

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

18th August 2020

New Complaint,

RE: ENFORCEMENT OF HORSE WELFARE.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the enforcement of horse welfare in line with the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

Local authorities must be able to make decisions based on local needs, resource priorities and the local arrangements that work best for them. While they have powers of entry to inspect complaints of suspected animal cruelty and prosecute where necessary, so do the Animal & Plant Health Agency and the police. I am aware that all three often work in close partnership to ensure that the welfare of animals, including horses, is protected.

Under the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*, anyone is able to investigate allegations of animal neglect and, if necessary, take forward a prosecution. The RSPCA enforces animal welfare legislation and successfully prosecutes 800 to 1,000 people each year. The RSPCA investigates many allegations of animal welfare offences where additional powers are needed, for example to seize animals, and I understand that in such cases they liaise with other relevant authorities to ensure these powers are used appropriately. In addition, the equine charity, World Horse Welfare, will also advise on cases of horse welfare.

Local authorities are required to enforce the *Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Regulations* which include the licensing of businesses that hire out horses for riding, or instruction in riding, and requires inspectors to be suitably qualified. Local authority animal welfare inspectors also carry out inspections in relation to welfare in transport and on-farm welfare. I would, therefore, expect most local authorities to have inspectors trained in enforcing equine welfare more generally.

I am also encouraged that from October 2020 it will be mandatory for owners to microchip their horses, ponies and donkeys, allowing local authorities and the police to track down the owners of abandoned horses and ensure that appropriate action is taken.

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