



Managing Demand and Risk: Dangerous Dogs in Cleveland

Policing Perspective to Place Select
Committee

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Strong on crime
Trusted by communities
Committed to excellence

Purpose of this evidence

- Provide an operational policing perspective by focusing on the areas requested of Police within the review scope: police responsibilities, demand and kennelling, long-term outcomes, and opportunities for partnership prevention

Outline:

- Police and partner responsibilities for dangerous dogs and other dog related incidents
- The number of dogs dealt with and kennelled by Cleveland Police
- How dangerous dog cases are managed and resolved by Cleveland Police

Highlight:

- Demand and system pressures
- Role of partnership working and prevention



Why am I giving this evidence

Role and operational responsibility

- Force Dog Legislation Officer for Cleveland Police
- Lead officer for dangerous dog legislation and enforcement
- Responsible for:
 - Risk assessment in dangerous dog cases
 - Identification of prohibited types
 - Advising on enforcement decisions and outcomes

Professional involvement

- Provide expert evidence in criminal and civil courts
- Support partner agencies including local authority and RSPCA
- Contribute to national policing approach through NPCC working groups

Operational background

- 12 years as an operational police dog handler
- NPCC Police dog instructor



Legal Framework and responsibilities

Police

- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
 - Section 1 – prohibited types
 - Section 3 – dangerously out of control

Local Authority

- Stray dogs – Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Microchipping enforcement – Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023

Animal welfare

- Animal Welfare Act 2006 offences
- Local authority has power to prosecute
- RSPCA often investigates / prosecutes privately
- Police mainly where there is immediate risk, criminality or safeguarding

Civil route

Dogs Act 1871

- civil complaints and control / destruction measures (police / LA)



Understanding the data

The recorded figures provide only a partial view of police demand

Recorded

- Aggravated Section 3 offences (injury cases)

Not consistently recorded

- Non-injury Section 3 incidents
- Section 1 prohibited type work
- Lower-level complaints and ASB



Dangerous dog demand – policing perspective

Aggravated Section 3 offences:

- 533 (2025/26)

Dogs seized:

- 116 (2024/25)
- 137 (2025/26)

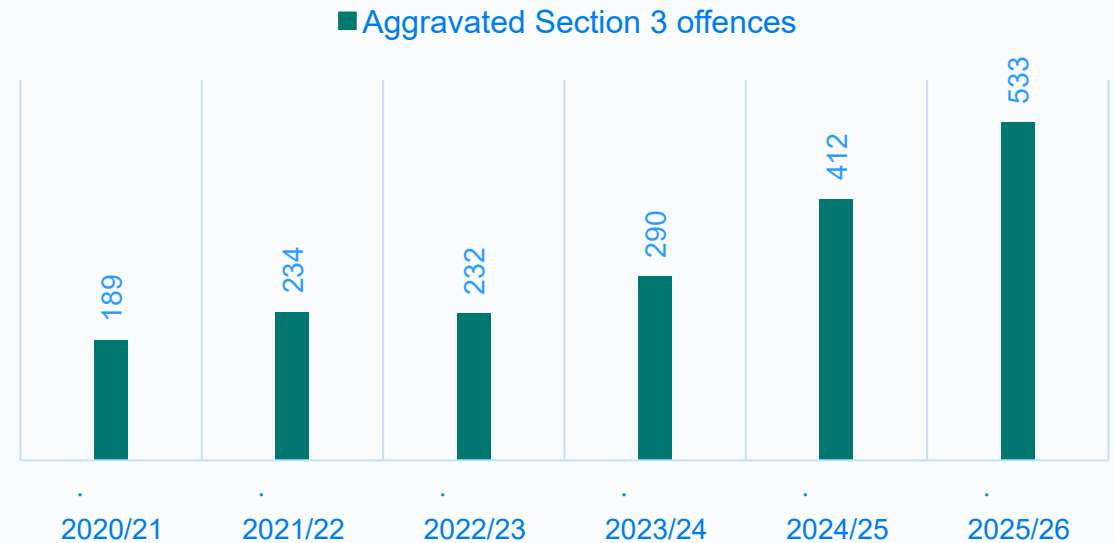
Police kennel capacity:

- 24 spaces
- Typically full

Key point

Demand is increasing, high-risk and resource intensive

Aggravated Section 3 offences



Full operational demand

What policing actually deals with:

Section 1 prohibited types

Section 3 incidents (injury and non-injury)

Dog-on-dog attacks

Neighbour disputes

Anti-social behaviour involving dogs

Wider demand and vulnerability

Incidents involving vulnerable individuals

Mental health / safeguarding concerns

Police often first agency attending

Dog-related risk forming part of wider issues



How cases are managed

Incident

- Risk assessment
- Seizure decision
- Kennelling
- Investigation
- Court
- Outcome

Key points

- Not all dogs are seized
- Decisions are based on risk and proportionality
- Public safety, welfare and cost all matter
- Long-term outcomes vary depending on evidence, risk and court decision



Long-term outcomes and kennelling pressure

Possible outcomes

- Return / no further action
- Control conditions / contingent destruction order
- Destruction
- Disqualification from keeping dogs
- Exemption where lawful for prohibited types

Kennelling pressure

- Police kennels: 24 spaces, typically near full
- Average time in kennels: about 44 days
- Main driver of delay: criminal justice and court process

Other point

Dogs linked to detained persons / prisoner property are a small part of kennel demand



Partnership, early intervention and improving understanding

Early intervention

- Joint work with Local Authority on:
 - Lower-level complaints
 - Emerging risk
 - Repeat nuisance behaviour

Tools used

- Community Protection Warnings
- Community Protection Notices
- Dogs Act 1871 applications
- Referral to children's / adults' services

Improving local understanding

- Clearer internal police guidance on detained persons' dogs
- Clearer challenge / acceptance process for temporary holding
- Shared understanding between police and Local Authority



What would help

- Clear shared pathway for stray dogs, detained-person dogs and dangerous dogs.
- Early information-sharing on repeat addresses, repeat owners and emerging risk.
- Consistent use of Community Protection Warnings, Community Protection Notices and Dogs Act 1871 applications.
- Greater consistency of approach and intervention thresholds across the four local authority areas.
- Public awareness on responsible dog ownership, microchipping, secure control of dogs and reporting routes.
- Better understanding across agencies of when Police powers are appropriate and when Council/RSPCA routes are more suitable.



Summary of evidence

- Dangerous dogs are a public safety issue
- Recorded crime figures only show part of demand
- Police demand includes:
 - Incident-led work
 - Proactive prohibited-type work
 - Preventative and safeguarding-related work
- Kennelling and court processes create sustained pressure
- Partnership working helps reduce escalation and harm before matters escalate to the criminal threshold.



Thank you

Any questions?

