August 2020



Thank you for contacting me about animal cruelty sentencing.

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 the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill has now been introduced in the House by Chris Loder MP and will be backed by the Government. The 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.

Due to the coronavirus outbreak and the changes to the setup of Parliament, this Bill will now be heard on 23rd October.

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 am aware that a public consultation found that 70 per cent of people supported the proposals for tougher prison sentences. I 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.

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

Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**