

YOUR TEAM IS GOING TO RESEARCH

Breed specific legislation

and speak **for and against** repealing it

This brief has been produced as part of the *RSPCA's Animal Welfare: The Great Debate* and is a starting point for the research you will need to do into the subject in order to ensure a successful debate. The points for or against a subject may not be RSPCA policy and represent some of the wider thinking around the subject.

- Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) was introduced 27 years ago as part of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 to restrict the ownership of certain types of dogs which are deemed to be dangerous to people.
- In the UK, BSL bans the ownership of four different types of dogs traditionally bred for fighting. Dogs can be euthanased if identified as one of the banned types.
- An owner can appeal to the court to lawfully keep their dog if they comply with certain preventative measures.

FOR

Here are some points **in favour of** repealing BSL – what other points can you find?

- There is a lack of robust scientific evidence to demonstrate that these dog types are any more aggressive than other dogs.
- Whether or not a dog is aggressive is influenced by factors such as how they are bred and reared and experiences throughout their life.
- Breed or type is not a good predictor of risk of aggressive behaviour.

AGAINST

Here are some reasons **against** repealing BSL – can you find any more?

- Prohibited dogs were traditionally selected for fighting and so are considered to pose a greater risk to people.
- Pit bull terrier types are among some of the most abused dogs. BSL offers these dogs protection by making their breeding illegal.
- These are big strong powerful dogs that can do a lot of damage.

Information you may want to find out

- Which dog types are included in the Act?
- Has the number of dog bites increased or decreased since 1991? What are reasons for dogs biting?
- What does an owner have to do to get their dog exempt? What are the conditions?

Potential sources of information

- RSPCA website: www.rspca.org.uk
- Political Animal website: www.politicalanimal.org.uk
- RSPCA facts and figures: <http://media.rspca.org.uk/media/facts>
- The Kennel Club: www.thekennelclub.org.uk

