

Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Act 2025

CHAPTER 32

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CHAPTER 32

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Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Act 2025

2025 CHAPTER 32

An Act to make provision changing the law about the offence of livestock worrying, including changes to what constitutes an offence and increased powers for investigation of suspected offences; and for connected purposes.

[18th December 2025]

BE IT ENACTED by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Livestock worrying: scope and consequences of offence

The Schedule contains amendments to the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 that—

(a) bring incidents on roads and paths within the scope of the offence in section 1 of that Act;

(b) bring camelids within the definition of "livestock" that applies for the purposes of that offence;

(c) exempt a dog owner from liability for that offence where the dog is in the charge of another person without the owner's consent;

(d) increase the penalty that may be imposed where a person is convicted of that offence;

(e) allow for a court to order an offender to pay expenses associated with seizing and detaining a dog;

(f) update the terminology used in that Act so that attacking livestock is dealt with separately from worrying livestock.

2 Seizure and detention of dogs

(1) For section 2 of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 substitute—

"2 Seizure and detention of dogs

Dog found without owner or person in charge

(1) A constable may seize a dog if—

(a) they have reasonable grounds to believe that the dog has attacked or worried livestock on agricultural land or on a road or path, and

(b) nobody present where the dog is found admits to being the dog's owner or in charge of it.

(2) A constable may detain a dog seized under subsection (1) until the owner has claimed it and paid all expenses incurred by reason of its seizure and detention.

(3) If the owner of the dog does not claim it and pay those expenses before the end of the period of seven days beginning with the day after the day on which the dog was seized under subsection (1), a constable may dispose of the dog.

(4) If the constable disposes of the dog by giving it or selling it to a person acting in good faith, that person becomes the owner of the dog.

(5) The chief officer of police for each police area must keep, or cause to be kept, a register of all dogs seized under subsection (1) in their area, containing the following information—

(a) a brief description of the dog;

(b) the date of seizure of the dog;

(c) if the dog is disposed of under subsection (3), how.

(6) Each register kept under subsection (5) must be available, at all reasonable times, for inspection by the public free of charge.

(7) For the purposes of this section, "disposing of" a dog includes—

(a) causing it to be disposed of, and

(b) destroying it or causing it to be destroyed,

but does not include disposing of it for the purposes of vivisection.

Dog posing continuing threat

(8) A constable may seize a dog if they have reasonable grounds to believe that—

(a) the dog has attacked or worried livestock on agricultural land or on a road or path, and

(b) unless it is detained, there is a risk that the dog could attack or worry livestock again.

(9) A constable may detain a dog seized under subsection (8)—

(a) until an investigation has been carried out into whether an offence under section 1 has been committed by reason of the dog attacking or worrying livestock, or

(b) if proceedings are brought in respect of such an offence, until those proceedings have been determined or withdrawn."

(2) Section 3 of the Dogs Act 1906 (seizure of stray dogs), so far as still in force by virtue of section 68(2) of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, is repealed.

3 Collection of samples and impressions

After section 2 of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 insert—

"2ZA Collection of samples and impressions

(1) Subsection (2) applies where a constable has reasonable grounds to believe that—

(a) a dog has attacked or worried livestock on agricultural land or on a road or path, and

(b) information derived from a sample or impression taken from the dog might provide evidence of an offence under section 1.

(2) A sample or impression may be taken from the dog; and a constable may seize and detain the dog in order that the sample or impression may be taken.

(3) Subsection (4) applies where a constable has reasonable grounds to believe that—

(a) a dog has attacked or worried livestock on agricultural land or on a road or path, and

(b) information derived from a sample or impression taken from any livestock might provide evidence of an offence under section 1.

(4) A sample or impression may be taken from the livestock.

(5) If taking a sample or impression under this section would amount to veterinary surgery, it must be done by a veterinary surgeon.

(6) A sample or impression taken under this section may be retained—

(a) until an investigation has been carried out into whether an offence under section 1 has been committed by reason of the dog attacking or worrying livestock, or

(b) if proceedings are brought in respect of such an offence, until those proceedings have been determined or withdrawn.

(7) In this section—

"sample" means any material that has come from the body of an animal and consists of, or includes, animal cells;

"veterinary surgeon" means a person registered in the register of veterinary surgeons, or the supplementary veterinary register, kept under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966;

"veterinary surgery" has the same meaning as in that Act."

4 Powers of entry

For section 2A of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 substitute—

"2A Power of justice of the peace to authorise entry and search

(1) Subsection (2) applies if, on an application made by a constable, a justice of the peace is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing—

(a) that an offence under section 1 has been committed, and

(b) that the dog in respect of which the offence has been committed is on premises specified in the application.

(2) The justice of the peace may issue a warrant authorising a constable to enter and search the premises in order to—

(a) identify the dog,

(b) seize and detain the dog under section 2, or

(c) take a sample or impression from the dog under section 2ZA.

(3) Subsection (4) applies if, on an application made by a constable, a justice of the peace is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing—

(a) that an offence under section 1 has been committed, and

(b) that anything that may be evidence of that offence could be on premises specified in the application.

(4) The justice of the peace may issue a warrant authorising a constable to enter and search the premises in order to seize any evidence of that offence that may be found.

(5) A warrant under this section may authorise the constable executing it to use reasonable force if necessary."

5 Extent, commencement, transitional provision and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales only.

(2) This Act comes into force at the end of the period of three months beginning with the day on which this Act is passed.

(3) The fact that any worrying or attacking of livestock took place (or is alleged to have taken place) before this Act comes into force does not in itself affect the availability, in connection with that worrying or attacking, of the powers conferred by virtue of sections 2, 3 and 4.

(4) This Act may be cited as the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Act 2025.

SCHEDULE

Section 1

AMENDMENTS TO THE DOGS (PROTECTION OF LIVESTOCK) ACT 1953

1 (1) Section 1 of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 (offence) is amended as follows.

(2) In subsection (1) (creation of offence)—

(a) before "worries" insert "attacks or";

(b) after "land" insert "or on a road or path".

(3) In subsection (2) (meaning of "worrying livestock"), omit paragraph (a).

(4) In subsection (3) (livestock trespassing), after "a dog" insert "on any agricultural land".

(5) After subsection (3) insert—

"(3A) A person is not guilty of an offence under this Act by reason of anything done by a dog on a road or path if at the material time the livestock are on the road or path as a result of straying from where they are kept, unless the person causes the dog to attack the livestock."

(6) In subsection (4) (dog in charge of someone other than owner)—

(a) before "worrying" insert "attacking or";

(b) for "he proves" substitute "the owner proves";

(c) before "worried" insert "attacked or";

(d) for the words from ", whom" to the end substitute "and that—

(a) the owner reasonably believed that other person to be a fit and proper person to be in charge of the dog, or

(b) the owner did not consent to the dog's being in the charge of that other person."

(7) For subsection (6) substitute—

"(6) A person who commits an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine.

(7) Where—

(a) a person is convicted of an offence under this section which was committed on or after this subsection comes into force, and

(b) the dog in respect of which the offence was committed was seized and detained in connection with the offence in accordance with section 2(8) and (9) (dogs posing continuing threat),

the court may order the person to pay whatever sum the court determines to be the reasonable expenses incurred by reason of the dog's seizure and detention.

(8) A court may make an order under subsection (7) whether or not it deals with the person in any other way for the offence.

(9) A sum required to be paid by an order under subsection (7) is treated for the purposes of enforcement as if it were compensation payable under a compensation order (as defined in section 133 of the Sentencing Code)."

(8) For the heading substitute "Offence where dog attacks or worries livestock".

2 In section 3 of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 (interpretation), in subsection (1), in the definition of "livestock", after "horses," insert "camelids".

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