

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

July 2016

Dear Constituent,

Thanks for contacting me about dog fighting.

This is a heinous crime that has been banned in this country for over 100 years. It is an offence under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and punishable by up to six months' imprisonment or an unlimited fine, or both. I also support the ban on owning or selling some types of dogs bred for fighting.

The police have powers to investigate allegations of dog fighting and have the power to arrest anyone suspected of being involved in this barbaric practice. People can be charged with causing, taking part in, attending or publicising an animal fight, receiving admission money or keeping equipment, premises or an animal to be used in a fight. This is a broad range of charges that are available to prosecutors, and naturally I would urge anyone with any relevant information to contact the police immediately.

The previous cap in the fine charges that animal abuse can attract was removed last year, but I can tell you that the Ministry of Justice is now looking at whether there is a case for increasing the penalties further. There is also a public consultation now open into sentencing guidelines for these crimes, which will close on 11th August. You can find more details on the website of the Sentencing Council, www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk under Consultations > Magistrates' Court Sentencing Guidelines consultation.

Once again, many thanks for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY