

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

2nd February 2024

Dear Constance,

RE: PET ABDUCTION

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about pet theft. I have read your comments with interest.

I fully recognise the devastating impact that the theft of a pet can have on both the pet and their family. In response to concerns about a perceived increase in pet theft during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) launched the Pet Theft Taskforce in May 2021. The taskforce's findings and recommendations, published in September 2021, included the creation of a specific offence.

I am aware that the *Pet Abduction Bill*, introduced by my colleague, Anna Firth MP, would introduce a new criminal offence in relation to the theft of a dog or a cat. I know that the Government supported the Bill during its Second Reading, and I will support this Bill when it returns to the House. It very much has my firm backing.

More widely, DEFRA has been making improvements to the cat and dog microchipping regime in England, in line with the taskforce's recommendations. This includes introducing legislation last year to extend compulsory microchipping to include cats, as well as dogs. This increases the likelihood of lost or stolen pets being reunited with their owners. In addition, police forces are working together to better coordinate and share best practice and advice on the steps owners can take to protect their pets.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'TP'.

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE