



Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: P-04-398

12 December 2012

Dear Sir or Madam,

As you may know, the Petitions Committee of the National Assembly for Wales exists to consider all admissible petitions received from the public and stakeholders.

The Petitions Committee has received the following petition:

Please sign in support of a 'Animal Offenders Register', a central Welsh database which will consist of name, address and convictions of people who have been convicted of any form of animal cruelty and abuse within Wales. Breeders / sellers of animals will be required to check this central database before allowing any animal they own / bred to go to a prospective owner / new home; if it is found that someone who has been convicted of animal cruelty or abuse has an animal the supplier / breeder will be held liable and prosecuted. At the moment there is no law to stop anyone who has been convicted of animal cruelty from moving a few miles up the road and then obtaining another animal to inflict further abuse on. Stricter laws need to be implemented to help protect animals, heavier fines and longer prison sentences as well as an Animal Offenders Register.

New York City and various states in the USA have already implemented this law, what is there to stop Wales taking the lead in the United Kingdom? You've heard of Sarah's Law, designed to keep sex offenders from striking again. Now we hope for a law created in the hope of preventing animal abusers from inflicting more cruelty, or moving on to human victims. Research has shown that there is a very strong correlation between animal abuse and domestic violence. Many murderers start out by torturing animals, and we could end up also protecting the lives of people.

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The Committee has agreed to look at this issue in more detail to examine *the legislative and practical implications of creating an Animal Offenders Register for Wales which sellers/breeders of animals would be required to consult prior to the sale of any animal.*

We are interested in receiving views from individuals, groups and organisations on the subject of this petition. These views will be used as evidence by the Petitions Committee in its consideration of the petition.

Issues you may wish to consider in responding

The Committee wishes to hear views on:

- The risks and benefits of creating an Animal Offenders Register for Wales.
- The legal and practical implications of placing a duty on sellers/breeders to consult a Register.
- The administration and funding implications of such a Register and how these could be addressed and in particular:
 - Who should be responsible for administering the Register?
 - Who should have access to the information contained in the Register?
 - How should administration of a Register be funded?
 - What details about offenders should be held in a Register?
- Policing of a Register and who should be responsible for ensuring the compliance of sellers/breeders with any requirement to consult the Register.
- The penalties and offences that should be associated with non-compliance of both offenders and sellers/breeders.
- The cross-border implications of developing an Animals Offenders Register for Wales only.

If you would like to submit evidence, we would be grateful to receive it by **Tuesday 5 February 2013**. Please send an electronic copy of your submission to petition@wales.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can write to:

Committee Clerk, Petitions Committee, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay, CF99 1NA.

Responding to the consultation request

The Committee welcomes responses from both individuals and organisations. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please provide a brief description of the role of your organisation.

The Committee welcomes contributions in English or Welsh and will consider responses to the inquiry before deciding whether to hold oral evidence sessions in the Spring / Summer term.

Submissions should arrive by **Tuesday 5 February 2013**. It may not be possible to take into account responses received after this date.

For your information, the Committee has invited submissions from those on the attached distribution list. They would be grateful if you could forward a copy of the letter to any individuals or organisations that are not included on this list, but might like to contribute to the inquiry. A copy of this letter has been placed on the National Assembly's website with an open invitation to submit views.

Disclosure of Information

It is normal practice for the National Assembly to publish evidence provided to a Committee. Consequently your response may appear in a report or in supplementary evidence to a report. The National Assembly will not publish information which it considers to be personal data.

In the event of a request for information submitted under UK legislation, it may be necessary to disclose the information that you provide. This may include information which has previously been removed by the National Assembly for publication purposes.

If you are providing any information, other than personal data, which you feel is not suitable for public disclosure, it is up to you to stipulate which parts should not be published and to provide a reasoned argument to support this. The National Assembly will take this into account when publishing information or responding to requests for information.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Powell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'W' and 'P'.

William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee

Distribution List:

RSPCA

Association of Chief Police Officers

Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales

WLGA

British Veterinary Association

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

International Fund for Animal Welfare

The Association of Lawyers for Animal Welfare

The Kennel Club

Dogs Trust

Cats Protection

Greyhound Rescue Wales

Horse Trust

National Equine Welfare Council

Animal Aid

PET Care Trade Association

Federation of Small Businesses

Welsh Pony and Cob Society

National Animal Welfare Trust

Thoroughbred breeders Association

The Governing Council of the Cat Fancy

Cat Breeders Association

British Horse Society

The International Cat Association

The British Rabbit Council

British Hamster Association

Feline Advisory Bureau

Cross Party Group on the Horse

National Farmers Union Wales

Farmers Union of Wales

Country Land and Business Association