

No. 366/2018

26 June 2018

Our Ref: P18/18

House of Commons, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Parliamentary Select Committee - Dangerous Dogs Legislation Inquiry - Oral Evidence Dave Joyce CWU - Wednesday 27 June 2018

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

On 11 May the House of Commons, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee launched an inquiry into the legislation on dangerous dogs.

The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 was introduced to protect the public from dangerous dog attacks. In 2014, the Act was extended to include attacks on private property and also brought in tougher penalties and new extended Police dog seizure powers along with Community Protection Notices, amongst other improvements, following the CWU's successful 7-year 'Bite Back' Campaign.

Despite the positive changes to the Dangerous Dog Laws, there has been substantial debate about the effectiveness of this dog control legislation with a number of criticisms and concerns raised by the CWU Health, Safety & Environment Department particularly around inconsistencies with enforcement of the Law by the Police and Local Authorities as well as interpretation of the Law by Police forces, Crown Prosecution Services and the Courts and finally, inconsistent and lenient Court Sentences despite two sets of guidance from the Sentencing Council.

3000 Postal Workers are attacked by Dogs at work annually. Forty people (members of the public, adults and children) have been killed in dog attacks or died as a result of an attack since 2005. The number of yearly hospital admissions due to dog attacks has also risen by 76% in the last decade in England and Wales and 80% in Scotland, indicating the continuation of a very serious situation in the UK.

The Government is responsible for protecting the public, including Postal and Telecom Workers from dangerous animals, so it is essential that laws evolve, are fit for purpose and work. The House of Commons EFRA Select Committee of MPs is investigating whether the Government's current approach is having the desired effect or not, and whether any changes to the Law are needed to ensure that the public and workers are properly protected and additionally that animal welfare concerns are properly addressed.

The Inquiry Terms of Reference are to address the following questions:

1. How effective is the Government's current approach to protecting the public from dangerous dog attacks?
2. What changes, if any, should be made to the current approach and legislation?
3. How can local authorities and Police forces be best supported in reducing the number of dangerous dog-related incidents?
4. What lessons could the UK learn from other countries dealing with similar issues?

CWU National Health and Safety Officer Dave Joyce has been requested to give oral evidence to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee on 27 June. The meeting will be held in the House of Commons, Palace of Westminster annex, Portcullis House in the Grimond Room and will begin at 09.30am with Dave Joyce scheduled to give evidence at approximately 10.30am. The Committee meets in public for such sessions and CWU Representatives and Members are free to attend. The proceedings may also be broadcast on the Parliament TV Channel.

Queues may develop at entrances to the Parliamentary Estate during busy times, so I would advise anyone wishing to attend to enter through the Portcullis House search point and allow half an hour to pass through the airport-style security. No identification or additional documentation will be required. Once inside the building, security or visitor staff will be able to direct you to the Grimond Room.

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer