



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs

Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

T 03459 335577
defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

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Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 16 August on behalf of your constituents about Breed Specific Legislation.

As a country, we are already world leaders in animal welfare, and have a strong track record to build on. Our recently printed "Action Plan for Animal Welfare" demonstrates our commitment to doing so. It represents the biggest shake up of animal welfare laws for animals both at home and abroad.

Section 1 of The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 ("the 1991 Act") prohibits the ownership of four types of dog; the Pit Bull terrier, the Dogo Argentino, the Fila Brasileiro and the Japanese Tosa. In this country, pit bull types have been traditionally bred for dog fighting to accentuate any aggressive tendencies and therefore the Government considers that they pose an inherently greater risk to the public. Pit bull terriers are crossbreeds, which is why they are referred to as "type" rather than "breed" and identification is based on physical characteristics. Identification of pit bull terriers is made by Dog Legislation Officers who are police officers specially trained to recognise the four prohibited type dogs.

The Government considers that a lifting of the restrictions on these types of dogs would more likely result in an increase in dog attacks, rather than contributing to any reduction in such incidents.

Despite the general prohibitions on these types of dog, individual prohibited dogs can be kept by their owners if a court judges that the dog is not a danger to the public, that the dog can be kept in a suitable environment, and that the proposed owner is a fit and proper person. If the court considers these criteria to be met, the dog can be listed on the Index of Exempted Dogs and must be kept under strict conditions, including being on a lead and muzzled in public.

RT HON GEORGE EUSTICE MP