



Kayleigh Imperato
Deputy Clerk
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
2019

23rd January

Dear Ms Imperato,

C.A.R.I.A.D. welcomes the Committee's consideration of our e-Petition: Ban the sale of puppies by pet shops and all commercial 3rd party dealers in Wales (Lucy's Law), which was successful in collecting well over 11,000 signatures, and wish to bring to the attention of the Committee our concerns that, regardless of the response from the Cabinet Secretary to David John Rowland AM, it is imperative that this important petition be given time for debate.

This petition has received many thousands of signatures from the people of Wales, as well as considerable attention across both social and printed media. This is because the people of Wales are deeply concerned about puppy farming and puppy dealing in our country. We believe that the Welsh citizens who have taken the time to sign the petition deserve to see their concerns discussed in a public forum by Assembly Members democratically elected to represent them. Furthermore, how Wales now addresses this critical issue is also being closely observed by other parts of the United Kingdom as well as from overseas. It's fair to say that in terms of animal welfare, all eyes are on Wales at the moment.

Whilst the Cabinet Secretary has stated in her letter to David John Rowland AM that there have been significant animal welfare improvements since the introduction on 30th April 2015 of the Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations, C.A.R.I.A.D. must highlight that regrettably this has not materialised into significant improvements to the physical and psychological health or welfare of the vast majority of breeding dogs in commercial Welsh breeding establishments. Our field and first-hand evidence of rescues that take in these dogs once they are retired, provides a shocking and depressing visual

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representation, through photos and videos, of the true state of affairs on the ground. This desperate situation is compounded by the considerable costs of veterinary treatment paid for by these rescues, in order to redress years of neglect and abuse suffered by these dogs, and in many cases their poor puppies as well.

C.A.R.I.A.D. recognises that there are, in addition to a ban, a number of areas where improvements to regulations, licensing, and enforcement are still required. A review of the Regulations is long overdue having initially been promised after 12 months of implementation, which became two years, then 3 years and will be 4 years by April 2019; during which time dogs and puppies have continued to suffer at the hands of both licensed and unlicensed puppy farmers and of course, their dealers. We would add that we have met with Welsh Government officials on several occasions and raised our concerns regarding this over the years, and the Cabinet Secretary has appeared to consistently dismiss them.

Just as the UK Government has already confirmed with the imminent implementation of Lucy's Law in England, whatever additional regulations are applied, there will not be any significant, tangible improvements to the lives of the breeding dogs in these establishments without the inclusion of a ban on the third party commercial selling of puppies (Lucy's Law) in Wales too. Without complete transparency in the breeding and selling process there can be no accountability, and these dogs will continue to be hidden away from public scrutiny and cruelly exploited, as long as puppy farmers are allowed to continue selling puppies away from their mothers, remotely through third party dealers.

C.A.R.I.A.D. very much welcomed the Cabinet Secretary's attendance at our popular and well-attended Lucy's Law Senedd event on 11th July 2018. Whilst we were encouraged to hear her speak of future improvements and how a ban might be introduced in Wales, we are also minded of the number of consultations drawn out over many years before the current breeding Regulations were finally introduced. We are concerned that issues surrounding Brexit, for example, could provide ample opportunity for the issue of puppy farming and puppy dealing to become relegated, and therefore suffer similar delays,

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which is another reason why we are pressing for this essential debate to happen at its earliest possible opportunity.

C.A.R.I.A.D. naturally welcomes the Government Consultation which is to be launched on 22nd February 2019 and is scheduled to run for a period of 12 weeks. We will be responding fully and comprehensively to it. However, such a Consultation by necessity will cover broader areas than those addressed specifically within the petition itself and as such we believe that despite the Consultation being announced just prior to the closing date for the petition, this does not negate the requirement for a debate in the Chamber on Lucy's Law.

Finally, C.A.R.I.A.D. would like to bring to the attention of the Committee the significance of local government support for this specific issue and that the majority of councils in Wales have already voted through their own motions of support for Lucy's Law including Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Cardiff, Caerphilly, RCT, Torfaen, Vale of Glamorgan, Neath Port Talbot, Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Conwy and Denbighshire, with Swansea and Powys voting on 24th January and Newport voting on 29th January 2019.

We think you'll agree with us that this is hugely significant, given that it is these same councils that are on the front line of legislative enforcement, and understand only too well why the introduction of Lucy's Law in particular will assist the work of their licensing officials and animal health officers. For the Councillors across Wales who have taken the time and effort to put forward motions of support at their meetings of full council, in our opinion it would be doing a great disservice to these Councillors and to all those who have voted, if this petition isn't debated ASAP.

C.A.R.I.A.D. once again thanks the Committee for their consideration of the concerns we've raised and look forward to hearing news of a positive decision regarding a debate on this important animal welfare issue for Wales.

Kind regards,

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