



David Rutley MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Food and Animal Welfare
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

15th May 2019

Dear Minister,

RE: Equine Re-Homing Centres and Sanctuaries

Following the decision to ban the third party sales of puppies and kittens, we understand thought has been given to the licensing of re-homing centres and sanctuaries under the Animal Activity Licensing Regulations. We recognise this has not been agreed and that there is substantial work to be undertaken to assess the impact of such a move, particularly on the small rescue operations.

From our knowledge, any potential licensing would focus on dogs and cats in order to close potential loopholes created by the third party ban. We agree this is important to do otherwise the third party ban will not be effective. The purpose of our writing to you is to ask that you take this opportunity to consider including equine re-homing centres and sanctuaries. This is an area where there are huge risks to animal welfare and World Horse Welfare and the RSPCA have had to intervene in a number of cases where groups or small organisations have taken in horses and not been able to provide for their care sufficiently. Horses are difficult and expensive to keep and costs often spiral out of control leading to neglect. Any rescue or re-homing organisation needs to ensure it can provide the resources including grazing and veterinary care before it takes in horses or ponies and a robust licensing regime would help such operations to have the right set up to enable this. Such a regime would also help to monitor movement of equines and control of disease.

There is support within Parliament for licensing of re-homing centres and sanctuaries and certainly a number of Members would see a strong case for including equines as long as the legislation was well thought out, supported by both small and large organisations and is based foremost on improving animal welfare. We have an effective Equine Sector Council and they worked on the Licensing of Riding Establishments so they are well placed to assist with the drafting of any guidance.

We do hope you will move forward with your consideration of licensing re-homing centres and sanctuaries before the third party ban is implemented and that you will consider including equines. If a meeting with your team to discuss inclusion of equines would be useful we would be happy to attend.

Giles Watling MP
APPG Animal Welfare

Caroline Spelman MP
APPG for the Horse