



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Catherine McKinnell MP
Chair of the Petitions Committee
House of Commons
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Our ref: MC2022/02594/MO

16 March 2022

Dear Catherine,

Thank you for your letter of 1 February about Breed Specific Legislation. I apologise for the delay in responding. Defra is currently dealing with high volumes of correspondence.

The purpose of the Middlesex University report was to look at measures to reduce dog attacks and promote responsible ownership across all breeds of dog. The report does not go as far as to say that we should move away from Breed Specific Legislation but does recognise that a range of factors should be considered alongside breed in efforts to prevent dog attacks and promote responsible ownership. The report also makes recommendations addressing improved data recording and collection, consistency in enforcement practice, the quality of dog training and dog awareness courses, and improved knowledge and awareness of appropriate behaviour around dogs.

To build on this work, officials have recently set up a steering group with the police, local authority representatives and animal welfare stakeholders (including Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, and the RSPCA) to consider these recommendations in detail and provide advice to Government as to how these could be taken forward. The steering group will oversee a series of specialist subgroups that will consider the recommendations alongside further evidence and expertise from relevant stakeholders, academics and experts, and inform the steering group's final advice.

I am pleased to report that the first meeting of the steering group took place on 24 February and officials are currently working to convene the subgroups. I would be happy to provide further information on the stakeholders involved in these subgroups once they have been agreed.

We expect the work of the steering group to be concluded in early 2023, at which point the Government will consider the advice.

RT HON GEORGE EUSTICE MP