



Petitions Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 4887 Email petitionscommittee@parliament.uk

Website www.parliament.uk/petitions-committee

Jo Churchill MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

21 June 2022

Dear Minister,

Thank you for responding to the [debate](#) on breed specific legislation on Monday 6 June, relating to e-petition [603988](#), “Repeal Breed Specific Legislation”.

While we were grateful for your response, it did not respond fully to several questions that were asked in the opening speech. Given the substantial and ongoing support for petitions on this subject, we would therefore be grateful if you could respond to the following points in more detail:

- You highlighted the importance of having the right evidence base to move forward, but it is unclear if the Government’s current work on responsible dog ownership will gather new evidence on breed specific legislation, to inform decisions about reforming this. Is the Government gathering new evidence on the effectiveness of existing breed specific legislation, and the risks of banned breeds, as part of this work? If not, will the Government commission an independent evidence review—as [recommended](#) by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee in 2018—to establish whether the banned breed types are an inherently greater risk than any legal breed or cross-breed?
- You said that commercial kennels are required to meet the standards placed upon them, and are licensed by the local authority, but there remain concerns about the welfare of dogs that are being kept pending a court hearing. What steps will the Government take to ensure that all dogs held in kennels pending court proceedings under Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 have their welfare needs met and safeguarded? Will the Government arrange for independent assessors to inspect the welfare of dogs that are being kept in kennels pending a court hearing?
- You said that officials are working with police forces across the country to increase uptake of the interim exemption scheme, which allows a dog to be released and returned to its owner pending a court hearing, where the police are satisfied the dog does not pose a danger to public safety. What are officials doing to increase uptake of this scheme, and what action will the Government take if police forces do not use this scheme?



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- The law prevents the rehoming of dogs that have been identified as being a banned breed in most circumstances, even if they pose no danger to the public. Will the Government consider reforming breed specific legislation to allow the rehoming of all dogs seized under the Act by responsible, reputable, rehoming organisations, where the dog has been found to pose no danger to the public?
- When a court has found that a dog does not pose a danger to the public and does not have to be destroyed, it is still subject to a contingent destruction order, and has to be neutered, microchipped, kept on a lead and muzzled at all times when in public, and kept in a secure place so it cannot escape. Where a dog has been found by the court not to pose a danger to the public, will the Government reform breed specific legislation so that the dog is not subject to contingent destruction order, or any other requirements that do not apply to other dogs?

Finally, you were asked if you would meet the creator of the petition that was debated, so she can tell you about her own experience, and concerns about breed specific legislation. We would be grateful if you would agree to meeting the petition creator, and the petitions team would be happy to help arrange this meeting.

We would be grateful to receive your reply by no later than Thursday 14 July.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine McKinnell MP
Chair of the Petitions Committee

Christina Rees MP
Member of the Petitions Committee