

11th November 2016

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about the breeding and sale of puppies.

Britain is a nation of animal lovers and it is vital that we maintain the highest standards of animal welfare. Ministers are serious about improving welfare in breeding establishments and at the point of sale, so are reviewing the laws that regulate dog breeding and pet sales. These plans would introduce a single 'Animal Establishment Licence' for animal boarding establishments, pet shops, riding establishments and dog breeding. Following a recent public consultation, I have been assured that the Government's final proposals will be outlined shortly.

It is already the case that anyone in the business of breeding dogs or running a pet shop must be licenced by their local council. They must demonstrate that the animals have suitable accommodation, food, water and bedding material; are adequately exercised and visited; and that all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent the spread of infection.

Local authorities can also restrict which animals a pet shop can sell and new guidance stresses the need for interaction with people. Meanwhile the Government has created a voluntary code regulating advertising on the internet, which has resulted in 130,000 adverts being removed since the start of 2014. While there are no plans to ban the sales of dogs by third parties, there are proposals to tighten welfare standards when this does occur.

For dogs bred by so called "hobby breeders", who are not in business but do breed occasionally, there is the Animal Welfare Act 2006, which makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to an animal or fail to provide for its welfare. Anyone breaking this law could face an unlimited fine and/or 51 weeks imprisonment.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP