



**Chris Heaton-Harris**  
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*Dear Constituent,*

Thank you for contacting me about animal cruelty sentencing.

I agree that 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. The Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill has now passed through the Public Bill Committee, backed by the Government and I look forward to it coming back to the House for the Report Stage and Third Reading. You have my assurance that I will continue to do all I can to support the Bill's swift passage through both the Commons and the Lords.

I am pleased that the new Bill will enable tougher prison sentences for the most serious perpetrators of animal cruelty, from the current maximum of six months to up to five years. 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.

A public consultation found 70% 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.

This Government is taking further steps to elevate our reputation for animal welfare in this country. Ministers are taking advantage of our departure from the EU to deliver manifesto commitments to end excessively long journeys for slaughter and fattening of livestock. Alongside this, they are continuing to work on developing new laws on animal sentience and cracking down on the illegal smuggling of dogs and puppies, and remain committed to banning pet primates, introducing mandatory cat microchipping and implementing the Ivory Act.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**