# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Animal Exhibits** |
| **DATE** | **29 August 2019** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs** |

Today I have launched a 12-week consultation on draft Regulations ‘The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Animal Exhibits) (Wales) Regulations 2020’ and accompanying Guidance, as well as inviting evidence to assist policymakers in assessing the impact they may have on the people and biodiversity of Wales.

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.

What has become clear as this policy has progressed is AEs play an important role in the development of attitudes towards animals. There are concerns they may have a negative impact, portraying animals as commodities or toys. Others feel strongly well-managed AEs are well equipped to introduce children, young people and adults alike to animals in a controlled environment.

A key principle behind the licensing scheme is to develop respectful and responsible attitudes towards animals and to that end, the draft Regulations introduce a new requirement for licensed AEs to promote public education and raise awareness of the species kept. This has been a long-standing and successful requirement for licensed zoos and I am keen to see the benefits it could have for the people of Wales when it is also delivered in other contexts.

This requirement should have a lasting impact on children and young people in particular and I feel it is important they have the opportunity to comment on this principle and other aspects of the proposed licensing scheme. A children and young people’s questionnaire has therefore been published as part of this consultation to allow the submission of evidence from the next generation of animal owners.

AEs are an integral aspect of the Welsh tourist industry and I am confident this licensing scheme will not only play a role in protecting the safety of people who observe these exhibits but prove to the people of Wales and our visitors we are a nation of animal lovers and passionate about ensuring animals, whether kept for working purposes or companionship, live a good quality life.

The consultation will be accessible until 21 November 2019 and can be accessed here: [https://gov.wales/animal-exhibits](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fanimal-exhibits&data=02%7C01%7CSian.Smith%40gov.wales%7C86049b809cc84048844108d72b933617%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637025783580892305&sdata=L18EXI600tvTX2nGA7Z7QZO49M3JniHwQ2OEmJ%2FMr80%3D&reserved=0)

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Assembly returns I would be happy to do so.