



Pets change lives
We change theirs



RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

Dog Control in Scotland – Key Issues

Out-of-control dogs

Out-of-control dogs are a growing concern in Scotland, with over 23,000 complaints reported in the last five years. The rise can be attributed to several factors, including inadequate training, irresponsible ownership, and a lack of awareness about responsible dog ownership.

Challenges faced by dog wardens

Scotland currently has only 27 dog wardens to cover 32 local authorities. This presents significant challenges for dog control across the country. The wardens are stretched thin, often leading to high demands on their time and resources. Many wardens are tasked with responding to a growing number of complaints and incidents involving out-of-control dogs, while working alone in often difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions.

XL bully ban issues

The ban of XL bully type dogs has raised major concerns, regarding both its introduction and its execution. The rushed nature of the policy has led to criticism from animal welfare organisations, dog owners, and law enforcement alike. The ban lacks a clear and effective strategy and does not address the root causes of dog control issues.

Microchipping

In Scotland we see widespread non-compliance with the Microchipping of Dogs (Scotland) Regulations 2016. The lack of a centralised database undermines traceability, making it harder to link dogs to breeders or owners and complicating efforts to reunite lost or stolen pets with owners. Enforcement is hampered by limited resources at the local authority level and the high workload of the Procurator Fiscal, leaving little capacity to pursue prosecutions for non-compliance.

Implementing our Responsible Dog Ownership course in Scotland

Blue Cross runs a unique Responsible Dog Ownership course, which addresses low-level dog-related offences. The course promotes restorative justice and responsible dog ownership for individuals, focusing on rehabilitation and education to reduce future offences and improve dog control.

Responsible Dog Ownership Course (RDOC)



Available to anybody who has committed a low-level dog related offence



Early intervention, collaboration between agencies, and a key focus on education

Encouraging responsible dog ownership within a community



Reaching more people



RDOC has recorded a 0% reoffending rate

74% of behaviourists dismiss breed as 'unimportant' or only 'slightly' important in determining aggression

2016 Battersea Dogs and Cats Home Survey



2% of dog control notices in Scotland contain banned breeds



XL bullies in the UK headlines

From 1 April 2022 until the 6 October 2023

Most common words used in headlines



568 mentions of 'ban'
354 mentions of 'attack'
130 mentions of 'killed'
92 mentions of 'mauled'

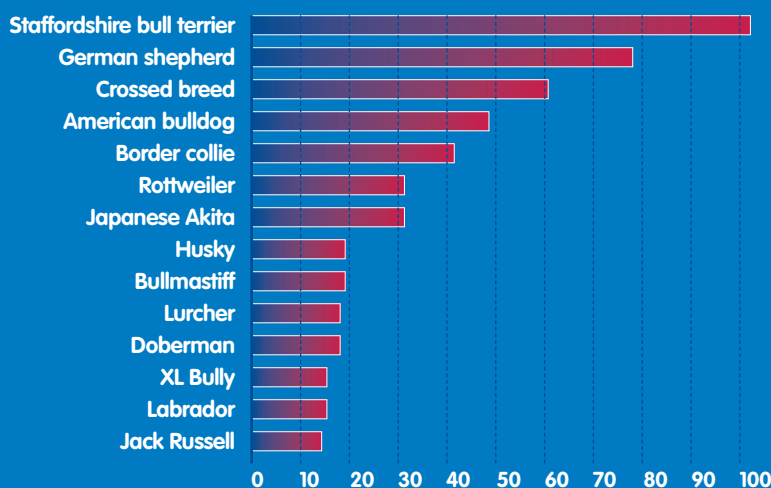
27 dog wardens cover 32 local authorities



OVER 800 active dog control notices in Scotland



Dog breeds with 10 or more Dog Control Notices (2018-2024)



2,888 headlines included the words 'dog' and 'attack'



1,224 more mentions of XL bullies than other dogs in headlines



Key Recommendations For Improvement

- Enforcement focused on irresponsible dog owners rather than specific dog breeds
- Establishing clear statutory requirement on who enforces dog related legislation
- The establishment of a UK-wide single point of search portal for dog microchipping information
- RDOC implemented across local authorities and Police Scotland as a stipulation on Dog Control Notices or as a preventative step before such notices are issued

