



September 2023

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the Government's decision to ban American XL Bully dogs.

As you may be aware, owners who allow their dogs to terrorise people or other animals are already breaking the law, and there is already a full range of powers to apply penalties to owners who do not control their pets.

However, very sadly, fatal and serious dog attacks have risen sharply this year. The American XL Bully, seemingly prized as status symbols by some for their aggressive temperaments, has been disproportionately involved in this rise. It is therefore only right that the Government takes decisive action to prevent these dogs from causing further harm.

Banning these dogs has been under consideration for some time, but this has been complicated by the fact that the XL Bully is not formally recognised as a breed in the UK. For this reason, the Environment Secretary and the Home Secretary will now urgently convene experts to define the American XL Bully breed type, including police, canine and veterinary experts, and animal welfare stakeholders. The Government will then legislate to add the XL Bully to the list of breeds banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

I understand that these changes are expected to be in place by the end of this year.

Of course, the existing population of XL Bullies will need to be safely managed, so an amnesty period will be introduced.

It may reassure you to know that owners who come forward to register their XL Bully during the amnesty period will be able to keep their dog until the end of its life, provided they meet conditions such as neutering the dog and keeping it on a lead and muzzle in public. Any XL Bully owner who does not come forward to register during the amnesty period will be committing a criminal offence if they are subsequently found to be keeping an unregistered dog.

In the meantime, I know that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will continue to work with the police, local authorities and animal welfare groups to



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help prevent future attacks by encouraging responsible dog ownership and to make sure the full force of the law is applied.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**