



PRESS RELEASE

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Statement on Dog DNA testing

Trevor Hammond has, as is typical of him, completely misconstrued or, which almost as bad, misunderstood the Minister's reply to a Question in Parliament.

As the Minister took pains to explain, the fact that few matches have been found in the DNA samples taken shows that responsible dog owners are indeed responding responsibly and are not allowing their dog excrement to remain on the pavements and streets.

It is those who have not correctly registered their dogs who are now the culprits, and these are actively being tackled. This was predicted when the strategy was considered. The number of dogs registered increased, but sadly there will always be those who through either omission or design do not respond.

There is an initiative now in place to target persons who have not registered, with a system of first warning followed by fining. Within the next few weeks the fine will be immediate. This principle is consistent with good practice, and is in fact frequent even in Courts of Law, where, depending on circumstances, conditional discharges or even absolute discharges are often given to first offenders.

While there are still hotspots for dog fouling, similarly there has been an improvement in some areas. Efforts will continue in order to improve the situation further, and the DNA testing is an essential tool in this. The Government is confident that the situation will improve in the coming months, and is looking at further ways of reducing the negative impact that irresponsible dog owners can have on our environment.