

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

August 2022

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for your email about dangerous dogs.

Ministers recognise that many people are opposed to the prohibitions placed on the four types of dog under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. However, the Government must balance the views of those who want to repeal or amend breed specific legislation with Ministers' responsibility to ensure that the public is properly protected from dog attacks.

I am aware that simply repealing the breed specific provisions contained in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 with no other changes may increase the risks to public safety, which I know the Government is unwilling to do. Any changes to current legislation would require careful consideration to ensure that public safety remains at the heart of the regime.

Regarding the rehoming of exempted dogs, I understand that current legislation only permits transfer of keepership of prohibited dogs where the existing keeper has died or is seriously ill. However, case law has confirmed that a person with a pre-existing relationship with the dog may apply to place it on the Index, even if they are not the owner or most recent keeper.

In December 2021, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) published research in collaboration with Middlesex University, investigating measures to reduce dog attacks and promote responsible dog ownership across all breeds of dog. The report made recommendations relating to improved data recording and collection, consistency in enforcement practice, the quality of dog training and dog awareness courses, and improved knowledge and awareness of appropriate behaviour around dogs.

Finally, Defra has set up a steering group with the police, local authority representatives and animal welfare stakeholders to consider these recommendations in detail and provide advice to the Government as to how these could be taken forward. The steering group will consider the recommendations alongside further evidence and expertise from relevant stakeholders, academics, and experts, to inform its final advice.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Gibson".

PETER GIBSON MP

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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