

Antony Higginbotham MP
Member of Parliament for Burnley



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

12th May 2020

Dear Constituent,

Re: Testing on Animals

Thank you for emailing me about animal testing.

There is no place in our country for animal cruelty, and I'm committed to ensuring those who abuse animals are met with the full force of the law. I'm sure you'll be pleased to hear that a new Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill has been brought before Parliament and is something I will be supporting. This new Bill will enable tougher prison sentences for the most serious perpetrators of animal cruelty, from the current maximum of six months to up to five years.

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.

I, like 70% of the UK public, support proposals for tougher prison sentences and am encouraged that the planned change in law means the courts will be able to take a tougher approach to cases such as dog fighting, abuse of puppies and kittens, or gross neglect of farm animals.

These increased maximum sentences will act as a serious 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.

Whilst I appreciate your concerns regarding animal testing it is worth remembering that, as a result of findings from animal studies, a large number of new life saving drugs have been made available without the need to test potentially dangerous new medicines on healthy volunteers and patients in clinical trials. Using the existing scientific research method ensures that by the time medicines do reach clinical trial, risks are significantly reduced, something which I support.

I am assured that animals are only used when there are no suitable alternatives, and by encouraging new cutting-edge approaches to science we will ensure that standards of animal welfare are improved in this area too.

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

Yours sincerely

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

Antony Higginbotham MP
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