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Horror attack is worst I've ever seen, says dog warden

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By Clare Weir

Londonderry's dog warden said today that a dog attack on a six-year-old boy in the city was the worst he has ever come across.

Michael Duddy, who works for Derry City Council, spoke after little Leon McDaid was savaged by a collie yards from his home on the Galliagh estate.

He suffered injuries to his head, back, arms, neck, shoulder and nose in the horror mauling.

The child was only rescued after a taxi-driver jumped from his car and kicked the dog off. The animal has been destroyed.

Mr Duddy said that the incident proved that the Dangerous Dogs Act, which restricts the breeding and ownership of four types of dog in the UK, including Pit Bull Terriers, is insufficient in protecting people from attacks.

And he revealed how brave Leon put aside his terror to chat about Michael's son John, the champion Derry boxer preparing to fight in New York this weekend.

"This was the worst attack on a child I have ever seen," he said.

"It just shows you - this was a collie dog. Collies, Jack Russell, Alsatians - they can all be dangerous and there is nothing in the Dangerous Dogs Act to cover them.

"All breeds are the same - any dog can attack a person if they are not trained or looked after properly.

"But the wee lad was great. He is only six and so brave - all he wanted to do was chat about the boxing. But his injuries were awful."

Lumps of Leon's hair were torn out during the ordeal and blood and flesh left embedded in his school uniform.

He is still waiting for swelling to subside before finding out if his nose was broken.

Leon had been playing with a friend outside a shop, just yards from his Brookdale Court home, when the animal struck.

His mother Lisa yesterday urged dog owners in the area to keep their pets in a

locked yard and walk them regularly on leads.

An amnesty for Pit Bull Terriers launched by Derry City Council has so far yeilded no confirmed specimens of the breed.

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