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Dog Attacks on Postal Workers are Appalling, Cardiff Conference Told. - Report on Event Held at Wales Government Offices:

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Calls for the use of dog licenses have been renewed by the CWU with attacks on postal staff reaching "epidemic proportions".

Opening the Conference Welsh Assembly Member Julie Morgan said postal staff were "most vulnerable" to such attacks with children also "badly affected".

Royal Mail reported 843 attacks on staff in Wales in the last five years. BT have reported attacks on field engineers also.

Cardiff councillors, Welsh Assembly Members and Ministers, CWU Union Representatives and parents of injured children gathered in Cardiff's Pierhead Hall, near the Wales Parliament to debate the ongoing problem of dog attacks and what can be done by the Wales Government to help reduce attacks.

The CWU suggested that the re-introduction of dog licenses may help encourage more responsible ownership but would generate funding for Policing and enforcement at a time when central government funding for the Police was being cut back.

CWU National Health and Safety Officer Dave Joyce said "There were now 22,000 less Police officers in the UK than there were ten years ago and the concern is that dog control was slipping down the priority agenda."

Stuart Hughes, who was a postman in Gwynedd, almost lost an earlobe in 2010 after an Alsatian bit his ear, jaw and throat while he was working.

"I had to see a facial injuries specialist and they managed to stitch up my ear and throat with about 20 stitches," he said.

"I'm back on normal duties now, but there are still scars, some tendons were damaged and I get ongoing problems with my neck. Dog attacks are no joke."

Cardiff councillor Dilwar Ali, whose six-year-old son was mauled by a neighbour's Rhodesian Ridgeback dog in 2011 after it escaped from the next door's garden, said "There is currently a

"loophole" in tracking dog owners through microchip databases because owners who sell dogs on do not always update the database."

He added "There were a lot of grey areas as dog owners should automatically be banned from owning a dog for 10 years after a serious offence under the Dangerous Dogs Act, but this was sometimes not happening".

Ms. Morgan has campaigned alongside Mr. Ali and the CWU for 'Dog Control Notices' that would allow early intervention by local authorities or Police if they had concerns about a particular dog owner, such as enforcing owner and dog training or compulsory muzzles in public."

Ms. Morgan said "dog owners needed much greater education and to be forward thinking about the responsibility of owning a dog".

The pair are supporting the Communication Workers Union's Biteback campaign which brought about strengthening the UK's Dangerous Dog Act, extending the law to private property, tougher penalties and introducing mandatory micro-chipping of dogs to identify and control dangerous dogs and irresponsible owners."

CWU health and safety officer Dave Joyce said "Though the Dangerous Dogs Act was extended to cover dogs on private property in 2014, more rigorous enforcement of the law was needed. The Police need to use their extended powers and the Courts need to use the full extent of the sentences available to them."

"It's a problem that still seems to keep going under the radar yet it has reached epidemic proportions he added. Our postal worker members are in the frontline and first to be confronted with irresponsible owners and dangerous dogs because postmen and women visit the nation's 29 million addresses with the mail and parcels daily".

"There are still cases where offences are committed but the Police are not prosecuting owners when they should be. There have been 15 private prosecutions that Royal Mail has had to pursue, all ending in successful convictions in recent times. Cases the Police should have prosecuted."

Mr. Joyce added "The Royal Mail and CWU were currently pursuing two private prosecutions for offences under the Dangerous Dogs Act that Police in Wales had not prosecuted."

He has asked the Welsh Government to consider more investment for dog legislation officers trained to deal with dog cases and the introduction of dog licenses similar to those in Northern Ireland to generate resources for enforcement and for the introduction of Dog Control Notices (DCNs).

Welsh Government Minister Lesley Griffiths said: "I have held meetings with the CWU and others to consider concerns. Our recent public consultation on a revised code of practice for the welfare of dogs reminds owners of their obligations relating to controlling their pets and the Governing legislation. The consultation closed earlier this week and we will look at the responses in detail shortly".

"We are also investigating the feasibility of establishing an animal offender register and looking at reintroducing dog licensing. Both are complex proposals but worth investigating."

"Embedding a culture of responsible ownership cannot be achieved in isolation. We will continue to work across government and with a range of organisations to achieve lasting improvements but owners must take the lead responsibility by ensuring their dogs' needs are met."

Report Ends

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer