

### Should dogs be kept on leads in parks?

Most parks allow dog owners to walk their dogs on the fields for free. For many years there has been great debate about whether or not dogs should be kept on leads during this time.

Firstly, it is far safer for children playing in the park if the dogs are kept on their leads; some dogs may be aggressive therefore they are more likely to bite humans. It is known that 50% of children are bitten by a dog each year. In addition to this, if a dog is kept on their lead they are less likely to run away. When using a lead, the owner is able to keep their dog at their side at all times. Shockingly, over 500,000 dogs in the United Kingdom go missing each year due to owners not using leads. Also, the majority of cats are frightened of dogs. If dogs are kept under control, then cats are also able to freely explore and exercise in the park. Studies have shown that cats appear more comfortable to leave their house and garden when dogs are restricted by a lead.

On the other hand, it is very well understood that dogs require exercise every day. Therefore, dogs need the space and freedom to run around and fully exercise their body. This is not possible when being held on a lead because dogs are able to run three times as fast as humans. Furthermore, dogs need to be able to socialise with other dogs. This allows them to build friendly relationships with other canines. Research suggests that dogs are less aggressive when they frequently interact with other dogs. Finally, many people believe the use of leads to be cruel. This is because there is the risk of choking if a dog tries to run. Dogs are well known for suddenly bursting into a sprint when they see something of interest; therefore the collar and lead around their neck could be dangerous.

In conclusion, I feel that dogs should be kept on a lead when in public parks, especially at peak times, as this is much safer for both humans and dogs. Ideally, there should be areas created especially for dogs within all parks.