

# **Dog Attacks on Postal Workers**

**WARNING – INCLUDES GRAPHIC IMAGES OF EXAMPLE CASES**



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**Page 1 of 16**

## **Introduction:**

Figures from the NHS England show that in 2012-2013 there were 6,317 hospital admissions for dog bites or injuries, rising to a record high of 7,673 in 2015-2016, an increase of 22% in three years. A quarter of these were children. This rise in dog attacks has occurred in spite of Government efforts to address the issue through various legislative initiatives aimed at curbing dog attacks and promoting responsible dog ownership.

There has been a 76% increase in dog attack hospitalisations over the last 10 years in England. Emergency admissions to Scottish hospitals after a dog attack rose 80% over the same 10 years period, according to NHS Scotland figures. Wales figures show a 20% increase over the last 12 months alone.

7,000 Dogs have been seized by police and put in kennels over the last five years with £5m spent on kennelling.

In 1991, the most substantial piece of this legislation, the 'Dangerous Dogs Act (DDA)' was introduced. Following the CWU's 7 year 'Bite-Back' Campaign, the laws covering England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were extended to Private Property where 70% of the attacks on Postal Workers occurred and owners were previously immune from prosecution. The amendments made included the extension of dangerous dogs' legislation to private property, introduction of tougher sentences, compulsory micro-chipping and new police seizure powers thanks to the Union's concerted efforts. That has seen a welcomed and marked increase in criminal dog owner prosecutions.

Worryingly however, dog attacks continue to rise despite the current, strengthened, legal framework for protecting Postal Workers and the public. The effectiveness of the dog control laws and their enforcement therefore remains in question.

UK Governments need to review the current strategy and initiatives for dealing with dangerous dogs and discuss the benefits of alternative multi-agency approaches that raise public awareness and strongly promote responsible dog ownership. Working with dog owners and schools to increase awareness of safe and appropriate behaviour around dogs. Crack down on irresponsible dog owners and dog breeding through consistently enforced Laws and tenancy agreements. The Courts also need to use the full range of sentencing penalties and orders available to them, dealing firmly with offenders.

CWU's 'Bite-Back' campaign aims to continue to raise awareness about irresponsible dog ownership and call for a post-implementation review of the new, existing dog control laws in place and its enforcement or lack of by certain Police forces, Local Authorities and the Courts, that need to use the tools available to them and take tougher legal sanctions against the owners of dangerous dogs. We believe that the statistics show that law and order is still failing to prevent dog attacks and failing to prevent workers becoming dog attack victims. An examination of the whole approach to effectively control dangerous dogs including collaborative action between local authorities, the police and courts is urgently needed. Dog Control in the UK is still out-of-control.

Three recent horrific dog attack cases, for example, in Newquay, Boston and Wrexham on Postwomen could easily have ended in fatalities had it not been for the intervention of good Samaritans and/or the owner in the nick of time.

The CWU estimates that up to 3,000 Postal workers and around 100 BT engineers are attacked by dogs each year. These range from minor injuries to life-changing, life-threatening incidents, suffered by ordinary postmen and women going about their jobs.

And it's not only Postal and BT CWU members at risk – gas, water and electricity workers, refuse collectors, council workers, NHS staff, district nurses, home helps, health visitors, care workers, meals on wheels volunteers and many others are all vulnerable.

It's outrageous that hard-working and conscientious people, providing vital postal delivery services are still running the daily gauntlet of out of control dogs and irresponsible owners. New efforts need to be made, reviewing the laws and their enforcement to protect victims and in raising public awareness, promoting responsible dog ownership to prevent attacks taking place.

This booklet contains 30 example cases of Dog Attack Victim Postal Workers and CWU Members who have kindly agreed to have their injury photos and case summaries included in order to raise awareness of the issue amongst fellow Postal Workers and dog owners, to hopefully avoid further attacks and combat the daily menace which sees around 8 Postal Workers bitten by dogs every working day of the year. Read more on pages 10-14.

**Dave Joyce**  
**National Health, Safety & Environment Officer**  
**Communication Workers Union**

### Anthony Quinn



Barrow postman **Anthony Quinn** lost the top of his finger when a dog bit him from the other side of the letterbox as he was delivering mail in Lancaster in October 2011. "There was no sound from inside to warn me of a dog's presence and as I pushed the letter in I was bitten," Anthony recalls, adding: After being rushed to hospital in nearby Preston, doctors told him that they would have to amputate below the nail root of the small finger of his left-hand.

### Patricia Prew



Exeter Postwoman **Patricia Prew's** extensive bruising and deep flesh wounds were inflicted on her by a Golden Retriever, which attacked her as she entered the front garden of a house in Devon. Patricia was delivering mail in Budleigh and had just come through the gate when the dog "came running at her from the side of the house and jumped at her grabbing hold of her and pulling her down ripping off a chunk of flesh from her arm skin and muscle.

### Andrew Berge



South London Postman **Andrew Berge** suffered severe damage to his left-hand ring finger and tendon In August 2011. "There was no sound or warning" he said. As he posted an item through the letterbox, a Staffordshire Bull Terrier dog bit into his fingers and held on for four to five minutes before ripping flesh from his fingers causing heavy blood loss and serious flesh, muscle, tendon and ligament damage before letting go.

### Jason Lee



Huddersfield postman **Jason Lee** needed plastic surgery on his arm In July 2013 after being badly mauled in a horrific dog attack in the Huddersfield village of Meltham left him with a 'life changing' injuries. Jason suffered a terrible injury, tearing a large chunk of muscle and flesh from his forearm as he protected his face when the dog struck. The 41-year-old was rushed to Huddersfield General Hospital and then transferred to specialist unit at Bradford Royal Infirmary where he underwent plastic surgery.

### Elaine White



Wakefield Postwoman **Elaine White** had the top of her finger bitten off while delivering an item of mail in Wakefield, Yorkshire, in April 2008. While an ambulance took the postwoman to hospital, police arrived at the scene and, having gained access to the house, were able to recover the severed finger. However, although the officers rushed the digit to the hospital, it had been damaged so severely that surgeons were unable to re-attach it, leaving Elaine with a stump where her finger had been. Elaine experienced ongoing problems with infections in the finger which wouldn't heal.

### Glynn Page



East Sussex Postman **Glynn Page** parked his Royal Mail Van in the driveway of a customer's house and got out to deliver the Mail. As he started walking towards the front door suddenly the side gate burst open and a dog ran at him, viciously attacking him and locking on to his left hand. He fell to the ground with the weight and force of the dog's attack. He was shouting for help whilst the dog continued biting his hand. The owner then came out of the house and restrained the dog, pulling it off and ending the attack. Glynn underwent several operations on his damaged hand.

### Alan Brown



Durham Postman **Alan Brown** was performing his delivery round on 25 October 2013 when a dog scaled a 6ft fence from a property across the road from where Alan was delivering. The dog proceeded to launch a vicious attack him in the street, badly injuring his arms and legs in a sustained attack. He suffered considerable blood loss from the pulsing, deep puncture and tear wounds before being rushed to hospital for emergency surgery to both arms and both legs. He was so badly injured he was unable to walk for some time after the attack.

### Patricia Meddings



Holloway, North London Postwoman **Patricia Meddings**, feared for her life when she was set upon by the Japanese Akita in September 2013 and her leg was left "hanging by a thread" after the mauling in the savage dog attack. She needed two emergency operations to save her leg, a graft to replace the skin, and months of physiotherapy following the attack. The dog's owner had previously been told to move his letterbox outside his garden fence and control his dog but he ignored it. The dog smashed through a barrier and attacked Patricia, clamping its jaws around her right leg. She had to fight the dog and drag it to a lamp post as it tried to take her down to the floor. The uninsured, unemployed benefits claimant owner was ordered to pay her £860 compensation at £10 per fortnight and banned from owning a dog for life. The dog was given a destruction order.

### Paul Coleman



Sheffield Postman **Paul Coleman** was nearly killed in a December 2007 dog attack. Paul was mauled by two pitbull crossbreed dogs in a sustained attack as he was delivering Christmas mail. The two dogs escaped from an insecure nearby property and attacked him, grabbing a leg each, dragging him to the ground and subjecting him to a horrifying prolonged attack. Paul suffered serious leg, arm and chest injuries and lost a significant amount of blood. Paul was in intensive care for six days. He underwent many skin grafts and plastic surgery operations over subsequent months. At one stage it was feared that he could lose his right arm but Surgeons managed to save it. Paul has permanent scarring and suffers reduced mobility along with lifelong disabilities and mental injury.

### Alan Smith



Milton Keynes postman **Alan Smith** needed over 100 stitches to his face after being attacked and badly bitten by a German Shepherd dog in February 2008, which attacked him after the owners young son opened the front door as the postman walked up the front path leading to the house to deliver the mail. The large dog barged past the child and launched a ferocious attack, knocking Alan Smith to the ground and clamping its teeth into his face and chin. The owner escaped punishment because of the loophole in the law at the time - prior to May 2014, whereby dog attacks on private property were not an offence. 70% of dog attacks on Postal Workers occur on private property.

### Stuart Hughes



Gwynedd, Wales Postman **Stuart Hughes** almost lost his earlobe in autumn 2010 after an Alsatian rushed out of a house jumped at him, biting his jaw, ear and throat. The resident had seen the postman arriving and opened her front door in the north west Wales town. The dog stormed past her, launching an attack on the Postman before the owner manager to get the dog off him.

### John Allanby



Leeds Postman **John Allanby** was off work a considerable time after being attacked by a German Shepherd dog which left him with deep wound puncture and tear wounds to his hand and arm which left him out of action for several months. John said "At this address, there is an open drive, with a gate to the back garden, but the gate had been left open and the dog ran out of the open gate and went straight for me and attacked me with force," The wounds still hurts and I have been left scared for life.

## John Grainger



Chelmsford Postman **John Grainger** had finished his Delivery Round in August 2011 and was returning to collect his cycle in the Town Centre. As he bent down to unlock his cycle a Staffordshire Bull Terrier being walked off the lead by its owner rushed over and savagely attacked him ripping a large chunk of flesh out of his face and bottom lip. John had to undergo a series of operations and extensive facial reconstruction plastic surgery as a result of being savaged. After watching the attack, the dog owner casually walked off, leaving the badly injured, heavily bleeding postman on the floor. Fortunately, CCTV cameras captured the incident and the Police apprehended the dog owner who received a 9-month suspended jail sentence, 180 hours community service, a life ban from owning dogs and a Destruction Order was issued for his dog.

## Alan Jack



Stirling, Scotland Postman **Alan Jack**, suffered serious facial and nose injuries after being attacked and bitten on the face by a dog. He suffered a horror wound to his nose in the attack as he did his rounds. Alan was bitten in Riverside's Abbey Road. He received treatment at Stirling Community Hospital before being sent to the Plastic Surgery Unit at Glasgow General Hospital for surgery.

## Stephen Carabine



Belfast postman **Stephen Carabine** was opening the gate to a customer's front garden to deliver the mail when he was suddenly, savagely attacked by a German Shepherd dog in June 2011. The dog bit right through his hand and locked on. Stephen managed to struggle free and a local resident called an ambulance, which took him to hospital where medics stitched his wounds. However, after being discharged, the injury became infected and he had Cellulites up to his elbow and was admitted to hospital where he received intravenous Antibiotic treatment. As well as the stitches and the treatment for the infection, Stephen also underwent physiotherapy from a specialist plastics team. He has been left with total numbness on the back of his hand and has been advised that full feeling may never return.

## Kieran Pickles



Dewsbury Postman **Kieran Pickles** went into an address as normal, opened the first gate to go down pathway, then as he opened second gate a dog came rushing out of the house and attacked him, jumping up and grabbing hold of his left hand, causing deep lacerations to three parts of his hand. Kieran was taken straight to hospital and ended up staying in for 48 hours where he underwent surgery with internal and external stitches inserted along with treatment for infection.

## Paul Roe



Chesterfield Postman **Paul Roe** was carrying out his delivery round on 8th April 2014 when he walked into cul-de-sac, Dickens Drive. An out of control American Bulldog was running loose and savagely attacked Paul inflicting serious injuries which included Muscle and Tendon damage to his right arm and bites and bruising to both inner legs. He was rushed to hospital where he underwent complex surgery with both internal and external stitches inserted. He was given strong antibiotics to avoid infection and needed long term treatment and rehabilitation a result of the mauling.

## Stephen Oxtoby



Manchester Postman **Stephen Oxtoby** had been carrying out his usual delivery round on 26 May 2015, in Radcliffe, Greater Manchester and was just leaving a property when he noticed that a large Mastiff type dog was loose in the garden next door with two people standing at the door. Stephen being aware of the dog from previous experience of carrying out deliveries to this address turned to walk away from the property. The animal jumped over the fence and viciously attacked Stephen's his right arm. The owners of the dog called the dog back but by this time Stephen had been badly injured and was taken the Royal Bolton Hospital where he underwent surgery and had his forearm stitched up.

## Claire Offord



Romford Postwoman **Claire Offord** was attacked by a dog on the 23 February 2016 when without any warning or noise, Claire's hand was savagely seized as she pushed mail through a front door letterbox. In a terrifying, ferocious attack the tips of her fingers were completely bitten off by a dog she couldn't see, inside the house. She was rushed to Hospital and underwent emergency plastic surgery and was medicated to avoid infection. Apart from physical injury Claire suffered physiologically. At the Magistrates Court on 6 May 2016, the dog owner pleaded guilty and was convicted an aggravated offence under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. He was ordered to pay Fines, compensation and costs totalling £8,793. A 'Contingent' (Suspended) Destruction Order was imposed on the Dog and the Dog must Muzzled and have 'Mandatory' Third Party Liability Insurance cover for life.

## Jackson Park Paul



Huddersfield Postman **Jackson Park Paul** was walking along the road between delivery points in Meltham on 22 July 2016, when a dog jumped over the insecure back gate of a house he was passing, rushed at him and launched a savage, sustained attack, lasting several minutes, during which time Jackson was pulled to the floor, despite being a large man, well over 6 feet tall, indicating the dogs strength and the ferocity of the attack. The dog was finally made to release its grip on Jack and then dragged away following the actions of a brave 'good Samaritan' member of the public and nearby resident who rushed to Jackson's aid repeatedly hitting the dog with a spade until it let go. A police armed response unit attended the scene after the dog had been taken back inside its home. The dog was subsequently seized and the owner was arrested and charged with Dangerous Dogs Act Offences.

## Steve Bradbury



Rotherham Postman **Steve Bradbury** was walking up the garden path towards the door of a house he had delivered to for 6 years on 25 May 2017 when without warning 3 Staffordshire Bull Terriers came charging out of the side door and attacked him in seconds, pulling him to the ground where one dog savaged his face and the others attacked his limbs and trunk inflicting multiple bite wounds. His face was ripped open and nose bitten off. Two Women came out of the house and struggled to pull the dogs off. The owners blamed Steve before calling an Ambulance which rushed him to Sheffield's Northern General Hospital for emergency treatment and specialist plastic surgery. The Consultant surgeon told Steve that if the deep dog bite on his neck had been 10mm deeper he would not have been stitching Steve up - he would have been covering him up in the Mortuary as he would have been dead? Dozens of stitches were inserted in the various wounds and plastic surgery was performed repairing his face, neck, nose, lips, mouth and under his eyes. The dog owner pleaded guilty to an aggravated offence under the S3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

## Liam MacCallum



Glasgow Postman **Liam MacCallum** needed stitches after being attacked and injured by a large dog in 2014. Liam from Giffnock. Liam was delivering the mail on his round and when he approached a door to deliver letters he heard a dog barking inside. The next thing he knew the door opened and a very big and powerful German Shepherd dog rushed out at him, firstly biting into his hand and then as it snarled it jumped up and went for his face, biting through his right cheek. Liam managed to break free and started running down the road with the dog in pursuit. It chased after him until some window cleaners saw what was happening and managed scare the dog away. After the horrifying experience, Liam was covered in blood and very shaken up. He went to hospital where a number of stitches were needed in his face which has left a scar to remind him. He also needed medication to prevent infection.

## Adam Burrows



Bury St Edmunds Postman **Adam Burrows** was delivering door to door leaflet mail on 4 November 2017 when a Staffordshire Bull Terrier Dog which was behind the door unbeknown to Adam, jumped up and ripped the mail from his hand through the letterbox and at the same time biting off the top of a finger.

## Gavin Murrell



On 8 May 2017 Ipswich Postman **Gavin Murrell** knocked on the front door of a house to deliver a parcel but he got no answer. He wrote out a Royal Mail 'Something For You' Card and as he was posting the Card through the customer's front door, he put his finger through the letter box aperture and without warning or a sound, a Boxer dog attacked the Card and his hand. He was severely bitten and the tip of a finger on his left hand was bitten off by the dog.



### Martin Cook



Dagenham Postman **Martin Cook** was delivering mail in Springfield Road on his Essex round on 22 June 2011 at 10.30am. As he attempted to leave the property he was viciously attacked from behind by a German Sheppard dog. This savage attack commenced on the customer driveway and spilled out onto the public highway as Martin tried to escape the grip of the savage animal. He received bite wounds to his hands and a very deep wound to his leg causing him to collapse with large blood loss, He was rushed to hospital for surgery and subsequently developed blood poisoning, cellulites which required IV anti-biotic treatment.

### Debbie Jones



Wrexham Postwoman **Debbie Jones** was collecting mail from a post box on Newbridge Road, on 6 April 2018 when without warning a large Bernese Mountain Dog/Rottweiler cross, which had escaped from a nearby house, rushed at her from nowhere and viciously attacked her. The dog inflicted several deep, serious injuries to her right arm and both legs which included severe puncture wounds and torn flesh as she was attempting to defend herself and fight the dog off. Luckily, two passing good Samaritan workman rescued Debbie, getting her into their van and to safety. Debbie was rushed to hospital for emergency treatment and surgery. Had the attack continued it could have been fatal? The dog was later destroyed.

### Sharon Singer



Boston Postwoman **Sharon Singer** received 19 separate injuries when she was pounced on by two large powerful Doberman dogs at an address in Wrangle, near Boston on Monday 3 July 2017. Four hours of complex reconstruction surgery and skin grafts by specialist surgeons was needed, to repair muscles, tendons, nerves and ligament damage. Several further operations and a long hospital stay followed before she was able to go home. As Sharon entered the garden of the address, to deliver mail, the two big powerful dogs raced aggressively from the house and attacked her. Sharon had to undergo extensive treatment and further operations to deal with her various serious injuries. The owner pleaded guilty to an aggravated offence under S3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act and was sentenced to Community Service and was ordered to pay Victim Compensation and the dogs were given a contingent or suspended destruction order.

### Claire Stanyer



Newquay postwomen **Claire Stanyer**, was approaching a house on Saturday 8 July 2017, when the door opened as the resident was leaving. A large Alsatian dog pushed past her and rushed out, savaging Claire in the street, biting into her right forearm with a crunch, causing a deep large wound. Claire fought to get free as the dog continued to attack her, latching onto her right hip and buttock where it wouldn't let go. Claire screamed in pain as the dog owner attempted to pull it off. Bleeding heavily she was rushed to hospital, in state of shock and distress. She was given Morphine and underwent surgery. Surgeons found the dog had chipped and left teeth marks on the bone of her arm and had chewed away the muscle which will not grow back. The Owner pleaded guilty to an aggravated offence under S3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, was ordered to pay Victim compensation and the Dog received a suspended destruction order.

**Clair Kami**



Liverpool Postwoman **Clair Kami** was delivering mail in North North Liverpool on 12 November 2016. As Clair knelt down to get a small parcel from her Mail satchel, a loose dog which had escaped from a nearby house across the road ran over and attacked her, biting into her lower left leg. Clair fought to get the dog off and her screams alerted nearby neighbours who came to her aid. The dog owner had accidentally left the door and side gate to the house open. The dog owner agreed to have the dog voluntarily destroyed. Clair was admitted to hospital overnight due to the severity of the bite wound and the following morning she underwent emergency surgery to repair her leg.

**Karen Tidman**



Coventry Postwoman **Karen Tidman** had just delivered a 'signed-for' delivery on Foleshill road. After the customer signed for the item Karen turned to leave the property when a Japanese Akita dog leapt on to her, biting her and ripping open her arm, leaving deep wounds and puncture injuries which bled heavily. Karen was kept in hospital and underwent surgery, including skin grafts and was given anti-biotic medication and pain killing drugs. She remained under the hospital for ongoing treatment.



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# **The UK Dangerous Dogs Problem And Where Do We Go Now!**

## **Background:-**

In 2007/2008 the CWU launched the 'Bite Back' campaign to get the Dangerous Dogs Act extended, to get tougher sentences and to raise awareness about the epidemic scale of the problem of dog attacks on Postal Workers plus draw attention to the growing number of dog attacks on children and the public and the rapidly growing number of serious injuries and deaths caused by dogs with bad owners.

- Two postal workers were nearly killed in dog attacks at Christmas 2007 and 2008 - 6,500 Postmen and Women were attacked by dogs that same year.
- As a result the CWU launched its 'Bite Back' campaign (in 2008) aimed at getting changes to the Dangerous Dogs Act, as follows:-

1. Extending the Dangerous Dogs Act to protect people who are attacked on private property. 70 per cent of dog attacks on Postmen and Women are on private property where the owners were immune from prosecution.
2. Tougher sentences for those convicted of Dangerous Dogs Offences.
3. Dog Control Notices introduced as a preventative measure.
4. Extended Police powers in relation to the seizure of Dangerous Dogs.
5. Compulsory microchipping of all dogs in order to keep track of animals and their owners.

## **New Extended Laws Achieved:-**

With the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010, The Dogs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 was extended in line with the Union's objectives, primarily extending the law to Private Property and thereby covering the 70% of dog attacks on Postal Workers that in which previously, irresponsible dog owners were immune from any prosecution.

## **Dog Attack Enforcement Problems across the UK.**

The biggest problem we face now is the inconsistencies between various Police Forces in dealing with dog attacks. There are 45 UK Police Forces and they decide their own priorities and deployment of resources. Trying to get the police to take this whole issue of Dog Attacks as seriously as they should do and take more punitive action through Prosecutions than by the issuing of just a community resolution order has become a real problem. It's the Police's job investigating each case to get it to prosecution standard but they seem reluctant to do so in many cases.

The Police clearly don't see Dog Attacks as a priority and appear to have other concerns and priorities so often Police Forces don't view dog attacks seriously enough which means offenders go unpunished and dog attacks will continue. We come across repeat offenders who were dealt with by the Police issuing a Community Resolution Orders or Warnings which doesn't work.

Unless we can get 'Top Down' support to deal with the 'Out Of Control' Dangerous Dogs issue and raise public awareness about the absolute need for responsible dog ownership and tough consequences for those who fail and offend then the problem will continue.

## **What is a Community Resolution?**

A Community Resolution is an alternative way of dealing with less serious crimes, allowing officers to use their professional judgement when dealing with offenders. It can be used for offences such as low level public order, criminal damage, theft, and minor assaults. Community Resolution will enable a quick resolutions, speedy justice outside of court and closure to their crime. There's been "a massive increase" in the number of crimes dealt with just by community resolution including serious crimes and now dog attacks since the police cuts started - breaking all the expert guidance and promises from government that they would only be used in low level incidents.

Whether this is due to the lack resources is questionable. Police Numbers have increased by 1000 in the last 10 years in Scotland whereas due to cuts there are 22,000 less Police Officers in the UK as a whole with those cuts mainly affecting England and Wales with a smaller drop in Northern Ireland. The

impact of those cuts must have an impact on the forces concerned and in turn manifest itself in reluctance to prosecute Dog Attack cases - perhaps not surprisingly.

### **Scotland Dangerous Dogs Issues and Problems:**

Over 1,500 Scottish Postal Workers have been attacked by dogs in last 5 years and 2,500 since the new Law, the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010 came into force. So is it ineffective?

The law in Scotland on Dangerous Dogs is applied differently than that in England and Wales (even though it is the same Act) so it is much more difficult to get a conviction, For example, in Scotland you need to be able to prove that the person in charge of the dog believed it would attack. Whereas in England and Wales the focus is on taking steps to ensure it does not attack. Added to that is the lack of ability to bring a private prosecution Scotland whereas it's a straightforward process in the rest of the UK. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland Royal Mail Lawyers supported by the CWU have succeeded with around 15 private prosecutions of Irresponsible Dog Owners whose dogs have attacked and injured Postal Workers, in cases where the Police and CPS have failed to prosecute for one reason or another.

The Police and Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service need to stop hiding behind this unacceptable 'One Free Bite' type rule or doctrine and misjudgements about owner culpability and start taking this issue of Dog Attacks much more seriously.

Additionally, Local Authorities in Scotland have the power to issue Dog Control Notices but this preventative measure is underused.

### **It's No Joke!**

Sadly the Cartoon Caricatures and jokes about Dogs Biting Postmen still prevail and Postal Workers are seen as fair game by the public and even the police but in reality nothing could be further from the truth as these terrifying attacks result in serious physical and psychological injuries some of which are life changing and full recovery isn't achieved.

### **Action Now Needed:**

**The CWU campaign achieved its main objectives by 2014 but the UK Governments now need a post implementation review of the Dog Control Laws and their enforcement, focusing on Further Changes and government initiatives such as:-**

- A Government commitment to better Prevention.
- Consistent, tougher enforcement by all Police Forces and all the courts.
- Increased Police (Dog Legislation Officers) and Local Authority Dog Wardens resources.
- Raising public awareness and Education on the issue of Dog Attacks and Dog Control problems.
- Promote better Dog Ownership Education and Training.
- Effective Sentencing and consistency from the Courts – using the full range of sentencing powers.
- Introduction of Dog Control Notices (DCNs) and consistent use where they are available to enable early intervention by enforcement officers, with owners and their dogs. The may help dog control by providing a simple preventative tool for Police and Local Authorities to serve on the irresponsible owners of nuisance, aggressive dogs in order to avoid serious incidents and attacks happening. The present Community Protection Notices (CPNs) in England and Wales are to complex, cumbersome, unspecific, slow, resource intensive and not often used because of this.
- DCNs once served should also contain the minimum requirements of i.e. Third Party Liability Insurance, Microchip, Muzzle & Lead in Public, Owner & Dog Training.
- Enforcement of the Control of Dogs Order 1992 which states that any dog in a public place must wear a collar and tag with the name and address (including postcode) of the owner engraved or written on it, or engraved on a tag. A telephone number is optional. Maximum Fine is £5000.
- Introduce compulsory third party dog insurance which would help provide proper compensation for victims of dog attacks from the owners of the dogs. (The Dogs Trust Membership Scheme provides £1M Third Party Liability Cover for under 50p per week, 25p for over 60's - so it's not expensive).
- Reinstate the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme (CICS) Payments for Dog Attack Victims (abolished by the Tory/Lib.Dem UK Coalition Government).

- Those convicted of DDA Offences involving injury to face an automatic dog ownership ban, compulsory third party insurance on any dogs owned in future and a mandatory victim Compensation Order with consistent payment levels.
- A review of Law to deal with the impact of the [Regina v Robinson-Pierre \[2013\]](#) Appeal Court Judgement which is causing turmoil in the Courts in so much as the offence of allowing a dog to be dangerously out of control contrary to section 3(1) of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, was a strict liability offence. However, since this judgement some Courts are now stating that nevertheless the Court requires proof by the prosecution of an act or omission on the part of the defendant (with or without fault) that to some (more than minimal) degree the defendant caused or permitted that prohibited state of affairs to come about.
- The Scottish Government and Scottish Enforcers must stop following the "One Free Bite" rule which was never supposed to be adopted. The same 'strict liability' approach must be adopted across the UK.

### **Dangerous Dogs Facts in the UK:-**

- 40 dog attack deaths have occurred (35 since 2005) – Approx 50% young children.
- 95,000 postal workers are on the UK streets six days a week 52 weeks of the year delivering 60 Million items to 29 million addresses daily and as such are the most at risk group of people in relation to dog attacks.
- Online shopping and e-retail is increasing daily the number of packages and parcels and 'signed for' deliveries. This is good for business and jobs but it's also increasing the dog attack risks to postal delivery workers who have to regularly knock on doors and customers have to open the door to collect and sign for their items. This means more delivery staff are at risk of coming into direct contact with dogs if the owner hasn't secured their animal before opening the door.
- Postal Workers suffer finger amputations and many more serious hand injuries caused by dog bites through the letter box.
- Letter Box Cages on the inside of doors to catch the post or outside post boxes can help reduce dog attacks which cause physical injury.
- 3,000 dog attacks a year occur on CWU members/Postal Workers.
- Approximately 1,000 minor dog attacks go unreported
- Summer holidays and the Christmas period see spikes in the number of dog attacks each year on Postal Workers. This is because at Xmas, the mail volumes double and in the summer the kids are on holiday, the weather's good and the families are out and about in the garden at home with windows/doors open and the dogs are outside.

### **Dog attacks are preventable:-**

Dog attacks are almost always preventable, if owners are responsible, keeping their animals under control and if initial signs of aggression are recognised and addressed immediately.

The growth in online shopping and signed for deliveries is resulting in Postal delivery workers having to knock on doors and for customers to open doors to collect and sign for the growing number of parcels which increases the possibility of direct contact with dogs in their own home or territory which they'll naturally defend.

To help reduce the number of dog attacks, owners need to increase their awareness of animal behaviour, take responsibility, recognise when their pet is showing signs of territorial aggression and take effective control.

Although Christmas and school summer holidays see a spike in dog attacks, on Postal workers, its important owners are observant as to a dog's behaviour at all times and take action to maintain control both on their private property and in public.

By working together with dog owners, vets, CWU members, government, police, local authorities, and animal charities - dogs and postal workers can live and work in harmony.

# **CWU/Royal Mail Dog Awareness Week in July**

## **-'Top Tips For Owners'**

During Dog Awareness Week the Union along with Royal Mail have been promoting "Responsible Dog Ownership" through a number of simple Dog Safety tips for owners as set out below:-

- Ensure your dog is out of the way before the postman or woman arrives. Put the dog in a secured room or place your pet in the back garden or a faraway room.
- If you have a back garden, please close off the access, in case your dog could get round to the front when the postman calls.
- Dog attacks can happen when you've opened the door to collect or sign for an item. Please keep your dog in another room before answering the door and make sure children don't open the door, as dogs can push by them and attack.
- Give your dog some food or a toy to occupy them while your mail is being delivered
- Wait 10 minutes after your mail has arrived to let your pet back into your hallway or outside. Keep everything as calm and low-key as possible. Check the Postman/Woman has left and the garden gate is shut.
- If your dog likes to attack your mail coming through the door then consider installing a wire letter receptacle. It will protect your post, and your postman's fingers.
- If it's not practical for you to keep your dog away from a postman delivering your mail, please consider fitting a secure mailbox on the edge of your property.
- Please ensure your dog is microchipped, wearing a collar and tag and that your contact details on the tag and microchip are up to date (Both are required by Law).

# Dog Legislation Summary

## **Dangerous Dogs Act 1991**

Section 1. Dogs of the following type are banned under the Dangerous Dog Act: • The Pit Bull Terrier • Fila Brasileiro • Dogo Argentino • Japanese Tosa

Section 3. It is a criminal offence (for the owner and/or the person in charge of the dog) to allow a dog to be 'dangerously out of control'. A 'dangerously out of control' dog can be defined as a dog that has injured someone or a dog that a person has grounds for reasonable apprehension that it may do so. A dog chasing, barking at or jumping up at a person can be grounds for a complaint, so owners need to ensure that their dog is under control at all times. If a dog injures a person, it may be seized by the police and on conviction the penalty may include one or more of the following: a prison sentence, a fine a ban on owning/keeping dogs, compensation order, costs, destruction or suspended destruction order on the dog. The court will automatically presume that the dog will be destroyed unless the court is persuaded that it is not a danger to the public, in which case it may be subject to a contingent/suspended destruction and control order.

## **Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014**

This amended the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. The changes introduced: • Extended section 3 of the DDA 1991 to covers attacks on private property (as well as in public places) • Removed the mandatory requirement for police to seize and kennel prohibited dogs which they do not consider to be of risk to the public • Extended Police powers to seize dogs. • Introduced Community Protection Notices which can be used following a Warning, to prevent incidences of dog aggression.

## **The Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010**

This came into force in February 2011 and is enforced alongside the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 to tackle irresponsible dog ownership. The legislation extended the law to cover private property, as well as in public places and introduced Dog Control Notices to be used as a preventative measure.

## **The Dogs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011**

In Northern Ireland the Dangerous Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 was extended by the Dogs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This Act: • Extended dangerous dogs legislation to cover private property. • Made microchipping of dogs compulsory • Allowed Dog Wardens to attach conditions to a dog licence where a dog's behaviour has led to a breach of the Dogs Order (similar to a Dog Control Notice) • Increases the dog licence fee to £12.50 (with some exceptions) • Made it an offence for an owner's dog to attacks and injure another person's pet.

## **The Control of Dogs Order 1992 [Dog Identification]**

Any dog in a public place must wear a collar with the name and address of the owner engraved or written on it, or engraved on a tag. A telephone number is optional (but advisable). Guide dogs, Emergency rescue dogs, Armed Forces dogs, HM Customs and Excise dogs, Police dogs, Hounds and certain working dogs are exempt.

## **Compulsory microchipping of dogs**

It is a legal requirement to have all dogs microchipped in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Failure to comply with the regulations could result in a fine of up to £500 in England, Wales and Scotland.

Nuisance and Dangerous Dogs Community Protection Notices and Byelaws

In the case of noisy and nuisance animals, the local authority can serve a noise abatement notice, or Community Protection Notice, which if unheeded can result in fines and legal expenses.

## **Animals Act 1971**

Owners can be liable for damage caused by their dog under this Act.

## **Dangerous Dogs (Amendment) Act 1997.**

The 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act was amended by the Dangerous Dogs (Amendment) Act 1997. The 1997 Act removed the mandatory destruction order provisions on DDA Section 1 'banned breeds' and reopened the Index of Exempted Dogs for dogs which the courts consider would not pose a risk to the public. The courts were given discretion on sentencing, with only courts able to direct that a dog be placed on the list of exempted dogs.

## **Pet Travel Scheme**

In January 2012, the UK harmonised its pet travel rules with the rest of the European Union (EU) to allow for easier pet travel. The changes for anyone travelling within the EU or non-EU listed country require the owner to ensure that their dog has: • A microchip • A rabies vaccination • A pet passport or veterinary certificate • Tapeworm treatment • A blood test 30 days (if travelling in to EU/UK) • Owners must use an authorised carrier and an approved route when travelling with pets. Commercial transportation of pets is covered by separate EU/UK Regulations.

## **The Road Traffic Act 1988**

Dogs travelling in vehicles should not be a nuisance or in any way distract the driver during a journey. If a dog is injured in a car accident, the driver must stop and give their details to the person in charge of the dog. If there is no person in charge of the dog, the incident must be reported to the police within 24 hours.

## **The Guard Dogs Act 1975**

Many of the provisions of the Guard Dogs Act 1975 – including Sections 2, 3, 4 and 6 relating to the licensing of kennels – are not yet in force. Section 1 of the Act prohibits the use of a guard dog unless a handler capable of controlling the dog is present on the premises at all times, and the dog is under the strict control of the handler unless secured (and is not at liberty to 'run free'). The use of any such guard dog is prohibited unless a notice warning that a guard dog is present is clearly exhibited at each entrance to the premises. Under Section 5 of the Act, a breach of Section 1 will result in criminal liability and a fine of up to £5,000.



Belfast postman Stephen Carabine's Royal Mail shirt after he was attacked by a German Shepherd Dog.

