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Information regarding the government's ban on XL Bully dogs

The UK government have recently made the decision to add XL Bully dogs to the list of dogs banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act of 1991.

From 31st December 2023 it will become a criminal offence to sell, abandon or give away an XL Bully dog; breed from an XL Bully; or take an XL Bully out in public unless the dog is muzzled and on a lead.

From 1st February 2024 it will be illegal to own an XL Bully in England or Wales unless the dog has a Certificate of Exemption.

Please be clear that this is a change in UK law and is not within the control of Acorn House Veterinary Hospital. Veterinary Surgeons are not adjudicators or enforcers of this legislation but there are some aspects of the legislation that XL Bully owners will need to ask their vet to assist with. Acorn House Veterinary Hospital has considerable empathy for the difficulties that the new legislation will create for some dog owners.

How do I know if my dog is an XL Bully?

The legislation is clear that the responsibility for identifying that a dog is an XL Bully lies with the owner. Veterinary surgeons are not being asked to identify or report XL Bully dogs to the police, nor can they alter clinical records or provide letters challenging police decisions should a disagreement arise between a dog owner and the authorities as to whether a dog should be categorised as an XL Bully or not. Please do not ask your veterinary surgeon to state whether your dog is an XL Bully or not, as they have not been given the authority to make this decision on your behalf.

The official definition of an XL Bully dog can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-definition-of-an-xl-bully-dog>

It is recognised that some of the breed characteristics are subjective and owners may struggle to be sure whether their dog is an XL Bully or not. The government advice is to err on the side of caution and to comply with the requirements if there is any possibility that your dog may be an XL Bully.

What shall I do if my dog is an XL Bully?

Owners of XL Bully dogs have two options:

1. Arrange for euthanasia of their dog before 31st January 2024
2. Comply with the requirements for owning an XL Bully before 1st February 2024, which include:
 - a. The dog must be microchipped

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- b. The dog must only enter a public place if they are muzzled and on a lead at all times
- c. The dog must be neutered (a Certificate of Neutering is required to prove this)
- d. The dog must have third party liability insurance (the police or dog warden can ask to see this)
- e. The owner must successfully apply for a Certificate of Exemption for the dog before 1st February 2024

What if I decide to have my XL Bully euthanised?

If you decide to have your XL Bully dog euthanised at Acorn House please contact Reception to book an appointment. Further information regarding euthanasia at Acorn House is available at <https://www.acornhousevets.co.uk/Bereavement1602.html>

A government scheme has been set up to provide pet owners with £200 compensation towards the costs of euthanising their XL Bully dog in accordance with the new legislation. If you wish to claim this compensation payment you must:

- Settle the bill with Acorn House in the usual way, at the time of the euthanasia appointment
- Use the following link to register with the Rural Payments Agency and print out the compensation form. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/claim-compensation-for-an-xl-bully-dog/registering-with-the-rural-payments-agency-to-claim-compensation-for-the-euthanasia-of-xl-bully-dogs>
- Complete the compensation form as far as you are able and bring it to the euthanasia appointment (ideally) or at a later date for the vet to complete and sign. You will need to submit the completed form by 15th March 2024 to receive the payment, but the dog must have been euthanised on or before 31st January 2024.

What if I decide to keep my XL Bully dog?

If you decide to keep your XL Bully dog you must make sure that the following are in place by 1st February 2024:

1. Your dog must be microchipped and registered on the microchip database under your name
2. Your dog must be kept on a lead and must wear a muzzle at all times in a public place. Muzzle training should be started in advance of the ban, to enable your dog to learn to wear the muzzle calmly. Acorn House has information on muzzle training on the website at <https://www.acornhousevets.co.uk/information-sheets.html>
3. You must have up to date third party public liability insurance for your dog. The Dogs Trust is currently offering this insurance cover.
4. Your dog must be permanently neutered (castration for male dogs; spaying for females). If your dog is over 1 year old on 31st January 2024, they must be neutered by 30th June 2024. If your dog



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is under 1 year of age on 31st January 2024, neutering must be performed by 31st December 2024.

5. You must ask your vet to complete a Confirmation of Neutering form for your dog and submit it to DEFRA. The fee for Acorn House to complete and submit this form is £55. The form can be completed at the time of neutering for XL Bully dogs being neutered from now on. For dogs that have been neutered in the past, it will be necessary to book and attend an appointment for your dog's medical records to be checked and the microchip to be scanned before the form can be signed by the vet. If your dog was neutered by a practice other than Acorn House, you are advised to ask the practice that neutered the dog to complete this form. If no veterinary records can be provided to prove that an XL Bully has been neutered by another practice (these will need to include the microchip details), it could be necessary to perform exploratory surgery to confirm that a dog has been neutered before the form can be signed. In these (rare) cases, additional surgery charges will apply.
6. You must apply for a Certificate of Exemption for your dog before 1st February 2024. Details of the process, form and fee applicable can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-certificate-of-exemption-to-keep-an-xl-bully-dog>. You will need to know your dog's microchip number to apply for the certificate.

Further information

Full details of the new legislation can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prepare-for-the-ban-on-xl-bully-dogs>

The team at Acorn House is here to support dog owners through the introduction of this new legislation. Please remember that this is government legislation and it is not under the control of the staff members at Acorn House, many of whom will be dealing with their own feelings when asked to euthanise healthy XL Bully dogs. Although the practice has considerable empathy for the difficulties that the legislation may pose for dog owners, it is of course the case that rude or abusive behaviour towards Acorn House staff is not appropriate and will not be tolerated.