

Keeping dogs under control



What you need to know

Responsible dog ownership plays a big part in keeping Argyll and Bute a great place to live, work and visit.

It is now an offence for any dog owner to allow their dog to be out of control in such a way that causes fear or alarm for other people.

This leaflet tells you what you need to know about keeping dogs under control in Argyll and Bute.

Dog control and the law

The Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010 promotes more responsible dog ownership. It aims to make sure that out of control dogs are brought and kept under control. It also seeks to prevent dogs becoming dangerous. This helps to reduce and prevent future dog attacks. Under the Act, Scottish local authorities have the power to take action against irresponsible dog owners.

How does it work in practice?

Argyll and Bute Council has a statutory duty to investigate and record reports of dogs which are out of control. If an investigation finds that a dog is out of control the owner will be offered advice or will be issued with a Dog Control Notice.

When is a dog 'out of control?'



- When the owner in charge of the dog is not keeping it under effective and consistent control
- When its behaviour causes a reasonable level of fear or alarm for other people

What is a Dog Control Notice (DCN)?

This is a notice which places conditions on the owner to keep their dog under control and keep others safe by preventing further incidents. It may include conditions like:

- Keeping the dog on a lead in public
- The dog wearing a muzzle in public
- Attending dog training courses

All dogs which are subject to a DCN must be microchipped and registered with 14 days of issue. **From April 2016 it will be compulsory for all dogs to be microchipped.**

Once a notice has been issued, the council has a duty to check that the owner is complying with it. Failure to comply with a DCN is an offence. In some circumstances, the owner of a dog which is out of control may be reported to the Procurator Fiscal, be fined up to £1,000 and/or be disqualified from keeping a dog. The dog itself may also be destroyed.

What to do if you see a dog out of control

If you see a dog that is dangerously out of control—for example bites or tries to bite someone, or seriously injures/kills another animal—this should be reported immediately to Police Scotland on 101 for action under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991

Before making a complaint, it is important to consider some points: was the dog's approach meant to be friendly? Was it playful or over-excited? Did you do anything to provoke or encourage its behaviour? How did the owner respond and react?

Dog owners—points to remember

As a dog owner, there are things you can remember to maintain and promote responsible dog ownership:



- Not everyone is a dog lover—some people may be afraid of your pet
- Don't let your dog roam unattended—it could do harm to other people, other animals or itself
- If your dog is aggressive or unfriendly to other people or dogs, please keep it on a lead at all times
- While your dog is on the lead, make sure you have good control of it—don't let it lunge at other people or dogs
- If you let your dog off the lead, make sure you are able to recall the dog if and when you need to

Stray dogs

Wherever possible, dog wardens will attempt to recover and identify the owners of dogs found straying. All dog owners are encouraged to have their dogs 'chipped' - this will help identification, recovery and return. Dogs should wear a collar and ID tag at all times when outdoors—owners who fail to do this could be prosecuted and fined.