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From January 2016 to September 2017, 25 dogs from Guide Dogs Scotland were attacked by other canines. Nine animals had to undergo vet treatment, leaving their owners without their lifeline support during the recovery period.

(Police Scotland – Guide Dog Attacks video. You can also watch a version of the [Police Scotland – Guide Dog Attacks With Burned-in Subtitles.](#))

22 of the aggressor dogs were not on a lead or tied up in when the incidents happened, with all but one of the attacks happening in a public place. Four people were also hurt in the attacks while 19 owners were left emotionally affected by the incidents.

Police Scotland is publishing a film highlighting the impact of a dog attacking a registered assistance dog, and reminding the public, and its officers, of the seriousness with which such an incident will be treated.

Chief Superintendent John McKenzie, Police Scotland Safer Communities, said: “As a nation of dog lovers, no-one wants to hear of an animal being injured, let alone a highly trained assistance dog which offers a lifeline to its owner.

“It is the responsibility of the dog owner to ensure an animal in your care is under control at all times, whether that’s in a public space, such as a park, or in a private are, like a garden.

“Police Scotland is committed to raising awareness of the issue of attacks on assistance dogs and the traumatic effects of these incidents, some of which can be felt years down the line.”

As a result of changes to Section 3 of the Dangerous Dogs (Scotland) Act 1991, any person in charge of a dog, whether they are its owner or not, can be charged if the dog in their care attacks an assistance dog.

Guide dog owner Elaine McKenzie is featured in the video talking about the effect on her life and on her dog Una after she was attacked while the pair were out shopping: “I can only liken the noise she made to that of a screaming child, she was in so much distress. Shop staff tried to pull the attacking dog away but it was relentless. Una bled a lot and had several puncture wounds in her chest.

“For two weeks after the attack, I couldn’t get out and about with Una. My independence was taken away. It then took two months of gentle, patient work, with the support of Guide Dogs staff, to get Una back to working confidently.

“Fortunately, she recovered, but it took quite a long time for us both to get enough confidence to get out and about like usual.

“If that attack had been any worse Una may not have been able to work again and my mobility would be gone. Una was still suffering after-effects from the attack for some time and was hesitant about going into the store again.”

Niall Foley is Guide Dogs Scotland’s Engagement Manager and said some animals are so badly injured or traumatized that

they have to be withdrawn from service: “An Attack on a guide dog can be devastating for the owner and their dog. It can leave someone with sight loss traumatized, isolated at home and robbed of their independence and freedom.

“We urge all dog owners to be responsible when they meet guide dogs and other assistance dogs. We welcome Police Scotland ensuring their officers are aware of the serious effects of an attack on an assistance dog, and their commitment to keeping our guide dog owners safe.”

You can also watch a version of the [Police Scotland – Guide Dog Attacks With Burned-in Subtitles](#)