



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

September 2019.

Dear Constituent,

A Response to the Horse Welfare Enforcement Campaign

Thank you for contacting me about the enforcement of horse welfare.

This is a devolved matter and therefore the responsibility of the Scottish Government. My MSP colleagues remain committed to the highest standards of animal welfare and they are clear that those who abuse and inflict cruelty on animals should be punished in accordance with the law.

In Scotland, inspectors employed by the Scottish Society for Protection of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), local authority inspectors and police officers are all able to take possession of animals, including horses, and any dependent offspring if cruelty is suspected. I would expect many local authorities to use their granted powers to protect animal welfare, working alongside the SPCA and the local police.

The SPCA is a reporting agency to the Crown Office and their investigators are authorised to enforce the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006. This means an inspector is able to enter land without a warrant where an animal is suffering. It also provides powers to seek a warrant to enter land and premises using force if necessary and seize animals or any item believed to be evidence of a relevant offence.

Unfortunately, it appears Scotland is falling behind when it comes to the protection of animals. With among the lowest animal cruelty sentences in Europe, there is very little deterrent. I believe Scotland must at least match the five-year maximum term being legislated for in England. After my colleagues in the Scottish Parliament warned they would use the opposition majority to change legislation, the Scottish Government announced a consultation on animal welfare, which has now closed and the results will be published shortly.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alister Jack".

The Rt. Hon. Alister Jack MP
Dumfries and Galloway constituency.