Chris Heaton-Harris
Member of Parliament for Daventry
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 7048

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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about puppy smuggling.

I would like to assure you that Ministers are committed to cracking down on puppy smuggling and will ban the imports of young or heavily pregnant dogs, as well as dogs with mutilations, such as cropped ears or docked tails. Applying strengthened penalties will send a clear message that animal cruelty will not be tolerated and will enable our courts to take a firmer approach to cases where pets are illegally imported. I know that the Government would be supportive of legislation to ban this through a single-issue Bill when parliamentary time allows.

The UK has one of the most rigorous pet travel border checking regimes in the world and I am aware that every dog travelling into Great Britain on approved routes has its microchip and paperwork checked to make sure they are all properly vaccinated and are old enough to travel. In addition, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) consulted on proposed changes to the commercial and non-commercial movements of pets into Great Britain. Defra has been carefully reviewing feedback from this consultation, and I look forward to reading a summary in due course.

Ministers have taken action to tackle the practice of puppy farming. Following the introduction of Lucy's Law in 2020, everyone must now buy directly from breeders or consider adopting from rescue centres, which is a major step in stopping the illegal pet trade. If an individual sells puppies or kittens without a licence, they could receive an unlimited fine or be sent to prison for up to six months.

Thank you for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY