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**WRITTEN STATEMENT**

**BY**

**THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

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| **TITLE**  | **Dog Breeding in Wales** |
| **DATE**  | **9 October 2019** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs** |

A recent documentary regarding puppy farming in Wales has caused further concern regarding welfare standards at some dog breeding establishments in Wales. This is the reason we held a consultation earlier this year to establish where Government intervention could have the greatest impact.

While the breeding of dogs for commercial gain is a legitimate business, the welfare requirements of the breeding dogs and their offspring are of paramount importance. I am deeply disturbed by the accounts of non-compliance raised following BBC Wales’ investigation into the licensing of dog breeding premises in Wales.

Changing legislation is not a quick process, and nor should it be. The correct procedures must be followed to ensure the development of sound, evidence-based, proportionate legislation aimed directly at optimising standards of animal welfare and encouraging responsible animal ownership.

 I have already committed to reviewing the Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs)(Wales) Regulations 2014 and also made clear the value I see in banning third party sales of puppies and kittens if a ban could deliver the health and welfare standards I wish to see in Wales. Further urgent action is needed and the following actions have been undertaken this week:

* I have written to the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group to accept their offer of help and request an urgent and immediate review of our dog breeding regulations. The review will include full consideration of any current barriers to enforcement and how impartial veterinary advice is provided during the licensing and inspection process.
* I have written to all Local Authority CEOs to raise concerns and invite relevant representatives to a meeting with the Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales to discuss the licensing process, enforcement and barriers to it.
* The Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales immediately referred the BBC programme to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.
* Officials are developing a campaign aimed at members of the public who may be considering purchasing a puppy highlighting the importance of sourcing responsibly.

The Welsh Government will continue to work with key stakeholders, including Local Authorities and the other Administrations to ensure we introduce changes which will have a lasting impact on the welfare standards of dogs and cats bred in Wales.