

17<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about animal cruelty sentencing.

There is no place in this country for animal cruelty, and we must ensure that those who abuse animals are met with the full force of the law. I am therefore pleased that the Government has reintroduced a Bill to the House of Commons which will increase maximum sentences for animal cruelty from six months to five years' imprisonment.

I believe that this increase in sentencing will send a clear message that this behaviour will not be tolerated. The maximum five-year sentence will become one of the toughest punishments in Europe, strengthening the UK's position as a global leader on animal welfare.

I am aware that a public consultation found 70 per cent of people supported the proposals for tougher prison sentences. I am encouraged that the planned change in law means the courts will be able to take a tougher approach to cases such as dog fighting, abuse of puppies and kittens, or gross neglect of farm animals.

These increased maximum sentences will act as a serious deterrent against cruelty and gross neglect in the future, and builds on recent positive action to protect animals, including plans to ban third party puppy and kitten sales and banning the use of wild animals in circuses.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me about this important issue.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**

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