

24th December 2014

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about puppies being trafficked across borders illegally.

I share your concern about this crime and am grateful to the Dogs Trust for highlighting the issue recently. Responsibility for stopping illegal movement begins in the country where puppies are born, so the Chief Veterinary Officer has written to the authorities in the countries highlighted in its report to remind them of their duties.

A new EU pet travel regulation in force from 29th December 2014 introduces further measures to strengthen enforcement. A new-style passport will be harder to forge, new rules apply when more than five animals are moved together and all EU countries must carry out compliance checks. A 12-week minimum age for rabies vaccination will assist compliance checking and restrict the movement of very young animals.

There is a robust checking regime for pets travelling here. Every pet travelling with its owner on an approved route is checked for compliance with the travel regime and the UK Border Force carries out a wide range of checks on vehicles arriving in the UK.

It is important to recognise that we cannot expect the Government to defeat this problem by itself. As individuals, we need to take care not to fuel demand for these poor creatures by providing a market for the unscrupulous people who exploit them. Government advice is very clear: people who buy a pet are responsible for knowing where it comes from and, if it is found to have been imported illegally, will be held responsible for any necessary quarantine and veterinary fees.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP