

30 March 2017

Dear Constituents,

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

Everyone who owns or is looking for a pet will want to know it has had the very best start to life. I entirely share your concern that for thousands of animals born each year to irresponsible breeders, their first weeks can be spent in cramped and squalid conditions without the care and attention they need.

I am therefore glad to say that the Government is cracking down on the worst offenders by strengthening the licensing system and giving councils the power they need to take action.

These plans will ban sales of puppies or kittens at too young an age, which in both cases will be less than eight weeks. It will also require anyone breeding and selling three or more litters of puppies a year to apply for a formal licence. Irresponsible breeders who break these rules face an unlimited fine and/or up to six months in prison.

They will introduce a single 'animal activities licence' covering pet shops, boarding houses and riding stables, to improve the process and make enforcement easier. Pet shops will also need to give customers written information about the animals they buy, with details of the five welfare needs owners must meet around environment, diet, behaviour, housing and freedom from pain. This is particularly important when buying exotic pets, which can have very specific needs.

With more and more pet sales now taking place on the internet, this market should be subject to the same strict licensing criteria as other breeders and pet shops. Anyone trading commercially in pets online will need to be properly licensed, to help make reputable sellers easily accessible to prospective buyers.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP