



Welsh Chief Officer Group

Protective Marking:	Not Protectively Marked
Author:	Chief Constable Simon Prince – Chair of Welsh Chief Officer Group
Title:	Control of Horses (Wales) Act 2004
Version:	One
Summary:	Evidence paper for the Environment and Sustainability Committee – Control of Horses Act – Evidence session on the 12 th March 2015 on behalf of the four Police Forces of Wales.
Authorised by:	Chief Constable Simon Prince



Thank you for the opportunity to submit evidence on behalf of the four Police forces of Wales.

Pre the 2014 Act being implemented fly grazing was particularly prevalent in South Wales along the M4 corridor, notably in the local authority areas of Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan. The problem was not only increasing but spreading into other local authority areas with Dyfed Powys Police and Gwent Police receiving reports from members of the public. Both public and private land was targeted by unscrupulous horse owners. Police advice at the time was to refer calls relating to public land to the relevant Local Authorities and in the case of private land, the owners would be advised of the civil action available to them.

Accurate and reliable Police data was not available at the time. This was down to the way calls to the Police were categorised with keyword searches returning thousands of calls relating to 'horse', 'pony', 'ponies' and 'grazing.' To research each individual call to establish the true picture was not realistic at the time. That is still the case.

As the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend Policing area of South Wales Police, known as the Central Basic Command Unit, suffered the most from fly-grazing issues it would be appropriate to highlight the effectiveness the Act has had there. Taking into account the keywords 'horse' and 'pony' the number of incidents in the Central BCU for 2012 was 1300 (not forgetting that this figure will include incidents at the 'Horse & Groom', hunting incidents etc.). South Wales Police then introduced Operation Thallium towards the end of 2012 and into 2013. This was a joint operation with Animal Health and Trading Standards, which resulted in the successful prosecution of an individual, whose fly-grazing activity impacted the most on the area and indeed all across South Wales. The number of incidents then for the same area in 2013 was 513 and then in 2014 post implementation of the Act the figures came down to 298. As I have already alluded to these figures include all horse and pony related incidents. Less horses being fly-grazed in turn reflects the number of 'loose horses on the road' incidents which has therefore had a positive impact on policing in South Wales. With enforcement action being taken in one area, one might think that the problem would have been dispersed to another, however Gwent Police, unable to give accurate data, report having seen a reduction in the problem since the same individual's conviction.

In Dyfed Powys although over 600 calls can be contributed to horses on or near a highway in 2014 only one call can be classed as fly-grazing, however on this occasion the caller was not aware that Carmarthenshire Local Authority were already dealing with the case and had already arranged with Police Officers to be present the following day when it was planned to seize the horses involved.

The situation in North Wales Police is unchanged with no issues prior to or post the Act being implemented.

In conclusion

- The impact of this piece of legislation since it was passed has been a positive one for the police.
- As the Act is enforced by the Local Authorities the Police are unable to give details of where and when it has been used.
- From a policing perspective it would appear that it has achieved its aims and objectives.
- As the legislation is enforced by Local Authorities the police cannot comment on any barriers to the implementation of the Act, however Police forces will work with Local Authorities where there is an identified need for assistance.