

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

21st February 2017

Dear Constituent,
RE: ANIMAL CRUELTY SENTENCING.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of sentencing for offences of animal cruelty.

I am pleased that we have a robust legal framework to tackle this vicious behaviour in the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*, which makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal.

The law, and the penalties for breaking it, were reviewed by the Parliamentary Select Committee for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in 2012. At that time, the Committee did not recommend increasing the maximum sentencing available to the courts. However, I am pleased to say that the previous cap in the fine charges of animal abuse can attract has been removed, and I can also tell you that the Ministry of Justice is now looking at whether there is a case for increasing the penalties further.

The courts must decide what the penalty should be for each individual case, taking into account its circumstances and the guidelines laid down by the Sentencing Council. There has recently been a public consultation into sentencing guidelines for these crimes, which resulted in the Council confirming the removal of the cap on the financial element of the penalty, and clarifying a range of relevant factors that would indicate a more serious offence.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

with best wishes,

Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE