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Dangerous Dogs Act

Thank you for contacting me about the Dangerous Dogs Act.

I am pleased that the law on dangerous dogs was reformed under the Coalition Government, with a greater emphasis placed on tackling irresponsible dog ownership. The ban on owning or selling some types of dogs bred for fighting remains for public safety reasons. However, dogs of any breed can become dangerous and owners are ultimately responsible for their dogs' behaviour.

It was wrong that, before these reforms, dog attacks on private property could not be prosecuted. Concerns were raised about attacks on postal workers, health visitors and social workers during home visits: people who are just doing their job should not be subject to dog attacks.

To address these concerns, the Dangerous Dogs Act has been extended to private property, and the maximum penalty for those held responsible for a dog attack has been increased to 14 years' imprisonment. New guidelines have also been published on sentencing for the new offence of an attack on an assistance dog.

Ministers have also introduced new powers to help frontline professionals tackle anti-social behaviour involving dogs. Police and local authorities can now intervene if a dog is causing a nuisance, for example by repeatedly escaping or acting aggressively. Owners of such dogs can be required to take a range of remedial action such as attending dog training classes, keeping the dog on a lead in public or repairing fencing to prevent the dog leaving their property.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP