

Bully Watch - Research based on fraud, bias and hype

Bully Watch are an anonymous group who claim to be 'Raising Awareness of the Scale of Large Bully-related Dog Attacks in the UK'. Their website claims that their mission is to promote responsible dog ownership and breeding practices. However, their data and statistics are being quoted as fact in mainstream media, despite them admitting that their research is biased and flawed.

In this document we take a closer look at their research, mostly referencing their report – Breed Specific Violence and the American Bully, available to download from [their website](#).

Don't have time to read the whole thing? Here are a few key points:

- **Bully Watch claim that there have been 11 confirmed human deaths from Bully XLs since 2021 and 3 suspected.** However, police reports have only confirmed 4 as American XL Bully. Bully Watch are grouping various suspected bull breeds and unconfirmed media reports to manipulate their statistics.
- **Bully Watch claim at 43% of attacks in 2023 are from 'large Bully breeds'.** This statement has been repeated in news reports and through MP correspondence to constituents. However, the statistic comes from a small sample of 841 dog attacks, collected via social media. People are more likely to share about a larger dog attack on social media than a small one, especially if they believe the breed to be one they have seen in the media. Therefore, this data set is flawed, unverified and biased. In addition, there were over 21,000 reported dog attacks in 2022, so why is such a small data set used for this statistic?
- **Bully Watch frequently reference outdated research in their report.** For example, they reference PETA being supportive of a breed specific approach to dangerous dogs. The reference is from 2009 and PETA's position is now against breed specific legislation. They also share research on 2 countries that introduced breed specific legislation as an effective measure to prevent severe and fatal dog attacks. Both countries have since abolished breed specific legislation.
- **Bully Watch's cited research often contradicts the point they are making.** For example, they reference a study which found that 'fighting type dogs' scored highest for aggression and dominance. The closest breed to the American Bully cited in this research is the Staffordshire Bull Terrier, which scored as one of the least prevalent

for problematic behaviour. This begs the question – did anyone from Bully Watch read the research they are citing?

Manipulation of data.

Bully watch has created somewhat of a serious issue in the manipulation of their primary data and presentation of secondary data in a way that unnecessarily chastises bull breeds. This is an attempt to highlight some of the more nuanced flaws in the data but is by no means a comprehensive list or in-depth analysis. However, we hope that this document can support in the collection of actual evidence and a more balanced discussion around better methods of tackling the current situation.

Investigating the data

Bully watch's primary data titled "UK dog attack figures 2023" is labelled as "live data" however only includes a sample size of 841 dog attacks. Assuming that the information provided by the BBC's FOI (BBC, 2023) is correct then there has been a steady rise in dog attacks over the last 3 years with a total of 21,918 attacks in 2022. We are now in the third quarter of the year, which begs the question as to why there is only 841 attacks included in the sample.

This is likely down to the method of sampling that has been used, Bully watch have used social media sites to collate this data, relying on members of the public to do 3 things:

- Share information about a potentially traumatic incident online.
- Reliably assess a dog's breed – potentially during a dog attack.
- Reliably report all dog attacks using social media sites, or directly to bully watch.

From a perspective of academic research and human psychology there are a number of issues with this method of data collection. It is commonly understood that cognitive bias exists such as the availability heuristic in this case (Read, 1995). Considering the media coverage of XL bully attacks and the psychological distress of being involved in a dog attack, it would be reasonable to assume a lot of powerful /guardian breeds could be classified as an XL bully because of this (Perry, 2002), any brief research within forensic psychology will highlight potential issues with the accuracy of witness statements after a traumatic event. None of which has been considered (Olaborode and Meintjes-Van der Walt, 2020).

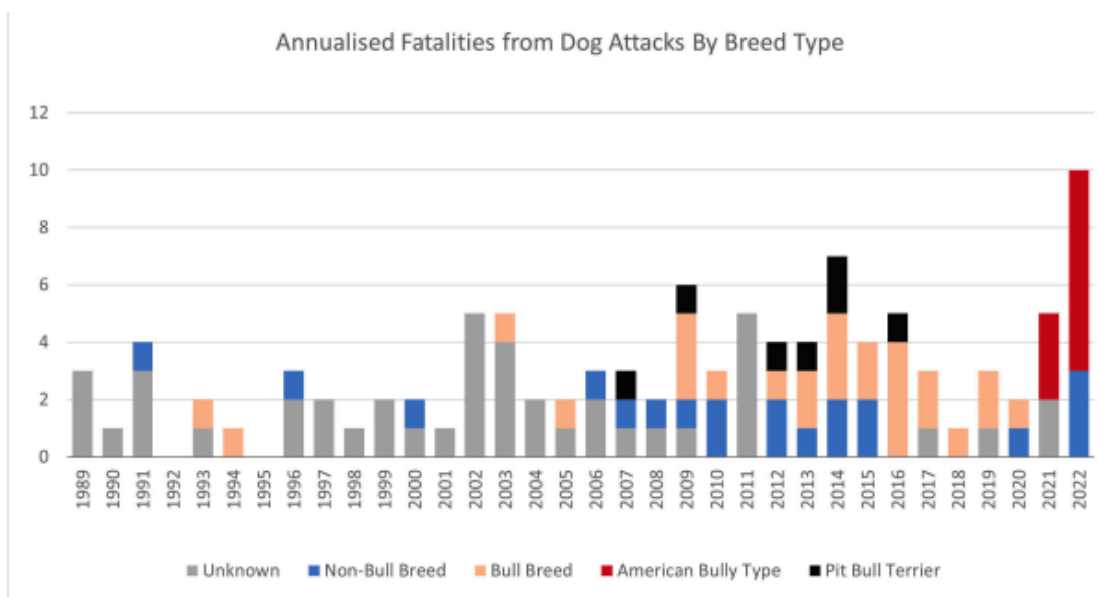
We should also consider the amount of attacks that a person feels are severe enough to report on social media or direct to bully watch as another party. Within psychology we can touch on the "halo" effect in that due to the negative light the dogs are portrayed in within the media, it would be reasonable to assume that a person would be more likely to report an attack than that of a dog perceived to be "sweeter" or more attractive, this is especially

observed when the crime does not relate to physical attractiveness in human study (Ajoori, 2023). Not to mention the statistics that surround reporting dog bites where little to no injury has occurred being a lot less likely.

In the essence of transparency, the research cited regarding cognitive bias has been conducted in human studies and isn't directly applicable to canine issues, it has only been included to demonstrate that a research stream currently exists for the issues mentioned. However, research by Creedon, and Súilleabháin (2017) not only supports this within canine research, but creates a clearer picture of this interaction. This comparison of bites from legislated and non-legislated dog breeds found that non-legislated breeds were more likely to not be reported to the authorities before ($P = 0.009$), and after ($P = 0.032$) the bite occurred compared to legislated breeds. The study also found that legislated breeds were significantly more likely to be perceived as aggressive in comparison to non-legislated breeds ($P = 0.003$) with No significant difference was observed between both legislated and non-legislated groups for medical treatment required following the bite, and the type of bite inflicted. This research was peer reviewed and published in the Irish Veterinary Journal.

Bully watch discusses use of pet insurance data within their reporting when it comes to determining breed populations however neglect to include a number of these breeds within their primary data. The reasoning for this seems to be simple, neglect to mention any/all other bulldog variations so that they can be classified as an XL bully or a mix to inflate the data.

Further evidence of this can be found within their secondary data chart where "bull breed" attacks seemingly stop in 2021 and are replaced with "American Bully type". The same chart also specifies that no attacks leading to a fatality by unconfirmed breeds or pit bull terriers took place in 2022 which is known to be factually inaccurate.



Source: analysis of ONS data on reported dog fatalities to 2021⁴, and reported fatalities from dog attacks taken from Wikipedia⁵ and the RSPCA⁶. Data available on request.

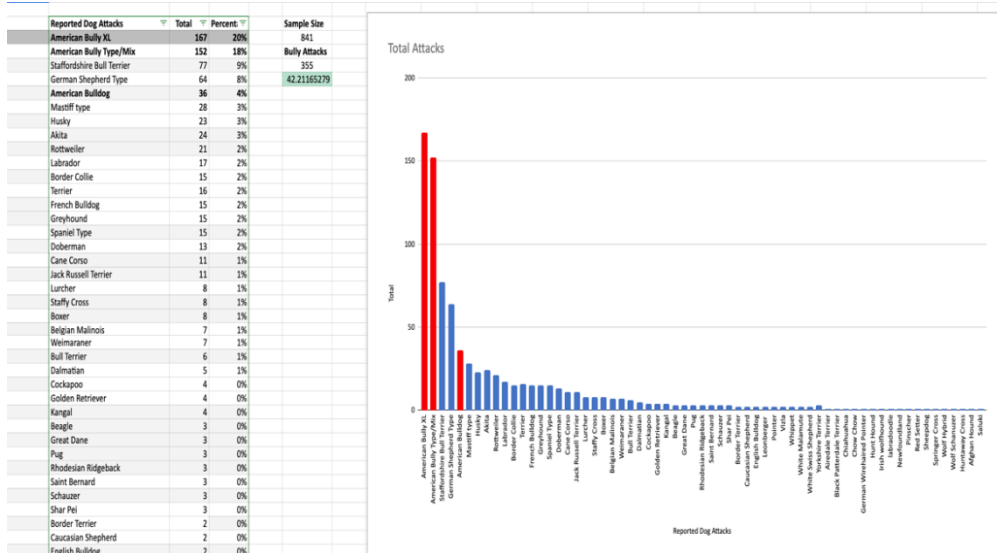
In addition to this, Bully watch then goes on to remove smaller variations of the Bully breed as well as any other variations of the English or American bulldog breed in the “live dog attack” data. Initially it would be reasonable to assume that these are likely to be included under the banner of the English and American Bulldog however upon further inspection we can see that the American Bulldog, a dog that is an entirely separate breed from its Bully counterpart has been included within the data of “bully attacks”. This then begs the question as to how many of these other breeds have been manipulated into the “American Bully type/mix” column to inflate the results further.

There is no definitive way to know if this is the case or if there has been an omission of any attack data from these breeds, however considering that there is no listed breed of dog with 0 logged attacks it seems very unlikely that this is the cause. Use of the internet and media coverage further suggests an inaccuracy in the Bully watch data due to the fact attacks from other bulldog breeds have been spoken about however are not included within the data.

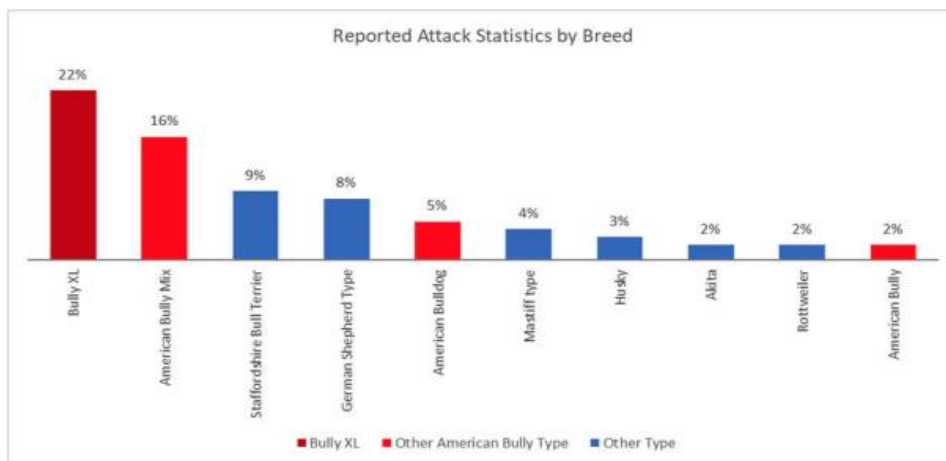
For example, in August 2023 a Dorset Old Tyme Bulldog was subject to a destruction order after attacking a Pizza Delivery man. It was also acknowledged in court that the owners had previously been given warnings relating to the control of their dog prior to the incident. The Dorset Old Tyme Bulldog is a separate breed completely that was not bred from fighting stock and originates from the UK (Frame, on behalf of Yorkshire evening post, 2023), (UKpets, 2023)

Similarly, although no attacks have been reported in the media for a number of years the UK does have an existing population of bulldog breeds such as the Leavitt Olde English Bulldogge, the Alapaha Blue Blood Bulldog, the Catahoula Bulldog and others which are all accepted as an independent breed by UK insurance companies. If these breeds can be separated and acknowledged separately for insurance reasons, why are the UK Kennel club not able to acknowledge their existence or regulate breeding. Likewise, why did Bully watch opt to not include them within their data if not to intentionally inflate the attack rates. The media and even MP’s have quoted the 42% attack statistic from this sample with no regard for its statistical accuracy.

Even if this had not been the case, the sample lacks any statistical power. A simple power analysis for a theoretical similar 1 group experiment with expected effect sizes as listed in the Bully watch sample would require around 75,000 attack statistics in order to gain a sample size powerful enough for a statistical significance of $p=.05$ or lower (less than chance of coincidental data).



Separation of these breeds is evidently possible as Bully watch themselves have done this in another chart on the report with the standard American Bully...



Source: Bully Watch UK analysis of 657 reported attacks, as at 16th August 2023

This data, although for 2023 provides a significant discrepancy with the 2022 data and statement provided by pet insurance company Manypets:

“We examined all third party claims we received between July 2018 and March 2022 and found that 22% were for dog-on-dog bite claims while 29% were for dog-on-human bite claims. A small amount of claims (3%) were for bites or attacks on other animals like chickens or sheep.

The other 46% were for all sorts of things like people being knocked over by dogs by or tripping over them, road traffic accidents, or even tearing clothing, but didn't specifically mention biting.

In the 12-month period up to 28 March 2022, the dog breeds with the highest ratio of third-party claims to the number of that breed insured were:

1. Lurcher
2. Dogue de Bordeaux
3. Great Dane
4. Belgian Shepherd
5. American Bulldog
6. Rottweiler
7. Hungarian Vizla
8. Greyhound
9. Large Mongrel
10. Staffordshire Bull Terrier

Because larger, more powerful breeds have more potential for damage it's not surprising that they are more likely to be involved in third-party insurance claims. But it's far too simple to say they're the breeds most likely to bite or fight.

More realistically, they're likely to simply be the breeds who have come out on top through their sheer size and strength where there has been a dog fight incident.

It reinforces that a great deal of responsibility comes with owning a larger dog, or breeds like Lurchers, Vizlas or Greyhounds with a very high instinct to chase cats and other animals.

But as only 54% of claims are for bites to humans or animals it doesn't really tell us which breeds are most likely to attack. Especially when it comes to bites to humans, which account for less than a third of third-party claims." (Dunn, on behalf of Manypets, 2022)

Considering the blatant and intentional data manipulation highlighted it is clear that the Bully watch data is unreliable and is not trustworthy. These statistics need to be more thoroughly fact checked before considering a ban that will impact almost all Bully, Bulldog and a lot of Mastiff breeds.

References

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Direct references to Bully Watch Report:

Follow along by downloading the Bully Watch Report from [their website](#).

Quoted from the report	Reference to statement in the report	Notes
<p>1. This rise in fatal attacks can be explained by just one breed: the recently-imported American Bully. A fighting breed derived from the (already banned) Pit Bull, these are intensively bred for further size, strength and ferocity. In one week in July, one dog a day was killed by an American Bully.</p>	No reference	<p>1.Many of the breeds in fatal attacks remain unconfirmed by authorities so this is speculation from the author based on media reports.</p> <p>2.Fatal attacks – as there is no official information confirmed/provided by police for all cases, below are fatalities that were reported in media for years 2022-2023:</p> <p>Total fatalities: Total – 17 Breed confirmed – 6 Breed unconfirmed – 11 American Bully confirmed on public domain – 1</p> <p>Refer to report ‘Fatalities 2022-23’</p>
<p>3.This rise in fatal attacks can be explained by just one breed: the recently-imported American Bully.</p> <p>4.A fighting breed derived from the (already banned) Pit Bull, these are intensively bred for further size, strength and ferocity.</p> <p>5.In one week in July, one dog a day was killed by an American Bully.</p>	No reference	<p>3.It is not clear if author refers to human or animal fatalities. As there is no reference provided, it is not possible to check this information. Human fatalities – please refer to report ‘Fatalities 2022-2023’</p> <p>4. According to ABKC, official American Bully breed register: 'Human or dog aggression, extreme shyness, or viciousness is very uncharacteristic of the American Bully and is highly undesirable' – https://abkcdogs.net/breeds/breed-1/</p> <p>5. As there is no reference to the source of information behind this fact, it wasn't possible to check or comment.</p>
<p>6.At present, the American Bully is estimated to represent less than 1% of UK dogs. Yet it has inflicted an astonishing ~44% of all attacks this year, and ~75% of all deaths in the last three years. These figures establish the American Bully breed as an outlier, being ~270x more deadly than the rest of the dog population.</p>	No reference	<p>6.This is a subjective opinion of the author as there is no reference to the source of the information or how the statistics were calculated.</p>
<p>7.This report assesses the latest scientific research on the relationship between dog breed and risk, examining the severity as well as the likelihood of attack. Recent research finds a strong link between dog breed and aggressive behaviour, shifting the debate away from a</p>	No reference	<p>7.No reference to the scientific research mentioned. Below is the reference to the source the author references later in the report that disproves the fact of the strong link between breed & aggression. DDL0205 - Evidence on Dangerous Dogs: Breed Specific Legislation (parliament.uk) DDL0205 - Evidence on Dangerous Dogs: Breed Specific Legislation (parliament.uk)</p>

<p>breed-neutral view of attack likelihood. Consensus has always held that there is a strong relationship between breed and the severity of a potential attack, and recent research confirms this, demonstrating fighting breeds have at least a 6x overrepresentation among severe attacks and an even higher propensity to kill. Finally, reviewing recent research on legislation, we see that effective breed specific legislation can reduce the rate of severe injury by up to 40%.</p>		<p>‘Breed is just one of many factors linked with dog’s likelihood to be aggressive. Other factors influence dog behaviour more than a breed. Although the legislated breeds are perceived to be more aggressive than other breeds, at the moment there is no evidence to suggest that they are more likely to bite. However, when they do bite they may cause greater injury. Therefore, if BSL was in place as a strategy aimed to reduce severity of bites, the list of legislated breeds would hypothetically need to be extended to all large strong dogs. Given the large number of Pit-Bull type dogs in the UK, discrepancies in identifying them and increasing dog bite rates, it is clear that the current legislation has not worked as intended’.</p>
<p>8. As a consequence, this report urges the Government to take immediate action by banning the American Bully type under the Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act (DDA), or by updating guidance to include the American Bully as a banned pit bull-type. The Secretary of State for EFRA can do this immediately - saving children, adults and pets from being attacked, maimed and killed.</p>	<p>No reference</p>	<p>8. There is no evidence that suggests that American Bully breed is responsible for the majority of the attacks. Currently, there are 11 fatalities where breed has yet to be officially confirmed.</p> <p>Children – in 2022, there were 4 fatalities with 4 different breeds confirmed responsible: Husky, Rottweiler, Cane Corso, American Bully</p> <p>Adults – in 2022 & 2023 there were 13 adult fatalities with 59% remaining unconfirmed breeds.</p> <p>Pets – there is no statistics found & author didn’t provide the evidence</p> <p>Provided that there are other larger breeds that resemble American Bully – Scott American Bulldog, Dogo Argentino, Alapaha Bulldog, American Staffordshire Terrier, Pitbul Terrier & their crosses, call for Action to ban the American Bully would be discriminatory towards the American Bully breed due to the lack of the evidence they are the most dangerous breed.</p>
<p>9. This action has strong support among the public. Recent YouGov polling shows a ban on the American Bully is supported by 57% of the public, with only 17% against. This includes majority support amongst the supporters of every major political party.¹ Dog owners support a ban of the American Bully 2:1.</p>	<p>https://www.gbnews.com/news/exclusive-poll-britons-back-killer-breed-dog-ban</p>	<p>9. This survey is based on 2,000 people, which is very narrow audience to demonstrate that it is public opinion. A petition – ‘Bad owners are to blame not the breed - don't ban the XL bully’ – demonstrates that public is against the ban with over 500,000 signatures.</p> <p>Bad owners are to blame not the breed - don't ban the XL bully - Petitions (parliament.uk)</p>
<p>10. A breed-specific approach to dangerous dogs retains the support of organisations responsible for public health such as the National Police Chief’s Council, and animal welfare organisations such as PETA.²</p>	<p>https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/92183/html/; https://www.peta.org/blog/peta-position-pit-bulls/</p>	<p>10. The Written Evidence by National Police Chief Council’s is dated 2016 and provides written evidence regarding pitbulls, thus is not relevant to American Bully breed.</p> <p>On the same note, this written evidence shows that despite the DDA, a banned breed is still responsible for majority of attacks.</p> <p>PETA – the reference is related to 2009, so information is outdated. However, then & now PETA’s position is against BSL, they protest relates to breeding for financial gain.</p>

<p>11. This year has seen increasing public attention concerning a rise in fatal dog attacks. The growth in popularity and ownership of the American Bully has led to this unprecedented increase in dog attack fatalities. Our research shows that 44% of attacks in 2023 have been caused by large functional bully breeds, with the American Bully type accounting for nearly 75% of all fatalities since 2021.³</p> <p>The American Bully poses a unique risk to public safety, due to the frequency with which they commit serious attacks and fatalities. It is crucial to regulate these dangerous dogs before they become a yet-more substantial part of the UK's dog population.</p>	<p>Bully Watch UK data, correct as at 15th August 2023</p>	<p>11. There is no official statistics that shows American Bully breed is responsible for majority of the attacks.</p> <p>There reference is to a report title but no link to the report. Given Bully Watch claim their data comes from social media sources, these numbers cannot be considered credible.</p>
<p>12. Since the start of 2022, we have seen a significant rise in deaths from dog attacks. Last year, 10 people died from dog attacks (the highest number since records began), quadruple the annual average of the previous decade of 2.74. There have been 5 fatalities this year thus far. Statistical modelling shows if nothing had changed within the canine population, the probability of just last year's string of deaths is 0.1%; including this year's that drops below 0.05%. In other words, 2022 was not simply an unlucky year.</p>	<p>Modelling of 2022 and 2022-3 deaths versus a poisson distribution</p>	<p>12. The fatalities reported are fatalities from any breed, in some cases breed hasn't been confirmed.</p>
<p>13. The American Bully is disproportionately responsible for this increase, with American Bully type dogs causing 73% of reported deaths since the start of 2022.</p>	<p>No reference</p>	<p>13. This is the biased opinion of the author. No credible evidence to support this statistic.</p>
<p>14. Bully Watch UK estimates that while the American Bully has rapidly increased in popularity, it is still less than 1% of owned dogs in the UK. If that is true, then it means this breed is almost 270x more deadly than the rest of the dog population.⁸ Even if we are wrong many times over and 6% of all</p>	<p>81% of dogs caused 73% of fatalities; the remaining 99% caused 27%. Each 1% of the remaining dogs caused 0.27% of fatalities, a relative risk ratio of 270x</p>	<p>14. These are author's speculation that aren't based on any evidence. The statistics are almost nonsensical and written in a way to sensationalise the threat of the breed.</p>

<p>dogs in the UK were the American Bully - making it the fourth most popular breed in the UK - these dogs would still be 42x more deadly than the rest of the dog population.⁹</p>	<p>96% of dogs caused 73% of fatalities; the remaining 94% caused 27%. Each 6% of the remaining dogs caused 1.72% of fatalities, a relative risk ratio of 42x</p>	
<p>15. Our data is clear that both the likelihood and severity of attacks by these breeds is higher, as they are responsible for both a disproportionate number of reported incidents as well as an even higher proportion of the most serious attacks involving death or severe injury.</p>	<p>No reference</p>	<p>15. The data is not based on scientific research or official statistics but rather tracking attack cases via social media.</p>
<p>16. American Bully type dogs will attack with less warning, and once they have attacked can become near impossible to restrain: when an American Bully puppy named Venom attacked a small spaniel in Cardiff in July 2023, it took 5 men to restrain it. In another incident, a pit bull type dog in Bradford required a reported 8 men 10 minutes to detach it from a small dog it had attacked.</p>	<p>No reference</p>	<p>16. Author didn't provide any reference to these incidents, there is no possibility to check the credibility of those cases.</p> <p>To presume that American Bully as a breed has an ability to attack with no warning is author's speculation and biased opinion as there is no any evidence that American Bully has this trait across the breed.</p>
<p>17. The rise in deaths is unrelated to training or socialisation during the pandemic. Only one reported death occurred during the period the UK was in lockdown, and the rise in deaths from American Bully breeds post-dates the pandemic: all bar one of the deaths in 2022 were more than 12 months after lockdown ended. Although a study by John Tulloch showed that paediatric dog bite incidents rose during lockdown, this study showed that the increase in bite rates seen up to July 2020 had returned to normal levels within 3 months of the end of lockdown.¹² It is not evidenced why an effect which had faded within 3 months of the end of restrictions would show up almost two years later in a series of serious maulings committed by just one breed.</p>	<p>https://bmjpaedsopen.bmj.com/content/5/1/e001040</p>	<p>17. Misleading statement – The study cited refers to increased number of bite related injuries reported by hospitals during Lockdown, which is allegedly believed to be related to more puppies purchased during lockdown & children spending more time at home according to the source author references to.</p> <p>Author gives biased opinion not supported by any credible evidence by canine specialists whether rise in deaths caused by dogs attacks are related or unrelated to pandemic lockdown, lack of puppy's socialisation at young stage.</p>

<p>18. Bully Watch requested data on seizures under S3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act from all Police Forces and local authorities. Among those who were able to respond, the American Bully was generally a plurality of seizures. The Metropolitan Police, who had seized the most dogs in total over the requested period, had seen the American Bully grow from an insignificant proportion of dogs seized to the most commonly seized dog in 2023.¹³</p>	<p>https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jun/04/met-police-dealing-with-at-least-one-dangerous-dog-a-day-figures-show</p>	<p>18. The information is cut out of context – The MetPolice has provided the data on how many dogs were seized acting dangerously or suspected as legislated breed or present at the crime scenes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide full picture for the entire UK, the statistics for entire UK are required. Author analyses the data provided by Met Police only. 2. Out of all seized dogs, to have an unbiased statistics, we also need to know – whether American Bully breed dogs seized were involved in the attacks or seized on suspicion of being a legislated breed as MetPolice reports doesn't have records of breakdown by reason of seizure vs breed. 3. how many of American Bully breed dogs seized on suspicion of being a legislated breed, were granted exemption and returned to owners. The Police report referred to doesn't not provide this information.
<p>19. The breed accounted for 25% of all dogs seized by the South Yorkshire police since January 2022 were American Bullies, 75% of those seized by Gwent Police were either a bully or a pit bull-type, and similar patterns were observed among other breeds. Bully Watch found similar patterns from FOI data received on dangerous dog incidents and seizures from Cleveland, Greater Manchester, and Lincolnshire Police forces. [Appendix B] The data correlates closely with Bully Watch's own tracker of self-reported attacks showing that the majority of serious incidents and attacks are being caused by Bully type breeds.</p>	<p>No reference</p>	<p>19. Author does not add any reference to the statistics he quotes to be based on data provided by different police departments.</p> <p>Below is the list of Bully Watch requested Police reports, date & status on 28/09/2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MET POLICE 30/05/2023 provided the breed specific report for 2018-2023 • West Midlands 13/08/2023 provided non breed specific • Greater Manchester police 06/09/2023 Awaiting clarification • Thames Valley Police 31/08/2023 Awaiting clarification • Essex Police 22/08/2023 Awaiting clarification • West Yorkshire 22/08/2023 Awaiting clarification • Police Scotland 18/08/2023 Awaiting clarification • Kent Police 18/08/2023 Awaiting clarification • West Midlands 16/08/2023 Awaiting clarification • Greater Manchester police 02/08/2023 Refused • Merseyside police 27/07/2023 Awaiting clarification • Devon and Cornwall Constabulary 26/07/2023 Long overdue • DEFRA 15/05/2023 Refused • West Midlands Police 22/05/2023 Refused • Police Scotland 12/05/2023 Refused <p>https://foi.west-midlands.police.uk/dog-attacks-1054a-23/</p> <p>Bully Watch bases their data by tracking social media. Even if algorithm to track the cases involving American Bully breed dogs is applied, the data collected is unreliable & biased.</p>
<p>20. In the public's mind it is commonly understood that different breeds of dogs have markedly different behavioural characteristics. The same is true in scientific consensus, with much scientific literature based on the understanding that different breeds of dogs "differ behaviorally in substantial, consistent and predictable ways".¹⁵ There has, however, remained some scientific debate about whether this impacts on aggressive behaviour by dogs.</p>	<p>https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2014-12980-001</p>	<p>20. The source cited by the author disprove the statement that the breed is the major predictor of aggression.</p> <p>DDL0205 - Evidence on Dangerous Dogs: Breed Specific Legislation (parliament.uk)</p> <p>DDL0205 - Evidence on Dangerous Dogs: Breed Specific Legislation (parliament.uk)</p>

<p>Recent peer-reviewed academic research conclusively shows that this is not the case.</p>		
<p>21. A number of large, high quality, peer reviewed studies have been released in the last few years which conclusively show breed matters for particular traits, including aggression. A study of 13,700 pet dogs published in the scientific journal Nature in 2020, showed significant heritability of traits such as propensity for aggression which differ significantly between breeds.¹⁶ A 2023 study by the University of Helsinki analysed traits of 11,000 dogs. It found that fighting type dogs scored highest on aggressiveness and dominance while scoring at the lower-end of dog sociability.¹⁶</p>	<p>Prevalence, comorbidity, and breed differences in canine anxiety in 13,700 Finnish pet dogs Scientific Reports (nature.com)</p> <p>(Paragraph 2 on page 5 they reference Finnish study on genetic links to behavioural traits)</p>	<p>21. None of the dog breeds researched are the American Bully breed dogs, however closest related breed from bull family is Staffordshire bull terrier which scores as one of the least prevalent breeds for problematic behaviour observed by the study authors cited here.</p>
<p>22. Pre-2011 studies generally show a strong relationship between breed and owner-directed aggressiveness, with pit bull and other breeds bred for fighting posing a particular danger¹⁸, but these studies are rejected on the grounds of “moderate quality” by academics who oppose breed specific legislation.</p>	<p>J. Sacks, L. Sinclair, J. Gilchrist, G. Golab, R. Lockwood. “Breeds of dogs involved in fatal human attacks in the United States between 1979 and 1998” J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc., 217 (2000)</p>	<p>22. The authors cites to the studies related to pitbull rather than American Bully therefore information is irrelevant as well as outdated</p>
<p>23. More modern studies, however, corroborate these older studies, finding that breed traits are genetic and heritable¹⁹ with certain dogs such as pit bulls scoring highly for aggression towards unfamiliar dog</p>	<p>https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/509315v1.article-metrics https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233995885_Breed_differences_in_canine_aggression</p>	<p>23. These studies suggest that there is a possibility of inheritance of certain traits.</p> <p>Study suggests dog breeds as Dachshund, English Springer Spaniel, Golden Retriever, Labrador Retriever, Poodle, Rottweiler, Shetland Sheepdog and Siberian Husky according to the study might inherit the aggression towards human strangers & owners while Akitas, Jack Russell Terriers and Pit Bull Terriers can inherit aggression towards strange dogs.</p> <p>The referenced studies don’t mention American Bully breed.</p> <p>Dogs that scored the highest level of aggression according to the cited study are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basset Hound Dachshund English Springer Spaniel Golden Retriever Labrador Retriever Poodle Rottweiler Shetland Sheepdog Siberian Husky West Highland White Terrier Yorkshire Terrier

<p>24. This echoes peer reviewed UK studies which have found that Bull type breeds are overwhelmingly involved in dog on dog attacks.²¹ This is not surprising, given that these dogs were intensively bred for use in dog fighting, and thus for higher aggression.</p>	<p>Incidence and impact of dog attacks on guide dogs in the UK - Brooks - 2010 - Veterinary Record - Wiley Online Library</p>	<p>24. The conclusion of this studies is that having been attacked by a dog, having been insufficiently socialized toward dogs early in life, or having predatory interests in general is a risk factor that predisposes for “dog-killing aggression.” In most of referred cases of this cited study, “dog-killing aggression” is likely not of a predatory nature but is associated with uninhibited interspecific aggression, specifically fast and silent attacks.</p>
<p>25. A study conducted in the Netherlands published in 2016 analysed police reports and behaviour tests of 279 dogs to understand intense dog attacks. While the referred dogs came from various breeds, 56%--of the dogs that killed other dogs in the seized group were of the American Staffordshire/pit bull terrier type.²²</p>	<p>Intraspecific killing in dogs: Predation behavior or aggression? A study of aggressors, victims, possible causes, and motivations - ScienceDirect</p>	<p>25. The conclusion of this studies is that having been attacked by a dog, having been insufficiently socialized toward dogs early in life, or having predatory interests in general is a risk factor that predisposes for “dog-killing aggression.” In most of referred cases of this cited study, “dog-killing aggression” is likely not of a predatory nature but is associated with uninhibited interspecific aggression, specifically fast and silent attacks.</p> <p>*American Staffordshire/pit bull terrier is outcross of Bull terrier; their superior loyalty and prey drive made them desirable as guard dogs, livestock herders & hunters in US in late 1800s. American Staffordshire Terrier History: How the AmStaff Separated From the "Pit Bull" – American Kennel Club (akc.org)</p>
<p>26. A study conducted in Sweden in 2016 of 101 dogs found that Bull breeds caused the highest number of injuries and were most often categorised as high risk by police officers. ²³</p>	<p>Canines seized by the Swedish Police Authority in 2015-2016 - PubMed (nih.gov)</p>	<p>26. The author changed the context of the study. The study, examining 101 seized dog, showed that these were cases where the owner didn't follow order or ban, or dogs were dangerously out of control. Study concluded that bull type breeds, followed by Rottweiler and German Shepherd were categorises as high risk for more severe injuries.</p>
<p>27. The clearest encapsulation of the argument is given by Carri Westgarth, an animal academic who uses her work to campaign against breed specific legislation, in her submission to a 2018 EFRA Committee hearing; she describes a series of studies showing that breed is a significant factor in behaviour, with some showing higher owner directed aggression, others showing higher stranger-directed aggression, and fighting breeds scoring highly dog-directed aggression than others. However, she rejects the older studies showing that fighting dogs are more aggressive towards humans on data quality grounds.</p>	<p>Behavioral differences among breeds of domestic dogs (Canis lupus familiaris): Current status of the science - ScienceDirect</p>	<p>27. The study concludes that substantial within-breed differences in behaviour also exist—even in the most controlled experimental studies. Breed differences in behaviour are therefore influenced by both genetics, and by the environment and experience.</p>
<p>28. Her conclusion then was that breed was a smaller factor than environmental stimuli, citing a study²⁵ whose abstract in fact states it found that “there is convincing scientific evidence for reliable</p>	<p>Behavioral differences among breeds of domestic dogs (Canis lupus familiaris): Current status of the science - ScienceDirect</p>	<p>28. The study suggests that widely acknowledged that different breeds have different and consistent behavioral predispositions due to selective pressure by humans.</p>

differences between breeds and breed groups with respect to some behaviours (e.g., aggression, reactivity)".		
29. This argument is unsustainable in the light of the tragic recent data around American Bully attacks, as this breed clearly exhibits a very high frequency of attacking both humans and other dogs.	No references provided	29. It is author's opinion as there is no official information that An American Bully breed dogs are confirmed by experts as involved in most of the recent cases of attacks.
30. Are Certain Dogs More Likely To Inflict Severe Or Fatal Damage When They Do Attack? Scientific consensus clearly ascribes a link between breed and severity of injury - to quote Carri Westgarth, " when [banned breeds] do bite they may cause greater injury ". ²⁶	DDL0205 - Evidence on Dangerous Dogs: Breed Specific Legislation (parliament.uk)	30. The author cut the quote from the cited resource out of the context. The source suggests that BSL has proven to be ineffective, as well as the genetics in not main predictor of certain behaviours in dogs, the main factor is the environment.
31. Peer reviewed studies from the United States, Canada and from European countries support this. From 2018 to 2021, 17 peer-reviewed scientific papers based on hospital data were identified which all showed that pit bull-type dogs were responsible for the most dog bites requiring hospitalisation and resulted in significant injuries. [Appendix C]	No references provided	31. American Bully is a separate breed form pitbull terrier and therefore author's statement doesn't apply to the context.
31. Despite pit bulls comprising only 6% of the population of dogs in the United States, in numerous studies pit bull terriers tend to be involved in about 50% of attacks, despite in many cases 20-25% of attacks involving law enforcement animals. ²⁷ This means they have an 8x-12x higher likelihood of being involved in an attack which results in a hospitalisation.	Dogs and Orthopaedic Injuries: Is There a Correlation With Breed? - PubMed (nih.gov) https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29912736/ https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30075476/ https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34100808/ https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5682160/ ²⁸ https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34787555/ ²⁹ https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31816277/	31. Author cites source related to Pit bull terrier breed and therefore is not relevant.
32. Sadly, not only do pit bull attacks result in worse	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21475022/	32. Author cites source related to Pit bull terrier breed and therefore is not relevant.

<p>injury, they are statistically significantly more likely to result in coma or death: in a 15 year study of 228 hospitalisations at one Trauma and Emergency Surgery Service, 17.2% of hospitalisations from pit bull attacks resulted in a coma and 10.3% resulted in death, while among the non-pit bull attacks, 0% resulted in patients ending up in comas or death.³⁰</p>		
<p>33. Peer reviewed studies of regions where breed specific legislation has been brought in shows that it can be highly effective at preventing severe and fatal dog attacks. Analysis of the introduction of BSL in Catalonia showed that it reduced hospitalisations from dog bites by 38%,³² while similar analysis in Manitoba, Canada saw reductions in hospitalisations of 19%, with significantly higher reductions in hospitalisations of children.</p>	<p>DDL0433 - Evidence on Dangerous Dogs: Breed Specific Legislation (parliament.uk)</p>	<p>33. Author uses outdated data – both countries cited have since abolished Breed Specific Legislation.</p>
<p>34. The National Police Chief’s Council credits breed specific restrictions with protecting public safety, reducing severe and fatal attacks relative to the counterfactual.³³ In fact, observing the very early days of the popularity of the American Bully in 2017, they predicted that if further restrictions were not placed on large functional bully breeds - including specifically the American Bully - that it was unlikely that the reduction in severe and fatal attacks would be sustained.</p>	<p>DDL0433 - Evidence on Dangerous Dogs: Breed Specific Legislation (parliament.uk)</p>	<p>34. The author cites to the evidence letter published in 2016, which makes the statement ‘observing the early days of the popularity of the American Bully in 2017’ contradictory.</p>
<p>35. The experience of places where breed specific legislation has been repealed has often been somewhat negative. In the Netherlands, the removal of breed specific legislation in 2009 resulted in a public swing of opinion in favour of bringing back their breed specific legislation. Although the new “hoog-risico honden” (high-risk dog) legislation proposed isn’t strictly breed-based,</p>	<p>The safe dog project Rapport Rijksoverheid.nl</p> <p>https://www.minderhondenbeten.nl/agressie/hoog-risico-honden/</p>	<p>35. Netherlands had (1993 – 2008) Pitbull banned with aim to have the breed extinct, however after ban was introduced, it didn’t prove to reduce the number of attacks and the ban was therefore abolished. In 2017 the government introduced the list of breeds that are considered high risk dogs & owners of those dogs were supposed to have a course. This was then stopped as Ministry made further investigation and it was concluded that any breed can be responsible for the attack. Current legislation is shaped around owners taking responsibilities for dog related bites/attacks to humans. There are no ban breeds currently.</p>

<p>21 breeds have been esignated automatically high risk and are proposed to be banned.³⁴ Their view is that while every dog can have risk, some breeds have a risk that is far too high to bear. ³⁵</p>		
<p>36. Finally, the legalisation of the American Bully provides a tragic natural experiment. The result of the legalisation of a pit bull sub-breed has been an explosion of severe maulings and fatalities, even while these dogs are still a much smaller population than pit bulls are elsewhere. If the American Bully type had remained illegal, 14 British lives tragically lost would instead have been saved. There is a reason why 550 US jurisdictions, and 32 countries have decided to adopt some form of BSL legislation including Germany, France, and Denmark.³⁶</p>	<p>https://blog.dogsbite.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/estimated-breed-specific-laws-2021.Pdf</p>	<p>36. Author has to be asked to list the cases of fatal attacks to present statistics from the credible source that shows that there are 14 fatal attacks where American Bully was responsible.</p>
<p>37. The American Bully is a crossbreed of the American Pit Bull Terrier and American Staffordshire Bull Terrier, as demonstrated by self-reported DNA testing on a number of dogs. Our study of breed lineage demonstrates it is genetically essentially a larger Pit Bull, with the ancestry of every Bully breed dog in the UK tracing back to these two types of pit bull.³⁷ Some suggest that Mastiff, Bulldogs and other breeds may have been bred in – but “papering” (the practice of forging pedigree papers for banned or cross-breed dogs) prevents analysis from confirming this.</p>	<p>Breed registration statistics Media Centre Kennel Club (thekennelclub.org.uk)</p>	<p>37. There no reference associated with this text.</p> <p>According to the leading authority on the breed American Bully Kennel Club state “The American Bulldog has a history that is traced back to 1121 BC and some would argue even thousands of years before that. The beginning of the modern American Bulldog as a breed began around the 1950’ s when John D. Johnson began to collect Bulldogs from around the GA area to breed, sell and advertise as the American “Pit” Bulldog. Later in 1985, he would drop the “Pit” from the name so as not to be confused with its cousin the American Pit Bull Terrier.</p> <p>So while its genetics may contain DNA of a Pitbull type its lineage over the years has clearly changed through the introduction of DNA from breeds such the English Bull Dog.</p> <p>“What are bully breeds? Bully breed is a generic term used to identify a variety of terrier-type dogs such as American Pit Bull Terriers, Bull Terriers, Bullmastiffs, Staffordshire Terriers, Boston Terriers, Boxers and French Bulldogs. The term bully dog also includes dogs who resemble these terriers in some physical way, but who may or may not actually have any genetic relationship to these breeds of dogs.”</p> <p>“https://www.marin humane.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Bully-Breeds.pdf</p>

<p>38. The breed was introduced to the UK sometime during the 2010s, and was first reported in mainstream media in 2017, when four American Bullies escaped the garden of a breeder and mauled a toddler close to death in Dingle. The breed remains sufficiently rare that it is not recognised by the UK's Kennel Club or most canine insurance providers.³⁸</p>	<p>No references provided</p>	<p>You will see the word 'sometime', again no factual evidence except reference to a media report in 2017 on an attack in Dingle. In fact, the media reported this was an American Bull Dog not an American bully. Again, completely false information</p> <p>https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-40178262.amp</p>
<p>39. Whereas the typical pit bull stock the American Bully was bred from usually weighs between 16kg and 29kg, breeding for bulk and musculature mean that American Bully type dogs can now weigh up to 75kg. Even the most skilled handlers often struggle to control these huge and powerful dogs; three of the fatalities from American Bullies have been from experienced professional dog handlers such as dog walkers and dog trainers, with one of them an experienced dog trainer with a decades-long career in rehabilitating rescued dogs. The use of prong collars, slip leads and other dog training tools is widespread amongst owners.</p>	<p>No references provided</p>	<p>39. It is author's opinion rather than evidence-based fact. In addition, there no logics in statement that American Bullies were selected from 16 – 29kg Pitbull to breed into the dog weighing up to 75kg.</p> <p>There is also no evidence-based cases that state that experienced dog trainers were killed by American bully breed dogs.</p>
<p>40. The pandemic saw a huge increase in amateur backyard breeders with no understanding of canine genetics given the Government stay at home order coupled with the huge increase in demand for dogs. The primary objective in breeding the American Bully became to breed bigger and more muscular dogs or to find physical traits such as colour to have a particular uniqueness-point.</p>	<p>No references provided</p>	<p>40. There is no factual evidence to suggest that American Bully breeders were more prevalent than Labrador breeders and they were being bred to be bigger.</p> <p>The charted standards institute quotes 'Demand for a furry friend' rises during the holiday season, and the isolation brought by pandemic lockdowns and new remote ways of working has increased demand throughout the past year. These changes have led to puppy prices soaring since 2020, presenting opportunities for unscrupulous sellers to profit significantly from mistreated animals. This has also impacted animal shelters, where there have been multiple reports of facilities running "at capacity" this year.</p> <p>https://www.tradingstandards.uk/news-policy-campaigns/news-room/2021/ongoing-effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-impacting-puppy-purchases/</p>
<p>41. Our research shows a significant number of these breeding dogs come from lines with a history of</p>	<p>Breed Genetics – Bully Watch</p>	<p>41. Bully watch cites their own genetic research of each pedigree, this is exaggerated as doesn't seem either realistic or</p>

<p>producing human-aggressive progeny in the United States. Despite this lineage, such breeding dogs are extensively used in the UK. Additionally, the ancestry of a large portion of these dogs includes champion dogs bred for fighting. Although dog fighting was made illegal in the United States in the 1970s, it wasn't enforced until the turn of the century. Some of the dogs we have tracked are descendant from pit bulls active in dog fighting in the 1990s.⁴⁰</p>		<p>possible to study each pedigree - once again their self-proclaimed bias and proved their research & data is false.</p> <p>Discussing issues of dog fighting in the USA and the tracking of individual Dogs is not cited. The majority of xl bullies are registered with ABKC & UKBKC, confirming most owners are responsible. Even when not registered the majority of owners have chosen these dogs because of their loyalty, their affectionate nature.</p> <p>It is not conceivable that over 100,000 American Bullies in the UK are fighting dogs!</p>
<p>42. The breed has increased in popularity since 2019, but still comprises a very small but rapidly rising minority of dogs. Only around 2% of puppies for sale on a variety of online marketplaces are for the American Bully breed. This, coupled with life expectancy of dogs, makes it likely that significantly less than 1% of owned dogs in the UK are American Bullies.</p>	<p>No references provided</p>	<p>42. this is author's biased opinion and not cited to any credible source.</p>
<p>43. Prior to litigation by a dog breeder sometime in the 2010s, the breed was considered a pit bull-type, illegal under section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. Repeated litigation resulted in dog typing organisations accepting that this was a different breed, despite the breed history clearly showing that this was a pit bull cross breed.⁴¹</p>	<p>(59) The Man that Brought the XL Bully to the UK!! - YouTube</p>	<p>43. Author speculates facts and cites to unreliable non-expert resource paired with biased interpretation of the information on the video.</p>
<p>44. The breed's genetic diversity is relatively limited due to inbreeding. All current American Bullies are descendants of a handful of US breeders active in the early 1990s. This has resulted in a lineage that stems from a limited number of original dogs. This was essentially narrowed again when the American Bully was introduced in the UK in the mid 2010s where breeders had a much smaller genetic pool from which to breed from. Most American Bully pedigrees show evidence of some inbreeding, with certain influential progenitors even displaying an extreme inbreeding coefficient of 40% or higher. This risks producing dogs with both health and neurological issues. According to the BVA, the base</p>	<p>No references provided</p>	<p>44. Author speculates facts. Not being either American Bully specialist breeder or canine expert/vet, statements related to inbreeding, potential neurological issue or breed specific dysplasia are speculations.</p>

standard for the XL Bully is to have mild hip dysplasia.		
45. The American Bully is a recent import to the UK. This breed is often bred in unsafe environments by amateur or inexperienced breeders operating without the required licences.	No references provided	45. This is author's biased opinion and not based on any evidence. Yes, there are amateur and unlicensed breeders but in all breeds. This is not just a bully issue. In fact the UK government in 2018 made a number of significant changes English breeding regulations. A key point to note they have also had to update legislation again 2022. This a country wide, all breed issue. https://www.bluecross.org.uk/news/breeding-bad-true-cost-irresponsible-pet-breeding
46. When analysing 35 of the most popular UK based breeders of American Bullies, Bully Watch found 33 (94%) prominently featured dogs with cropped ears (an illegal and cruel practice, criminalised under Section 5 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006). Moreover 91% of breeders assessed did not feature a dog licence, a legal requirement for the sale of dogs in the UK.	Bully Watch UK Investigation Bully Watch UK research, Pets4Homes.com	46. No way to verify this information, No information provided on details of this analysis and methodology. For this reason considered unreliable. Misleading to imply illegal activity from lack of registration on companies house. A business - in this case kennel - doesn't have to be a limited company, and therefore be registered on companies house, in order to operate legally
47. Despite high inbreeding and known issues of aggression, it is common for breeders to market the breed as being family and child friendly. Indeed, breeders can be found claiming that American Bullies are great with children due to their high tolerance for pain. Bully Watch's research shows some breeders sell American Bullies despite admitting that their animals are unable to control arousal and that they have been specifically bred with or for high prey drives.	No references provided	47. "Known issues of aggression" - presenting personal opinion derived from biased information as a common fact. No examples or further information provided on specific breeders and their statements - misleading generalisations.
48. Early anecdotal evidence suggests that these unethical breeding practices of a dangerous dog breed have triggered the start of a crisis among dog shelters	No references provided	48. "Dangerous" is an opinion not a proven characteristic Shelters are not being overwhelmed by one breed, unethical breeding and ownership practices are observed among many breeds - leading to the overwhelming of shelters. Animal welfare groups, including Battersea, have stated that BSL has had crushing effects on its shelters and a new ban would actively worsen that https://www.battersea.org.uk/what-we-do/animal-welfare-campaigning/breed-specific-legislation https://planetradio.co.uk/city/local/news/xl-bully-ban-rescue-centres-grind-halt/
49. . Further research by Bully Watch on independent shelters is ongoing, but early indications are that owners, unable to control their American Bullies or, to quote one case study,	No reference	49. Details of the research aren't provided No sources found to suggest american bullies are given to shelters in "high numbers". There is a concern from shelters on the other hand that a ban will likel

being 'scared' of them, are consequently giving them to shelters in high numbers. This research is forthcoming, but it is clear that UK breeding practices for this dangerous breed require serious investigation		y cause an influx of newly banned Bullies and overwhelm shelter capacity https://planetradio.co.uk/city/local/news/xl-bully-ban-rescue-centres-grind-halt/
50. The Government must act decisively and quickly, using the powers they already have. There are two paths, listed in order of preference	No reference	50. There are not 2 paths, there are several alternative legislative frameworks for controlling dangerous dogs that can be adopted. To frame the government as having no other options is misleading
51. The American Bully type is a close descendent of the American Pit Bull Terrier, and as such is a "fighting breed" per the Dangerous Dogs Act	No reference	51. American Bully is a descendent of many dogs, in the same way the pit bull descended from Staffordshire Terriers and also wolves. It is majorly studied and confirmed by many studies that breed is not the main indicator of aggression. The American Bully is not a fighting breed, it has not been bred for fighting.
52. This option requires little more than the signature of the Secretary of State and would immediately stop a significant threat to pets and children across the country	No reference	52. Credible evidence from independent studies and major animal welfare groups suggests that BSL is ineffective at protecting public safety and therefore wouldn't "stop a significant threat to pets and children" 4 child fatalities last year, as well as one American Bully, a Rottweiler, Siberian Husky and Cane Corso were involved
53. The UK Bully Kennel Club, and the United Kennel Club both describe the American Bully as necessarily bearing significant characteristics of its parent breed (the American Pit Bull Terrier). ⁴⁴	https://www.ukcdogs.com/docs/breeds/american-bully-breed.pdf	53. While the breed standard states the breed's American Pit Bull Terrier ancestry, it also highlights the infusion of other breeds including the American Bulldog, English Bulldog, and Olde English Bulldogge. Temperament characteristics according to this standard are as follows - "The American Bully breed is, first and foremost, a companion, exhibiting confidence with a zest and exuberance for life. Despite its powerful appearance, their demeanor is gentle and friendly" (Aggression is considered highly undesirable
54. As a cross-breed of the American Pit Bull Terrier, the American Bully should be considered a "pit bull-type" as per the Dangerous Dogs Act.		It is a misrepresentation of the breed history to suggest American Bullies are the same as American Pit Bull Terriers American bullies were infused with various breeds including American Staffordshire terriers, English Bulldogs, American Bulldogs, Olde English Bulldogges which naturally changed the characteristics of the breed - particularly removing the prey drive typical to terrier breeds
55. This requires simply updating the non-statutory dog typing guidance. The Secretary of State for EFRA, or the Minister for Policing, should issue guidance to Chief Constables that the government considers the American Bully a "Pit-bull type". These actions merely restore the original intent of Parliament in passing the Dangerous Dogs Act. It is only through a lack of updated guidance that the American Bully is currently in the UK. If guidance	https://www.ukcdogs.com/docs/breeds/american-bully-breed.pdf	55. Author suggests the government to implement the DDA with 1 breed included into the list of dangerous breeds, however complete disregards the fact that the attacks that involved American Bullies are minority as well provided manipulated data, fabricated facts and biased opinion within this report.

had been updated to reflect changes in breeding, the American Bully would not have been permitted and, as a result, many children and dogs would not have died.		
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If you have research on Bully Watch or anything you think we should add to this document please contact dontbanmelicenceme@outlook.com.

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