

Answers to some of the questions you asked.



What is a PSPO?

Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) are broad powers which allow councils to enforce and manage particular anti-social activities within a specified area. They are used where needed to help tackle persistent issues that are damaging communities or the environment.

When used proportionately and appropriately they can be effective in dealing with some issues local residents and businesses face on a daily basis, or tell us are a problem for them.

Why have you introduced one?

It will help us keep our beautiful environment even cleaner which, in turn, makes Teignbridge a healthy and more desirable place where people want to live, work and visit.

While there are laws covering dog fouling and irresponsible dog ownership, it can be patchy and in some places we have no control over enforcement. This inconsistency makes enforcement more challenging in areas where people have reported a problem.

Without the PSPO, byelaws which apply to some council-owned parks, green spaces and beaches cannot be enforced using fixed penalty notices and offences must be prosecuted through the courts which is very expensive and rarely used.

The PSPO replaces existing controls and introduces new ones so there's a consistent approach. We made a commitment to reviewing our policy within the Council Strategy – which has been adopted by councillors – and are carrying out that promise.

What does it now mean?

You can be fined if your dog is out of control in public or you do not pick up after it. We have put in place a PSPO to help deal with these issues.

If you ignore a PSPO you can be fined:

- £100 on the spot (a fixed penalty notice)
- Up to £1,000 if it goes to court

The PSPO, introduced from 1 April 2019, means you have to:

- Pick up after your dog in public places
- Not walk your dog on some [beaches](#) from 1 April to 30 September
- Keep your dog out of areas signed as dog exclusion areas (for example, children's play parks)
- Keep your dog on a lead in certain areas
- Keep your dog on a lead when walking next to a road, on footpaths next to the road or on cyclepaths.
- Where a dog is being a nuisance or annoying to people or other animals, you must put your dog on a lead if asked to do so by a council officer or police officer.
- Limit the amount of dogs you have with you to a maximum of six (this applies to professional dog walkers too).
- Carry sufficient dog poo bags

Beaches covered by the PSPO are Dawlish Warren, Dawlish Town, Dawlish Coryton Cove and Teignmouth Town Beach.

The Ness Beach, Shaldon, and Holcombe Beach, Dawlish, remain places you can walk dogs all year round.

When did you decide it was needed in Teignbridge?

We committed to bringing a PSPO in across the district through our Council Strategy, adopted by Council in 2015. People were able to have their say on the strategy and shape its promises.

Keeping our streets, green spaces and beaches clean was the top most important issue for residents and businesses.

Work started on preparing the PSPO in 2016 and we asked people for their views between June – October 2017. Many people got involved and we had more than 2,000 responses.

Most supported the control and asked us to provide resources to be able to target irresponsible dog owners. It has always been our intention to apply any enforcement measures proportionately and with common sense, and the same will apply with the PSPO.

All the evidence, the consultation responses and recommendations were taken to councillors for a decision.

When was the decision made?

The PSPO was adopted by [Full Council on 14 January 2019](#). This followed detailed considerations by councillors serving on the Executive, Overview and Scrutiny and Full Council on earlier dates too.

How will it be policed?

Teignbridge has a small team of enforcement officers who routinely patrol hotspots around the district, including early mornings, evenings and on weekends. All staff, members, residents and visitors are able to report issues for investigation. The team are all always ready to report and respond where necessary which means there is a relatively high chance you will be caught should you not clear up after your dog has fouled.

People report incidents to us regularly, so residents, businesses and visitors can also play a part in helping us tackle a problem where it is seen and reported.

What's the penalty?

You could get an on-the-spot fine of £100 or face prosecution where you could be fined up to £1,000.

Why has the ban on dogs on beaches been introduced earlier?

The Executive considered this at their meeting on [4 December 2018](#).

The purpose of the PSPO is to provide clear and simple rules across the district. During the discussions, councillors considered the seasonal dog exclusion date and decided to introduce it a month earlier. Dawlish Warren has a ban in place from April 1 with others starting from May 1. The PSPO provides clearer consistency. This will be reviewed in 12 months by a review group of councillors. You are welcome to provide your views on the ban to help inform their work. Contact us on: envc@Teignbridge.gov.uk

Can I still walk my dog on the beach?

Yes, but dog bans are in place at some beaches at certain times during the year and not at others. Here's some helpful information for you: www.teignbridge.gov.uk/dogsonbeaches

How do I report anyone breaking the order?

We will investigate all complaints we get although the response we can provide will vary depending upon the quality of information that is provided.

For example we would be in a better position to take action should you be able to provide a full description of what happened (including date, time, location, what you witnessed, description of the dog/owner and as much information as possible about the incident - also any information regarding the offender - which could include name/address (if known), vehicle registration number or any other identifying feature.

You may be asked to provide a witness statement if we need to take it further. You'll get extra information and help with that.

It is only with people getting involved and reporting problems that they see in their neighbourhood that we will be able to solve more problems and take action to deal with dog fouling or out-of-control dogs.

What if I'm asked to show a dog poo bag and I refuse?

You'll be breaking the law! You need to show a bag if asked by an authorised enforcement officer. If you don't, you could be fined £100 there and then.

I only take one bag out with me on a walk – what if I am approached after I've used it?

We would urge you to grab a few bags and take them with you. Most people do this without thinking because you never know when your dog might decide to go twice!

Enforcement officers will take a common-sense approach to the new powers. The fines are not in place as a money-making scheme or to 'catch out' responsible owners. Officers will generally approach people at the start of their walk – at the entrance to parks or in car parks at popular dog walking spots – when owners would be expected to have a supply of bags with them. Officers will also be reasonable when considering any explanation offered as to why a person is not carrying bags.

I've bagged my dog's poo but there is no dog poo bin nearby. What should I do?

Dog poo can be bagged and placed in any normal public bin. It does not have to go in a dog poo bin. If there are no bins available please take it home and discard in your usual way.

If you come across any bins that are full please report it at www.teignbridge.gov.uk/reportfulldogbin and we will empty it as soon as we can.

Why might I be told to put my dog on a lead?

Most dogs love being off the lead and in many circumstances – so long as your dog is safe and under control – that is absolutely fine. If you are next to a road and your dog is off the lead, it can be dangerous both for the dog and any passing vehicles or cyclists.

However if an authorised officer has formed the opinion that a dog is causing danger or serious nuisance to other people or their dogs the owner will be ordered to bring it under control on a lead.

When would you prosecute a dog owner rather than issue them with a fixed penalty?

A prosecution might be appropriate for repeat offenders, or if the offence is so serious that it merits prosecution. For example a dog owner that allows their dog to be dangerously out of control despite being directed by an officer to put it on a lead may risk prosecution, rather than a fine.

How are you informing people of the new rules?

We are getting the message out in as many ways as we can. There is information on our website, we post information on Twitter and Facebook, our staff will be out and about telling people, there'll be posters up in key locations and there are already signs in place.

I use an assistance dog – do the same rules apply?

The measures do not apply to assistance dogs used by people who are partially sighted, or by those who are registered as disabled and lack the physical ability to comply with the requirements of the PSPO.

I've seen a dog walker allow their dog to foul without picking it up. What should I do?

Please report it to us with as much information as possible, such as:

- The time/date/location of incident
- The frequency of the offence if it happens regularly
- A description/breed of the dog
- Any other descriptions to help identify the offender, including their name and address if known

You can report it by visiting www.teignbridge.gov.uk/dogfouling