

Antony Higginbotham MP  
Member of Parliament for Burnley



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

26 June 2020

Dear Constituent,

**Re: Animal Cruelty**

Thank you for your email on the Animal Welfare Bill.

I completely agree with you that this is incredibly important legislation which is rightly being reintroduced to increase maximum sentences for animal cruelty from six months to five years' imprisonment. As a society, we must send a message that we will not tolerate this behaviour, and it is fantastic that the proposed sentencing will become one of the toughest punishments in Europe, strengthening the UK's position as a global leader on animal welfare. I have been thrilled to see considerable public support for this bill as it is something I have looked forward to supporting in Parliament. This Bill will act as a serious deterrent against cruelty and gross neglect, and will build on recent positive action to protect animals, including plans to ban third party puppy and kitten sales and updating the statutory welfare codes to tighten regulation.

I would also like to reassure you that I am committed to making sure that any necessary changes to UK law are made in a rigorous and comprehensive way to ensure animal sentience is legally recognised once the UK leaves the EU. I know the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is engaging with the relevant organisations and authorities to enhance its policies on this issue, and I will be supporting them to the best of my ability. Our withdrawal also allows us to bring an end to the inhumane live cross-border transport of animals which I am personally outraged by and so I will call on the Government to ensure this is brought to an end. Animals deserve the very best treatment from us, as a society, and those individuals who are not willing to respect them deserve to face a rigorous dressing down by our criminal justice system.

From service animals, to guide dogs, to support pets, animals help us, and love us unconditionally, and they deserve to have the best legal protections against cruelty possible. We have to do right by animals as well as the rest of the natural world, so we can live together and flourish together. Pets can often brighten up our day, bring us a great deal of joy and, for many, they can become a real lifeline, so, in return, I think it is essential we protect them with the fullness of the law.

In short, I am thoroughly supportive of the Government's Animal Welfare Bill and I look forward to voting it through Parliament. Thank you again for raising this important issue.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Higginbotham', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Antony Higginbotham MP**  
Member of Parliament for Burnley