Experience of participants:

- The parent of a child who had been attacked by dogs;
- A person who had been attacked by a dog;
- Six people whose pets had been attacked by dogs.

The key points reflecting the views and experiences of those attending are listed below.

**How have you been affected by an out of control dog?**

Physical injuries by 2 dogs to a child resulting in permanent disfigurement. In addition to requiring hospitalisation and reconstructive surgery, the attack has had a long-term impact on the child’s confidence, self-esteem and anxiety levels as they have grown up.

Person was attacked by 2 dogs which had escaped from a neighbouring garden and received bites to the leg.

Physical injuries while attempting to stop an attack on their own dog.

A dog which had escaped from its garden attacked a person’s dog which was on a lead. The person had to intervene to stop the attack and prevent additional injury to their dog which required sedation.

A person’s dog was attacked by one of 4 dogs being walked by their owner. It transpired some of these dogs had attacked other dogs before and it was reported they had attacked again since the incident with this person.

A person’s dog was attacked and when they tried to lift their dog to safety the other dog turned on her. The owner was unable to physically control the dog and a neighbour provided help to the person and dog who had been attacked.

**If you have reported an out of control dog, how easy was it and what was your experience of engaging with the local authority, police or courts.**

A child was attacked by dogs when the owner of the dogs was already subject to an order to keep the dogs under control after biting someone previously. This may have been an order made by the court as that incident occurred before this act came into force. The person is not convinced that issuing dog control orders to negligent owners will make any difference.

Person was attacked and bitten by a dog(s) and phoned the police and the dog warden as was unsure who to contact. The dog warden visited them and took pictures of the bite wounds but the person has heard nothing more. They are unsure whether any action has been taken or not.

Dog was attacked and injured by another dog. Police would not attend as it was not a police matter. The response from the dog warden was positive but they are
unaware if a dog control notice was issued or if it was what it contained. Six months after the incident the owner’s garden is still not secure, the dog is unmuzzled and walked on an extendable lead.

The incident happened over the Christmas period so it was difficult to contact anyone at the local authority. When they did speak to the dog warden, they felt all she could offer was advice and they are unsure if a dog control notice was issued after the attack.

The person was injured when attempting to save her dog as it was being attacked. The police advised that it was a matter for the dog warden as the dog hadn’t attacked the person directly. The dog warden did respond and the person is aware that a dog control notice was issued requiring the dog to be muzzled as they asked the owner directly.

After the person’s dog had been attacked the dog warden was contacted and it was around two and a half weeks before the dog warden was able to come out to speak to them. A dog control notice was issued, but the dog warden was unable to give them any details. The stray dog is still escaping from the garden.

A person told us they had found a stray dog out with the working hours of the dog warden and had contacted the police. The police informed them that it was not a priority for them to attend and they only agreed to respond when the person pointed out that they were concerned the dog may cause a road traffic accident. While the dog’s behaviour did not give the person cause for concern, the fact that it was not under control meant the person was concerned others may be harmed.

The law allows for control notices to be issued to owners of out of control dogs. The notice can include a requirement for; the dog to be muzzled, kept on a lead, banned from specific places or neutered. If you are aware of a dog that is subject to a dog control notice, do you feel it has made any difference to how the owner acts in respect of the dog?

Other than the person who asked the owner directly about the dog control notice, no-one else was aware of the contents of the notice or, in some cases, whether a notice had even been issued. They added that things that they would have expected to see if a dog control notice had been issued such as securing gardens and the use of muzzles and leads when the dog was out in public did not appear to have been put in place.

What changes do you think need to be made that would help provide more protection from out of control dogs?

Proper sanctions for failing to comply with dog control orders so people take them seriously.

There is a need to ensure that people who report dog attacks and out of control dogs are made aware of what action has been taken and the contents of any dog control notice that has been issued as a result.
People were concerned that they weren’t getting the information they needed on what action had been taken in respect of the dogs that had attacked them and they reported that they were told this was due to data protection issues.

The dog warden told one person that their powers were limited; for example, they are unable to order the destruction of a dog if they felt it was necessary and this should be changed.

Should larger dogs require to be muzzled when out in public?

Should there be an age restriction on children walking dogs, in particular large powerful ones?