



Dogs on Leads

Analysis of responses to
public consultation

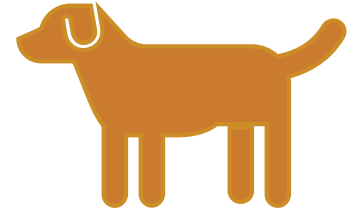
October 2021



Contents.

Section	Page
Summary of findings	3
Background and context	4
Profile of consultation respondents	8
Overall findings	12
Results by individual locations	22

Summary of findings.



The majority of consultation respondents live in close proximity to one of the four locations under review, and 3 in 5 are dog owners.

- The consultation received 754 responses and 82% of all respondents live in the FY8 postcode area.
- 3 in 5 respondents are dog owners and 65% exercise their dog(s) in more than one of the locations under review.

More respondents agree with changing the PSPO than disagree.

- In each location, between 56%-58% of all respondents want the PSPOs to be changed; between 42%-45% either agree with the current PSPOs or do not want any PSPO in place.
- A minority of respondents suggest having on lead requirement in particular areas of public gardens only, e.g. around lakes.

An overwhelming majority of non dog owners want dogs to be always on leads in all four locations.

Across all four locations, over 8 in 10 non dog owners are in favour of requiring dogs to be always on leads, compared to 4 in 10 dog owners.

A key concern is that changing the PSPOs will only punish responsible owners.

The most common theme amongst respondent comments is that changing the PSPOs to require dogs to be on leads will just punish the majority of dog owners who act responsibly and won't change the behaviour of the minority of irresponsible owners.

The most common reasons given for changing the PSPOs are to protect wildlife and other people.

A fifth of respondents feel that dogs need to be on leads to protect wildlife and/or other people.

Background and context.

Background.



September 2021:

Following several attacks on protected wildlife by dogs not on leads in public gardens, Fylde Council is reviewing the current Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) in four locations:

- Ashton Gardens;
- The Promenade and Promenade Gardens;
- Lowther Gardens;
- Fairhaven Lake.

As part of the review, the Council invited feedback from all stakeholders who use these parks and gardens.

The four locations under review currently have a PSPO which requires a dog to be put on a lead only when asked to do so by a police officer or an authorised officer of Fylde Council.

Members of the public and partners have contacted the Council to request that the PSPO in the four locations is strengthened to require dogs to be kept on a lead at all times.

The consultation ran from the 7th September 2021 until 5th October 2021.

The public was asked to provide answers to the following questions via an online form:

- There is a borough-wide PSPO requiring dogs to be put on a lead if asked by an authorised officer. A number of parks and open spaces owned by Fylde Council are enjoyed by a large number of locals and visitors alike and many have protected wildfowl. Do you agree that the current PSPO as described above is adequate in the following locations or do you prefer an alternative?
- Do you own a dog?
- Do you exercise your dog in any of the locations mentioned above?
- If yes, which locations
- To help collate an insight of local specific needs, please provide details of your postcode
- Is there any further information you would like to include regarding your decision? (Open text response)

All comments received via the online form (and one paper response) have been analysed and included in this report.

Source: <https://new.fylde.gov.uk/fylde-council-seeks-views-on-further-pspo-controls/>

Context.

In total, there were 754 responses to the consultation: 753 responses to the online form and one letter.

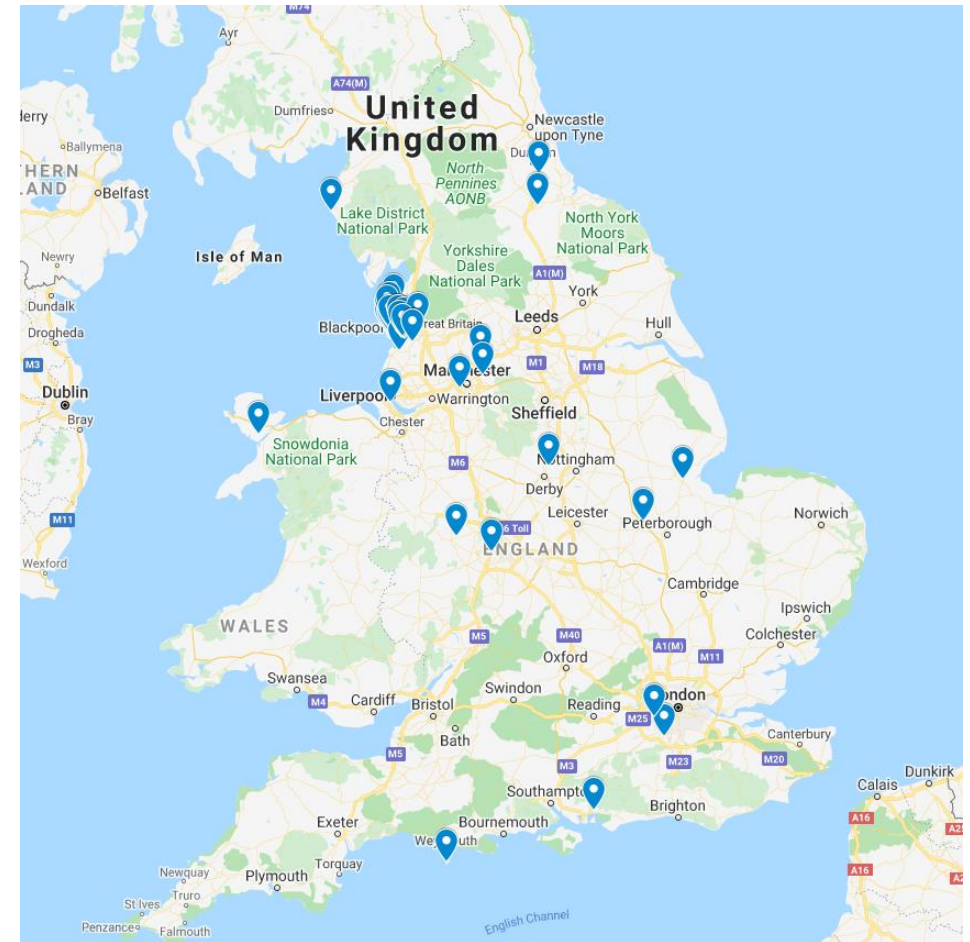
Any percentages reported should not be considered as representative of all residents in the borough and it should be noted that not all respondents are residents.

This report summarises the key themes amongst responses. All responses have been coded to identify these themes and example comments are used to illustrate them.

In the online form, respondents provided postcode data and analysis by postcode has been conducted and reported on when appropriate.

82% of all responses came from people living in the FY8 postcode area. The map across shows the geographical spread for all other respondents, demonstrating the wide-ranging interest in the consultation.

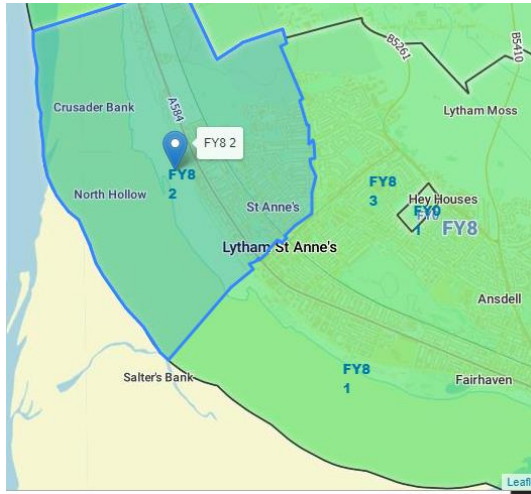
Where respondents live (excluding FY8)



Postcode analysis.

Postcode comparisons throughout are at a four-digit postcode level, focussing on FY8 1, FY8 2 and FY8 5.

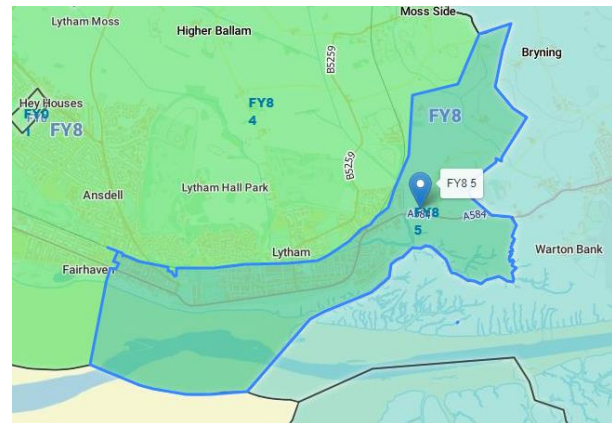
FY8 2



FY8 1



FY8 5



Postcode analysis has been conducted to ascertain whether there are differences in opinion amongst those who live closest to each locations. Given the close proximity of the four locations, postcodes within a 0.25 mile radius of each location were counted as being closest*. Using this parameter:

- 27 (4%) live within 0.25 miles of Ashton Gardens
- 11 (1%) live within 0.25 miles of Promenade Gardens
- 27 (4%) live within 0.25 miles of Fairhaven Park
- 11 (1%) live within 0.25 miles of Lowther Gardens

These numbers are too low to allow for sub-group analysis, therefore postcode analysis has been kept to comparing FY8 1, FY8 2 and FY8 5 postcode areas.

In addition, the closeness of each location to another and the fact that many dog owners exercise their dogs in multiple locations means that the postcode analysis should be considered alongside the wider results in order to provide a true representation of views.

Source: [streetlist.co.uk](https://www.streetlist.co.uk)

*Note: not all respondents gave their full postcode

Base: n=754

Profile of consultation respondents.

4 in 5 respondents live in close proximity to one of the locations.

82% of the consultation respondents live in the FY8 postcode area, where all four locations are situated.



82% of all respondents gave an **FY8** postcode

Within the **FY8** postcode area:

- 17% of all respondents live in FY8 1
- 18% live in FY8 2
- 12% live in FY8 5

Map showing FY8 postcode area with approximate locations of the four locations under review.
Source: streetlist.co.uk. Postcodes provided by Fylde Council.

Base: n=754

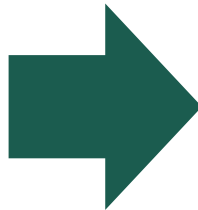
3 in 5 respondents to the consultation own a dog.

Of those who own a dog, almost all exercise their dog in at least one of the locations under review.



62%

Of all respondents own a dog

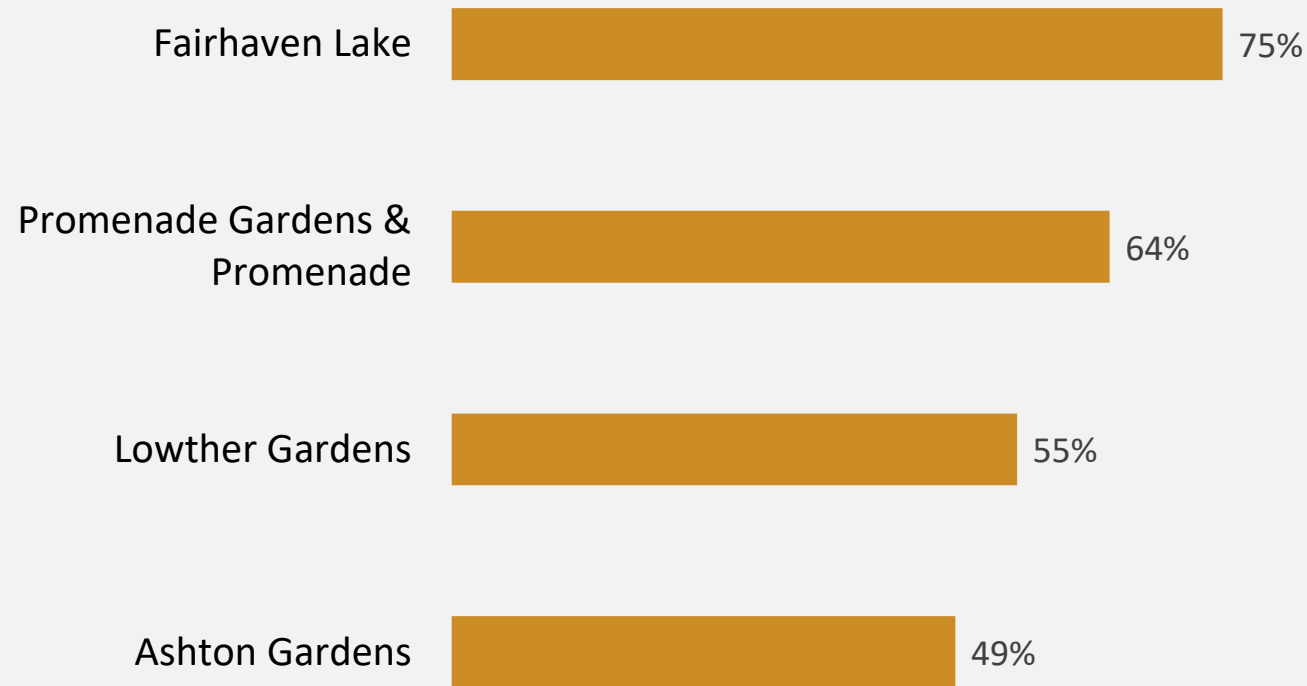


Of those respondents who own a dog:

- **93%** exercise their dog in one of the locations under review
- 79% live in the FY8 postcode area

The majority of dog owners exercise their dogs in more than one of the locations under review.

Locations under review in which respondents with dogs exercise their dogs:



Of respondents who exercise their dog in at least one of these locations...

- **65%** exercise their dog in more than one of the locations under review
- **29%** exercise their dog in all four locations

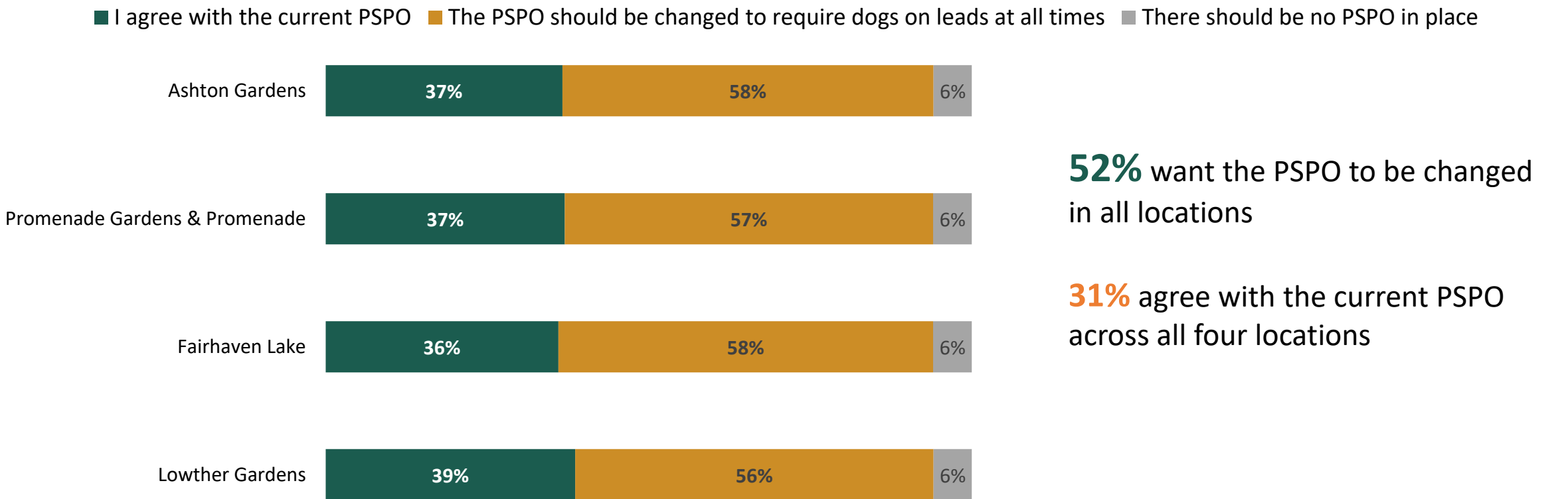
Q4. 'Which locations?' (Multicode) Base: all respondents who exercise their dogs in any of the locations under review, n=436

Note: when originally launched, this question only allowed for a single answer to be given. This was quickly changed to allow for multiple answers. Some of the early responders to the survey added in the other areas where they walk their dogs into the comment box. Where this occurred, these have been included in the analysis for those locations specified.

Overall findings.

The majority of respondents want the PSPOs to be changed.

Half of respondents want the PSPO to be changed to require dogs to be always on leads in all locations; 4 in 10 either agree with the current PSPOs/do not want a PSPO for all four locations.



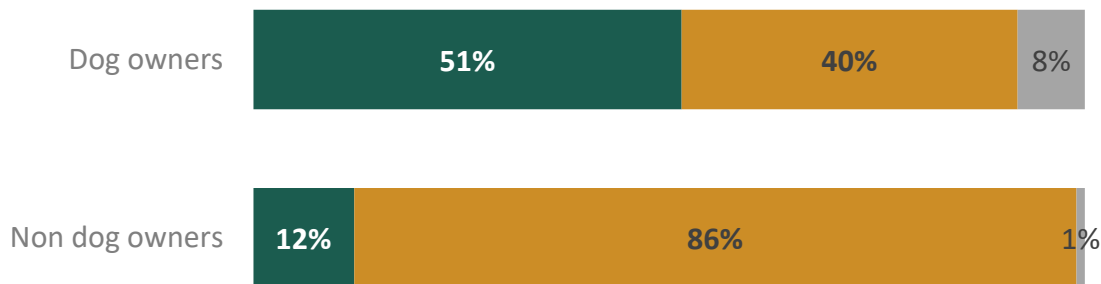
Q1: ‘There is a borough-wide PSPO requiring dogs to be put on a lead if asked by an authorised officer. A number of parks and open spaces owned by Fylde Council are enjoyed by a large number of locals and visitors alike and many have protected wildfowl. Do you agree that the current PSPO as described above is adequate in the following locations or do you prefer an alternative?’ Please tick the appropriate box. (Base: n=754)

Non dog owners are much more likely to want dogs to be on leads.

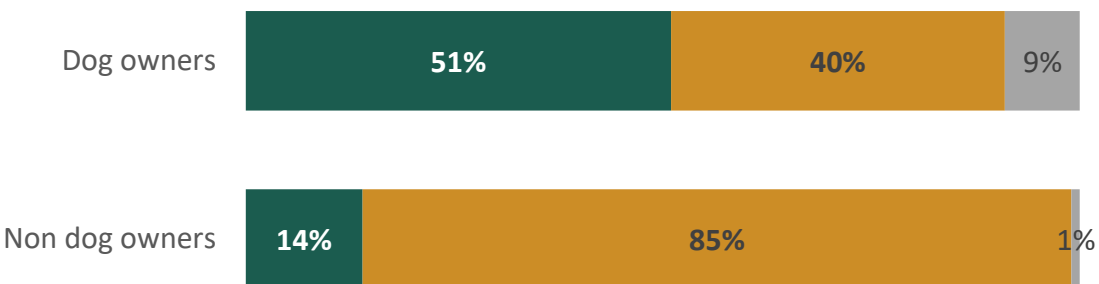
Across all four locations, over 8 in 10 of those who do not own a dog are in favour of changing the PSPO to require dogs on leads at all times, compared to 4 in 10 dog owners.

■ I agree with the current PSPO ■ The PSPO should be changed to require dogs on leads at all times ■ There should be no PSPO in place

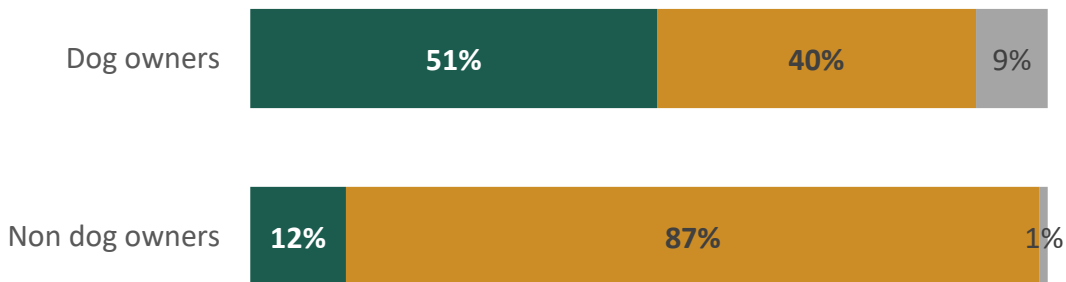
Ashton Gardens



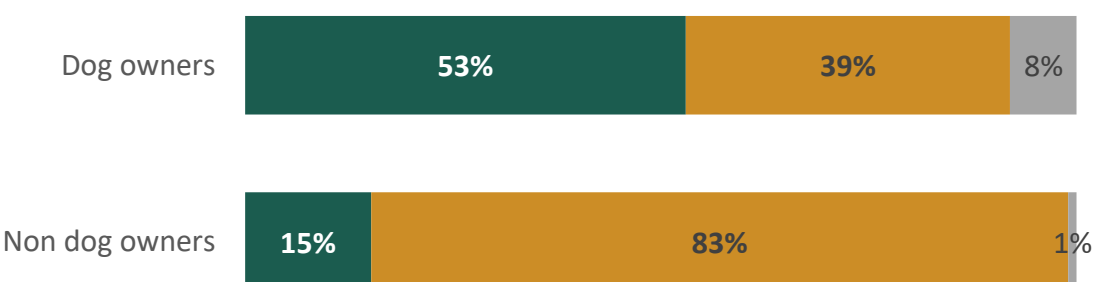
Promenade Gardens & Promenade



Fairhaven Lake



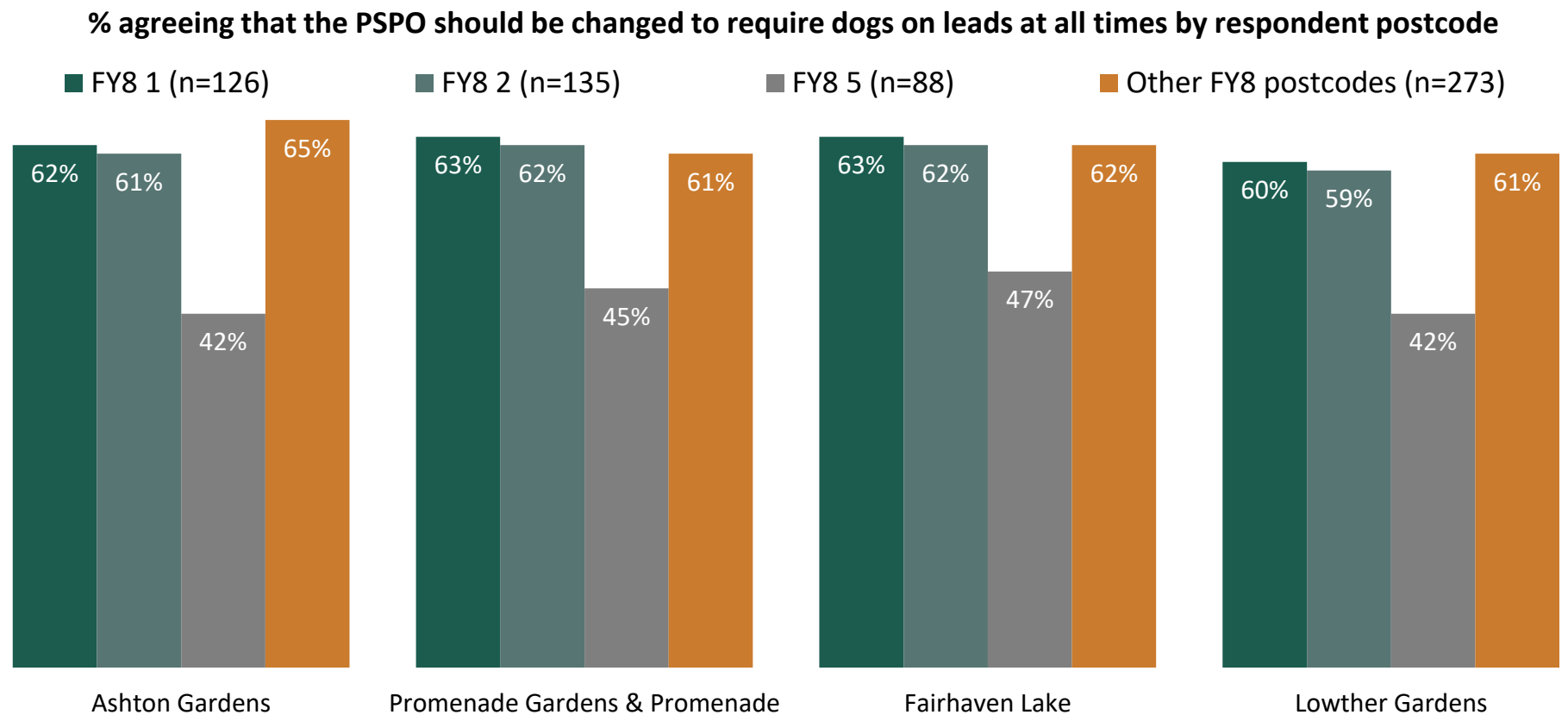
Lowther Gardens



Base: Dog owners, n=470; non dog owners n=284

The majority of respondents in FY8 postcodes, with the exception of the FY8 5 postcode area, agree the PSPOs should be changed.

Those in the FY8 5 postcode are significantly less likely to agree that the PSPO should be changed in any location than respondents in all other FY8 postcode areas.

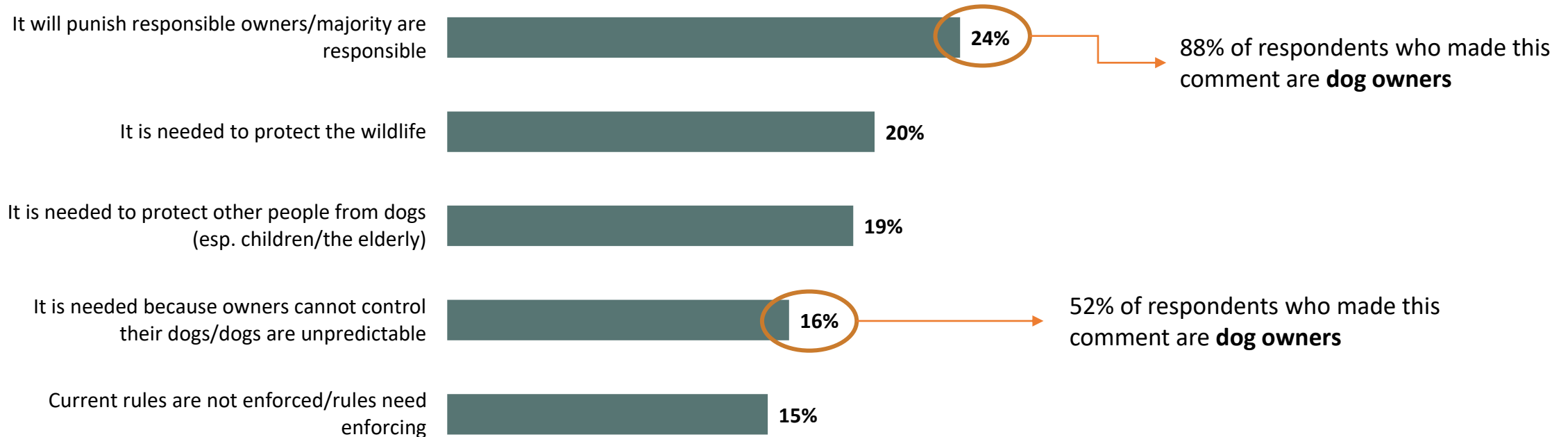


Bases detailed within chart

Key themes within respondent comments:

A quarter of all comments given to the open text question refer to the fact that tighter restrictions will simply punish responsible dog owners. A fifth of comments reflect on the need for tighter restrictions in order to protect wildlife in the area and/or to protect other people from dogs who are off the lead.

Top five most common comments made by respondents:



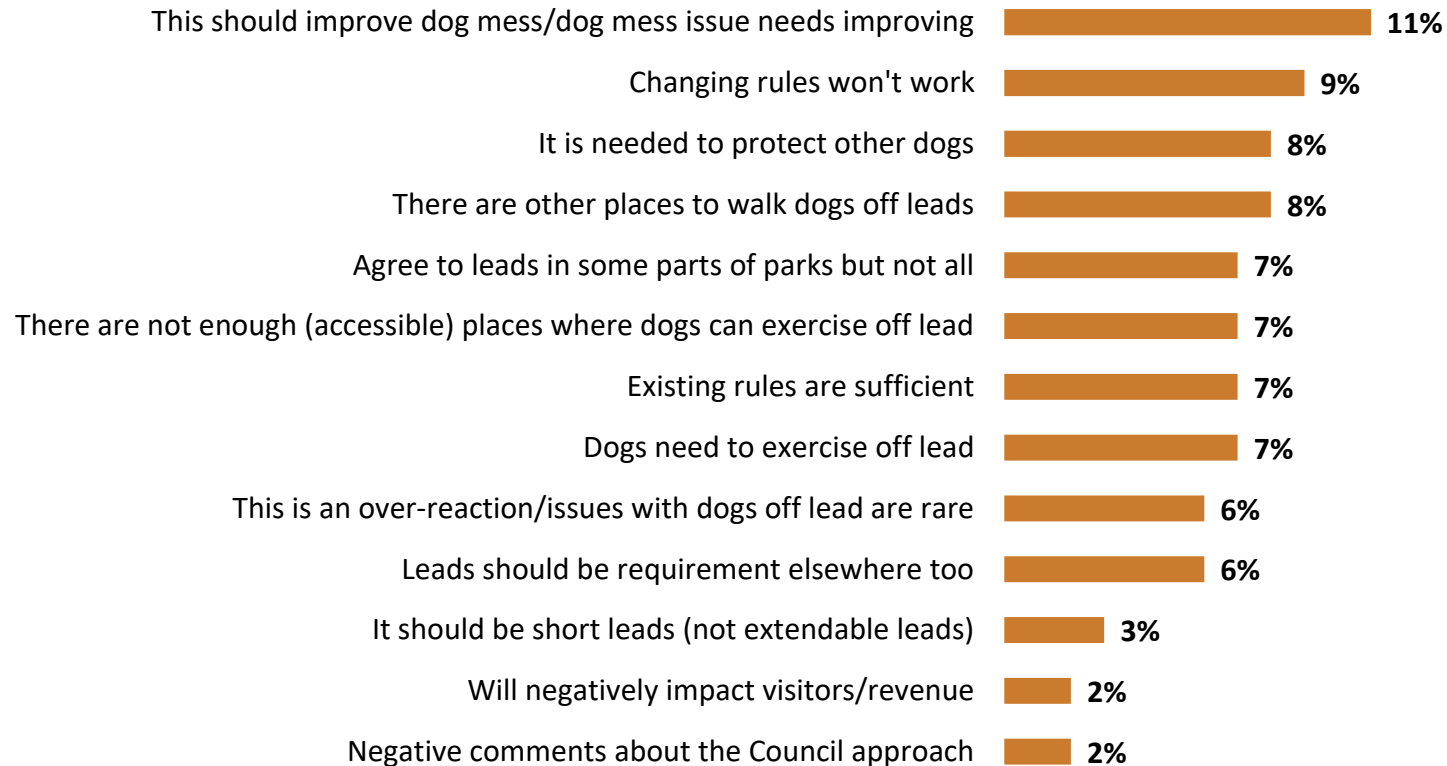
Q6: 'Is there any further information you would like to include regarding your decision?' Base: all providing further information, n=511

Coded responses from comments provided (top 5 reasons shown)

Other themes amongst all comments.

7% of comments refer to the fact that there are not enough alternative places where people can exercise their dogs off the lead, particularly for elderly people and people with a disability.

Other themes amongst comments made by respondents

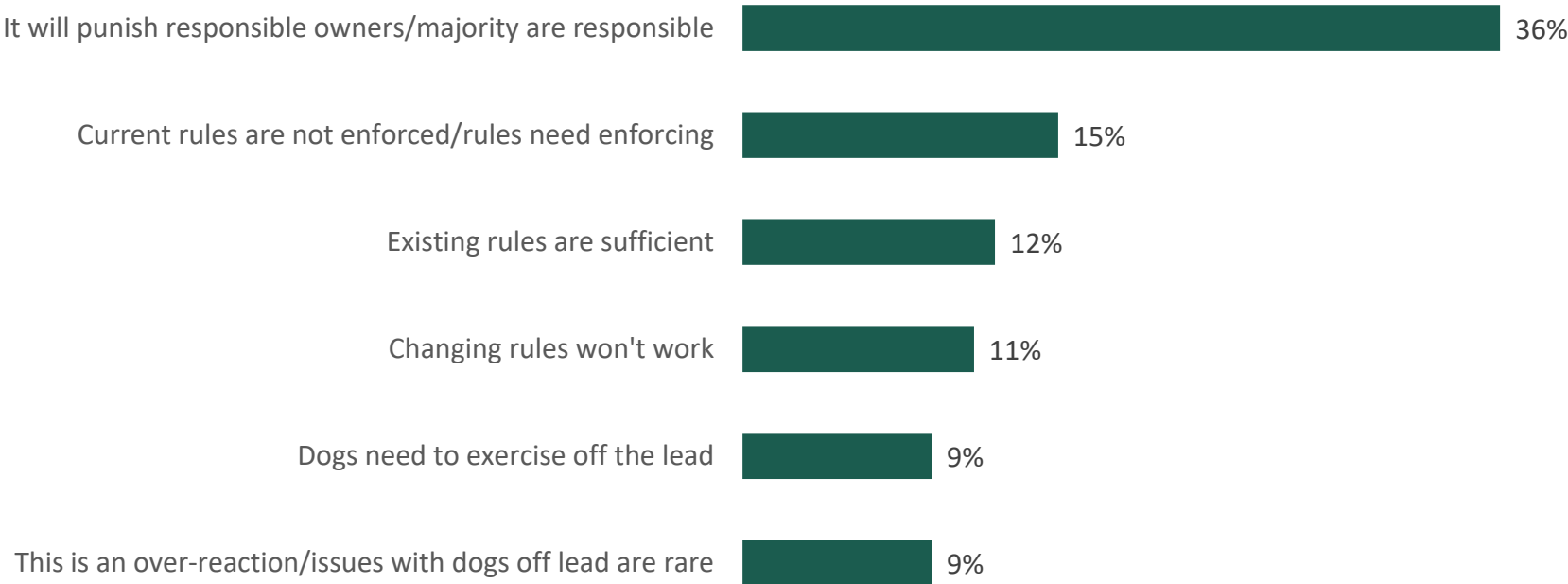


Q6: 'Is there any further information you would like to include regarding your decision?' Base: all providing further information, n=511
Coded responses from comments provided

Agreement with current PSPOs: most common reasons.

Looking only at the comments from those respondents who agree with the current PSPOs, a third comment that changing the PSPOs will punish the majority of responsible dog owners and 15% feel the current rules need enforcing instead.

Five most common comments made by respondents who agree with the current PSPOs in all four locations:



Q6: 'Is there any further information you would like to include regarding your decision?' Base: all who agree with current PSPO in all four locations and who provide further information, n=235; Coded responses from comments provided (top 6 reasons shown)

Agreement with current PSPOs: example comments.

“ Restricting dogs to on lead disproportionately impacts the elderly and disabled as they are often unable to give their dogs the exercise they need by walking sufficient distance with them on lead [...] More effective policing of current rules and greater education are the answer, not blanket regulations. ”

“ Perhaps introduce on lead & off lead areas. We always keep our dogs on lead around the lake near the swans/ducks & also when the paths are at their busiest. ”

“ I overlook the park and I have seen most of the problems that happen in Ashton gardens. Just because of one bad owner we all have to suffer. I was told that the swan attack was done by a fox and not a dog...What will happen when some teenagers cause problems are you going to ban all of them from using the park? ”

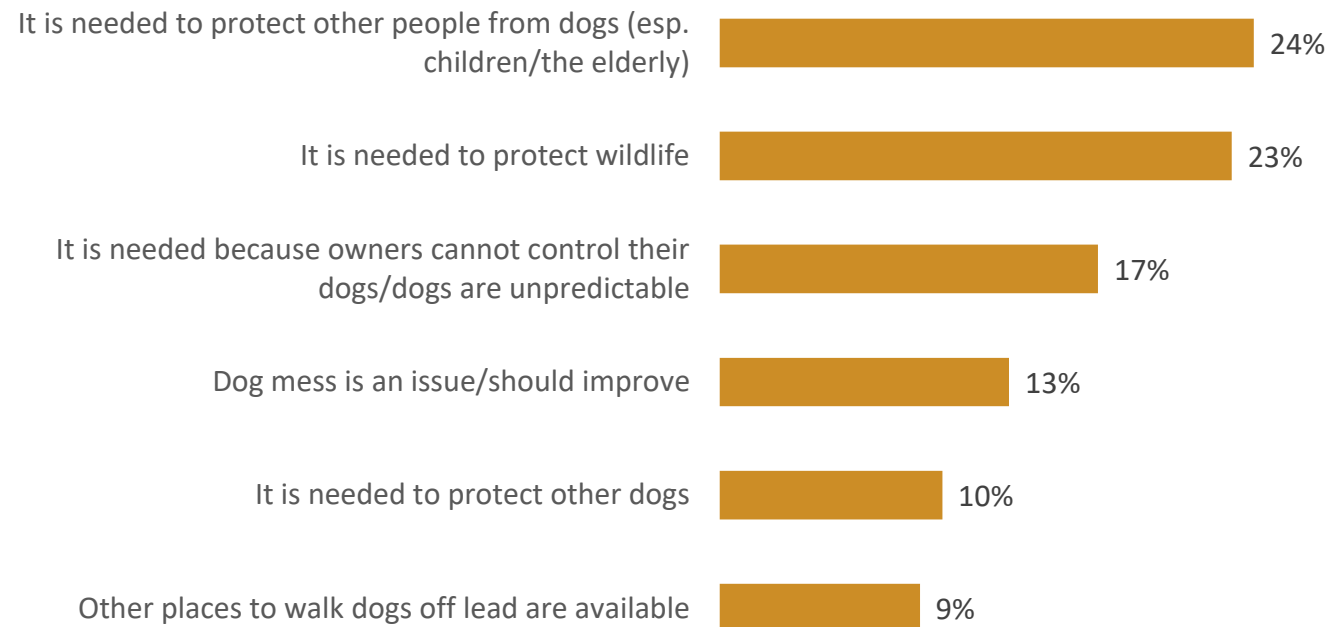
“ The vast majority of dog owners are responsible and make sure that their dogs are under control at all times. They already exercise their own discretion when deciding whether or not to put their dog on a lead. This is a knee jerk reaction to the vocal minority who use social media to promote their own interests. The Council ought to have a balanced view on these matters. There is a danger that the area is seem to be hostile to dogs and this will impact tourism. ”

“ This is a knee-jerk reaction to an isolated problem that will affect the ability of responsible dog owners without impacting the irresponsible. There are existing laws about this kind of incident anyway so it is not necessary. Finally, you do not have the resources to police the PSPOs already in place. Yet another example of the anti-dog attitude of Council members. ”

Agreement with changing PSPOs: most common reasons.

Looking only at the comments from those respondents who agree that the PSPOs should be changed, a quarter feel the change is required in order to protect other people and/or to protect the wildlife from dogs who are off the lead.

Most five common comments made by respondents who agree with the current PSPOs in all four locations:



Q6: 'Is there any further information you would like to include regarding your decision?' Base: all who agree that PSPOs should be changed in all four locations and who provide further information, n=389; Coded responses from comments provided (top 6 reasons shown)

Agreement with changing PSPOs: example comments.

“ There has been a spike in dogs being aggressive towards wildlife, people and other dogs. Keeping dogs on leads won't stop dogs being aggressive (they're animals after all) but it does help to control the situation. ”

“ I find it difficult taking my small grandchildren for walks on the promenade and around the lake because of the numbers of unrestrained and untrained dogs which are allowed to approach the children. ”

“ Dogs on leads are not only better for wildlife but safer for other dogs, children and general park visitors. I have dogs and I have never let them off leads but we have been attacked by other dogs twice in 6 years. As much as I love dogs, they are unpredictable and the same can be said for some owners. ”

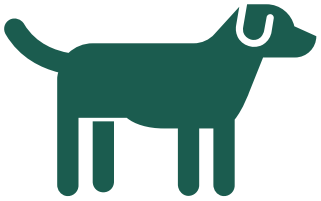
“ I work in Lytham and walk the Green most mornings. I daily see dogs off the lead toileting and owners distracted and not seeing. If dogs were on the lead in pedestrianised spaces, I believe more dog mess would be picked up as well as wildlife being protected. ”

“ I have owned dogs in the past so understand the implications of this. Responsible dog owners should have no problem accepting a change which will protect not only wildlife but also other on lead dogs and result in fewer dogs making a mess in public places without the owner realising as often happens when dogs are off the lead. ”

Results by individual location.

Ashton Gardens.

6 in 10 (62%) dog owners who exercise their dogs at Ashton Gardens either agree with the current PSPO or do not feel there should be any PSPO in place.



- Of the 320 respondents who agree that the **current** PSPO is adequate in Ashton Gardens or that there should be no PSPO, **88% are dog owners**.
- Of the 434 respondents who want the PSPO to be **changed** at Ashton Gardens, **44% are dog owners**



Amongst dog owners who exercise their dogs at Ashton Gardens (n=214):

- 51% agree with current PSPO
- 38% want a change to require dogs on leads
- 11% do not feel there should be any PSPO



Those in postcodes FY8 1 and FY8 2 (closest to Ashton Gardens) are more likely to want to see dogs on leads at all times than those further away (FY8 5):

- Change the PSPO to have dogs on leads:
 - FY8 1 postcode: 62% (n=126)
 - FY8 2 postcode: 61% (n=135)
 - FY8 5 postcode: 42% (n=88)

Ashton Gardens: a minority of respondents suggest changing the PSPO to require dogs to be on leads around the lake only.

Example comments:

“ I regularly take my dog for a walk in Ashton Gardens. I always keep him on a lead next to the lake but like to throw a ball for him on the grass area next to the main gate on Clifton drive. If there was some way of having some areas where on the lead was compulsory that would be sensible. I know the beach isn't accessible for some dog owners so the area may become very limited for places to allow dogs to free run. It's a shame that responsible dog owners like myself are being penalised for those who have no control over their dogs. ”

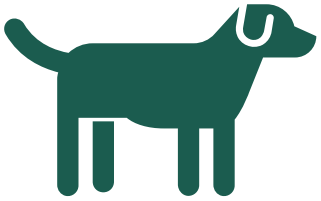
“ I feel dogs should be kept on leads at all times in areas where there's a smaller footpath and more wildlife around, e.g. at Fairhaven Lake and in the Victorian gardens on St. Anne's seafront. We do exercise our dog off lead in Ashton Gardens as there is the space for him to not be in others' way, however we always put him on his lead near the lake. Perhaps a dogs always on lead order is appropriate around the lake area only in Ashton Gardens. ”

“ I support dogs to be on a lead at all times in Promenade Gardens, the Promenade adjacent to the Amenity Beach and the area of Ashton Gardens around the lake. Unfortunately proposals go too far in requiring dogs to be on a lead in areas where there is no problem and very little wildlife. Whilst the beach is not far from Ashton Gardens many pensioners walk their pets in the gardens and the extra distance to the beach would be very difficult for them. ”



Promenade Gardens and the Promenade.

64% of dog owners who exercise their dogs at the Promenade Gardens & Promenade either agree with the current PSPO or do not feel there should be any PSPO in place.



- Of the 324 respondents who agree that the **current** PSPO is adequate in Promenade Gardens and the Promenade or that there should be no PSPO, **87% are dog owners.**
- Of the 430 respondents who want the PSPO to be **changed** at Promenade Gardens and the Promenade, **44% are dog owners.**



Amongst dog owners that exercise their dogs at the Promenade Gardens and Promenade (n=277):

- 53% agree with current PSPO
- 36% want a change to require dogs on leads
- 11% do not feel there should be any PSPO



Those in the postcodes FY8 1 and FY8 2 (closest to the Promenade Gardens) are more likely to want to see dogs on leads at all times than those further away (FY8 5):

- FY8 1 postcode: 63% (n=126)
- FY8 2 postcode: 62% (n=135)
- FY8 5 postcode: 45% (n=88)

Promenade Gardens and Promenade: several comments refer to need for dogs to be on leads in the Gardens in particular.

Example comments:

“ I believe that dogs being on leads in all the areas is essential given how busy all these areas have become - in addition the Promenade Gardens is too close to a busy public highway to allow dogs off lead for safety reasons. Dogs can be exercised off lead very close by on the beach near to all of these locations and there is therefore no compelling need for dogs to be off lead. The recent killing of wildlife in two of these locations was entirely due to dogs being off lead and owners being unable to control their dogs. ”

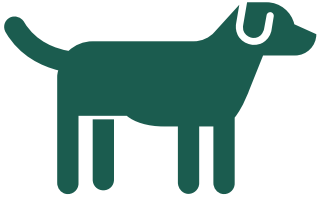
“ Irresponsible dog owners are causing hazards in parks & on the promenade. I have witnessed many incidents. I feel concerned also for young children in danger from dogs off leads running free sometimes at great speed. I've seen dog fights which are very frightening. The Fylde coast is noted for its waders & sea birds & owners regularly allow & encourage their dogs to disturb the birds, a particular risk during the breeding season. The decline in number of these birds can be blamed on dogs. ”

“ Unfortunately not enough people train their dogs sufficiently and to keep wildlife safe in our parks dogs need to be on leads. I don't agree with dogs having to be on leads on the Promenade in Lytham or the Promenade in St Annes but agree with them being on leads in the Promenade Gardens. It's wrong to lump all three areas together. ”



Fairhaven Lake.

64% of dog owners who exercise their dogs at Fairhaven Lake either agree with the current PSPO or do not feel there should be any PSPO in place.



- Of the 319 respondents who agree that the **current** PSPO is adequate at Fairhaven Lake or that there should be no PSPO **88% are dog owners.**
- Of the 435 respondents who want the PSPO to be **changed** at Fairhaven Lake, **43% are dog owners.**



Amongst dog owners that exercise their dogs at Fairhaven Lake (n=325):

- 55% agree with current PSPO
- 37% want a change to require dogs on leads
- 9% do not feel there should be any PSPO



6 in 10 of respondents who live in the FY8 1 postcode (closest to Fairhaven Lake) feel the PSPO should be changed to require dogs on leads at all time:

- FY8 1 postcode: 63% (n=126)
- FY8 2 postcode: 62% (n=135)
- FY8 5 postcode: 47% (n=88)

Fairhaven Lake: some mention the need to protect the birds around the lake in particular; others feel this location has more open space for dogs to be off the lead more safely.

Example comments:

“ I feel that dogs should be kept on leads in certain areas of Ashton Gardens. Near the pond, it is sensible for them to be on a lead, but in the open space near the main entrance, the grassy area provides the perfect space for exercising dogs. My dog enjoys chasing balls! The promenade is busy and near a road so leads are sensible. Lowther is a formal park so again, sensible to have leads. Around the lake at **Fairhaven**, again, it would be sensible for dogs to be on leads due to the sheer number of birds. ”

“ Due to the recent dog attacks and the increase of visitors some of whom do not have their dogs on a lead at Fairhaven, I feel the restrictions need to be tightened. I have seen people's dogs barking at the geese, swans, chasing the geese on the grass. ”

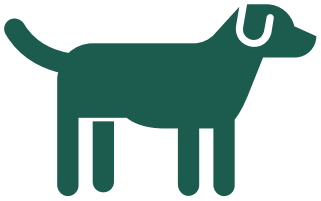
“ I would like to see a ruling where dogs should be put on leads when close to lakes/wildlife (maybe within 30 metres?). I understand it would be harder to police but having signs up that say where dogs need to go on leads may help. So in places like Ashton Gardens, and even Fairhaven Lake, dogs can run free in most of the area - just not right near the lakes. Plus I would like to see more done to irresponsible owners (fines?) without targeting the responsible ones. ”

“ I feel that Fairhaven Lake is different because it is wilder in nature, and has a lot of open space for a dog to roam without upsetting non doggy people. Also, I have never seen a dog worrying a swan or vice versa! ”



Lowther Gardens.

7 in 10 (69%) dog owners who exercise their dogs at Lowther Gardens either agree with the current PSPO or do not feel there should be any PSPO in place.



- Of the 335 respondents who agree that the **current** PSPO is adequate at Lowther Gardens or that there should be no PSPO, **81% are dog owners.**
- Of the 419 respondents who want the PSPO to be **changed** at Lowther Gardens, **44% are dog owners.**



Amongst dog owners that exercise their dogs at Lowther Gardens (n=238):

- 60% agree with current PSPO
- 31% want a change to require dogs on leads
- 9% do not feel there should be any PSPO



4 in 10 respondents who live in the FY8 5 postcode (closest to Lowther Gardens) feel the PSPO should be changed to require dogs on leads at all time:

- FY8 1 postcode: 60% (n=126)
- FY8 2 postcode: 59% (n=135)
- FY8 5 postcode: 42% (n=88)

Lowther Gardens: several comment that there is less wildlife to protect in this location although others disagree.

Example comments:

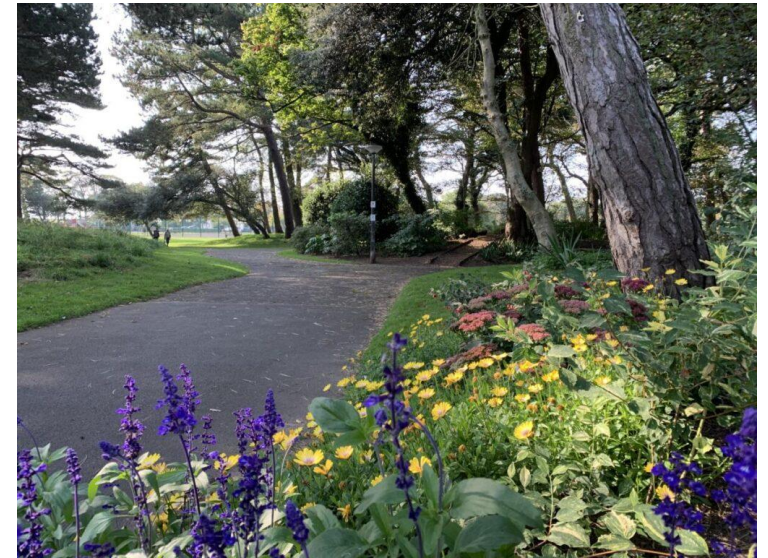
“ My dog is exercised in all four locations. The only one he’s allowed off lead on is Lowther early in the morning when quiet. There’s not the wildlife like in the other areas which I completely agree should be protected at all times.

“ The sheer number of dogs is impossible to control & personnel in Lowther Gardens just do not have the time to constantly request owners to put dogs on leads. They require help from stronger by-laws. When dogs run into bushes & flower beds, owners can lose sight of them & what they are doing, especially if chatting to other park users & dog owners.

“ There are a lot of elderly residents who walk their dogs (their main companion) in Lowther Gardens. They can’t walk very far and many come in cars. Walking on the windy busy bumpy Green is not a viable option. In addition, there are no wild fowl other than the usual garden birds. Even the budgies have gone.

“ There is no wildlife in Lowther Gardens apart from the odd grey squirrel which can outrun any dog. I have been walking in the gardens for many many years and have seen no incidents. All dogs seem to be well under control and having a lovely time. What a shame it would be to punish all dogs because of the behaviour of some owners.

“ Fairhaven lake especially needs further dog control along with Lowther Gardens. We saw a squirrel mauled by a dog in Lowther Gardens just last week, and a dog in the lake at Fairhaven swimming at birds.





Prepared by Emma Slater.

psresearch.co.uk | hello@psresearch.co.uk

It all starts with good research.