

Andrew RT Davies MS

Chair

Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee (ETRA)

25 November 2025

Dear Andrew,

Petition P-06-1291 Hold an enquiry into the corporate takeover of the veterinary profession in Wales.

The Petitions Committee met on 24 November and had a private discussion about the above petition, submitted by Linda Joyce-Jones. This followed an informal meeting between the Chair and petitioner on 10 November, to discuss latest developments with the Competition and Markets Authority's ongoing market investigation into veterinary services for household pets.

As you are aware, the Petitions Committee has been considering this petition for some time, and following a short inquiry we submitted evidence to the CMA inquiry. The CMA's Wales representative has also been keeping us informed of developments. As agreed by the Committee last October, I also wrote to your predecessor Paul Davies MS, to request that ETRA consider an inquiry on the matter within its forward work programme.

At that time both our Committees had agreed to keep a watching brief on the petition pending the conclusion of the CMA inquiry. Paul Davies indicated that "once the CMA had reported the Committee would consider its next steps. This may include holding an inquiry if appropriate." At that time the CMA investigation was expected to conclude in May 2025, but this substantial investigation was subsequently extended into 2026. Having published its provisional findings on 15 October, the CMA is consulting further on its reform proposals, before issuing a final report in February-March 2026, with an administrative deadline of May 2026.

The petitioner has raised concerns with me and with the Chair of the CMA inquiry about the direction taken between the publication of their initial work and the latest Provisional Findings. She notes the British Veterinary Association is named as a "main party" in this investigation, and questions the extent to which the voice of consumers (companion animal owners) is now being drowned out by the interests of the veterinary profession and in particular the large corporates.



The petitioner understands that many aspects of this investigation are non-devolved, however she is of the view that there should be a fully independent external ombudsman for the veterinary profession in Wales, and that this regulatory role should be made a devolved matter.

I appreciate that at this point in the Senedd term, ETRA's work programme may already be fully committed until dissolution. However, as the Committee responsible for scrutiny of animal welfare, it would be appreciated if you could advise whether there is scope for you to take up this matter with the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, perhaps in the course of your general ministerial scrutiny if there is no capacity for a short inquiry. It would be useful for the petitioner to know the Welsh Government's position on the inquiry, its provisional findings and the direction of travel, and what it means for the future of veterinary services in Wales.

For your Committee's information, the petitioner is also planning an event in the Senedd in January, which I have agreed to host as Chair of the Cross Party Group on Animal Welfare.

The Petitions Committee will be reviewing all petitions that remain open at the end of this Senedd term and producing a legacy report. We expect this to be one of the significant ongoing issues to be reported on and recommended for follow-up by Members of the Seventh Senedd.

The full details of the Committee's consideration of the petition, including the correspondence and the actions agreed by the Committee can be found here:

<https://business.senedd.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=39835>

I would be grateful if you could send any response by e-mail to the clerking team at petitions@senedd.wales.

Yours sincerely



Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.