

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1200
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00038/22

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions Committee

3rd February 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 20 January, regarding Petition P-06-1200: Make horse tethering, with or without shelter, illegal and an act of cruelty in Wales. Your letter makes particular reference to calls from Blue Cross and the RSPCA for enhancements to local authority enforcement.

Our [Programme for Government](#) includes four kept animal welfare commitments and these are included in our five year [Animal Welfare Plan for Wales](#). Enshrined in both, is our plan to develop a national model for the regulation of animal welfare, introducing registration for animal welfare establishments, commercial breeders of pets, and animal exhibits. Recognising the need to support effective enforcement, our plans also include a commitment to support the training of local authority enforcement officers. Our Local Authority Enforcement Project provides an example of our current commitment in relation to dogs and the project is going from strength to strength.

Our AWPW which is challenging, includes the requirement to have a national model for enforcement, registration and regulations and to improve the training and skills for LA enforcement officers. We have made it clear we will be looking at all existing animal welfare licensing legislation as well as the potential expansion across other areas. We are currently considering how best to support the continuation and expansion of this model to ensure a sustainable, comprehensive and consistent approach to enforcement. We will be working in close collaboration with enforcement agencies and via a joint working Group which includes members of the Animal Welfare Network for Wales and the Companion Animal Welfare Group for Wales.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

It is evident we cannot complete all this work in the first few years and we will have to focus on some key priorities included in the plan, some of which have been raised by the third sector organisations. However, in line with the stated intent of the plan, we will consult on the outcome of the prioritisation work, especially in relation to existing legislation which may require updating and any gaps in our legislation.

These commitments illustrate how animal welfare and the responsible ownership of animals are priorities for the Welsh Government and the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group. We are committed to maintaining high standards of welfare for all animals kept in Wales at all stages of their lives. Equines, like all domesticated and captive animals, are afforded protection under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Under this legislation, it is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to an animal, or for an owner (or keeper) to fail to provide for its welfare needs.

Finally, as mentioned in the correspondence from Blue Cross and the RSPCA, the Welsh Government Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses (the Code) is a good tool for training and was updated in 2018 and the Control of Horses (Wales) Act 2014 was introduced at the request of enforcement authorities, commoners and welfare charities. The Act itself provides further powers for Local Authorities to combat the abandonment of horses and ponies found grazing on land where the owner of the animals does not have the consent of the land owner.

We can certainly consider inclusion of *future* enforcement training on other species of animals as we progress work on the AWPW and will, in the meantime, continue to work with key stakeholders, including Local Authorities, third sector organisations and the other UK Administrations, to ensure any measures we introduce have a lasting impact on the welfare of animals in Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

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