



Dear Prime Minister

I am writing to you from a small charity called Animal Concern – an organisation dedicated to ending animal exploitation and promoting the humane treatment of animals since 1876.

My letter concerns the addition of XL Bully dogs to the list of banned breeds in the UK under the Dangerous Dogs Act. I am sure you will have received a significant amount of correspondence on this issue.

Firstly, I will say that our hearts go out to all the families and friends of victims of dog attacks. We cannot imagine the pain and loss they must have felt. However, it is our view that a blanket ban on a particular breed is not the answer to this problem.

The ban on XL Bully dogs is based on the assumption that the breed itself is inherently dangerous. However, I am sure you have the country's foremost experts in animal welfare and behavioural research at your disposal, who will tell you that recent research conducted in the United States has established that breed accounts for just 9% of a dog's behavioural traits<sup>1</sup>. This means that the vast majority of a dog's behaviour is determined by factors such as training, treatment and age. In essence, any breed of dog, or any other species for that matter, can exhibit aggressive behaviour if it has been raised in an environment that fosters aggression.

The responsibility for ensuring that dogs are well-behaved and safe to be around should lie squarely on the shoulders of breeders and dog owners. It is their duty to learn how to properly train and care for their individual dogs, taking into consideration their environment, temperament and early life experiences, and ensure the safety of both the dog and the people they interact with.

The real solution to reducing dog attacks and promoting responsible pet ownership is, as with most problems, education. Education empowers individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and meet their dog's needs. It helps them recognised and address behavioural issues before they become a problem. Moreover, it fosters a culture of responsible dog ownership that benefits the community as a whole.

Public education initiatives can help dispel the myths and stereotypes surrounding certain dog breeds. Banning specific breeds only perpetuates the misconception that certain dogs are inherently dangerous, while others are not. This misguided approach not only punishes responsible dog owners but also fails to address the root causes of dog aggression.

While we are right to be concerned about reducing the number of dog attacks as far as possible, banning XL Bully dogs or any specific breed is not a constructive solution, Prime Minister. Instead, we should invest in comprehensive public education programmes that teach responsible dog ownership practices.

We, therefore, implore you to reconsider your decision and recognise that blaming dog attacks on a particular breed of dog because they were supposedly born aggressive is baseless. We understand your duty to protect the public at all costs. But we ask you to heed the advice of experts like the RSPCA and the British Veterinary Association that this kind of aggressive behaviour is learned, and therefore taught. It follows, therefore, that a more effective solution is to deal with those teaching this behaviour very deliberately, rather than eradicating another entire breed from our shores.



We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Freddy Bowen-Bate". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Freddy Bowen-Bate  
Secretary & Head of Campaigns

**Animal Concern Ltd** is a Registered Scottish Charity (No. SC050422) and a registered non-profit making Limited Company (No. SC109126). Established in 1988 as Animal Concern (Scotland) Limited we changed our name to Animal Concern in 1992.

Animal Concern incorporates the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society, founded in 1876.

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