

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you with serious concerns regarding the welfare of seized dogs in the UK. Dogs are held in police approved kennels, the location of which are always kept secret, whilst I understand that the majority of these are private boarding kennels, and as such are licensed by the relevant authority, due to the secrecy there is no recourse for complaint when a dog is returned in a poor state or dies in these kennels whilst awaiting a court date.

The kennel licensing system is star rated, as seized dogs are held for prolonged periods of time one star rated kennels cannot meet their welfare needs. I ask that you urgently review this situation and make it mandatory that all police forces only use 5 star rated facilities. A 5 star rated facility would ensure that dogs are fed twice each day, are exercised twice a day, this may mean that the dog is released into a secure outdoor space if it is truly too dangerous to be walked by staff, also the dog would get 2 enrichment periods a day provided in the kennel.

Seized dogs often stay in these kennel facilities for months, sometimes years whilst awaiting an outcome from the courts, currently they often receive no human contact during this time. Kennel facilities who have secured the contract to hold these dogs should have a qualified behaviourist available to advise on whether a dog is truly aggressive or just fearful of the situation they find themselves in, the latter can be easily managed by spending time gaining the trust of the dog who can then have his needs more appropriately met.

The current system is hugely damaging to these dogs, time and time again dogs are returned in alarmingly skinny condition and mentally shut down from their experience, they are often kept in a manner which is in clear breach of The Animal Welfare Act 2006. Tragically some previously healthy dogs have died whilst being held as seized dogs.

In addition to improving the care given to seized dogs, I ask that independent inspections of these dogs, and the facility they are held in, take place by a trusted outside source such as the RSPCA or Approved Expert Witnesses who are bound to secrecy. I am aware that the major dog

charities forming the Dog Control Coalition have also proposed a scheme requiring independent inspection of kennels housing seized dogs.

As it stands there is no action for recourse against these kennels, the need for secrecy means that complaints cannot be made to the licencing authority, nor can concerns be raised.

I ask that you urgently review this situation and seek to make significant improvements to the system.

Yours Faithfully