

Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West

20th November 2017

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about the status of animals as living beings.

I am proud that the UK has some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world. Ministers have been clear that they intend it to remain world-leading in the future and, as a minimum, to retain our existing standards of animal welfare once we have left the EU.

The EU (Withdrawal) Bill will convert the existing body of direct EU animal welfare laws to become UK laws. Most of these EU laws relate to farmed animals and many were passed after Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) came into effect.

Based on the Animal Welfare Act, the Animal Protection Index, maintained by World Animal Protection, rates the UK's formal recognition of animal sentience as grade A. Other Lisbon Treaty signatories such as France, Italy and Spain do not enjoy this rating, having each received grade C.

Article 13 of the TFEU created a qualified obligation on the EU and Member States "to have full regard to the welfare of animals [as they are sentient beings]" when formulating and implementing EU law. The Government has said that it will consider how the 'animal sentience' principle of Article 13 might be explicitly reflected in the UK when we leave the EU.

I therefore believe that existing UK legislation, which provides necessary and appropriate protection for animals in this country, will not be weakened when we leave the EU.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP