



The Time is Meow

Dangerous dogs and attacks on cats

Why it matters

Dog attacks on cats are a terrifying experience for the cat, their owner and the wider community. Such attacks often result in the death of a cat and witnesses can be left with long-lasting trauma. When vicious attacks take place in public, it can be deeply worrying and upsetting for the whole community.

Currently, there is confusion among local authorities, the police and the public about the law relating to dog attacks on cats. Furthermore, there are no official statistics about dog attacks on cats, despite many of them happening in a public place. In the absence of this, press reports give a small snapshot of the problem. Over the past five years, 270 cases of dog attacks on cats have been reported in the press in the UK, 80% of which were fatal¹. Of these reports, only 10% resulted in prosecution².

Community Protection Notices (CPNs) can be issued to owners whose dogs have not been adequately controlled, but there is a lack of official information on the effectiveness of CPNs in encouraging responsible dog ownership and reducing dog attacks. Cats Protection has been supportive of community policing initiatives such as the Local Environmental Awareness on Dogs (LEAD), believing that prevention is preferable to prosecution. However, initiatives like LEAD need to be rolled out much more widely with the support of government and the police.

What the government can do

Introduce a specific offence within existing legislation on dangerous dogs to allow for prosecution of dog owners whose dogs attack, injure or kill cats.



The vast majority of dog owners are responsible and keep their dogs under control. When a dog does attack a cat, it is usually because the owner fails to control their dog. An attack by a dog on a cat can be an indication of a dog that is dangerous and needs control. There have been reported instances of dogs that attack cats going on to attack children.

← Turn over to read more



The benefits

1. Reduce the number of cats killed and injured by dogs.
2. Establish a consistent response from police and local authorities across England in relation to dog attacks on cats.
3. Allow cat owners to achieve action and closure for their injured or killed cats.
4. Encourage more responsible dog ownership.

The London Borough of Sutton recognise the significant impact dog-related issues can have upon the local community, their perception of safety and actual levels of crime. In response we have worked with Sutton Police to support the development of the LEAD initiative which provides a cost-effective early intervention framework to address owners' behaviour as well as providing appropriate risk management tools to more serious cases. We will continue to work with police colleagues through the LEAD initiative to further improve community safety outcomes for our residents."

- Community Safety Manager at Sutton Council/London Borough of Sutton³



For further information about our advocacy work visit www.cats.org.uk/timeismeow or email advocacy@cats.org.uk

¹ Cats Protection monitoring of press reports in UK between 2015 to 2019

² Includes civil prosecution and community resolution orders

³ www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200514/community_safety_and_policing/1268/keeping_safe_-_in_your_neighbourhood/9