

P-05-919 Do not implement licensing for show dogs, cats and shown horses

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 3 Rhagfyr 2019
Petitions Committee | 3 December 2019

Reference: RS19/11038-2

Petition Number: P-05-919

Petition title: Do not implement licensing for show dogs, cats and shown horses

Text of petition: The Welsh Government is currently consulting on new Regulations regarding Animal Exhibits which includes a proposal that anyone exhibiting (showing) a dog or cat (or other pet species) in Wales will need to be licensed and inspected. Thousands of dogs and cats and horses come to Wales every year to be shown so such a licensing scheme is not only impractical and unnecessary it will actually have an impact upon Wales' economy. Dogs (registered with the Kennel Club) cats (registered with the governing Council of the Cat Fancy) or horses shown in hand and under saddle should be exempt from registration. We ask that the Welsh Government to 'add the keeping of dogs, cats and horses engaged in competitive events' to Regulation 3(4) which lists a number of exempted activities that are proposed should not be subject to the proposed licensing scheme.

Thousands of people in Wales show their dogs but more importantly many more thousands of exhibitors regularly come to Wales from all over the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland to compete at shows held in the Principality. Figures are not available for cats or horses but there are two major championship shows which between them attract over 11,000 dogs and over 200 open shows each year attracting hundreds at everyone. The owners of these dogs based outside Wales not be licensed so will simply not be able to attend.



1. Background

Draft Animal Welfare (Licensing of Animal Exhibits) (Wales) Regulations 2020

On 29 August 2019 the Welsh Government published a consultation on the draft Regulations and associated guidance on the proposed **licensing scheme for Animal Exhibits**. The draft Regulations, the *Animal Welfare (Licensing of Animal Exhibits) (Wales) Regulations 2020*, would be introduced under the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*. The consultation ended on 21 November.

The accompanying written statement said:

The draft Regulations provide a licensing scheme for all Animal Exhibits (AEs) based in, and visiting, Wales which meet a given criteria; it allows checks to be made to ensure good welfare standards are met at their home base, in transport and during exhibition.

Currently many Animal Exhibits are not subject to routine checks. The Welsh Government says the licensing scheme would include conditions to protect the welfare of the animals and safety of those who interact with the exhibits. The Welsh Government says that a key principle behind the proposed licensing scheme is to develop ‘respectful and responsible attitudes towards animals’. For that purpose, the draft Regulations introduce a requirement for licensed Animal Exhibits to ‘promote public education and raise awareness of the species kept’.

Once the exhibitors have demonstrated their ability to meet the licence conditions, they can obtain a licence from their local authority which would last for three years. The local authority must appoint ‘suitably qualified’ inspectors to ensure licence conditions are being met.

Scope of the draft Regulations

The licensing scheme is proposed for certain Animal Exhibits. Regulation 3 of the draft Regulations, and Section 2 of the accompanying guidance, provides examples of the types of Animal Exhibits and activities that would require a licence. The “in-scope activities” include (but are not limited to) pony parties, animals in circuses, mobile animal exhibits, agricultural or animal care colleges and bird of prey displays.

Regulation 3(4) describes activities that are **exempt**:

The licensable activity does not include:

- (a) keeping animals primarily for dairy farming and livestock breeding and keeping;
 - (b) keeping or training animals for military or police purposes;
 - (c) keeping or training animals for sporting purposes;
 - (d) animals displaying learned behaviours which are taught for working purposes;
 - (e) any activity permitted under a licence for a zoo under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981(1);
 - (f) keeping a pet shop under a licence granted under section 1(1) of the Pet Animals Act 1951(2); or
 - (g) any activity permitted under a licence for a riding establishment under the Riding Establishments Act 1964(3).
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The guidance document further describes examples of “out-of-scope” activities that would be exempt from the licensing scheme:

Any organisation or person that keeps or trains animals for exhibition that is either not for entertainment or educational purposes, or exempted by Regulation 3. This could include (but not limited to):

[...]

- **Animals kept primarily as pets.** Inspectors must be satisfied, where a pet is exhibited, this is unlikely to be an ongoing activity. Examples include pet dogs exhibited at local dog shows once or twice a year for recreational purposes, donkeys at nativity plays; ‘show and tell’ activities by children in schools.

[...]

- **Training or exhibiting animals for sporting purposes.** This is intended to include organised sports such as horse racing, greyhound racing, dog agility and other similar competitions commonly seen at agricultural shows. This is not intended to include novelty sports where the animals are not bred or conditioned for sporting purposes, for example sheep or ferret racing, which would require a licence.

[...]

- **Exhibiting animals displaying learned behaviours which are taught for working purposes.** This could include sheepdog trials; gundog and hunt pack displays; horse carriage driving; assistance or therapy animals.
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The draft Regulations make no specific mention of licences for show cats or shown horses, however, as cited above, the guidance document states that

animals kept primarily as pets, or exhibition for sporting purposes, would be exempt.

2. Welsh Government action

The Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, letter to the Petitions Committee on this matter states:

I am aware of a campaign generated by The Kennel Club, and publicised by 'Our Dogs' which has given the impression people who show their dogs in Wales or further afield will need to be licensed under the proposed licensing scheme. This is not the case. The Regulations as currently drafted do not mention show dogs and the Guidance makes a passing reference to local dog shows as an example of an activity involving pets which should not be considered for licensing; this in no way is intended to imply other dog shows should be licensed and the wording of this point will be considered post-consultation if the results suggest this necessary. Likewise the Regulations do not mention show cats or shown horses as examples of pets which should be licensed.

3. National Assembly for Wales action

Stakeholders' concerns around dog shows being captured under the proposed licensing scheme were raised in the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs (CCERA) Committee's meeting on 10 October 2019 during its scrutiny of the Wild Animals and Travelling Circuses Bill:

Llyr Gruffydd AM: We've had a lot of correspondence about that consultation [on the proposed Animal Exhibit licensing scheme]. I think a number of people involved with agricultural shows and dog shows are very concerned. I don't know if it's appropriate whether you could signal that your intention is not to capture those kinds of activities.

Lesley Griffiths AM [Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs]: Absolutely. I've just written, I think it was yesterday or the day before, to the chief executive of the Kennel Club, because, clearly, that was the impression

Llyr Gruffydd AM: I think a number of us have had correspondence.

Lesley Griffiths AM: Yes, wrongly—that we were going to include dog shows, and we're not.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.