

Dogs charity had to put small number of pets to sleep after XL Bully ban

Scotland's leading animal welfare charity has told how it had "regrettably" had to euthanise some XL Bully dogs in its care as a result of The Scottish Government's crackdown on the breed.

Tough new rules brought in following a spate of horrific incidents involving XL Bullies in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK, banned rehoming centres such as the Scottish SPCA from finding new homes for any of the dogs in their care, leaving them with few options other than euthanasia.

Under the government scheme, rehoming centres are eligible to apply for £100 compensation per dog if they euthanised XL Bullies after it became illegal for them to rehome, sell or transfer ownership of the dogs.

The Scottish SPCA confirmed they had euthanised "a small number" of XL Bullies in their care but declined to say how many. They added that they "have not claimed any compensation from The Scottish Government".

According to the charity, in order to comply with legislation, which they insist is not the solution to prevent dog control issues, they "regrettably had to put a small number of XL Bully dogs to sleep".

Scottish SPCA Chief Superintendent Mike Flynn said: "While we fully support legislation to protect the public, we have long opposed restrictions that focus on Breed Specific Legislation.

"We know that any breed of dog can be potentially out of control and dangerous in the wrong hands.

"We continue to believe the safeguards that the Scottish Government has chosen to implement is not the solution to the issue when it comes to preventing dog control issues but, as a responsible charity we will, of course, continue to comply with legislation that has and will be implemented."

In March, the Scottish SPCA issued a desperate appeal for new homes for four XL Bully type dogs named Duchess, Praline, Paddington and Lex, which they said had only been partially successful.

The charity said the appeal had run out of time for two of the dogs before the ban came in and said five XL Bullies in their care may have to be put to sleep.

They declined to say which of the dogs had found homes and which remained in their care and said the fate of the other three would "depend on assessment if they are XL Bully dogs or not".

An SSPCA spokeswoman said: "Keeping any dog in a kennel environment for the rest of their life would not provide an adequate quality of life for that animal, and as a result, unfortunately we can confirm that some dogs will be euthanised.

"This is not the outcome we would want for these dogs."

A spokesman for one of Scotland's oldest rehoming charities, Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home (EDCH), which dates to 1884, confirmed that they had also "sadly" opted to euthanise some XL Bully dogs in their care, but said they had not applied for

compensation.

Lindsay Fyffe-Jardine, CEO of SSPCA, said: "Since the change in legislation in February affecting XL bullies and our rehoming policies, the home has had less than a handful of confirmed XL bullies come through our door.

"Some of these we have been able to reunite with their legal owners. To date, we have not made any claims for compensation for the very few that have sadly resulted in euthanasia."

Ms Fyffe-Jardine added: "While we do not believe this legislation is necessary or effective in supporting community safety we have complied fully with it.

"Adding XL Bully type dogs to this banned breed list, in our opinion, falls short of understanding the real challenges happening in communities up and down the country where their breeding practices, control and training is not effective.

"We feel there is a need to look at dog control as a wider issue of public safety, which is not breed specific."

The Scottish Government said that, as of 1 August, there had been 3,342 exemption applications for XL Bully dogs approved but said data on the number who applied for compensation after choosing to have their pets euthanised was not yet available.