

**Information on the XL Bully Dogs Ban**

Following a concerning rise in attacks and fatalities caused by XL Bully dogs, the government has added this breed to the list of dogs banned under the [Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/65/contents)

The restrictions will be implemented in two phases.

**Phase 1**

From 31 December 2023 it will be against the law to:

* sell an XL Bully dog;
* abandon an XL Bully dog or let it stray;
* give away an XL Bully dog;
* breed from an XL Bully dog;
* have an XL Bully in public without a lead and muzzle.

The official definition of an XL Bully can be found here: [Official definition of an XL Bully dog - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-definition-of-an-xl-bully-dog). Defra recommends taking a precautionary approach. If you’re not sure if your dog is an XL Bully, you should prepare for the ban on XL Bully dogs. This includes puppies that may grow up to be an XL Bully. PPP Officers will not be able to advise members of the public if their dog falls within the scope of the ban. It will be for the owner or keeper to identify whether they think their dog may be in scope.

To keep an XL Bully dog it must be:

* microchipped;
* kept on a lead and muzzled at all times when in public;
* kept in a secure place so it cannot escape;
* neutered.

As the owner, you must also:

* be over 16 years old
* take out third party public liability insurance against your dog injuring other people
* be able to show the Certificate of Exemption when asked by a police officer or a council dog warden, either at the time or within 5 days.

**Phase 2**

From 1 February 2024 it will be a criminal offence to own an XL Bully dog in England and Wales unless your dog has a Certificate of Exemption.

**Applying for a Certificate of Exemption to Keep an XL Bully**

If you want to keep your XL Bully dog after the ban, you must apply for a Certificate of Exemption by 31 January 2024.

To get a Certificate of Exemption you must:

1. Get [third party public liability insurance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prepare-for-the-ban-on-xl-bully-dogs#third_party_public) cover for your dog.

1. Neuter your dog permanently if it is not already neutered. A vet must confirm if your dog is already neutered.

1. [Pay the £92.40 fee for each dog you want to keep](https://products.payments.service.gov.uk/pay/19dc34dca16248fb95e2cc2450b049fe). The fee is not refundable.

1. [Apply for a Certificate of Exemption to keep an XL Bully dog](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-certificate-of-exemption-to-keep-an-xl-bully-dog).

You can apply here: [Apply for a Certificate of Exemption to keep an XL Bully dog - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-certificate-of-exemption-to-keep-an-xl-bully-dog)

**Third Party Public Liability Insurance**

You must have third party public liability insurance for your XL Bully dog. The cover must start no later than 1 February 2024. This can be provided by [Dogs Trust Membership](https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/support-us/membership). The policy must renew annually for the life of the dog.

If you use a different insurance provider, you must check the policy:

* covers the policyholder for death or bodily injury to any person caused by the exempted dog;
* is suitable for a prohibited breed as defined under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

You must provide the start date of your insurance policy when you apply for a Certificate of Exemption. Your insurance provider can tell you the start date.

You do not need to provide the insurance policy number or any other documents from your insurance provider to apply.

**Registering and Neutering An XL Bully Dog**

From the 01 February it will be illegal to own an XL Bully dog if it is not registered on the Index of Exempted Dogs.

You must also arrange to have your XL Bully dog neutered through castration in the case of a male dog, or through spaying in the case of a female dog. If your dog is:

* less than 1 year old on 31 January 2024, it must be neutered by 31 December 2024
* older than 1 year old on 31 January 2024, it must be neutered by 30 June 2024

Defra recommend having your dog neutered as soon as possible so that you meet these deadlines.

**Confirmation of Neutering**

Once your XL Bully dog has been neutered, you and your vet will need to fill in the [confirmation of neutering form](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/confirm-an-xl-bully-dog-has-been-neutered). Your vet should then return the form to Defra.

If your dog has already been neutered, you and your vet must fill in the [confirmation of neutering form](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/confirm-an-xl-bully-dog-has-been-neutered). The vet should return the form to Defra.

If the vet is unable to return the form, the owner of the dog can return it to Defra.

Your current vet may have to check that neutering has taken place if:

* the dog was neutered by a different vet or at a different practice;
* you’re unsure whether your dog is neutered.

You may have to pay a fee for the vet to do this. Alternatively, you may be able to contact your previous vet to fill in the form.

**Keeping an XL Bully Dog**

In addition to applying for the Certificate of Exemption your dog will need to be microchipped, kept on a lead and muzzled in public spaces and kept in a secure place so that it cannot escape.

**Microchips**

You must make sure your dog is fitted with a microchip and registered on a database by the time it’s 8 weeks old. Find out how to get your dog [microchipped](https://www.gov.uk/get-your-dog-cat-microchipped). If you’re not sure if your dog is microchipped, you should ask your vet to check.

If your dog is less than 8 weeks old when you apply for a Certificate of Exemption, you’ll have until 31 March 2024 to give the microchip number to Defra. Email the microchip number to dogsindex@defra.gov.uk or post it to:

Dogs Index

PO Box 68250

London

SW1P 9XG

Defra will send you a new Certificate of Exemption when you provide the microchip number.

**Dogs certified as unfit for a microchip**

If a vet certifies that your dog is unfit to have a microchip for a period of time, you must send a copy of the veterinary certificate to Defra by 31 March 2024. You must then arrange to have your dog microchipped and provide the microchip number to Defra within 28 days of the expiry date of the veterinary certificate.

Email the veterinary certificate to dogsindex@defra.gov.uk or post it to:

Dogs Index

PO Box 68250

London

SW1P 9XG

**Muzzles and Leads for XL Bullys**

From 31 December 2023 XL Bully dogs must wear a muzzle and be kept on a lead when in a public place.

The Dogs Trust recommends that you choose a muzzle that your dog can eat, drink and pant through, such as a basket type muzzle. Being able to pant is important for dogs to regulate their temperature. The muzzle needs to fit them comfortably, shouldn’t obscure their vision, dig into their face, or restrict their mouth movement. It needs to be secure and as comfy as possible. If it’s rubbing, you can try wrapping a non-irritant fabric around the inside of the nose-piece.

Information about training your dog to wear a muzzle can be found on these websites:

* [Blue Cross](https://www.bluecross.org.uk/advice/dog/behaviour-and-training/dogs-and-muzzle-training)
* [Dogs Trust](https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/dog-advice/training/outdoors/muzzle-training)
* [PDSA](https://www.pdsa.org.uk/pet-help-and-advice/pet-health-hub/other-veterinary-advice/how-to-muzzle-train-your-dog)
* [Battersea Dogs & Cats Home](https://www.battersea.org.uk/pet-advice/dog-advice/muzzle-training-your-dog)

**Buying, Selling or Transferring XL Bully Dogs**

From 31 December 2023 it will be illegal to rehome, sell, buy, or transfer ownership of an XL Bully dog to another person.

If you are concerned that someone is trying to sell you a XL Bully after this date, visit the Petfished website to find out [how to spot the signs of a deceitful pet seller](https://getyourpetsafely.campaign.gov.uk/).

**Breeding XL Bully Dogs**

It will be a criminal offence to breed XL Bully dogs from 31 December 2023. This includes:

* breeding from an XL Bully dog
* allowing for an XL Bully dog to be bred from any combination of other dogs

It will not be an offence to allow a litter of puppies that have already been conceived to be born. If the puppies are born after 31 December 2023, it will be an offence to sell them or to rehome them.

Owners who purchased a puppy before 31 December 2023, which is less than 8 weeks old at that point, will be able to collect it legally when it’s 8 weeks old.

**Stray and Abandoned Dogs**

From 31 December 2023, it will be illegal to abandon an XL Bully dog or allow it to stray.

If you find a stray or abandoned dog of any breed, within Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire areas please contact the Public Protection Partnership’s Animal Warden on:

* 01635 519171 During office hours (8:30am - 5pm, Monday to Thursday or 8:30am - 4:30pm Friday)
* 01733 740426 Outside of these times (including Bank Holidays)

Check to see if they are wearing a tag with the owner’s details on. If you are happy to do so, contact the owner and arrange to have the dog returned.

Otherwise contact us using the above details and we will arrange collection.

Please be aware collection may take up to four hours depending on the time of day, location and volume of work at that time.

We will not collect a dog unless it has been secured.

The police have the enforcement role when dealing with banned breeds and any reports relating to XL Bullys should go to them.

**Rescue and Rehoming Centres**

From 31 December 2023, it will be illegal to rehome, sell or transfer ownership of XL Bully dogs. From this date, rescue and rehoming centres should not rehome XL Bully dogs. Rescue and rehoming centres should consider whether the dogs in their care may be XL Bully dogs.

Rehoming centres can decide to:

* keep an XL Bully and apply for a Certificate of Exemption
* euthanise an XL Bully

Rescue and rehoming organisations can [claim a £100 contribution towards any euthanasia cost](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/claim-compensation-for-an-xl-bully-dog). *Compensation must be claimed by 15 March 2024*.

**Vets**

Vets may be asked by XL Bully owners to euthanise their dog. Owners can claim £200 per dog. Rescue and rehoming organisations centres can claim £100. The euthanasia must be performed by 31 January 2024. Owners must [apply for compensation](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/claim-compensation-for-an-xl-bully-dog) by *15 March 2024.*

Vets may also be asked to [confirm an XL Bully dog has been neutered](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/confirm-an-xl-bully-dog-has-been-neutered).

It’s the responsibility of owners to:

* use the official definition and guidance to determine if their dog is within the scope of the ban
* make a declaration as part of their claim for compensation

Vets should be able to recognise dogs as being XL Bully type dogs for the purposes of undertaking euthanasia.

Vets will not be expected to report XL Bully dogs and their owners to the police.

More information can be found on the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons website: [XL Bully dog ban - Professionals (rcvs.org.uk)](https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/xl-bully-dog-ban/)

**Giving Up an XL Bully Dog to be Euthanised**

If you choose not to keep your XL Bully dog, you should take it to be euthanised at a registered vet practice by 31 January 2024.

You can claim £200 compensation towards the costs. You and your vet will need to fill in a compensation form to make a claim. You must apply by 15 March 2024.

