



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

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**TITLE**            **Circuses - next steps in considering whether wild animals should be used in travelling circuses**

**DATE**            **1 December 2015**

**BY**                **Rebecca Evans, Deputy Minister for Farming and Food**

The Welsh Government believes there is no place for the use of wild animals in circuses and despite previous commitments from Defra to take forward primary legislation to ban the use of wild animals in circuses, and numerous promises from the Secretary of State, it is now clear the UK Government shows no appetite for action.

In considering how to take this forward separately in Wales, I have asked Professor Stephen Harris, 2nd Lord Dulverton Memorial Professor of Environmental Sciences at Bristol University, to undertake an independent review on the evidence of animal welfare, both physical and mental, of wild and/or non-domesticated animals in travelling and non-travelling circuses. In addition I have asked him to consider the environmental enrichment of such animals and their behaviours. I look forward to receiving the draft final report by the end of February 2016.

Professor Stephen Harris has held the Chair of Environmental Sciences at the University of Bristol since 1992. He is an expert on the behaviour and welfare of wild mammals, and is an internationally recognised expert. It is expected that he will gather evidence from across the world from a variety of sources.

I have also previously agreed that Welsh Government officials should continue their discussions with the Welsh Local Government Association, the Animal and Plant Health Agency, police and Local Authorities to map out a cohesive, Wales-wide approach to monitoring public safety and animal health and welfare standards in travelling circuses. That work is ongoing with a view to all local authorities and enforcement agencies in Wales having a single reference document and check list for their use.

I will continue to keep Assembly members informed on progress.