

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION

Adroddiad i'r:	Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu Cymunedau Iachach
Dyddiad y cyfarfod:	22 Medi 2021
Teitl:	Trosolwg ar Wasanaethau Wardeiniaid Cymunedol a Rheoli Plâu gwasanaeth Diogelu'r Cyhoedd
Pwrpas yr adroddiad:	Rhoi'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf i'r Pwyllgor Craffu am y materion y mae Gwasanaeth Wardeiniaid Cymunedol gwasanaeth Diogelu'r Cyhoedd yn eu hwynebu, yn enwedig y Gwasanaeth Rheoli Plâu.
Er:	Craffu
Portffolio ac Aelod Cabinet:	Y Cyngorydd Gareth Lloyd – Diogelu'r Cyhoedd

Cefndir

Mae'r Tîm Wardeiniaid Cymunedol yn rhan o wasanaeth Diogelu'r Cyhoedd y Cyngor. Yn ogystal â'r gofyniad i gyflawni dyletswyddau statudol penodol, mae cylch gwaith y tîm yn cynnwys darparu gwasanaeth rheoli plâu costeffeithiol.

Dros y naw mlynedd diwethaf, bu'r Tîm Wardeiniaid Cymunedol yn gweithredu gyda dim ond dau warden, a bu'n ofynnol i'r swyddogion hyn roi blaenoriaeth i dasgau a dyletswyddau sy'n cynhyrchu incwm.

Fodd bynnag, ers mis Mawrth 2020, bu'r Gwasanaeth Wardeiniaid Cymunedol yn gweithredu gyda dim ond un Warden Cymunedol oherwydd cyfnodau o salwch/absenoldeb hirdymor ac ymadawiadau staff, ac mae bellach yn rhaid blaenoriaethu cwynion/ceisiadau sy'n ymwneud â phlâu ar sail eu risg i iechyd y cyhoedd.

Pryderon o ran staffio/adnoddau

Cytunwyd yn flaenorol y byddai'r Gwasanaeth yn gweithredu gydag 1.6 aelod staff cyfwerth ag amser llawn. Yn sgil adolygiad ariannol parhaus, penodwyd Warden Cymunedol newydd i lenwi swydd wag, a bydd yn dechrau yn ei swydd yn gynnar ym mis Medi. O'r herwydd, bydd dau swyddog amser llawn yn y Tîm Wardeiniaid Cymunedol eto (2.0 aelod staff cyfwerth ag amser llawn). I gadw dau swyddog cyfwerth ag amser llawn yn y Gwasanaeth, bydd angen i'r Gwasanaeth chwilio am gyfleoedd i gynhyrchu mwy o incwm.

Cyn bod modd i'r swyddog newydd ymgymryd ag unrhyw ddyletswyddau rheoli plâu, rhaid iddo ennill Dyfarniad Lefel 2 Cymdeithas Frenhinol Iechyd y Cyhoedd (RSPH) mewn Rheoli Plâu. I wneud hyn, bydd rhaid iddo fynd ar gwrs preswyl sy'n para pum diwrnod a sefyll arholiad, cyn cwblhau pecyn dysgu chwe wythnos ar-lein gyda Chymdeithas Rheoli Plâu Prydain (BPCA).

Galwadau ar y Gwasanaeth

Mae'r data isod yn dangos nifer y ceisiadau a gofnodwyd bob blwyddyn ers 2016:

Tabl 1

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Llygod mawr	189	187	163	220	265
Llygod	41	72	41	45	36
Clêr	11	9	17	7	10
Gwenyn meirch/ Gwenyn	147	132	201	184	190
Pÿcs	2	4	4	3	1
Morgrug gardd	14	11	16	11	12
Chwain	41	21	21	21	8
Plâu eraill	8	18	12	7	17
Cŵn strae	57	1	4	5	5
Baeddu gan gŵn	52	37	44	28	20
Cyfanswm	562	492	523	531	564

Mae'n ymddangos bod nifer y llygod mawr yn cynyddu, ond nid oes mesur llwyr o nifer y llygod mawr ar gael. Gall fod modd priodoli'r cynnydd ymddangosiadol yn nifer y llygod mawr i ystod eang o ffactorau, gan gynnwys twf ym mhoblogrwydd bwydydd tecawê yn creu mwy o wastraff bwyd, sbwriel yn cael ei gasglu'n llai aml, tai mewn cyflwr gwael, aelwydydd ag incwm isel/aelwydydd sy'n agored i niwed yn methu â fforddio gwasanaethau rheoli plâu, a gaeafau mwynach.

Darparu Gwasanaeth Rheoli Plâu

O dan Ddeddf Atal Difrod gan Blâu 1949, mae dyletswydd statudol ar yr Awdurdod i gadw'i ardal yn rhydd rhag llygod mawr a llygod.

Yn benodol, mae dyletswydd ar yr awdurdod lleol i wneud y pethau a ganlyn:

1. Difa llygod mawr a llygod ar dir y mae'n ei feddiannu, a chadw'r tir hwnnw, cyhyd ag y bo'n ymarferol, yn rhydd rhag llygod mawr a llygod.
2. Gorfodi dyletswyddau perchnogion a meddianwyr tir i gyflawni gweithrediadau i gael gwared ar beryglon a allai achosi plâu oddi ar eu tir.

Serch hynny, nid oes dyletswydd gyfreithiol ar awdurdodau lleol i ddarparu gwasanaethau rheoli plâu dewisol, ac nid yw llawer o awdurdodau Cymru'n darparu gwasanaethau o'r fath mwyach.

Rheoli cnofilod mewn carthffosydd cyhoeddus

Mae diffyg abwydo mewn carthffosydd yn destun pryder i'r Gwasanaeth ac i'r Awdurdod. Gan fod nifer y problemau llygod mawr y rhoddir gwybod amdanynt yn cynyddu, mae angen ailystyried y ffordd orau o wasanaethu'r cyhoedd a mynd i'r afael â'r broblem hon.

Dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf, yn sgil pryderon cynyddol am gnofilod mewn trefi ledled y sir, mae'r Gwasanaeth wedi ceisio ailgydio yn y gwaith o abwydo carthffosydd ar y cyd â Dŵr Cymru. Mae Dŵr Cymru yn agored i'r syniad hwn, ond nid yw bellach ond yn cydweithio â sefydliadau/partneriaid sy'n gallu dangos eu bod wedi'u hachredu o

dan gynllun ardystio'r corff Cynlluniau Diogelwch mewn Caffael (SSIP). I ailgydio yn y gwaith hwn, rhaid i'r Awdurdod gael ei achredu o dan y cynllun SSIP.

Mae awdurdodau lleol eraill wedi'u cael eu hunain yn yr un sefyllfa ac maent wedi penderfynu dweud wrth Dŵr Cymru am wneud ei drefniadau amgen ei hun i abwydo carthffosydd.

Gwasanaethau Rheoli Plâu ar Ffermydd

Mae'n ymddangos mai Cyngor Sir Ceredigion yw'r unig awdurdod yng Nghymru sy'n parhau i ddarparu gwasanaeth rheoli plâu penodol ar gyfer ffermydd.

Cyn pandemig COVID-19, roedd gan y Gwasanaeth oddeutu 100 o contractau rheoli plâu gweithredol â ffermydd lleol. Ers mis Ebrill 2021, mae nifer y contractau fferm gweithredol wedi gostwng i lai na deg gan fod mwyafrif y cleientiaid blaenorol wedi penderfynu peidio ag adnewyddu eu contractau.

Gall fod modd priodoli'r gostyngiad yn nifer y contractau fferm i nifer o ffactorau/rhesymau, gan gynnwys:

1. Cyn pandemig COVID-19, nid oedd llawer o ffermydd yn cael gwasanaeth cywir/cyflawn oherwydd prinder adnoddau yn y Gwasanaeth; o'r herwydd, rhoddwyd ad-daliadau i nifer o gwsmeriaid neu byddai swyddogion yn ymweld â nhw pan oeddent ar gael i wneud hynny;
2. Yn ystod cyfnodau clo COVID-19, bu'n ofynnol i swyddogion gysgodi ac ati, felly bu'n rhaid atal ein gwasanaeth rheoli plâu dros dro oherwydd prinder staff. Nid oedd y Gwasanaeth ond yn gallu ymdrin ag achosion eithriadol o blâu a oedd yn peri niwed sylweddol i iechyd a lles y cyhoedd;
3. Oherwydd inni orfod atal ein gwasanaeth rheoli plâu ar wahanol adegau yn ystod pandemig COVID-19, mae nifer o'n cwsmeriaid blaenorol wedi troi at ddarparwyr eraill yn y sector preifat i gael gwasanaethau rheoli plâu;
4. Yn 2020, bu'n rhaid i'r Gwasanaeth adolygu'r ffioedd a'r taliadau sy'n gysylltiedig â contractau ffermydd oherwydd bod newidiadau deddfwriaethol wedi effeithio ar y ffordd y mae'n rhaid rhoi gwenwyn llygod. Roedd angen i'r ffioedd a'r taliadau adlewyrchu'r newidiadau deddfwriaethol a'r arferion gweithio newydd neu, fel arall, byddai'r gwasanaeth rheoli plâu ar ffermydd wedi peri colled ariannol i'r Awdurdod. Cafodd cost y contractau newydd ei chyfrifo ar sail adennill costau, gan ystyried amser ychwanegol y swyddogion, costau teithio ychwanegol, a'r deunyddiau ychwanegol yr oedd eu hangen i gyflawni'r gwaith yn unol â'r rheoliadau newydd. Felly, mae'n bosibl bod rhai o'n cwsmeriaid blaenorol wedi penderfynu peidio ag adnewyddu eu contractau am resymau sy'n ymwneud â chostau.

Darparu Gwasanaeth Wardeiniaid Cŵn

O dan adrannau 149 ac 150 o Ddeddf Diogelu'r Amgylchedd 1990 a Rheoliadau Diogelu'r Amgylchedd (Cŵn Strae) 1992, mae dyletswydd statudol ar y Cyngor i ddal cŵn strae mewn mannau cyhoeddus ac, os nad oes modd eu dychwelyd i'w perchnogion, i fynd â nhw i gynelau contract. Cynigir unrhyw gŵn nad oes neb yn eu

hawlio i'r rheini a all ddarparu cartref newydd iddynt. Yn anffodus, ond yn anaml iawn, gall fod rhaid ewthaneiddio cŵn oherwydd problemau ymddygiad neu afiechyd. Codir tâl ar berchnogion am amser y swyddogion, ynghyd â'r ffioedd sy'n gysylltiedig â rhoi'r cŵn mewn cynelau a ffioedd milfeddygol, er mwyn dychwelyd eu cŵn strae iddynt.

Yr awdurdod lleol sy'n ysgwyddo'r cyfrifoldeb llwyr dros gyflawni pob swyddogaeth sy'n ymwneud â chŵn strae. Mae'r Heddlu'n ymwneud â materion cŵn pan gaiff da byw neu bobl eu niweidio neu pan fydd ar bobl eu hofn. Mae'r Heddlu hefyd yn chwarae rôl o ran adnabod a rheoli bridiau sydd wedi'u rhestru yn y Ddeddf Cŵn Peryglus.

Mae nifer y cŵn strae y mae'r Gwasanaeth yn cael gwybod amdanynt wedi parhau i fod yn gyson isel dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf, ac mae wedi gostwng yn sylweddol o'i gymharu â nifer yr adroddiadau a ddaeth i law yn 2016. Mae'r sefyllfa hon yn debyg i sefyllfa awdurdodau lleol eraill.

Nid yw'r adnoddau presennol wedi effeithio ar y swyddogaeth hon. Fodd bynnag, mae'r Awdurdod yn dibynnu ar un cynel i weithredu fel cynel contract i gynorthwyo'r Gwasanaeth â'r swyddogaeth hon.

Darparu Gwasanaeth Gorfodi Baeddu gan Gŵn

Mae ar y Cyngor ddyletswydd statudol i ddiogelu iechyd y cyhoedd rhag niwed oherwydd baw cŵn, cŵn peryglus a chŵn strae, a hynny mewn mannau cyhoeddus, ar dir y Cyngor ac ar dir penodol arall.

Mae'r Cyngor hefyd wedi mabwysiadu is-ddeddfau sy'n ymwneud â gwahardd cŵn o draethau a chŵn ar bromenadau, ac mae'r rhain yn parhau i fod mewn grym. Yn yr un modd, mae'r Cyngor wedi mabwysiadu Gorchymyn Diogelu Mannau Agored Cyhoeddus sy'n ymwneud â chŵn, ac mae ar waith ar ran o'r traeth a'r promenâd yn y Borth.

Oherwydd prinder adnoddau, mae angen tystiolaeth dda i gymryd unrhyw gamau ffurfiol, gan gynnwys erlyn, ac anaml y bydd tystiolaeth o'r fath ar gael yn anffodus. Mae profiad blaenorol yn dangos na fu gwaith patrolio'n llwyddiannus iawn o ran adnabod troseddwr gan fod y rhan fwyaf o'r achosion o faeddu gan gŵn yn digwydd pan fydd hi'n dywyll neu pan nad oes tystion yn bresennol, ac nid oes modd adnabod troseddwr. Fodd bynnag, roedd y ffaith bod swyddogion yn patrolio yn ffordd effeithiol o atal troseddu o'r fath.

Gall y Cyngor gefnogi ac annog ymddygiad priodol drwy nifer o ddulliau sy'n cael eu harwain gan y gwasanaeth Priffyrdd a Gwasanaethau Amgylcheddol fel rhan o ymgyrch y Cyngor, Caru Ceredigion.

Cronfa Galedi Llywodraeth Cymru

I gyfrannu at roi Cynllun Rheoli Cyrchfan ar waith ledled y sir yn sgil effaith pandemig COVID-19, ac i sicrhau bod ymwelwyr yn ymweld â Cheredigion mewn ffordd ddiogel a chyfrifol yr haf hwn, penodwyd pedwar swyddog dros dro gan ddefnyddio arian caledi Llywodraeth Cymru.

Fe'u cyflogir tan ddiwedd mis Hydref i gynorthwyo gwasanaeth Diogelu'r Cyhoedd a gwasanaeth yr Arfordir a Chefn Gwlad i fynd ati'n rhagweithiol i batrolio traethau,

gwarchodfeydd natur, yr arfordir, llwybrau beicio a strydoedd ledled y sir, gan ymateb i broblemau o ran troseddau bywyd gwyllt ac amgylcheddol, e.e. baeddu gan gŵn/sbwriel, tarfu ar fywyd gwyllt, ac ati. Fel rhan o'u dyletswyddau, byddant yn ymgysylltu ag aelodau o'r cyhoedd, eu haddysgu a'u hannog i gydymffurfio â deddfau amrywiol ym maes bywyd gwyllt ac iechyd y cyhoedd, a byddant yn cynorthwyo swyddogion presennol tîm Diogelu'r Cyhoedd a thîm yr Arfordir a Chefn Gwlad i orfodi materion sy'n ymwneud â throseddau bywyd gwyllt/amgylcheddol.

Crynodeb

I fodloni disgwyliadau'r cyhoedd, i ymgymryd â dyletswyddau statudol, ac i ddarparu gwasanaeth rheoli plâu cynhwysfawr, mae'r Gwasanaeth yn cynnig gwneud yr hyn a ganlyn:

1. Ennill achrediad SSIP i ailgydio yn y gwaith o abwydo carthffosydd;
2. Lluo Polisi Rheoli Plâu newydd a fydd yn cyflwyno system newydd sy'n nodi sut y bydd yr Awdurdod yn codi tâl am wasanaethau rheoli plâu penodol, ac ar bwy y bydd yn codi'r tâl hwnnw. Yn benodol, bydd yn cyflwyno mesur diogelu newydd i sicrhau bod modd i aelwydydd ag incwm isel/aelwydydd sy'n agored i niwed ddefnyddio'r gwasanaethau hyn drwy ddarparu gwasanaeth trin plâu llygod mawr am ddim neu am bris gostyngedig iddynt, yn enwedig pan gaiff achos ei atgyfeirio at wasanaeth Diogelu'r Cyhoedd gan Dîm Diogelu Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol y Cyngor;
3. Ystyried ffyrdd o gynyddu gwaith patrolio/gorfodi o ran baeddu gan gŵn drwy bwysu a mesur cyfleoedd i ddirprwyo gwaith gorfodi o ran baeddu gan gŵn/taflu sbwriel i swyddogion priodol eraill y Cyngor, neu ofyn am gyfraniadau ariannol gan gynghorau cymuned i gynyddu capasiti a gwelededd y gwasanaeth ledled y sir.

A gyflawnwyd Asesiad Effaith Integredig? Os na, rhowch reswm

Amherthnasol

Llesiant cenedlaethau'r dyfodol:

**Crynodeb
Hirdymor:
Cydweithio:
Cynnwys:
Atal
Integreiddio**

Argymhelliad:

Bod y Pwyllgor Craffu'n ystyried cynnwys yr adroddiad a'r materion a ddisgrifir ynddo.

Rhesymau dros y penderfyniad:

Darparu gwasanaeth rheoli plâu sy'n addas i'r diben.

Trosolwg a Chraffu:

Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu Cymunedau Iachach

Fframwaith polisi:	Strategaeth Gorfforaethol 2017–2022
Blaenoriaethau corfforaethol:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyrwyddo cydnherthedd amgylcheddol a chymunedol
Goblygiadau o ran cyllid a chaffael:	Mae'r Gwasanaeth yn anelu at weithredu o fewn ei gyllideb.
Goblygiadau cyfreithiol:	
Goblygiadau staffio:	
Goblygiadau o ran eiddo/asedau:	Dim
Risg(iau):	Her gyfreithiol / Niwed i enw da – mae deddfwriaeth wedi rhoi dyletswydd ar yr Awdurdod i gadw ei ardal yn rhydd rhag llygod mawr a llygod ac i gasglu a chadw cŵn strae.
Pwerau statudol:	Mae Deddf Atal Difrod gan Blâu 1949 yn rhoi dyletswyddau ar yr Awdurdod Lleol; Deddf Diogelu'r Amgylchedd 1990; Rheoliadau Diogelu'r Amgylchedd (Cŵn Strae) 1992; Deddf Cymdogaethau Glân a'r Amgylchedd 2005.
Papurau cefndir:	Ceir mwy o wybodaeth am dueddiadau a mentrau cenedlaethol o ran baeddu gan gŵn yn adroddiad y Gymdeithas Rhagoriaeth mewn Gwasanaeth Cyhoeddus am Faeddu gan Gŵn (Rhagfyr 2019) DEFRA – Rheoli Cŵn a Lles (Ionawr 2018) Adroddiad Arolwg yr Ymddiriedolaeth Cŵn o Gŵn Strae (2019/20)
Swyddog Arweiniol Corfforaethol:	Alun Williams (Polisi a Pherfformiad)
Swyddog adrodd:	Anne-Louise Davies (Rheolwr Safonau Masnach a Thrwyddedu)
Dyddiad:	2 Medi 2021



Dog Fouling – Why it is difficult to tackle and potential solutions

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Key Points

In 3 years since the original APSE [briefing](#), dog fouling remains one of the most prevalent issues for local authority environmental services.

This briefing covers why this issue is so difficult to tackle, and offers some additional solutions for local authorities.

1.0 Background

As shown in the recent APSE State of the Market report for Parks and Green Spaces, dog fouling remains the second priority environmental issue for that service (83%) behind only litter (89%), and the figure is up by 5% since last year's survey. 66% have dog control orders in parks and green spaces, which is also up by 4% since last year. According to respondents from the APSE State of the Market for Street Cleansing, 80% are planning dog fouling education campaigns in the next 2 years, which is also up by 12.4% since last year.

This shows that dog fouling is a prevailing problem for many local authorities, and with shrinking staff levels and diminishing budgets, it will become more difficult for local authorities to deal with in the way that they do currently.

2.0 Why dog fouling is a challenging issue to tackle

Dog fouling seems particularly difficult to tackle for a number of reasons:

People are aware they could be fined, but many don't think they will ever be caught

Research by [Encams](#) showed that roughly 60% of dog owners who justify their behaviour largely on the idea that "everyone else is doing it" would clean up after their pets if they were either shaken or shocked into it, and if the dangers of toxocariasis was better articulated.

Fouling can happen at any time of day or night, so patrolling often won't catch the offenders

Research by [Keep Britain Tidy](#) showed that people are more likely to not pick up after their dogs when they feel like they aren't being watched (either by the public or by enforcement officers/contractors); fouling also has been shown to increase at night.

Residents are (rightfully) hesitant to confront residents who persistently dog foul

Offenders can react in a myriad of ways to being confronted, ranging from excuses about not having bags to collect the waste all the way up to violent altercations. Recent news stories suggest that an elderly man in [North Ayrshire](#) was punched for confronting a man, and another in [Huddersfield](#) was subjected to racial abuse and threats of violence.

It is important to let residents know about the potential dangers of confronting or recording offenders.

Prosecution requires good evidence

Residents often only report where the dog fouling is, rather than giving a date, time, name and address of the dog owner (if known), a description of the dog and owner, vehicle registration number, and any other identifying details that could lead to a successful prosecution. A [Chorley Council councillor](#) also suggested that residents with doorstep CCTV cameras could provide footage of someone not picking up after their pet to officers.

It can be a long and time-consuming process to pursue and successfully prosecute offenders.

As a result of residents only reporting where dog fouling has taken place and the way that local authorities record incident reporting, many Freedom of Information requests that have been reported in the news media comparing number of reports to number of prosecutions have unfairly made local authorities look very ineffective at tackling dog fouling.

Attempts to introduce new dog controls to combat dog fouling can lead to a public backlash

[Wirral Council](#) recently proposed introducing a Public Spaces Protection order that would require dog owners to carry bags as well as banning dog walking between May and September at tourist hotspots, as well as bans from marked sports pitches and children's play areas, and requiring dogs to be on a lead at all times in other areas. This approach was met by a considerable public backlash, with a [petition](#) reaching nearly 20,000 signatures; many of the comments saw the proposals as an attack on responsible dog ownership.

The same story is also true of many other local authorities, and shows how difficult it can be to try and introduce effective controls on irresponsible owners that do not negatively impact responsible owners.

The public is still largely unaware that (in many areas) you can dispose of dog waste in any available local authority litter bin

Many residents are still under the impression that you must use the dog waste bins only, but guidance on this has since been updated and the majority of councils now encourage owners that they can use any general litter bin. More work should be done to educate the public on this in areas where dog fouling issues exist where there are few bins specifically for dog waste.

Many people don't consider leaving dog waste bags on the ground fouling

The littering of bagged dog waste is a growing problem. Research by the [Dog's Trust and Keep Britain Tidy](#) showed that many dog walkers leave bagged dog waste in public places with the intention of collecting it later but forget, and that this may be suggesting to others that it is a "socially acceptable practice". Some councils are now including messages about bagged waste into their education and enforcement campaigns, with some like [Cornwall Council](#) offering a £150 fixed penalty or prosecution for those caught throwing it.

3.0 Good ideas from local authorities

Local authorities are implementing many good ideas related to dog fouling that could be easily implemented by others. The [2016 APSE briefing](#) covered ideas such as:

- The Green Dog Walkers Scheme
- Rewards for residents reporting fouling
- Chalk stencils with messages being painted onto pavements
- Highlighting fouling with bright coloured sprays
- Hanging bags of soil to represent fouling in the area
- Glow-in-the-dark posters to target night-time fouling
- Dog watch schemes – inspired by neighbourhood watch schemes
- A Council reporting app that allows you to identify the location of fouling

Dog bag dispensers

Dog bag dispensers - Getting primary schools involved - West Lothian Council [\[link\]](#)

West Lothian Council's Cleaner communities team engaged with local primary schools to create dog bag dispensers from empty two litre plastic bottles. Parkhead Primary in West Calder took part, and the bag dispensers were placed at key points in the local area.

Dog bag dispensers – Provided free of charge through sponsorship - Fife Council [\[link\]](#)

Fife installed free dog bag dispensers across parks, recreation areas and walking routes in the authority. Fife teamed up with an organisation called Tikspac UK who provide the dispensers and unlimited bags, with the costs covered through sponsorship and advertising on the dispensers; therefore, all the council have to do is re-fill the dispensers.

A survey of council areas where these stations have been installed has shown an average 56.8% reduction in dog fouling complaints and 49.4% average reduction in littering.

Dog walking routes intervention in 15 local parks – Dogs Trust and Keep Britain Tidy [\[link\]](#)

The Dogs Trust and Keep Britain Tidy's 'Walk This Way' campaign uses signage, colour-coded route markers and bin stickers to create dog walking routes with bins for waste disposal. Route markers are shown at 200 metre intervals, with stickered bins placed at 1-kilometre intervals. Maps of the routes were also displayed. The use of these dog walking routes reduced bagged and unbagged dog fouling by an average of 40% across all sites.

The full report is available [here](#).

Dog DNA identification

Dog DNA scheme - London Borough of Barking and Dagenham [\[link\]](#)

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham introduced a voluntary dog DNA registration scheme that allows dog owners to access their pet's DNA profile, breed overviews, a place to store medical records, kennel information, etc) through PooPrints UK. This also allowed the council to match any dog fouling found to an owner. During the scheme pilot they found around 50% less fouling than they usually would on their streets, with reductions up to 90% reported.

Public Spaces Protection Orders

Some local authorities have introduced [Public Spaces Protection Orders](#) (previously called Dog Control Orders) in public areas that require residents to do things such as:

- Keep your dog on a lead
- Limit the number of dogs you can have with you
- Clean up after your dog
- Put your dog on a lead if told to by someone from the council or police
- Stop your dog going to certain places – like parts of a park
- Carry disposable bags or a poop scoop

Ignoring Public Spaces Protection Orders can lead to a £100 on the spot fine (also known as a Fixed Penalty Notice), or up to £1,000 if this leads to court action.

Councils have a duty to let the public know where Public Spaces Protection Orders are in place, for example 'no dogs' signs if dogs are not allowed in a specific park.

Public spaces protection order – Caerphilly County Borough Council [\[link\]](#)

Caerphilly County Borough Council introduced a Public Spaces Protection Order to:

- Continue to exclude dogs from all enclosed children's play areas within the county borough
- Require dog owners to put their dogs on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised officer on any public land where the dog is considered to be out of control or causing alarm or distress or to prevent a nuisance
- Requires dog owners to remove dog faeces on any land. You must clean up after your dog in all public places in Caerphilly County Borough.
- Requires dogs to be kept on leads in enclosed memorial gardens situated in the county borough
- Requires dog walkers to carry an appropriate receptacle for dealing with the waste that dog dog(s) produce. This requirement aims to ensure that dog walkers always have the means (i.e. a receptacle) to pick up their dog's faeces

This enhanced the council's ability to deal with irresponsible dog owners.

Plain clothed enforcement officers

Plain clothed enforcement officers - Plymouth City Council [\[link\]](#)

Plymouth City Council have started using plain clothed environmental enforcement officers in areas where fouling has been reported. They noted that when people decide they're not going to pick up after their dogs, they have a look around and check there isn't an enforcement officer around and then continue walking, and that plain clothed enforcement officers add an additional deterrent to this type of offender.

The officers carry Plymouth City Council identification that will be produced at the start of any conversation with the public.

CCTV

CCTV at dog fouling hot spots – Craven District Council [\[link\]](#)

Craven District Council's Policy Committee approved plans to tackle dog fouling hot spots with CCTV cameras in order to obtain the necessary evidence to fine/prosecute those responsible. There are plans to install CCTV in key areas where intelligence and evidence confirm that persistent offending is occurring.

The Council also plans to increase the numbers of patrols, and to continue their education programme in schools.

Events

Family and Dog Fun Day event – Scottish Borders Council [\[link\]](#)

Scottish Borders Council run a Family and Dog Fun Day as part of their responsible dog ownership strategy, with a range of activities and stalls for all ages and their dogs. This year's event (their third so far) included activities such as:

- Les Amis D'Onno dog display team
- Dryburgh Abbey Training Group with 'have a go' dog agility
- Dog training demonstrations by Braw Puppy
- A fun dog show

This was alongside activities for the whole family including: face-painting, a bouncy castle, a scavenger hunt and a colouring competition for children.

The event also allows families to engage with the council and to get information on the Green Dog Walker scheme, get free pet health checks and microchipping was available for a small fee. More than 300 people turned up to the previous year's show.

The Council recognise that having as many responsible dog owners as possible will help to reduce issues around out of control dogs, fouling, stray dogs and anti-social behaviour.

3.0 APSE Comment

APSE encourages our member councils to keep sharing their failures and successes in approaches to tackling dog fouling. Judging by news media stories since our last briefing on this topic and discussions at advisory group meetings, it does not seem like anyone has completely eradicated dog fouling in their local area.

Dog fouling can be a difficult thing to tackle without punishing responsible dog owners in the process. Pet ownership, according to the [Mental Health Foundation](#), can help us to live mentally healthier lives with research showing benefits for those suffering depression, loneliness, later life stresses, ADHD, autism and walking dogs helps people stay more socially connected. It is important that council actions to reduce fouling does not negatively impact those that are reaping other benefits from pet ownership.

Public Spaces Protection Orders need to be reasonable and taken in conjunction with the public. Dog fouling alone may not be enough for the public to accept their necessity. It is important that dogs get enough exercise, so this needs to be considered when designating no-dog areas. The [PDSA](#) recommends that breeds of dogs such as golden retrievers and labrador retrievers may require 2+ hours of exercise per day, and that they should be able to spend time off-lead in a secure area to run around. Owners with limited mobility or lack of access to appropriate transport need to be able to access public spaces that allow them to properly exercise their pets.

Education approaches and campaigns undertaken should try to target all ages and communicate the dangers of toxocariasis (a disease that can cause blindness), especially to young children. Owners should be made aware that bagged dog waste can be disposed of in normal bins and not just in dog bins (where applicable), and authorities carry out audits of the locations and use of bins to make sure the provision is appropriate across areas with a high prevalence of fouling.

Where possible, councils should be trying to make allies out of responsible dog owners, improving mechanisms for public reporting (e.g. through social media) and utilising their insights to help identify the individuals who are the source of the issue, and publicising successful prosecutions.

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Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Guidance on Dog Control and Welfare for Police and Local Authorities

January 2018

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Introduction/ context

1. In 2017 Defra surveyed police and local authorities in England and Wales on their approaches to dog control and welfare and in particular measures and policies to reduce dog attacks. This document brings together the results of the survey, sets out and makes recommendations on examples of good practice and gives a steer on respective responsibilities for police forces and local authorities to work up in partnership.

Survey results

2. There were a number of positive comments about the new anti-social behaviour powers, stating that these had been very helpful as they provided more wide-ranging and flexible powers. Use by both police and local authorities of such statutory measures as the Community Protection Notice to tackle dog control was generally low. Even so, many enforcers noted they use non-statutory intervention measures, such as warning letters, “come to notice” letters or acceptable behaviour contracts to tackle incidents, especially of a minor variety, before resorting to statutory interventions, which were often not then needed.
3. Several respondents commented on the importance of agencies - principally police and local authorities, but also social housing providers - working together and the success of the **LEAD** initiative (Local Environmental Awareness on Dogs – see below). It was felt that improved partnership working has helped and that there had been an improvement in the guidance available.
4. Reference was made to a lack of certainty in some areas over the split of responsibility between police and local authorities with respect to dog control issues. Varying degrees of enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 or engagement on dog control between local authorities was highlighted as an issue. Resourcing was identified as a challenge against a background of a high number of cases.
5. Half of the police forces that responded to Defra had a policy in place for dealing with dog attacks or dog bites. As noted in existing guidance, Defra advises all police forces to have a clear policy in place in relation to dangerous dogs.

Roles & Responsibilities

6. The overriding message from the survey is that **partnership working** between authorities can be beneficial and initiatives such as Local Environmental Awareness on Dogs (LEAD) provide a helpful structure to encourage cooperative approaches while helping in the management of ‘Risk’ and with Safeguarding.

7. Within that framework **police are the lead enforcer where an incident concerns a suspected criminal offence** such as under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 involving a suspected prohibited dog (e.g. pit-bull terrier) or a dog dangerously out of control. At the other end of the scale, **local authorities** are solely responsible under the law for providing a **stray dog service**. This includes the requirement to provide for an acceptance point where finders can take stray dogs outside of normal office hours.
8. Within that range of examples there are a host of dog related incidents such as nuisance dogs, excessive barking, and dogs running loose where increased partnership working can help. In general local authorities may wish to lead on dealing with and following up on such incidents as they relate more to stray dogs and statutory nuisance controls. To help them tackle these issues, the full range of measures to combat anti-social behaviour are available and which are detailed below.
9. Where a dog attack has occurred or an offence suspected under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or where a dog is worrying livestock then, as noted above, that will be a police matter given the possibility of criminal offences having been committed under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 and the seriousness of the incident.
10. **Table 1** summarises the split of responsibilities between police and local authorities. This information is based on intelligence gathered in the survey but responsibility may vary from one area to another.

Dog microchipping

11. The successful implementation of compulsory **dog microchipping** (estimated 90-94% compliance in Britain) has led to a reduction in stray dogs, because dogs can now be more quickly reunited with their owners and do not spend time in local authority kennels.
12. **Local authorities** have powers under the Microchipping of Dogs regulations to take enforcement action against keepers of unchipped dogs and have powers to seize and chip dogs at the owner's expense. We would not expect police to routinely use these powers although they can do so where unchipped dogs come to their notice for other reasons.

Local Environmental Awareness on Dogs – LEAD ©

13. LEAD is a police-led initiative adopted by a number of forces and local authorities to encourage responsible dog ownership of all breeds of dog and to nip issues in the bud before they escalate. It seeks to provide advice to the public on dog issues, improve dog safety and dog welfare. LEAD also helps with the management of 'Risk' and through early engagement and intervention helps in with Safeguarding.

How does LEAD work in practice?

14. Police assume the role as lead of the partnership. In all cases where an irresponsible dog owner or keeper comes to the attention of the police or the local authority, contact is made, regardless of whether a statutory offence has been committed. The police will send a tailored “Coming to Notice” letter addressing the issue often on joint local authority/ police headed paper. Where the owner/keeper lives in social housing, a copy is also sent to the housing provider who, through quality standards, will follow up within 7 working days. The letter is accompanied by a LEAD pack, which includes, the Good Citizen Guide from the Kennel Club, literature with information on the breed of their dog from Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, the RSPCA dealing with care, training and welfare and information on socialisation, and park etiquette local bye-laws, the Dangerous Dogs Act etc.
15. Should the dog’s behaviour or irresponsible owner/keeper come to notice again, a second letter is hand-delivered. If the dog owner is a social housing resident, then a joint visit is made with police and the housing provider. Preventative measures are put in place by way of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. The Housing Provider may remind them of, or enforce, their tenancy agreement and continued anti-social behaviour could result in permission to have a dog/pet on the property being withdrawn or even repossess the property.

Acceptable Behaviour Contract

16. As the second letter is sent, an **Acceptable Behaviour Contract** – a voluntary agreement between the police and the individual – can be sought. If this is declined, the police (often the ASB unit) will normally monitor the dog’s behaviour for at least six months.
17. Continued anti-social behaviour could result in a formal statutory notice being sought: either a **Community Protection Notice (CPN)**, a **Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO)**, a Contingent Destruction Order on conviction under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or an appropriate Order under **Section 2 of the Dogs Act 1871**. Further detailed guidance and information on these measures is available (see Practitioner’s Manual on dealing with Irresponsible Dog Ownership linked below.) CPNs and CBOs can also be issued in their own right and not always as part of a LEAD initiative or as a follow on from an ABC.
18. In summary, police forces and local authorities adopting the LEAD initiative:
 - record all incidents involving undesired dog behaviour including dog attacks on people and animals; dog welfare and dog fouling. This is important to create a documented history should enforcement be necessary
 - share report of incidents with the local authority/ local police/ registered social landlords and vice versa

- encourage owners (if a social housing resident) to register their dog with their housing provider
- arrange dog roadshows and/or community outreach often in liaison with national or local charities that offer dog advice and free or discounted dog micro-chipping – many police forces, particularly those with a high proportion of dog related incidents, already undertake such outreach.

19. Eastleigh BC and Hampshire Constabulary have taken ABCs one step further with the introduction of specific **Dog Behaviour Contracts**. These are simple voluntary agreements that could be offered to owners of dogs causing issues, rather than taking formal enforcement action. Dog behaviour contracts are used to remedy the immediate concerns of local residents and secure longer-term improvements in dog ownership that could prevent issues from recurring.

20. Each contract is tailored, but can include conditions relating to muzzles, fencing, microchipping, neutering and training. All contracts include timescales for meeting conditions and a formal end date.

21. Dog behaviour contracts appeal to dog owners because they remove the threat of more formal court action. The contract provides the opportunity to engage with the owner in a less confrontational manner, making them more open to changing their behaviour. See: <https://www.local.gov.uk/eastleigh-borough-council-tackling-fear-created-dangerous-dogs>

Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs)

22. Local authorities also have powers to issue PSPOs to restrict persistent anti-social behaviour in a public place. These can help reduce incidents by placing restrictions on dogs in certain areas. The powers replaced local authority powers to issue Dog Control Orders. PSPOs are used to tackle lower level anti-social behaviour and can include provisions to restrict dogs or require dogs to be on leads in certain areas, and for owners to pick up after their dog. Comprehensive guidance is available to local authorities on PSPOs, including by the LGA: https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/10.4%20-%20PSPO%20guidance_03_1.pdf

Table 1: Summary of Responsibilities & Powers for Dog Control and Welfare

Situation/ measure	Police	Local authority	Shared/Joint working
Offences under the DDA91: prohibited dogs and dogs dangerously out of control	Yes	No	
Dog worrying livestock: criminal offence under the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953	Yes	No	
LEAD initiative	Yes	Yes	Yes
ASB controls (except PSPOs) – CPN, CBO	Yes	Yes	Yes
Orders under the Dogs Act 1871 with respect to a dog not kept under control	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nuisance dogs, excessive barking and dogs running loose	Not normally / under local agreement & LEAD	Yes	
PSPOs	No	Yes	
Dog microchipping	No	Yes	
Providing a stray dog service	No	Yes	

Further guidance

As noted above previous guidance issued by Defra on dog control and welfare is still relevant – namely: Dangerous Dogs Law “Guidance for Enforcers” in 2009:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69263/dogs-guide-enforcers.pdf

and the Practitioner’s Manual on Dealing with Irresponsible Dog Ownership in 2014:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-irresponsible-dog-ownership-practitioners-manual>

These give further detailed advice on the principle statutory interventions – the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, the Dogs Act 1871, anti-social behaviour measures and the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953.

Defra has proposed revisions to the licensing system for dog breeding and pet vending, which should lead to more focused enforcement of these activities by local authorities and better controls on the supply of dogs, as well as more focus on enforcement of pet travel and puppy imports.

Further information on the **LEAD initiative** is available from:

**PC Heath Keogh 567ZT - LEAD Initiative SPOC and Dog Legislation Officer,
Community Intelligence, Wildlife Officer**

Safer Sutton Partnership – Metropolitan Police Service

MetPhone 730660 | Telephone 020-8649-0660

1st Floor, Room 1.046

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Stray Dog Survey report 2019-20



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1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Objectives

The Dogs Trust Stray Dog Survey (SDS) is administered to all local authorities (LAs) in the UK, and has been undertaken since 1997. The survey collects information about dog related services provided by LAs, and the dogs that they interact with.

The SDS is used to determine the following (not an exhaustive list):

- **The estimated number of stray/unwanted dogs that are handled by UK LAs each year.**
- **How these dogs enter LA care (e.g. handed in by a member of the public, seized as a stray, handed over by the police)**
- **The outcomes for these dogs (e.g. returned to owner, rehomed, passed on to welfare organisations, put to sleep)**
- **Numbers of dogs microchipped**
- **Factors relating to reuniting dogs with their owners (e.g. up to date microchips, collar and tag with owner contact details etc.)**

This information is used by Dogs Trust to examine trends over time, and to help determine where to allocate resources for campaigns.

From 1997-2019 the SDS was managed by an external market research company, on Dogs Trust's behalf. The company distributed the survey to LAs, analysed the data, and produced a report. In 2020 all aspects of the SDS were managed internally by Dogs Trust staff.

1.2. Methodology

1.2.1 Data collection

The 2019/2020 Stray Dog Survey was administered to all LAs via the online survey platform SmartSurvey. The survey link was emailed to contacts in each LA on 21 August 2020 and the survey was closed 21 October 2020, giving LAs 2 months to complete the survey. Reminder emails were sent twice a week after the first week of the survey going live. Local authorities that did not respond to the email reminders were attempted to be contacted by phone; at least one attempt to contact by phone was made for each LA who had not completed the survey a week before it was due to close. For stray dog figures, LAs were specifically asked to give figures for the time period between 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020.

1.2.2 Analysis

Summary statistics are provided for both the LAs that responded to the current survey and estimated for the whole UK. As not all LAs complete the survey, national totals are extrapolated from the figures provided by responding LAs. This was done by calculating the mean for each LA that responded and multiplying it by the number of LAs in the UK. This year's figures are also plotted alongside previous years to show changes over time. The number of "people per dog" (PPD) was also calculated by dividing the human population of each LA by the total number of dogs handled. Human population figures were obtained from publicly available data from the Office of National Statistics. Lower PPD numbers imply more dogs in relation to the human population in each area. This helps account for inevitable differences in total numbers of dogs between heavily and sparsely populated areas.

Previous surveys have reported regional differences by dividing the UK into TV regions. These regional areas have become less widely used over time, so this report uses the administrative geographical regions used by the Office of National Statistics¹. England is therefore the only country broken down into regions; Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland figures are reported at the country level (see Table 1 in the next section).

The SDS has previously referred to the total number of dogs handled by LAs as the total number of stray dogs. However, the term "stray" covers a range of meanings. For example, one of the categories for dogs entering LA care is "brought in/surrendered by general public". This category covers both relinquishment (i.e. an owner handing over their own dog to the LA as they are no longer able or willing to care for them) and a member of the public coming across a stray dog and bringing them in. There is currently no way of differentiating between these two possibilities, but in future surveys we hope to change the wording of the categories so that LAs can make this distinction. In this survey report we refer to the "total dogs handled" rather than strays, to reflect that not all dogs handled by LAs are truly stray.

¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/administrativegeography>

2. Summary of findings

2.1 Response Rate

Overall, 214 LAs responded to the 2020 Stray Dog Survey (SDS). This is an average response rate of 56% of the 379 LAs in the UK when the survey was administered, with a range from 40% to 83% across regions (Table 1). The response rate for the 2018-19 survey was 49%; indicating an improved response in 2019-20. Nevertheless, previous years have had higher response rates (surveys from 2015-2018 had response rates between 70-92%). **There are factors we believe may have contributed to the relatively low response rate this year compared to 2015-2018:**

1. **2020 has been an extraordinary year, with the COVID-19 pandemic causing major disruption across all sectors. The survey was distributed in October, when many organisations had staff furloughed. We know from those who did respond to the survey that staffing was affected by the pandemic, so it is reasonable to assume that other LAs had similar issues.**
2. **As this was the first time we have brought the SDS in-house, the LAs may not be used to hearing directly from us about the survey.**

However, neither of these explain the lower response rate in 2018-19, so there may be unknown factors contributing to the declining response rate.

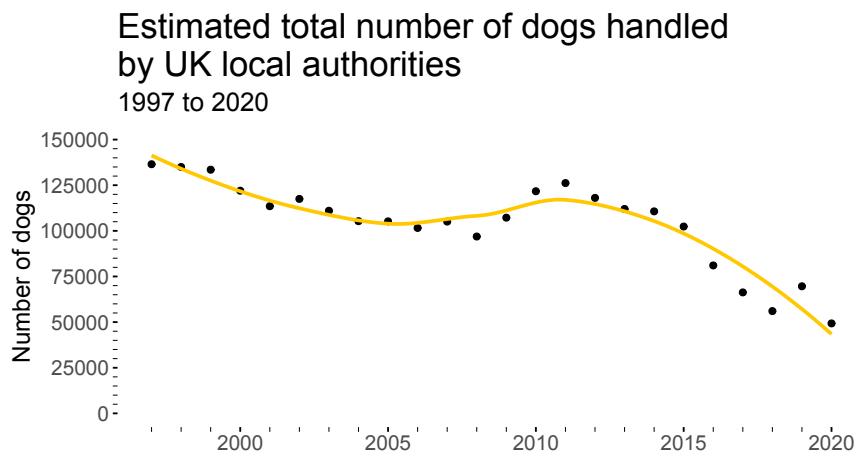
Table 1. Breakdown of response rate by country and region

Region	Number of LAs that responded to SDS	Total LAs in region	Response rate
North East England	10	12	83.3%
N. Ireland	9	11	81.8%
North West England	31	39	79.5%
Yorkshire and the Humber	16	21	76.2%
Wales	14	22	63.6%
South East England	39	64	60.9%
England (All Regions)	178	314	56.7%
South West England	17	30	56.7%
East Midlands	19	40	47.5%
London	15	33	45.5%
West Midlands	13	30	43.3%
Scotland	13	32	40.6%
East England	18	45	40.0%

2.2 Number of dogs handled

The 214 LAs that responded to the survey reported handling a total of 28,565 dogs in the period between 1 April 2019- 31 March 2020. On average each LA handled around 139 dogs, however there was a wide variation from 0 to 723. Based on these findings it was estimated that approximately 49,292 dogs were handled by LAs across the UK. This figure is the lowest estimated number since the survey began in 1997. Figure 1 demonstrates the decline in estimated numbers of dogs handled by LAs over the years.

Figure 1

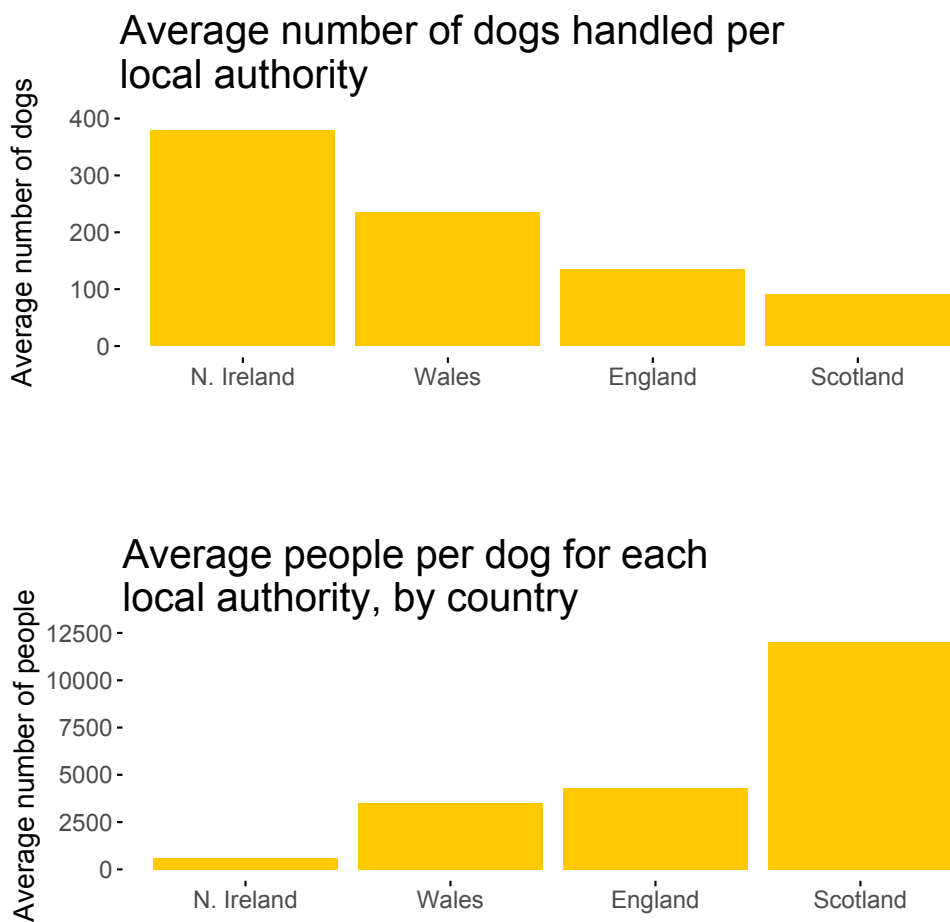


There were regional differences in the numbers of dogs handled (Table 2). Northern Ireland had the highest average number of dogs per LA, and the lowest number of PPD. As mentioned previously, England is divided by regions, but is also shown collectively in Table 2. Figure 2 shows the differences in average number of dogs handled per LA between the 4 UK countries (top), and the differences in PPD (bottom).

Table 2: Regional breakdown of average total new dogs handled and people per dog (PPD) per local authority (in ascending order of PPD)

Region	Number of LAs in region (that completed survey)	Average total new dogs handled per LA	Average PPD per LA
Northern Ireland	9	379	601
North East England	10	248	1052
East England	18	92	2098
South West England	17	99	2561
East Midlands	19	97	2568
Wales	14	234	3507
North West England	31	145	3524
West Midlands	13	212	3614
South East England	39	83	3677
England (All Regions)	178	122	4291
Yorkshire And The Humber	16	149	6117
Scotland	13	90	12028
London	15	81	13676

Figure 2



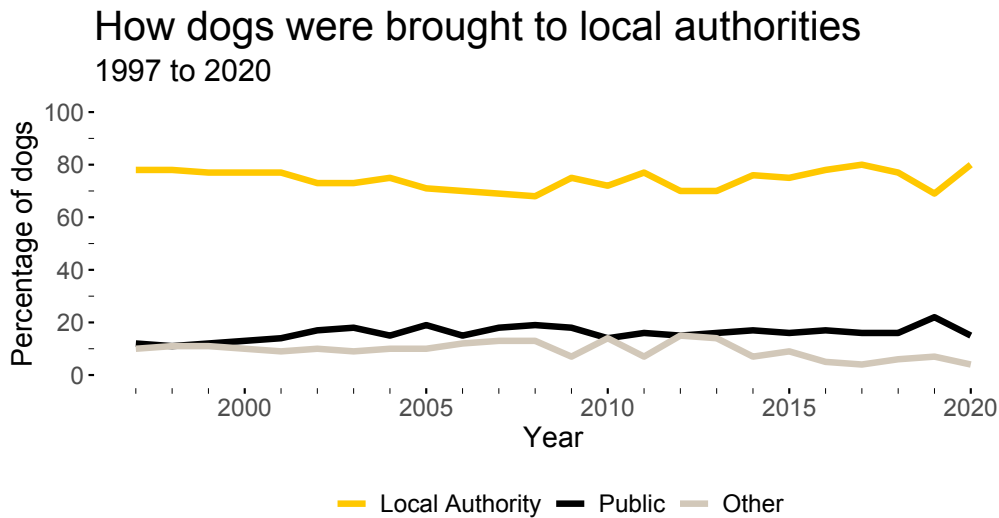
2.3 How do dogs arrive at local authorities?

Dogs come into the care of LAs via different routes. Table 3 summarises how many dogs were reported by LAs to have arrived in their care via these routes between 2019-2020. Consistent with previous years, the majority of dogs arrive at LAs after being seized as strays by the LAs. Figure 3 shows the proportions of dogs brought in by different routes across time.

Table 3: How did dogs arrive at local authorities between 2019-2020?

Arrival type	Number	Percent
Seized as stray	22904	80%
Brought in by public	4354	15%
Brought in by police	334	1%
Other	973	3%
Total dogs handled	28565	100%

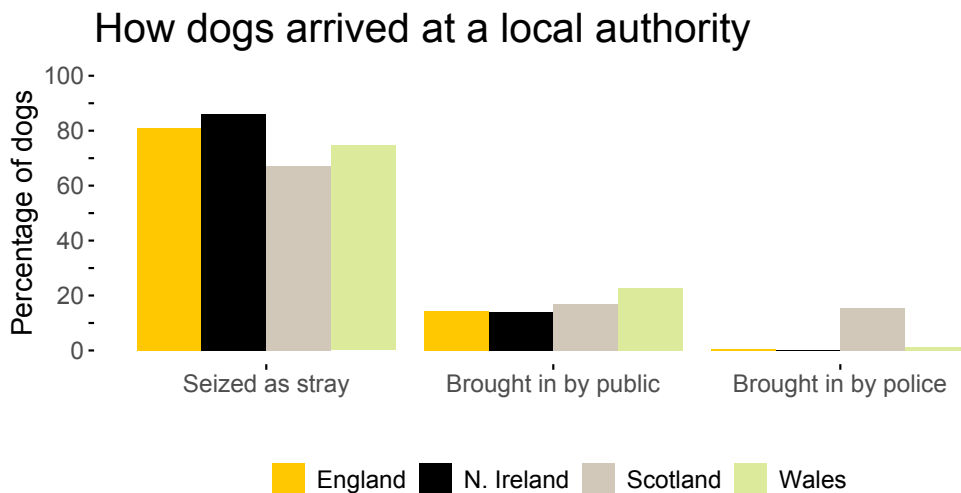
Figure 3



Only 18 councils reported any dogs being seized in response to the Dangerous Dogs Act/Order, with 118 dogs in total seized in this way. Of these, eight councils reported 1 case and eight councils reported between 2 and 5 cases. The remaining two councils reported 28 and 55 cases.

There was some regional variation in arrival routes of dogs handled by LAs (see Figure 4). For example, LAs in Scotland reported a higher proportion of dogs being brought in by the police.

Figure 4



2.4 What happens to the dogs handled by local authorities?

In total, approximately 59% of dogs taken in by LAs were returned to their owners (either reclaimed during the kennelling period or returned without kennelling). Approximately 2% of dogs were reported to have been put to sleep (PTS); it is estimated that this translates to around 1165 dogs being PTS across the UK by LAs during the study period. Table 4 summarises the number of dogs for each outcome. However, the data are incomplete as not all LAs recorded outcomes. The estimated total numbers for the UK provided in Table 4 should be treated with caution due to the incomplete nature of the data (n.b. these figures do not add up to the estimated total number of dogs handled by LAs in the UK described in Section 2.2 of this report due to the amount of missing data). Figure 5 shows the proportions of dogs brought in that met the four most common outcomes across time. Tables 5.a-5.e shows each outcome broken down by country.

Table 4: What were the outcomes for dogs handled by local authorities in 2019-2020?

Outcome	Total number recorded in this survey	Percentage of dogs recorded in this survey	Mean number per LA	Estimated UK numbers
Dogs reunited with their owners (includes 'a' and 'b' below)	16960	59%	86.1	32629
a) Dogs reclaimed during kennelling period	10900	38%	56.8	21516
b) Dogs returned without kennelling	6060	21%	35.6	13510
Passed to welfare organisation	7067	25%	39.9	15132
Rehomed by LA	2114	7%	13.0	4915
PTS	638	2%	3.1	1165
Other	346	1%	1.6	613
Total	27108	95%		

Figure 5

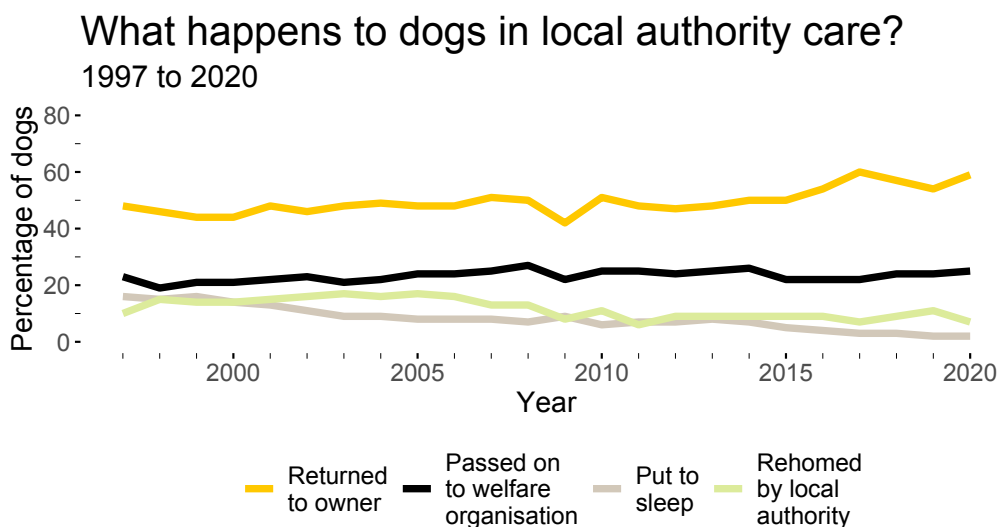


Table 5: Outcomes for dogs handled by local authorities broken down by country

5. a) Reclaimed during kennelling period

Country	Count	Percentage of dogs handled
England	8857	42.8%
Northern Ireland	849	24.9%
Scotland	539	45.8%
Wales	655	20.0%
Whole UK	10900	

5. b) Returned without Kennelling

Country	Count	Percentage of dogs handled
England	4368	21.1%
Northern Ireland	581	17.1%
Scotland	283	24.1%
Wales	828	25.2%
Whole UK	6060	

5. c) Passed on to Welfare organisation

Country	Count	Percentage of dogs handled
England	5420	26.2%
Northern Ireland	531	15.6%
Scotland	114	9.7%
Wales	1002	30.5%
Whole UK	7067	

5. d) Rehomed by local authority

Country	Count	Percentage of dogs handled
England	1278	6.2%
Northern Ireland	619	18.2%
Scotland	103	8.8%
Wales	114	3.5%
Whole UK	2114	

5. e) Put to Sleep (PTS)

Country	Count	Percentage of dogs handled
England	499	2.4%
N. Ireland	89	2.6%
Scotland	22	1.9%
Wales	28	0.9%
Whole UK	638	

2.5 Microchipping

Among the LAs that provided information about the microchip status of the dogs they handled, 55% of dogs (10,632) were already microchipped before being handled by the LA. However, many LAs (77) did not give any figure for number of dogs microchipped. Table 6 summarises the proportion of LAs who offer microchipping service, and how this is funded.

Table 6: Responses to “Do you offer a microchipping service?”

Response	Count	Percentage
No	101	47%
Free to owner using Dogs Trust chips	63	29%
Fee passed on to owner	33	15%
Free to owner at a cost to the local authority	9	4%
No response	8	4%
Total	214	100%

2.6 How were dogs reunited with their owners?

Local authorities were asked to report the number of dogs reunited with their owners as a result of the factors listed in Table 7. This information was collected to determine whether some responsible dog ownership messages, such as the importance of microchipping and ID tags on collars, may contribute to dogs being reunited with their owners. As many LAs did not have this information, the number of LAs able to report these figures is included as an indication of how representative these data are likely to be.

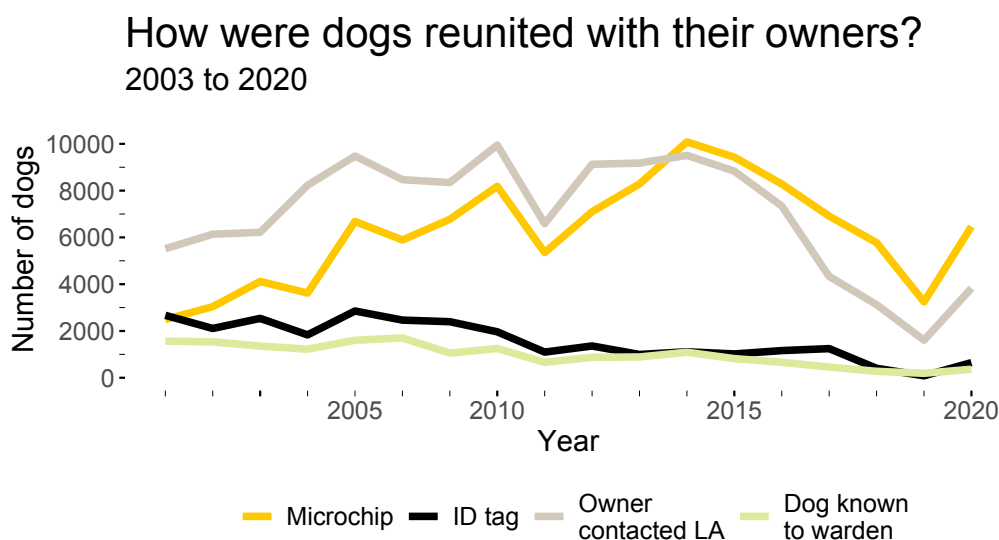
Table 7: What factors contribute to dogs being reunited with their owners?

Factor	Number of LAs that responded	Total number of dogs	Average number of dogs per LA
Dog had up to date microchip	142	6464	40.4
Dog had an ID tag	114	696	4.7
Owner contacting pound directly	105	3827	28.3
Dog known to dog warden	92	363	2.5
Other	28	129	0.6

Local authorities reported a total of 1678 dogs who could not be reunited with their owners due to incorrect microchip details. The true figure is likely to be higher, as only 91 LAs were able to provide this information. Of those LAs who did provide a figure, the average was 10.6 dogs per LA, so it could be estimated that around 4000 dogs across the UK were unable to be reunited with their owners due to incorrect microchip details.

Figure 6 shows how the methods of dogs being reunited with their owners has changed from 2003 to 2020 (this question was not asked prior to 2003). In line with previous reports the raw numbers have been reported rather than percentages.

Figure 6



2.7 Dog warden services

This year, 137 LAs (64%) said their dog warden was employed directly by them, compared to 52 LAs (24%) who contracted the service out. Both proportions are consistent with results in 2019. 70% of LAs reported that dogs were handled by private boarding kennels; whereas 13% LAs used a council-owned pound and 33% used welfare charity kennels to house their dogs – also consistent with 2019 findings.

2.8 Predominant breed types

LAs were asked to report the top 3 breeds that are seized/brought in. Table 8 shows the number of LAs that listed each breed as one of their top three (e.g. 160 (75%) of the LAs listed Staffordshire Bull Terriers (SBT) or their crosses among their top 3 breeds).

Table 8: Predominant breed types seen by local authorities

Breed	England	% of England LAs	NI	% of NI LAs	Scotland	% of Scotland LAs	Wales	% of Wales LAs	Whole UK	% of UK LAs
SBT*	135	75.8%	6	66.7%	9	69.2%	10	71.4%	160	74.8%
Crossbreed	83	46.6%	6	66.7%	5	38.5%	7	50.0%	101	47.2%
JRT*	80	44.9%	2	22.2%	3	23.1%	7	50.0%	92	43.0%
Lurcher	73	41.0%	3	33.3%	6	46.2%	8	57.1%	90	42.1%
Border Collie	17	9.6%	6	66.7%	6	46.2%	3	21.4%	32	15.0%
American Bulldog	17	9.6%	1	11.1%	2	15.4%	1	7.1%	21	9.8%
Labrador	12	6.7%	1	11.1%	3	23.1%	2	14.3%	18	8.4%
Greyhound	17	9.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	17	7.9%
German Shepherd	11	6.2%	1	11.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	5.6%
Husky	7	3.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	14.3%	9	4.2%
Terrier (not specific)	8	4.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	3.7%
Yorkshire terrier	3	1.7%	1	11.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	1.9%
Akita	3	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	1.4%
Chihuahua	3	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	1.4%
Rottweiler	2	1.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.9%
Patterdale	2	1.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.9%
Mastiff	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%
Whippet	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%
Boxer	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%
Retriever	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%

* JRT (Jack Russell Terrier) and SBT (Staffordshire Bull Terrier)

2.9 Impacts of COVID-19

We predicted that the COVID-19 pandemic would have an impact on the activities of LAs. Therefore, in this survey we included questions to assess these effects. Previous questions in the survey referred specifically to the period between 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020, but the COVID-19 section asked LAs to think about their experiences “since the start of COVID-19 restrictions in the UK (from around mid-March 2020 until now)” (the survey was distributed in August 2020). Overall, most LAs reported that the number of dogs they were handling had decreased or remained the same since implementation of the COVID-19 restrictions, only 7 (3%) reported that the numbers of dogs increased (Table 9).

Table 9: Impact of COVID-19 on numbers of dogs seen by local authorities

Response	Number	Percent
Decrease in number of dogs	133	62%
Number of dogs has remained about the same	42	20%
The number of dogs has fluctuated during this time	13	6%
Unknown	10	5%
Other	9	4%
Increase in number of dogs	7	3%
Total	214	100%

Furthermore, 78% of LAs reported that demand for their services decreased during the first UK COVID-19 lockdown, and just under half (43%) said that it increased again once lockdown was eased, suggesting that the return to “normality” was slower for some.



3. Conclusions

The number of dogs handled by LAs in the UK, as estimated by the annual Stray Dog Survey, has showed an overall decline since the survey began in 1997. The rate of decline was steady up until the period between 2008-2010, when then was a brief period of increasing numbers. We do not know what caused this increase, but the timing coincides with the global financial crisis of 2008, which caused severe economic downturn in the UK. It could be hypothesised that people may have been unable to care for their pets due to financial difficulties, which may have led to relinquishment or abandonment. The steep decline in numbers between 2015-2018 coincides with the introduction in 2016 of legislation making microchipping mandatory for dog owners in the UK. An increase in microchipping during this period may have made it easier for dogs to be reunited with their owners without being handed over to LAs. These UK-wide figures are estimates based on the numbers of LAs who responded to the survey. As discussed earlier in this report, relatively low response rates in recent years may mean that the UK-wide estimates are less accurate, since they are based on a smaller sample which may not be representative of the UK at large.

Regional comparisons between numbers of dogs handled indicated that LAs in Northern Ireland tended to handle more dogs on average, and have a lower number of “people per dog”, compared to LAs elsewhere in the UK. These findings are consistent with operational experience, and suggest the need for interventions to address the specific causes for higher numbers of dogs entering LA care within Northern Ireland.

The methods by which dogs come into the care of LAs has remained consistent over the years, with the majority being seized directly by LAs as strays. The only substantial regional difference reported was a greater proportion of dogs coming to LAs via the police, and slightly less dogs are seized directly by LAs, in Scotland compared to other regions. This may reflect differences in the ways that LAs work with the police, and perhaps other institutions, between different countries.

In recent years there has been a gradual increase in the proportions of dogs reunited with their owners by LAs. There has also been a gradual decrease in the numbers of dogs put to sleep (PTS) by LAs. Although these trends are very good news, it is still the case that around 41% of dogs handled by LAs are not returned to their owners; either because they are unwanted or because the owners are not able to be found. Furthermore, we estimated that although only 2% of dogs in our sample were PTS, this could reflect a UK wide total of over 1000 dogs being PTS by LAs. Based on these facts it is clear that activities to encourage microchipping, updating microchip data, and the use of collar and ID tags for all dogs are still very much necessary.

Responses to the COVID-19 questions indicated that many LAs experienced a decline in the demand for their dog related services and handled less dogs during the period of lockdown restrictions. The period covered by this survey in terms numbers of dogs handled (1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020) only included a small period of lockdown; therefore we are unlikely to see the impacts of the pandemic reflected in the total numbers of dogs reported. It is hoped that the 2020-2021 report will provide a clearer picture of the impact of longer-term COVID-19 throughout 2020 and into 2021 on stray dogs and LA dog services.

Next year, 2020-2021, will be the 25th anniversary of the Stray Dog Survey.

To mark this occasion, we will be reviewing the survey in the following ways:

- **Assessing how we can maximise the relevance and usefulness of the data we collect to stakeholders within and external to Dogs Trust**
- **Refining the survey to ensure only essential data is collected**
- **Updating the way questions are asked to ensure data are returned in the most useful format for analysis**
- **Updating methods of analysis to improve the quality of results; for example, using more advanced statistical techniques when calculating estimates.**

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