

# **Updated guidance on the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010**

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**Scottish Government**  
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### Ministerial Foreword

Owning a dog brings with it important responsibilities. The vast majority of the owners of Scotland's estimated 600,000 dogs are responsible people who take good care of their animals and enjoy the widespread benefits of dog ownership and companionship.

However, a small minority of owners fail to keep their dog under proper control, which can put people at risk and cause public safety concerns across our communities.

The Scottish Government is committed to responsible dog ownership to help keep our communities safe.

The Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010 ("2010 Act") came into force on 26 February 2011, and statutory guidance was issued ahead of implementation of the legislation.

As we look ahead to the 10 year anniversary of the 2010 Act coming into force, the focus of the legislation continues to be on the "deed not the breed" approach in tackling irresponsible dog ownership.

The Scottish Government considers that as local authorities have had nearly a decade of experience of use in their 2010 Act powers, it is an appropriate time to issue updated guidance that reflects lived experience, use of the legislation and an opportunity to reflect on the lessons learnt to help inform and shape future policy and legislative change in this area.

This updated guidance therefore includes examples of best practice of local authorities use of their powers.

It is important to note however that the underlying legislation has not changed over the past 10 years. Looking ahead, if amendments to the 2010 Act are considered necessary during the term of the next Scottish Government administration, this guidance will be revisited.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ash Denham'.

**Ash Denham MSP**  
Minister for Community Safety

## **Part A – Introduction**

### **Purpose of the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010**

1. The key purpose of the 2010 Act is to promote more responsible ownership of dogs and ensure that dogs which are out of control are brought and kept under control in Scotland.
2. The focus of the 2010 Act is on “deed” not “breed” and is primarily aimed at owners’ behaviour which will thereafter address the resulting behaviour of dogs.
3. At the heart of the 2010 Act regime is an ability for local authority ‘authorised officers’ to be able to impose dog control notices (DCNs) on any dog owner who allows their dog to be out of control. The DCN is a civil notice which can contain a number of conditions such as requiring a dog to be on a lead when in public.

### **Who should read the guidance?**

4. This updated guidance is provided in accordance with the duty upon the Scottish Ministers under section 12(1) of the 2010 Act to issue guidance to local authorities in relation to the exercise of their functions and the functions of authorised officers under the 2010 Act.

### **Status of guidance**

5. Section 12(3) of the 2010 Act requires that local authorities and authorised officers must have regard to any guidance issued under section 12(1). Section 12(2) allows the Scottish Ministers to vary or revoke guidance issued under section 12(1).
6. The guidance is designed to enhance understanding of the 2010 Act and assist local authorities and authorised officers. The guidance is not a definitive interpretation of the 2010 Act, as ultimately that is a matter for the courts. The guidance aims to complement the legislation, and should be read alongside the 2010 Act itself. The 2010 Act and Explanatory Notes can be viewed by accessing the links provided at Part J of the guidance.

### **Links with other legislation**

7. When undertaking their duties under the 2010 Act, local authorities and authorised officers should be mindful of other legislation that covers dogs and their owners, such as the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 and the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. Further information about these Acts can be found in Part H of this guidance.

### **Further information**

8. Further information on this guidance is available from:  
**Scottish Government Criminal Law, Practice and Licensing Unit**  
Enquiries by Email: [controlofdogsactguidance@gov.scot](mailto:controlofdogsactguidance@gov.scot)

## **Part B – Overview of the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010 provisions**

### **Section 1**

1. This section covers the serving of a Dog Control Notice (DCN). The provisions impact on local authorities who will be required to appoint at least one officer for the purposes of the 2010 Act. Local authority appointed ‘authorised officers’ will be expected to be skilled in the control of dogs, and also have the capacity to instruct and advise others in dog control matters.
2. Authorised officers will be permitted to serve a written DCN on dog owners (if the owner is not yet 16 years of age, a person who has parental responsibilities would be served) who do not keep their dogs under proper control. If it is not clear to the authorised officer, after making reasonable inquiries, who the dog’s owner is, or the authorised officer does not consider it would be reasonable to serve the notice on the dog’s owner in the circumstances, the authorised officer can serve the notice on any person who is 16 years of age or more and appears to have the day-to-day charge of the dog. The 2010 Act refers to this category of people as the “proper person”.
3. It is no defence for the proper person to contest the serving of the DCN on the grounds that some other person was in charge of their dog at the time when their dog was out of control. The DCN provisions place a statutory duty on the proper person who is issued with a DCN to keep their dog (regardless of breed) under control at all times thereafter.
4. Under the 2010 Act, a dog is deemed to be “out of control” if:
  - it is not being kept under control effectively and consistently (by whatever means) by the proper person (generally the proper person is the owner of the dog but it may be the person who has parental responsibilities in relation to an owner under 16 or any person who appears to have day-to-day charge of the dog), and
  - its behaviour gives rise to alarm, or apprehensiveness on the part of any individual, and the individual’s alarm or apprehensiveness is, in all circumstances, reasonable. The apprehensiveness may be as to (any or all) - (a) the individual’s own safety, (b) the safety of some other person, or (c) the safety of an animal other than the dog in question.
5. The definition of “out of control” is crafted so that both elements of the test must be met in order for an authorised officer to be able to serve a DCN.

### **Section 2**

6. This section covers the terms of the DCN which must set out the reasons for the DCN being served, the name and address of the proper person and the description of the dog (the DCN can only refer to one dog). The DCN must include the date on which it is served and a statement that the notice comes into effect on that date.

7. The intention is to try to emphasise the importance to the proper person of the need to control their dogs to prevent and reduce the risk of incident. It is hoped that the serving of DCNs will encourage more responsible ownership that will hopefully see the proper person taking responsibility for the actions of their dogs and stop them from being out of control in order to prevent further issues arising.
8. Section 2 lays out the content of the DCN, which can include a range of measures. Local authority officers can also impose other specific control measures that must be taken on by the proper person. Section 2 includes compliance measures that will require the proper person served with a DCN to arrange for their dog to be implanted with a microchip (electronic transponder) by a person who, in the opinion of the local authority, is appropriately qualified (veterinary surgeon/nurse, animal charities,) as a means of identification. It is possible that some local authorities may wish to have their authorised officer microchip the dog themselves if the owner agrees. The proper person is required to comply with the terms of the notice to the satisfaction of the local authority which has the duty of monitoring its effectiveness and enforcing it, and on changing name or address, notify the authority of the change in question.
9. This action must be carried out within 14 days of the DCN being served. There is some flexibility built in to this provision as it permits the proper person to present information (as required by the local authority) to prove their dog has already been chipped. The DCN may include any or all of the following measures:
  - Muzzling the dog whenever it is in a place to which the public have access to
  - Keeping the dog on a lead in a place the public has access to
  - If the dog is male, neutering it
  - Keeping the dog away from a place, or category of places, specified in the notice
  - Attendance and completion of a course of training in the control of dogs
10. The list of DCN measures is non exhaustive and it is therefore possible for a DCN to include other requirements as deemed necessary by the authorised officer in order to keep the dog under control.

### **Section 3**

11. This section sets out the appeals procedure that permits the proper person to appeal to a sheriff against the serving of a DCN as a whole or a term of the notice:
  - The appeal is made by summary application;
  - A dog owner can ask the sheriff to consider the suspension of the DCN or any term of the DCN pending an appeal decision; and
  - The sheriff will decide whether to uphold or discharge the notice or term appealed against, and may opt to vary the terms of a DCN.

### **Section 4**

12. This section places a duty on local authorities to enforce and monitor the effectiveness of the DCN regime. The 2010 Act requires ongoing monitoring of DCNs to assess whether the steps specified are effective in bringing the dog under

control. The 2010 Act requires local authorities to update and record information in relation to all DCNs issued.

### **Section 5**

13. This section covers failure to comply with notices and offences. Where the proper person breaches the terms of a DCN, they have committed an offence. When a breach of a DCN occurs this would be discovered by or reported to the authorised officer as part of their enforcement and monitoring responsibilities. If it transpires that the proper person has committed an offence, they are liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.
14. If the court finds that the terms of a DCN have been breached, it may also make an order to disqualify a person from owning, or keeping a dog for a period as the court think fit. In cases where the court has decided that the dog is dangerous, it may make an order for the dog's destruction.

### **Section 6**

15. This section enables a local authority to discharge or amend a DCN. Such action may not be taken when an application has been made separately for discharge or variation under section 7 of the 2010 Act. Discharge of a DCN could be made, for example, where the authorised officer is satisfied that the terms of the DCN have been complied with and the dog is now under control. Local authorities are required to notify the dog owner if the DCN has been discharged.

### **Section 7**

16. This section provides the right for the proper person to apply to the local authority to have the DCN discharged or varied. Requests for variation or discharge of a DCN must be made in writing. The 2010 Act sets out the grounds on which the application can be based, for example, the death of the dog, or the fact that a person no longer has day to day to charge of the dog.
17. There is an appeal process built into the provision that permits the proper person to appeal to a sheriff if their application is declined. This is by way of summary application.

### **Section 8**

18. This section gives the Scottish Ministers the power to establish a national database of DCNs. The provisions in section 4 of the 2010 Act place a specific duty on local authorities to enforce and monitor the effectiveness of the DCN regime.
19. While this will require local authorities to keep records locally in respect of DCNs that have been issued in their areas, the 2010 Act makes it possible to create a national database to hold information from all local authorities relating to DCNs in Scotland.
20. The 2010 Act does not require such a database to be created, but provides an enabling power for the Scottish Ministers to make Regulations to establish a

database. The order making power can only be exercised following consultation with local authorities and other appropriate stakeholders.

### **Section 9**

21. This section enables a summary application to be made to the sheriff by a local authority for an order to destroy a dog. This is in circumstances where the dog is out of control and dangerous and serving a DCN (or a further DCN) would be inappropriate.
22. If the summary application is granted by a sheriff and an order for the dog's destruction is made, the court may also make an order to disqualify the dog's owner from owning, or keeping a dog for a period of time as the sheriff thinks fit.
23. Separately, the court may also make an order for a dog's destruction under section 5 where the terms of a DCN have been breached and the court considers that the dog is dangerous.

### **Section 10**

24. This section amends section 3(1) of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 to remove the reference to "any public place" and replace it with "any place" so that it becomes a criminal offence to allow any dog to be dangerously out of control in any place.
25. The effect of the amendment to the 1991 Act is that the person who is in charge of the dog may be criminally liable should their dog be dangerously out of control in all places, public or private, even if this occurs within the person's own home or other private place where the dog is permitted to be. An aggravated offence is committed if the dog injures any person whilst being dangerously out of control.

### **Section 11**

26. This section makes it an offence not to comply with an order disqualifying a person from owning or keeping a dog. Prosecution is by summary procedure with the accused liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.
27. Should a person wish to apply for discharge of a disqualification order imposed, the order must be in force for at least one year. The application is made to the court which imposed the disqualification.
28. The applicant has a right of appeal where an application to discharge a disqualification order is refused.

### **Section 12**

29. This section places a requirement on the Scottish Ministers to provide guidance to local authorities in relation to the exercise of their functions and the functions of the authorised officers under the 2010 Act.

### **Section 13**

30. This section sets out definitions of terms which appear throughout the 2010 Act.

### **Section 14**

31. This section introduces schedule 1, which contains minor amendments to other enactments and minor amendments consequential on the provisions in the 2010 Act.

### **Section 15**

32. This section repeals the Acts listed in schedule 2, namely the Dogs Act 1871 and the Dangerous Dogs Act 1989. These Acts are superseded by provisions in the 2010 Act.

### **Section 16**

33. This section makes clear that any proceedings under the 1871 Act or the 1991 Act which arose from incidents occurring prior to the commencement of provisions in the 2010 Act are not affected by the repeal and amendment of the provisions in those Acts.

### **Section 17**

34. This section makes provision for the powers given to Scottish Ministers to make orders under the 2010 Act.

### **Section 18**

35. This section provides for the 2010 Act, apart from this section, to come into force 9 months beginning with the date of Royal Assent. The 2010 Act came into force on 26 February 2011.

## **SCHEDULE 1 – MINOR AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS**

36. Schedule 1 makes minor and consequential amendments to relevant enactments:

- Amends section 1 of the Dogs Act 1906
- Amends the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991

## **SCHEDULE 2 – REPEALS**

37. Schedule 2 - The Dogs Act 1871 and the Dangerous Dogs Act 1989 which extends and supplements the 1871 Act, are repealed by section 15 and this schedule.



## Part C – Data Protection Q&A

Local authorities are often reliant on members of the public reporting breaches of a dog control notice (DCN). The Scottish Government is aware that concerns have been expressed by both local authorities and members of the public on the lack of information disclosed by local authorities when a DCN has been issued. The issue of information sharing was also helpfully considered by the Scottish Parliament Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee, who heard from a number of witnesses that highlighted the complexities of data sharing under the umbrella of GDPR, and the need to look at ways to achieving better consistency of approaches to support local authorities with interpretation of their data protection responsibilities around the sharing of information in relation to DCNs.

The following information has been prepared to help address concerns about information sharing and to ensure that data sharing is in compliance with the law. Data protection law does not prevent personal data from being shared where it is necessary and proportionate and where there is a lawful basis for doing so.

This guidance can be read alongside the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) draft data sharing code of practice:

<https://ico.org.uk/media/about-the-ico/consultations/2615361/data-sharing-code-for-public-consultation.pdf>

Q. Can information be shared between local authorities?

A. The 2010 Act allows for and requires local authorities to co-operate with the police and other local authorities in all matters relating to the control of dogs arising under or by virtue of this Act, the Dogs Act 1906 or the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

If the sharing of personal data is necessary to fulfil obligations under the 2010 Act, the Dogs Act 1906 or the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 then it is likely that local authorities will be able to rely on "Public Task" as their lawful basis for data sharing as the sharing is likely to be necessary to perform a task in the public interest. They must of course share in compliance with the data protection principles set out at Article 5 of the GDPR.

Is data sharing between LA's likely to be routine? If yes, it is best practice for local authorities to establish rules and agree procedures in advance. This would usually be in the form of a data sharing agreement that sets out clearly how and under what circumstances personal data will be shared for this purpose in accordance with data protection law and the principles set out at Article 5 of the GDPR. The ICO draft data sharing code of practice sets out what data sharing agreements should contain.

An example of data sharing would be where a person is issued with a DCN in one local authority area and later advises that authority they will be moving to a different part of Scotland and provides their new address, the local authority which issued the DCN would be expected to pass details of the DCN to that person's new local authority.

Q. Are there any data protection issues that need to be taken into account before information can be shared with the individuals who reported a dog?

A. Disclosure to individuals is likely to be the exception rather than the rule. Nonetheless there may be some serious, individual cases where the local authority determines that disclosure is necessary and proportionate. In these circumstances the local authority would have to be confident that they have a lawful basis for disclosure and must clearly document that lawful basis and why the disclosure was necessary and proportionate.

The risks of sharing and not sharing information to both the data subject (the appropriate person who has been served with the DCN) and the individual who has reported the dog must be considered and documented.

Further information can be found in the ICO draft data sharing code of practice (see pages 22-23).

Information sharing is therefore a balancing act. It is recommended that local authorities balance the risks and rights of individual dog owners, with those of the person who reports such an individual, as well as others in the wider community. Whilst undertaking this balancing exercise, local authorities should have regard to data protection legislation.

It should also be noted that some of the data being processed about DCN is criminal offence data. To share this type of data local authorities must comply with Article 10 of the GDPR and should be aware that this is particularly sensitive. The following ICO guidance provides further information:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/criminal-offence-data/>

These links to other relevant ICO guidance will also be of some assistance. If you have any questions or concerns please speak with your Data Protection Officer (DPO).

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/principles/>

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/>

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/>

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/principles/storage-limitation/>

## Part D – Dog Control Notice (DCN) Regime Q&A

Q1. Do authorised officers need to work in pairs in respect of DCNs?

A1. There are 3 key stages within the DCN process and 2 of these 3 key stages require corroborated evidence (i.e. two or more sources of evidence).

The 1st key stage of the DCN process is where consideration is given by an authorised officer as to whether a dog has been out of control with a view to a DCN being issued. In order for the authorised officer to issue a DCN, they must be satisfied that a dog has, on at least one occasion, been out of control (as described in the answer to question 17 of this guidance). There is no requirement that any more than one authorised officer needs to be satisfied a dog has been out of control and the authorised officer does not require corroborated evidence before deciding whether a dog has been out of control. It would be sufficient for an authorised officer to decide a dog has been out of control if, for example, an individual authorised officer or a member of the public witnessed a dog being out of control in a public park.

The 2nd key stage of the DCN is that the DCN is served on the proper person. In order for the DCN to be valid and in force, the legislation does not actually require that the service of the DCN needs to be corroborated as the serving of a DCN is a civil matter.

However, the complication is that should the terms of the DCN be breached by the proper person in the future, it is possible that the proper person may be prosecuted in the criminal courts (under section 5(1) of the 2010 Act) for a breach of the DCN. In order for the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service to prosecute for the breach of a DCN, **prosecutors will require corroborated evidence for both the 2nd key stage of the DCN process (that the DCN was issued to the proper person (as the proper person may say they had no knowledge of the DCN being issued)) and the 3rd key stage of the DCN process (that the terms of the DCN have been breached). Prosecutors do not require corroborated evidence in respect of the 1<sup>st</sup> key stage in the DCN process (where an authorised officer considers a dog has been out of control and the proper person should be issued with a DCN).**

Therefore, corroborated evidence is required for both the service of the DCN on the proper person and for the breach of the DCN by the proper person.

It will be up to authorised officers to consider the most appropriate way of ensuring corroborated evidence is available for both the service of a DCN on the proper person and for the breach of the DCN by the proper person. As a general guide, here are some different ways that the requirement that corroborated evidence is available to confirm the service of the DCN on the proper person could be achieved:

- The person being served with the DCN could be asked to attend a local authority office to be served with the DCN. As long as such service is effected by two people (this could be two authorised officers, or a mix of one authorised officer and one other person (acting as a witness)).

- The DCN could be served on the proper person at their home address. Two local authority officers (or a mix of one authorised officer and one other person (acting as a witness) could undertake a visit to the person's home to personally serve the DCN.
- Local Authorities may wish to use two Sheriff Officers to serve the DCN on the proper person at their home address.

**A template of a 'Form of execution of service of a dog control notice' is provided at Part I of this guidance for possible use by local authorities.**

In terms of a breach of the terms of a DCN, corroborated evidence proving the breach is also needed. Authorised officers may wish to consider working in pairs where a DCN has been issued, and then a report is received that the dog owner is still failing to keep their dog under control. In that situation, it is possible that a breach of a DCN will be/has been committed and so, in line with the comments above, it is possible a prosecution may be taken forward following a report being submitted to the procurator fiscal. As such, corroborated evidence would be needed and therefore having two authorised officers (or one authorised officer and another person) present would be helpful in ensuring corroborated evidence of the breach of the DCN is available.

One of the key policy aims of the 2010 Act is to act as a motivation for dog owners to keep their dogs under control. The very existence of the legislation should help focus the minds of dog owners where, for example, an authorised officer could use their discretion and discuss with a dog owner the need to keep their dog under control without actually issuing a DCN. It would be good practice for authorised officers to record details of any discussion. To clarify what is expected of the dog owner to keep their dog under control, authorised officers may wish to write to the dog owner to summarise what was discussed and highlight any agreed actions.

The same applies where a DCN is already in force and where a dog owner may, perhaps, have failed to keep their dog under control – again the authorised officer has discretion in terms of what action (if any) they would take at that point and such discretion includes whether to take any formal action under the 2010 Act or give an informal warning to the person. In cases where an authorised officer receives a report that a DCN has been breached, the officer must carefully assess the evidence to determine whether they have sufficient information and evidence to conclude that the terms of the DCN has been breached.

More generally, the safety of authorised officers is paramount. We recommend officers, particularly those working on their own, should be encouraged to seek assistance from the police if difficult situations (especially for serious incidents that occur under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991) were to develop. In the event that assistance is not readily available, or if the authorised officer is concerned that their personal safety could be jeopardised, they should be advised to withdraw immediately.

Q2. How should authorised officers deal with the issue of contested ownership, in cases where it may be difficult to pinpoint the owner of the dog or person who has day-to-day charge of the dog?

A2. It is possible that authorised officers may encounter some cases of contested ownership. If it is not apparent to an officer who has ownership of the dog, section 1(5)(b) of the 2010 Act enables the authorised officer to undertake reasonable enquiries in order to determine the person who appears to have day-to-day charge of the dog. For example, authorised offices may wish to ask the person who appears to have day-to-day charge of the dog if they would agree to provide any veterinary registration/history documentation to assist with their enquiries.

Authorised officers should be mindful of the Control of Dogs Order 1992 that requires that the collar of a dog contains the name and address of the owner. While the Order only applies in public places, it may be helpful to invoke the existence of this Order if there is an ownership dispute.

In addition, following the introduction of the Microchipping of Dogs (Scotland) Regulations 2016, authorised officers may make use of microchip readers to identify the ownership of a dog. Similarly, if a dog is not microchipped, authorised officers should be aware of the procedures to be followed where offences in terms of regulation 13 of the 2016 Regulations are discovered.

Q3. If a dog owner is in charge of more than one dog that is not being kept under control, is it possible for that person to be served with more than one DCN?

A3. It is possible for a proper person to be served with more than one DCN. An authorised officer may serve a DCN if it comes to the attention of the authorised officer that a dog has been out of control. A DCN can be served where the authorised officer has witnessed a dog which is out of control, or has received information that a dog is out of control. It will be a matter for the authorised officer to consider whether it is appropriate to serve such a DCN. The text below is extracted from the explanatory notes to the 2010 Act.

Explanatory Notes - The Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010 Section 1 Subsection (8) provides that there must be one notice per dog. Therefore, if a proper person has charge of two dogs and both of those dogs are not being kept under control two separate dog control notices would be served.

Q4. Can action be taken against a person who obstructs an authorised officer in the course of their duties?

A4. Section 1(5)(b) of the 2010 Act permits authorised officers to undertake reasonable enquiries to attempt to ascertain the identity of the dog's owner, or person who appears to have day-to-day charge of the dog. The 2010 Act does not contain provision to make it an offence to fail to provide details to an authorised officer. It would be disproportionate to make it an offence for failing to provide officers with information on the basis that the provisions in section 1 of the 2010 Act do not establish any penalty or offence for a person to be served with a DCN. Having said this, should any person obstruct an authorised officer in a manner which

involves conduct severe enough to cause alarm to ordinary people and threaten serious disturbance to the community, then a breach of the peace may have been committed.

In addition, Section 38 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 creates an offence of engaging in 'threatening or abusive behaviour'. Subsection (1) provides that it is an offence for a person to behave in a threatening or abusive manner where that behaviour would be likely to cause a reasonable person to suffer fear or alarm and he or she either intends by the behaviour to cause fear or alarm or is reckless as to whether the behaviour would cause fear or alarm.

Q5. Would a dog owner or person who has day-to-day charge of the dog who has been served with a DCN, still be liable if someone else was in charge of their dog at the time of an incident?

A5. Yes. The person who has been served with a DCN continues to be liable for the actions of their dog at all times. It is likely there will be occasions where the dog owner, or person who has day-to-day charge of the dog entrusts another person to be in charge of their dog, such as commercial dog walkers, family member, or a friend who wishes to exercise the dog.

Section 2(1)(d) of the 2010 Act provides that the proper person or an entrusted person must be in charge of the dog in a public place. The entrusted person must be advised of the terms of the DCN and it is imperative, to avoid the risk of a breach of the DCN, that they comply with the measures set out in the DCN. For example, if a dog is required to be kept away from a particular place specified in the DCN and the entrusted person fails to follow the steps set out in the notice, it would be the dog owner or person who has day-to-day charge of the dog that would be held accountable for failing to comply with a DCN.

Q6. Is a DCN issued in one local authority area valid and enforceable across the whole of Scotland?

A6. A DCN is issued under section 1(1) of the 2010 Act. Under section 5 of the 2010 Act, it is an offence to fail to comply with a DCN. Section 1 and section 5 (as indeed the whole of the 2010 Act) extend to the whole of Scotland and therefore any notice issued under that section will also be valid and enforceable in the whole of Scotland no matter where the DCN was served and the offence took place.

Q7. Does the DCN regime apply to all places?

A7. Yes. The DCN regime in the 2010 Act extends to all places and authorised officers may accordingly deal with out of control dogs in all places. The DCN regime permits authorised officers to issue DCNs to irresponsible owners of any dog that have been found to be out of control in any place (including the person's own home). Of course, it is less likely that the authorised officer will learn of a dog being out of control within, say, a home as opposed to, say, a public park where either members of the public or the authorised officer will have easy access to. It should be noted the 2010 Act does not provide a power of entry for an authorised officer into a person's home.

Q8. Is there a standard format for the DCN?

A8. Yes. Using powers in, in section 2(11) of the 2010 Act, Scottish Ministers have prescribed the form for a DCN. A link to the DCN form is provided at Part F of the guidance for use by all local authorities.

Q9. The 2010 Act requires that an electronic responder (microchip) is implanted in the dog as a means of identification. Is there a recommended type of microchip scanner that should be used?

A9. There is a range of Pet Identification microchip scanners available on the market, but in this instance it would be inappropriate for the guidance to promote certain suppliers of such products. The dog owner will be required to ensure the electronic transponder is implanted by a person who is appropriately qualified and satisfy the authorised officer that they comply with the requirements of section 2(1)(b) of the 2010 Act. It may be that local authorities may decide to provide a list of recommended suppliers to those issued with a DCN as a means of assisting dog owners in meeting their requirements.

Q10. Can authorised officers take photographic evidence to assist with identification to ensure the correct dog has been microchipped?

A10. Authorised officers may wish to take photographs of the dog to assist with identification. This may be beneficial in cases where a person owns several dogs of the same type/breed to ensure the correct dog is identified and is microchipped accordingly. There is no requirement under the 2010 Act to take photos.

It is the person served with a DCN that must comply with the terms of the DCN to the satisfaction of the local authority. If the person served with a DCN was to intentionally avoid making the necessary arrangements to correctly chip the dog in question, a breach of the DCN would have occurred as they would have failed to comply with the terms of the DCN.

Q11. The 2010 Act provides that each local authority must be satisfied that the authorised person is skilled in the control of dogs and is able to instruct and advise others in matter relating to this. Are there any courses that cover dog control?

A11. The 2010 Act does not prescribe specific qualifications for the post of authorised officer. It will be for local authorities to ensure that their staff are adequately trained to carry out their duties in line with the general requirements of the 2010 Act. The level and nature of training provided to staff is, of course, a matter for individual local authorities.

There are Dog Control National Occupational Standards and some of these are contained within the SVQ in Animal Care at SCQF Level 6.

As a guide, we suggest that local authorities may wish to explore as part of developing their training strategies for officers who will take on responsibilities under the 2010 Act, the availability and affordability of this training:

## Scottish Qualification Authority

These are the current SVQs in Animal Care at SCQF Level 5 and Level 6 (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework)

[https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/Qualifications/Accreditation\\_Qualification\\_Show?id=851885](https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/Qualifications/Accreditation_Qualification_Show?id=851885)

[https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/Qualifications/Accreditation\\_Qualification\\_Show?id=851935](https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/accreditation/Qualifications/Accreditation_Qualification_Show?id=851935)

There are Scottish Vocational Qualification units contained within the SVQ that may be of interest to local authorities and authorised officers.

SVQ Unit Handle and restrain animals

SVQ Unit Provide and manage accommodation for animal

SVQ Unit Provide first aid to animals

SVQ Unit Investigate animal related incidents

SVQ Unit Evaluate information pertinent to animal related incidents

SVQ Unit Plan and monitor the establishment and management of animal populations

SVQ Unit Load and unload animals for transportation

SVQ Unit Protect yourself and others from the risk of violence at work

SVQ Unit Make presentations

SVQ Unit Present information to court and formal hearings

Alternatively, local authorities may wish to also explore the SQA website to consider customised training awards for their staff. [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/29182.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/29182.html)

For general information on training options please contact the SQA Customer Contact Centre by:

Telephone 0345 279 1000

E-mail [customer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:customer@sqa.org.uk)

Tweet to @sqasupport

Office hours: 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday (we are closed on Bank holidays)



Q12. Are authorised officers expected to make use of provisions contained in the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000 (RIPSA) when monitoring and enforcing the DCN?

A12. Ultimately, the use of RIPSA is a matter for local authorities. RIPSA legislation puts in place a regulatory framework within which the necessity for and proportionality of certain surveillance activities can be considered and authorised if both tests are met. Covert techniques should only be considered when there is no other way of obtaining the information required. Local authorities are required to demonstrate how they have met the necessity and proportionality tests, and these recorded authorisations are subject to inspection by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners.

Q13. What is expected of local authorities in respect of monitoring and enforcement?

A.13. The 2010 Act places a duty on local authorities to monitor the effectiveness of and enforce all notices issued by local authority appointed officers. The explanatory notes for the 2010 Act confirm that this will require ongoing monitoring of DCNs to assess whether the steps specified are effective in bringing the dog under control.

The 2010 Act does not specify the exact frequency and level of monitoring that is required, we would suggest the local authorities make such enquiries as they think necessary for the purposes of monitoring the DCN and require the person served with the DCN to provide such information or documentation (i.e. produce certificate of attendance at training course in the control of dogs) as necessary. For different cases, this may mean different approaches depending on the circumstances of a DCN that has been issued. For example, where a number of additional conditions has been added to a DCN (under section 2(6)), this may lead to more active monitoring and enforcement of a DCN than for a DCN where no additional conditions had been added. However, the discretion lies with authorised officers to decide on the best approach for each of their cases.

Local authorities may also wish to call upon, or obtain expert or other advice from any person who is, in their opinion, particularly qualified to help make an informed decision when gauging the effectiveness of the notice served.

Q14. If a person wishes to appeal against the serving of a DCN is the appeal time bound?

A14. Yes. The appeal is time bound and is by way of summary application. This means a person has 21 days from the date of the issuing of the DCN to appeal against the whole notice as a whole or a term of the notice. This is because the normal rules of summary applications apply – Rule 2.6(2) of the Act of Sederunt (Summary Applications, Statutory Applications and Appeals etc. Rules) 1999 SI 1999/929 : <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/1999/929/made>

Q15. Is there any guidance available that would support local authorities and authorised officers when considering how to proceed in the event of a breach of a DCN?

A15. Reference should be made to the Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service guidance for Specialist Reporting Agencies (SRA). The aim of the guidance is to provide advice for specialist reporting agencies which will enable them to contribute effectively to achieving an outcome in reported cases which best serve the public interest. The purpose of the SRA guidance is to:

- To assist specialist reporting agencies in knowing exactly what the Procurator Fiscal requires when a case is reported and to provide some indication of how trials are conducted in Scotland; and
- To identify and to address common problems in reporting and in prosecuting such cases which more often than not involve employees or members of specialist reporting agencies.

<http://www.copfs.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/13547/0000442.PDF>

The SRA guidance is comprehensive and wide ranging and should be of assistance to local authorities and authorised officers when considering how best to proceed in the event of a DCN being breached under the terms of section 5 of the 2010 Act. The SRA guidance offers advice on a range of areas including witness statements, the role of the Procurator Fiscal, court procedure, and general legal requirements including preserving evidence and the nature of evidence that should be presented by the authority for there to be a reasonable chance of a prosecution being pursued.

## **ISCJIS**

The link below provides information for local Authorities and specialist reporting agencies on The Integration of Scottish Criminal Justice Information Systems (ISCJIS) programme.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/legal/criminalprocedure/iscjis>

For general enquiries on the ISCJIS programme please email:

[ISCJIS@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ISCJIS@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

Q16. If a serious breach of a DCN happens what action should be taken by the authorised officer?

A16. Local authorities would be expected to adhere to the section 5 provisions of the 2010 Act in the event of a breach of a DCN occurring. Dependant on the severity of the breach it may be appropriate to also rely on the provisions contained in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

For example, if a person allowed their dog to be dangerously out of control and the dog seriously attacked someone it would be appropriate for the authorised officer to report the matter to the police who are responsible for dealing with dangerous dogs (including strays) that are formally classed as dangerous under the terms of the 1991 Act (this Act makes no changes to police responsibilities for stray and dangerous dogs). Section 5 of the 1991 Act allows for a constable or an officer authorised by a local authority to seize any dog within the boundaries of the 1991 Act.

With regard to kennelling costs for dogs that are seized, unless localised agreements are in place between the local authority and the police, the cost of keeping the dog will rest with the organisation that seized the dog.

If the person is subsequently convicted of an offence, the court may order the destruction of the dog in question. Under section 4 (4)(b) of the 1991 Act, the court can order the offender to pay such sum as the court may determine to be reasonable expenses of destroying the dog and of keeping it pending its destruction. Any sum ordered to be paid under subsection (4)(b) above shall be treated for the purposes of enforcement as if it were a fine imposed on conviction.

Q.17. Are commercial dog walkers covered by the 2010 Act?

A17. There is no specific provision covering commercial dog walkers, but they, along with everyone else, could be covered by the general provisions. For example, a number of people rely on commercial dog walking services to exercise their dogs. A situation could arise where a person who has been served with a DCN which requires their dog to be kept on a lead opts to use a commercial dog walking service. Under the 2010 Act, it is possible for the proper person to entrust someone else to be in charge of their dog in a public place. This would mean the commercial dog walker would become the “entrusted person” - an “entrusted person” under the 2010 Act is a person who is at least 16 years of age, has been entrusted by the proper person to be in charge of the dog and is made familiar with the requirements of the DCN and is willing and able to abide by those requirements.

Whilst the behaviour of certain dogs in large packs will of course vary, to reduce the risk of incident, authorised officers may wish to rely upon section 4(b) of the 2010 Act to stipulate an additional step on the DCN so that the dog cannot be walked in large groups of more than, say for example, 6 dogs at the same time.

If the dog walker failed to keep the dog on the lead, or walked the dog in a group of more than 6 dogs at the same time, then a breach of the DCN would have occurred under section 5 of the 2010 Act. It would be the owner, not the entrusted person, who would be liable.

All dog walkers should be mindful of the 2010 Act and we would expect those who deliver such services to act in the spirit of the legislation by ensuring they take necessary steps to ensure the safety of members of the public is not compromised by keeping dogs under proper control at all times.

All dog walkers should be mindful of section 3(1) of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 that makes it an offence to allow who a dog to be dangerously out of control in any place.

Q18. Given the risk of differing interpretation among authorised officers when trying to determine whether a dog is “out of control”, can the guidance provide any examples of what would constitute a dog being “out of control”?

A18. Firstly, a dog is out of control if -

- it is not being kept under control effectively and consistently (by whatever means) by the proper person,
- Its behaviour gives rise to alarm, or apprehensiveness, on the part of an individual, and the individual's alarm or apprehensiveness is, in all circumstances, reasonable.

Secondly, the guidance for the 2010 Act cannot go beyond this statutory definition of 'out of control', but we can provide some examples as to what this definition may mean in practice. Decisions as to what constitutes 'out of control' will depend on the very specific circumstances of each case. The scenarios given below are intended to provide a guide, but should not be seen as overwriting the law in any way.

### **Scenario 1**

Search dogs are often used to locate people who are missing, lost in the wilderness, escaped from nursing homes, covered in snow avalanches, buried under collapsed buildings, etc.. Dependent on the circumstances, it is possible that it may appear that a dog used for tracking purposes, who works off-lead, may not appear at times to under the constant control of their handler.

As long as the dog handler is able to exercise control by commanding the search dog to follow instruction and the search dog responds to such instruction, the two part test laid out in the 2010 Act will ensure dogs working legitimately as working dogs under the control of their handler will not be affected, as the first part of the test will not be met due to the dog being kept under control effectively and consistently by the dog handler as they carry out their working duties.

### **Scenario 2**

Guard dogs and watch dogs help to protect private or public property, either in living or used for patrols, as in the military and with security firms. Under section 1(1) of the Guard Dogs Act 1975 a person shall not use or permit the use of a guard dog at any premises unless the "handler" who is capable of controlling the dog is present at the premises (premises means land and buildings, but not dwelling houses) and the dog is under the control of the handler at all times.

The two part test laid out in the 2010 Act will ensure dogs working legitimately as working dogs under the control of their handler will not be affected as the first part of the test will not be met as the dog will be being kept under control effectively and consistently by the dog handler as they carry out their working duties.

However, if the dog handler was to allow the dog to be off-lead and was unable to restrain the dog, or if the dog failed to obey their handler's repeated commands not to pursue an intruder on the premises, the authorised officer may deem that the dog was out of control under section 1(3)(a) of the 2010 Act. The second element of the two-part test would still need to be met before a DCN could be issued. It may be possible that the intruder was alarmed or apprehensive when being pursued by the guard dog. In such circumstances, authorised officers would be required to look carefully and more broadly at the context in which the alarm or apprehensiveness arose (under s1(3)(b) and (3c) of the 2010 Act) to determine if it was reasonable.

### **Scenario 3**

Dogs such as working type terriers, spaniels, labradors, retrievers, hounds, hunt-point-retrievers, and lurchers are often used to track locate and, when appropriate, legitimately dispatch / drive / retrieve legal quarry and pest species (e.g. rats, rabbits, game-birds etc). When engaged in such work these dogs will often work off-lead and, at times, may not appear to be under the constant control of their handler.

As long as the dog handler is able to exercise control by commanding the dog, when re-called, to follow instruction and the dog responds to such instruction, the two part test laid out in the 2010 Act will ensure dogs working legitimately as working dogs under the control of their handler will not be affected, as the first part of the test will not be met due to the dog being kept under control effectively and consistently by the dog handler as they carry out their working duties.

### **Scenario 4**

Sheep dogs are used to track, locate, gather, drive, catch and restrain sheep and cattle. Sometimes this work can involve dogs ranging widely over large areas of land. When engaged in such work these dogs will often work off-lead and, at times, may not appear to be under the constant control of their handler. As long as the dog handler is able to exercise control by commanding the sheep dog, when re-called, to follow instruction and the sheep dog responds to such instruction, the two part test laid out in the 2010 Act will ensure dogs working legitimately as working dogs under the control of their handler will not be affected, as the first part of the test will not be met due to the dog being kept under control effectively and consistently by the dog handler as they carry out their working duties.

### **Scenario 5**

It is very common for dog owners to exercise their dogs in public parks. If a dog is being exercised in a public park off-lead, excitedly runs over to a person and then playfully jumps up onto that person, it is feasible that the person, if they are afraid of dogs, could have experienced some form of alarm or apprehension. If the owner of the dog was to intervene immediately and command the dog to return to his/her side, and the dog obediently complies, the authorised officer would be required to carefully consider whether the individual's alarm or apprehension was reasonable.

Assuming the authorised officer has no reason to believe the dog presented any danger to the person/public and is satisfied there is no supporting evidence of any previous incidents involving the dog in question, it would most likely be seen as unreasonable to expect the authorised officer to serve a DCN under those circumstances.

### **Scenario 6**

If a puppy is being exercised on-lead in a public park and constantly fails to respond to its owners commands to heel/repeatedly pulls away from its owner and frequently lurches towards anyone who passes by, it may appear to be 'out of control'. It may

be that the puppy's behaviour and general disobedience could be put down to pent up energy and excitement.

It should also be borne in mind that there is no obligation on authorised officers to issue a DCN on every occasion. While enforcement will be important, it may be more appropriate for the authorised officer to highlight the measures of the 2010 Act that are aimed to prevent and deter dog owners from allowing their dogs from being 'out of control' and rather than issuing a DCN, seek reassurance from the dog owner that appropriate steps are being taken to correct the puppy's behaviour without a DCN actually being issued.

### **Scenario 7**

A number of public and private sector workers may require access to private property in the course of their duties. Access could be required to deliver mail, seek access to the home to read gas meters, carry out health visitor appointments, or to provide a home help service.

If a worker accesses a property to deliver mail and is met by a dog who is not under the watchful eye of its owner and to all intents and purposes has been left to its own devices, demonstrates overly protective and territorial aggressive behaviour towards the worker by constantly growling and snarling without provocation, the authorised officer may after careful deliberation decide that the two-part test under section 1 of the 2010 Act had been met and decide it would be appropriate to serve a DCN.

While it could be argued that it is common for a dog's instinct to take over, and to demonstrate defensive behaviour when faced with someone unfamiliar entering the property, dog owners must take responsibility to ensure those workers who deliver a vital service for their communities are not subjected to having to deal with threatening or aggressive dogs when undertaking their duties on private property.

Dependant on the severity of the incident, it may be appropriate to consider the provisions of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 if the dog is dangerously out of control.

### **Scenario 8**

Many dogs stray regularly, whether due to a failure to ensure that they are adequately secured at the place which they are kept on a daily basis, or deliberately let out to roam by their owners. Therefore, they are not being kept under control effectively or consistently. Where the dog then acts in a manner to cause alarm or apprehensiveness it may then be 'out of control' as defined by the 2010 Act and an authorised officer may have reason to serve a DCN.

As well as giving consideration to whether the incident was deemed to be serious enough to serve a DCN, the officer may wish to consider whether this was a 'one off' incident where the dog escaped i.e. the dog is normally kept securely and an uncharacteristic event led to the dogs escape, or whether this is a regular occurrence. An officer may also wish to take in to account any effort made by the owner to find and secure the dog and bring it under control.

## **Scenario 9**

Nowadays, dogs are very popular as family pets and are may live in busy households where there are young children. Inevitably, the children's friends will visit and it is normal for a stream of people/children to be coming and going on a regular basis. Children playing can become a source of great excitement for dogs, particularly puppies, and this can often lead to chasing or nipping behaviour as they try to join in with the games.

Owners need to be extra vigilant in these circumstances as situations can quickly become out of control. If a report of a child being severely nipped or bitten in such a situation is made to an authorised officer, as well as considering the seriousness of the incident there are many factors to take into account. Sometimes young dogs are unable to handle the excitement of children playing and officers may want to consider if the dogs immaturity led to inappropriate behaviour rather than being deemed 'aggressive' by nature. For example, if the dog was a very young puppy, was the dog trying to play without having learned 'bite inhibition'.

Authorised officers may wish to consider any measures put in place to keep the dog under control. Authorised officers may also wish to consider whether any mitigating factors should be considered before reaching a decision on whether to serve a DCN. For example, did the child's interaction with the dog contribute or trigger the dogs behaviour that led to the incident. For example, the dog was crated/behind a baby gate but the child kept pestering it through the bars which resulted in a nip, either through excitement or apprehension.

## **Scenario 10**

Many dogs are allowed free access to the garden of the property in which they live. The garden may look onto public pathways or parks where the dog can see people and other dogs. Should the dog behave in an aggressive manner towards people walking past the garden it is feasible that they could experience alarm or apprehension and complain about the dogs behaviour. This is particularly the case when the boundary fence is low enough that the dog can jump up to bark at passers-by.

Authorised officers may want to investigate whether the dog in question was barking excitably at general activity outside the garden or if the dog displayed aggression specifically towards the complainant in order to help establish whether their apprehension was reasonable. It may be that the complainant did not see the dog in the garden and got a fright when it barked. In this case it would be seen as unreasonable for the Officer to issue a DCN. Officers may also want to take into account any control measures were put in place by the owner. For example, whether the dog was completely secure in the garden or whether it was feasible for the dog to escape over/through fencing and whether it was supervised at the time.

## **Scenario 11**

Dogs have a natural chase instinct and it is highly likely that situations will develop where a dog chases after other domestic pets, resulting in a complaint being made

against the dog. For example, if a dog chases a cat, it is reasonable to assume that this would cause the owner of the cat to be fearful for its safety. Authorised Officers would need to establish the extent of the chase - did the dog start to chase the cat, but responded to the owner's calls and returned to them without harming the cat, or did the dog continue to pursue the cat until it was out of reach. If the dog was on lead and managed to break free in order to give chase, but the owner then regained control before any harm came to the cat, it would seem unreasonable to issue a DCN and advice in the control of the dog may be more appropriate. If the dog was being walked off lead at the time and ignored the owner's calls to return, a DCN may be appropriate in order to prevent similar problems in the future.



## **Part E - Examples of best practice**

This section outlines some suggested techniques for local authority officers to help determine the best course of action to bring the dog under proper control. The table provided below is simply a guide to consider. Local authorities will of course assess each case on its individual merits before particular DCN measures are considered and may deal with similar types of issues in a different way dependant on the circumstances.

### **Best practice of investigating DCN complaint:**

Normally you will receive a phone call or email alerting you to a complaint about an incident involving a dog. Advise to first make contact with that person and arrange to take a statement.

During the statement taking it is important to steer the conversation to the relevant questions and to ask and record the details appropriately. Eg Were you put in a state of fear and alarm when the incident happened? Was there anyone else present at the time ?

(Sometimes the complainer does not know the details of the person who was in charge of the dog involved in the incident) it is still recommended that a statement is taken in case a similar case occurs in the future and you can tie up the two incidents, (these incidents can then be added to a DCN should you serve one in the future).

(N.B if the person does not know the owner/person in charge of the dog you could send them a blank template of the statement asking them to complete the details and return, this way it saves time from you obtaining the statement but at least you have something on file if required in the future).

It is next recommended to visit the alleged "proper person" / owner of the dog and obtain a statement from them. During this process it is important to ask relevant questions in relation to the dog / incident. When visiting the owner of the dog who we are considering for the service of a DCN in addition to asking about the incident consideration is also to be given to how the dog behaves and interacts with the investigating officer, the owner and their family and also how obedient the dog is. Get the owner / proper person to sign the statement.

Next decide what action if any is required - this could be: Verbal / written warning or serving of a DCN.

The content of a DCN will of course depend on the specific circumstances of each case.

However, when thinking of the content of a DCN you may often find that you tend to use the same type of conditions. It could be helpful therefore to keep a table /word document containing these conditions so that it is easier for you when issuing a notice in future. Some of the conditions that you could consider using are as follows:

Step	Additional Instruction	If appropriate, select date by which the step is to be taken by
Should you rehome your dog, you must inform the Authorised Officers of the name and address of the new owner	This is <b>not</b> a requirement to re-home the dog. It applies, only if you choose to do so.	Officers must be informed as soon as arrangements are made for the dog to be rehomed.
When the dog is outwith your garden and within the boundaries of a settlement it must be on a lead no longer than one metre.	Boundaries of settlement means within the built up area (this includes public parks and open spaces)	Immediately
When the dog is outwith your garden and outwith the boundaries of a settlement it must be on a lead no longer than five metres.	Outwith the boundaries of settlement means open country outside a town or village.	Immediately
Ensure that when the dog is put out into a garden area, it has no means of escape.	Dog to be supervised and on suitable lead/tether and/or adequate fencing of perimeter of garden to prevent escape.	Immediately
When the dog is exercised off lead it must wear a suitable muzzle	The muzzle should be appropriate for the size and breed of dog and fitted correctly and securely	Immediately
The dog must wear a muzzle at all times whilst in a public place, or a place where the public have access.	Make sure that the muzzle is appropriate for size and breed of dog and is fitted correctly and securely	Immediately
Undertake training with your dog to modify and manage any unwanted behavioural issues, particularly in cases where the dog has an aggression problem	Inform the authorised officer of the planned training arrangements. You can attend training classes, seek one to one behavioural help or undertake your own training provided it is effective.	Arrangements for training should be made within 2 weeks, and should commence no later than 2 months after the date of the notice.

<p>Undertake adequate training to ensure that the dog: Responds to commands from owner / person in charge of the dog. Ensure the dog does not attempt to lunge bite or act in an aggressive or over excited manner with people or other animals.</p>	<p>Inform the authorised officer of the planned training arrangements. You can attend training classes, seek one to one behavioural help or undertake your own training provided it is effective.</p>	<p>Arrangements for training should be made within 2 weeks, and should commence no later than 2 months after the date of the notice.</p>
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When serving a DCN it is recommended that you try to make an appointment to see the “proper person”/ dog owner this is so you can explain the notice to them and explain exactly what they need to do.

It is also recommended that you obtain a photograph of the dog at this stage so that if there is a further incident in future the photo may help to identify the dog should a breach occur.

It is advised that the notice is served by two authorised officers and an Execution of service document is obtained.

On occasion it is recommended that if there is dispute as to who is the owner / proper person of the dog that you may need to consider serving two notices (one on each individual).

It is likely that there will be occasions when the proper person refuses to engage with the authorised officer making it difficult to glean full details of the dog. It is still possible to serve a DCN with partial details of the dog . Full details should be provided when microchip details are provided (a condition of the DCN and you could obtain the details from the Microchip).

### **Breach of a DCN**

As failure to comply with a DCN is a criminal offence, it is important when speaking with the “proper person” that this is done with another authorised officer.

## **Part F – Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010 Prescribed form for a Dog Control Notice**

Section 2(11) of the 2010 Act permits the Scottish Ministers, by order, to prescribe a form for a Dog Control Notice.

The Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010 (Prescribed Form of Notice) Order 2011 sets out the appeal mechanism under section 3(1) of the 2010 Act:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2011/39/contents/made>

### Prescribed Form for Dog Control Notice ‘Right to appeal’

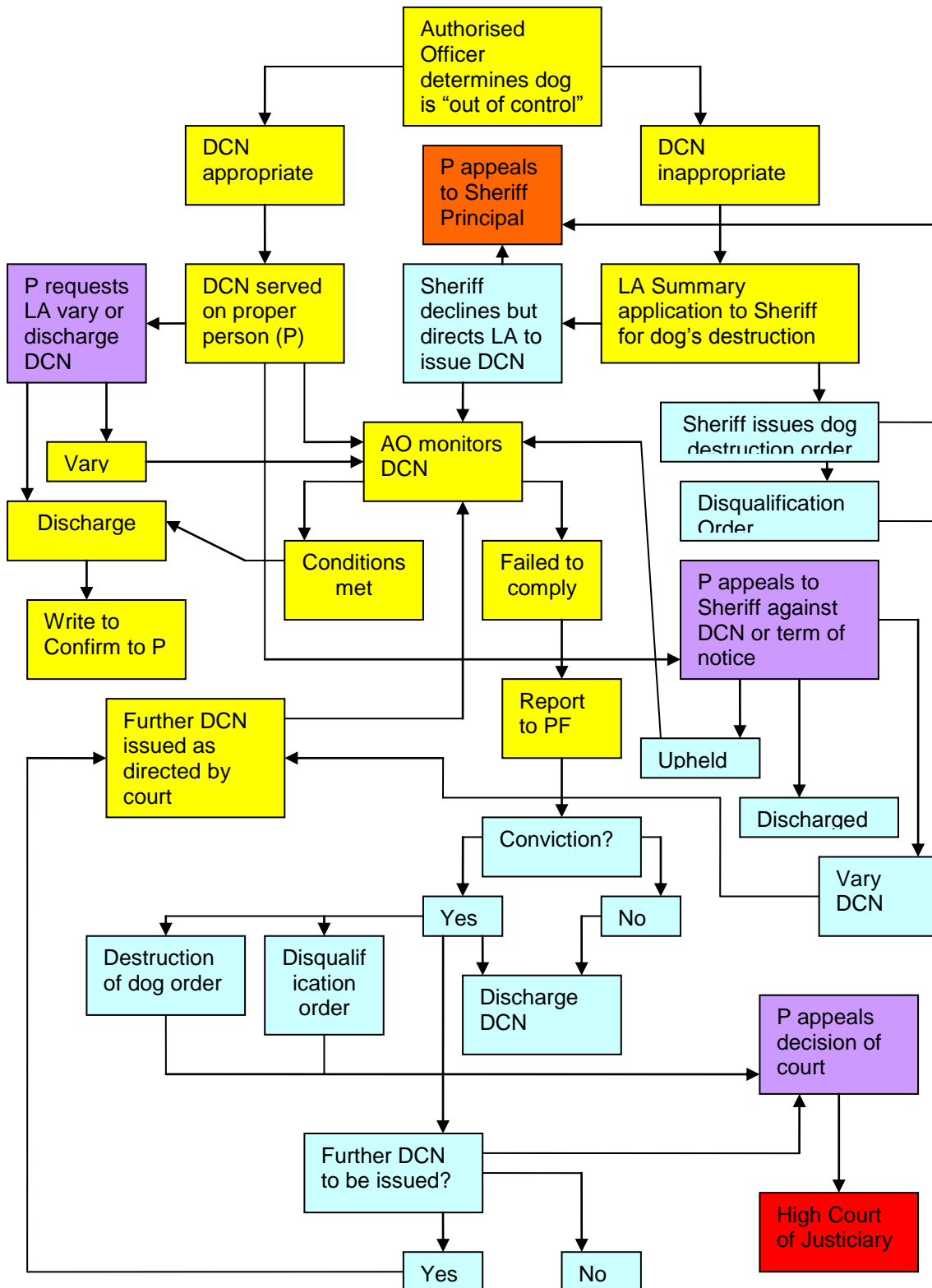
The prescribed form for a dog control notice states that “to lodge an appeal, you should contact your local sheriff court to ask for a summary application form”. However, there is no prescribed summary application form to appeal against a dog control notice. To appeal against a dog control notice or against a term of such a notice, summary application procedures will apply. The appeal is made by initial writ and must be lodged within 21 days after the date of service of the dog control notice.

The Prescribed Form of Notice Order 2011 permits local authorities to include in the dog control notice such other matters as the local authority thinks fit, provided it is consistent with the Order made by the Scottish Ministers. The Order also states in Article 2 that the notice shall be in form prescribed in the Order “or a form substantially to the same effect”. To ensure that the person who wishes to exercise their right to appeal is clear about which form needs to be completed in order to appeal, **we recommend that under the ‘Right to Appeal this notice’ section of the Prescribed dog control notice form, local authorities are advised to score through the wording “you should contact your local sheriff court to ask for a summary application form. The application” and insert the following words “the initial writ” instead so that the text will read “To lodge an appeal, the initial writ must be lodged with the sheriff clerk within 21 days after the date of service”.**

Authorised officers are also recommended to advise people who wish to appeal or enquire about appealing dog control notices, that the Scottish Courts Service cannot provide advice to individuals regarding the completion of the initial writ form and that they may wish to seek legal advice through a solicitor or seek advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau to receive some assistance in completing the initial writ form. The initial writ (Form 1) can be downloaded from the Scottish Courts Service website (attached link refers).

<https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/rules-and-practice/forms/sheriff-court-forms/summary-applications-statutory-applications-and-appeals-etc-forms>

## Part G – Dog Control Notice Regime Flowchart



## **Part H – Links with other legislation**

### **Dogs Act 1906/Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Stray dogs**

The 2010 Act does not alter the present legislative position with regard to stray or abandoned dogs. Where a dog is unaccompanied in a public place the dog would continue to be treated as a stray under section 3 of the Dogs Act 1906 or sections 149 or 150 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

### **Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982**

Section 49(1) of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 makes it an offence for any person to allow any creature, including a dog, to cause injury or danger to any other person who is in a public place or to give that person reasonable cause for alarm or annoyance. Any person convicted for such an offence is liable to a fine not exceeding £500. Section 49(2) of the 1982 Act permits any person to apply for a court order in relation to annoyance caused by an animal in the vicinity of where the person resides.

If the court grants the order, such steps as deemed necessary by the court that the person keeping the animal should take to bring the annoyance to an end will be included in the order. This provision is used on occasion in cases where a dog barks excessively to the annoyance of neighbours. Breach of such an order by the person in charge of the animal is a criminal offence and the person can be fined up to £1000.

### **Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and Dangerous Dogs (Amendment) Act 1997**

The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 made it an offence for anyone in charge of any type of dog to allow it to be “dangerously out of control” in a public place, or in a private place. A person found guilty of an offence may face imprisonment of up to 2 years and/or an unlimited fine. The courts may also disqualify the offender from having custody of a dog for any period as it thinks fit.

Section 10 of the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010 amends the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 by extending the offence contained in section 3 of the 1991 Act so that it becomes a criminal offence to allow any dog to be dangerously out of control in any place. However, with the exception of this amendment police and local authority powers and responsibilities conferred under the terms of the 1991 Act, remain the same.

In order for a dog to be regarded as “dangerously out of control”, section 10(3) of the 1991 Act requires that the prosecution must provide corroborated evidence that there were “grounds for reasonable apprehension that it will injure any person (or assistance dog), whether or not it actually does so.”

The question whether there are grounds for reasonable apprehension that a dog will injure any person is ultimately a matter for the courts to decide based on the facts and circumstances of each individual case. Evidence may be obtained from establishing the dogs previous behaviour (from other witnesses, neighbours, Local

Authority Dog Warden, or the dog owner - under caution and police interview), and/or the full circumstances of the incident including the dog's aggression (if any) and the attempts, or lack of, of the person in charge of controlling the dog and whether there was any delay in doing so.

The case of *Tierney Vs Valentine SCCR 1994 697* shows the importance of establishing 'grounds for reasonable apprehension'. In that case a dog which had never previously bitten anyone ran into a children's playground and inflicted four bites on two children in one brief incident before there was time for the owner to form a reasonable apprehension that the dog might injure someone and before he could bring the dog under control. No offence under section 3 was committed.

By contrast, circumstances may arise in which a dog has not previously injured someone, yet is acting in such a way as to give rise to a reasonable apprehension. In the case of *Elizabeth Thomson v Procurator Fiscal, Peterhead [2009] HCJAC 101* the owner of a Staffordshire terrier dog was convicted of injuring the complainer when the dog became involved in a fight with the complainer's Scottie dog. For a period of about 8 minutes, the Staffordshire terrier refused to respond to any command or enticement by the owner or by the complainer whilst biting the Scottie. The complainer attempted to put her hand between the two dogs and was bitten by the terrier. After an appeal by the owner of the terrier, where she argued that she had no reasonable apprehension that her dog would injure any person as it had never bitten another person before, it was held that a period of 8 minutes, was sufficient to establish a reasonable apprehension that the dog would injure someone.

Section 5(1) of the 1991 Act gives power to any constable or authorised local authority officer to seize any dog they believe to be prohibited and/or a dog which appears to them to be dangerously out of control when it is in a public place. If the dog is not in a public place, a police officer can apply to the court for a warrant to enter premises for the purpose of seizing the dog.

The 1991 Act also introduced strict controls on types of dogs which are specifically bred for fighting. Those dogs being the Pit Bull Terrier, the Japanese Tosa, the Dogo Argentino and the Fila Brasileiro. Case law clarifies that the 1991 Act's use of the term "type" and not "breed" of dog in section 1 means that the Act lays down a general test by reference to recognised characteristics rather than a particular test by reference to breeding or pedigree; a broad and practical approach should be taken when considering whether a dog falls under section 1.

Following the passing of the Dangerous Dogs (Amendment) Act 1997, it continued to be the case that it is a criminal offence to own one of these types of dogs, but following a conviction, the court had new discretion in sentencing so that a dog of this type is not always required to be destroyed where an owner was found to have kept a dog in breach of the legislation. Though this does remain as an option for the court.

As well as sentencing the owner of the dog to up to 6 months imprisonment and/or a fine not exceeding £5000, the court can, as an alternative to ordering the destruction of the dog, place the dog on the Index of Exempted Dogs. Only courts can direct that a dog can be placed on the Index of Exempted Dogs ("the Index").

If placed on the Index, a dog is required to be kept in compliance with the strict requirements of the legislation, meaning the owner had:

- To obtain a certificate to enable them to retain such a dog;
- To have the dog neutered or spayed;
- To ensure the dog is permanently identified with a tattoo and microchip(electronic transponder);
- To maintain insurance against their dog injuring third parties;
- To keep the dog muzzled, on a lead in public places; and
- To ensure the dog is not left in charge of a person under the age of 16.

### **The Control of Dogs Order 1992/901**

The Control of Dogs Order 1992 states that the owner of a dog or the person in charge of a dog that is not wearing a collar which provides the details of the owner in a public place shall be guilty of an offence.

### **Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004**

The Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 contains provisions relating to noise nuisance which can be relied upon in cases of excessive noise created by dogs and makes provision for a fixed penalty notice to be issued.

### **Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006**

Section 34 of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 allows a court to make a "Disposal Order" in relation to animals seized under section 32 (Taking possession of animals to protect them from suffering). A Disposal Order can be for the sale of the animal and the money raised can be used to offset any expenses incurred by the local authority or police.

### **The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014**

Part 7 of the Act deals with dangerous dogs and makes certain amendments to the 1991 Act, such as extending the aggravation contained in section 3(1) so as to apply where a dangerously out of control dog injures an assistance dog.

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 also amended the 1991 Act in light of a 2012 High Court judgement (the Sandhu judgement) which ruled that the 1991 Act did not allow the court to consider the character of the owner when assessing whether the dog posed a risk to public safety. The Act therefore amended the 1991 Act in relation to the test which the court must consider when assessing whether a dog is a risk to public safety by requiring the court to consider the character of the owner, as well as the temperament of the dog and its past behaviour, along with any other relevant circumstances when deciding whether the dog poses a risk to public safety.



## **The Microchipping of Dogs (Scotland) Regulations 2016**

The Microchipping of Dogs (Scotland) Regulations 2016 came into force on 6 April 2016, making it compulsory for all dogs over 8 weeks old in Scotland to be microchipped. The requirements under these Regulations include dogs being implanted with a microchip and having their details registered on a compliant database.

The Regulations set a technical standard for the type of microchip that must be used for the purposes of microchipping a dog under these Regulations. They also set out rules about who may implant a microchip of any kind in a dog in Scotland.

Where associated details are registered on a database and kept up-to-date, microchipping has an invaluable role in re-uniting lost or stolen dogs with their keepers. The Regulations help improve the effectiveness of this process, cutting time and costs associated with kennelling strays.

## **Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill**

This Member's Bill was introduced by Emma Harper MSP on 14 May 2020. It amends the existing law on what is called "livestock worrying", which is where a dog chases, attacks or kills farmed animals.

The Bill increases the maximum penalty to a fine of £5,000 or imprisonment for six months; allows the courts to ban a convicted person from owning a dog or allowing their dog to go on agricultural land; gives the police greater powers to investigate and enforce livestock worrying offence (this includes by going onto land to identify a dog, seize it and collect evidence from it); allows other organisations to be given similar powers; and extends the "livestock worrying" offence to cover additional types of farmed animal.

At the time of writing this Bill was at Stage 1 in the Scottish Parliament. Further information can be found on the Scottish Parliament website at:

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/dogs-protection-of-livestock-amendment-scotland-bill>

## **Local Authority bye-laws**

Local authorities can consider bye-law making powers to address a specific problem. For example, if there is an area where dogs are often a nuisance, the matter can be raised for consideration by the council who have powers to make appropriate bye-laws (i.e. to keep dogs on leads in particular areas or to ban dogs from such places such as children's playgrounds).

## **Local Authority approved dog walker scheme**

East Lothian Council introduced a professional dog walker scheme. To be granted approved user status, the dog walking company has to agree to a number of conditions including:

- No more than six dogs to be exercised at any one time

- The professional dog walking company to have relevant pet business insurance
- Dogs to be transported in a vehicle fit for purpose with dogs adequately secured.
- To have a first aid kit designed for dogs
- Dogs to tagged with the professional dog walking company's own company tag whilst under their care and authority.

[https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210630/approved\\_dog\\_walkers/12005/dog\\_walking\\_services](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210630/approved_dog_walkers/12005/dog_walking_services)

Part I

Form of execution of service of a dog control notice

**FORM** I can confirm that Dog Control Notice **(INSERT DCN no)** was signed and dated and placed into the envelope in the presence of (name of witness).

**Form of execution of service of Dog Control Notice under The Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010.**

EXECUTION OF SERVICE ON Dog Owner / Proper Person

I, *an Animal Welfare Officer an authorised officer under The Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010* on **(date)** duly served a Dog Control Notice on **(name)** of **(address)**. This was witnessed by my colleague. The Dog Control Notice was served by the following means:

Hand delivered to known address	
Served on the proper person	

Signed Authorised Officer  
Witness

I (INSERT NAME OF DOG OWNER) agree receipt of Dog Control Notice (INSET NOTICE NO) on (INSERT DATE) at ..... I agree that I was given the opportunity to have the Dog Control Notice explained to me by the authorised officers.

Signed

Authorised Officer

Witness

## **Part J**

### **Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010 and Explanatory Notes document**

The 2010 Act and the Explanatory Notes for the 2010 Act are available at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/9/contents>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/9/notes/contents>



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