

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

4th April 2017

Dear Constituent,

RE: ANIMAL CRUELTY AND THIRD PARTY SALES.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of animal welfare.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the debate in the House of Commons on the 30th March owing to other parliamentary commitments, although I did follow the proceedings.

As you know, the debate focused on a recent report by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, and in particular on the issues of sentencing for animal cruelty offences and pet sales by third parties.

The Government responded to the Committee's recommendations in full, noting the conclusions of its recent consultation on introducing a new Animal Activities License. Under its proposals, anyone breeding and selling three litters or more within twelve months will need to be licensed by their local authority, as will anyone breeding commercially. This should take the number of people in England who need a licence from 600 to around 5,000.

Ministers are concerned that a ban in third-party sales would be extremely difficult to enforce. It would require local authorities, already under pressure to enforce licensing requirements, to expend further resources verifying that all sales to end customers were being handled directly by the breeder. There is also concern that such a ban would drive sales onto the black market, which would be worse for the animals involved.

When sentencing in cases of animal cruelty, the courts must decide what penalty should apply in each case, taking into account its circumstances and the Sentencing Council's guidelines. Currently, in addition to the maximum penalty of six months' imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine, the courts can also disqualify offenders from keeping animals.

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 PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE