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## **Woman Jailed Over Savage Dog Attack On 12 Children:**

### **To: All Branches**

Dear Colleagues,

Irresponsible dangerous dog owner Claire Neal was jailed for 4 years yesterday after she allowed her dog to escape into a playground full of young children and stage a terrifying attack on 12 youngsters.

Claire Neal, 39, left her dog unsecured even though it was known to be dangerous stated Northumbria Police.

The dog had already bitten children in previous incidents.

Neal had left her brown and white Staffordshire bull terrier in her front yard, where it was able to escape into the road in Blyth, Northumberland.

The dog, named Marley, was already subject to a 'destruction order' after it had attacked children on two previous occasions.

It was found without a muzzle or collar by a teenager who planned to take it to the RSPCA but it went wild after seeing children in a park and ran inside the play area before jumping on kids and biting them.

Statements from the children were read out in court, with one girl saying she fainted after the dog closed its jaws on her during the attack in May 2016.

Another child said he saw a girl being dragged by the dog while screaming.

One parent described their child's leg as looking like "Swiss cheese", full of puncture holes and a big gash.

A total of 12 children were treated for bites and puncture wounds, with three needing to remain in hospital overnight for further treatment.

Neal, 39, initially denied owning a dog that was dangerously out of control, arguing that the destruction order meant that it belonged to the courts.

However, after a trial was aborted part way through, she changed her plea to guilty just before a second trial commenced.

Jailing her for four years, Judge Sarah Mallett said it was a "sustained and repeated attack" and that Neal's actions were "utterly irresponsible on every level".

The Judge said Neal had failed to put in place any control measures and the dog had been trained to be aggressive by Neal's partner.

The Judge added that it was ridiculous to suggest Marley was not Neal's dog. She told Neal that she was the owner and was responsible for the dog at all times.

The Judge concluded that it was clear from these descriptions there were serious injuries but it was also clear there was significant psychological harm as well.

In addition to the 4-year jail sentence, Neal was also disqualified from owning a dog for life and the dog was destroyed.

The CWU welcomes the sentence. With 3000 Postal workers attacked by irresponsible owners' dogs every year and with a recent spate of very serious injuries following attacks on Postmen and Women, we are calling on the Courts to be more consistent and to use the full range of their sentencing powers to hand down effective sentences along with ownership bans and destruction orders as in the Claire Neal case.

Yours sincerely



**Dave Joyce**  
**National Health, Safety & Environment Officer**