

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion
Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref - P-06-1318
Ein cyf/Our ref - DB/00286/24

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions Committee
petitions@senedd.wales

5 April 2024

Dear Jack

Thank you for your letter of 19 March to the former Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport and Tourism, relating to Petition P-06-1318. *This calls upon the Welsh government to introduce new legislation to deal with dog fouling on sports pitches.* I am responding as policies relating to local environmental quality reside within my portfolio.

Dog fouling is an issue the Welsh Government takes very seriously and whilst enforcement can play a role in addressing the problem, our aim has been to encourage responsible dog ownership. This work has predominantly focussed on supporting Local Authorities (LAs) and Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) to raise awareness through communication campaigns and education programmes. For example KWT, with grant funding from the Welsh Government, undertook a yearlong campaign as part of its *Caru Cymru* programme. The '[Leave only pawprints](#)' campaign focused on using behavioural change and awareness raising to reduce dog fouling on a national scale. This included the development of a communication toolkit for LAs and other partners to use. Trials were also run in LAs to help encourage people to clean up after their dogs.

Where such preventative measures fail and irresponsible dog owners choose to ignore the law, there are several enforcement options available to LAs. These includes the ability to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) of up to £150 to those dog owners who are caught not picking up their dog waste and the establishment of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs). The latter can be used to prohibit certain activities involving dogs in a specific area, for example preventing access to certain public spaces (including parks) or requiring dogs to be kept under control which can help prevent dog fouling in these areas. FPNs can be issued for a breach of the conditions set under the PSPO.

Officials monitor the use of FPNs via the annual enforcement data survey of LAs and liaise with enforcement officers to help understand the action being undertaken across Wales. I confirm for the 2022/23 reporting year 66 FPNs were issued for dog fouling offences, an increase from the 25 FPNs issued during 2021/22. Views collected from LAs as part of this

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

survey work indicated that whilst there are some operational issues associated with PSPOs, for example the requirement to review and consult on their use every three years, there were other mitigating factors in the relatively low numbers of FPNs being issued. This included budgetary constraints, loss of staff resources due to retirement or redeployment and that some LAs no longer employed private enforcement companies. LA officers have also noted that even with the availability of enforcement tools it can be difficult to catch irresponsible dog owners, as the offence usually needs to be witnessed by an enforcement officer and many incidents typically occur outside of the hours worked by enforcement officers.

The Welsh Government continues to monitor and review the use of existing enforcement tools, however at present there is no plan to introduce any new legislation. It should also be noted that as statutory bodies LAs have a legal responsibility for keeping their land and highways clear of litter and refuse (which includes dog waste) and it is ultimately for them to decide on how best to deploy the various tools and resources available to them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a stylized representation of the name 'Huw Irranca-Davies'.

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