



# Executive Summary

In the past two years, **fatal dog attacks** in the UK have increased dramatically. Between 2001 and 2021 there were an average of three fatalities per year, with no year exceeding six. However, in 2022, ten people were killed, four of whom were children. There have already been five deaths this year to date.

This rise in fatal attacks can be explained **by just one breed**: the recently-imported **American Bully**. A fighting breed derived from the (already banned) Pit Bull, these are intensively bred for further size, strength and ferocity. In one week in July, **one dog a day was killed by an American Bully**.

At present, the American Bully is estimated to represent less than 1% of UK dogs. Yet it has inflicted an astonishing **~44% of all attacks** this year, and **~75% of all deaths** in the last three years. These figures establish the American Bully breed as an outlier, being **~270x more deadly** than the rest of the dog population.

This report assesses the latest scientific research on the relationship between dog breed and risk, examining the severity as well as the likelihood of attack. **Recent research finds a strong link between dog breed and aggressive behaviour**, shifting the debate away from a breed-neutral view of attack likelihood. Consensus has always held that there is a strong relationship between breed and the severity of a potential attack, and recent research confirms this, demonstrating **fighting breeds have at least a 6x overrepresentation among severe attacks and an even higher propensity to kill**. Finally, reviewing recent research on legislation, we see that effective breed specific legislation can reduce the rate of severe injury by up to 40%,

**As a consequence, this report urges the Government to take immediate action by banning the American Bully type under the Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act (DDA), or by updating guidance to include the American Bully as a banned pit bull-type. The Secretary of State for EFRA can do this immediately - saving children, adults and pets from being attacked, maimed and killed.**

This action has strong support among the public. Recent YouGov polling shows **a ban on the American Bully is supported by 57% of the public**, with only 17% against. This includes majority support amongst the supporters of every major political party.<sup>1</sup> **Dog owners support a ban of the American Bully 2:1.**

A breed-specific approach to dangerous dogs retains the support of organisations responsible for public health such as the National Police Chief's Council, and animal welfare organisations such as PETA.<sup>2</sup>

As this report demonstrates, a dog's breed is unavoidably important in determining the risk it poses to humans and other dogs. When a breed has been created expressly for fighting, members of that breed will inevitably fight. In the case of the American Bully, the alarming volume and severity of its attacks, and the science behind breed and aggression, establishes that the Dangerous Dogs Act must be used as it was originally intended: to stop the spread of dangerous dogs, unacceptably likely to injure, harm and kill.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gbnews.com/news/exclusive-poll-britons-back-killer-breed-dog-ban>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/92183/html/>;  
<https://www.peta.org/blog/peta-position-pit-bulls/>

# Introduction

This year has seen increasing public attention concerning a rise in fatal dog attacks. The growth in popularity and ownership of the American Bully has led to this unprecedented increase in dog attack fatalities. Our research shows that 44% of attacks in 2023 have been caused by large functional bully breeds, with the American Bully-type accounting for nearly 75% of all fatalities since 2021.<sup>3</sup>

The American Bully poses a unique risk to public safety, due to the frequency with which they commit serious attacks and fatalities. It is crucial to regulate these dangerous dogs before they become a yet-more substantial part of the UK's dog population.

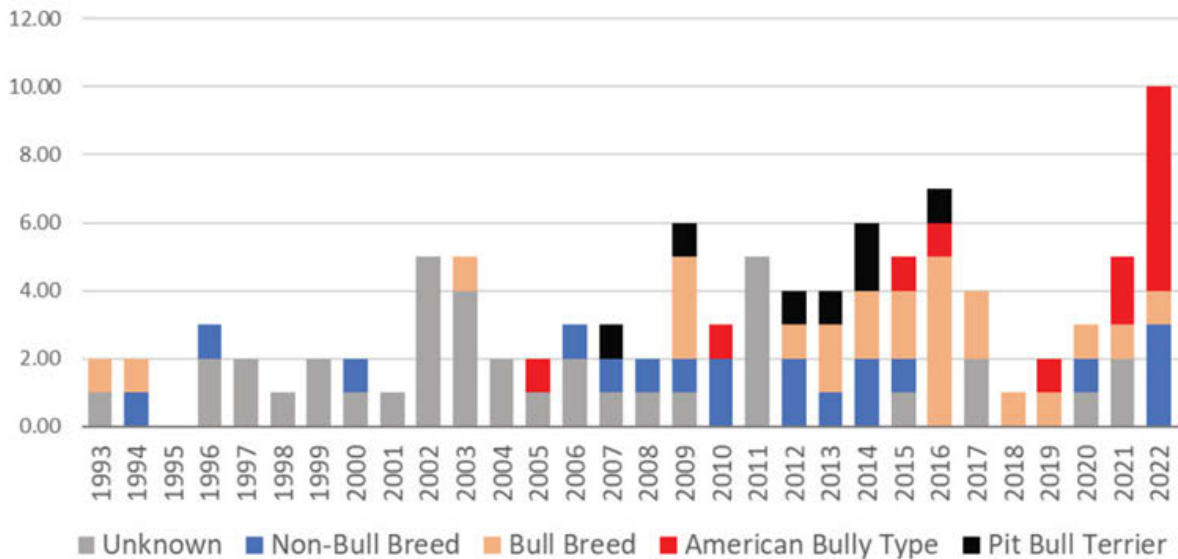
# About the Attacks

Since the start of 2022, we have seen a significant rise in deaths from dog attacks. Last year, 10 people died from dog attacks (the highest number since records began), quadruple the annual average of the previous decade of 2.74. There have been 5 fatalities this year thus far. Statistical modelling shows if nothing had changed within the canine population, the probability of just last year's string of deaths is 0.1%; including this year's that drops below 0.05%. In other words, 2022 was not simply an unlucky year.<sup>7</sup>

**The American Bully is disproportionately responsible for this increase, with American Bully type dogs causing 73% of reported deaths since the start of 2022.**

Bully Watch UK estimates that while the American Bully has rapidly increased in popularity, it is still less than 1% of owned dogs in the UK. If that is true, then it means *this breed is almost 300x more deadly than the rest of the dog population.*<sup>8</sup> Even if we are wrong many times over and 6% of all dogs in the UK were the American Bully - making it the fourth most popular breed in the UK - these dogs would still be 42x more deadly than the rest of the dog population.<sup>9</sup>

Annualised Fatalities from Dog Attacks By Breed Type



Source: analysis of ONS data on reported dog fatalities to 2021<sup>4</sup>, and reported fatalities from dog attacks taken from Wikipedia<sup>5</sup> and the RSPCA<sup>6</sup>. Data available on request.

<sup>3</sup>Bully Watch UK data, correct as at 15th August 2023

<sup>4</sup>ONS datasets from the Births, Deaths, Marriages dataset and Deaths Registered Series: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/adhocs/006077deathsfromdogbitesengland1981to2015>; <https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformation/annualnumberofdeathsfromdogattacksorbites>

<sup>5</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_fatal\\_dog\\_attacks\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fatal_dog_attacks_in_the_United_Kingdom)

<sup>6</sup><https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/92337/html/>

<sup>7</sup>Modelling of 2022 and 2022-3 deaths versus a poisson distribution  
<sup>8</sup>1% of dogs caused 73% of fatalities; the remaining 99% caused 27%. Each 1% of the remaining dogs caused 0.27% of fatalities, a relative risk ratio of 270x  
<sup>9</sup>6% of dogs caused 73% of fatalities; the remaining 94% caused 27%. Each 6% of the remaining dogs caused 1.72% of fatalities, a relative risk ratio of 42x





## Are Different Breeds More Likely To Attack Humans And Other Dogs?

### The Argument For

In the public's mind it is commonly understood that different breeds of dogs have markedly different behavioural characteristics. The same is true in scientific consensus, with much scientific literature based on the understanding that different breeds of dogs **"differ behaviorally in substantial, consistent and predictable ways"**.<sup>15</sup> There has, however, remained some scientific debate about whether this impacts on aggressive behaviour by dogs. Recent peer-reviewed academic research conclusively shows that this is not the case.

A number of large, high quality, peer reviewed studies have been released in the last few years which conclusively show breed matters for particular traits, including aggression. A study of 13,700 pet dogs published in the scientific journal *Nature* in 2020, showed significant heritability of traits such as propensity for aggression which differ significantly between breeds.<sup>16</sup> A 2023 study by the University of Helsinki analysed traits of 11,000 dogs. It found that fighting type dogs scored highest on aggressiveness and dominance while scoring at the lower-end of dog sociability.<sup>16</sup>

Pre-2011 studies generally show a strong relationship between breed and owner-directed aggressiveness, with pit bull and other breeds bred for fighting posing a particular danger<sup>18</sup>, but these studies are rejected on the grounds of "moderate quality" by academics who oppose breed specific legislation. More modern studies, however, corroborate these older studies, finding that breed traits are genetic and heritable<sup>19</sup> with certain dogs such as pit bulls scoring highly for aggression towards unfamiliar dogs.<sup>20</sup> This echoes peer reviewed UK studies which have found that Bull type breeds are overwhelmingly involved in dog on dog attacks.<sup>21</sup> This is not surprising, given that these dogs were intensively bred for use in dog fighting, and thus for higher aggression.

A study conducted in the Netherlands published in 2016 analysed police reports and behaviour tests of 279 dogs to understand intense dog attacks. While the referred dogs came from various breeds, 56%

-of the dogs that killed other dogs in the seized group were of the American Staffordshire/pit bull terrier type.<sup>22</sup> A study conducted in Sweden in 2016 of 101 dogs found that Bull breeds caused the highest number of injuries and were most often categorised as high risk by police officers.<sup>23</sup>

### The Argument Against

The clearest encapsulation of the argument is given by Carri Westgarth, an animal academic who uses her work to campaign against breed specific legislation, in her submission to a 2018 EFRA Committee hearing:<sup>24</sup> she describes a series of studies showing that breed is a significant factor in behaviour, with some showing higher owner-directed aggression, others showing higher stranger-directed aggression, and fighting breeds scoring highly dog-directed aggression than others. However, she rejects the older studies showing that fighting dogs are more aggressive towards humans on data quality grounds.

Her conclusion then was that breed was a smaller factor than environmental stimuli, citing a study<sup>25</sup> whose abstract in fact states it found that "there is convincing scientific evidence for reliable differences between breeds and breed groups with respect to some behaviours (e.g., aggression, reactivity)".

She concludes by asserting that "breeds currently named in BSL have not yet been found to show more human-directed aggression than other breeds." This is clever wordplay, focusing on the absence of evidence rather than any evidence of absence, after already having rejected a number of studies which provide "moderate quality" evidence that pit bulls do show more human-directed aggression; even she agrees that these dogs are more likely to show aggression against other dogs.

This argument is unsustainable in the light of the tragic recent data around American Bully attacks, as this breed clearly exhibits a very high frequency of attacking both humans and other dogs.

<sup>15</sup><https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2014-12980-001>

<sup>16</sup><https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-59837-z>

<sup>17</sup>2023 - Breed, age, and social environment are associated with personality traits in dogs - Finland - <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jisci.2023.106691>

<sup>18</sup>J. Sacks, L. Sinclair, J. Gilchrist, G. Golab, R. Lockwood. "Breeds of dogs involved in fatal human attacks in the United States between 1979 and 1998" *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.*, 217 (2000)

<sup>19</sup><https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/509315v1.article-metrics>

<sup>20</sup>[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233995885\\_Breed\\_differences\\_in\\_canine\\_aggression](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233995885_Breed_differences_in_canine_aggression)

<sup>21</sup><https://bvajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1136/vrb.48.55>

<sup>22</sup><https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1558787818302259>

<sup>23</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30711844/>

<sup>24</sup><https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/91190/html/>

<sup>25</sup><https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2014-12980-001>

<sup>26</sup><https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/91190/html/>

<sup>27</sup><https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2014-12980-001>

## Are Certain Dogs More Likely To Inflict Severe Or Fatal Damage When They Do Attack?

Scientific consensus clearly ascribes a link between breed and severity of injury - to quote Carri Westgarth,

*“when [banned breeds] do bite they may cause greater injury”.*<sup>26</sup>

Peer reviewed studies from the United States, Canada and from European countries support this. **From 2018 to 2021, 17 peer-reviewed scientific papers based on hospital data were identified which all showed that pit bull-type dogs were responsible for the most dog bites requiring hospitalisation and resulted in significant injuries. [Appendix C]**

Despite pit bulls comprising only 6% of the population of dogs in the United States, in numerous studies pit bull terriers tend to be involved in about 50% of attacks, despite in many cases 20-25% of attacks involving law enforcement animals.<sup>27</sup> This means they have an **8x-12x higher likelihood of being involved in an attack which results in a hospitalisation.**

Analysis of hospital admissions shows these dogs causing more extensive and complex damage when they bite, *with a pit bull's risk of inflicting a complex or deep bite being 17 times higher than non-pit bull dogs.*<sup>28</sup> These attacks often result from an unprovoked attack where the dog has gone off territory to attack.<sup>29</sup>

Sadly, not only do pit bull attacks result in worse injury, they are statistically significantly more likely to result in coma or death: in a 15 year study of 228 hospitalisations at one Trauma and Emergency Surgery Service, 17.2% of hospitalisations from pit bull attacks resulted in a coma and 10.3% resulted in death, while among the non-pit bull attacks, 0% resulted in patients ending up in comas or death.<sup>30</sup>

A doctor involved in a paediatric study of 1616 children over a 4-year period stated that pit bulls inflict the most damage when they bite and they bite in numerous anatomical locations. The victims, if they survive, require highly complex surgery. As the doctor puts it, ***“even in the best owners' homes and the sweetest of dogs, if a chihuahua has a bad day, it is a very different story to the pit bull having a bad day and disfiguring a child for life.”***<sup>31</sup>

## Is Breed Specific Legislation successful in preventing severe and fatal dog attacks?

Peer reviewed studies of regions where breed specific legislation has been brought in shows that it can be **highly effective at preventing severe and fatal dog attacks.** Analysis of the introduction of BSL in Catalonia showed that it reduced hospitalisations from dog bites by 38%,<sup>32</sup> while similar analysis in Manitoba, Canada saw reductions in hospitalisations of 19%, with significantly higher reductions in hospitalisations of children.

The National Police Chief's Council credits breed specific restrictions with protecting public safety, reducing severe and fatal attacks relative to the counterfactual.<sup>33</sup> In fact, observing the very early days of the popularity of the American Bully in 2017, they predicted that if further restrictions were not placed on large functional bully breeds - including specifically the American Bully - that it was unlikely that the reduction in severe and fatal attacks would be sustained.

The experience of places where breed specific legislation has been repealed has often been somewhat negative. In the Netherlands, the removal of breed specific legislation in 2009 resulted in a public swing of opinion in favour of bringing back their breed specific legislation. Although the new “hoog-risico honden” (high-risk dog) legislation proposed isn't strictly breed-based, 21 breeds have been designated automatically high risk and are proposed to be banned.<sup>34</sup> Their view is that while every dog can have risk, **some breeds have a risk that is far too high to bear.**<sup>35</sup>

Finally, the legalisation of the American Bully provides a tragic natural experiment. The result of the legalisation of a pit bull sub-breed has been an explosion of severe maulings and fatalities, even while these dogs are still a much smaller population than pit bulls are elsewhere. If the American Bully type had remained illegal, 14 British lives tragically lost would instead have been saved. There is a reason why 550 US jurisdictions, and 32 countries have decided to adopt some form of BSL legislation including Germany, France, and Denmark.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>26</sup><https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/91190/html/>

<sup>27</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30845083/>

<sup>28</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29912736/>

<sup>29</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30075476/>

<sup>30</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34100808/>

<sup>31</sup><https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5682160/>

<sup>32</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34787555/>

<sup>33</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31816277/>

<sup>34</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21475022/>

<sup>35</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27400935/>

<sup>32</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20805621/>

<sup>33</sup><https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/92183/html/>

<sup>34</sup><https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/dierenwelzijn/documenten/rapporten/2019/05/01/the-safe-dog-project>

<sup>35</sup><https://www.minderhondenbeten.nl/agressie/hoog-risico-honden/>

<sup>36</sup><https://blog.dogsbite.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/estimated-breed-specific-laws-2021.pdf>

# The American Bully

The American Bully is a crossbreed of the American Pit Bull Terrier and American Staffordshire Bull Terrier, as demonstrated by self-reported DNA testing on a number of dogs. Our study of breed lineage demonstrates it is genetically essentially a larger Pit Bull, with the ancestry of every Bully breed dog in the UK tracing back to these two types of pit bull.<sup>37</sup> Some suggest that Mastiff, Bulldogs and other breeds may have been bred in – but “papering” (the practice of forging pedigree papers for banned or cross-breed dogs) prevents lineage experts from confirming this.

The breed was introduced to the UK sometime during the 2010s, and was first reported in mainstream media in 2017, when four American Bullies escaped the garden of a breeder and mauled a toddler close to death in Dingle. The breed remains sufficiently rare that it is not recognised by the UK’s Kennel Club or most canine insurance providers.<sup>38</sup>

The popularity of the American Bully is a very new trend. As recently as 2017, an ITV survey didn’t include the breed inside the top 100 on Britain’s favourite dog breeds.<sup>39</sup> Although the number of American Bullies in the UK has risen rapidly since 2020, only 2% of puppies sold online are American Bully types. As such, we estimate that they remain less than 1% of the population of owned dogs.

The pandemic saw a huge increase in amateur backyard breeders with no understanding of canine genetics given the Government stay at home order coupled with the huge increase in demand for dogs. The primary objective in breeding the American Bully became to breed bigger and more muscular dogs or to find physical traits such as colour to have a particular unique-selling-point.

Whereas the typical pit bull stock the American Bully was bred from usually weighs between 16kg and 29kg, breeding for bulk and musculature mean that American Bully type dogs can now weigh up to 75kg. Even the most skilled handlers often struggle to control these huge and powerful dogs; three of the fatalities from American Bullies have been from experienced professional dog handlers such as dog walkers and dog trainers, with one of them an experienced dog trainer with a decades-long career in rehabilitating rescued dogs. The use of prong collars, slip leads and other dog training tools is widespread amongst owners.

Our research shows a significant number of these breeding dogs come from lines with a history of producing human-aggressive progeny in the United States. Despite this lineage, such breeding dogs are extensively used in the UK. Additionally, the ancestry of a large portion of these dogs includes champion dogs bred for fighting. Although dog fighting was made illegal in the United States in the 1970s, it wasn’t enforced until the turn of the century. Some of the dogs we have tracked are descendant from pit bulls active in dog fighting in the 1990s.<sup>40</sup>

The breed's genetic diversity is relatively limited due to inbreeding. All current American Bullies are descendants of a handful of US breeders active in the early 1990s. This has resulted in a lineage that stems from a limited number of original dogs. This was essentially narrowed again when the American Bully was introduced in the UK in the mid 2010s where breeders had a much smaller genetic pool from which to breed from. Most American Bully pedigrees show evidence of some inbreeding, with certain influential progenitors even displaying an extreme inbreeding coefficient of 40% or higher. This risks producing dogs with both health and neurological issues. According to the BVA, the base standard for the XL Bully is to have mild hip dysplasia.

The breed has increased in popularity since 2019, but still comprises a very small but rapidly rising minority of dogs. Only around 2% of puppies for sale on a variety of online marketplaces are for the American Bully breed. This, coupled with life expectancy of dogs, makes it likely that significantly less than 1% of owned dogs in the UK are American Bullies.

## The Legal Status of the American Bully

Prior to litigation by a dog breeder sometime in the 2010s, the breed was considered a **pit bull-type, illegal under section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991**. Repeated litigation resulted in dog typing organisations accepting that this was a different breed, **despite the breed history clearly showing that this was a pit bull cross breed**<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> <https://bullywatch.link/breed-genetics/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media-centre/breed-registration-statistics/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.countryliving.com/uk/wildlife/dog-breeds/g33/itv-show-britains-favourite-dogs-top-100-dog-breeds/>

<sup>40</sup> <https://bullywatch.link/breed-genetics/>

<sup>41</sup> <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=dACdTFDMMvA>





## Breeding in the UK

The American Bully is a recent import to the UK. This breed is often bred in unsafe environments by amateur or inexperienced breeders operating without the required licences.

When analysing 35 of the most popular UK based breeders of American Bullies, Bully Watch found 33 (94%) prominently featured dogs with cropped ears (an illegal and cruel practice, criminalised under Section 5 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006). Moreover 91% of breeders assessed **did not feature a dog licence, a legal requirement for the sale of dogs in the UK**. Bully Watch found no evidence that 23 (65%) of these kennels were registered on Companies House.<sup>42</sup> Of the 909 breeders selling American Bullies on Pet4Homes, **only 6 (less than 1%) were Council licensed breeders.**<sup>43</sup>

Despite high inbreeding and known issues of aggression, it is common for breeders to market the breed as being family and child friendly. Indeed, breeders can be found claiming that American Bullies are great with children due to their high tolerance for pain. Bully Watch's research shows some breeders sell American Bullies despite admitting that their animals are unable to control arousal and that they have been specifically bred with or for high prey drives.

Early anecdotal evidence suggests that these unethical breeding practices of a dangerous dog breed have triggered the start of a crisis among dog shelters. Further research by Bully Watch on independent shelters is ongoing, but early indications are that owners, unable to control their American Bullies or, to quote one case study, being 'scared' of them, are consequently giving them to shelters in high numbers. This research is forthcoming, but **it is clear that UK breeding practices for this dangerous breed require serious investigation.**



<sup>42</sup>Bully Watch UK Investigation  
<sup>43</sup>Bully Watch UK research, Pets4Homes.com

# Immediate Legislative Recommendations

The Government must act decisively and quickly, using the powers they already have. There are two paths, listed in order of preference:

## Option 1:

**The Secretary of State for EFRA should use s1.1c of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and add the American Bully type (and thereby its relevant subtypes) to the list of banned dogs.**

The American Bully type is a close descendent of the American Pit Bull Terrier, and as such is a “fighting breed” per the Dangerous Dogs Act.

A ban permits the government a range of enforcement options that can include seizure of dogs deemed dangerous, enforced muzzling in public, compelled neutering or a ban on breeding.

This power has been used previously with two types being added to the banned breeds list under s1(c) through Statutory Instrument 1991 no.1743 (these being the Dogo Argentino and Fila Brasileiro).

This option requires little more than the signature of the Secretary of State and would immediately stop a significant threat to pets and children across the country.

## Option 2:

**The Dangerous Dogs Act bans “types” not breeds. Types are broader than breeds, including crosses.** The description of a type is not included in the Act but is instead given in case law and police guidance. Type descriptions are based on physical characteristics.

Current legislation does not define “pit bull-type”. Current government guidance for police services is based on the American Dog Breeders Association standards of the American Pit Bull Terrier. Case law has confirmed that a dog does not need to meet this description perfectly but must share ‘a substantial number of characteristics’.

The UK Bully Kennel Club, and the United Kennel Club both describe the American Bully as necessarily bearing significant characteristics of its parent breed (the American Pit Bull Terrier).<sup>44</sup> Whilst the prestigious UK Kennel Club does not recognise the American Bully as a separate breed. Multiple insurers, including the RSPCA, do not recognise the American Bully as a separate breed.

**As a cross-breed of the American Pit Bull Terrier, the American Bully should be considered a “pit bull-type” as per the Dangerous Dogs Act.** This requires simply updating the non-statutory dog typing guidance. The Secretary of State for EFRA, or the Minister for Policing, should issue guidance to Chief Constables that the government considers the American Bully a “Pit-bull type”.

These actions merely restore the original intent of Parliament in passing the Dangerous Dogs Act. It is only through a lack of updated guidance that the American Bully is currently in the UK. If guidance had been updated to reflect changes in breeding, the American Bully would not have been permitted and, as a result, many children and dogs would not have died.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.ukcdogs.com/docs/breeds/american-bully-breed.pdf>

**Only once the most dangerous dogs are banned can government build on this foundation to further improve the regulation of dangerous dogs.** Some options are listed below:

## **1. Impose higher penalties for irresponsible dog owners, including the criminalising of dog-on-dog attacks**

Currently, the penalties for irresponsible owners of dogs are far too lenient. We urge the government to pass Emilie's Law and criminalise fatal dog-on-dog attacks. Alongside Wayne David MP and the Mirror, we call for tougher sentences for irresponsible dog owners

## **2. Ensure proper enforcement of breeders to root out illegal and unethical breeding**

Our investigation of American Bully breeders found the vast majority of major breeders surveyed were not appropriately licenced and many were publicly flaunting animal welfare violations. We ask that the government better regulate this sector with harsh penalties for breeders operating outside the law. The level of criminality operating in the dog breeding circles cannot be emphasised enough.

## **3. Make Health and Third-Party Insurance compulsory for all dog owners**

All dogs should be insured so that in the event they do attack another dog or human, compensation should be sought. Although no financial compensation will ever make up for the loss of a child or a companion dog, ensuring that there can be recompense for injury and distress is important.

Dogs which are more likely to be involved in attacks or which cause more severe damage will attract higher premiums; insurance companies will be incentivised to ensure dog owners undertake appropriate training both for themselves and for their dogs.

## **4. Consolidate dog control legislation and simplify enforcement**

Currently, dog control legislation is divided between a number of different acts, including the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Consideration should be given to consolidating the separate pieces of dog control legislation across the UK to simplify enforcement for local authorities, clarify responsibilities for dog owners, and ensure that there are targeted dog control provisions (eg. Dog Control Notices) in legislation

## **5. Establish a centralised dog biting incident database to collect data including breed on the context and severity of all dog bite incidents resulting in medical treatment**

Collecting better data on dog bite incidents, including breed data, is crucial for ensuring we can deal rapidly with trends in dog breeding which may endanger public safety, as well as allowing us to do further research into the phenomena of dog bites to improve public education and reduce the frequency of bites.



## APPENDIX C

### **2021- Surgical Treatment of Pediatric Dog-bite Wounds: A 5-year Retrospective Review (Oct 2021)**

Pit bull bites were significantly larger and more severe; patients were four times more likely to be bitten by a pit bull than a German shepherd.

Link: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8597704/>

### **2021 - Analysis of Pediatric Dog Bite Injuries at a Level 1 Trauma Center Over 10 Years (June 2021)**

Most paediatric dog bite victims were male children (55.6%), and pit bulls were the most common offending breed (53.0%).

Link: <https://www.dogsbite.org/pdf/level-1-trauma-center-studies-dog-bite-injuries-2011-2021.pdf>

### **2020 - The changing epidemiology of dog bite injuries in the United States, 2005–2018**

Pit bulls were the most numerous breed (33.6%) and were more common in economically deprived neighbourhoods.

Link: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-020-00281-y>

### **2020 - Dog Bites in Children (November 2020)**

Pit bulls were implicated in over half of the severe wounds requiring surgical management.

Link: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53092-1\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53092-1_5)

### **2020 Facial dog bites treated at the Massachusetts General Hospital over a 20-year period. (August 2020)**

Pit bulls led in the number of bites.

Link: [https://www.oooojournal.net/article/S2212-4403\(20\)30059-6/fulltext](https://www.oooojournal.net/article/S2212-4403(20)30059-6/fulltext)

### **2020 - A look at the incidence and risk factors for dog bites in unincorporated Harris County, Texas, USA (March 2020)**

Pit Bull breeds had the greatest frequency of bites (25.07%).

Link: <https://doi.org/10.14202%2Fvetworld.2020.419-425>

### **2020 - Dog-Bite Injuries to the Craniofacial Region: An Epidemiologic and Pattern-of-Injury Review at a Level 1 Trauma Center (March 2020)**

Pit bull terriers inflicted more complex wounds and were often unprovoked.

Link: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joms.2019.11.002>

### **2020 - Children have an Increased Risk for Periorbital Dog Bite Injuries (January 2020)**

Pit bulls were the most commonly named breed in both pediatric (18%) and adult (26.2%) injuries.

Link: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joms.2019.08.021>

## **2019 - Children have an Increased Risk for Periorbital Dog Bite Injuries (September 2019)**

Pit bulls were the most commonly named breed in both pediatric (18%) and adult (26.2%) injuries.  
Link: [https://www.joms.org/article/S0278-2391\(19\)30666-4/pdf](https://www.joms.org/article/S0278-2391(19)30666-4/pdf)

## **2019 - Epidemiology, Socioeconomic Analysis, and Specialist Involvement in Dog Bite Wounds in Adults (May 2019)**

Pit bulls were the most common breed identified (47.5%).  
Link: [https://journals.lww.com/jcraniofacialsurgery/abstract/2019/05000/epidemiology,\\_socioeconomic\\_analysis,\\_and.32.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/jcraniofacialsurgery/abstract/2019/05000/epidemiology,_socioeconomic_analysis,_and.32.aspx)

## **2019 - Dog bites in a U.S. county: age, body part and breed in paediatric dog bites (May 2019)**

Pit bulls accounted for 27.2% of dog bites.  
Link: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8278816/>

## **2019 - Dog bite injuries to the face: Is there risk with breed ownership? A systematic review with meta-analysis (February 2019)**

Injuries from pit bulls were both more frequent and severe.  
Link: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0165587618305950>

## **2019- Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine, January 2019**

Pit bull-type was the most frequently implicated breed (27%).  
Link: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29490720/>

## **2018- Are Dog Bites a Problem of Nature or Nurture? (November 2018)**

Pit bull attacks account for higher morbidity rates and higher hospital charges.  
Link: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6236509/>

## **2018 - Pediatric Dog Bite Injuries in Central Texas (October 2018)**

Pit bull was the most-identified breed (36.2%).  
Link: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30473254/>

## **2018 - Characteristics of Dog Bites in Arkansas (August 2018)**

Pit bulls were proportionally linked with more severe bite injuries.  
Link: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30075476/>

## **2018 - Dogs and Orthopaedic Injuries: Is There a Correlation With Breed?**

Pit bull terrier bites resulted in an amputation and/or bony injury in 66% of patients treated.  
Link: <https://europepmc.org/article/med/29912736>

**Bully Watch UK, Protect Our Pets UK** and the **Campaign for Evidence-Based Regulation of Dangerous Dogs** have partnered to produce this report to raise concerns about the significant increase in dog attacks and fatalities across the United Kingdom.

## **About Bully Watch:**

Bully Watch is an alliance of public policy, communications and data science professionals. Many of us dog owners and all of us dog lovers, we aim to provide a strong, data-driven evidence base around the risks of bully-breed dogs as well as campaigning for effective regulation of dogs and breeders to protect the lives of children, people and other dogs. Bully Watch is an anonymous organisation due to the dangers of highlighting the often criminal activities of breeders.

Contact: [BullyWatchUK@gmail.com](mailto:BullyWatchUK@gmail.com)

[www.bullywatch.link](http://www.bullywatch.link)

## **About Protect Our Pets UK:**

Protect Our Pets is a campaigning group set up in 2018 for those who have had a dog killed or seriously injured in a dog on dog attack. Since our creation we have supported more than 2,000 people through the traumatic loss or maiming of a beloved pet, whose trauma cannot be underestimated. Those whose dogs are attacked are often shocked to learn that an attack was not a criminal offence. We focus on campaigning for effective regulation to protect our pets.

Contact: [www.facebook.com/groups/1800204616731629](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1800204616731629)

## **About the Campaign for Evidence-Based Regulation of Dangerous Dogs**

Founded by legal academics and policy experts, the Campaign for Evidence-Based Regulation of Dangerous Dogs is composed of policy experts, scientists and legal specialists, with an aim to improve the regulation and enforcement of laws on dangerous dogs, and to ban the American Bully. Away from regulatory focus, our aim is to provide credible expertise confronting the misinformation and fake science so often thrown about in the debate around breed specific legislation.