



## Stray Dogs: The Law

A stray dog is any dog which is running free in a public place without its owner being present. Legally it makes no difference if the dog is loose accidentally, has been released without authority of the owner, or has been deliberately allowed to roam.

The law requires, under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, local councils to treat all unaccompanied dogs on public land as strays, regardless of whether they are wearing a collar and disc or have been microchipped. The council must seize such dogs and if they cannot be returned immediately to their owner they must be taken to the council stray pounds where they are held for a mandatory period of 7 days. After the 7-day period, the dog legally becomes the property of the kennels and the kennels can either rehome the dog to a new owner, keep the dog at the kennels or, following veterinary advice, put the dog to sleep.

**Our Dog Wardens are happy to provide advice or assistance on all aspects of dog ownership. For further details contact:**

### Pest Control & Dog Wardens

Luton Borough Council  
Central Depot  
Kingsway Luton  
LU4 8AU



- ☎ 01582 510330
- ✉ [dog@luton.gov.uk](mailto:dog@luton.gov.uk)
- 🌐 [www.luton.gov.uk/dogs](http://www.luton.gov.uk/dogs)
- 🐦 @lutoncouncil
- 📘 lutoncouncil

*Please ensure that you leave a telephone number so the Dog Wardens can contact you during office hours.*

## Stray Dog Information



**Please read this leaflet thoroughly**

**This information sheet has been produced for your benefit to provide you with information concerning potential consequences that could result from your dog being unsupervised in a public place.**

## **If your dog is found straying**

Should your dog be seized by the Dog Warden, the Environmental Protection (Stray Dogs) Regulations 1992, would make you liable to pay the prescribed amount of £25.00 plus kennelling fees before you would be entitled to have your dog returned to you.

Straying dogs often wander on to roads, putting pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle drivers, not to mention the dog itself, at risk of serious injury or even death. If your dog causes damage to property, a road traffic accident or bites someone then you may be liable to prosecution.

If your dog fouls whilst straying it could lead to legal proceedings. Dog faeces on streets and grassed areas, especially where children play or people enjoy sitting out, is simply not acceptable. The person in charge of a dog has a duty to remove faeces from public areas including back lanes, grassed areas, parks, streets, cemeteries, play and picnic areas. Under the provisions of The Fouling of Land Act 1996, it is an offence to fail to clear up after your dog the maximum penalty for which is £1000.



## **Aggression**

An unaccompanied dog is an uncontrolled dog. It may be friendly but if it barks and jumps up, people can feel frightened and intimidated. Under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 it is an offence to permit any dog to be dangerously out of control in a public place.

### **Any dog is dangerously out of control if:**

- it injures a person
- it behaves in a way that makes a person worried that it might injure them.

The law applies everywhere the general public is allowed to go and anywhere your dog goes where it is not supposed to be.

If no injury is caused then the maximum penalties will be a £2,000 fine and/or 6 months imprisonment. Where actual injury is caused the fine becomes unlimited and/or the sentence increased to a maximum of 5 years imprisonment.

## **Stray Dogs**

Many people believe that a stray dog is one which has been abandoned or neglected. This is not the case.

A dog can go missing for all sorts of reasons – a moment's inattention, a missing panel in the garden fence, a door or gate left ajar, fireworks or other sudden loud noises. All these and more can cause our dogs to find themselves lost.

Should your dog go missing it is important that you contact the necessary services immediately. Contact your local Dog Warden, Police, veterinary surgeries and holding kennels.

If you are leaving your dog with a friend or relative make sure that they have the necessary numbers to contact should they lose your dog.

