

Petitions Committee

Consultation on petition P-04-398 Campaign for a Welsh Animal Offenders Register

Response from The British Horse Society

I would like to respond to the consultation as follows:

The benefits of creating an Animal Offenders Register would mean that a central database to list all those offenders with animal cruelty convictions would be created. Currently there is nothing to stop anyone with such a conviction/ban from buying another animal as checks to ensure this doesn't happen are impossible with the resources available.

The main problem of such a register however lies in the enforcement (a problem with any register/law) and the risk that breeders may sell to a person who has no record and who is buying on behalf of a third party who has previous convictions.

The Local Authority should be responsible for the administration within the remit of the TS Departments and the local Animal Health Officers within those departments. At point of conviction the offender can be entered onto the register – in a similar process to the Sex Offenders Register.

Access to the information held should be available to LA AHOs (of course if the admin lies with them this will already be the case) RSPCA, Police and rehoming charities/breeders. This information would have been made public at any court and conviction process. Addresses and contact details however would have to remain confidential with data protection law and only those recording the details should have access. Any individual selling an animal could simply request a basic yes or no from the administrator.

Funding should come from the Welsh Government with a percentage input from the RSPCA. Similar projects in America have shown that there is a huge potential to protect human life from this initiative as many serious offenders start with the ill treatment of animals.

Offenders names, addresses, DOBs and conviction details/penalties should be recorded. For parties who need information the disclosure would only need to include name/date and details of conviction and postcode area of offence.

From the equestrian point of view it has now become impossible to identify owners and check equine passport details as the National Equine Database has been closed by DEFRA last September. Serious welfare cases are on the rise and we would welcome the creation of this

Register so that anyone with a past conviction against an equine could be stopped from trying to own another. I can think of several cases where people have flouted the law and the result has been yet another horse being destroyed after months of suffering.

I understand that a similar proposal is being put forward at Westminster – there would need to be tight cross border discussion and a fluid strategy to ensure a workable solution.

Many thanks

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The British Horse Society
Wales and The Channel Islands