



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

11th August 2021

Sean Conboy

RE: KEEPING PRIMATES AS PETS.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of keeping primates as pets. I have read your comments on this issue with interest.

Primates are highly intelligent wild animals with complicated welfare needs, and require open spaces, varied diets, social contact and plenty of warmth and light. When primates are confined in tiny cages, often alone and with little stimulation, their lives are a misery. I understand that a recent 'call for evidence' found that these complex needs cannot be met in a home environment. I believe that we must therefore take action to prevent the suffering caused to these creatures.

Having considered the evidence available, including the responses to the Government consultation, I am pleased that my ministerial colleagues have now confirmed that they will legislate to prohibit primates being kept as pets. I am aware that keepers who are able to provide welfare standards akin to those of licensed zoos will be able to keep their primates under a new licensing regime, subject to conditions and inspections. Ownership of these exotic animals with complex needs will be phased out for keepers unable to meet these standards. Furthermore, Ministers will place a ban on the sale, or otherwise transferring of primates, apart from to persons holding a relevant licence. I understand that a relevant licence would include a 'Zoo Licence', an 'Animals (Scientific Procedures) Licence' and a new 'Specialist Private Primate Keeper Licence'. It is welcome that the new prohibitions and licensing regime is being introduced through legislation in the *Kept Animals Bill*.

It is welcome also that the commitment to ban keeping primates such as capuchins, lemurs and squirrel monkeys forms part of a renewed push to cement the UK's position as a world leader on animal welfare.



Currently, anyone wishing to keep a primate covered by *The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976* must apply for a licence from their local authority. Some keepers of smaller primates do not need a licence, but in all cases the animal is protected by the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*. Now that the *Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act* has come into force, anyone causing unnecessary suffering to a primate will be liable to up to five months imprisonment or an unlimited fine, or both. The statutory *Code of Practice for the Welfare of Privately Kept Non-human Primates* also outlines how primates must be provided with a suitable environment and diet; be able to exhibit normal behaviour; be housed with, or apart from, other animals; and be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

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**