# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Mobile Animal Exhibits** |
| **DATE** | **31 January 2019** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs** |

Following my announcement of my intention to introduce a licensing scheme for Mobile Animal Exhibits (MAEs) in Wales, I wish to update Assembly Members. Animal welfare is a priority of the Welsh Government and the proposal to introduce a licensing scheme, reinforces our commitment to ensuring the highest welfare standards for all animals kept in Wales.

In October and November 2018, my officials hosted a series of workshops across Wales to capture the thoughts of key stakeholders on how a future licensing structure for MAEs may look and to better understand the impact it may have on enforcers, welfare organisations and MAE operators. 62 individuals, representing 41 organisations gave their time to engage with officials and share their knowledge and I thank them for their input.

The workshops allowed an open discussion to take place on the objective of promoting animal welfare, whilst being mindful of the need for proportionality, both for a sector primarily made up of small businesses and for enforcement authorities who have, for many years, been managing with fewer resources.

The overwhelming response was of support for the proposal. In particular, the excellent opportunity the proposal presented to encourage respectful and responsible attitudes towards animals through these frontline organisations. The continuation of human-animal interaction was seen as an important activity to preserve for future generations, however, the need for minimum welfare standards to be set for an animals’ enclosures, in transport and whilst on display, as well as the framework to ensure those standards are met, was echoed at every event.

The feedback from the workshops will be used to inform a full and detailed public consultation which will now take place this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our stakeholders for their ongoing support and to encourage the continuation of this dialogue as we progress through 2019. By working together, we can develop a robust and proportionate licensing scheme which meets the needs of our stakeholders and delivers a lasting impact on animal welfare standards in Wales.