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(Redacted)

By email: (Redacted)

Our ref: FOI2026/02678  
19 February 2026

Dear (Redacted),

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: XL Bully dogs – registration and neutering data**

Thank you for your requests for information of 21 January 2026 and 3 February 2026 about XL Bully dogs – registration and neutering data. We have handled your requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Your information requests and our response are set out below.

Initial request: FOI2026/01550 (received 21 January 2026)

- 1. As of the most current data available, the number of XL bully dogs currently registered with a certificate of exemption*
- 2. Since the XL bully ban was introduced how many applications have you received from owners who wish to withdraw a certificate of exemption because they think their dog is no longer an XL bully?*
- 3. How many of the applications from Q2 were successful?*
- 4. If the process of withdrawing a certificate of exemption is not yet ready, please supply a date from which it will be, and/or an explanation for the delay.*
- 5. Since the first deadline for neutering passed on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024, how many confirmations of permanent neutering have you received from owners of XL bullies? Please supply results broken down by month/year if available.*
- 6. If possible, please provide a geographical breakdown of where these neutered dogs are living – either by postcode district, town, or county, whichever is most accessible / available.*

Request: FOI2026/02678 (received on 3 February 2026)

*I would like to resubmit Question 5 as suggested, so please supply the information in the question below.*

“Since the first deadline for neutering passed on 30 June 2024, how many confirmations of permanent neutering have you accepted for XL Bully dogs registered during the XL Bully ban?”

For part 6 of the request, I confirm that a breakdown by county would be acceptable, although I note that you have in previous responses, been able to provide the information by postcode ([XL Bully dogs and location data for those issued with Certificates of Exemption - FOI2024/10893 - GOV.UK](#))

In response to part 5 of your initial request, since the first neutering deadline passed on 30 June 2024, Defra have accepted 6,813 confirmations of permanent neutering for XL Bully dogs (for the 31 December 2024 and 30 June 2025 deadlines).

Regarding your request for a geographical breakdown by postcode district, town, or county (part 6), we are unable to provide the information at postcode district or town level. In several areas, the number of neutered dogs is fewer than ten, and disclosure would risk enabling the identification of specific owners or allow others to link the data to identifiable individuals. We are also unable to provide a breakdown by county. County information was self-reported by owners when they uploaded their dogs’ details, and this field contains known errors and inconsistencies. To ensure the data is both accurate and presented at a level that avoids the potential identification of individuals, we have provided the geographical breakdown by police force area, which is the most accurate and accessible geographic level available from the information we hold.

<b>Police force area</b>	<b>Number of ‘confirmation of neutering’ forms received after 30 June 2024 by police force area (i.e., for the 31 December 2024 and 30 June 2025 deadlines)</b>
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	171
Bedfordshire Police	65
Cambridgeshire Constabulary	123
Cheshire Constabulary	160
Cleveland Police	72
Cumbria Constabulary	69
Derbyshire Constabulary	195
Devon and Cornwall Police	176
Dorset Police	60
Durham Constabulary	65
Dyfed-Powys Police	36
Essex Police	296

Gloucestershire Constabulary	60
Greater Manchester Police	360
Gwent Police	57
Hampshire Constabulary	232
Hertfordshire Constabulary	119
Humberside Police	133
Kent Police	294
Lancashire Constabulary	207
Leicestershire Police	124
Lincolnshire Police	89
Merseyside Police	257
Metropolitan Police Service	565
Norfolk Constabulary	104
North Wales Police	102
North Yorkshire Police	54
Northamptonshire Police	93
Northumbria Police	179
Nottinghamshire Police	203
South Wales Police	100
South Yorkshire Police	251
Staffordshire Police	196
Suffolk Constabulary	59
Surrey Police	91
Sussex Police	177
Thames Valley Police	171
Warwickshire Police	96
West Mercia Police	161
West Midlands Police	491
West Yorkshire Police	238
Wiltshire Police	62

In accordance with our duty to advise and assist applicants in line with section 16 FOIA, the following updated response is given for part 1 of your initial request:

As of 22 January 2026, 55,837 XL Bully breed type dogs have been issued with a Certificate of Exemption in England and Wales. Please note that this figure does not include dogs that have either died or been exported.

Regarding part 4 of your initial request, where an owner has applied for a Certificate of Exemption and no longer thinks that their dog is an XL Bully, it will be possible to ask Defra to withdraw the certificate. However, the withdrawal scheme is not open for owners to apply at this current time.

Officials are working diligently to develop the withdrawal scheme as soon as possible. Please be advised that further information and timelines will become available once the scheme has launched.

Information disclosed in response to this FOIA request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA and the government's Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on GOV.UK, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

We attach Annex A, explaining the copyright that applies to the information being released to you, and Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

**Information Rights Team**  
[InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk](mailto:InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk)

## **Annex A**

### Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs or logos) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

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## **Annex B**

### Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to <sup>[Redacted]</sup> Head of Information Rights via email at [InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk](mailto:InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk) and they will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our website.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure.

The ICO can be contacted using the following link:

<https://ico.org.uk/>