

## TEMPLATE LETTER TO SEND/EMAIL TO YOUR MP

Dear (your MP)

As a member of your constituency I am writing to request that you support the Early Day Motion #1954 tabled by Tom Brake, MP. The motion is urging the Government to consider changing the law to provide the same level of protection to Companion Dogs as that which is currently awarded to Assistance Dogs under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. If you are unable or unwilling to sign the Motion I would appreciate knowing your reasons. Currently this is the only way in which we can highlight the issue as DEFRA refuses to acknowledge that there is a problem.

The number of Companion Dogs being seriously injured or killed on a daily basis in the UK is unacceptable. Nicky Morgan MP had the matter raised in the House of Commons on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017 as she was so concerned about the number of attacks in her own constituency. At the end of 2016 Mrs Morgan put in a freedom of information request to all police forces in England for information on how many dog-on-dog attacks had been reported in the past two years – 14 of the 39 forces that responded held easily accessible data. In those 14 areas there were more than 1,700 reported dog attacks on other dogs. If we extrapolate these figures across 39 forces we arrive at a figure of 4,735 (2,637 for one year, 45 a week).

Bearing in mind that a dog-on-dog attack is not a criminal offence the actual number of attacks is likely to be considerably higher. I am part of a group that is campaigning for a change in legislation. A constituent of Tom Brake set up the Facebook group. Several members of the group have written to David Rutley, MP, and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Food and Animal Welfare, expressing their concerns. Unfortunately he doesn't accept that there is a problem.

INSERT OWN STORY HERE IF YOU HAVE ONE TO TELL

We are said to be a dog-loving nation and pets are an integral part of family life. No owner should have to watch their pet being ripped apart in front of them as a result of an irresponsible owner failing to control their dog. As well as an animal welfare issue, this is a huge mental health issue with owners suffering PTSD for some considerable time afterwards. It is particularly distressing for young children and for the elderly. Many elderly people live alone and their pet is their sole companion.

In 2017 a veterinary nurse working for Direct Line Pet Insurance became concerned about the number of claims and Direct Line commissioned an agency to carry out some research. The results showed that 64,000 dogs died in a 12-month period, 44,000 suffered life-changing injuries and owners collectively spent £458 million on veterinary fees. This data cannot be supported by hard evidence, however, because there is no proper means of recording attacks. The EFRA Inquiry into the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, published in October 2018, recommended that the Government set up a national database to record attacks on humans. We would also like a database set up to record dog-on-dog attacks.

This issue is beyond party politics and I feel sure it is one that everyone can get behind. Please sign the EDM, look out for any parliamentary debates on the subject, and do what you can to secure more protection for our Companion Dogs.

Yours sincerely,  
(signature)