



# Safer Seven

## Dangerous Dogs



### 1. Introduction

The Dangerous Dogs Act (1991) provides very detailed information on the legislation covering certain types of dogs, the responsibilities of owners and the actions that can be taken to remove and/or control dogs.

In the UK it is against the law to own certain types of dog unless the owner has a certificate of exemption.

### 2. Breed Specific Legislation

Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) was introduced as part of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. It restricts the ownership of certain types of dogs deemed to be dangerous to people.

BSL bans the ownership of types of dogs including some traditionally bred for fighting:

- Pit bull terrier
- Japanese Tosa
- Dogo Argentino
- Fila Brasileiro
- The XL Bully became illegal to own from the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 without a certificate of exemption

### 3. Any dog can be 'dangerous' (as defined by the Act) if it has already been known to inflict or threaten injury.

Injuries inflicted by certain types of dogs are likely to be especially serious and damaging. Strong, powerful dogs such as Pit Bull types will often use their back jaws (as opposed to 'nipping') and powerful neck muscle to shake their victims violently as they grasp.

When reports of 'prohibited' dogs are known or potentially dangerous dogs are linked to the presence of children and / or pregnant women, all agencies should be alert to the possible risks and consequences.

### 4. What to do if you have concerns

Any agency that becomes aware of a dog that could be prohibited or considered dangerous should collect the following information:

- The dog's name and breed.
- Information about the owner.
- The reason for keeping the dog and information about other family members, particularly young children.

Where there is a report of a child having been injured by a dog (or exposed to the risk of injury) a referral to Children's Services should be made.

### 5. A referral should be made if any of the following criteria apply:

- If a child has an injury that requires medical treatment
- If the child has been injured more than once by the same dog
- If a child has sustained a significant injury
- The child/young person is under 16 years of age, injuries have required medical treatment and initial information suggests the dog responsible could be prohibited and/or dangerous.
- A prohibited and/or dangerous dog is reported and/or treated and is believed to be living with and/or frequently associated with children

### 6. Referrals and Further Resources

**RSCPA guidance is to approach the police in the first instance (before making a referral to children's service) if they have concerns about aggressive dog behaviour and serious concerns about the safety of children.**

To make a referral to Children's Services visit the [Dudley Children's Portal](#)

Leading animal welfare organisations including [Blue Cross](#), [Dogs Trust](#), [PDSA](#) and [Battersea Dogs and Cats Home](#) have developed a range of helpful resources and free online learning opportunities to support owners to muzzle train their dogs.

### 7. Further information:

Information on XL Bully restrictions can be found [here](#)

Visit our Learning Zone to see our selection of briefings and more [HERE](#)