

Territorial Aggression

Every dog will begin to mark an invisible outline to the area they see as their own, this is known as their territory. When they begin to feel threatened within this territory, they may begin to show territorial aggression, which is essentially fear, motivated.

The experience of a dog whilst young will influence their behaviour towards visitors to the home. If the dog feels that a visitor is potentially threatened they will show a degree of defensive behaviour. This can range from barking and growling to jumping and lunging.

A regular target for dogs is postman and milkmen. Every day they come and everyday the dog scares them off again. Not knowing that the delivery person was going to leave, the dog gets rewarded for their actions and is likely to repeat the process next time. This is why this behaviour seems to be never ending to pet owners. When someone does not go away promptly, such as delivery person with a large parcel who needs the door opened, the dog may seem to be getting frustrated. This is because the dog is becoming frustrated that their actions aren't working and is when some dogs may nip at people or get them to leave.

Reducing your dog's territorial tendencies towards visitors and delivery people means introducing them on neutral territory. Arrange to meet the postman on his early morning rounds, and whilst getting him familiar with the 'friendly' postman you will also be exercising the dog too. Postmen really appreciate people making the early morning effort, after all it makes their life easier and safer.

Consistent periods of socialisation with people visiting regularly, increasing the dog's socialability is necessary for consistent learning with an established offender. Introduce people, off the dog's territory and return to the house together. The use of a lead, or placing the dog in another room behind a baby gate so they can become familiar with the goings on at a safe and tolerable distance maybe necessary.

With puppies, you will find no shortage of volunteers to help socialise them. There is no greater reward than being able to play with a cute cuddly puppy.