



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP
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Malcolm Morley
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Dear Malcolm,

Thank you for your letter of 9 February to the Secretary of State on behalf of the British Veterinary Association and specialist divisions, about the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

As outlined in our 2021 Action Plan for Animal Welfare, the Government has an ambitious agenda for animal welfare and conservation reforms, which we plan to take forward during the current Parliamentary session and beyond. We will continue to introduce and support legislative and non-legislative reforms when we can.

The measures in the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill bring forward the domestic animal welfare proposals within the Action Plan, including three manifesto commitments to crack down on puppy smuggling, ban live exports for fattening and slaughter and ban the keeping of primates as pets. This Bill will also provide protection for livestock from out-of-control dogs, establish a new offence of pet abduction and introduce reforms to the zoo licensing regime, improving the welfare of our kept wild animals.

We have already delivered on several other commitments made within the Action Plan. We have increased the penalties for those convicted of Animal Cruelty and passed the Animal (Sentience) Act 2022. We have provided for penalty notices to apply to animal welfare offences, introduced new police powers to tackle hare coursing, and banned glue traps. We are supporting Private Members' Bills banning trade in detached shark fins, the import of hunting trophies and the advertising here of low-welfare animal experiences abroad.

In addition, the Ivory Act 2018 was brought into force in June 2022 to help protect elephants.

The Government is continuing to gather information in relation to fur and foie gras. Farming animals for their fur and the practice of force feeding have been illegal here for many years.

I hope this provides you with some reassurance that the Government is working hard to take steps in further improving our already high standards of animal welfare.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need further information.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP