



# ConsultationResponse

FROM THE RSPCA IN WALES

## Consultation response: Newport City Centre Public Space Protection Order

February 2018

RSPCA Cymru is responding to Newport Council's PSPO consultation relating to the city centre PSPO with regards to condition seven ensuring that dogs are kept on leads.

Under the existing Dog Control Order, it is already "an offence to fail to remove dog faeces deposited by a dog under your control"<sup>1</sup>. RSPCA Cymru understands that dog fouling is a major issue for towns and cities across Wales. Therefore, in order to increase responsible dog ownership and improve the relationship between dog owners and the wider community, the RSPCA agrees that it should continue to be an offence for an owner not to clean up their dog's faeces.

Several local authorities in Wales have also introduced a new condition within their PSPOs which would require dog walkers to carry an appropriate receptacle for dealing with their dog's waste, such as a poop bags or other means at all times. RSPCA Cymru believes that this would also be beneficial in helping to improve responsible dog ownership.

**Condition 7: Any person in charge of a dog within the restricted area shall be in breach of this Order if he/she fails to keep the dog on a lead (of no more than 1.5 metres in length).**

Whilst owners may claim to have effective control of their dog when off the lead, keeping the dog on a lead prevents incidents from occurring, especially in a potentially stressful situation such as a city centre location, and therefore the RSPCA supports retaining this proposal. RSPCA Cymru recommends to owners that they take their dogs behaviour into account before exposing them to potential stressful situations and if necessary seek advice from their vet who may refer them to a clinical animal behaviourist.

RSPCA Cymru would encourage, as part of these proposals, to take the opportunity to introduce wide ranging promotional materials with a strong educational element about the PSPO requirement but also signposting dog owners to accredited websites or organisations for help on training and behaviour, and the general promotion of responsible dog ownership<sup>2</sup>. In the event that a dog owner decides that they can't take their dog into the city centre, it should be clearly stated that they must not leave their dog in a car, especially on a warm day, and that they should consider alternative arrangements.

Although the condition requires a length of "no more than 1.5 metres in length", RSPCA Cymru would encourage discretion by enforces, for example, allowing situations where the lead is greater than 1.5 metres but the dog is still under "effective control" and is not causing a nuisance to other city centre users. To ensure that this condition is administered appropriately, RSPCA Cymru would like to see that the experience, knowledge and training of the officer imposing the condition is sufficient to ensure

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.newport.gov.uk/en/Transport-Streets/Dog-control/Dog-Control-Orders/Dog-control-order.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> In 2015 the Welsh Government commissioned the RSPCA to investigate Responsible Dog Ownership, as such a joint report by the RSPCA, Police, Local Government and Dogs Trust was submitted to the Welsh Government in March 2016 with recommendations for one portal or website hosting all relevant information for dog owners. A copy of the report can be found here: <http://politicalanimal.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Responsible-Dog-Ownership-Review-March-2016.pdf>

the welfare of the dog is not compromised e.g. that they are able to signpost the owner to someone appropriate for further advice regarding their dog's behaviour.

Dog owners must also remember their responsibilities under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, especially the need to allow their dog "to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns"<sup>3</sup>. RSPCA Cymru would encourage dog owners to consider a range of walking opportunities to allow their dog to be on and off the lead being able to meet, play and interact appropriately and adequately with other dogs and humans to ensure they, and in particular puppies, develop into well adjusted happy individuals. RSPCA Cymru does recognise that not all dogs will be well-socialised and may find other animals or people threatening and where this is known then they should be encouraged to seek advice about their dog's behaviour and apply measures to ensure their dog doesn't pose concern to the community.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/section/9>