

Animal Concern Factsheet 5 - Dog Control

In the 1980's there was a growth in ownership of powerful and potentially dangerous dogs.

There were increased reports of attacks on people and animals by dogs, increased illegal use of dogs in organised fighting and baiting, and rising cruelty to dogs through neglect, abandonment and abuse. In 1991 in response to public concern the Government rushed through the badly-drafted and ill-thought-out Dangerous Dogs Act. Thousands of innocent animals have been destroyed under this Act which these proposals are designed to replace. Along with other animal rights and welfare organisations Animal Concern has repeatedly called for the introduction of humane methods to control dog ownership. The following proposals would greatly reduce the risk of injury from dogs, over-breeding of dogs and cruelty to dogs.

REGISTRATION: All dogs registered from the age of nine weeks on a central computer register. Each animal to carry a microchip implant carrying registration code giving details of owner and to wear a collar carrying same details on engraved disc. Annual fee would be set at £20 with half that payable by those on benefit. Fees could be waived or further reduced for pensioners. On registration all owners to be given a 'handbook' giving details of the requirements of their type of dog and their liabilities and duties as owners. This handbook to contain details of required vaccinations/worming treatments which must be given to the dog by due dates. Administration of required veterinary treatments to be logged in the handbook by qualified vet.

BREEDING: Any dog not having been neutered would be regarded as a breeding animal and the owner would be required to hold a breeders certificate costing £200 per year. No person to be allowed to hold more than two breeding certificates. Should Government decide on elimination of any type of dog then breeding certificates could be refused for that type. Breeders who enhance negative traits or physically debilitating features in dogs would be banned from holding a Breeders Certificate.

NEUTERING: Fee's from breeding certificate scheme to be used to provide subsidised spay/neuter programme to reduce the number of unwanted dogs.

LEASH/MUZZLE: All dogs to be on a short leash when walked on public footpaths and other designated places such as children's play areas. Where feasible in town and city parks, local authorities would be obliged to provide fenced-off free exercise areas for dogs. Courts empowered to order muzzling in public of any specific dog shown to be of potential risk.

INSURANCE: Owners to hold third party insurance to cover risk of accident, damage or injury caused by their dog.

POLICING: Scheme would be self-funding and administered by either police, veterinary profession or RSPCA/SSPCA. Persons found guilty by courts of cruelty, neglect or abuse of their dog or endangering the public through inadequate control of their dog to risk a life ban on keeping of dogs, fine or imprisonment and rehoming or, if the animal is badly injured or dangerous, destruction order on the dog.

FOULING: It would be an offence to leave dog excrement in a public place and local authorities would be obliged to provide dog waste bins on streets, in public parks and

other amenity areas. These bins could be sponsored and carry advertising from local vets, pet supply stores, animal welfare groups and the like.

(The above information is copyright to Animal Concern, but may be used for research or educational purposes free-of-charge, provided that Animal Concern is quoted as the source.)