

P-06-1200: Make horse tethering, with or without shelter, illegal and an act of cruelty in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 01 Tachwedd 2021
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Reference: SR21/1044-1

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Petition title: Make horse tethering, with or without shelter, illegal and an act of cruelty in Wales

Text of petition: In Wales it is currently not illegal to tether horses. Everyone must have seen a beautiful horse tethered on a short chain at the side of a road with no shelter from the harsh weather.

RSPCA appear have no power do anything about it! If a dog was tied up on the side of a busy road, there would be outrage. Both animals matter!

Laws must be passed to stop this terrible cruelty to such sensitive creatures! These animals have no quality of life, it's an absolute scandal.

HorseWorld a welfare charity created a #BreaktheChain campaign with the hopes of changing the law. Despite being dubbed as cruel and dangerous this practice remains legal.

Visit the website www.BreakTheChain.org.uk for further information.

Would be so proud of Wales if they lead the way to finally stop this dreadful practice. The RSPCA is also opposed to the practice as they say compromises animal welfare in so many ways.

Defra Code on practice for horses and the Welsh Government Code of Practice states that horse tethering is not a suitable method of management of an animal. Have to ask why therefore it's not illegal?



1. Background

'Tethering' is the term used when a horse is tied up so it is restrained from moving out of a certain radius with a rope, chain, strap or cord.

There is no specific legislation to ban the tethering of horses. However under the *Animal Welfare Act 2006* owners or carers of horses have a legal duty to meet five specified welfare needs at all times. They must:

- have a suitable environment to live in;
- have a healthy diet;
- be able to behave normally;
- have appropriate company; and
- be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

If the tethering results in these needs not being met then this could be a breach of the 2006 Act. Concerns about the welfare of an animal, can be reported to the Local Authority which has powers under the 2006 Act to investigate such matters.

The RSPCA does not recommend tethering as a viable way to keep a horse. It says:

If a horse needs to be tethered in order to have access to grazing, it must only be for short periods of time. For the remainder of the day the horse should have access to shelter, and a space to run free and interact freely with other horses.

2. Welsh Government action

In November 2018 the Welsh Government updated its code of practice for the welfare of horses. A 12 week public consultation on the updated code took place in 2017. The code sets out the *Animal Welfare Act 2006* requirements referred to above.

Appendix 1 of the code looks specifically at the tethering of horses, and states that "it should never be used as a long-term measure to control horses", as this can lead to a failure to meet a horse's basic welfare needs as set out in the 2006 Act. This section covers the suitability of the animal, the site where the animal is tethered, and the equipment used, amongst other things.

The Welsh Government introduced the *Control of Horses (Wales) Act 2014* at the request of enforcement authorities, commoners and welfare charities. The Act provides further powers for Local Authorities to combat the abandonment of horses and ponies found grazing on land where the owner of the animals does not have the consent of the land owner.

3. Welsh Parliament action

There has been no significant work in the Senedd to ban the tethering of horses. There was a written question on the matter in 2017.

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