



Improving the Operational Effectiveness of the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act, 2010

Scoping Study by the Improvement Service

16 February 2021

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Improvement Service

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About the Improvement Service

- Company limited by guarantee, incorporated in 2005, not for profit
- 34 members – COSLA, SOLACE, 32 councils
- Governed by Local Government through Board of Directors

Our Vision:

To be an agile organisation that supports and mobilises resources for our partners to manage the challenges they face in improving outcomes and reducing inequalities

Our Purpose

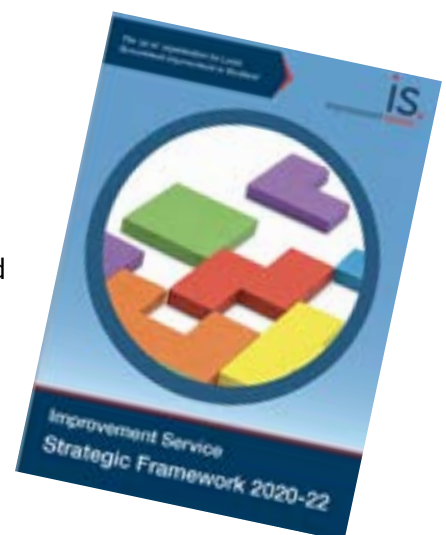
We are the '**go to organisation**' for Local Government improvement in Scotland.

We:

- Provide leadership to Local Government and the wider system on improvement and transformation;
- Develop capability and capacity for improvement within Local Government;
- Deliver national improvement programmes for Local Government and partners and support councils to improve at a local level;
- Provide research, data and intelligence to inform Local Government's policy-making and decision-making and to drive improvement;
- Deliver national shared service applications and technology platforms; and
- Broker additional resources from outwith the sector to support the delivery of Local Government's priorities.

Our Strategic Priorities

- We will support Local Government to live with Covid-19;
- We will support Local Government to re-build post Covid-19;
- We will support Local Government's contribution to the delivery of Scotland's National Performance Framework; and
- We will support Local Government, working with their communities and partners, to deliver place-based approaches.





1.0 Introduction

1.0 Background

1.1. The UK has a strong tradition as a dog-loving nation with dogs and puppies valued companions for many individuals and families. According to a 2019/2020 survey, dogs are the most commonly owned pet in UK households; the share of households reporting dog ownership stands at around 23%. In 2018/19, pet dog numbers in the UK reached 9 million, comprising approximately 550,000 in Scotland, a figure that has grown to nearer 600,000 today. 21% of Scotland's population, or some 471,000 households, are dog-owners.

1.2. A survey by Ipsos MORI in September 2020 pointed to pet ownership in the UK soaring in response to the Covid-19 lockdown, expecting it to continue growing. Nearly half of all British people already owning a pet, obtained at least one new one during lockdown. In the same survey, 10% of British households not owning a pet indicated an intention to get one in the following six months. Pet and dog ownership is significant for other reasons; on average, pet owners lead healthier and more physically active lifestyles than non-pet owners, and health and wellbeing have enormous impacts on the economy and productivity.

1.3. The vast majority of dogs react well with humans, and the majority of dog owners take their ownership role seriously and act responsibly. However, the number of dog attacks on people is rising. In 2019, 864 people were **admitted to hospital** in Scotland after dog attacks, 53 higher than the previous year. **Hospital attendances** resulting from dog attacks amounted to 6,992 in 2019 (the last full year's data available), an increase of almost 8% from the previous year. In 2019, there were 23 dog attacks on postal workers in Scotland. Despite the introduction of the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act in 2010, over 2,500 postal workers in Scotland have been attacked by dogs since then.

1.4. Dog bites and attacks cause injury, even leading to some victims having to undergo reconstructive surgery. In a small number of cases, they can prove fatal. Dog attacks can result in lasting trauma for victims and their families, including a fear of public places and a distrust of animals.

1.5 The Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act, 2010 was passed by the Scottish Parliament in April 2010, making further provision for the control of dogs, including by amending existing legislation, the Dangerous Dogs Act, 1991. The new legislation made [15 provisions](#) for the serving of a **Dog Control Notice**, and these include if:

- a. If it comes to the attention of an authorised officer that a dog has, on at least one occasion after this section has come into force, been out of control, the officer may serve on the proper person a written notice (to be known as a “dog control notice”) requiring the person to bring and keep the dog under control,
- b. A court makes a requirement under section 5(4) or a case is remitted under section 9(3), an authorised officer is to serve such a notice (or as the case may be a further such notice) on the proper person.

Sources: Public Health Scotland; Statista.com; Ipsos MORI (on behalf of LetterOne); [Letter from the Minister for Community safety to the PAPLS Committee, Scottish Parliament, 23 December 2020](#)

1.6. Despite the legislation introduced in 2010, there have been calls to look at the opportunities to strengthen dog control legislation as:

- c. *Thousands are continuing to attend A&E every year with attack injuries.*
- d. *Some local authorities need to boost their resources to ensure dog warden services can be undertaken / made available in their communities.*
- e. *The number of dog control notices served by local authorities across the country is varied.*

1.7. Other factors are behind views that the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act, 2010 is proving ineffective in addressing the problem of out-of-control dogs and irresponsible owners. These include:

- a. Misinterpretation of the legislation by Police, the Crown Office, the Procurator Fiscal Service and the Scottish Courts, including from difficulties in securing a conviction from the law being applied in strict terms.
- b. There were varying degrees of enforcement by police across the country.

The Scottish Government's consultation on improving the operational effectiveness of the Control of Dogs Act (2010) confirms support for the establishment of a dog control notice database. It is Scottish Government's intention to work towards establishing the database involving key stakeholders, including COSLA, Police Scotland and Local Authorities and other stakeholders who hold membership on the Scottish Government-led Working Group on Dangerous Dogs and Dog Control. Prior to a database's establishment, Section 8 of the Control of Dogs (S) Act 2010 required Scottish Government to initiate a consultation on it. A consultation ran between September 2019 and January 2020, and the consultation findings published in June 2020 revealed strong support for a dog control notice database..

1.8. In September 2020, following meetings between the Minister for Community Safety, COSLA's Community Safety and Wellbeing spokesperson and Police Scotland., Scottish Government Justice officials and representatives of the National Working Group engaged with the Improvement Service and COSLA.to explore how to take the database development forward.

1.9. This resulted in Scottish Government commissioning the Improvement Service in November 2020 to undertake a scoping study designed to:

- develop a fuller understanding of the current approach towards dog control notice management, involving engagement with Scotland's Local Authorities and other stakeholders
- Analyse and assess ways the approach might be transformed and improved, leading to multiple benefits
- Assess technology options available, including to establish and maintain a Dog Control Notice national database and an understanding of its likely costs.

1.10. The scoping study was expected to run from late November 2020 to early February 2021.

 **EMERGENCY**
Drop-Off

 **Hospital** 
Drop-Off

 **Emergency
Parking**



 **Visitor Parking** 

 **Exit**

Drop-Off
 **EXIT**

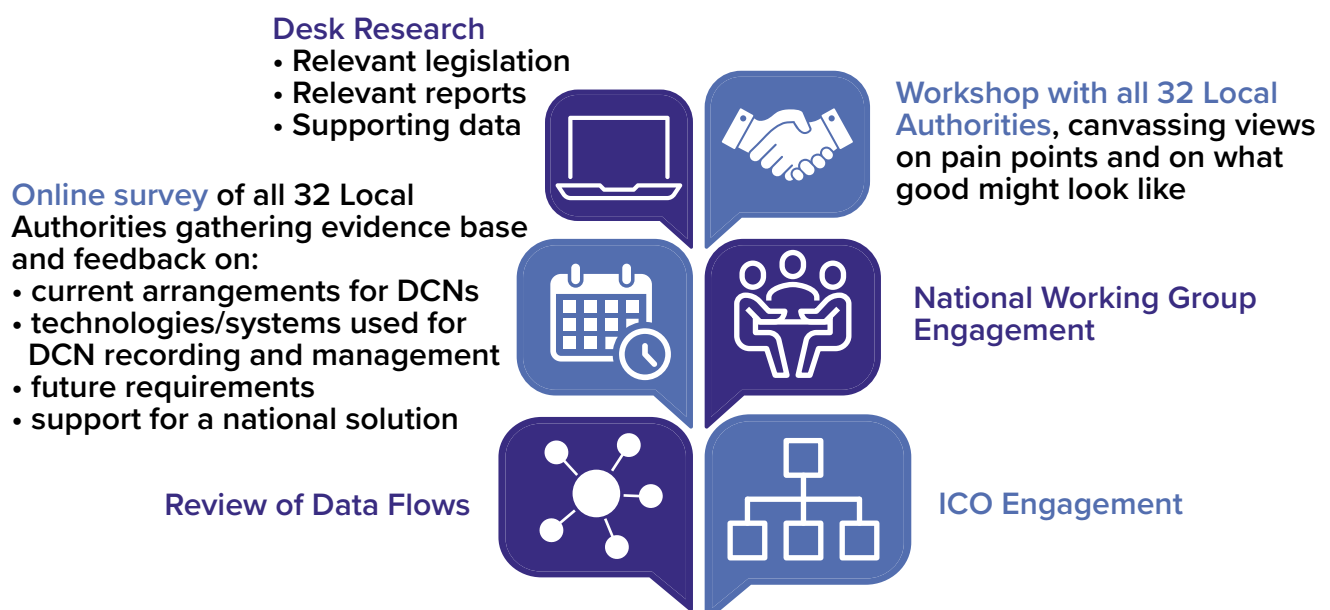
2.0 Scoping Study Remit and Methodology

2.1. In broad terms, the scoping study set out to:

- Develop a fuller understanding of the current approach towards dog control notice management
- Analyse and assess ways it might be transformed, bringing multiple benefits
- Assess technology options available , including the establishment of a national database

2.2. The scoping study deployed a range of methodologies, including:

- a. Desk research to examine pertinent legislation, Scottish Parliament Official Reports and relevant data points.
- b. An online survey of all 32 Local Authorities to gather evidence of the current approach ('As-Is') and to understand high-level requirements for a future ('To-Be') model.
- c. Stakeholder engagement, including:
 - o a virtual workshop held with representatives of all 32 Local Authorities
 - o a presentation to the National Working Group on the online survey's interim findings
 - o A meeting with the Information Commissioner's Office on 2 February 2021 to consider and take advice on relevant data protection matters
- d. A high-level appraisal technology options appraisal for a future, 'To-Be' model to assist in helping improve the operational effectiveness of the dog control legislation and deliver other benefits.





3.0 Survey Findings

3.1. An online survey was issued to all 32 Local Authorities on 9th of December 2020, and open for responses over a four week period. The survey asked 25 questions related to current systems for capturing and storing Dog Control Notices (DCNs) within local authorities; about future plans for developing new systems where these do not already exist; about DCN volumes; about future requirements; and about views on establishing a national database. (Note: Not all respondents were asked all questions, as it was possible to skip questions depending on whether each local authority had an existing system. A full list of questions is shown in Appendix A). In total, 27 local authorities (84%) responded to the survey.

3.2. Technology systems are already in place in all Local Authorities, excluding one, for recording Dog Control Notices. Rather than a single platform, 24 Local Authorities (84%) use one of three systems, Civica Flare (38%) Idox Uniform (19%) and MS-Excel (31%). **(Figure 1: Systems for Capturing Dog Control Notices)**. One Local Authority is not currently using a system, however, it is planning to introduce one within the next 3-6 months period.

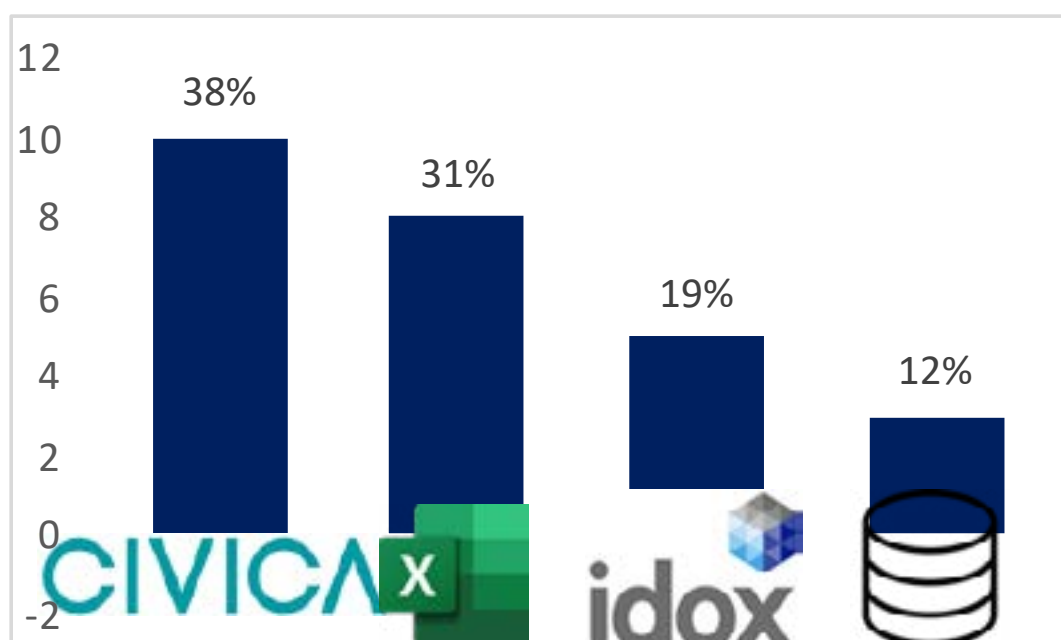


Figure 1: Systems for Capturing Dog Control Notices

3.3. The annual volume of Dog Control Notices is relatively low in number, possibly influencing the level of frequency with which Dog Control Notice data is input to local systems. The vast majority of respondents (70%) entered notice data at the point a Dog Control Notice is issued while just over a quarter (27%) either entered data daily or multiple times per week. **(Figure 2 - How Often is Data Captured and Entered into the System)**. Local Authorities larger in size by populations and geography entered data more frequently than those with lower populations and geography, and likely reflective of higher levels of dog ownership in their area based on (human) population levels.

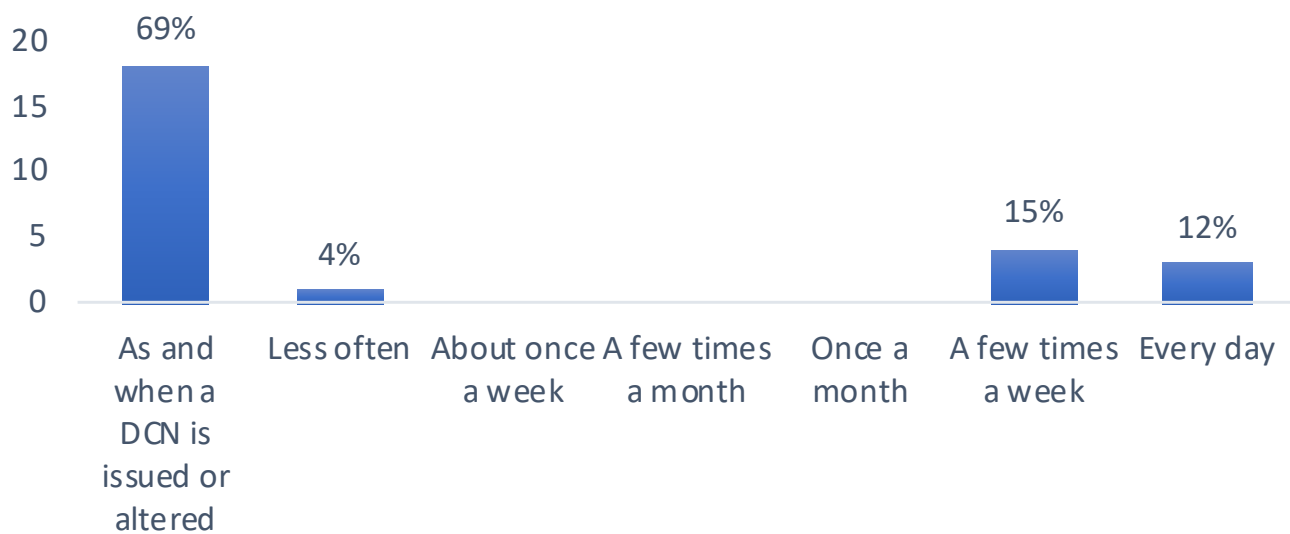


Figure 2 - How Often is Data Captured and Entered into the System

3.4. Dog Control Notices recorded across Scotland on an annual basis are relatively small in number, amounting to around 1,400 in total at the extreme. In 85% of local authorities the number per quarter is less than 10, with 62% entering less than 5 DCNs per quarter. Just 8% of local authorities indicated they enter more than 30 DCNs per quarter. **(Figure 3 - Average Dog Control Notice Entries Recorded per Quarter).** (Note: this analysis does not account for five (5) Local Authorities not supplying data).

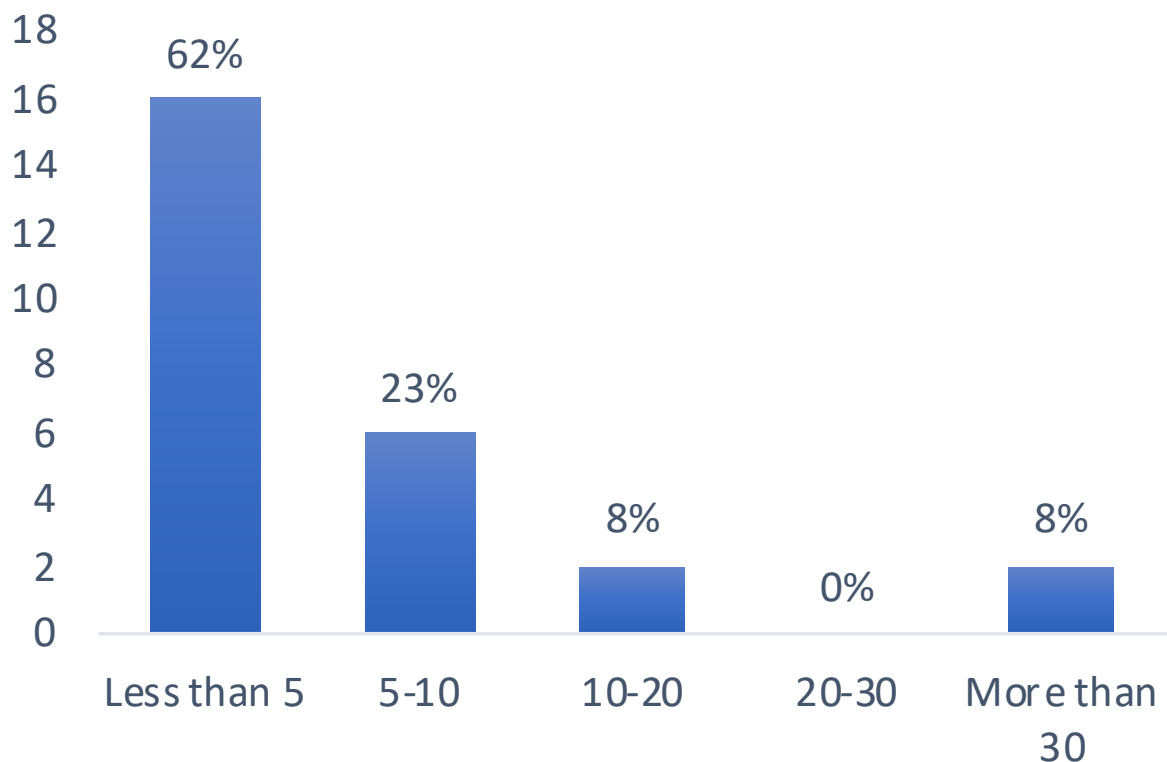


Figure 3 - Average Dog Control Notice Entries Recorded per Quarter



3.0 Online Survey Findings

3.5. Over half of Local Authorities (57%) perform reporting, monitoring or analysis of the stored data. Monitoring of and reporting on data is done mainly on an ad hoc, rather than systematic, basis, for example, when responding to Freedom of Information requests, when providing benchmarking data or when replying to Police Scotland enquiries. Several Local Authorities do more regular reporting or monitoring, for example, bi-annual or annual internal service performance reporting or statutory returns. Some local authorities include Dog Control Notice information, mainly of the total numbers served, as part of their annual APSE data return. It appears that local authorities are not carrying out detailed analysis, relying on relatively basic monitoring; in a few cases, the simplicity of existing recording systems was cited as a factor for why monitoring proved difficult.

3.6. Respondents were generally very positive when asked to rank their existing systems on a scale of one to five and where five was “Work very well” and 1 was “Do not work well at all”. Ten (38%) respondents gave the highest ranking of five, while a further twelve (46%) ranked their system as four. Only three respondents (12%) marked three out of five, and just one rated it two out of five. No respondents said that it did not work well at all. Taken together, over four-fifths (84%) believe their existing arrangements work very well/well. **(Figure 4 - How Well Would You Say Your Current Arrangements Work).**

“It’s simple and straightforward for the very few DCN’s we serve.”

“We have very low numbers of FOI so the DCNs are relatively easy to manage.”

3.7. Some felt searching and retrieving Dog Control Notice information was easy using their system. Some felt that their system having features such as the ability to set reminders and create tasks were useful.

“Reference numbers relate to each complaintwhich makes searching the database easy. The recording of each action is good because it allows officers to see how the investigation is progressing and when an action was completed.”

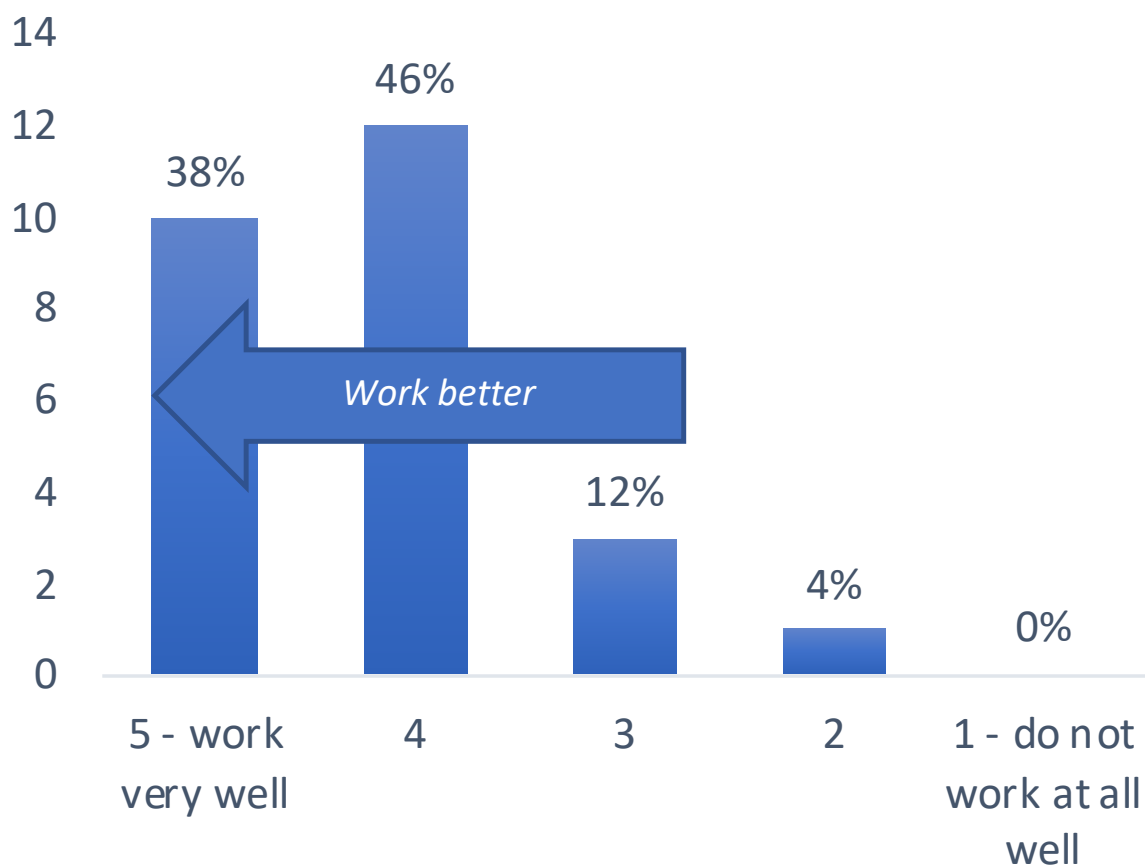


Figure 4 - How Well Would You Say Your Current Arrangements Work.

3.8. While expressing a fair degree of satisfaction with the current arrangements, a number of common themes emerged in relation to the areas identified by Local Authorities for improvement, namely:

- ✓ Sharing data within a Local Authority
- ✓ Sharing data between different Local Authorities and other partners, such as Police Scotland
- ✓ Tracking dog and dog ownership moving between different Local Authorities
- ✓ Tracking notices served outside of the owner's principal residence
- ✓ Upskilling and training staff to use systems

3.9. All survey respondents (100%) were supportive of the establishment of a national database. The vast majority of respondents viewed the development of a national database as bringing multiple benefits, including a way to share data and details of dog notices between Local Authorities more easily; of tracking dangerous dogs and their owners moving across Local Authority areas; of tracking where and when a notice was served outside of the owner's principal residence. Others felt that a national database offered the potential for a consistent approach between Local Authorities, emphasising how they would be even more supportive of such a development if it was simple to use.



“It seems one of the many weaknesses of the entire Control of Dogs regime is the inability to easily track or identify dog movement out with individual authority areas.”

“This would greatly improve the information flow and availability between. local authorities, the Police and Procurators Fiscal.”

3.10. Establishing a national database presents a number of challenges, meaning a number of themes were reflected within responses. For example:

- ✓ Ensuring compliance with GDPR and data protection legislation
- ✓ Managing and sharing sensitive data, including personally identifiable information about dogs and their owners, within and across different Local Authorities and other partners
- ✓ Maintaining accurate, relevant and up-to-date information
- ✓ Data retention policies and practice
- ✓ System oversight and management
- ✓ Governance

“The issue of GDPR needs to be reviewed to allow officers to share pertinent information with complainants or members of the public who request information about DCNs.”

“It would be required to be confirmed who was responsible for updating the database in this case or if there are any amendments to a DCN. A system would be required to ensure that the database info was as accurate and up to date as possible.”

Survey Findings Author:
Nick Cassidy, Research Manager,
The Improvement Service



4.0 Virtual Workshop

4.1. A virtual workshop was hosted by the Improvement Service on 15th January 2021, attended by 31 delegates from 27 Local Authorities, plus relevant Improvement Service staff. As well as share the interim findings from the online survey, the workshop aimed at building on the survey responses to:

- Explore the current arrangements for capturing Dog Control Notices in some more detail and, in particular, pain or pinch points which the current arrangements present
- Understand requirements for future developments or improvements

4.2. Among the pain or pinch points identified by workshop delegates within the current arrangements included:

- ✓ More importance should be attached to officers' safety and to an employer's duty of care to them
- ✓ Difficulty tracking movement of dogs between Local Authority areas
- ✓ Comprehensive information about the owner and about the dog, including a photo not always available
- ✓ Having an easily accessible means to find out when and where DCN was issued, and about the serving officer is not always available
- ✓ No robust means to share real time information
- ✓ Inconsistent reporting by the Police to a Local Authority of incidents involving dangerous dogs
- ✓ Inability to have it flagged up when a dog owner associated with a DCN moves residence or Local Authority area
- ✓ Inconsistent approach to information sharing, either internally or with other external agencies, hinders an ability to show other instances of non-compliance (by a dog owner) or to leverage added value from the available data
- ✓ The time taken for DCNs to be taken through a court process can be lengthy, making it a potentially uncomfortable process for the initial complainant, (and leading to some suggesting fixed penalty notices should be considered as an alternative to dog control notices)

4.3. Workshop delegates were supportive of the establishment of a national database, viewing it as offering the potential to introduce a number of improvements and deliver other benefits, including, for example, to:

- ✓ Create a consistent approach
- ✓ Improve information flows between and across Local Authority areas and other partners
- ✓ Minimise or remove single points of failure e.g. system training and upgrades
- ✓ Facilitate the capture and sharing of dog photos (viewed as a necessary requirement by all)

4.4. In summary, the virtual workshop generated much of the same or similar feedback as the online survey findings, including strong support for a national database being established. The creation of a, or any, single national database offers several advantages, for example:

- ✓ Easier to manage and administer
- ✓ Only one production environment needs maintained
- ✓ Centralised user access management
- ✓ One consolidated code base to maintain, update and modify, negating a need to apply the same set of changes or fixes to multiple servers at different sites
- ✓ Adoption of standard business processes
- ✓ Allows a standard MIS reporting dashboard to be deployed
- ✓ Affords centralised management of cyber resilience, of threats and vulnerabilities

4.5. On the other hand, there are some disadvantages in establishing a single national database, for example:

- ✓ Need for coordinated downtime
- ✓ Some stakeholders may not like or allow mixing their data with another party's data
- ✓ Need for even stronger governance arrangements



5.0 Technology options

5.1. The scoping study's remit included the Improvement Service having to conduct a high-level appraisal of technology (and other) options available to help improve the operational effectiveness of the dog control legislation. Six (6) options were examined (Figure 5: Options

1. Do nothing
2. Reuse existing assets and systems already in place
3. Leverage a secure file sharing platform
4. Develop a bespoke national database
5. Go to the market and buy a commercial off-the-shelf software package
6. Run a proof of concept, using Dog Control Notices as the focus, to create a data marketplace

5.2. Option 1 (Do Nothing) would involve leaving existing Local Authority approaches and processes 'As-Is', and making no changes to existing technology systems already in place. This option would have limited or no impact on a Local Authority, however, it is unlikely to improve the operational effectiveness of the dog control legislation, deliver the changes and improvements identified by stakeholders through the online survey and workshop or lead to any lasting impact.

5.3. As is evident from Local Authority responses, technology systems are already in place for recording Dog Control Notices with most using a small number of caseload management systems such as Civica Flare, Idox Uniform or the software programme, Microsoft Excel. These are established platforms or solutions, known to work locally, meaning limited upskilling is required for existing users. Option 2 (Reuse Existing Assets and Systems) affords an opportunity to better leverage the existing assets in place, including to introduce a number of enhancements by each Local Authority acting on its own. Option 2 has the potential to result in high transaction values (per Dog Control Notice), offer limited strategic oversight and lead to unstructured growth. (A sub-set of this option is also a possibility, for example, to use one of the existing proprietary solutions, roll it out and make it available to all other Local Authorities. As well as other factors to consider, this may have a major impact on current operating models, especially for Local Authorities).

5.4. Option 3 envisages using a secure file-sharing platform to allow Local Authorities to upload Dog Control Notice data into a secure area accessible by all other Local Authorities and others (with permissions). Such an option could be delivered rapidly, be relatively resource-lite for Local Authorities and involve minimum requirements to create a central operating model. This option would be reliant upon data standards being clearly defined upfront. Existing tools are available within and to Local Government, such as Microsoft Power BI (Business Intelligence) or Improvement Service's ISSecure. This option might not meet all the requirements or the vision, however, it could provide a useful intermediate solution or even an important component towards developing a national database. Responsibility for operating and managing a national database on behalf of all 32 Local Authorities and other partners, and who pays for it, will need to be determined.

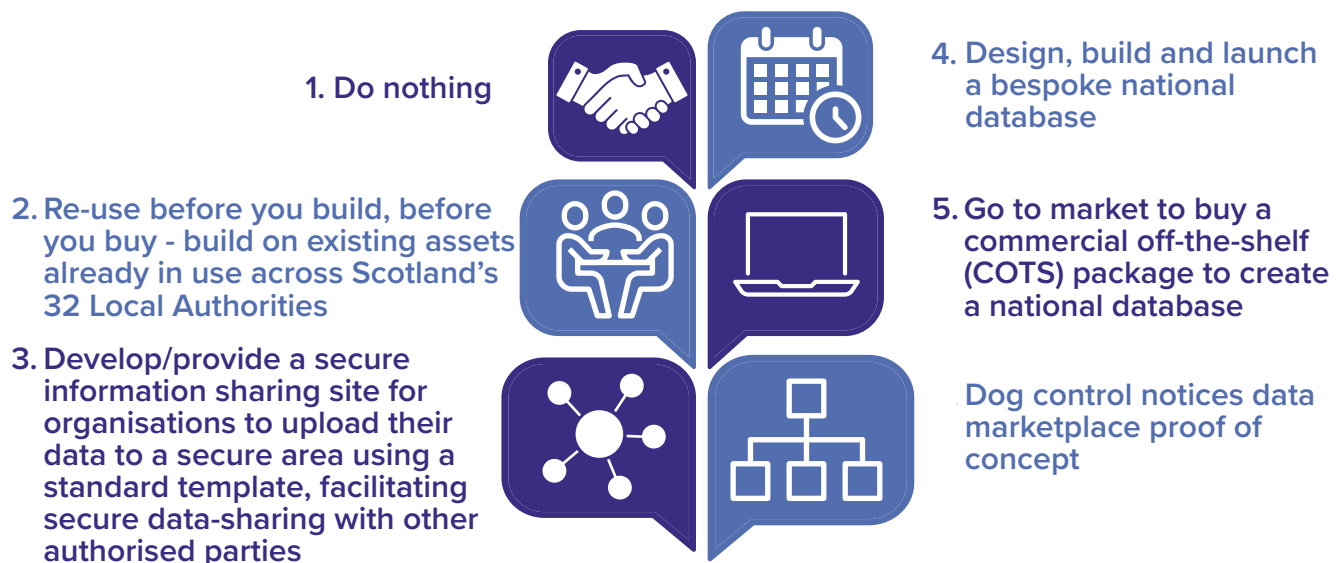


Figure 5 - Options

5.5. Option 4 (Develop a bespoke national database) comes with an immediate attraction, namely strong stakeholder buy-in for it, and revealed through a public consultation in 2020 and further engagement with Local Authorities in late 2020/early 2021 as part of this scoping study. This option could afford a better strategic approach, produce a scalable and flexible solution built to clearly-defined requirements based on users' needs and leads to streamlined processes. It could also more easily help in realising the broader goal, namely to improve the operational effectiveness of dog control legislation, avoiding the current postcode lottery situation arising from the current approach.

5.6. Option 5 (Buy a commercial off-the-shelf software package) envisages an engagement with the market to procure and deploy a case management-type solution capable of meeting stakeholders' functional and non-functional requirements. As well as the ability to ensure key requirements can be delivered, this option may assist towards realising the broader goal. It will require the solution being configured to requirements, may have a high resource impact on Local Authorities and, given the relatively low number of Dog Control Notices annually, transaction costs may be high. Like Option 4, a key consideration will involve determining responsibility for operating and managing such a solution on behalf of all 32 Local Authorities and other partners.

Technology Options Author:
Cameron Walker, Strategic Technical Lead
The Improvement Service



6.0 Dog Control Notices Proof of Concept

6.1. The Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of having good quality data, and its contribution towards building an evidence base with which to make informed decisions. To many, good data is seen as the new oil, the most valuable thing an organisation can possess. Independently of this scoping study, the Improvement Service has been actively exploring the development of a data aggregation, curation, enhancement and reporting solution designed to help unlock data's true potential by connecting it an ecosystem, and to help derive meaningful insight by capturing and managing data as well as enriching and visualising it. Building any connected ecosystem typically involves starting small and evolving a bigger proposition over time. Among the considerations necessary to build a connected ecosystem include a need to adopt a standards-based approach to data management and orchestration in areas such as:

- ☑ Quality of data
- ☑ Veracity
- ☑ Semantics
- ☑ Classification

6.2. In a number of respects, the way in which Dog Control Notices are managed across Scotland, is a microcosm of the broader challenge facing Scottish local government and other parts of the public sector. Data sources are growing, yet internal data can be unreliable or difficult to extract from their silos, resulting in slow exchanges of data. Point-to-point data exchanges can often be insecure, inflexible or even inconsistent. It means that, while data might be fit for purpose in one Local Authority area or in one organisation, there is no continuity if the data has to move elsewhere and shared with other Local Authorities, other organisations or partners. The effective sharing of data and data sets is reliant upon having repeatable formats, and all parties taking a standards-based approach. These factors are important for two reasons: first, if everyone who needs to know, knows where the data came from, knows who touched it, and understands its lineage. And, second, if they are to derive insights from the data once in possession of it, and unlock even more value from it.

6.3. The challenge common to many scenarios is on how can we curate, aggregate and catalogue the common bits of data, and provision up good quality data so that all parties can benefit from it. The evidence suggests that the annual volumes of Dog Control Notices issued across Scotland are relatively low in number, and that the businesses processes involve the collection of a relatively manageable amount of data. Dog Control Notices point to a relatively simple use case with which to find a repeatable format to aggregate, and curate data, to enhance, report and visualise it.

6.4. The Improvement Service is planning to run a tightly-defined proof of concept or proof of value to test out the development of a data aggregation, curation, provision and reporting solution based on common standards. Distinct from the other five options, an opportunity is available to undertake a low-cost proof of concept across 30, 60 or 90 days taking Dog Control Notice management as its focus. Learning points from the proof of concept could help inform the other five options as well as provide a reusable solution to address a common requirement across the public sector.



7.0 Building a Bespoke National Database

7.1. A number of factors will influence the cost and timelines of developing a bespoke national database, including, for example:

- ☑ Functional and non-functional requirements
- ☑ Project complexity
- ☑ Solution customisation
- ☑ Integrations with external services

7.2. A bespoke national database would incur both initial set-up costs and monthly recurring costs. Initial set-up would involve developing the software, engineering the build of servers and security and vulnerability testing. Monthly recurring costs would be incurred for application support, domain licenses and certificates, disaster recovery servers etc. Several models are available when apportioning fixed and recurring costs, for example, to apportion costs evenly across all 32 Local Authorities or on a sliding scale based on population size. As an illustrative example only and using the first model option as an example, developing and running a bespoke national database is likely to cost somewhere between £5,000 - £10,000 per Local Authority annually, and at the lower end of this scale if initial set-up costs are excluded.

7.3. A further consideration will be the charging model required, if any, for other users of a bespoke national database, such as Police Scotland through, for example, an annual license fee, a cost per transaction fee or even simply as a free service in support of a broader public good.



8.0 Conclusions

8.1. Through the stakeholder engagement and other analysis, a number of conclusions can be drawn from this scoping study, including:

1. A small number of technology systems and software are used across all Local Authorities for Dog Control Notice caseload management and annual volumes of Dog Control Notices issued across Scotland are relatively low in number. It means that managing cases involves the collection of a relatively manageable amount of data.
2. Though most Local Authorities view the current arrangements as working very well/well, there is a clear recognition that they generate a number of pinch points. A clear consensus emerged and strong stakeholder buy-in in support of improvements being introduced. Stakeholders also identified some key priorities of theirs, for example, having an ability to share data within and between a Local Authority and other partners; having a means to track dog and dog ownership moving between different Local Authorities, accompanied with photographs; and having a way to track notices served outside of a dog owner's principal residence.
3. Taking account of the large discrepancy in annual numbers of dog notices issued (c. 1,400) and hospital attendances due to dog attacks (6,500), dog attack victims and their families, among others, are unlikely to share a similar view to Local Authorities that the current arrangements are working effectively.
4. Maintaining the status quo is unlikely to improve the operational effectiveness of the dog control legislation and deliver the changes and improvements identified by stakeholders. A targeted outreach programme or campaign aimed at Local Authorities and designed to improve dog control notice issue and management may bring some degree of improvement and reduce the current postcode lottery in terms of how dog control notices are issued, managed and reported. A number of other options to introduce and affect change are available, each with distinct advantages and disadvantages.
5. Some options have the potential to provide a useful intermediate solution or component towards developing a national database although they might not meet all stakeholders' requirements or help realise the broader goal. Other options – either developing a bespoke solutions or sourcing an 'off-the-shelf' solution from the market - might afford a better strategic approach through the provision of a scalable and flexible solution able to meet users' needs as well as more easily help realise the broader goal of improving operational effectiveness of dog control legislation. The resource impact of introducing change on Local Authorities will be a key consideration, especially, as they grapple with the many pressures on frontline services presented by Covid-19.
6. In 2019, Food Standards Scotland developed a national database, involving Local Authorities providing food hygiene case data held in their back office systems – Civica, Idox and Northgate Public Services - to a national database using Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). The Food Standards Scotland approach may provide useful learning points when examining options and reaching decisions aimed at improving the operational effectiveness of the dog control legislation.
7. Universal support (100%) emerged for the establishment of a national database, viewed by all as the means to introduce consistency of approach, Scotland-wide; to deliver the

improvements and priorities identified by stakeholders; and to improve the operational effectiveness of the legislation. A national database, whether as a bespoke solution or sourced from the market, will involve key decisions having to be made i.e. to determine responsibility for operating and managing such a solution on behalf of all 32 Local Authorities and other partners, and to agree who pays for it and how much. The illustrative cost to develop a bespoke national database is relatively low, and recurring annual running and support again very low if, for example, the costs were apportioned equally across all 32 Local Authorities.

8. Most, if not all, of the options presented will need to undergo a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to ensure compliance with GDPR and other regulatory frameworks and privacy-by-design principles are respected. It is recommended that a lite-touch PIA appraisal is undertaken of each option taking account of the ICO's [Data Sharing Code of Practice](#) and [Data Sharing Checklist](#) and followed by a fuller and final DPIA for the preferred option. Data Controller to Data Controller agreements, Data Controller to Data Processor agreements, a PIA. Risk and Threat Modelling and a vulnerability assessment will require to be in place and concluded prior to any arrangements going live. (For example, it is the Improvement Service policy that, for any system it operates which processes personal data, it will always be subject to a DPIA before implementation or following a significant change). It is further recommended that engagement is undertaken with Local Authority data protection officers through their professional network, [SOLAR Scotland](#), (principally through the FOI, Data Protection and Human Rights National Working Group) on the privacy impact of each option on a case-by-case basis and for the purposes of:
 - ✓ Assessing what the sharing is meant to achieve
 - ✓ Assessing the potential benefits and risks to individuals and/or society of sharing or not sharing
 - ✓ Assessing if it is fair to share data in the way proposed
 - ✓ Assessing If the sharing is necessary and proportionate to the issue being addressed
 - ✓ Assessing the minimum data required for sharing to achieve the aim
 - ✓ Evaluating if the objective could be achieved without sharing personal data, or by sharing less personal data
 - ✓ Assessing what safeguards can be put in place to minimise the risks or potential adverse effects of the sharing
 - ✓ Analysing if there is an applicable exemption in the DPA 2018
9. The findings and conclusions of this report should help inform Scottish Government to consider the next steps, including options available, to improve the operational effectiveness of dog control legislation leading to broader benefits to communities and society.

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