

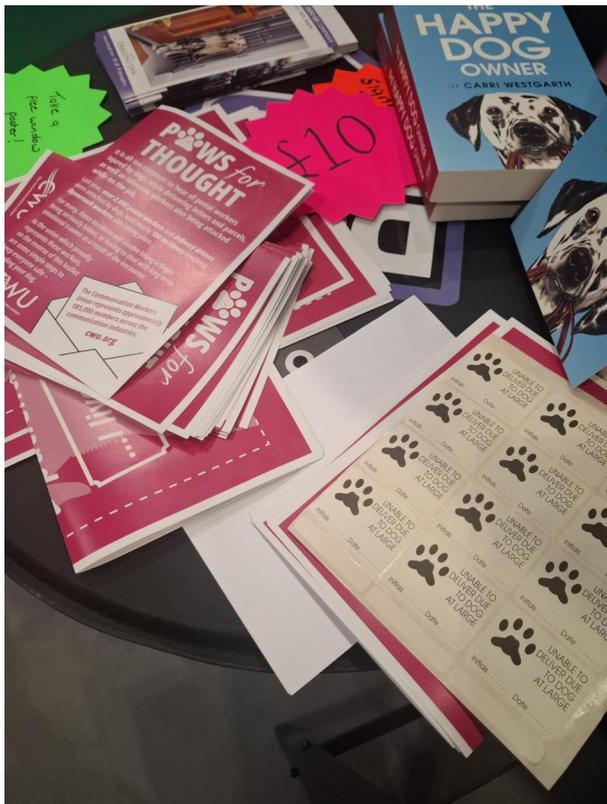
CWU DOG SAFETY ACTIVITY REPORT 2025 - 2026



CWU AT CRUFTS 2026









PAWS for THOUGHT

It is all too common to hear of postal workers injured by dogs while delivering letters and parcels, as well as telecoms workers also being attacked while on the job.

Last year, **over 2,000 postal workers** and **delivery drivers** were attacked by dogs, with nearly **100 incidents** involving **Openreach workers** also taking place.

For many, these incidents will involve losing a finger, being seriously bitten, or having to deal with long-term emotional trauma as a result of the encounter.

As the union which proudly represents these workers, on the reverse of this leaflet are some simple steps to keep everyone safe – including your dog.

The Communication Workers Union represents approximately 185,000 members across the communication industries.
cwu.org

CWU
The communications union

HOW TO KEEP EVERYONE SAFE...

-  Please don't open your door until your dog is safely secured, in another room or behind a gate; if you have a back or side garden, please make sure your dog can't get out.
-  Install a letter box cage, so that dogs can't snatch or attack the mail – and the hand of those delivering it.
-  Provide an alternative delivery point.

If you are struggling to do any of the above, then please consider fitting a secure mailbox on the edge of your property that allows safe deliveries.

We all love our dogs, but nobody deserves to lose a finger or face violent, unexpected attacks while they're at work, be those attacks from humans or from our best friends.

Please consider the suggestions above – and thank you for being a responsible dog owner.



PAWS FOR POSTIES – SCHOOL ASSEMBLY RESOURCE DOWNLOAD
Bring safety to life in your classroom! PDSA and CWU's Paws for Posties assembly is a ready-to-use resource that teaches children how to stay safe around dogs and help keep visitors like postal workers safe.

CWU
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MDSP
merseyside dog safety partnership

merseydogsafe.co.uk

   CWUNews

 The Communications Union

 #TheCWU CWU.ORG

The CWU were at Crufts as a guest of the Dog G8 company, who have worked with MDSP/ Liverpool University previously [DogG8 secure gates protecting visitors to properties](#) Over 200 Leaflets were handed out which convert into window stickers for community benefit to identify that a dog resides on the property.

2026 CWU DOG ATTACK BOOKLET

Dog Attacks on Postal Workers

WARNING – INCLUDES GRAPHIC IMAGES OF EXAMPLE CASES



Many may recall that back in 2018, Dave Joyce, Former Health, Safety & Environment National Officer, issued a Dog Attack Booklet which included details and **graphic images of injuries suffered by CWU members** and was used both internally and externally to support the union's wider 'Dangerous Dog – Bite Back campaign'.

A revised and updated 2026 version of this booklet is being considered to again highlight the serious and all too often life changing injuries suffered by members following dog attacks, Where CWU Safety Reps or members have individual case photographs where permission is granted from the member concerned, these details please be sent direct to:

lpietrzykowska@cwu.org for potential inclusion in the 2026 booklet, we would also like to publish cases whereby members have suffered from post-traumatic stress and longer-term anxiety linked to a dog attack, as this report below from our CWU Working partner Dr John Tulloch advises that Mental Health trauma succeeds in 1 in 7 cases. **This report can be accessed by clicking on the text below the photo**

Mental trauma succeeds 1 in 7 dog related injuries, claims data suggest



1 - [Dr John Tulloch report- Mental health trauma following dog attacks](#)

“Dog attacks on postal workers remain a serious concern. A study exploring personal injury claims, found that 28% of all dog bite claims were for deliver workers. These workers were injured in three ways; the door was opened and an unrestrained dog rushed out (44%), there was a loose dog on the property (32%), and being bitten through the letter box (22%). These bites can have devastating physical and psychological consequences, with at least 4% diagnosed with PTSD after a bite, affecting quality of life and ability to work, we continue to raise awareness on this issue and support the CWU in highlighting the devastating impact of dog attacks

Dr John Tulloch, March 2026.



[Dr John Tulloch BVetMed DipRN MSc PhD FHEA DipECVPH MRCVS](#)

Lecturer in Veterinary Public Health

Working in partnership with our collaborators



The Dogs trust is currently speaking with companies across the utilities and telecoms sector about dog bite prevention and **potential formation of a new CWU Telecoms industry education partnership** with the dog's trust is in discussion.

Researchers from the dogs trust are acutely aware of the psychological impact and risks within the Telecoms industry from dog attacks and near misses inside homes and on properties

The Dogs Trust and RSPCA have recently developed a "Responsible Dog Ownership" framework which is now this out to consultation.

Please consider reviewing the framework here: [Responsible dog ownership | Dogs Trust](#) it -it will probably take 10-12 minutes to do (including watching the video introducing the framework).

The CWU have pledged support for a Dog's trust submission to the Office for National Statistics in relation to the 2031 England and Wales census, for more information about this see [Census 2031 topic consultation](#)

The proposal recommends **inclusion of a census question on pet ownership**. At present, there is no comprehensive, consistent national dataset on the number, distribution, or basic characteristics of pets in England and Wales, despite the significant implications for animal welfare, public health, housing policy, emergency planning, and local and national service provision, and much more. As a result, policy and planning in these areas often rely on fragmented or outdated estimates.

The national census represents a unique opportunity to establish a robust evidence-base that would support better-informed decision-making by government and local authorities, strengthen the work of the animal welfare and veterinary sector, and provide a valuable resource for academic research.

The Dog's trust Research team have put together a Year in Review to showcase their activities, key findings, and publications from 2025. You can access this year's (and previous year's) Review here:

<https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/research>

[Liverpool University \(and partners\) response to the Royal College of Emergency Medicine guidance paper on dog bites](#)

Liverpool University have drafted a joint response to the Royal College of Emergency Medicine dog bite reporting guidance recently released

[RCEM guidance on dog bites](#)

The following response submitted to the RCEM has been supported by those people/organisations listed below

Concerned response to the RCEM paper

Those who endorse RCEM letter from MDSP

Name	Position	Organisation
Joanna Clough	Director	The Dog Safe Workplace Ltd
Helene Svinos	Emergency Medicine Doctor	Manchester Royal Infirmary
Sam Halligan	Inspector	Greater Manchester Police Dog Legislation Office
Anna Ewers-Clark	Veterinary Evidence & Content Manager	PDSA
Jamie McGovern	Health & Safety Policy assistant	The Communication Workers Union
Christian Duncan	Consultant Plastic Surgeon	Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust
Emma Kennedy	Sergeant for Search Dogs and Dog Legislation	Greater Manchester Police

Why Dog attack victims are not often entitled to victims of crime compensation- Ongoing CWU campaign of change.



Criminal Injuries
Compensation
Authority

"The CICA Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority - GOV.UK **does not currently compensate dog attack victims (workers with applied access rights) who suffer level 3 & level 4 dog attacks.** This, despite Level 3 & 4 being classified as a 'violent' dog attack and a **crime under Sec 3 of the Dangerous dogs act.** This is the case even if the dog owner is found guilty of an aggravated offence under the above statute act, eligibility to claim is not given to the dog attack victim unless the dog has been used as a 'weapon' with intent."

For any such CICA application to succeed currently, the dog has to be used as a weapon. It is not sufficient that somebody was negligent in allowing their dog off the lead even if the dog would be classified as being a restricted breed under the Dangerous Dogs Act. It has to be that the dog was set upon you deliberately.

Given the increase in cases of serious Psychological harm. **We believe that Level 3 or 4 dog attacks on workers with applied access who are injured in their course of work should be eligible to apply for CICA award as a victim of an aggravated offence under section 3 of the 1991 Dangerous dogs act** once being able to show, in addition to sustaining an injury that:

- * the incident happened in the United Kingdom
- * it happened within the past two years (or within two years of your 18th birthday)
- * the matter was reported to the police in a prompt manner (within a maximum of 72 hours);
- * you have co-operated fully with the police in their investigations.

Why is Compensation Important?

Both physical and mental health injuries are the result of being attacked by any Dog, let alone by one listed as a Dangerous Dog, as previous testimony in the media, and on the CWU's national website and on Unionsafety; exemplifies.

In particular, PTSD has been seen to stop postal workers attacked and injured by a dog attack, from being able to return to work. With similar cases existing of this happening too to CWU members working within the Telecoms industry.

The last issue of the CWU's Dangerous Dog Attacks document on the instances and injuries sustained, highlights the shocking human cost of a dangerous dog attack in terms of both the physical injuries sustained, but also of the mental health toll suffered.

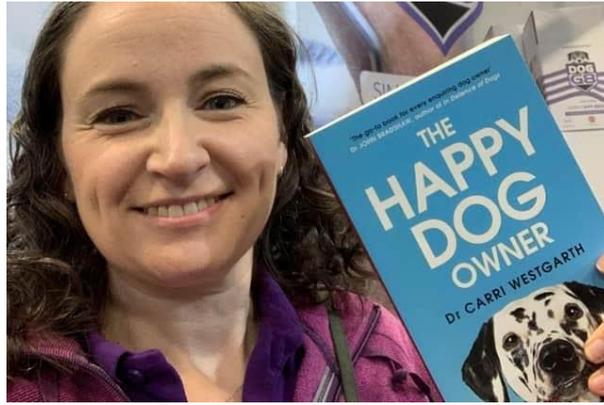
Dog attack victims should be recognised as victims of crime- **CWU continued campaign**

THE RIGHT TIME TO BAN LOW LEVEL LETTERBOXES IS NOW



2 - "Preventing smaller dogs from accessing the letterbox in the first place through appropriate door design is a simple way to reduce the risk of incidents."

Professor Carri Westgarth, who is a world leading expert on dog attacks, has expressed support for the CWU's campaign, saying: ***"Preventing smaller dogs from accessing the letterbox in the first place through appropriate door design is a simple way to reduce the risk of incidents. At the Merseyside Dog Safety Partnership, we strongly support the use of technical controls such as product designs like this because they do not rely on changing human or dog behaviour in order to be effective."*** **Professor Carri Westgarth**, Chair in Human-Animal Interaction, April 2025



3 - Professor Carri Westgarth

Thanks to the efforts of **MSP Stuart McMillan in robustly supporting our low level letterbox campaign** The Cabinet Secretary for Housing has subsequently confirmed that it is the Scottish Government's intent to include such amendments within the next edition of the Technical Handbooks, expected to come into force from April 2026.

This is a result of Stuart McMillan's joint lobbying of the Scottish Government with the CWU (Hamish Menzies/Dave Joyce) Government officials have been assessing options for amendments to building standards guidance, with the intent of providing more explicit guidance on the positioning of letterboxes where these are provided in new dwellings.

The Building Standards Division have just published its April 2026 edition of the Technical Handbooks which includes updated guidance under Standard 4.1 'Access to buildings', Clause 4.1.7 'Accessible entrances' which contains the new point (g) noting:

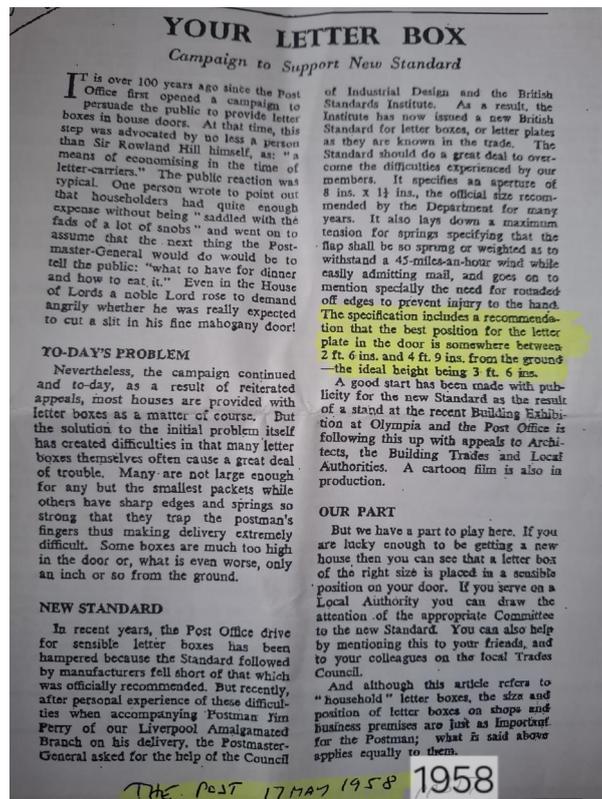
"if fitted with a letterplate, the height of the aperture should be located at a height between 700 mm and 1.7 m above ground level so as not to endanger the health and safety of persons using such apertures in accordance with the recommendations of BS EN 13724: 2013."

You can access the new Technical Handbooks using the following link: [Building standards technical handbook: domestic - April 2026 - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/technical-handbooks/domestic-2026/pages/letterboxes.aspx)

We continue to pursue the same in England/Wales and many supporters from this MDSP group have given us real impetus. We (CWU) met in January with Samantha Dixon (MP Chester North & Neston) Samantha Dixon MBE MP - GOV.UK who is the Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Anneliese Midgley (MP Knowsley) to discuss the CWU's letterboxes campaign. Samantha Dixon said that she

fully supported the union's case and informed us that, as well as the effect on postmen and postwomen of low letterboxes. The Under-Secretary said that she would make some recently undertaken research available to Anneliese Midgley MP for Knowsley and to the CWU. It was unknown prior to the meeting that the UK government has been involved in research and ergonomic studies concerning the design and placement of physical letterboxes, primarily to inform updates to building regulations and improve safety and accessibility for both postal workers and residents. It was presented at our meeting as 'accessibility' research from a front door delivery aspect and a 'behind the door' aspect too. The key detail of this research is outlined below. Ergonomic Research: The Department for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), has commissioned and carried out ergonomic research, including studies on the reaching requirements for letterboxes. This research considers the needs of disabled people and those with long-term health conditions to inform statutory guidance on accessibility in buildings. Reach ranges for ambulant disabled people focusing on heights and in particular the lower end of the reach range and the use of letter boxes and picking up letters is a key consideration. Final Government report was published in October 2025 Access to and use of buildings:

CWU have been campaigning on low level letterboxes since 1958





4 - CWU meeting with with Samantha Dixon (MP Chester North & Neston) in January 2026 [Samantha Dixon MBE MP - GOV.UK](#) who is the Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and with Anneliese Midgley (MP Knowsley)

10 Minute Rule Motion: Low-level Letterboxes - second reading due 11th July 2025



5 - Anneliese Midgley MP

The Communication Workers Union have been campaigning on this issue since 1958!

- The CWU has long called for a legal ban on Low-level letterboxes for all UK new builds and front door replacements.
- Postal delivery workers are at significant risk of musculoskeletal injury and dog bites when posting mail through any low-level letterbox.
- The current British standard letterbox height (70cm min – 170cm max) is **advisory** rather than mandatory. Building companies have increasingly ignored this guidance to install Low-level letter boxes and this trend is set to continue without a change in the law. The Labour Government have planned to build 1.5 million new homes during the current term of parliament, so legislative change is absolutely needed.
- Rising dog ownership, an increase in dog attacks and heavier mail bags have all exacerbated the risk to postal workers from low-level letter boxes.

- The main purpose of a ban is to protect postal workers but there are other people who often access letterboxes too! (Recent letterbox attacks on MPs can be mentioned?)
- The NHS, Police, Courts, and Royal Mail would also benefit significantly from a reduction in the costs of dog attacks, industrial injuries, and prosecutions.
- The lady Justice Carr & Mr Justice Saini court of appeal ruling in 2022 set a UK case law precedent for prosecutions for dog attacks at letterboxes under Section 3 of the Dangerous dogs' act, this ruling came after a postal worker suffered the loss of a finger during a letterbox attack in 2017.
- The statement in this ruling said, ***“Parliament has chosen to put the burden on those who own, or in charge of a dog to ensure that effective steps are taken to ensure that the dog does not cause injury to anyone,”***

So surely parliament **should also accept a burden of responsibility** to act and bring forward legislative change that significantly **lowers the likelihood of risk** for postal workers and other workers too.

The Communication Workers Union recently (In April & May 2025) undertook a survey on the risk issue of low-level letterboxes.

The survey returned responses from Health & Safety Representatives covering over **1 million** of the 1.8 million UK postcodes.

The key findings were-

93% of CWU H&S representatives surveyed had experienced Health & Safety issues with 'New - build' homes in their area within the last 5 years installing letterboxes that are **lower than the British standard height recommendations.**

99% of CWU H&S representatives surveyed believed it would make delivery work **significantly safer**, if the UK adopted & enforced The European Standard EN 13724 BSEN13724 recommended letterbox placement dimensions were made mandatory under UK law? for the minimum height of letterboxes?

90% of CWU H&S representatives surveyed indicated they have had postal workers complain to them directly within last 2 years about the Health & Safety risk issue of accessing low level letterboxes

Also, we do have very strong academic support with dog bite research experts also supporting this needed legislative change.

Dr John Tulloch, renowned canine expert, and veterinarian said-

*“Dog attacks on postal workers remain a serious concern, with Low-level letterboxes **posing a key risk**. These low-positioned boxes allow dogs of all sizes to easily reach and bite fingers and hands as mail is delivered.”*

Lizz Lloyd Royal Mail Safety Director said-

*The Royal Mail is also of the opinion that BSEN 13724 (2013) should be **made mandatory in UK law for all new builds and front door replacements**. The health, safety & wellbeing of our employees is of paramount importance, and we seek to reduce risks at source wherever reasonably practicable, mandating the standard would help to significantly reduce the risk of both musculoskeletal disorder and dog attacks, not only for our employees but all national couriers by reducing pain & injury*

What is ultimately needed is as follows-

That the letterbox placement dimensions set out within the current recommended UK industry standard BSEN 13724 (2013) be **made mandatory in UK law for all new builds and front door replacements**.

This UK industry standard, BSEN 13724 (2013), referring to the letterbox as the ‘aperture’, states: ‘For ergonomic reasons the lower edge of the lowest aperture and the upper edge of the highest aperture should be at a height between 700mm (approx. 2ft 3½in) and 1700mm (approx. 5ft 7in) measured from the delivery floor level. In special cases such as groups of apertures or in historical buildings with limitations the range may be extended but should be between 400mm (approx. 1ft 4in) and 1800mm (approx. 5ft 11in).

The latest available data shows that **Royal Mail postal workers had 18,000 back-related injuries and absence spells in 2021/2022**, sustaining back problems connected wholly or in part because of the act of bending and stooping to deliver mail into low-level letterboxes. The risk of injury is compounded by heavier workloads and a more intense pace of work due to growing parcel volumes. Increased **musculoskeletal strain** and greater **vulnerability to dog attacks** are the two key factors affecting circa 80,000 Royal Mail postmen and postwomen when delivering to addresses with ground-level letterboxes.

Lancashire Police and the CWU have officially agreed to work together to help tackle dog attacks



Dog attacks and the threat from Dangerous Dogs are an area of mutual interest for Lancashire Constabulary and Postal Workers. Lancashire police have a specific role in responding to dog attacks and proactively managing the risk of dangerous dogs that reside within our communities.

Aim 1. To have clear guidance for workers to help ensure they get an effective service. This will help minimise the impact of any attack, promote confidence and manage the wider risk to the community.

2. To have clear guidance to ensure postal workers can communicate information relating to risks within our communities.

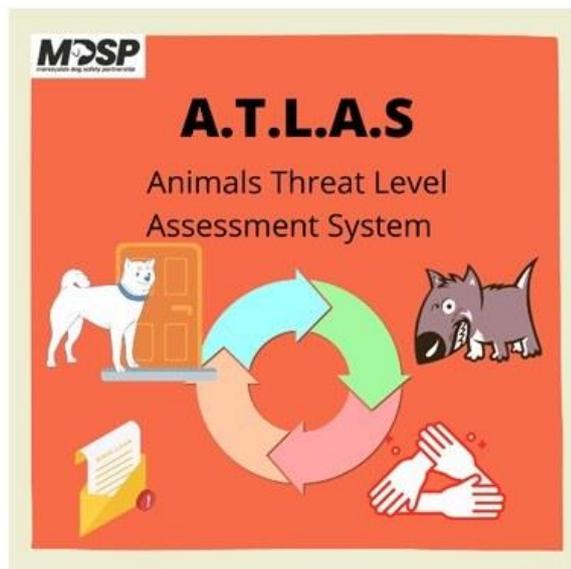
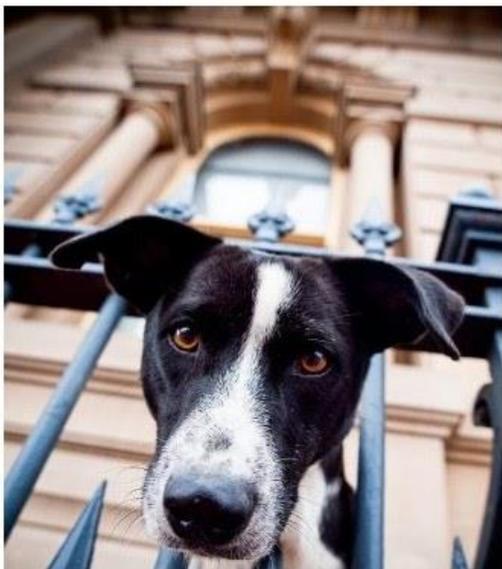
3. To provide clear expectations between postal workers and employees of Lancashire Constabulary. Actions to follow when a crime or incident is in progress

- If you are subject to an incident involving a dog dangerously out of control, remove yourself to a place of safety at the earliest opportunity, call the police, or request they be called immediately, and request an ambulance if required.
- Tell the Police that this is a crime or incident in progress. This applies if the dog/owner is still in the area and you are still at risk.
- Tell the Police that you are a Postal Worker**, and that you have been attacked by a dog whilst performing your duties delivering mail.
- Answer any questions you may be asked over the phone with as much detail as possible and remain in a location where you have agreed to meet with the Police.
- Request a log reference number from the police.
- Report the incident to your line manager so they can record an accident and can provide you with support.
- Should you need to leave the scene for medical treatment, arrange a time and location for the Police to speak with you. This may be at home, hospital, a police station or your workplace. If an appointment cannot be confirmed, request a timescale in which you shall receive a visit from the Police.
- Where possible, obtain photographic/video evidence of the incident via a mobile device. Be mindful that the device holding such images may have to be seized by Police for a short time so that the images/footage can be captured and used in evidence.
- Ask for photographs to be taken of any injuries, both before and after medical treatment.

Actions to follow when a crime or incident is not in progress

- a. Report the incident to your line manager so they can ensure it is recorded as an accident and can provide you with any support you may need.
- b. Report the incident to the Police at the earliest opportunity, explaining what has happened and emphasise both that you are a Postal Worker and were carrying out your duties at the time of the incident. The report can be made over the phone dialling 101 or via the Force website's online portal which can be found at [The online reporting portal](#) - Lancashire Constabulary -
- c. Ask for the relevant log number for the report or retain a record of the digital request.
- d. Where possible, obtain photographic/video evidence of the incident via a mobile device. Be mindful that the device holding such images may have to be seized by Police for a short time so that the images/footage can be captured and used in evidence. Inform the police that such evidence has been preserved.
- e. Ask for photographs to be taken of any injuries, both before and after medical treatment. Response from the police when the incident is not ongoing As a crime is being reported, the expected response to an incident/crime of this type is that it will be handled by the Force Crime Management Unit (FCMU). The FCMU is staffed entirely by police officers. An officer should record the details of the crime and provide you with a crime reference number.

THE CWU A.T.L.A.S system

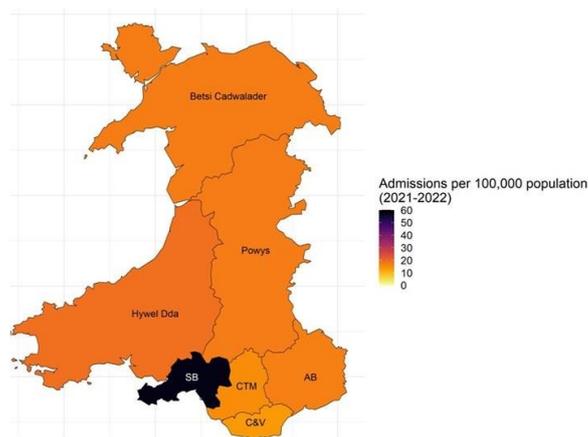


Don't put up with it REPORT IT!

The ATLAS system – **A partnership approach to reducing dog attack incidence rates. 200 plus near miss/ pre- bite reports have been received in Wales in 2025.** Recent research from Liverpool University tells us that **Wales now has a higher incidence of dog bites and strikes than England or the Republic of Ireland.** Work in the communities where incidence is exceptionally high is needed to understand the reasons behind having the highest incidence of dog bites in the British Isles and to establish the most efficacious methods for bite prevention. Swansea now identified as the Dog attack capital of the UK based on hospital admissions for dog attacks per 100,000 population

The Animal Threat Level Assessment System (ATLAS) was set up through joint work in Merseyside with the CWU and Merseyside Dog Safety Partnership (MDSP) www.merseydogsafe.co.uk The CWU ATLAS process actively encourages the engagement of both Council Dog Wardens & the Police. As a result of a MDSP collaboration, a questionnaire and animal risk assessment were drawn up by the CWU. This form is known as the Animal Threat Level System (ATLAS). From outset It was designed to be "Admin light" taking less than 5 minutes to complete. it can be accessed via a 2D barcode displayed in delivery offices see below example of a reporting link. We use the ATLAS system regularly and one of the key areas is low level letterboxes which all dogs can access. [CWU ATLAS REPORTING SYSTEM LANCASHIRE & NORTH WEST – Fill out form](#)

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CWU 'PAWS FOR THOUGHT' POSTERS

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EWU **MDSPP** merseydogsafe.co.uk
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✂ Please cut me out and place in your window...

PAWS for THOUGHT

Please be patient...

...I live here!

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