

EN

Big Appple presents

XL BULLY

An exhibition by Alexis Etienne

January 18th - March 8th 2026

“Is my dog dangerous?”

That is the question that has been running through the British public sphere since the national ban on XL Bully-type dogs in the winter of 2024. Drawing on a comparative study conducted in the British press, Alexis Etienne analyses the language employed, the repetition of images, and the narrative framing of a handful of sensationalised news stories. Here, the press functions like a magnifying glass: it isolates, enlarges, and distorts. It produces a cycle of fear in which psychosis feeds on itself.

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In *Ghosts of My Life*, Mark Fisher writes that we are “haunted by the futures that never happened,” by the social, cultural, or political possibilities annulled by neoliberal capitalism. Alexis Etienne’s bulldogs are among these spectres. They look at us as much as we look at them, and they pose a simple yet disturbing question: what are we really afraid of? And if they are, why are these dogs dangerous?

Clément Hébert

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© Darren Shuttleworth-Long / SWNS

The dog sitter was taken to hospital and had what was left of his ear stitched up, he said: 'The tissue had to come off - there was nothing to attach it to'

'There was blood everywhere. It was pouring out of me. It was like a horror movie.

'My whole face was covered in blood. Half my nose was hanging off.'

The dog sitter was taken to hospital and had what was left of his ear stitched up. He said: 'The tissue had to come off - there was nothing to attach it to.'

Mr Shuttleworth-Long has been recovering since and struggles to go out.

He said: 'I can't go anywhere near big dogs now.

'It's a long-lasting stress that will be there for the rest of my life now.'

He is waiting for the soft tissue on his ear to harden before he can then have an appointment with a plastic surgeon to look at reconstruction.

The dog sitter added: 'Dogs barking sends cold chills through me.'

Wiltshire police confirmed a 24-year-old woman was arrested on suspicion of being in charge of a dog dangerously out of control causing injury.

She has been released on bail pending further enquiries.

Since February 1, 2024, owning the XL Bully breed has become a criminal offence in England and Wales unless owners have an exemption certificate and anyone who owns one of the dogs needs to have the animal neutered and microchipped.

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England and Wales have banned this breed of dog. Should Ireland follow?



Supporters of the XL Bully dog breed hold placards during a protest against the UK government's plans for the breed, in London on October 7th, 2023. Photograph: Henry Nicholls/AFP via Getty

[Bernice Harrison](#)

Fri Feb 02 2024 - 06:15

It is now a criminal offence to have an [XL Bully](#) dog in England and Wales, although some exemptions do apply. New rules were brought in to stop serious and fatal attacks by the breed and the legislation makes four breeds of dog, originally bred for fighting, illegal including American Pitbull terriers, Japanese Tosas, Dogo Argentinos and Fila Brasileiro.

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Speaking after the case Inspector Joynes said: 'Zeus was subjected to violent and senseless abuse at the hands of Campbell on a number of occasions.'



James Campbell, a 50-year-old from Birkenhead, just outside Liverpool, was filmed chucking brocks and pans of water at 21-month-old dog Zeus



The dog was put down by a vet after he signed her over to authorities

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Crime & Law Analysis

Q&A: the ban on XL bully dogs - why is it happening and what will it mean for dog owners?

Government is bringing in ban as a direct response to a number of horrific attacks on people in recent years



Four-year-old XL bully dog Coby, pictured during a protest on Wednesday, September 25th, in Dublin's city centre against the ban. Photograph: Brian Lawless/PA Wire



Cormac McQuinn

Thu Sept 26 2024 - 21:21

[XL bully dogs](#) are being [banned in Ireland](#) on a phased basis starting next Tuesday, but why is this happening, what will it mean for dog owners, and how will the ban be enforced?

Q: Why are they being banned?

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DEVIL HOUNDS Shock stats reveal 488 people sought medical attention in hospital for dog attack injuries in Ireland last year

There is a stark increase

John Kierans

Published: 15:40, 29 Jun 2025 Updated: 15:41, 29 Jun 2025



THE number of people treated in hospitals for dog bites has increased year on year, new figures from the HSE reveal.

A total of 488 people had medical attention in [Irish hospitals](#) after dog attacks last year, compared to 343

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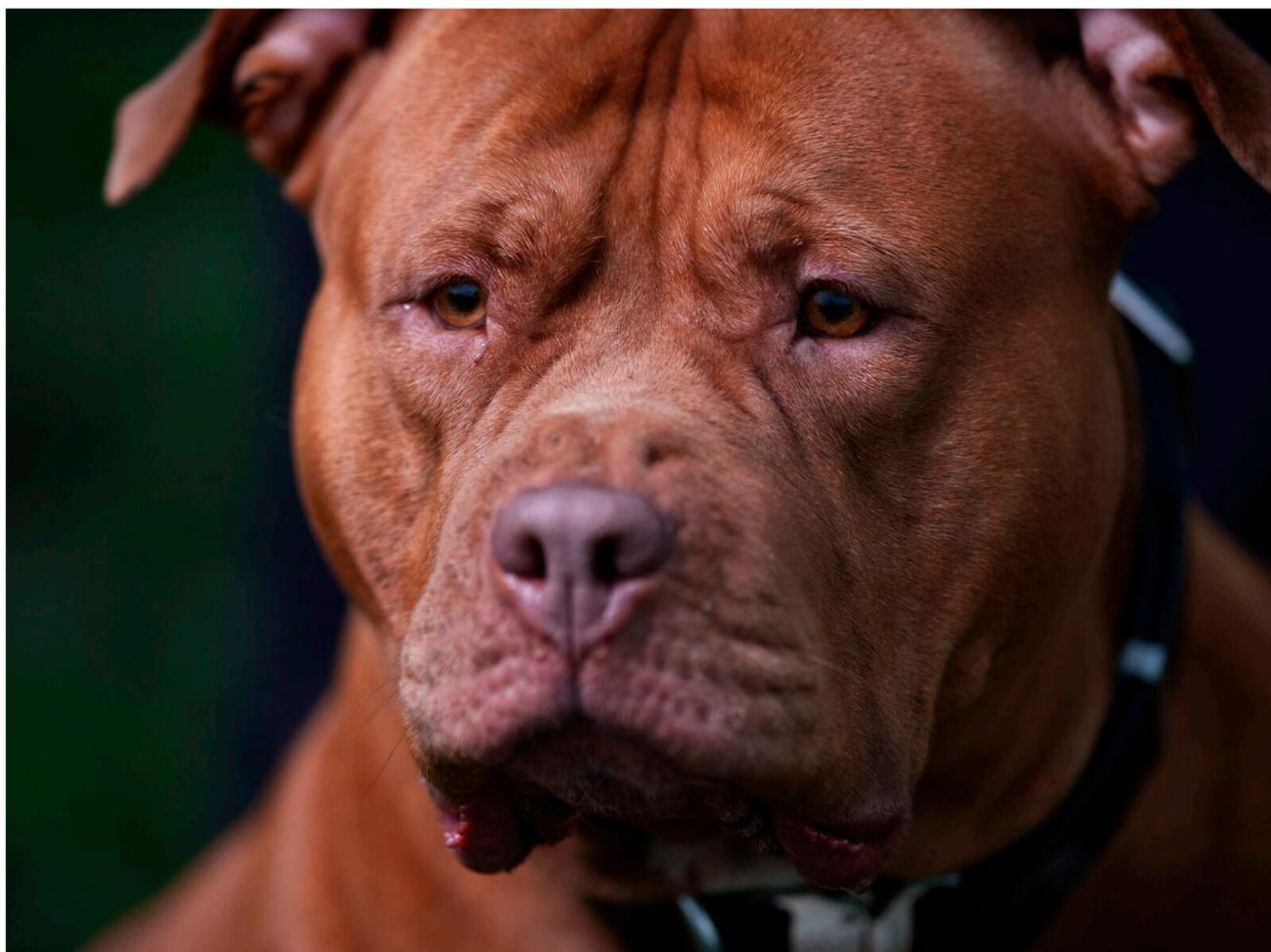
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Crime & Law

Three women arrested and XL Bully dogs seized at Dublin property

Cash, mobile phones and scrambler motorcycles also seized in operation targeting west Dublin gang



Several XL Bully dogs were removed from the residence. File image: Getty

Colin Gleeson

Thu Apr 03 2025 - 22:20

Three women were arrested and gardaí seized a significant sum of cash, multiple mobile phones and three high-powered scrambler motorcycles during a search of a property in Dublin on Thursday.

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Ireland

XL bully ban creates ‘a real risk of dog abandonment’, says ISPCA

Charity says change in legislation will put more pressure on animal rescue groups and create worries for responsible dog owners

Saeedullah Safi

Cormac McQuinn

Mon Jul 15 2024 - 16:25

[A ban on XL bully dogs](#) creates “a real risk of dog abandonment” and will place pressure on already stretched animal welfare groups, the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA) has said.

The ban, announced last week by Minister for Rural and Community Development Heather Humphreys, is to be implemented in two phases and comes in response to a series of attacks involving XL bully dogs, [including a fatal incident in Co Limerick recently](#).

From October 1st, the breeding, rehoming, reselling and importation of XL Bully dogs is to be banned. From February 1st, owning an XL bully will be prohibited unless the owner has secured a Certificate of Exemption. Penalties for breaching the ban include fines of up to €2,500 or imprisonment for up to three months.

The ISPCA said the change in legislation was deeply worrying for responsible dog owners who comply with the legislation and would create additional pressures on animal rescue charities. The ISPCA currently cares for 211 dogs, including 68 restricted breeds, with 28 potentially classified as XL bully dogs.

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Courts

XL bully dog ban disproportionate and vague, say animal welfare groups

Organisations say they have seen a 'substantial' increase in requests to surrender bully-type dogs



Tim O'Connor with his XL bully Piper at a protest in Dublin against the XL bully ban last November.
Photograph: Alan Betson/The Irish Times

Ellen O'Riordan

Mon Jan 20 2025 - 20:14

A new law restricting ownership of XL bully dogs is disproportionate and too vague to impose a criminal liability on owners who fail to comply, animal welfare organisations allege in High Court proceedings.

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XL bully dogs facing being put down given reprieve until next year

Ban on rehoming would have forced shelters to euthanise dogs still in their care next week



XL bully dog Custard with dog charity volunteer Suzanne Ryan before Custard was shipped off to Sweden to begin a new life

Ronan McGreevy

Fri Sept 27 2024 - 17:42

XL bully dogs currently in pounds and dog shelters have been given a reprieve and will not need to be put down when a ban comes into force next week.

EN

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Clément Hébert

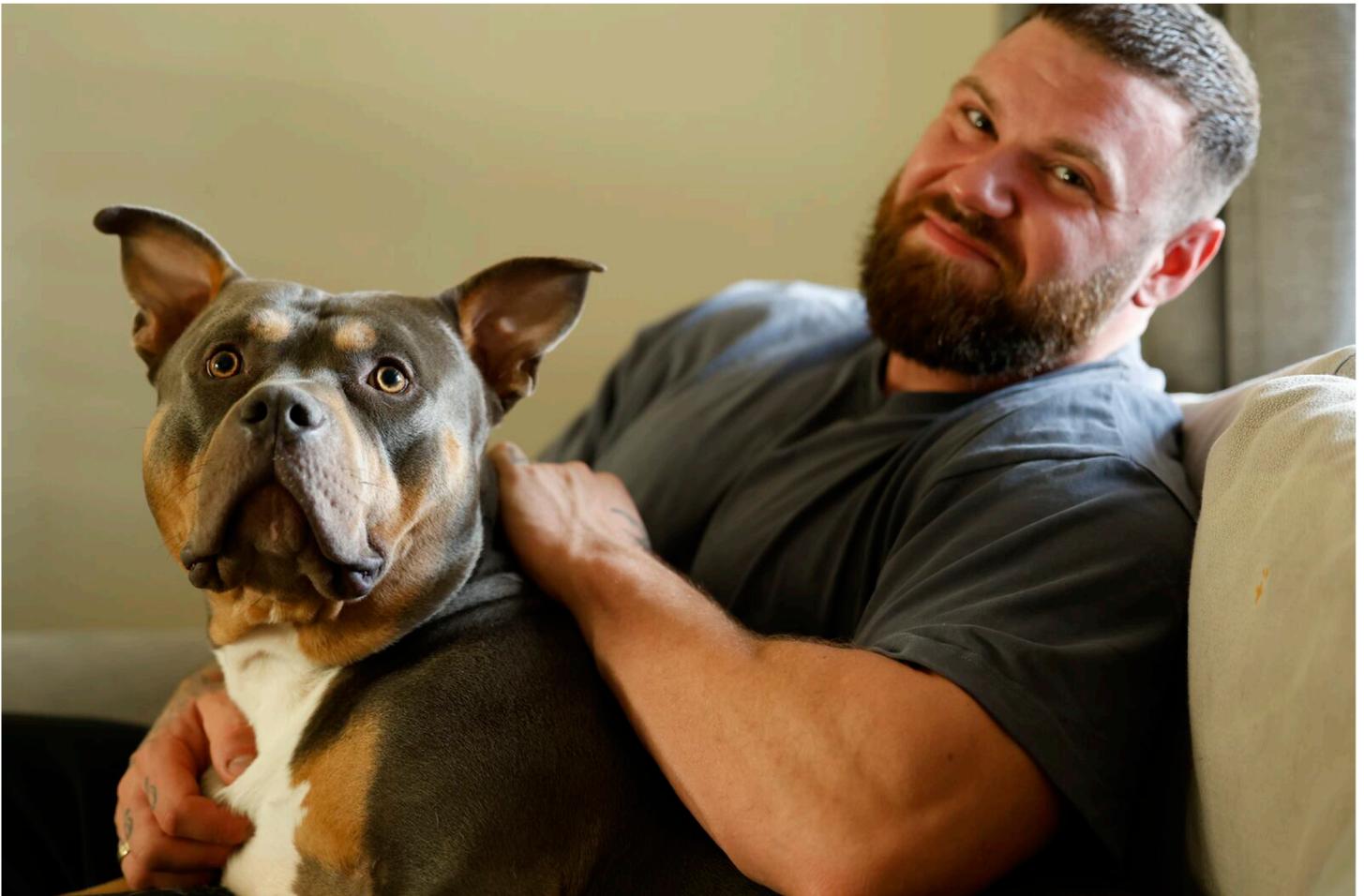
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People

XL bully dogs: Is this the end for one of the most feared breeds in Ireland?

From October 1st the importing, breeding, selling and rehoming of XL bullies will be prohibited here



Rowan Woodgates with his three-year-old XL bully Goose. Photograph: Nick Bradshaw



[Sheila Wayman](#)

Sat Sept 21 2024 - 06:00

The clock is ticking for Hercules, Bert and Hannah, three strays at the [Dublin](#) County Dog Shelter. There are only nine days left for any homeless [XL bully dogs](#) like them in rescue centres around the country to find a new owner or they face being [euthanised under new laws from October 1st](#).

Hercules has been adopted once but it did not work out and he was returned after a few weeks; Bert and Hannah are more recent arrivals. The Newcastle shelter is looking for experienced dog owners, with no other pets and a large garden, to take each of them in, says assistant manager Emily Nash. Another failed placement would likely cost them their lives.

This banning of a particular type of dog is a first for Ireland. It seems to many like an eminently sensible move considering that XL bullies have been involved in horrific fatal and maiming attacks. Just last weekend a man in north Co Dublin was injured in an attack by his own XL bully, which was later put down. Announcement of the ban last July, by the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, came a month after [Nicole Morey had been killed by her own dogs, including an XL bully](#), in her Co Limerick home. The

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Law to crack down on roaming dogs

Ray Ryan

A crackdown on marauding and dangerous dogs is imminent after the Government announced further funding for local authorities to support warden services from 2025.

The move follows increased calls for action after a series of shocking dog attacks on people and livestock across the State in recent years.

A four-month-old girl, Mia O'Connell, died from injuries in one such attack in Clashmore, Co Waterford, in 2021.

Earlier this year 23-year-old Nicole Morey suffered fatal injuries in another incident in Ballyneely, Co Limerick. In Kerry this week, a young girl was also badly injured in a suspected XL bully attack.

There have also been reports of people being injured in an increasing number of dog attacks at different locations countrywide.

A total of 3,158 emergency in-patient hospitalisations with dog bite-related injuries were recorded during a 10-year study period (2012-2021).

The joint study was conducted by the Department of Agriculture, the

National Health Intelligence Unit and the University of Limerick.

Statistics collated by the Irish Farmers' Association have also indicated that the number of sheep injured and killed by roaming dogs could be 3,000 to 4,000 per annum.

Earlier this year, Rural and Community Development Minister Heather Humphreys established a new Stakeholder Group on dog control headed by retired Deputy Garda Commissioner John Twomey.

Last month, an allocation of €2m for local authorities to hire up to 40 new dog wardens and support services was announced. New regulations will also prohibit the importing, breeding, selling, and rehoming of XL Bullies from October 1.

And from February 1, 2025, it will be illegal to own an XL Bully without a 'Certificate of Exemption'. It is expected that most of the new positions will come on stream next year. There are 74 dog wardens employed across the local government sector.

A person guilty of an offence under legislation shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine of up to €2,500, or to imprisonment of a term



Dogs are a danger to livestock, with as many as 3,000 to 4,000 sheep per annum killed by them.

of up to three months, or both.

Any dog found straying, or abandoned, will be seized by a dog warden and may then be put down after five days, if not claimed and any charges paid.

Ministers Humphreys, Darragh O'Brien (Local Government and Heritage) and Alan Dillon announced the measures.

The funding recognises the in-

creased demands around dog control and the need to ensure there are resources to enforce the pending ban on XL Bully dogs.

Stressing that public safety is the priority, Ms Humphreys said the funding will help each local authority to ensure they have the necessary number of dog wardens in place.

"The measures banning the import, sale, and breeding of XL Bullies

will be in place very shortly. This funding will help ensure that these new measures are enforced on the ground.

"I have already trebled the fines for a range of offences. Whether it's in our towns, villages or cities, there should be zero tolerance for people who do not keep their dogs under proper control in public spaces," she said.

The move builds on previous funding from the government to improve local authority dog pound facilities.

Mr O'Brien said local authorities play a vital role in the enforcement of dog control laws. It is important that each of them has the necessary resources.

"I fully recognise the additional demands in this area, and the need to ensure that there are sufficient services in place to meet these demands. This funding will help achieve that," he said.

Stressing that communities must be protected from dangerous dogs, Mr Dillon said he was confident the allocation will support the enforcement of new dog control measures at a local level.

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British prime minister promises to ban 'dangerous' XL bully dogs by end of the year

Matthew George

American XL bully dogs will be banned in the UK by the end of the year following a series of attacks, Rishi Sunak has said.

The British prime minister made the promise after it emerged a man has died after being attacked by two dogs — suspected to be bully XLs — in Staffordshire and following a video of another incident that went viral when an 11-year-old girl suffered

serious injuries in Birmingham.

Mr Sunak said: "I share the nation's horror at the recent videos we've all seen. Yesterday we saw another suspected XL bully dog attack, which has tragically led to a fatality.

"It is clear this is not about a handful of badly trained dogs, it's a pattern of behaviour and it cannot go on."

He said he has ordered ministers to bring together police and experts to define the breed of dog behind these

attacks so they can then be outlawed.

"We will then ban the breed under the Dangerous Dogs Act and new laws will be in place by the end of the year," he said. "These dogs are dangerous, I want to reassure the public that we will take all necessary steps to keep people safe."

Downing Street denied the government has taken too long to ban American XL bully dogs. Asked whether ministers had "dragged

their heels" on commencing work to outlaw the breed, the prime minister's official spokesman said: "I wouldn't accept that. I think we've obviously been doing some policy work on this and you heard from the home secretary recently about how to take this forward.

"Clearly this breed of dog isn't defined in law so it's right to take the time to consider the best way to put an end to these horrendous attacks that we're seeing."

Within minutes of Mr Sunak announcing the ban, a man was arrested on suspicion of manslaughter over the attack in Main Street, Stonnall, on Thursday, Staffordshire Police said.

The 30-year-old, from the Lichfield area, was previously arrested on suspicion of being in charge of dogs dangerously out of control causing injury.

One of the dogs died after being restrained and the other died after an injection

was given by a vet, the force said, adding that both were believed to be XL bullies but further tests are being carried out to determine their breed.

A 60-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of possessing a dog dangerously out of control after the dog attack last Saturday that left 11-year-old Ana Paun with injuries that required her to spend a night in hospital.

She suffered shoulder and arm injuries in the attack by

an American bully XL and Staffordshire bull terrier crossbreed puppy in Bordesley Green, Birmingham.

Two other men were also injured in the attack after the dog broke free from its collar twice.

Mr Sunak's ban on American XL bully dogs has been commended by the former Conservative home secretary who introduced the Dangerous Dogs Act.

The decision has been backed by campaign groups,

the Labour Party and Kenneth Baker, who put the Dangerous Dogs Act on the statute books more than 30 years ago.

Mr Baker said American XL bully dogs should be "neutered or destroyed" once the ban has come into force, with any permitted to live being "muzzled for the entire time".

The Tory peer said: "It should be done almost immediately because this is a very dangerous breed."

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Theory test for owners 'would cut number of incidents of dog attacks'

Jack White

A mandatory theory test should be enforced for dog owners, an Oireachtas committee on dangerous dog breeds has heard.

Canine behavioural expert Nanci Creedon said the theory test, which would be similar to the test for a driver's licence, would reduce the number of incidents of dog attacks, and promote responsible dog ownership.

She said the test would contain "basic" information which would look at how punishing dogs can lead to aggressive behaviour. She also said the cost would turn off people not "invested enough" or committed to being responsible owners.

Ms Creedon also said the

restrictive breed list in Ireland is "ineffective" and "unscientific", while an outright ban seen in Britain has had the opposite desired effect, causing people to "glorify" banned breeds, which subsequently led to an increase.

She noted three high-profile fatalities including the death of four-month-old Mia O'Connell in Waterford in 2021, and said none of these cases had breached the current legislation.

"The Control of Dogs act was not breached in either of our three recorded fatalities nor did it save their lives."

Ms Creedon said educating owners is key in preventing dog bites and livestock worrying, and would also reduce the number of dogs being surrendered.

She said this would have a knock-on effect on the pressures faced by shelters across the country that are currently at capacity.

The committee heard the current restricted breed list gives a sense of security to those whose dogs are not on the list, and who might subsequently assume they are safe to let their dogs to roam.

The lack of dog wardens was raised by Sinn Féin TD Martin Browne, who said there is just "one and a half" in Tipperary.

Ms Creedon said there is not only a lack of wardens, but they, along with gardaí, are inadequately trained in dealing with dogs. "Before any legislation changes, we first need to appoint a dog bite prevention organisation

that will appoint members to investigate the events of serious and fatal dog attacks, assess the dog before euthanasia, and begin to build a picture of the characteristics of serious dog bites, with the intention to then use said data to build more appropriate legislation," she said.

Principal officer of the Department of Rural and Community Development Paul Geraghty said it intends to "more actively promote" a culture of responsible dog ownership and would include a campaign similar to one used during the 1980s.

He said fine increases are being considered, which would see on-the-spot fines raised from €100 to €250, and court-imposed fines increased from €2,500.

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Gardaí go to court to have 'very dangerous' XL bully dog seized or put down

GORDON DEEGAN

A "vicious and very dangerous" XL bully dog has been running freely on roads near Lisdoonvarna, Co Clare, and has bitten people, a court has heard.

At Ennis District Court, Sgt Noelle Bergin said she was seeking an order for the destruction of the dog or an order allowing the seizure of it.

She told Judge Alec Gabbett: "There are allegations on two occasions that this dog has bitten members of the public and he has been running freely on the public roads during May and up to June 19"

The sergeant told the court the owner of the dog, Michael Geraghty, of Ballinalackin, Lisdoonvarna, is not complying with the directions of Clare county dog warden Frankie Coote.

Sgt Bergin said she served Mr Geraghty with a garda application last Saturday and he was told the matter would be dealt with before Ennis District Court.

"He told me that he would be here," the sergeant said.

However, there was no appearance in court by Mr Geraghty.

"Our problem is that the dog is residing in a house and the dog warden doesn't have the power to take this dog from a house," Sgt Bergin said.

"I am seeking an order for the destruction of the dog or an order giving the dog warden the power to remove the dog."

Five members of the public were in court to provide sworn evidence in support of the garda application.

In evidence, Mr Coote told the court the dog is named Ghost.

"He is huge. A very, very vicious, very dangerous dog," Mr Coote said.

"I have had at least six complaints of the dog attacking people, two or three times biting people.

"I first became aware of the dog last year running loose on the road, so I went up and cautioned the owner and got him to put the dog under control.

"He then tied the dog to a trailer of rubbish, so I then had welfare concerns for the dog.

"I removed the dog last year and I gave it back to him on condition that he would look after him, but then the dog started to roam."

Mr Coote said he told people who made complaints to him about the dog to make formal complaints to gardaí "or I could not act".

He said he microchipped the dog and registered it to the owner "on the advice that he would have to keep the dog under control, but within four days the dog was out on the road again".

"His owner is not complying with me in any form or manner. I have never met him - it is all phone calls, notes or sending other people. He won't comply with me at all," Mr Coote told the court.

Judge Gabbett said Mr Geraghty has a right to be heard if he wishes to come to court before the dog is destroyed.

"That is the right thing to do. He is entitled to be heard," the judge said.

Sgt Bergin told Judge Gabbett there was an issue with service of the application, and the judge told her she was free to make a similar application at a future court sitting.

She said it was also open to gardaí to obtain a search warrant of the property and an application could be made to court for such a warrant.

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Muscle dogs can't deny vicious nature

Your columnist (Sarah Harte, Thursday 21/09/23, 'Rather than ban certain breeds, can people just control their dogs?') adds to the dangerous naivety animating this debate. The problem with these dogs — muscle dogs — is that even if they are placid 99% of the time, they are uncontrollable if, or more likely, when they behave in the way generations of dog breeders intended. They were, and sometimes still are, bred to fight and kill.

An out of control pitbull is a frightening sight and one no community should have to contemplate. They, even if only a minority of the breed, are too dangerous to be treated as tolerable pets. They have no place in our society especially as there are so many plausible alternatives for those who love dogs. That so many of those happy to parade these timebomb dogs seem to have so little understanding of what they might do, only adds to the need to ban them.

Jack Power
Inniscarra
Cork

EN

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State must join dog owners in controlling dangerous breeds

The death of a young woman following a dog attack in Limerick has caused shock throughout the country. The attack on Nicole Morey, who died on her 23rd birthday, seems unfathomable. An XL bully believed to have been involved in the attack was shot dead at the scene, while three other dogs were seized. Gardai are continuing to investigate the circumstances surrounding the horrific incident, so the full facts are not yet known.

Nonetheless, this is the second occasion in which this particular breed of dog has come to national attention as a result of a vicious attack. An XL bully is a variation of the pit bull and known for its strength. Alejandro Mizsan, who is now 11, was attacked by an XL bully while playing outside with friends in Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, two years ago and was left with serious facial injuries. A man and a woman were jailed earlier this year over the attack.

That horrific mauling sparked a national debate about restrictions being placed on certain breeds of dogs. A task force was set up to look at bringing recommendations to the minister in terms of strengthening the legislation around the control of dogs. While there are restricted breeds here, no breeds are banned. The Government says that if the group recommends a ban on any breed, it will be implemented.

Under the Control of Dogs Regulations, there are rules in place already to restrict ownership and impose controls on several dog breeds, including pit bulls, Dobermans and German shepherds. Any dog on the restricted breed list must be kept on a strong lead by a person over 16, must be muzzled at all times in public places and must always wear a collar bearing the name and address of the owner. The basic legislation is already in place, so what is being envisaged would not be that difficult to implement.

Strict rules about ownership of XL bullies are in force in England, Scotland and Wales. Restrictions on owning the dogs were announced in Northern Ireland earlier this year. The Stormont Executive is bringing forward legislation requiring people to register their ownership of the breed and obtain an exemption certificate, and also to keep them on a lead and muzzled while in public. There would also be a ban on breeding, selling, abandoning or giving away XL bully dogs in the region. Further, XL bullies would have to be neutered under the planned law changes.

It is not acceptable that the Government on this side of the Border cannot keep pace with its counterparts in the North. It also undermines the action being taken there to not have a similar follow-through in this jurisdiction. If the intention is to ban specific breeds, restrict them or bring in additional safeguards for the public, and then get on with it.

A current advertising campaign tells dog owners they are responsible if their dog bites someone. But the State also has to take ownership of the system that is in place to prevent dog attacks.

The warning signs are firmly there on dangerous breeds.

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Murder victim's wife to appeal order to destroy her XL Bullies

Judge Anthony Halpin noted evidence of six gardai at the scene on March 28 when four officers fled from Oddie.

He accepted they had to take "evasive action to save themselves from being savaged by an XL Bully dog".

Visibly upset, Ms Maher's denied opening a gate to unleash the unmuzzled dog on gardai who had been on the beat in her cul-de-sac. She said the dogs were part of her family, like their children, and Oddie slept in her king-sized bed.

The judge also noted evidence that she had these dogs to protect the property.

The grandmother testified that three-year-old Oddie jumped the front garden wall when the officer put his hand in, and she rejected the accusation that she set the dog on the garda. She also claimed Medusa had also been in the yard at the time.

The court heard the other two were in cages in the back garden, and Oddie had already damaged a rear garden exit.

Garda Sean McLoughlin alleged that when he got near her house, Ms Maher told him: "Get the f**k away from my

house, you murderers." He was in absolute fear for his life that he would be viciously attacked by the dog, which chased and tried to bite him.

He alleged she let the dog out through the front garden gate.

He and three other gardai fled to different gardens, with one standing on a wall until back-up arrived a few minutes later.

Ms Maher brought the dog back into the house, and she denied telling gardai: "If you don't f**k off now, I'll get him back out here."

Witness Kayleigh McEntee (26) of

Waterville Row, Blanchardstown, was at the house and contradicted the evidence that Ms Maher opened the gate. She also said the dogs were safe and often around children.

Three more gardai said they also had to flee to gardens in the cul de sac, with one telling Judge Halpin that he feared he would be killed.

Photographs were handed in, showing some of the dogs with family and children.

In his ruling, Judge Halpin described one image of an infant surrounded by two huge XL Bullies as upsetting "given the potential ferocity of these animals".

He found that the dogs were dangerous and not under proper control. Furthermore, he acceded to an application by Garda Sergeant Michael Harkin to grant a destruction order for all four.

Oisín Clarke BL was granted a two-week stay on the order to lodge an appeal. The court has adjourned ruling on the costs of keeping the animals in a dog pound since they were taken from Ms Maher on April 4.

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Taskforce to be set up to examine strengthening laws on dog control

Tadgh McNally
Political Reporter

A new taskforce is to be established to examine measures to strengthen Ireland's laws on dog control.

Social Protection Minister Heather Humphreys will today inform Cabinet that former Garda assistant commissioner John Twomey will chair the new stakeholder group on dog control.

The group will be tasked with recommending changes to strengthen laws on dog control and will be made up of several government departments, as well as representatives from the Irish Farmers' Association, Dogs Trust, and the ISPCA.

It is understood that Ms Humphreys is open to taking actions similar to that taken in Britain where the XL bully breed was banned unless an owner had an exemption certificate.

In November Ms Humphreys announced that on-the-spot fines for serious dog control offences would be tripled from €100 to €300, while increasing funding to dog warden services.

Meanwhile, Agriculture Minister Charlie McConalogue is due to update Government on a project to archive between 8m and 11m records from the former Irish Land Commission.



In Britain, the XL bully breed was banned unless an owner had an exemption certificate.

Held by the Department of Agriculture, the historically significant documents are due to be catalogued and provided to the National Archives as is required by law. A pilot phase is set to be established first, which will examine the time frame and a roadmap to catalogue all these records. After this is carried out, a final cost — expected to be significant — will be provided to Cabinet.

The Land Commission, established by the British government in 1843, was used in

the redistribution of land to farmers following the Land War in the late 1870s. It was formally dissolved in 1999.

Higher Education Minister Simon Harris will update Cabinet on measure to bring more people into careers in both construction and offshore wind. He will outline further actions as part of a campaign to bring people who are working on construction sites across the world back to Ireland.

It is understood that as part of his visit to Britain

next week, Mr Harris will meet with construction workers who left during the economic crash and examine the existing barriers to returning to Ireland.

Mr Harris will also update Cabinet on a report which shows the economic benefits of offshore wind could be worth up to €38bn to Ireland.

He is set to allocate €500,000 to help develop skills related to offshore wind, including targeting mid-career professionals.

Elsewhere, Education Minister Norma Foley is set to update her Cabinet colleagues on the rollout of the free schoolbooks scheme for secondary school students up to third year.

A total of €50m has been provided to allow schools buy schoolbooks and other classroom materials, including ebooks, workbooks, and copybooks.

The memo will be about ensuring that secondary schools are provided with the resources to buy materials in the run-up to the next school year, beginning in August and September.

The scheme is designed to help ease financial pressures on parents, due to the significant costs ahead of a new school year.

Currently, senior cycle students are not covered by the free book scheme.

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Horrified relatives learned of brutal attack after getting CCTV footage

ROBIN SCHILLER, ERIKA SASSONE, EAVAN MURRAY

The family of a young woman killed in a dog attack at her Limerick home were alerted to the horrific incident after being sent footage of the attack.

Nicole Morey (23) was set on by two dogs, understood to be XL bullies, in the garden of her rented home in Ballyneety on Tuesday night. She suffered catastrophic injuries and despite the best efforts of emergency services was pronounced dead at the scene.

Ms Morey was on her own with four dogs at the time of the incident but it is understood that a man known to her saw the attack occurring on a high-tech CCTV system to which he had access.

The man rang emergency services before sending an 18-second video clip of the attack to the victim's shocked family.

A source said: "This woman's family were unaware of what had happened until one relative was sent the graphic video showing the attack."

Paramedics rushed to the scene but were unable to get to Ms Morey because the dogs posed a serious risk to their safety.

Members of the Armed Support Unit arrived at the property and had to shoot one dog dead while two other dogs were pepper-sprayed to subdue them.

Emergency services then worked on Ms Morey for an hour in a bid to save her life but she was pronounced dead at the scene.

Three of the dogs have since been seized while the fourth was destroyed.

Relatives of Ms Morey also arrived on the scene having been alerted to the attack.

Gardaí are continuing to investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident and are satisfied that the four dogs at the property were under the care of the victim and not stray dogs.

Investigators probing the sharing of the attack footage have identified the source of the video and believe he was under the influence of drugs when circulating it.

"There doesn't appear to be a malicious motive in sending this to the family," a source said.

"It appears it was done to alert them, although the video is extremely graphic and shows what ultimately was a fatal attack. It was an extremely horrific scene and welfare supports are being put in

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LETTERS

On dangerous dog breeds it should be remember it's humans who are at fault

With XL Bully dogs about to be banned we should remember that it's humans who make dogs so potentially lethal.

Any dog can be dangerous if its owner treats it the wrong way.

To the XL Bully, one might add the various cross-breeds used in dog fighting and badger baiting, which, apart from inflicting horrific injuries on each other and the badgers, pose an obvious risk to humans owing to the warped training they receive.

These dogs are deliberately whipped up into a frenzy of viciousness. Humans are the true culprits for any hurt they cause.

Foxhounds, while sociable when approached on a one-to-one basis, can cause havoc when in full flight across country, egged on by so-called sportspeople.

We should reflect on this malign relationship between dogs and some heartless and misguided humans before, to quote the old adage, giving a dog a bad name.

**John Fitzgerald
Co Kilkenny**

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9.00 **AMBULANCE** A frantic 999 caller reports witnessing an XL bully dog attack. Crews are immediately dispatched – but the dangerous animal is still on the loose. Narrated by Christopher Eccleston. S

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Rush to rehome Irish XL Bully dogs in Sweden

Ann Murphy

An animal welfare charity is offering Irish homeless XL Bully-type dogs to Swedish homes ahead of next week's restrictions on the breed.

The offer comes as a census takes place today to establish how many dogs are homeless in rescues and pounds across Ireland.

Dog welfare organisations in Ireland are battling to rehome abandoned XL Bully dogs before October 1, when it will become illegal to import, breed, sell, or rehome XL Bully-type dogs.

From February 1 next year, it will be illegal to own an XL Bully-type dog without a certificate of exemption issued by the local authority in which the dog resides. XL Bully owners must apply for the certificate of exemption after October 1 and before February 1.

Some organisations have linked up with Sweden-based Hundar Utan Hem (Dogs Without Homes), a charity which has taken scores of Ireland's unwanted pups in recent years.

The charity is now listing 19 XL Bully-type dogs on its website from charities in Ireland, with hopes of rehoming them in Sweden.

"Many loving family dogs will be abandoned in the near future," said the charity in a statement.

"For those XL Bully-type dogs already waiting for their forever homes, the odds have now significantly worsened. Time is ticking for these dogs."

The charity is appealing to Swedish dog lovers to assist the dogs before the law comes into effect next Tuesday. The law is being introduced following high-profile incidents involving XL Bully-type dogs, including the death of Nicole Morey in Limerick in June after she returned home after marking her 23rd birthday.

Hundar Utan Hem says it rehomes more than 700 Irish dogs annually, totalling an estimated 11,000 dogs since 2005.

Dawn Divilly, director of operations at Madra dog rescue in Galway, said that the homeless census was undertaken last year for the first time, in a joint initiative with Galway County Council and the Department of Rural and Community Development.

She said there were 3,277 homeless dogs in 120 shelters and local authority shelters last year.

Ms Divilly said rescues are inundated with the rehoming of XL Bully-type dogs, with pressure mounting ahead of next week's deadline.

She said that similar restrictions introduced last year in Britain have been monitored by Irish animal welfare organisations.

"It has been very challenging [there] and is still very challenging but, unfortunately, the Government has decided to go ahead with a very similar model here," said Ms Divilly

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Yet Alexis Etienne has never owned an XL Bully. He admits to a form of fear: crossing the street when faced with a dog deemed “dangerous,” distrusting a body perceived as threatening. It is, indirectly, his own fears that he puts to work here. At the intersection of the intimate and the political.

Alongside this media investigation and field study carried out in Dublin, the artist turns his attention to another form of circulation: that of forms and taste. Decorative bulldogs - multicolored figurines, pop dogs sold on Amazon, in discount home goods stores, or in galleries near the Louvre - are invading gardens, balconies, and interiors, from suburban neighborhoods to opulent apartments. Hovering between distant references to contemporary art and unabashedly kitsch objects, these figurines question how taste is socially constructed, how it seeps in and spreads.

The large bulldog paintings produced by Alexis Etienne engages with these familiar forms. The paint drips and overflows. The dogs become unstable and ghostly, almost spectral. They are no longer decorative objects, nor entirely threats. These unsettling figures, bodies that are both heavy and volatile, are charged with the emotions, fears, and affects of a social body attempting to reconstitute itself.

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48 XL bully dogs surrendered since State ban

David Kent

Almost 50 XL bully dogs have been surrendered since the introduction of the ban on the breed.

In October 2024, it became illegal to import, breed, re-home, or resell an XL bully dog.

On February 1 of this year, it became illegal to own an XL bully unless the owners had a certificate of

exemption. However, the certificate of exemption cannot be granted for an XL bully that has not yet been neutered or has been deemed medically unfit for neutering.

Limerick and Cork City councils are among those who have seen dogs surrendered to them since the ban was introduced.

Rural and community development minister Dara

Callery told Fine Gael TD Maeva O'Connell that, in total, 48 XL bully dogs have been surrendered.

The highest numbers were seen in:

- Dublin City (11);
- Limerick (10);
- Cork City (four).

Some 15 councils are yet to see a dog surrendered.

Mr Callery said: "Members of the public must comply with the regulations.

"Any owner found to be in breach of the regulations will have committed an offence under the Control of Dogs Act 1986.

"Responsibility for the enforcement of the regulations rests with the individual local authorities, who are empowered to seize XL bully-type dogs where necessary under the relevant statutory provisions."

The new regulations were

introduced to protect public safety following a number of attacks by XL bully-type dogs, a restricted breed, including the mauling to death of Nicole Morey, aged 23, in Limerick last June.

Days later, members of the Garda Armed Support Unit had to shoot a pit bull terrier dog, a smaller version of the breed, after a woman was injured at a house in the Ballyphehane area of Cork City.

In total, over 1,800 applications for certificates of exemption were received and, to date, almost 1,000 have been granted.

Any owner found to be in breach of the laws could see their dog seized and euthanised in a humane manner by officials.

The owner could face a fine of up to €2,500, a jail term of up to three months, or both.

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Deadline fast approaching for XL Bully dogs

■ 100 certificates of exemption granted with Cork animal charity appealing to owners to start process

Eoin English

There has been a surge in applications for special certs for XL Bully dogs ahead of this weekend's deadline, set by new regulations which were introduced months after a fatal dog attack.

At least 100 certificates of exemption, which allow people to keep their dog until the end of its natural life, have already been granted by local authorities surveyed by the *Irish Examiner*.

XL Bully owners have also been warned that, from tomorrow, any such dog without the required paperwork — or not in the system awaiting approval — cannot be rehomed and will be destroyed.

"This is being taken very seriously," said Vincent Cashman of the Cork Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal (CSPCA).

"We can't rehome any XL Bullies from tomorrow. Any of these dogs that are not in the process of waiting for the exemption certificate to be approved will be put to sleep.

"People have had plenty of time to sort this and to get their paperwork. Our advice to owners is, even with just a few hours to go, to do the right thing for their dog.

"If they care about their dog, get the process started today. If they are not sure if their dog meets the criteria, we are available to give advice."

Cork City Council had received 25 applications for certificates of exemption and had issued 20 certs; Cork County Council had received 35 applications, but has yet to grant one, with applications still being processed; Kerry County Council had received 34 applications for exemptions and granted 26; Tipperary County Council had received 35 applications by Wednesday — 17 of those



CSPCA's Vincent Cashman: 'This is being taken very seriously.'

in the last week alone — and had granted 11; Limerick City and County Council had received 22 applications by lunchtime on Monday, had approved 18, and was awaiting approval of four — pending the receipt of further documentation; and Waterford City and County council had received 31 valid applications by the start of the week, granted 10, but 11 had been deemed invalid because the applicant was living in another county.

The new regulations were introduced to protect public safety following a number of attacks by XL Bully type dogs, a restricted breed, including the mauling to death of Nicole Morey, aged 23, in Limerick last June.

Days later, members of the Garda Armed Support Unit had to shoot a pit bull terrier dog — a smaller version of the breed — after a woman was injured at a private house in the Ballyphehane area of Cork City.

The regulations, which came into effect last October, prohibit the importing, breeding, selling, and rehoming of XL Bully type

dogs. From tomorrow, it will be illegal to own an XL Bully type dog without a certificate of exemption issued by the local authority responsible for the area in which the dog lives.

Applicants must supply a copy of a valid dog licence, a copy of the microchipping certificate for the dog, veterinary confirmation that the dog has been neutered, and photographic proof of their own identity, and proof of address.

There is no charge for the certificate.

As a cross of restricted breeds, XL Bully type dogs are subject to the existing additional controls — including that they must be securely muzzled when in a public place, and they must be kept on a strong chain or leash, no more than 2m long, by a person over aged 16 who is capable of controlling the dog.

Any owner found to be in breach of the regulations will have committed an offence under the Control of Dogs Act 1986.

The dog may be seized and euthanised in a humane manner, and the owner could face a fine of up to €2,500, a jail term of up to three months, or both.

Dog wardens will be responsible for enforcing the new regulations.

It came as the State is set to oppose an injunction application brought by six animal welfare organisations seeking to halt the new law, which they say is too vague and disproportionate to impose a criminal liability on owners failing to comply.

At the High Court yesterday, barrister Sunniva McDonagh SC, for the six charities, said she was seeking injunctive relief against the State from imposing the new law from February 1.

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XL Bully dogs are subject to new regulations.

Case taken over XL Bully dogs settled

The case taken by a number of animal welfare charities, objecting to the seizure and euthanasia of XL Bully dogs in their possession, has been settled and can be struck out once the controversial new regulations are amended by the State.

At the High Court, Sunniva McDonagh, who appeared with Mariana Verdes on behalf of six animal charities opposing the regulations, said she was happy to tell Ms Justice Sara Phelan that the matter had been settled. Shelley Horan, for the State, indicated that amendments to the regulations would be made.

Ms McDonagh said that, on consent, the matter could be struck out with an order for the plaintiff's costs but that both orders could be postponed. Ms Justice Sara Phelan adjourned the matter for mention on April 29.

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XL Bully owners warned ahead of new rules

Sean Murray

The Government has issued advice to owners of XL Bully dogs ahead of new regulations restricting their ownership due to take effect from next week.

The restrictions, set to be introduced after that particular breed was responsible for a number of recent fatal and serious attacks, come as the Government recently warned the number of such dogs will grow if action is not taken now.

In the Dáil last week, an opposition TD said the ban was “too extreme” and is causing “panic and mayhem within dog rescue groups”. From Tuesday, October 1, it will be prohibited to im-

port, breed, sell or rehome XL Bully-type dogs.

And then, from February 1, 2025 it will be illegal to own an XL Bully-type dog without a certificate of exemption issued by the local authority in which the dog resides.

In its advice, the Government said the certificate of exemption will allow a person to keep the dog until the end of its natural life.

Applicants will need to provide a copy of a valid dog licence, copy of a microchipping cert for the dog, a copy of veterinary confirmation of its neutering status, photographic proof of identity, and proof of address.

The guidance states dogs will need to be neutered by a registered veterinary practi-

tioner to have the exemption granted.

In defining an XL Bully, the Government said is a variant of the wider American Bully breed type, but larger than typical dogs of this breed and more muscular. It said it is an owner’s responsibility if their dog is covered.

It added: “If an application for a certificate of exemption is refused for any reason, the owner will be notified in writing by their local authority. Such owners may re-apply, addressing the reasons for refusal.

“If further applications are refused, and a certificate of exemption is not in place before February 1, 2025, owners may be required to

surrender their dog to the local authority dog warden.

“The seizure and detention of any dogs may involve both the dog warden and An Garda Síochána.”

In the Dáil last week, the issue was raised by Sinn Féin TD for Dublin Bay South Chris Andrews who said there were “much more humane ways to deal with this”.

“Thousands of restricted dogs could be killed as a result of this ban because XLs are not a breed, they are a type of dog that is a variety of breeds,” Mr Andrews said.

He said “arbitrary” decisions would be made on which dogs be killed, and called for an amnesty and a

time extension so these dogs “can live out their natural lives”.

In response, minister of state Thomas Byrne said the ban was being introduced in the interests of public safety.

“The XL bully was responsible for a number of attacks and killings in this country,” he said.

“If the Government does not take action now, the number of these dogs will grow. The fear, which I think is well founded, is that these attacks will become more frequent.

“It is the Government’s strong view that Ireland should not be out of step with neighbouring jurisdictions in Northern Ireland and the UK on this matter.”

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DSPCA Adoptions Consultant and Dog Trainer Leah Brennan pictured with XL Bully dog Athena at the DSPCA in Rathfarnham. Photo: Gerry Mooney

unsure whether they should apply for an exemption.

Adoptions consultant and dog trainer with the DSPCA Leah Brennan said the charity has spent time guiding people through the application process to get a certificate of exemption.

"We are offering our support and help to owners who may be struggling with the application for a certificate," she said.

"Dog owners can make an appointment to visit the DSPCA shelter with their dog, chat to a member of our team, and get help in navigating the form.

"What we are currently seeing is a large number of confused and worried owners.

"People with large bull breeds, that are not XL Bullies, are afraid that their dog will be mistakenly identified as XL"

"People with large bull breeds, that are not XL Bullies, are afraid that their dog will be mistakenly identified as XL, especially given the lack of clarity on the definition of an XL Bully.

"In many instances we're advising them to apply for the exemption anyway and we're here to help them do that. We want to give some comfort to people in a new and unknown scenario."

The new legislation on the dogs is being controlled by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

A spokesman said: "These regulations have been introduced in the interest of public safety following a number of horrific attacks involving XL Bully-type dogs.

"By the end of December, 235 applications for certificates of exemption had been received by local authorities. We anticipate more applications as the deadline approaches at the end of this month.

"The certificate, which is issued free-of-charge, allows owners to keep their dog until the end of its natural life."

From the announcement of the legislation in October until the end of last month, 23 XL Bully dogs were surrendered to local authorities.

Twenty-seven were euthanised – a figure made up of surrendered dogs and strays or abandoned animals, and possibly dogs that were seized. The biggest number of applications for certificates of exemption was from Co Kildare, at 29.

The highest number of dogs surrendered was also in Co Kildare, at six.

"There is an ongoing public awareness campaign to make owners aware of their responsibilities under the new ownership laws," the department spokesman said. "The department is working with stakeholders to ensure that there is widespread awareness of the need to apply for a certificate."

"Owners that are unsure if their dog is covered under the rules should use the 'Physical Conformation Standard' to determine if their dog is an XL Bully type."

On Wednesday six animal welfare charities sought an urgent High Court injunction against the ban, claiming the regulations underpinning it are unlawful, with an application to be heard next Monday.

"This 'Physical Conformation Standard' is available along with more information at gov.ie/XLBully," the spokesman said.

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'Death sentence' for XL Bullies

Michelle McGlynn

Political Reporter

The ban on XL bullies has animal rescues around the country deeply concerned for the welfare such dogs, with many now "effectively facing a death sentence".

Among the measures that will come into effect on October 1 is a ban on rehoming the dog breed, which means the animal welfare groups will effectively be powerless to help.

From February 1 next year, those who already own an XL bully are permitted to keep their dog once they have a valid dog licence, the dog is microchipped and neutered, and they have applied for and received a certificate of exemption.

According to the ban, which was announced by Rural and Community Development Minister Heather Humphries, "After February 2, 2025, any owner not compliant with the new regulations will have their dog seized and euthanised".

Animal rescues believe that many XL bully owners will simply abandon their dogs rather than take the time to meet the new



Rural and Community Development Minister Heather Humphries announced the XL bully dog ban. Picture: Gareth Chaney/Collins Photos

requirements, leading to a surge in XL bullies being abandoned over the coming months. As the abandoned dogs cannot be rehomed, these too will be put down.

Martina Kenny, co-founder of My Lovely Horse Rescue, said that she supports the idea of having a certificate and other requirements for these dog owners, but not allowing rehoming is effectively a death sentence for many dogs.

Ms Humphries cited public safety as a concern

when announcing the ban following a number of recent attacks by XL bullies. One such incident was the fatal attack on Limerick woman Nicole Morey last month.

Ms Morey's death on the night of her 23rd birthday prompted widespread calls for a ban to be introduced on the dog breed similar to those announced in Britain.

Limerick TD and Further Education Minister Patrick O'Donovan said the people of Limerick who are still mourning the

loss of Ms Morey welcomed the news.

"Dogs of this breed have no place on our streets or indeed, in our own homes, where Nicole was tragically attacked," he said.

"I hope to see more action in the months ahead and a serious crackdown on control of these dogs and those who breed them, sell them, and import them."

He was joined by Fianna Fáil's minister of state for further education, Niall Collins, who said the ban should reduce the frequency of these terrible attacks.

"Without these new measures, I fear there could be further fatal attacks by these dogs," Mr Collins said.

However, Ms Kenny has pointed out that there is currently no plans laid out for how the Government plans to enforce the ban or who will be responsible for it.

There are currently 4,000 dogs per warden across Ireland, and requirements for dog licences and microchipping are not being strongly enforced, so it remains to be seen if they can effectively enforce the new XL Bully ban, Ms Kenny said.

Currently, the owner of an XL bully is required to have a dog licence, have the dog microchipped, they must keep the dog on a short lead, and ensure they are muzzled when in public.

A better approach to the situation would have been to properly enforce these requirements of dog owners, Ms Kenny said.

She said there has already been strong reaction from dog owners and dog lovers to the news of the ban, and she predicts that the Government will have a fight on its hands.

There are currently 11 restricted dog breeds in Ireland and there is concern that, in time, these breeds will also be subject to a ban.

Ms Kenny said animal welfare groups are already facing a dog crisis, with calls every day about abandoned dogs, but the Government's decision means they are now facing a potential crisis.

"If people think there's a chance their dog may soon face a similar ban, they may decide keeping their dog is not the right option for them, and shelters can't cope with demand as it stands," Ms Kenny said.

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Fears grow as 44% rise in number of dog attacks on people

Seán McCárthaigh

Local authorities have reported a sharp increase in the number of dog attacks on humans.

A total of 442 people were physically injured by aggressive dogs last year.

New figures published by the Department of Rural and Community Development show the number of cases of people suffering injuries in dog attacks in 2023 is up 44% from the 308 incidents

recorded the previous year. The largest number of dog attacks last year in which people were injured, including damage to clothes, was in Dublin City, with 63; followed by Cork county, with 54; Louth, with 46; and Fingal and Mayo, both 32. Cork City had 14 reported attacks.

Only two local authority areas — Wicklow and Roscommon — recorded no incidents of people being injured by dogs.

The latest figures also

show that there was a 75% increase in the number of incidents of aggressive dog behaviour reported to local authorities last year — up from 791 in 2022 to 1,383.

Dublin city was again the location with the greatest number of incidents, at 301, ahead of Cork county, at 136. Cork City had 27 incidences of aggressive behaviour.

Roscommon was the only county where no incidents of aggressive dog behaviour were reported. Growing public

concern about dog attacks and dangerous breeds was heightened following the death of Limerick woman Nicole Morey, 23, on June 4 this year after she was mauled by one of her dogs, an XL bully, at her home in Ballyneety, Co Limerick.

New regulations, introduced after Ms Morey's death, have made it illegal since October 1 to import, breed, sell, or rehome XL bully-type dogs.

From February 1, 2025,

ownership of an XL bully-type dog will be banned without a certificate of exemption issued by the local authority in which the dog resides.

In order to obtain the certificate, owners will have to show that the dog is licensed, microchipped, and neutered.

The Department of Rural and Community Development said the data had not previously been uniformly collected by dog services operated by local authorities,

which meant there were "some gaps". It pointed out that some injured parties may have reported a dog attack to gardaí or sought medical attention but did not notify local authority dog wardens about the incident.

The department said the figures presented "a snapshot of the situation" relating to dog attacks, with improved data quality expected in future years.

It claimed the increase in incidents of aggressive

behaviour by dogs reported last year could be linked to increased media coverage of attacks by dogs.

The number of attacks by dogs on livestock also rose by 3% last year, with a total of 276 incidents of farm animals being injured by dogs.

It is estimated that more than 730 animals were attacked during such incidents, with sheep accounting for almost two-thirds of the total, with approximately 430 animals being maimed,

killed, or having to be put down. The largest number of incidents were reported in Cork county, with 62; Mayo, with 34; and Waterford, with 21.

The department said sheep-worrying and other threats to livestock continue to be a significant concern for farming and rural communities.

The latest figures show the number of stray dogs placed in pounds last year rose by 10%, to 5,546.

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Council vets want dog insurance to be compulsory in case of attacks

Sean O'Riordan

Cork County Council veterinary officers are to ask a national forum dealing with the control of dogs to recommend to the Government that it be compulsory for dog owners to have insurance cover in the event their pets attack humans or livestock.

The move comes after county councillors expressed concern at the increase in dog ownership in the region, especially potentially dangerous breeds.

There has been a significant increase in the number of licenced dogs in Co Cork.

The county council's environment department head Louis Duffy said that when parts of the county were ceded to the city council in late 2019, around 10,000 dog licences were transferred from the county into city administration.

After the enlargement of the city, the county council was left with 27,000 licenced dogs in its area. This has now increased by over 4,000.

Some county councillors fear the increase of listed and non-listed dogs could lead to an increase in attacks on humans and livestock, and



Vets have advised that all dogs should be insured as owners may not be able to afford to compensate for potential attacks otherwise.

more dog fouling on the streets.

Fianna Fáil councillor Bernard Moynihan said people living in his area, the Kankurk/Mallow Municipal District, which has the highest concentration of dogs of all the county's municipal districts, have told him about the number of potentially dangerous dogs "running out of control".

He said he did not want to see a repeat of the terrible facial injuries recently

inflicted on nine-year-old Wexford boy Alejandro Miszan by a pit bull terrier.

Fine Gael councillor Kay Dawson said constituents had contacted her about listed breeds which are running around not under the control of their owners, without a lead or muzzle.

"There has to be more enforcement on that," she told Mr Duffy, who is in charge of the county's dog wardens.

Mr Duffy told the *Irish Examiner* if information is

provided on such incidents by the public, wardens will investigate it with a view to ensuring it doesn't happen again. However, he added if the owners persist in not obeying the law then the council will require witnesses to testify in court.

Independent councillor Frank Roche said he'd been contacted by several farmers recently who are concerned about increased dog attacks on their livestock.

"They should all be insured as in many cases their owners can't afford to pay compensation," Mr Roche said.

He also urged the council to try and seek the implementation of compulsory insurance for dogs and Mr Duffy said he would get his veterinary department officials to raise that issue at the National Working Group on the Control of Dogs.

Mr Duffy said while there is a sizeable increase in dogs in the county, he believes owners are becoming more responsible when it comes to cleaning dog dirt off the streets and as a dog owner himself said he had witnessed a more responsible attitude in the last few years.

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State consults on XL bully dog ban

**Elaine Loughlin
and Paul Hosford**

The Taoiseach has promised to move to ban XL bully dogs and other dangerous breeds following the recent death of Nicole Morey.

The Government is now consulting with the Attorney General on outlawing the breed.

Ms Morey from Bawnmore View, Limerick city, was killed by her dogs at her home in Fedamore, Limerick, on Tuesday last week.

Her case was raised in the Dáil by Fianna Fáil TD Willie O'Dea, who called for the urgent introduction of a blanket ban on all 11 types of dogs on the restrictive list.

Responding, Mr Harris said a taskforce has now been asked to prioritise the issue of introducing a ban on certain breeds.

"I believe the committee is

due to meet on June 26, and we have asked that it would report on this specific issue as quickly as possible," he said.

Social Protection Heather Humphreys told the Seanad that currently no dogs are banned in Ireland — instead a restricted dogs list applies, which also includes any crosses of these breeds which are subject to "strict" controls.

This means that, when in public, these dogs must be muzzled and they must be kept on a short, strong leash.

Ms Humphreys said that more needs to be done specifically about the XL bully.

"I am consulting with the Attorney General on how a ban on the XL bully would work in Ireland, and what legislative changes may be required to give effect to this — that work is underway," she said.

Ms Humphreys said that some people "would not like" hearing what she had to say, but said that the potential damage done by an XL bully was potentially too great.

"They will tell me that they own an XL bully and it would never hurt anybody," she said.

"The XL bully was the dog involved in the attack on Alejandro Mizzan in Wexford, and it was also the dog involved in the attack in Limerick last week of Nicole Morey. I can't ignore the facts."



XL bully dogs are one of 11 breeds facing restrictions.

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Doctor's eight-point plan to reform our 'not-fit-for-purpose' dog control system

Medic blasts red tape involved in reporting issues

RALPH RIEGEL

The Government has been warned that existing dog control regulations are not fit for purpose and that a new special licensing classification system is required to deal with breeds that have the potential to inflict serious harm.

The warning came from retired Cork doctor, Dr Joe Moran, after Rural and Community Development Minister Heather Humphreys imposed a ban on XL Bully dogs following a number of horrific attacks.

Dr Moran warned that the XL Bully ban represented "a minimal and inadequate response" given that it ignores the threat posed by other breeds and the actions of reckless dog owners.

He has proposed an eight-point plan to deal with dog control issues and potentially dangerous breeds amid warn-



Alejandro Miszan was mauled by an XL Bully in Enniscorthy in 2022

ings that Ireland could face further fatal attacks if effective changes are not fast-tracked.

A Limerick woman, Nicole Morey (23), was fatally mauled outside her home last June.

She was attacked by an XL Bully, a special type of over-sized pit bull dog which has been linked to more than

half of fatal dog attacks in the UK over a three-year period.

In June 2021, a four-month-old girl, Mia O'Connell, was fatally mauled in Waterford after a terrier-Dachshund cross attacked her in her cot after apparently becoming jealous of the attention the child was getting.

In November 2022, when he was nine, Wexford boy Alejandro Miszan was left with life-changing injuries after he was mauled by an XL Bully while out playing near his Enniscorthy home.

Now, Dr Moran has proposed an eight-point plan to reform dog controls.

Dr Moran, a retired GP and University College Cork (UCC) lecturer, said that those who try to alert the authorities to threatening dog behaviour face a bureaucratic and potentially legal nightmare under the current system.

Actions against reckless dog owners who flout rules are often frustrated because of an overly bureaucratic process.

In one case, a local authority warned it could not take action against a specific dog owner unless the family threatened by the dog secured written testimony from neighbours and

even photographic evidence.

The GP was so concerned he raised the issue of dog control with a number of politicians.

"From a parliamentary question, it was confirmed that the gardai are of the view that enforcement of the current (dog control) legislation is not their primary responsibility," he said.

The Government is introducing new measures to double the on-the-spot fine to €300 for owners who fail to control a potentially dangerous dog. Dog owners who are reckless as to their animal's control or behaviour can face fines of up to €5,000.

Government figures revealed that, under the Control of Dogs Act, there were 1,654 on-the-spot fines issued in 2018, 1,749 in 2019, 1,069 in 2020 and 924 in 2021. In addition, there were 176 prosecutions taken by local councils in 2018, 182 in 2019, 82 in 2020 and 97 in 2021.

However, the Cork doctor warned that the current system is overly bureaucratic and simply increasing the size of the fines won't work.

"I think we also need to know how many of these fines are being appealed

and ultimately are overturned on technicalities. Also just how many of these fines are not paid – and what happens when they are not paid?"

Dr Moran said he believes a root-and-branch reform of dog control measures is urgently required in Ireland.

He has proposed an eight-point approach including:

- (1) License all dogs according to breed classification;
- (2) Classify all breeds according to their potential to injure;
- (3) Restrict the number of dogs per household beyond those deemed safest;
- (4) Require all owners of dogs above those deemed safest to undergo training in ownership and its responsibilities. A failed test will prevent dog ownership;
- (5) Chip all dogs with details maintained on a national database;
- (6) Require the database to be maintained when dogs die or are sold;
- (7) Dog wardens to assume full responsibility for licensing and training; and
- (8) Gardai to be given primary responsibility for safety-measure enforcement such as muzzle-wearing, leads, etc.

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'Dangerous' XL bully dogs face ban across Ireland

Tadhg McNally
Political Reporter

XL bully dogs are to be banned in Ireland starting this October as the Government clamps down on the breed following a number of serious attacks.

The two-phase ban will begin on October 1 when breeding, rehoming, reselling and importing XL bullies will be outlawed.

A full ban on owning an XL bully, without a certificate of exemption, will come into effect on February 1.

The plan is due to be announced today by Heather Humphreys, the rural affairs minister.

The minister wants to send a clear message that the XL breed is dangerous and a ban is required to protect members of the public.

Owners of XL bullies will be able to seek a certificate of exemption if they can prove that their dog has a license, is microchipped and is neutered.

The ban will bring Ireland

into line with Britain and in the North.

Currently, Ireland does not ban any other breed of dog, but there are 11 restricted breeds.

Those animals on the list are required to be kept on a short lead and wear a muzzle while in public places.

The XL bully ban follows the death of Nicole Morey, who was killed by her own dog in Limerick City last month.

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How you can spot aggression and defend against dog attack

CIAN O BROIN

One of Ireland's leading dog trainers and behaviourists has shared the best ways to defend against a dog attack.

In the past week, two separate dog attacks in Limerick have led to the death of a 23-year-old woman, and a nine-year-old boy needing 30 stitches to his head, as well as two family members being injured from bites to their limbs in Cork.

Nanci Creedon, who was Ireland's first certified dog behaviourist, said: "We can't be naive and pretend there's no difference between breeds when they are very finely selected for certain traits."

Ms Creedon said avoiding aggressive dogs in public is difficult, as the public are "blind to subtle canine communication".

She said there are two main streams of aggression that lead to biting: dogs

that are protecting themselves and dogs that become aggressive during play.

The Cork zoologist said there are two main identifiers of aggression that people need to look out for.

The first is if their dog is showing any kind of potential signs that they may be afraid, uncomfortable or want to stop the interaction or quit their environment.

"Whether it's fear-based, pain-based or avoidance-based, they're communicating that they don't want something to happen prior to it escalating to a bite," she said.

A yawn, licking their lips, excessive blinking and head turns are all signs of canine discomfort, as well as snapping at the air, which she likened to a person shaking their fist at another in warning.

The other side is arousal, meaning when a dog's adrenaline is pumping

and they enter a state similar to when a person acts and "isn't thinking straight".

"Dogs are not thinking logically when the adrenaline kicks in... they are acting purely on instinct," Ms Creedon said.

"In this instance for the dog, everything appears to be a threat. When playing with a dog and they are in this state and someone grabs their collar, the first instinct is to defend themselves.

'A yawn, licking their lips, excessive blinking and head turns are all signs of canine discomfort'

"When we see a dog become aroused and that adrenaline is pumping, I'm constantly telling parents, every single dog is dangerous... that's where a lot of bites happen."

Failing de-escalation and in the event of an attack, Ms Creedon said every situation is different.

Some of the starting points of defence are: throwing water on the dog; putting a blanket over its eyes; making noise and distracting them; or pouring water that goes into their mouth.

"However, if I can't stop a fight quickly and a fatality looks possible, I would rather the aggressor lost oxygen by choking it with hands or a lead for a short period," she said.

"It's quick and effective and you have a hold of the dog thereafter. Obviously, there is a risk of the dog redirecting on to the person who is holding the lead."

When trying to defend against a dog that isn't "thinking straight", Ms Creedon said one possible method is to surprise it and speak to its memory and learning.

"You can say things such as, 'Let's go for a walk' 'Get your ball' or 'Good boy,'" she said, adding that it can cause the dog to come back to reality.

Ms Creedon, who has acted as an expert witness in courts assessing dangerous dogs, said it is vital that aggressive ones in an area are reported and that dog owners of restricted breeds should be working with a dog behaviourist.

"If you are using pain and punishment methods, you are very much increasing the probability of that dog having a reason to turn around, react and attack you or somebody else," she said.

More information is available on dog behaviour courses for owners on nanci-creedon.co.uk/all-courses

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Family of baby girl mauled to death by rescue dog backs calls for overhaul of animal adoption regulations

Ralph Riegel

A FAMILY left heartbroken after a terrier fatally mauled a four-month-old baby girl has added their voice to demands for a radical overhaul of dog safety regulations in Ireland.

The O'Connell and Woods family said they don't want any other family to endure their nightmare after the rescue dog gained entry to their Waterford home and savaged infant Mia O'Connell as she slept in a Moses basket in an upstairs bedroom.

It is now hoped that a crackdown on the vetting of rescue dogs, an extension of banned breeds and greater dog ownership controls will be enacted as 'Mia's Laws'.

While the dog that mauled tiny Mia was a small cross-breed terrier, dog wardens have been alarmed by an increase in ownership of large, potentially dangerous breeds which are not on Ireland's controlled dog list.

Ten main breeds are on the controlled list – but wardens are worried that dogs such as the Belgian Malinois, XL Bully and others don't have specific controls despite a huge increase in their ownership.

The O'Connell-Woods family want tougher vetting controls on rescue dogs.

A verdict of death by misadventure was recorded last week for Mia O'Connell who was fatally mauled by rescue dog Red on June 6, 2021. The dog – a terrier-dachshund cross – had previously snapped at Mia after she was brought home

from hospital in March 2021.

Mia's mother, Ella Woods, said she always "felt uncomfortable" when the dog was near her child – while Mia's grandmother, Noreen O'Connell, said she had repeatedly asked her partner, Barry, who had adopted the dog, to get rid of it after it had tried to snap at the little girl.

Now, Mia's aunt, Heidi O'Connell, wants to see the entire dog adoption and vetting system overhauled.

"We were not aware when that dog was given (to its owner) that he was given up because he would not hunt – that information was never given to us," she said.

"It wasn't until (the inquest) that we found out.

"I think it is a big thing that a dog was given up for rescue because he wouldn't hunt and that information was never given to us.

"(The dog) was bred for it but he wouldn't do it and he was handed over to a house with a baby coming into it."

Heidi said Ireland needed to see reform of dog ownership regulations. "There should be more laws put in place to check out the background of a dog and to check where they are coming from and more investigation into it."

"This dog was a small terrier – there was no indication that he was (dangerous). He was not a big dog, like a pit bull, vicious, or anything like that."

"There were some concerns but never in a million years would you think that anything like this would happen to your family.

"I would ask people to be very, very careful – make sure you know what you are doing and where you are getting the dog from and that he is safe.

"At the end of the day, a dog is an animal and you cannot predict what is going to happen. You don't know what they are going to do. You have to be very vigilant.

"Mia was an angel of a baby. She was never crying, always smiling. She was a blessing for us. Nothing will ever be the same without her.

"It has been like a nightmare for us."

At last week's inquest, Cork Coroner Philip Comyn issued a warning about having dogs in proximity to children.

Mia – Ella Woods and Rhys O'Connell's first child – was born on February 22, 2021.

On the evening of June 6, 2021, Mia's aunt, Emily, went to an upstairs bedroom of the house at Clashmore, Co Waterford, to check on Mia.

The family had insisted that the dog, Red, be kept outside.

Emily was horrified to see the baby lying on the bedroom floor with the dog standing over her.

"Mia was in the middle of the room. The dog Red was behind her. He was just standing there. There was blood all over his mouth."

Assistant State Pathologist Dr Margaret Bolster found that Mia died from severe brain trauma due to fractures to the skull and multiple lacerations consistent with an animal attack involving a dog.

The dog was euthanised within days of the tragedy.

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Spike in dogs surrendered to shelter ahead of XL ban

Manon Gilbert

An animal rescue shelter in Limerick has seen a surge in the number of dogs being surrendered in advance of the countrywide ban on XL bullies.

From today, it is illegal to import, breed, sell, and rehome XL bully type dogs — the first time that a specific dog breed will be banned in Ireland. A full ownership ban comes into effect on February 1.

The restrictions come after a number of fatal and life-altering attacks involving the XL bully breed, including the death of Nicole Morey, 23, who was fatally attacked by her own dogs in her home in Limerick.

Limerick Dog Shelter says

a total of 157 dogs have been surrendered to it so far this year, with 47 dogs being surrendered since July.

According to Limerick City and County Council, there has been an increase in the number of dogs being surrendered since the council waived the fee on restricted breeds.

"In July, LCCC waived the surrender fee for restricted breeds. Since then, there has been an increase in the surrender of these breeds," said a spokesperson for Limerick council.

Between January and June 2024, 107 dogs were surrendered to the shelter — with restricted breeds accounting for 35% of that number.

From July to present, the



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council said 47 dogs have been surrendered — with restricted breeds accounting for 55%.

"Limerick City and Coun-

ty Council (LCCC) is prioritising public safety and, working in conjunction with An Garda Síochána, we have increased our activities in re-

lacion to dangerous dogs and restricted breeds," added the spokesperson.

Each dog that enters the Limerick Dog Shelter is assessed for rehoming.

"Dogs suitable for rehoming will be rehomed directly from the shelter or transferred to another animal shelter. Dogs that have been involved in any kind of attack or have displayed aggressive behaviour will be euthanised. Dogs may also be euthanised for reasons of ill health," they said.

A total of 109 dogs have been euthanised at the shelter since 2020 — including 32 so far this year.

In July, Minister for Rural and Community Development Heather Humphreys announced the XL bully

breed would be banned in Ireland.

However, Social Democrats councillor for Limerick, Shane Hickey-O'Mara said "we don't have the resources" to enforce the new regulations regarding dog breeds.

"We have one dog warden in Limerick, who's supposed to be an expert on identifying XL bullies. The only guidance that Minister Humphreys has actually put forward on specific guidelines for identifying them is height. It's deciding the legslation, which is all very knee-jerk, and then expecting under resourced local animal teams to carry it out instead of looking at what is the bigger picture," Mr Hickey-O'Mara said.

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Owners urged to control dogs after sheep killed in front of 12-year-old

ISABEL COLLERAN

A mother in Wexford was left reeling when she discovered two vicious dogs killing sheep on her farm — and is calling on dog owners to control their animals.

The woman, who wishes to remain anonymous, returned home with her 12-year-old son to her farm in Kilanerin on May 29 to find two “out-of-control” dogs tormenting a field of their sheep.

“We could see the dogs running the sheep and attacking them. The young lad had a hurl and golf sticks with him and he was going after those dogs,” she said.

“I had to stop him. I told him I have one job for you, get back in the van, close the doors and put your hand on the horn and don’t take it off because that will frighten them away. It was the only thing I could think of on the spot to try and get him away from the dogs,” she said.

The woman’s husband was at work and too far away to make it back in time to help so she called her uncle who lives up the road and he arrived with her cousin, and shot one of the dogs.

“It took three shots to actually kill him. When he shot the dog at first, he turned on him as well. He had to put two more bullets in him to kill the dog, and the second dog has been put down since,” she said.

Mauled

By that point one of the sheep had already been mauled and injured very badly and had to be shot in the field.

“Only one ewe died but after a traumatic experience like that — and it can take several days — ewes can abort their lambs and one of the ewes aborted two lambs,” she said.

Her son owned the sheep and was devastated after witnessing the attack.

“When he rang his daddy he was crying and roaring down the phone; they’re his sheep and his pride and joy.

It could have been worse but it also could have been prevented.

“He bought them out of his own money. He looks after them everyday. He knows what farming life is like and you get used to having deaths of animals on the farm for whatever reason, but to have to stand and look at out-of-control dogs, it’s not acceptable.”

The Staffordshire cross and Rottweiler cross were rescue dogs which had only been adopted by their owners less than two months previously.

“They’ve been in constant contact with us and they’re very sorry,” said the woman. “Full responsibility has been accepted on their behalf.

“What I want to get across is that people need to control their dogs. If they have dangerous dogs, they need to control them — they need to have proper fencing and security for them.

“Had I not gone back and checked on those sheep, they would have killed every sheep in the field, they wouldn’t have stopped.”

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The counties where nobody was fined for dangerous dogs

Amy Molloy

PUBLIC AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

DOG-ATTACK victims have urged the Government to introduce harsher penalties for irresponsible owners as new figures show that some local authorities have issued no fines in the past four years for dogs being unmuzzled or off leads in public.

The *Irish Independent* contacted all councils for data on dog-control fines and found the vast majority had issued a significantly low number. Five have issued no fines at all since 2019 and 12 have issued 10 or fewer.

While fatal dog attacks are relatively rare, Deborah Brady, whose son suffered facial injuries in a 2020 attack, said there will be more deaths unless enforcement is stepped up.

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Sheep farmer: 'When dogs draw blood, it gets serious'

SIMON BOURKE

Dog owners across Co Wexford are being urged to be extra vigilant with their pets in the wake of a sheep attack which saw 14 ewes killed last month.

Paddy Keane, who farms in Mayglass, approximately 6km from where the attack occurred in February, says many owners aren't aware of how dangerous their dog can be once it's out in the wild.

"People don't realise, they'd say; 'ah, I don't think he would do it', but they all do it, my own dog would do it," Paddy says. "To the dogs it's just fun, but when they draw blood it gets serious then, the night it happened here the dogs had drawn blood and we couldn't get them away."

Although he hasn't suffered an attack in many years, lambing season is always a nervous time for Paddy and his family. With 300 ewes, he's constantly on edge during the spring months, wary of the threat from all sides.

"It's a good few years ago [since it happened to me], there was nothing killed but they were scattered everywhere, I was up to my waist in rivers trying to get them out of it," he says.

"It is [a constant fear], there's dogs either side of this field. I ring these people when I'm putting them in here and you're hoping for the best then.

"The biggest problem is trying to keep the sheep in grass over the winter and then saying 'no, I can't keep them there, because there's dogs nearby', it's a major pain in the a***"

Heavier penalties

And if people can't ensure their dogs are under lock and key at all times, Paddy says owners should face heavier penalties.

"The fines should be bigger, that would make people more conscious," he says. "But it's trying to get the proof, you can't stay with the sheep all night. Then trying to catch the dog; a neighbour of ours had his sheep attacked

and a friend stayed out a couple of nights with a rifle and he got the dog. They didn't know who owned the dog, they wouldn't own up."

Contrary to popular belief, the increase in giant dog breeds has not made life any more difficult for sheep farmers.

"It's any breed of dog, although the bigger dogs will do more damage, they cover more ground," Paddy says.

"You can replace them, if you buy 10 ewes it's going to cost a couple of thousand, but it's the damage to the thrive, you'll knock them back months, you'll have dead lambs, abortions, all sorts of problems."

The financial cost can, over time, be recovered, but the emotional damage lasts much longer.

"My two little wans are nine and seven... if I go out some morning and their ewes have been killed, it'll turn them off farming for life.

"To have go in and tell them that would be heart-breaking."

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Councils struggle to enforce rules as more than 1,500 incidents reported to gardaí in two years

AMY MOLLOY

More than 1,500 dog attacks have been reported to An Garda Síochána in the past two years, new figures show.

Despite a rise in attacks in recent years, local authorities are still struggling to clamp down on dangerous dogs, with some failing to issue any fines at all in the past four years.

Data provided by gardaí show there was an increase in attacks last year when compared with the previous year.

Last year, 850 attacks were reported, including 430 on people, 240 on livestock and 180 on other animals.

In 2022, gardaí received reports of 738 attacks including 335 on people, 220 on livestock and 183 on other animals.

During the previous five years (2016 to 2021), there were just over 4,000 dog attacks reported in total.

In the wake of the horrific attack by a pit bull cross on Alejandro Mizsan in Co Wexford more than a year ago, the Government established a working group to examine fines, enforcement and how dog wardens are deployed.

It was announced last November that on-the-spot fines for more serious offences under the Control of Dogs Act would increase from €100 to €300.

Owners of dogs on the restricted breed list are required to have the animals muzzled in public. The dogs must also be held on a short lead by a person over the age of 16.

However, despite the increase in the value of fines, local authorities have reported having issues with enforcement due to a lack of dog wardens.

Many have issued little or no fines, while some councils have handed out dozens.

Fines can only be issued if the alleged offence is observed by a warden or a witness statement is provided by a member of the public.

The *Irish Independent* contacted all local authorities to see how many were issued between 2020 and last year for dogs on the restricted breed list being off the leash in public.

Five councils (Cavan, Clare, Westmeath, Longford and Galway city) issued no fines, while eight handed out between one and five.

In Dublin, there was a mixed response between the four local authorities.

Dublin City Council has been proactive, issuing 105 fines.

Fingal County Council has given 90 fines. However, South Dublin County Council has only handed out 18, while Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council only issued one.

The dogs on the restricted breed list include American pit bull terriers, rottweilers, German shepherds (alsatians), English bull terriers, Staffordshire bull terriers, bull mastiffs, doberman

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XL bully dog ban begins in October

Tadhg McNally
Political Reporter

A ban on XL bully dogs is to come into effect from October, Heather Humphreys, the rural affairs minister, will confirm today.

The ban is to be implemented in two separate stages, with the first taking effect from October 1.

The first stage will consist of a ban on breeding, rehoming, reselling, and importing of an XL bully dog, while the second stage will be a full ban on owning the breed, the *Irish Examiner* understands.

The second stage is due to take effect from February 1 next year, but XL bully owners will be permitted to keep their dog if they receive a certificate of exemption.

However, this certificate will only be provided to dog owners who can prove that their XL bully has a dog licence, is microchipped, and neutered.

One source said that Ms Humphreys wants to send a clear message that the XL bully is dangerous, causes serious harm, and that a ban is now necessary to protect public safety.

In recent months, consultation has been ongoing with the attorney general around outlawing the breed, with no legislation required to implement the ban itself.

The plan will also bring Ireland in line with the North, which introduced a similar ban earlier this year.

The ban is being brought forward by Ms Humphreys following a spate of dog attacks in recent months, including one which led to the death of Nicole Morey in Limerick.

Ms Morey, from Bawnmore View, Limerick City, was killed by her dogs at her home in Fedamore in the county in early June.

A young boy, Alejandro Mizsan, was left with serious injuries following an at-



While it is true that any dog can bite you, consider the damage an XL bully can do compared to a jack russell,' said Heather Humphreys

tack by an XL bully in November 2022.

Speaking previously in the Seanad, Ms Humphreys said that while everyone loves their dogs, "no dog's life is worth more than human life".

"While it is true that any dog can bite you, consider the damage an XL bully can do compared to a jack russell," Ms Humphreys said.

"The history of these dogs is they were bred to be aggressive. It is in their nature."

The rural affairs minister said that owners of XL bully dogs would not want to hear about a ban. "They will tell me they own an XL bully and it would never hurt anyone, but I cannot ignore the facts. The XL bully was the dog involved in the attack on Alejandro Mizsan in Wex-

ford and it was also the dog involved in the attack in Limerick which killed Nicole Morey."

A number of measures to deal with restricted dog breeds have been taken in recent months, including the doubling of on-the-spot fines to €300 for serious offences.

There are currently 11 restricted dog breeds in Ireland, which requires owners to keep them on a short lead and ensure they are muzzled while in public.

A task force to examine strengthening dog control laws was established by Ms Humphreys earlier this year, with the body being chaired by John Twomey, former Garda assistant commissioner.

The group itself is made up of a number of stakeholders, including government departments and representatives from the Irish Farmers Association, Dogs Trust, and the ISPCA.

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Call for emergency laws over dog attacks

Kathleen O'Sullivan

Farmers are calling for emergency legislation to be introduced amid savage dog attacks on sheep that have occurred in recent weeks.

Following a devastating attack on a family farm in Co Tipperary on December 27, the death of over 80 sheep is expected.

This incident came only weeks after up to 50 sheep were killed in an attack in Moneygall, and 20 sheep were attacked by dogs in Kildare.

Irish Farmers' Association Tipperary North sheep chair JP Ryan told the *Irish Examiner* that these attacks are a "huge financial loss" to the farmer, along with being "demoralising", and taking "security away from your livelihood".

Mr Ryan said that "emergency legislation" should be brought in to try and tackle the issue, with action needed immediately.

The IFA has repeatedly called for a number of measures to be introduced, including tougher sanctions for those who fail to have their dog under their control at all times, and for those whose dogs are identified to be worrying/attacking livestock.

The IFA is also calling for a single national database for all dogs in the country that identifies the person responsible for the dog, along with additional resources to ensure compliance with the obligations of dog owners.

Mr Ryan said that farmers need policies and authorities to protect them against these

types of attacks.

"The IFA sheep committee has been highlighting this problem for a long number of years and we need action this January because there's worse waiting to happen," he said.

"This was a huge kill in Tipperary recently, by dogs powerful enough to kill sheep probably in one snatch.

"We need special legislation, probably emergency legislation to bring this under control and the fines need to be more severe as well, and Gardai need to be able to investigate more robustly if necessary."

Mr Ryan said that these attacks are happening "all too often" on Irish farms, making it a "serious problem".

"Let alone the financial loss, but you're worried that

this is going to happen again, and there are enough challenges out there," he said.

Mr Ryan added that "if you keep a dangerous dog breed, there should be a special register for that breed above the dog licence".

"An animal that's capable of ferocious destruction, it should be the case that if you have a dangerous dog breed, you have a special area to keep that dog that is totally secure," Mr Ryan added.

Speaking this week to the *Irish Examiner* about the dog attack that has resulted in the death of up to 80 of their sheep on the family farm in Lorrha, Co Tipperary, Nuala Gonzalez O'Donoghue stressed the need for a change in policy, and has pleaded for people to ensure they have their dogs under control at all times.

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Dog on restricted breed list attacked a runner on Donegal greenway

Stephen Maguire

A man had to be rushed to hospital after being attacked by a dog on the restricted breed list in Co Donegal on Sunday.

He had been jogging on the greenway between the villages of Muff and Quigley's Point on the Inishowen Pen-

insula when he was set upon by the dog just after midday.

The dog, understood to be a Rottweiler, was being walked on a lead by its owner at the time.

The animal was not muzzled at the time.

It managed to break free from its owner and chased the man before biting him a

number of times on the leg.

The victim, who is in his 20s, was rushed to Altnagelvin Hospital in Derry where he underwent emergency treatment.

It is understood that gardai had, by yesterday morning, identified the dog at the centre of the incident.

Officers have launched an

investigation into the attack.

Local councillor Terry Crossan said he is horrified by the attack and said people need to take full responsibility for their dogs.

"I want to pay particular praise to the gardai in dealing with this situation and taking control of it once they realised the seriousness of

this incident," he said.

"This man was lucky to escape even though his injuries are very serious.

"If this was a child the consequences could have been much worse and it's not even worth considering that."

Mr Crossan said he now plans to bring forward a motion to Donegal County

Council on dog control and dog warden services in the county.

The attack comes less than two weeks after a 23-year-old woman died in a dog attack in Co Limerick.

Nicole Morley died after being mauled by her own XL bully dog when she entered her home after a night out

celebrating her birthday.

The tragedy has once again opened up the debate on dangerous dog breeds and the possibility of certain breeds being banned in Ireland.

Last week, Taoiseach Simon Harris promised to move to ban XL bully dogs and other dangerous breeds

in the wake of Ms Morey's death.

The Government is now consulting with the Attorney General on outlawing the breed.

Earlier this month, a pit-bull terrier which attacked two people at a house in a Cork City suburb had to be shot dead by armed gardai.

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Bully dog ban 'does not go far enough'

Gráinne Ní Aodha

The sister of Limerick woman Nicole Morey, who was killed in a dog attack, has said laws banning XL bully dogs are not strict enough.

Jolene Morey said her sister had all the documents needed for her pets.

"The law they're bringing out, you have to have a licence, you have to have papers ... but my sister had all of them," she told RTE's *Upfront With Katie Hannon* programme.

"Nicole loved them dogs, and the dogs loved Nicole. But they just turned on her."

Nicole was killed by her dogs, including an XL bully, as she returned home after celebrating her 23rd birthday in June.

Her death prompted Rural and Community Development Minister Heather Humphreys to introduce legislation focused on XL bully dogs.

From today, it will be illegal to import, breed, or resell XL bullies, while a ban on ownership of the dogs will come into force from February 1.

Current owners of XL bullies will be required to neuter their dogs to obtain a certificate of exemption between those two dates in order to keep them.

It followed several incidents of dog attacks, including a case in Co Wexford in which a nine-year-old boy was left with serious facial injuries.

In an interview aired yesterday, Ms Morey told the programme that she does not believe the law represents "a big enough change".

"I think people are going to keep the dogs, and then there's going to be more accidents and more attacks," she said. "But people won't feel the pain until it hits their front doorstep."

"I think there should be a stricter law brought in.

"They're dangerous dogs. They're not small little puppies. They're not dogs that you could just mess around with. They can just switch in two seconds."

She described the family's reaction when they heard that something had happened to Nicole that night.

"I was sitting in my room in darkness, and I rang Nicole because I didn't believe it was real.

"Then I texted her. I said: 'Are you OK?' And got no message back. And then a video got sent to me. And they asked me if it was with my sister. And I just remember clicking into a video and seeing her on the floor.

"I was just waiting for the phone call to say she's gone because I had a feeling in my stomach that she didn't survive it.

"But my mum was like: 'No, it's only bites and stuff.' Then my uncle rang, and I just knew from his voice that she was gone."

She described her sister as successful and an important part of their family as the eldest sibling.

"My family want Nicole to be remembered as how much of a good person she was. Not the girl that died from the dog attack or the video that's going viral.

"Nicole did so well in life. Nicole would do anything for anyone. She's just a lovable person."



Nicole Morey had all the papers needed for her pets.

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**Does Ireland need
tougher dog control laws?**

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Armed police had to fire 19 SHOTS to kill two XL Bully dogs after an 84-year-old man was dragged off the street and mauled: Woman arrested over attack as pensioner fights for his life

By [JAMES TOZER, REPORTER](#)

PUBLISHED: 15:56 BST, 25 February 2025 | UPDATED: 21:20 BST, 25 February 2025

Armed police had to fire 19 shots to kill two XL Bully dogs after an 84-year-old man was left fighting for his life when he was dragged into a garden and viciously attacked.

A 29-year-old woman has now been arrested after the 'unregistered' **XL Bully** mauled the helpless pensioner.

Due to the 'size and ferocity' of the dog and a second suspected XL Bully at the same property, police marksmen had to **shoot them 19 times** in order to kill them, they revealed today in a horrific update.

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Courts

Court effort to stop ban on rehoming XL bullies will be opposed by State

Plaintiffs say ban is 'overly broad' and seek to stop it being imposed on February 1st



An owner found to be in breach of the regulations by keeping an XL bully after February 1st without an exemption certificate will have committed a criminal offence. Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

Paul Neilan

Thu Jan 30 2025 - 18:14

The State is set to oppose an injunction application brought by six animal welfare organisations seeking to halt the impending ban on them rehoming or exporting XL bully dogs in their care.

The High Court has scheduled to hear the application on Friday, just one day before the ban is due to come into force.

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Death or Sweden: XL bully dogs shipped overseas before ban next week

Dog rescue charity in Sweden agrees to accept 22 animals who would otherwise be put down

A dog rescue charity in Sweden has taken 22 XL bully dogs from Ireland who would otherwise be put down.
Video: Enda O'Dowd

[Ronan McGreevy](#)

Thu Sept 26 2024 - 18:46

St Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland. The 22 [XL bully-type](#) dogs that left Ashbourne in Co Meath on Thursday were driven out of Ireland in air-conditioned vans.

Their final destination is Sweden, a journey of two days across land and sea. As of next Tuesday, October 1st, it will be against the law to import, breed, sell or rehome an XL bully dog.

Therefore those in dog shelters or pounds will be put down. Those retained by owners will need a certificate of exemption from next February and will have to be neutered and microchipped.

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This transfer of responsibility had been long called for by farm organisations, particularly the IFA and INHFA.

Department of Agriculture officially takes responsibility for dog control

Effective from 1 June 2025, the Department of Agriculture has said that it will now look after policy regarding dog control.

Rachel Donovan

Wed 25 June 2025 12:00 AM



All policy and legislative responsibility for the control of dogs has been transferred to the Department of Agriculture, the *Irish Farmers Journal* can reveal.

Effective from 1 June 2025, the Department of Agriculture has said that it will now look after policy regarding dog control, policy relating to breed specific legislation, including XL Bully control and dog licensing policy.

It will also support local authorities in discharging their responsibilities in relations to dog control operations.

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IMAGE: Shutterstock/Vicky1981

XL BULLY BAN

Dog behaviourist

The problem of dog attacks won't be solved with just a ban on certain breeds

Suzi Walsh says banning certain breeds like they've done in the UK may not be the way to go.

7.01pm, 25 Jan 2024

AT THE END of last year, a ban on XL bully dogs was introduced in England and Wales to address the increased incidence of fatal dog attacks but will it work and should Ireland follow suit?

An XL bully is a type of bully breed, a term used to identify a variety of terrier-type dogs. The types and styles of bully dogs vary geographically depending on individual preferences such as English Bull Terriers, Bullmastiffs, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, Boston Terriers, Boxers, French Bulldogs and breed types such as the American Pitbull terrier.

The term "Pit Bull " is a universal term often misused to suggest that the pit bull is a breed of dog, when they are actually a mix of two or more breeds of dog. This is also the case for the XL or American Bully.

An American bully XL, known as an XL bully, is the largest of the American bully types. They are not a registered breed with the Kennel Club in Ireland or the UK but are a breed type that has been bred from several different dog breeds. They are a very large dog weighing upwards of 57 kg and have a muscular appearance. They are often overly bred to create an abnormal shape and structure which can be detrimental to the dogs health.

The Noteworthy team recently reported a rise in dog bite reports across Ireland, with victims of dog attacks saying lax law enforcement leaves them without hope. [Read their investigation here >>](#)

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What is happening in Britain?

From 31 December 2023, it became illegal to breed, sell, advertise, exchange, gift, rehome, abandon or allow XL bully-type dogs to stray in England and Wales. The ban does not yet apply in Scotland or Northern Ireland.

The XL Bully is the fifth dog added to the banned list which includes the American Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino and Fila Brasileiro.

Families with an XL bully type dog in Britain must now keep their dog on a lead and muzzled when they walk in public. All XL Bully types are required to be microchipped, neutered (by June 2024) and have third party liability insurance. From the 1 February this year, it will be a criminal offence to own an unregistered XL bully type dog. Registration costs over €100 and dogs without a certificate of exemption are at risk of euthanasia.

The decision to ban XL Bully dogs was made following a concerning rise in dog attacks, with 11 people sadly losing their lives in the last three years with an XL Bully type named as the dog.

There is currently no exact description for an XL bully because XL bullies are crossbreeds: Kennel Club breed standards do not exist. Instead, the UK government created **its own specification** for the breed, including the size of their head and muzzle, their build and the height and length of their body. Breed name, DNA and parentage are not considered. The main criterion the government is focusing on is a minimum height requirement. For adult males, this is 20 inches and above, and for females, this is 19 inches and above. If a dog does not meet this height requirement, they will not be typed as an XL bully. If they do, they are assessed against the rest of the specifications.

Currently, a judicial review hearing has been scheduled for January with campaigners seeking to overturn the ban. There are approximately 250 XL Bullies in shelters throughout England and Wales who would be euthanised under the legislation.

Didn't they try that before?

Pit Bulls were banned in the UK in 1991 and since then researchers at Liverpool University have shown that UK hospital admissions for dog bites have risen consistently over the past 20 years. The increase appears to be restricted to adults, where the numbers have tripled over that time.

Despite Pit Bulls being banned in the UK they are still identified in many bite instances confirming that they're difficult to identify or that banning the breed was unsuccessful. Either way, the statistics indicate that banning a breed does not appear to decrease the number of dog attacks. So instead of banning a breed why not implement a plan of responsible dog breeding, ownership and welfare?

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Are there any banned dog breeds in Ireland?

There are no banned dog breeds in Ireland, however there is a restricted breed list. This is a list of 11 dog breeds with certain rules and regulations that must be followed by law. These are the American Pit Bull Terrier, English Bull Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Bull Mastiff, Dobermann Pinscher, German Shepherd (Alsatian), Rhodesian Ridgeback, Rottweiler, Japanese Akita, Japanese Tosa, Bandog or any combination or crosses of these breeds. In addition to the normal dog legislation, these dogs must be kept on a short lead (under two metres), muzzled in public places and they must only be exercised by someone over the age of 16.

Is banning a breed the answer?

Bans or restrictions on dog breeds seem good on the surface; if those dogs don't exist, they can't attack or bite, but the reality is not that simple and it's not an effective solution. The new legislation in the UK fails to get to the root of the dog bite problem which ultimately is irresponsible care and mismanagement of a dog. Research clearly shows that breed-specific legislation does not reduce the number of bites.

A study by the **Department of Environmental and Life Sciences at Karlstad University in Sweden** showed that breed specific legislation had no effect on the total number of dog bites, supporting previous studies that have also shown no evidence for breed-specific legislation in other countries.

The issue of dangerous dogs, dog bites and public safety is a complex one. Any dog can bite. It is the dog's individual history, behaviour, general size, number of dogs involved, and the vulnerability of the person bitten that determines the likelihood of a dog causing serious injury.

Breed-specific bans are a simplistic answer to a far more intricate social problem, and they have the potential to deflect attention and resources from more effective approaches.

Breed-specific laws are extremely difficult to enforce, especially when a dog's breed cannot easily be determined or if the dog is of mixed breed. A breed identification study by the **University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine** had over 5,000 breeders, trainers, groomers, veterinarians and shelter staff review 119 photos of individual dogs to see if they were capable of identifying breeds.

The participants were only able to correctly identify a prominent breed an average of 27% of the time. These results indicate that, regardless of profession,

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What should we do?

The best ways to reduce dog bite-related incidents in a community are multifactorial approaches focusing on improved ownership and husbandry practices, better understanding of canine behaviour, education of parents and children regarding safety around dogs and consistent enforcement of dangerous dogs/reckless owners in communities.

Effective laws should hold people responsible for the humane care, custody, and control of their dogs regardless of breed or type.

Apart from the misidentification of many breed types, there is always another breed to come to the forefront. If you ban XL Bullies, people buy Cane Corsos. Ban the Cane Corso and people will buy Rottweilers and so on. There is always another breed or type to replace the last. Bans and restrictions are complicated, they are difficult and costly to implement and are a very unsuccessful way of reducing bite statistics.

Banning a breed also has a serious emotional impact on the veterinary profession. Nearly all Veterinary professionals choose their career in order to save the lives of animals and while this is not always possible, euthanasia is usually the last resort. It is unethical for a government to put laws in place where Veterinarians are asked to put healthy animals to sleep based on their appearance. This is especially true when that animal is a beloved family pet with no history of aggressive behaviour.

Why do dogs bite people?

Aggression is a context-dependent behaviour and is associated with many different motivations. Most dogs that show aggression do so to eliminate a perceived threat to their safety or to protect a resource.

Nearly all dog aggression is fear-based and it is rarely unpredictable.

The leading causes of fear are inadequate socialisation and undiagnosed pain. When there is increased demand for a particular breed there is usually an increase in behavioural issues and health concerns for the breed as unscrupulous breeders race to meet the demand.

1. Inadequate socialisation: Bites mainly happen when dogs are poorly socialised. Puppies need to be raised in a home environment, to experience regular and gentle handling from approximately three weeks of age and they need to be exposed to the stimuli they will experience in a pet home. They need people to be affectionate with them and they need to be social, content and outgoing by the time they reach 12 – 14 weeks of age to be adaptable enough to live in a human world.

The main problem that we have in Ireland is that how we breed dogs prevents adequate socialisation and, worryingly, breed specific legislation exacerbates the

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Yet Alexis Etienne has never owned an XL Bully. He admits to a form of fear: crossing the street when faced with a dog deemed “dangerous,” distrusting a body perceived as threatening. It is, indirectly, his own fears that he puts to work here. At the intersection of the intimate and the political.

Alongside this media investigation and field study carried out in Dublin, the artist turns his attention to another form of circulation: that of forms and taste. Decorative bulldogs - multicolored figurines, pop dogs sold on Amazon, in discount home goods stores, or in galleries near the Louvre - are invading gardens, balconies, and interiors, from suburban neighborhoods to opulent apartments. Hovering between distant references to contemporary art and unabashedly kitsch objects, these figurines question how taste is socially constructed, how it seeps in and spreads.

The large bulldog paintings produced by Alexis Etienne engages with these familiar forms. The paint drips and overflows. The dogs become unstable and ghostly, almost spectral. They are no longer decorative objects, nor entirely threats. These unsettling figures, bodies that are both heavy and volatile, are charged with the emotions, fears, and affects of a social body attempting to reconstitute itself.

In *Ghosts of My Life*, Mark Fisher writes that we are “haunted by the futures that never happened,” by the social, cultural, or political possibilities annulled by neoliberal capitalism. Alexis Etienne’s bulldogs are among these spectres. They look at us as much as we look at them, and they pose a simple yet disturbing question: what are we really afraid of? And if they are, why are these dogs dangerous?

Clément Hébert

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Dog-minder has ear ripped off by XL Bully after it attacked him while he slept

- Have YOU been attacked by an XL bully? Email: poppy.gibson@mailonline.co.uk

By [POPPY ATKINSON GIBSON](#)

PUBLISHED: 16:56 BST, 5 June 2025 | UPDATED: 23:02 BST, 5 June 2025

A dog-minder had his ear ripped off by an **XL bully** after it attacked him while he slept.

Darren Shuttleworth-Long, 52, from Swindon was sleeping peacefully next to the banned breed on his sofa on April 26, but was woken up after it started biting him.

The dog sitter was caring for the hound for someone else and described the animal crashing in to him several times and snapping and snarling before biting his face.

He will now require plastic surgery to reconstruct his ear and confessed he struggles to leave the house and even hearing a dog bark sends shivers down his spine.

A woman has been arrested on suspicion of being in charge of a dog dangerously out of control

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the dog broke free and started to attack him.

The church volunteer managed to move it off him but the dog continued to attack him in a 10-minute long fight that also saw half his nose ripped off.

The 52-year-old was finally able to get away and was taken to Bristol's Southmead Hospital.



+4
View gallery

Darren Shuttleworth-Long, 52, from Swindon was sleeping peacefully next to an XL Bully on his sofa on April, 26, but was woken up after it started biting him, ripping his ear off

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View gallery

© Darren Shuttleworth-Long / SWNS

The dog-sitter will now require plastic surgery to reconstruct his ear and confessed he struggles to leave the house and is scared of big dogs

He spent three days in intensive care and was told he would need plastic surgery to reconstruct his ear.

Mr Shuttleworth-Long, a volunteer at his local church said: 'I went to sleep and had the dog asleep next to me.

'I woke up and it had latched on the side of me. I managed to move it off.

'It attacked me again and hit me on the side.

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'He hit me about eight to ten times - I thought "I'm in serious trouble".'

Mr Shuttleworth-Long says the attack was unprompted and lasted for around 10 minutes before he was able to get away from the dog.

He said: 'My whole right side of my face was numb.'



Mr Shuttleworth-Long said he initially found the dog's jaw had locked while it was nestled in to his armpit but as he tried to move it, the dog broke free and started to attack him