



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
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Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 2 November to the Secretary of State on behalf of your constituents about the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and I apologise for the delay in doing so.

As outlined in our 2021 Action Plan for Animal Welfare, the Government has an ambitious agenda of 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 Kept Animals Bill are part of this ambitious agenda and we have already delivered on various 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 also introduced penalty notices for animal welfare offences, introduced new police powers to tackle hare coursing, and banned glue traps. We are also supporting Bills banning the import of detached shark fins and hunting trophies.

For animals overseas, the Ivory Act 2018 came into force in June 2022, ensuring protection for elephants.

The Government is also gathering further information about exploring potential action in relation to the import of animal fur and foie gras produced abroad using force feeding. Farming animals for their fur and the practice of force feeding have been illegal in the UK 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