila Brasileiro	Japanese Tosa	American Staffordshire terrier
Staffordshire bull terrier	Fila Brasileiro	Japanese Tosa	perro de presa Canario	Staffordshire bull terrier
<b>+ additional breeds identified by each state, for example, Baden-Wurtemberg:</b>	dogo Argentino	American pit bull terrier or pit bull terrier	American pit bull terrier	
Dogue de Bordeaux	American bulldog	perro de presa Canario or presa Canario		
bull mastiff	boerboel	<b>+ additional restrictions identified by each region, for example, Western Australia has additional regulations for these dogs.</b>		
dogo Argentino	Kangal dog			
Fila Brasileiro	Central Asian shepherd dog (ovcharka)			
mastiff	Caucasian shepherd dog (ovcharka)			
Neapolitan mastiff	South Russian shepherd dog (ovcharka)			
Spanish mastiff	tornjak			
Tosa inu	Sarplaninac			
Hesse				
American bulldog				
Kangal dog (karabash)				
Caucasian shepherd dog				
Rottweiler				

These variations may reflect region-specific dog control issues. Importantly, the differences in the breeds prohibited suggests inconsistency in the evidence informing effective dog control policy. Further, application of breed specific restrictions indicate there are alternatives to the UK approach that could ease restrictions such as prohibition of ownership without removing BSL, for example, requiring behaviour assessment tests for all restricted breeds/types, registration/licensing/permit requirements and control in public and private spaces.

## 5. Mini case studies on dog control: Ireland, Australia, Canada, USA and Austria

Using the scoping literature review and systematic review of the legislation, a list of possible case study locations was drafted. Relevant scholars from Europe, Canada, America, and Australia were contacted to help identify possible case studies. From this list, five mini case studies were identified, using the following rationale:

- to identify a location from each region (e.g. Australasia, Europe, America, Canada)
- the location represented the various approaches (e.g. breed-ban, breed-restrictions, general restrictions, or a combination)
- the location provided enough information in English (or which could be translated) to make sense of the approach
- where possible, a recent review of the legislation was available.

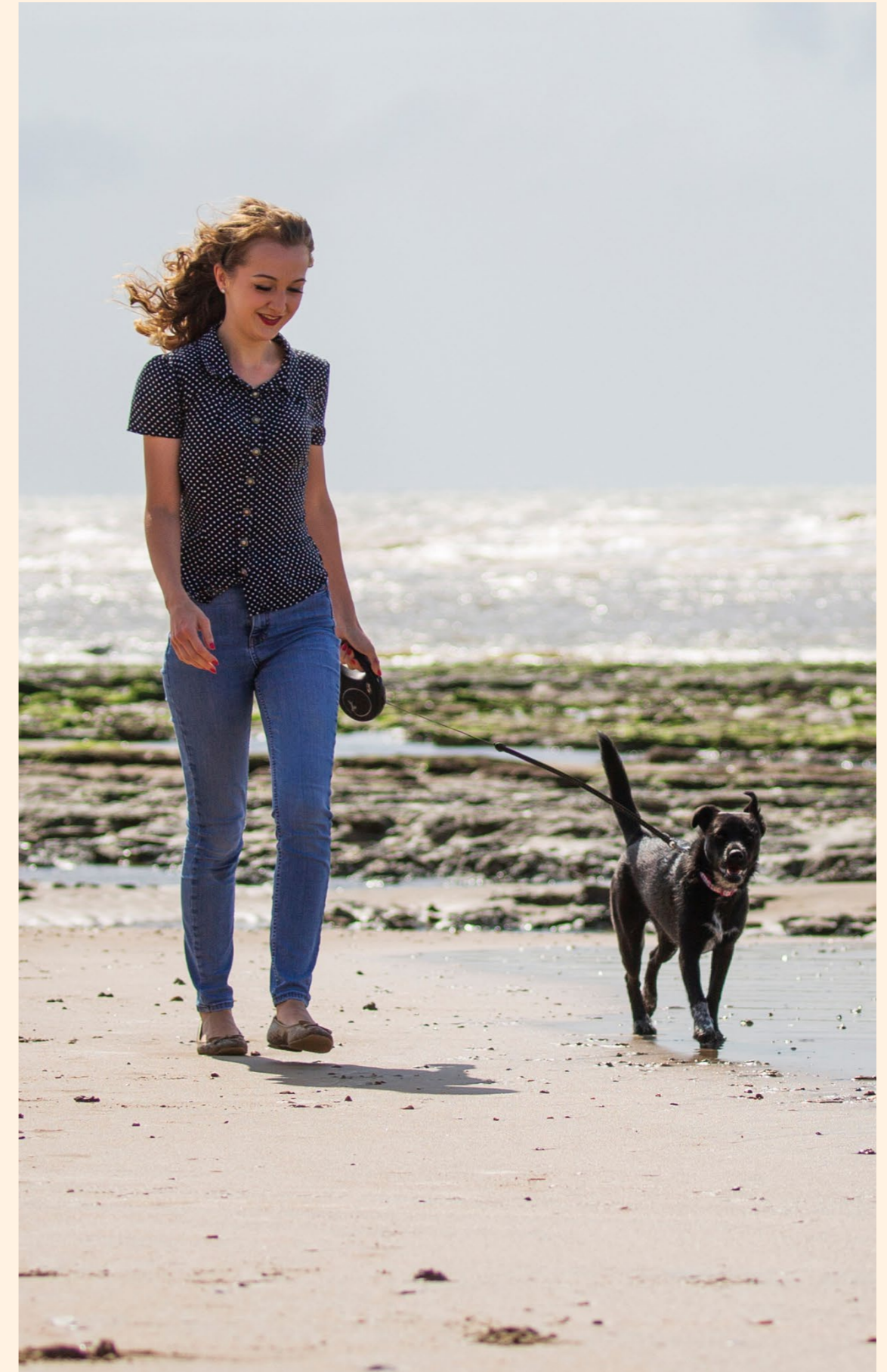
The focus of the mini case studies was to identify viable additions and alternatives to UK dog control, with the understanding that further research would be required to determine how best they could be applied to the UK context. A number of subsections were evaluated in detail allowing comparisons to be made between countries including:

1. Key legislation
2. Defining and regulating dangerous dogs
3. General dog restrictions
4. Enforcement approach
5. Incentives
6. Penalties.

The five mini case studies were: Ireland, Victoria (Australia), Calgary (Canada), Multnomah County (USA), and Vienna (Austria). While there are undoubtedly other regions and countries that could also have met the same criteria, limitations such as language barriers and limited data access placed constraints on what could be considered suitable case studies. As mini case studies, they provide a snapshot rather than a comprehensive review of each country or region. Table 2 provides an overview of the key features of each location in comparison to the UK.

While there are similarities in how each location approaches dog control, the approach to – and focus on – dog control varies. In Ireland, for example, the focus is on control through responsible ownership and by placing restrictions on specified breeds. Legislation in Victoria (Australia) focuses on regulation by deed *and* by breed (BSL). Vienna (Austria) claims its approach strikes a balance between the needs of humans and dogs. Multnomah (USA) relies on general restrictions and emphasises balancing animal welfare and the welfare of residents. Calgary (Canada) also favours general restrictions while advocating for happy, healthy dogs and preventing dog-related disputes.

“ The UK legal approach to dog control places liability both on the dog owner and on the dog – while the owner is required to act responsibly, the restrictions and penalties are commonly directed towards the dog. ”



**Table 2. Key dog control approach in case study locations and the UK**

Key features	Ireland	Victoria, Australia	Multnomah, USA	Calgary, Canada	Vienna, Austria	UK
<b>Main Dog Control Legislation</b>	Control of Dogs Acts 1986 to 2014 (National) Control of Dogs Regulations 1998 (National)	Domestic Animals Act 1994 (amended 2011 & 2014) (State) Crimes Act 1958 (State) Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956 (National)	Animal Control Law 1977 (County) Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 609 2021 (State)	Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw (City-specific) Dangerous Dogs Act 2000 (Province)	Tierschutzgesetz [TSchG] 2004 (The Federal Act on the Protection of Animals 2004) (National) Wiener Tierhaltegesetz 1987 (Vienna Keeping Animals Law 1987) Haltung von Listenhunde 2010 (Keeping of Listed Dogs 2010)	Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 Antisocial Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 Dogs Act 1871
<b>Related Legislation</b>	Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013 (National) Microchipping of Dogs Regulations 2015 (National) The Animal Health and Welfare (Sale or Supply of Pet Animals) Regulations 2019 (National) The Dog Breeding Establishments Act 2010 (National)	Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations 2019 (State) Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (State)	The PACT (Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture) Act 2019 (Federal) Animal Welfare Act 1966 (Federal)	Provincial Offences Procedures Act 2000 (Province) Municipal Government Act 2000 (Province) Animal Protection Act (amended 2006) (Province)	Tierhaltungsverordnung 2004 (The 2nd Animal Husbandry Ordinance 2004) (National)	(See legislation listed in Section 3)
<b>Key Enforcement</b>	Local authorities	Councils Police	Director of Multnomah County Animal control Peace officers Persons designated by the Director	Designated City Officers Police Bylaw enforcement officers/Peace officers	Police Administrative State Authority (Bezirksverwaltungsbehörde) Local authorities	Police Local authorities
<b>Key Dog Control Penalties</b>	On-the-spot and other fines Seizure of dog Disqualification from owning dogs Imprisonment Euthanasia	Payment of damages Seizure of dog Disqualification from owning dogs Imprisonment Euthanasia	Fines Responsible Pet Ownership Program/ Obedience course Seizure of dog Imprisonment Euthanasia	Warning notice Tiered range of fines Higher licensing fees Curfews Disqualification from owning dogs Imprisonment Euthanasia	Fines Education and training course Seizure of dog Imprisonment Euthanasia	Community Protection Notice Criminal Behaviour Order Fines Seizure of dog Euthanasia Imprisonment (including life) (See also Section 3)
<b>Key Dog Control requirements for all dog owners</b>	Effectual control Microchipping Licensing Collar or harness with owner's contact details Rabies vaccination	Registration Microchipping Identification marker (tag) worn at all times Permit for households keeping dogs over set number Effective control Collar and leashing in on-leash areas Not left unattended in public Maintain minimum requirements for care and welfare	Licensing and registration required Owners liable: effectual control to prevent issues from nuisance and dangerous dog behaviour Rabies vaccination Licence tag must always be worn by the dog, except on property of owner/ keeper	Licensing and registration required Leashing in public areas Permit for households keeping more than six dogs Dog must be under control in on- and off-leash areas, and are prohibited from certain public spaces Permit required for walking more than six dogs Dog walker cannot be on bike/ skateboard while walking dog	Licensing and registration required Muzzle and leash in public spaces Microchipping Competency course Liability insurance	Microchipping Collar and tag ID Leashing in public spaces, avoiding prohibited areas Licensing (Northern Ireland only) Under control of guardian (with respect to people, livestock and assistance animals) (See Section 3 for further information)



**Table 2. Key dog control approach in case study locations and the UK (continued)**

Key features	Ireland	Victoria, Australia	Multnomah, USA	Calgary, Canada	Vienna, Austria	UK
<b>Identification of Dangerous Dogs</b>	Behaviours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dogs not under 'effectual control'.</li> </ul> Breed (see next row, below)	Behaviours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dangerous dogs kill/seriously injure person or animal by biting or attacking</li> <li>menacing dogs have received two infringement notices</li> <li>dogs declared as dangerous under other state/territory law</li> <li>repeated aggressive behaviour.</li> </ul> Breed (see next row, below)	Behaviours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at large</li> <li>menacing</li> <li>chasing</li> <li>threatening or aggressive acts</li> <li>biting</li> <li>causes physical injury or death.</li> </ul>	Behaviours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>caused severe injury to person or animal</li> <li>caused death of an animal</li> <li>risk to health and safety of persons in the city</li> <li>threatening/aggressive behaviour</li> <li>at large.</li> </ul>	Behaviours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>biting or reactive dogs.</li> </ul> Breed (see next row, below)	Behaviours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dogs who are out of control</li> <li>attack on person, livestock, or assistance animal.</li> </ul> Breed (see next row, below)
<b>Breed-specific rules around Dangerous Dogs</b> <b>Breed/type = breed</b>	No prohibited breeds 10 breeds, or crosses of, with additional restrictions imposed	Five breeds or crosses of, prohibited from import Five breeds, or crosses of, with additional restrictions imposed Greyhounds are not prohibited but subject to additional requirements	No breed ban or restriction	No breed ban or restriction	Listenhunde (listed dogs): 12 breeds, or crosses of, with additional restrictions imposed	Five prohibited breeds
<b>Rules specific to Restricted and Dangerous Dogs</b>	Restricted (short lead) Guardian over 16 years old capable of controlling the dog	Neutering/spaying Microchipping Prescribed collar Warning signs on premises Housing on premises Restrained off premises and capable guardian over 18 years old Notification and ownership requirements Exemptions on transferring ownership	Permanent identifying mark Microchipping Photographed Fitted with special tag or collar (in some cases) Public liability insurance Restraints/secure enclosures Moved to secure dangerous animal facility	Restricted (muzzling, lead) Curfews Secure enclosures Retain services of a certified professional dog trainer Prohibited from off-leash areas Tattooing Microchipping Neutering/spaying Keep under control Display warning signs on premises Pet tag	Restrictions (stricter muzzling and leashing) Dog licence Required to pass an exam to keep dog Guardian over 16 years old Alcohol limit for walking dog	Neutering/spaying Tattooed Microchipping Third party liability insurance Restrictions (muzzling and leashing) Guardian over 16 years old Must be kept in a secure home Must be registered on index of exempted dogs Euthanasia
<b>Key Initiatives</b>	Funding for local authorities to upgrade dog pounds and shelter facilities Information and educational campaigns in partnership with responsible stakeholders	Local government programmes encouraging/providing incentives for responsible dog ownership Public education programmes Reduced fees for responsible dog ownership	Public education Low cost spaying/neutering schemes Reduced fees for responsible dog ownership	Public education Low cost spaying/neutering schemes Reduced fees for responsible dog ownership 'First ride home for free'	Reduced fees for responsible dog owners and ownership Public education and advice	Yellow Dogs UK Cardiff North Royal Mail Delivery Office LEAD (police-led initiative)

Each location acknowledges the importance of keeping dogs under effective control, however, the definitions of the terms ‘control’, ‘dangerousness’ (e.g. to whom and where) and ‘responsible dog ownership’ vary. The measures used to achieve control vary in use and application, nonetheless, all share similar tools for public protection.

- Each case study location requires some type of identification for dogs. Compulsory microchipping is a requirement in four out of five, with the use of tags and collars used in tandem, or as an enhancement.
- Licensing and registration are notable and valued features in each location but the management and enforcement of these varies considerably. For example, in Vienna, all dogs are registered, but dog licences are only required for certain breeds categorised as dangerous, whereas in Calgary it is a requirement for all dogs.
- Each location identifies restrictions on access and/or ownership whereby dogs must be restrained in some or all public spaces, with additional requirements for dangerous dogs or specified breeds. Ownership, particularly for dangerous/restricted breeds, is also restricted. In Vienna, for example, potential dog owners may be deemed incompetent (inability to pass a test) or dangerous (prior criminal history) and be prohibited from owning a dog.
- Identifying and responding explicitly to dangerous dogs is key to dog control. Both Calgary and Multnomah County categorise dogs as dangerous based on the level and outcome of their behaviour (‘deed’). This is assessed on a scale of dangerousness and a tiered response applied. Ireland, Vienna, and Victoria designate dangerous dogs by ‘breed’ and ‘deed’ and vary in terms of their use of a scale of dangerousness and the use of enhanced restrictions. All locations will use euthanasia in response to dangerous dogs, but in Calgary and Multnomah it is the ‘very last’ option used.
- Most locations used multi-agency enforcement with the use of punishment and incentives as an effective tool for increasing compliance and responsible ownership. Schemes such as low cost spay/neuter programmes, tiered fees and training opportunities have been noted. As have the use of fines and imprisonment (for the most serious offences).
- Education and training opportunities are provided in most locations, with some involving mandatory engagement (e.g. Vienna, Calgary).
- Dog control overlaps with dog welfare in each case study. It is a core feature in some locations (e.g. Calgary), but largely implicit or peripheral in others (e.g. Ireland). However, most locations specifically acknowledged the need to balance human and dog safety and welfare (e.g. Ireland, Victoria, Calgary).

These five mini case studies illustrate the breadth of the approaches to dog control and dog bites. The analysis has shown that there is clearly no one-size-fits-all solution to effective dog control and while some tools work well in some locations, they do not in others. It is therefore important to consider this when improving and enhancing the UK approach.

“ Identifying and responding explicitly to dangerous dogs is key to dog control. ”





## 6. Exploring the Calgary approach to responsible dog ownership and dog bites

From the outset of the research, Calgary was an area of interest given the international recognition it receives for high licensing compliance rates and low stray dog and euthanasia rates, as well as the promotion of dog welfare. It does not apply breed-specific restrictions and has a significant reputation for reducing dog bite incidents. It is also notable due to the prevalence of bully breeds, which reflects the breed bans in other jurisdictions. While 2021 figures illustrate the distinct difference in human and dog populations between Calgary (1.3m<sup>[26]</sup> and 89.5k<sup>[27]</sup>) and the UK (67m<sup>[26]</sup> and 10.6m<sup>[2]</sup>), they do share similar patterns in dog ownership; before and during the Covid-19 pandemic, increases alongside problematic breeding and acquisition practices were seen. This was similarly followed by a surge in relinquishment and abandoned dogs explained by the period of economic inflation and stress, lack of affordable pet-friendly housing, and the inability of owners to manage complex behaviour and health issues. It was therefore chosen as a worthy case study to explore in more depth. A qualitative research approach was undertaken, with a systematic literature review and interviews with experts, professionals and members of the public. The following provides a more detailed overview of the Calgary approach to responsible dog ownership (RDO) and why it appears to achieve not just RDO but reduced dog bites.

### a. Key legislation

The Alberta Dangerous Dogs Act 2000 provides provincial legislation for dangerous dogs but dog control is also regulated by municipal bylaws. The [Responsible Pet Ownership bylaw](#) is the legislation applicable to the City of Calgary that advocates **for responsible dog ownership through maintaining a happy, healthy dog population and avoiding dog-related disputes**. It is framed around three overlapping actions: licensing, public education, and enforcement whereby education and compliance are the primary responses with enforcement when necessary. The bylaw promotes five principles of responsible dog ownership.



### b. Licensing

Licensing is one of the five principles of RDO in Calgary and as such is a mandatory requirement, with fees starting at CAN\$42 (approximately £23). Fees increase incrementally depending on the dog's neuter status and behaviour. For example, nuisance or vicious dogs (see section 6d) incur higher fees to support additional enforcement requirements and risks.

As with other case studies, licensing is particularly valuable as it provides an essential funding stream for enforcement and enrichment of the dog control approach. The original vision of the model was that it would be 'self-supporting without tax dollar'<sup>[28]</sup>. Apart from funding peace officers, Calgary's licensing fee revenue is ring-fenced and generates the funding necessary to support all animal service operations e.g. licensing, incentives and animal shelters. The revenue generates around CAN\$5.7m each year, which covers the CAN\$4.5m operation costs. The surplus offsets the bylaw enforcement costs of CAN\$4m.

Calgary is unique in public compliance with licensing rates reaching 90% in recent years. The findings suggest high compliance rates are attributed to a range of factors including incentive programmes, the removal of barriers, and robust monitoring and enforcement with consequences. For example, the fee is considered affordable but it is also convenient to apply for and there is accessible information about its cost as well as a clear illustration about how the fees are used and their benefit. Dogs are provided with a free ride home should they stray, while neutering is subsidised and discounted rates on goods are available through a 'responsible ownership card'. In contrast, owners who fail to license their pets are unable to access key services including daycare, pet sitting and walking, as well as subsidised neutering and medical treatment for supported owners.

Compliance is also thought to be achieved through other means including community buy-in, social peer pressure at the neighbourhood level, and role modelling by community ambassadors. Individuals set the standard expected of the dog community, provide self governance, and help make licensing a cultural norm. Licensing is also seen as a public good that facilitates the care of all dogs and humans. This is promoted by factors including government departments that the public wish to work with, as well as information and education to make better choices and opportunities for people to be heard. Where this does not work there is a perception of zero-tolerance and harsh penalties for offenders.

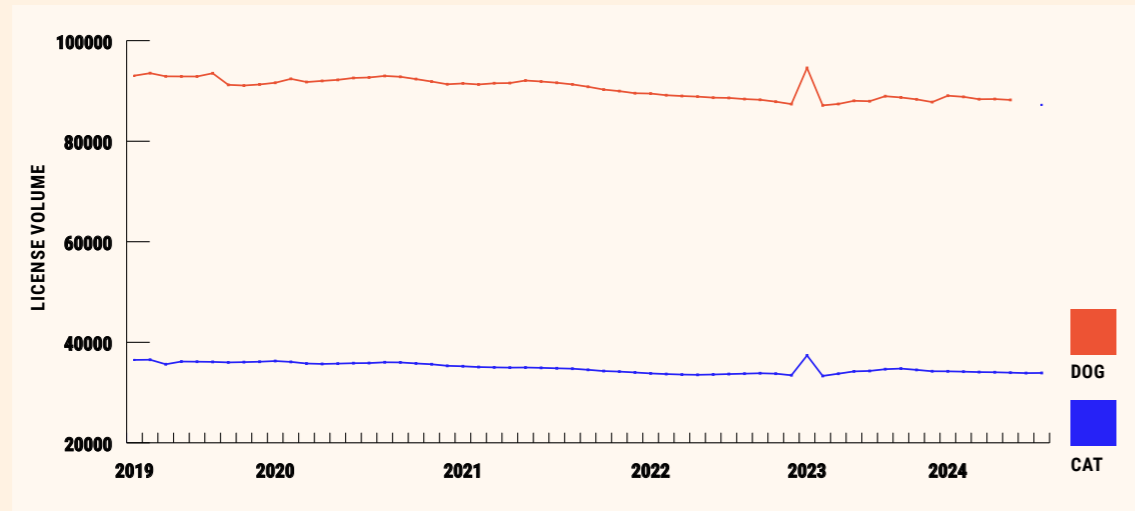
Because Calgary's licensing rate is so high, it provides invaluable data on the dog population and owner demographics and helps enhance traceability of dangerous and at risk dogs. For example, anonymised administrative data on the licensed dog population is available publicly, and more detailed data is used by Calgary to understand the nature and prevalence of its population and to communicate with owners (see Figures 3–10).

Calgary also has a second system that centralises and provides rich granular data on recorded dog-owner offences. Incidents can be analysed by type of victim (human and non-human animal) and incident, dog breed, group and characteristics, owner characteristics, and compliance with bylaw regulations and situational factors, as well as their severity (see Figures 3–10). When combined, the licensing and dog-owner offence databases facilitate effective tracing of owners, the identification of unlicensed dogs, and a means of responding to aggressive dogs and repeat offenders. **When used alongside demographic data, dog bite incident data can allow a much more tailored response to enforcement or initiatives that seek to change human behaviour.**

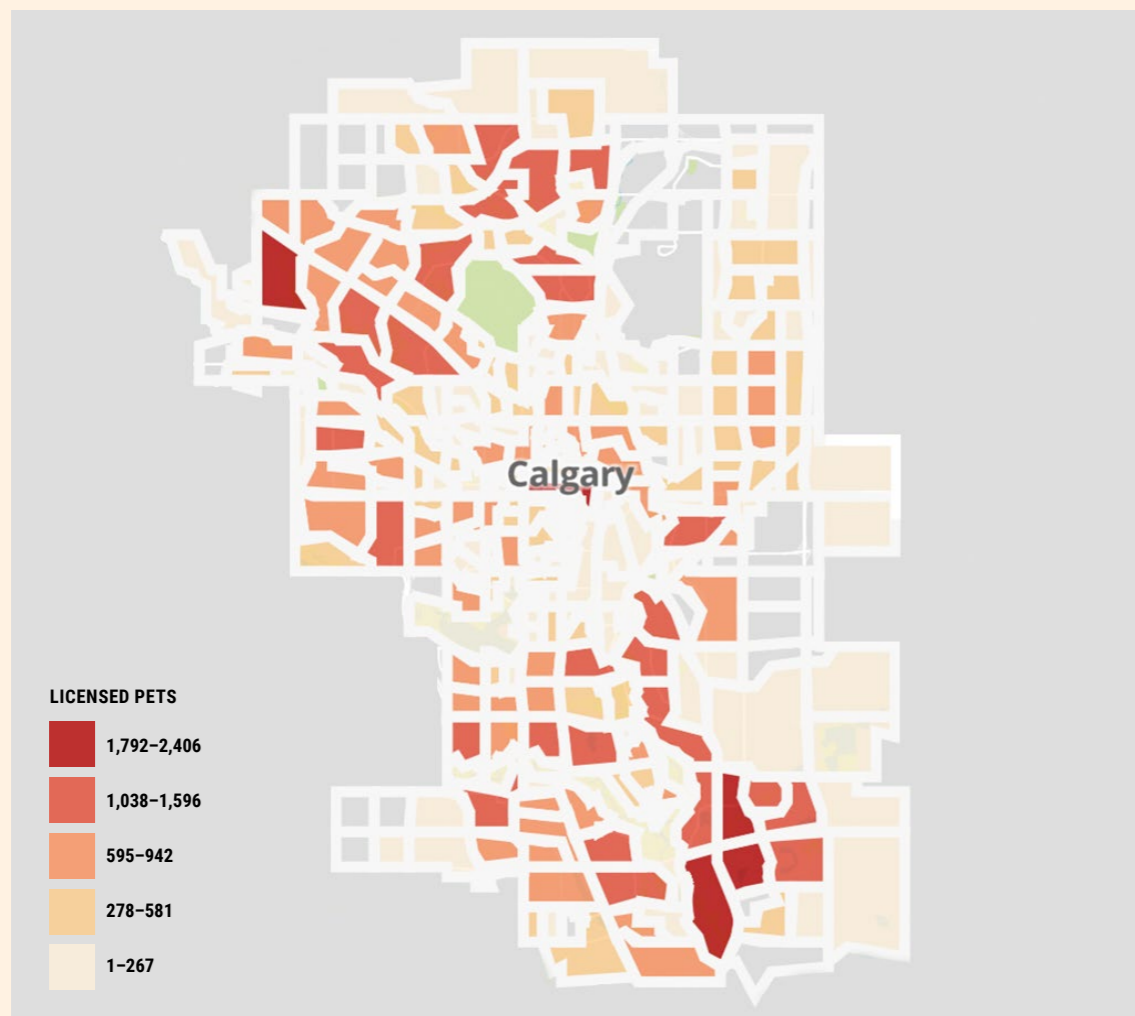
## Data

The Calgary model provides a good illustration of the richness of data that can be provided from the licensed dog population and dog-related incidents and offences.

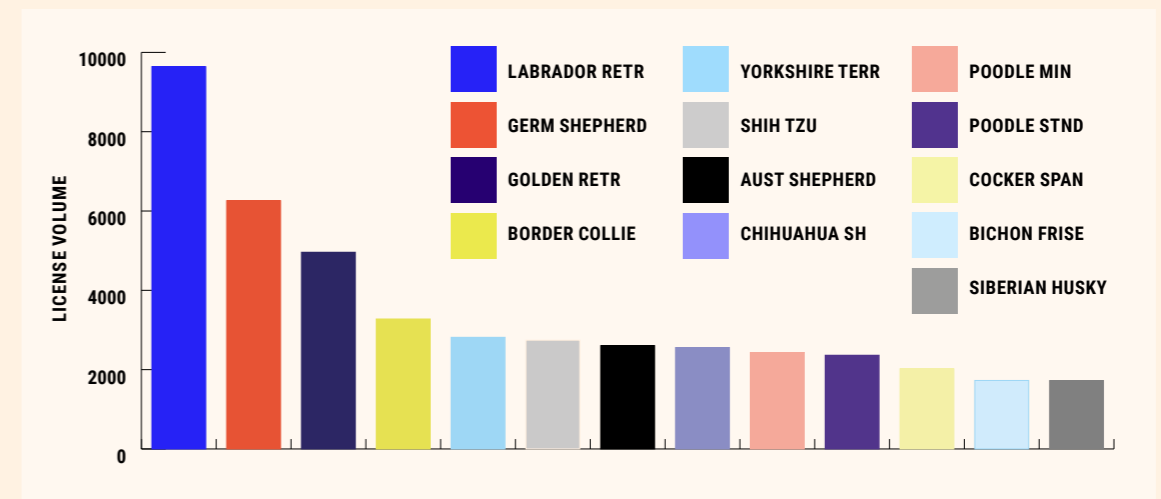
**Figure 3. Total number of licensed dogs in Calgary over the past five years**



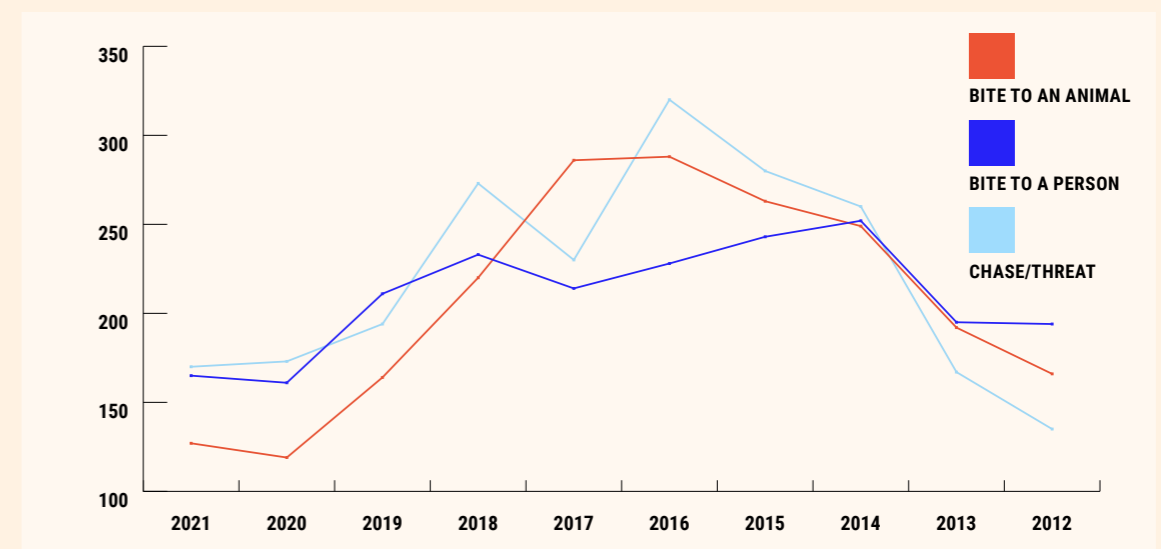
**Figure 4. The geographical density of licensed pets in Calgary (accessed September 2024)**



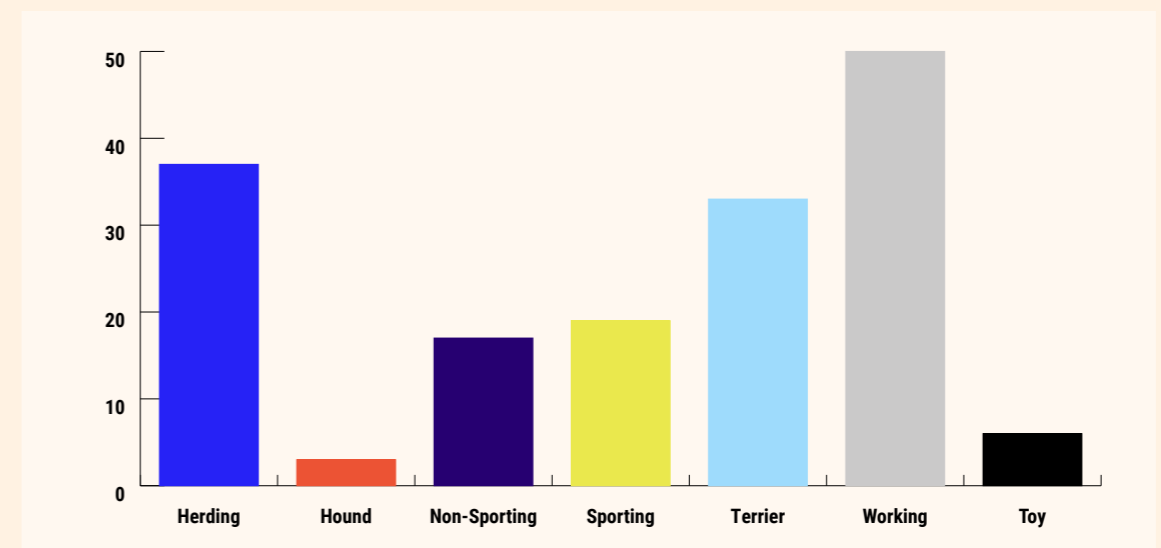
**Figure 5. Top 10 licensed dog breeds in Calgary over a 90-day period**



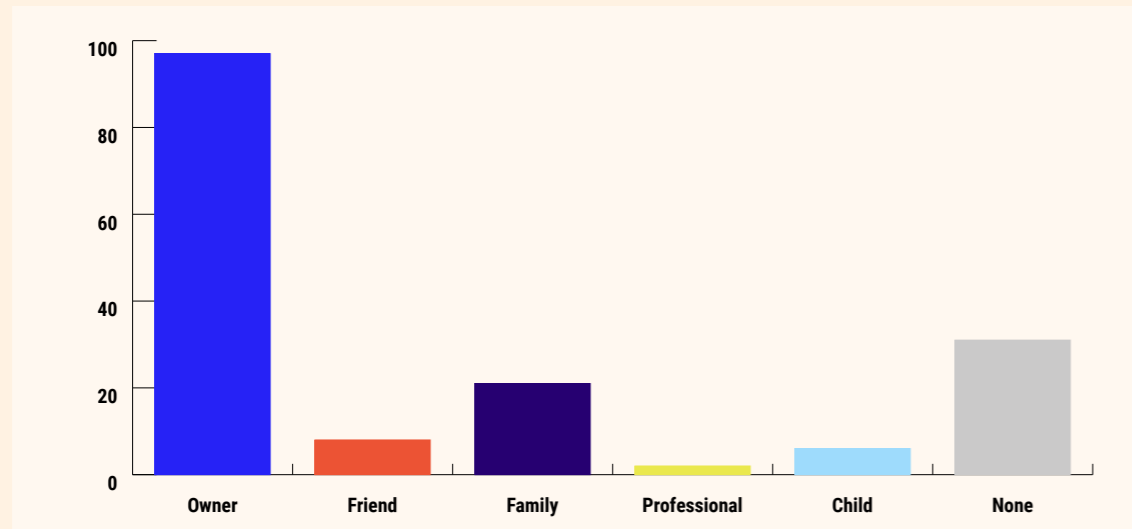
**Figure 6. Number of bite incidents between 2011 and 2021: involving people, to an animal, chase/threats**



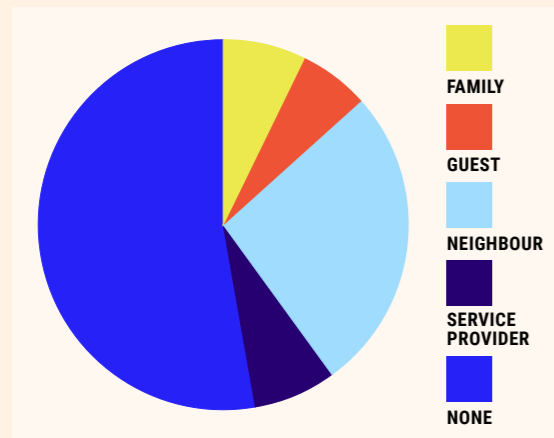
**Figure 7. Number of bite incidents in 2021 by breed group**



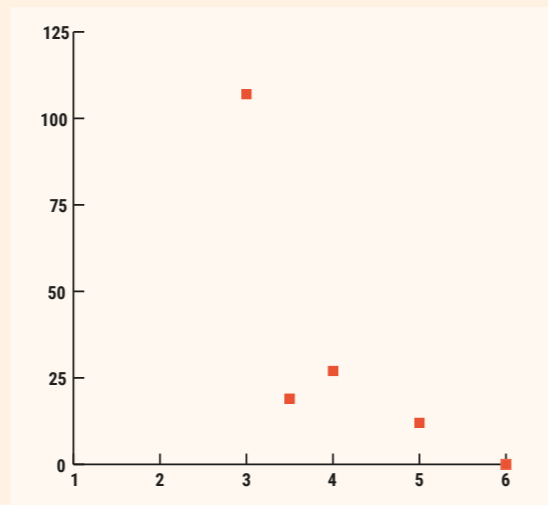
**Figure 8. Number of bite incidents by persons responsible for them at the time**



**Figure 9. Percent of dog bites on persons by relationship of victim to dog in 2021**



**Figure 10. Number of dog bites on persons in 2021 by severity rating (Dunbar Scale<sup>[29]</sup>)**



### c. Key dog control requirements

All dogs regardless of their breed must be licensed and should wear a City of Calgary licence tag as soon as they reach the age of three months. There are also a range of conditions that owners must comply with. The following are some examples.

- Dogs must always be leashed unless signposts indicate otherwise, or where the dog has the right of occupation.
- Dogs are prohibited from public areas such as school grounds, playgrounds, sports fields, golf courses, cemeteries, and wading or swimming areas.
- When in designated off-leash areas, dogs must remain under control, meaning that they must be in sight of their owners and respond to sight or sound commands.
- On pathways, dogs must be on a shorter leash (no longer than two metres), on the right-hand side of the path, and must be prevented from interfering with or obstructing other users.
- Guardians must not cycle, skateboard, or in-line skate with a dog on a leash while on a pathway. Dogs must be kept under control (e.g. not bite, injure, chase, threaten or attack a person or animal) and avoid causing a noise disturbance or property damage.
- All dog owners must ensure that they bring along a suitable means to pick up dog faeces and remove all dog faeces appropriately, both on and off their property.

There is also a requirement on the maximum number of dogs per household, which is set at six (commonly, three elsewhere). Commercial dog walkers are also limited to six dogs in public without a permit. The barriers and restrictions placed on dog owners are again notable features of Calgary’s bylaw but fundamental to keeping dogs under control.

### d. Defining dangerous dogs

Like other case studies, Calgary has a tiered and nuanced approach to dangerous dogs. The definition of a dangerous dog is based on the severity of the bite incident with dogs assessed using the Ian Dunbar scale<sup>[29]</sup>. This determines the severity of risk and response. There are two main categories of dangerousness: nuisance and vicious animals.

Nuisance animals require a Nuisance Animal Licence where:

- “ (a) the *Animal* has engaged in repeated threatening or aggressive behaviour;
- (b) the *Animal* has been found *Running at Large* more than once;
- (c) the *Animal* is a dog that repeatedly barks, howls, or otherwise makes or causes noise which disturbs any *Person*; or
- (d) the *Owner* has demonstrated an inability to control the *Animal* in an *Off Leash Area* or any other public area on more than one occasion.”

Conditions placed on a nuisance dog include a curfew on the dog between 10pm and 7am, keeping the dog in a secure enclosure when outdoors on the owner’s property, and leashing and muzzling in public. Owners of nuisance dogs must also retain the services of a certified professional dog trainer who will provide specific education and training for a specified amount of time. Nuisance dogs are prohibited from entering or remaining in an off-leash area and can be issued with any condition that is expected to reduce nuisance behaviour.

Vicious dogs are defined as exhibiting more serious aggressive behaviours and require a Vicious Animal Licence. They are subjected to the rules for nuisance dogs and additional restrictions, such as being marked by a tattoo and microchipped. Dogs regarded as a vicious animal include where:

- “ (a) the *Animal* has caused a *Severe Injury* to a *Person*, whether on public or private property;
- (b) the *Animal* has, while off its *Owner’s* property, caused *Severe Injury* to another *Animal* or the death of another *Animal*; or
- (c) there are reasonable grounds to believe the *Animal* poses a risk to the health and safety of *Persons* in the city.”

### e. Enforcement and penalties

The responsible dog ownership bylaw governance structure is shown in Figure 11 and clearly shows the range of partners involved in Calgary’s approach. Interagency collaboration is at the heart of Calgary’s approach to RDO and therefore a noted feature in the bylaw’s governance. The key partners are described briefly below.

The Chief Bylaw Officer is responsible for overseeing the RDO bylaw. Over 90 bylaw enforcement and peace officers are employed primarily for enforcing the law. They encourage compliance through education of owners, investigating complaints, responding to dog bite incidents and dogs at large, as well as enforcing licensing through checking compliance and issuing penalties. There are a range of penalties available for enforcement including warning notices, tiered fines, higher licensing fees, curfews, disqualifications, imprisonment and euthanasia.



The officers have powers to identify and assess aggressive dogs and seize if necessary. They also compile information about incidents. Where the incident is serious, the Chief Bylaw Officer is responsible for designating an animal as one who is vicious and they will determine the conditions of the licence.

The City Animal Services Centre is responsible for administering the pet licensing programme and runs the shelter for lost and relinquished dogs. The shelter provides veterinary services to low income families while behavioural coordinators assess dogs for adoption and rehabilitation.

The Humane Society is responsible for animal welfare enforcement but collaborates with bylaw officers through collaborative enforcement activities and by providing training to frontline officers, accepting dogs for rehabilitation and rehoming, and promoting responsible dog ownership.

There are also other stakeholders who support the bylaw. Of particular interest is the Community Standards Appeal Board (Tribunal Board), which enables owners to challenge the designation of their dog as a vicious animal by the Chief Bylaw Officer. The board comprises members with appropriate skill sets including veterinarians, dog trainers and dog behaviourists who review the cases. The board can uphold, amend or cancel the Chief Bylaw Officer's decision but it also allows cases to be escalated to the Court of King's Bench. The research suggested this initiative was particularly supported.

*"I think having multiple people to have their input is much better than just a single person being able to make that kind of decision, because this is somebody's family member."*

*"To me it just made sense because of the delays within the courthouse. We wanted to expedite these. We can't have animals in our facility for a year in a kennel. I mean, it's not good from an animal welfare perspective even though we take them for walks and have some enrichment."*

Certified dog trainers are also a critical part of the governance structure as owners with nuisance and vicious dogs are referred to them as part of their licensing or designating requirements.

The model is also supported by business partners and the public, with the latter being able to apply and train to become Ambassadors. These roles engage with the public, educate dog owners and model responsible dog ownership. The Humane Society and City Shelter also act as role models, rehoming dogs with a free licence and nudging those to re-license once it has lapsed.

**Figure 11. City of Calgary responsible dog ownership bylaw governance structure**



## f. Is the Calgary model working?

Calgary's dog control approach appears to be very effective at reducing dog bites. It is attributed to a low level of dog bite incidents, and not only are dog bite levels low, they are also reducing across time.

**Between the period 2012 and 2022, dog bites to a person and to an animal have reduced overall (see Figure 6).**

This is counter to what we are seeing in the UK. Further, because Calgary rejects breed specific restrictions or bans, the reported reduced rates of dog aggression are notable. **While licensing is often held up as the key factor in Calgary's success, our in-depth analysis found that it is much more sophisticated than this. There are in fact a whole range of features that lend themselves to Calgary's success; each is complex and all are interlinked, highlighting the holistic, multi-method, multi-agency approach created by the city.**

Enforcement is nuanced and intelligence-led, supported by data on dog population demographics and dog bite incidents collated via robust infrastructure, allowing a much more tailored response. There are also a variety of enforcement tools available to respond to the complexities of irresponsible dog ownership. These allow flexibility, as well as an officer to tailor their responses to individual cases. This is particularly evident in the assessment of aggressive dogs where the spectrum and severity of aggression can determine the level and range of responses.

Collaboration and partnership is key. Although the bylaw is overseen by the Chief Bylaw Officer, it is supported by key stakeholders working in partnership and collaboration, including members of the public who seek to model responsible dog ownership and self-govern the legislation. Partners also help with rehoming and veterinary care, as well as providing opportunities to deliver education and awareness. The cost of these services is balanced among dog owners and public taxes as licensing removes a significant financial burden from public funds. While this can only be achieved when the licensing compliance rate is high, it appears to have been made possible by using incentive programmes coupled with the removal of barriers to compliance and robust monitoring, and enforcement with consequences.

There is also a repetitive theme throughout the model of balance and transparency. For example, services are balanced among dog owners, with the needs of low economic dog owners considered via a fair-entry programme and subsidised veterinary treatment. This also extends to the requirements for vicious and nuisance dogs recognising that the amount of training necessary to manage such dogs may not be feasible.

Critically, the approach recognises the complexities of responding to dog bites and irresponsible dog ownership and seeks to balance the needs of dogs and their owners with that of other humans and non-human animals. For example, the complexities of responding to dog bites is recognised through the use of the Dunbar scale<sup>[29]</sup>, ensuring that responses are individualised, proportionate and tailored to the circumstances. Where vicious and reactive dogs remain in the community, there is a requirement for owners to comply with specific conditions. Furthermore, responsibility for their dog's behaviour is placed on the owner via higher licensing fees and mandatory insurance as well as incremental raises in penalties for repeat and serious offences, recognising the additional cost of balancing community safety. Transparency is provided through data on dog licensing and incidents being publicly available although a recent review has highlighted that this could go further.

The original Calgary model sought to 'protect animals from people', 'create a humane animal management strategy' and 'a peaceful and respectful coexistence between humans and animals'. Although animal welfare is not within the remit of the bylaw services and officers, it can be seen in the approach. Dog welfare is an important consideration in community safety, and implicit in the language and intention of the bylaw. In other respects, it is explicit in the emphasising of rehabilitation and restrictions, rather than euthanasia, for most dogs identified as vicious or dangerous, and the five principles of responsible dog ownership.

Unlike other dog control approaches, Calgary's approach emphasises managing risk rather than attempting to remove all risks. General restrictions on dogs are robust and may therefore be judged as restrictive for dog owners. There are limitations on the number of dogs owned and walked, restrictions on dogs in public spaces with designated on- and off-leash areas, and a tiered system for defining, identifying, and responding to dangerous dogs (with further restrictions for 'nuisance' and 'vicious' dogs and their owners). However, these restrictions are balanced by many extensive purpose-designed areas in which dogs and their owners have liberty e.g. parks.

Recent updates to the model require limits on the number of dogs per household, which has provided additional tools for tackling some of the factors that can lead to dog bites e.g. backyard breeding, but it can also help with animal hoarding cases. These updates include modernisation of the IT infrastructure, which includes the development of an integrated bespoke system with greater data and analysis capacity.

It must be noted that the Calgary model is not without criticism. Individuals interviewed during the course of the research noted many animals are not licensed and there was reference to the licence as another tax. There were also issues raised around the use of dog parks, suggesting that these can be the spaces where dogs lack control, as well as a lack of or unequal access to a large, open off-lead space for all dog owners. Nonetheless, there was a consensus that the model is effective at reducing dog bites and protecting public safety, with responsible dog ownership, compliance, bite reduction and balancing interspecies needs being highlighted.

## 7. Lessons learnt from other countries for reducing dog bites in the UK

This research has shown that exploring alternative approaches to dog control outside of the UK is of value and that there are distinct differences in the UK's current approach compared to other locations. In particular, the UK's extension of BSL and the severity of the provisions is at odds with what is observed across other regions and locations. However, while the research identifies many examples of good practice, it is neither feasible nor practical to suggest transferring any single approach to the UK. Further, the findings evidence there is no panacea or silver bullet for reducing dog bites or promoting responsible dog ownership.

There are many complicated factors influencing responsible dog ownership and dog bite reduction and the subsequent responses adopted in other countries. There has been a range of notable features identified as a result of the research, but it is important to stress that each feature is complex and interlinked with others; Calgary illustrates this well. Care must be taken when considering how these features could be implemented in the UK context. Nonetheless, in seeking to reduce dog bites and promote responsible dog ownership in the UK it is proposed that the following points are explored.

### a. Place responsible dog ownership at the core

Across each of the case studies, responsible dog ownership is the core focus of the model towards which the location is working and requires a direct targeting of dog owners. While the UK Government and devolved administrations have shown a desire to achieve responsible dog ownership, wanting responsible dog ownership is not the same as implementing a strategy that develops this. Encouragingly for the UK, the findings of this research indicate that the principles of responsible dog ownership can be achieved, for example, by making owners accountable through traceability (e.g. registration, licensing, ID), enforcement (e.g. robust and intelligence-led), restrictions (e.g. age, behaviour, activities with the dog) and compulsory training or competency tests (e.g. Vienna). Incentives (e.g. via licensing) and education and training provision are also important tools for encouraging responsible ownership. Importantly, the approach must be of value and beneficial to dog owners to facilitate compliance from 'willing agents'. Furthermore, regulation must consider the complexities



of responsible dog ownership and vulnerabilities in the community, to avoid barriers, for example, some case study areas used tiered fees for dogs and subsidised or free neutering programmes to encourage compliance.

In working towards responsible dog ownership, it is important to recognise the considerable variation in the perceptions and actions of owners regarding this concept<sup>[30]</sup>. For example, problematic ownership may rise amongst those who perceive themselves to be good owners because of a too-weak or too-strong owner-dog relationship, and there may be differences in interpreting what is best for the dog, difficulties predicting situations of conflict, and variations in tolerance for negative impacts of dog ownership. Further, some owners may lack sufficient knowledge and/or the skills necessary to achieve responsible dog ownership.

### b. Create a culture of care and dog-positive culture

Creating a culture of care and a dog-positive culture is fundamental to an approach that is compatible with good dog welfare. The effort to create these cultures was especially evident in Calgary which sought from the outset to establish a community of care, providing space to consider the needs of different species and individuals, even those found to be dangerous. This is an important step in achieving welfare-compatible dog control and also towards balancing the welfare needs of dogs with public safety.

Working towards this culture and ensuring better outcomes for dogs is likely to require communities accepting a higher level of risk and a greater awareness of and respect for dogs' welfare needs. Encouragingly, the RSPCA and Scottish SPCA 2023 Kindness Index survey reveals a positive shift in public attitudes towards animal welfare, suggesting the setting is right for enhancing a culture of care. For example, these NGOs have changed the terminology used and their core mission statements (e.g. joy and value of, kindness and compassion, respect to dogs). The importance of such messaging coming from those in authority was noted during interviews with Calgarians and employed in their new bylaw, whereby terminology was altered to reflect changes in, and the management of, public expectations.

The need for a cultural shift towards dogs is not limited to members of the public; a shift in the way the media responds to dog bites and the positioning of dogs involved in such incidents is also necessary. Over the years, sections of the media have created a pariah status for some particular types of dog, most recently the American bully XL<sup>[31]</sup>, despite breed not being a reliable predictor of risk of aggressive behaviour. In doing so, it has likely reinforced the belief that the risk of aggressive behaviour is breed-dependent and has raised concerns from organisations such as the RSPCA that this may lead to further incidents where humans interact with breeds perceived as safe in ways that increase the likelihood of aggression.

### c. Promote the safe and harmonious use of public spaces

Given the close proximity in which dogs and humans live and the use of shared public spaces, achieving safe and harmonious public spaces is of importance. This is linked to section b but it also requires education to help achieve attitudinal and behavioural change among owners *and* the wider community. This will help ensure better decision making when engaging with and interacting with dogs, placing the responsibility for positive inter-species engagement on dog owners and the wider community. This is consistent with the dog bite research, which notes inappropriate human behaviour is a key feature of bite incidents and, thereby, highlights the importance of educating potential victims (and their families) on how to engage with dogs safely and respectfully. Likewise, many of the case study areas recognised such mitigating factors in assessing the severity and outcomes for dogs who bite.

### d. Increase owner accountability

Greater owner accountability is noted in the case studies and dog bite research. For example, case study authorities require or encourage owners to prove competence to own a dog (e.g. Vienna's owner exam and training course). In their report for the UK Government, Nurse et al<sup>[11]</sup> suggest dog awareness courses for UK owners with dog control issues, however, this could be extended further through voluntary or compulsory courses for all dog owners.

Dog bite research emphasises the importance of owners understanding their responsibility to appropriately control (e.g. restricting their dogs at home and in public) and train their dogs (e.g. education, socialisation and potential limitations on the number of dogs owned). However, authorities also play an important role in supporting owners and the community, for example, by prohibiting the use of harsh training and punishment measures of dogs, bringing forth environment modifications in public space including restraining or prohibiting dogs in 'at risk' public areas, and promoting awareness schemes (such as a yellow ribbon for reactive dogs). But in seeking to achieve welfare compatible dog control, it is vital that restraints on dogs are balanced with dog welfare, specifically their ability to engage in natural behaviours.

### e. Use public education and other points of information

The use of public and online education and other points of information were identified in all case study areas. These programmes appear to be important in facilitating compliance and reducing dog bite incidents. However, the dog bite research reveals there are few evaluations available on these approaches to identify what works. While the approaches in the case study areas may be usefully adopted in the UK, evaluation and ongoing impact assessment of existing or new responses are necessary.

### f. Make dog control a public good

Addressing dog control as a "public good" highlights the holistic approach taken to dog and human wellbeing in some case study areas. This was a core argument underpinning Calgary's licensing compliance, whereby the benefits of licensing were argued to be broad and diverse (e.g. diffused costs, benefiting individual and community dogs). Many animal welfare issues, such as vaccines, breeding and the acquisition of dogs, dog behavioural issues, stray and abandoned dogs, and hoarding, overlap with dog control and public health concerns. Thereby, collaborative attention to improving animal health and welfare directly and indirectly, through targeted programmes, will inform better public health and safety, and may reduce other social harms (such as abuse and criminality). One notable feature in the case studies that captured this were the restrictions on the number of dogs per household (for general and/or dangerous dogs).



### g. Regulate dog-related activities

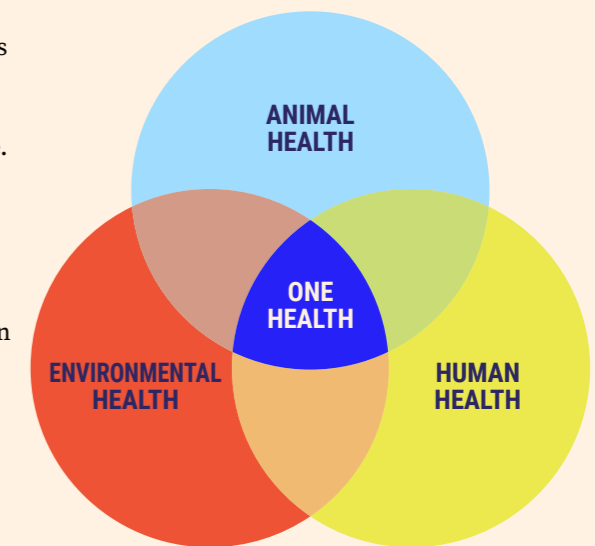
Within Calgary, registered dog trainers and veterinarians played a prominent role. This is crucial as dog bite research identifies the mental and physical health of dogs to be factors in bite incidents. The use of accredited dog trainers, for example in Calgary, was highlighted, and is of relevance to the UK where the behaviour industry is unregulated. A similar concern was raised regarding dog walkers in Calgary, which now requires those walking more than six dogs to have a permit – for which they need evidence that they have competence and/or training to do so.

Dog walking is a further activity that is not subject to statutory regulation in the UK, although there have been calls from the animal welfare sector to add dog walkers and practitioners in the behaviour industry to existing legislation for activities involving animals. The need to accredit dog trainers was also included as a recommendation by Nurse et al to the UK Government.

### h. Promote collaborative working and a One Health model

A One Health model (Figure 12) was proposed for Calgary as it already provides the many benefits of governments, statutory organisations, civil society, businesses, communities, families, and individuals working together for positive change.

The need for a collaborative approach has previously been argued by Nurse et al in their report produced for the UK Government<sup>[11]</sup>, through promoting better information sharing and introducing model guidance. It has also been proposed by UK academics who have identified dog bites as a 'One Health' problem, and that a multi-agency approach to identify solutions and strategies that are going to be effective<sup>[32]</sup> is required. There is already a precedent for partnership working to tackle dog bite incidents with the Merseyside Dog Safety Partnership, which draws together a multidisciplinary group of experts to address the problems of dog bites in the area<sup>[33]</sup>.



**Figure 12. The One Health model illustrates the interconnectedness between human, animal and environmental health**



### **i. Establish an effective monitoring system by competent authorities and ensure traceability of all dogs**

The significant benefits of establishing an effective monitoring system by competent authorities is clearly evident in Calgary and illustrated earlier in this report (section 6b). However, robust data collection and monitoring is not enough to achieve effective dog control and responsible dog ownership; it has to be facilitated through a modernised IT infrastructure that accurately records granular data on the dog (and dangerous dog) population, dog owners, and dog attack and nuisance incidents. Likewise, effective monitoring and enforcement requires robust traceability which, as evidenced in the case studies, can be achieved through licensing or registration. While microchipping, mandated by law across the UK, provides some traceability, it is not comprehensive enough to provide robust data and monitoring. Furthermore, in addition to data, licensing or registration supports animal services and responsible dog ownership.

Creating and implementing a centralised and comprehensive system coupled with licensing or registration would enable intelligence-led and preventative enforcement, resource management and monitoring. It also provides potential to cover service and enforcement costs. The pressing need for improved UK recording of dog attack data and incident characteristics was highlighted in Nurse et al's report<sup>(10)</sup> commissioned by the previous UK Government. Similarly, the dog-bite research also stresses the need for relevant and accurate dog bite data to inform effective public health and safety strategies<sup>(6)</sup>.

### **j. Ensure enforcement is consistent, robust and has consequences**

For legislation to be effective, it must be coupled with enforcement, and, as shown across the various case studies, consistent and robust enforcement with consequences is vital. In addition to multi-agency collaboration, clear enforcement roles and responsibilities were evident in the case studies. This has been highlighted as a need in the UK by way of introducing a statutory enforcement duty<sup>(10)</sup>.

Evidence in Calgary and elsewhere<sup>(34)</sup> indicates that a balance between incentives and punishment is key to effective dog control. Calgary utilises a tiered approach to punishment and is perceived to be consequential by the public. Financial penalties increase for repeat offenders and riskier behaviour. It was noted that the penalties were impactful as they covered low-to-high-level noncompliance (no ID tag to dog attack: CAN\$50–3,000), can be accumulative (for each incident and dog), are expensive, and enforcement was consistent.

### **k. Introduce a nuanced approach to defining and responding to dog aggression**

As highlighted in the scoping review (section 4), there are many different approaches to defining and responding to dangerous dogs. Most case study areas adopt a nuanced and measured approach to defining and responding to dog aggression, which is achieved in many ways.

Of note, is the focus on dog behaviour and bite incidents. The tiered approach to designating dogs as vicious or dangerous, and the use of scales to assess the severity of a dog bite incident, permits a tailored approach to prevention and intervention. This recognises the complex factors involved in dog bites – supported by the dog bite literature – and balances the needs of individual dogs and the public. It also recognises aggression as a normal behaviour that can be displayed by any dog of any breed. The use of independent experts and tribunal boards to decide the outcome for the dog facilitates transparency and a measured response.

Although dog bite research does not support breed specific restrictions as a measure to reduce dog bites, this approach is adopted in many countries. It can, however, be implemented in a more nuanced and less severe manner through additional restrictions (e.g. muzzling, housing) and requirements (e.g. licensing, training, insurance), rather than via bans on and/or euthanasia of specified breeds, as seen in the UK. Introducing a more nuanced approach would also avoid the unnecessary euthanasia of dogs who are identified as prohibited types based on their physical appearance but whose behaviour would otherwise enable them to be suitable candidates for rehoming.



### **l. Allow dog control policies to be determined at local levels**

The ability of regions, states, and communities to determine dog control policy bespoke to their needs is notable in the findings. This facilitates flexibility to attend to local issues, to recognise and address vulnerabilities in the community, and to tailor a response that allows for the complexity and nuance of dog bite incidents. It was noted by interviewees that this approach brings its own challenges (e.g. displacement, confusion, public pressure), but nonetheless, independence was greatly valued. This is relevant to the UK as the nature and prevalence of dog bites differs across the country<sup>(5)</sup> and the focus of each devolved nation varies in dog control. For example, recent research found highly localised geographic patterns with Swansea, Wales potentially containing a region with the highest incidence of dog bites in the UK<sup>(6)</sup>. The same study also highlights the need for resources to be targeted at hotspot areas to maximise cost effectiveness, which links to the importance of the potential for ring-fenced funding through licensing or registration and the need for flexibility in local spending.

In summary, measures that may enhance the UK's approach to dog control and should be considered by policy makers include:

- making positive human-dog engagement the responsibility of dog owners and the wider community
- 'responsibilising' dog owners using incentives, punishment and education and engendering a culture of care and compliance
- an evidence-based education and information approach
- attention to wider dog welfare concerns and harms as part of the dog control response
- a holistic and collaborative approach or One Health model
- licensing or registration to support traceability, enforcement and service costs
- IT infrastructure that supports robust data collection and monitoring and enforcement
- consistent and robust enforcement with consequences
- flexibility to attend to local issues through legislation and bylaws
- a tiered and nuanced approach to identifying and responding to dangerous dogs.

“ The analysis has shown that there is clearly no one-size-fits-all solution to effective dog control and while some tools work well in some locations, they do not in others. ”

## 8. Achieving effective dog control in the UK

This research has shown that there are a range of measures available to governments when considering how to enhance and improve dog control legislation and policy. While the most recent response to the increasing number of dog bites and fatalities in the UK has focused on a breed specific approach, this must not prevent other measures from being implemented or existing ones being amended. The scientific evidence consistently shows that targeting certain types of dogs is ineffective at reducing dog bites, is incompatible with good dog welfare, and leads to additional, unintended consequences.

Across the case studies, responsible dog ownership and engagement is a key theme and core focus. Moreover, achieving an approach that protects public safety and is compatible with good dog welfare is possible. Moving towards a model that emphasises this in the UK is critical. However, for the UK to make this shift, we need attitudinal, behavioural and cultural change, as well as funding, to enable the implementation of systems that underpin, promote and support this new approach. As we have seen, successful approaches are holistic, multi-method and multi-agency and are capable of responding to the many variables influencing dangerous dogs via the agreement and coordinated action from multiple stakeholders.

The UK needs:

- all dog owners to understand how to appropriately and effectively acquire, care for and control their dogs and to act accordingly, while being compliant with dog control legislation
- dog owners and communities to engage positively with one another and uphold the values and approach of the dog control system
- the delivery of community level services such as education and training, which promote responsible dog ownership and a culture of care
- regulated practitioners who support responsible dog owners and enforcement and manage dogs in a welfare-compatible, humane way
- a legislative framework that allows for flexibility at, and tailored for, a local level – for example, bylaws – and a range of welfare-compatible, evidence-based powers including incentives and punishment, which encourage compliance and RDO
- consistent and robust enforcement provided by dedicated officers (dog control officers or animal welfare officers)
- multiple agencies to work in partnership and collaboratively with one another
- funding to support enforcement, responsible dog ownership and animal services
- centralised systems that enable reporting, recording, analysis and monitoring of dog bites and injuries and their characteristics, as well as intelligence-led enforcement coupled with a means of tracing all dogs and their owners in the population
- a comprehensive, standardised and evidence-based approach to dog dangerousness that is consistently and universally applied across all dog bite incidents, allowing tailored responses to prevention and intervention.

While some features are outside the purview of governments, there are clear and specific actions that can be taken to shift and enhance the approach to dog control in the UK. **We want to see governments make a clear commitment to achieve effective dog control in the UK and to focus on the fostering and development of communities where responsible dog ownership and engagement is emphasised.**

To support this shift we are calling for governments to do the following.

### 1 Address critical data gaps around dog control using centralised and bespoke systems – UK government

- a. Accurate and detailed recording and monitoring of dangerous dog incidents across the UK is key. The UK's current recording system is inconsistent in its approach and level of detail. In the absence of this information, we are unable to fully understand the scale of dog bites and their causal factors, nor to inform effective public health and safety strategies.
- b. Robust traceability of dogs across the UK is necessary for data and to inform enforcement. While microchipping is mandatory for dogs across the UK, it is not comprehensive enough to provide robust data and monitoring. We need to know how many dogs there are in the population, where they are located, and who is responsible for them. Robust traceability coupled with detailed data on dog bites will enable effective monitoring of dangerous dogs and targeted enforcement. Importantly, this also has the potential to fund enforcement.
- c. Defining levels of dangerousness and allowing tailored responses to prevention and intervention recognises the complexity of dog aggression. We need a more nuanced and measured approach to defining and responding to dog bite incidents.

### 2 Create and evaluate innovative multi-agency pilots to test recording of dangerous dog incidents, as well as traceability and dangerousness dog-assessment systems – local governments

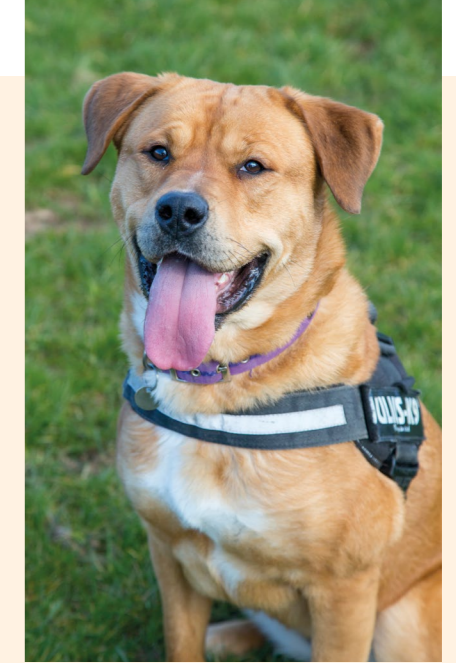
Effective dog control is reliant on systems that work for the UK as well as the involvement of a range of agencies, which requires partnership and collaborative working. Pilots will allow the identification of key stakeholders, as well as testing and modifications, before upscaling for wider rollout. In some cases, pilots will likely be facilitated through the extension of existing collaborative efforts.

### 3 Implement legislation that enables the development of responsible dog ownership and engagement while paying regard to dog welfare – UK, national and local governments

- a. Create laws that allow for flexibility at a local level and which can be consistently and robustly enforced by dedicated officers (dog control officers or animal welfare officers) with the use of welfare-compatible, evidence-based powers, including incentives and punishment. This will enable a proportionate response to a range of incidents, with support from other partners.
- b. Introduce measures to better protect the welfare of dogs affected by the legislation. Current legislation compromises both the welfare of dogs it affects and human wellbeing.
- c. Regulate the dog behaviour and training industry. These professionals play a vital role in responsible dog ownership and responding to dangerous dogs, and must be qualified to do so and want to ensure they are doing so in line with best practice.

### 4 Map and evaluate existing initiatives/schemes which encourage a culture of care – local governments

In recognition of the range of initiatives and schemes already in use, research/review is required to identify and evaluate existing initiatives/schemes that encourage a culture of care. This will enable the development of a strategy for wider rollout.



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## Appendix 1

**Table 3. An overview of key dog control legislation in the UK (N.B. this is not intended to be exhaustive)**

Legislation	Brief summary
<b>Dogs Act 1871</b>	This originally sought to protect people from dangerous and stray dogs, as well as introduce rabies control. The section on dangerous dogs remains in force, allowing local authorities to bring the owner of a dangerous dog before the Magistrates' court. The Act applies to public and private places and, as a civil action, allows the court to choose to impose a fine, measures appropriate to keeping the dog under control or, if necessary, have the dog destroyed.
<b>Pet Animals Act 1951</b>	This created a UK-wide dog licensing scheme. It was abolished in England, Wales and Scotland in 1987 as it was considered uneconomical. It remains in Northern Ireland where all domestic dogs must be licensed unless they are exempt.
<b>Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953</b>	This legislation makes it an offence for an owner or person in charge of a dog to allow it to worry livestock or be at large on any agricultural land, while providing a limited power of seizure, destruction and fines upon conviction.
<b>Animals Act 1971</b>	This imposes strict civil liability for the offences against people and livestock identified in the previous Acts.
<b>The Road Traffic Act 1988</b>	This requires the leashing of dogs in public areas such as roads, and the control of dogs to prevent accidents.
<b>Environmental Protection (Amendment) Act 1990</b>	Stray dogs measures were enhanced under this Act and local authorities must appoint an officer responsible for dealing with stray dogs; this includes maintaining a register setting out the number of stray dogs seized by the local authority and holding strays for seven days. It also allows unclaimed dogs to be sold, rehomed or euthanased.

Legislation	Brief summary
<b>Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and Dangerous Dogs (Amendment) Act 1997</b>	This applies to England, Scotland and Wales and places criminal liability on owners of 'dangerous' dogs and a responsibility to keep them under control. Dangerous dogs are defined as any dog who is of a prohibited type (S1) and any dog dangerously out of control in a public or private place (S3). It is an offence to own, possess, breed, sell, exchange, transfer, advertise or gift the five prohibited types. Prosecutions under the Act can result in prison sentences, fines, compensation and the destruction of the dog, depending on the severity of the crime.  The 1997 amendment removed the mandatory destruction of banned types and added court discretion to allow dogs identified as prohibited types to be legally kept, which requires such dogs to be added to an index of exempted dogs.
<b>Dangerous Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1991</b>	The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 does not apply to Northern Ireland, with the exception of S.8, which makes provision for corresponding legislation to be made there. That corresponding legislation is The Dangerous Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 and is enforced by district councils. Police do not have any powers conferred by this Order.
<b>The Control of Dogs Order 1992</b>	This requires owners to place collars on their dogs, showing their name and address, when in a public space. This aims to reduce stray dogs and make owners accountable for their dog's behaviour.
<b>Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010</b>	The key purpose of this Act is to promote the responsible ownership of dogs and ensure that dogs who are out of control are brought, and kept, under control in Scotland. The focus of the 2010 Act is on 'deed' not 'breed' and is primarily aimed at owners' behaviour, which is intended to address the resulting behaviour of dogs. The focus of the regime is for local authority 'authorised officers' to be able to impose dog control notices (DCNs) on any dog owner who allows their dog to be out of control. The DCN is a civil notice that can contain a number of conditions such as requiring a dog to be on a lead when in public.
<b>Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014</b>	This legislation strengthened the Dangerous Dogs Act by extending the Act to private places and incidents involving assistance dogs, as well as including powers for an appointed officer to seize a dangerously out-of-control dog in a private place. It also increased prison sentences for those convicted of specific offences and set out specific considerations concerning the suitability of the owner.
<b>The Microchipping of Dogs (Wales) Regulation 2015/ The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulation 2015</b>	This requires all dogs by the age of eight weeks to be microchipped by their keepers. Its intention is to reduce stray dogs and aid reunification of lost dogs with their owners.
<b>The Dangerous Dog (Designated Types) (England and Wales) Order 2023</b>	This added the American bully XL type dog to S1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act from February 2024.
<b>The Dangerous Dogs (Compensation and Exemption Schemes) (England and Wales) Order 2023</b>	This provides compensation for owners who voluntarily euthanase their American bully XL dog and sets the conditions for owners who wish to legally keep them. They also allow for additional leash and muzzle requirements on any dog, the seizure of dogs, entry of premises, and control of evidence to enforce the law.



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