



June 2020

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about animal welfare.

The UK has some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world and it is right for us to cement our status as a global leader by continuing to raise the bar. All animals should be subject to the highest possible welfare standards.

There is no place in this country for animal cruelty and we must ensure that those who abuse animals are met with the full force of the law. I am therefore pleased that Chris Loder MP has introduced the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill to the House of Commons which will increase maximum sentences for animal cruelty from six months to five years' imprisonment.

These increased maximum sentences will act as a deterrent against cruelty and gross neglect in the future and builds on recent positive action to protect animals, including plans to ban third party puppy and kitten sales and banning the use of wild animals in circuses.

I believe that this increase in sentencing will send a clear message that this behaviour will not be tolerated. The maximum five-year sentence will become one of the toughest punishments in Europe, strengthening the UK's position as a global leader on animal welfare.

It is very encouraging that the Prime Minister believes animal welfare is a priority. I know that the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs agrees, and is keen to set ambitious animal welfare goals, in particular seeking to reward farmers for environmental stewardship and improving the health and welfare of animals.

I am also pleased to report that the use of wild animals in travelling circuses was prohibited from January 2020. On top of this, the Government will be running a consultation on proposals to ban long journeys of live animals being transported for slaughter, and has also now consulted on restrictions on trade in hunting trophies from endangered animals. I look forward to seeing the outcome of these exercises.

The Government has been clear it will not compromise the high quality of British food or agricultural standards in any free trading relationship and is committed to maintaining high standards on animal welfare and food safety now that the UK has left the EU. The Animal

and Plant Health Agency takes potential breaches of animal welfare legislation and codes very seriously and investigates all allegations. Where welfare regulations are breached, appropriate action will always be taken.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me about this important issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Sunderland', is displayed on a light yellow rectangular background.

James Sunderland MP
Member of Parliament for the Bracknell Constituency
Bracknell, Crowthorne, Finchampstead, Sandhurst and Wokingham Without