



Dog Awareness Week follows 10% decrease in attacks

Royal Mail Dog Awareness Week 2016 took place between July 4 and 9, with the aim of promoting responsible dog ownership and raising awareness of dog attacks.

This year's campaign followed a 10 per cent decrease in dog attacks on postal workers over the past year. However, on average seven attacks still take place each day in the UK. In the past year, there were more than 2,600 reported dog attacks.

UnionLine currently has more than 200 claims for dog attacks running for CWU and GMB members. Since opening in 2014, 25 claims relating to dog attacks have been settled for members, with total compensation amounting to £63,683.67.

Tony Rupa, CWU's Head of Legal Services said; ***"The decrease in the number of dog attacks this year is welcome news. The total compensation won by UnionLine on behalf of our members in the CWU and GMB goes some way in alleviating the stress and trauma resulting from these attacks. By maintaining and acting upon our strict legal policy on irresponsible dog owners, thousands of our members have been given a sense of justice."***

During the week, postal workers spoke about their own experience of dog attacks, and dog wardens visited Royal Mail delivery offices to give safety talks to workers. A poster was also released by Royal Mail containing tips on how dog owners can help reduce attacks.

These tips include giving a dog some food or a toy to play with while the post is being delivered, installing a wire letter receptacle over the letterbox or putting a letterbox outside the property, or simply keeping the dog in the back garden or a faraway room while the post is delivered.



Poster issued by Royal Mail during Dog Awareness Week 2016

The campaign was launched in 2013, and takes place at the beginning of July as the summer holidays see a 10 per cent increase in dog attacks, as parents and children are at home with dogs allowed outside into the garden or street unsupervised.

Research released on July 4 revealed that 27 per cent of parents who own a dog have had their pet loose in the house when an outside door was open.

In the past year, 36 per cent of dog attacks on postal workers happened at the front door, while 35 per cent took place in the front garden.



MPs review law on wearing high heels at work

MPs on cross-party committees have been discussing what the law says about requiring women to wear high heels at work, after a worker was sent home without pay for refusing.

Nicola Thorp was told that she had to wear a heel between two and four inches when she arrived for work as a receptionist at finance company PwC in December last year.

Ms Thorp objected to wearing high heels, as she would have struggled to work a full day in the shoes. She was told to go buy a pair of high heels on her first day, rather than wear the smart flat shoes she had worn to the office.

"I was expected to do a nine-hour shift on my feet escorting clients to meeting rooms. I said 'I just won't be able to do that in heels,'" she said. Ms Thorp also said she asked if a man would be expected to do the same in heels and was laughed at.

Ms Thorp started a government petition in May this year, requesting the government make it illegal for companies to require women to wear high heels at work. The petition has received more than 150,000 signatures, and is now awaiting a date for debate in Parliament.

As a result of the petition, an inquiry was launched by the cross-party Petitions and Women and Equalities committees. The inquiry worked with legal experts to discuss what the law says about making women wear high heels to work.

PwC said that the dress code was not one of their policies. The agency she was working for, Portico, said Ms Thorp had signed the appearance guidelines, but these are now being reviewed.



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New cabinet gives hope for changes in legal industry

Theresa May became Prime Minister on 13 July and quickly appointed her new cabinet in the following days.

Phillip Hammond was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, while Amber Rudd became Home Secretary. Other notable appointments included Boris Johnson as Foreign Secretary and David Davis as Brexit Secretary.

The Law Society of England and Wales welcomed the appointment of Ms Truss as the first woman Lord Chancellor, though some in the legal industry were concerned as the MP has no experience of being a lawyer or a senior member of the cabinet.

With a new Justice Secretary in place, many in the profession hope that the Prime Minister's pledge to work on behalf of working people will now see proposed changes to personal injury claims be scrapped. Earlier this year, then-Chancellor George Osborne proposed changes which included changing the limit for small claims from £1,000 to £5,000, requiring more people to

represent themselves without the assistance of a lawyer.

A clean sweep of ministers in the Ministry of Justice also means the responsibility for publishing the long-awaited report into employment tribunal fees promised by Shailesh Vara will now fall to his successors.

Damian Green was appointed as the new Work and Pensions Secretary, with Penny Mordaunt taking the position of Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, with responsibility for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in the same department.

GMB called on the new secretary to ensure the HSE is ***"properly resourced to effectively identify negligent employers and hold them to account"***.

The union echoed Theresa May's inaugural speech on "fighting burning injustice" by saying that there can be ***"no greater injustice than losing your life in an avoidable incident due to employer negligence"***.



Are you holding an event?

Is your Region or Branch having an event that you think UnionLine could attend and add value to?

If so, we'd love to hear from you!

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