

Summary of consultation responses on the Interim Report for the Review of the Implementation of the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011

Recommendations

Recommendation	Summary of comments
<p>1. DARD considers increasing the maximum sentence on conviction of the more serious summary offences from six months to twelve months imprisonment and increasing the fine from £5,000 to £20,000; and in the case of indictable offences considers increasing the maximum prison term to five years.</p>	<p>(1) Respondents strongly supported this recommendation to consider an increase in maximum sentencing levels. For example, Cats Protection commented that sentences should be seen to be appropriate in order to maximise their value as a deterrent to those who might commit offences. Battersea Dogs and Cats Home commented that the proposed maximum sentences are “in our view entirely appropriate”; and “would place Northern Ireland in a favourable position relative to most of its immediate neighbours, and demonstrate that the commitment to genuine deterrent sentencing is as strong in the province as anywhere else in Western Europe.” The Irish Working Terrier Federation (IWTF) suggested that maximum sentencing on summary conviction in Northern Ireland should align with that in neighbouring jurisdictions.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of respondents commented on the potential for minimum sentences with some in favour and other against. For example, Michael Milliken called for the introduction of a minimum sentence for organising/spectating at dog fighting events, and NI Badger Group also called for a minimum sentence in relation to dog fighting and animal baiting. 7th Heaven Animal Rescue Trust questioned why minimum sentences cannot be introduced in light of the inclusion of aggravating factors in the current sentencing guidelines. However, the IWTF did not agree with the introduction of minimum sentences as the current legislation allows the judiciary ample room for adequate sentencing. It believes that this narrow focus on “Crime and Punishment” is not helpful to the progress of animal welfare in Ireland. The British Veterinary Association (BVA) supports the decision not to include a minimum sentence as it believes that where possible advice and education is often preferable to prosecution. • The USPCA supported strong sentencing, however, commented that any deterrent effect this may have is totally lost if reported cases are not being properly investigated and, if need be, prosecuted. • Causeway Coast Dog Rescue suggested that there should be an appeals procedure if the public and victims feel the sentence handed down is unduly lenient; and that a lifetime ban

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	<p>should automatically be imposed on anyone convicted of animal cruelty and if this is breached a jail term would be then be imposed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Ireland says “No” to animal Cruelty (NISNTAC) suggested that if multiple offences have been committed and/or there are multiple animal victims a separate sentence should be handed down for each offence and victim. <p>(2) All Councils that responded and the Council Animal Welfare Project Board welcomed this recommendation. Belfast City Council also supported the introduction of minimum sentences for aggravated offences.</p>
<p>2. DOJ consults with relevant organisations to consider what further steps can be taken to promote awareness of sentencing guidelines for animal welfare offences.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support.</p> <p>(2) All Councils that responded and the Council Animal Welfare Project Board welcomed this recommendation.</p>
<p>3. DARD VS review performance standards as part of the post-implementation review of the animal welfare enhancements to APHIS.</p>	<p>No specific comments were made by respondents on this recommendation although a number indicated that they were generally content.</p>
<p>4. DARD VS monitor the level and outcome of anonymous and vexatious calls and if necessary review their procedures. In addition, they should consider reporting the number of anonymous and vexatious calls in the annual report.</p>	<p>The Society of Greyhound Veterinarians commented that the greyhound industry has experienced vexatious anonymous welfare complaints. It stated that while the Society is mindful of the civil rights of complainants and would not wish to deter whistleblowers from reporting well-founded welfare concerns, it would wish to see DARD taking a close interest in the number and outcome of such calls. The Society expressed a strong preference for the publication of the number of anonymous vexatious calls in the proposed annual report.</p> <p>No other respondents made specific comments on this recommendation although a number indicated that they were generally content.</p>

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<p>5. DARD VS incorporate lessons learned from case reviews in staff training in the implementation and enforcement of the appropriate legislation.</p>	<p>No specific comments were made by respondents on this recommendation although a number indicated that they were generally content.</p>
<p>6. DARD VS continue with the current arrangement of monitoring the effectiveness of call-handling and, if any problems are detected, provide additional training.</p>	<p>No specific comments were made by respondents on this recommendation although a number indicated that they were generally content.</p>
<p>7. DARD VS continue to review policies, procedures, standard forms and guidance as and when the need arises (e.g. changes in legislation, review of best practice in a case).</p>	<p>No specific comments were made by respondents on this recommendation although a number indicated that they were generally content.</p>
<p>8. Councils continue to report to the Animal Welfare Project Board on achievement of the targets set out in their Call Prioritisation policy.</p>	<p>(1) All respondents that commented specifically on this recommendation were in support.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battersea Dogs and Cats Home and Lucy's Trust expressed concern that priority 1 calls to animal welfare can take up to one day to respond to as this may be too slow for animals in immediate danger and that a 24 hour on-call service should be made available. • Causeway Coast Dog Rescue expressed concern about the time scale AWO's work within when dealing with a call from the public and that members of the public can sometimes not understand the priority call system. If the public are given a rough time frame for the AWO to attend it would alleviate some concerns they may have instead of just saying the information will be passed to the officer to deal with. Call operators need to inform the caller of a rough time frame of when the AWO will call to assess the situation and give feedback to the caller

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	<p>about action taken e.g. improvement notice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lucy's Trust suggested that each Council area should have a head dog warden who will also act as deputy to the AWO and therefore dramatically increase response times. <p>(2) Two Councils agreed with this recommendation, with one Council stating that this is a matter for the Animal Welfare Project Board.</p>
<p>9. DARD and the Animal Welfare Project Board continue to review the required level of funding for enforcement of the non-farmed animal welfare service.</p>	<p>(1) All respondents that commented specifically on this recommendation were in support. For example, Battersea Dogs and Cats Home commented that the steady increase in cases recorded in Table 4 of the Interim Report demonstrates that there is a continued need for the increased number of AWOs that have been recruited since the legislation was put in place.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballysaggart Environmental Group commented that there are not enough AWOs to cover NI. • Cats Protection commented that they would like to see a recommendation to Councils that funding is made available within Councils to support (Trap/Neuter/Return) TNR, perhaps using expenditure dedicated to pest control. <p>(2) Councils agreed with this recommendation.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A level of funding in excess of £820K similar to that received by Councils in the two previous financial years will be required if there is to be no reduction in the level of Service for 2015/16. This is likely to be in excess of £1M depending on demand levels and associated variable costs. • This will only allow Councils to continue operate a reactive service at full capacity with no scope to further expand the service. • Should it appear that the budget may not be sufficient to meet the full year's demand then this and other Councils will have to consider reduction in service to operate within the allocated budget. • Consideration of the introduction of an out-of-hours contact for animal welfare cases (24 hours a day) needs to be resourced adequately and the need to increase funding allocated

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	by DARD for this function.
<p>10. Councils continue to review the volume of work, budget and spend on a quarterly basis and continue to seek to create efficiencies, where possible.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corinne Jordan expressed concern at level of competence and capability of the current structure, believing that one animal welfare officer cannot respond to or intervene in every case reported over a vast geographical area, and questioned why the system here is not similar to the rest of the UK with RSPCA officers out investigating animal abuse in partnership with the police and AWOs. <p>(2) Seven Councils and the Council Animal Welfare Project Board supported this recommendation.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's review volume of work, budget and spend on a monthly basis and processes are ongoing to streamline work. • The ethos of continuous improvement is at the heart of all Council functions and will continue to do so.
<p>11. Chief Executives of the eleven new Councils should consider the information provided to them by the Review when making decisions about the operating model for the delivery of the animal welfare service from 1 April 2015.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dogs Trust stated that with the amalgamation of 26 Councils to 11 super Councils it remains concerned about the levels of enforcement of the legislation by Councils, particularly in relation to budgets and resources. • NISNTAC suggested increasing the number of animal welfare officers to 11 (one for each Council area) and a way to fund this would be to reduce the number of line managers as 3 managers are showing for 9 animal welfare officers and they think that one centrally located line manager could quite easily oversee 11 roaming staff. <p>(2) Seven Councils and the Council Animal Welfare Project Board responded to advise that delivery structures are being considered.</p>

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<p>12. Councils advise DARD as soon as possible of the structures in relation to the animal welfare service post LGR to inform decisions in relation to budget planning.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battersea Dogs and Cats Home stated that it would be disappointing in the extreme if the significant progress (and it must be considered significant progress that almost 5,000 investigations took place in 2013/14) made since the passage of the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 were stalled owing to the complications of merging local authorities. The increased use of AWOs demonstrates a need for the service that they provide, and for appropriate resources to be continued. • Countryside Alliance Ireland commented on the need for consistency within Councils in respect of the delivery of the animal welfare service and said the current arrangement should be maintained unless there is overwhelming evidence that an alternative delivery model would be fairer and more beneficial. <p>(2) Seven Councils and the Council Animal Welfare Project Board support the recommendation.</p>
<p>13. Councils consider a consistent policy in relation to delegating the power to instigate legal proceedings to the relevant Director or Head of Service post LGR.</p>	<p>(1) No specific comments were made by respondents on this recommendation although a number indicated that they were generally content.</p> <p>(2) Six Councils and the Council Animal Welfare Project Board responded and most supported this recommendation – although noted that it is a matter for each individual Council. Most Councils have adopted a Scheme of Delegation which includes animal welfare. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC) meet on a monthly basis and do not consider it essential that these powers are delegated.</p>
<p>14. Councils provide guidance to AWOs in relation to offending by children and young people.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, Countryside Alliance Ireland agreed that, following the Review identifying that guidance from the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) in relation to offending by children and young people is not currently included in Council procedures, that this should be provided to staff.</p> <p>(2) Six Councils and the Council Animal Welfare Project Board supported this recommendation. Councils will consider this in line with their enforcement policy but it is for each individual Council to</p>

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	address. Animal welfare officers will be advised of the Council policy and undertake appropriate child protection training.
15. Councils provide specific training on dealing with vulnerable adults and continue to incorporate learning from on-going cases into guidance and practice.	<p>(1) No specific comments were made by respondents on this recommendation although a number indicated that they were generally content.</p> <p>(2) Six Councils and the Council Animal Welfare Project Board responded and commented that the Animal Welfare Project Board will source appropriate training in relation to enforcement involving vulnerable adults and develop guidance as necessary.</p>
16. Councils to formalise the procedures which are currently in draft form for AWOs and continue to undertake routine periodic review of policies, procedures, standard forms and guidance documents as good practice, address procedural gaps and periodically conduct consistency audits.	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISNTAC asked for a review of the criteria that the AWOs inspect, with regard specifically to animal isolation. Dogs are currently deemed to be adequately housed based on physical requirements but leaving a dog alone outside with no human company causes unnecessary suffering and often leads to aggression <p>(2) Six Councils and the Animal Welfare Project Board responded and commented that Councils have a number of formalised procedures and continue to undertake routine review of policies, procedures, standard forms and guidance documents. A consistency audit protocol will be developed for Animal Welfare.</p>
17. The conditions required for obtaining a dog breeding licence should be made available on Council websites, the NI Direct website and the proposed single animal welfare website.	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kennel Club provided information on the Assured Breeder Scheme which is now in its 11th year, with 7k members and around 31k puppies annually. They also recommend the following: prohibition of sale of puppies in pet shops or retail premises; promote advice about “do’s and don’ts” of buying puppies; make the Assured Breeding Scheme conditions mandatory; and issue guidance and training to Councils on the minimum requirements to ensure consistency.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battersea Dogs and Cats Home referred to their Westminster campaign “end backstreet breeding”, and called for full implementation of breeding establishment licensing. • The Irish Coursing Club suggested that the conditions for obtaining a dog breeding licence should be made available at the two greyhound racetracks and websites for those racetracks. <p>(2) Six Councils and the Animal Welfare Project Board responded in support of this recommendation and noted that it is for each individual Council to address.</p>
<p>18. The PSNI obtain input from Council AWOs to training for new officers and call handlers.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example Countryside Alliance Ireland agreed that call handlers need to be more informed in order to correctly disseminate the information provided to ensure it is allocated to the relevant personnel.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countryside Alliance Ireland also commented that, ideally a dedicated animal welfare unit within PSNI would be welcomed although they are aware of funding pressures. They feel the dedicated Wildlife Liaison Officer (WLO) has been extremely beneficial but additional support for the WLO is required on an ongoing basis and the funding needs to be provided for this. <p>(2) Six Councils and the Animal Welfare Project Board responded in support of this recommendation and commented that they will readily assist as required. MEABC has historically engaged in programmed training for PSNI in environmental health legislation.</p>
<p>19. The PSNI make information available for call handlers on the investigative responsibilities of PSNI, DARD and Councils for animal welfare issues, and to include contact details of relevant agencies should the matter need referred to another body.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support.</p> <p>(2) Six Councils and Animal Welfare Project Board commented that this is a matter for the PSNI to address.</p>

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<p>20. The PSNI provide operational officers with guidance that can be accessed when out on patrol, advising on animal welfare responsibilities of each of the three enforcement bodies (PSNI, DARD, Council) and focusing on the common animal welfare offences police officers are likely to investigate i.e. animal fighting, horses on roads.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The USPCA commented that each of the 11 policing districts should have specialist wildlife officers, drawn from existing ranks and provided with an additional area of expertise at a modest cost and with a major impact. • The NI Badger Group suggested that PSNI need to put in place a dynamic specialist unit to tackle wildlife crime similar to what has been set up in North Wales. <p>(2) Six Councils and Animal Welfare Project Board commented that this is a matter for the PSNI to address.</p>
<p>21. The PSNI investigating officer, upon securing a Disqualification Order, should forward details to the Wildlife Liaison Officer and local policing team. The information should also be placed and flagged on the computer system. The Order should be formally monitored at least twice a year and evidence of monitoring should be entered on the computer for audit purposes.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISNTAC commented that this issue is extremely important and any visits should be unannounced so that people do not have the opportunity to remove any unlawfully held animals from the property before the inspection. • NISNTAC noted that orders are placed against an individual and not their address, and this creates a loophole where the person can get around the order by stating that the animal(s) does not belong to them but to another party at that address. • NISNTAC also noted that Judges do have specific wording available to them around exactly what level of contact a person is permitted to have with any animal(s) under their Disqualification Order, which they would like to see used to their full effect when the courts issue the orders. • League Against Cruel Sports said it would be more acceptable if Disqualification Orders were monitored by an unannounced quarterly visit as opposed to twice yearly. • Countryside Alliance Ireland suggested that PSNI should adopt a risk assessment based policy for monitoring Disqualification Orders with monitoring at least once per year, and in certain cases visits should be more frequent than twice yearly.

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	<p>(2) Six Councils and the Animal Welfare Project Board supported this recommendation.</p>
<p>22. The draft MOU between the three enforcement bodies and the current MOUs between DARD and Councils, be updated to reflect the outcome of this Review and the new structures adopted by Councils following LGR.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, one respondee commented that at present “the buck” is being passed between all three bodies with no one body taking responsibility for a situation which is getting out of hand.</p> <p>(2) Six Councils and the Animal Welfare Project Board responded in support of this recommendation.</p>
<p>23. The three enforcement bodies establish protocols for working together in certain situations i.e. abandoned horses and missing pets.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, NI Badger Group commented that all agencies involved in dealing with animal cruelty must work in effective partnership with a clear protocol drawn up of responsibilities, communication channels and standards to be met.</p> <p>(2) Seven Councils and the Animal Welfare Project Board responded in agreement with this recommendation and will consider this as part of the review of the MOUs.</p>
<p>24. The three enforcement bodies meet regularly to discuss enforcement of the 2011 Act and to share best practice and lessons learned from specific investigations, NICTS should be invited when required.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, Lucy’s Trust commented that recommendations to improve the facilitation of enforcement are also a welcome addition to the current process, with all bodies working more closely together, and attending regular meetings, less instances of animal welfare breaches will be able to fall through the cracks.</p> <p>(2) Six Councils and Animal Welfare Project Board agreed with the recommendation and will invite PSNI to meetings with Animal Welfare Line Managers as required.</p>

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<p>25. The three enforcement bodies develop templates for Disposal, Deprivation and Disqualification Orders for use by prosecutors.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, Battersea Dogs and Cats Home said that as a charity which regularly takes in animals that have been removed by law from their owners, they agree that the process should be as swift as practical for the welfare of the dog and the cost of homing for the Local Authorities charged with keeping them. Many dogs struggle with kennel life, even at the most forward-thinking rehoming kennels. Life in a Local Authority holding kennels is often physically and psychologically harder still, and the quicker the process behind Disposal Orders can be arranged the quicker work can begin on finding animals a new life in a new home.</p> <p>(2) Six Councils and the Animal Welfare Project Board responded to support this recommendation and said that efforts to address this recommendation are ongoing as templates have been drafted.</p>
<p>26. DARD progress its application for access to the CRV and investigate options regarding sharing data with Councils.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, Joseph Boyle said that he would like to see the introduction of a register of those convicted of animal cruelty with their name remaining on it for life. NI Badger Group agreed with a database/register but suggested it is managed by the PSNI and then shared with other agencies.</p> <p>(2) Seven Councils and the Animal Welfare Project Board support this recommendation.</p>
<p>27. DOJ, in conjunction, with partner organisations, to give further consideration as to what, if any, steps can be taken in order to assist animal re-homing organisations with access to conviction data.</p>	<p>(1) Twelve respondents supported this recommendation. For example, 7th Heaven Animal Rescue Trust said that if a charity gives an animal to an animal abuser because they were unaware of their conviction, they have failed in their duty and the public's donations have been misused. It is therefore definitely in the public interest to avoid this. Lucy's Trust said that whilst they understand the need to protect human rights, and that protection of the data itself is imperative, they do feel that animal rescue and rehoming organisations should have some form of access, perhaps through the Council, DARD or PSNI on a case to case basis.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISNTAC suggested that rescue/re-homing centres/ licensed breeders could be provided with the appropriate wording which could be incorporated into their adoption forms (or equivalent) and which would facilitate the potential adopter providing permission for the organisation to submit a request for confirmation of whether that person is, or is not,

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currently banned from keeping animals.

- Lucy's Trust suggested that rather than full access to the CRV, charities could make a phonecall to the relevant body, who can identify if the person they are enquiring about has previously had any convictions, disqualifications or offences against animals logged on the system. Security measures could be put in place and details of the offences would not have to be given out.
- Battersea Dogs and Cats Home also suggested that a full criminal history is not needed, just to know whether there is anything in the would-be owner's history to suggest mistreatment of animals and that a sensible middle ground could be providing a single point of contact to refer queries to, who could tell if there is anything relevant. They said that if access to the Criminal Record Viewer were possible for rehoming charities, then in most cases it is something that would certainly be used. However, our experience of life without it is that we can make a very accurate assessment, using our experienced rehoming staff's expertise, to tell whether someone is appropriate for rehoming a dog or not.

Three respondents opposed this recommendation generally on the basis that access to conviction data for re-homing charities could be open to abuse.

Further comments included:

- Countryside Alliance Ireland suggested that key members of staff noted as contacts within their relevant Council areas, each of whom would be identifiable to the Councils (and security vetted) as an authorised contact would be able to ask if a specific person in that area were exempt from keeping animals. To ensure data protection, the re-homing charities would only be able to obtain this information from Councils if the person (being vetted) had signed a consent form.
- Another respondee said that before you purchase a dog you must have already obtained a dog license, and it is the responsibility of Councils to have access to the criminal convictions data and only grant a license to those entitled to obtain one.

(2) Councils and the Council Animal Welfare Project Board supported this recommendation and welcomed DOJ consideration of this issue.

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<p>28. Councils invite expressions of interest from organisations that are in a position to take ownership of an animal which may be re-homed as a result of a Disposal Order granted by the Courts.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, Battersea Dogs and Cats Home said that communication to rehoming organisation about Disposal Orders may not be as effective as it could be and the efforts of local authorities/DARD have in the past been blighted.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battersea Dogs and Cats Home also suggested that DARD contact representative bodies for rehoming charities e.g. Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH) who in turn would contact their membership to potentially help in operational matters. • The Irish Coursing Club requested that DARD make the Irish Coursing Club aware of Disposal Orders for registered greyhounds so that the industry might follow up on these greyhounds and their owners. <p>(2) Six Councils and the Animal Welfare Project Board responded in support and recommended that all organisations take a similar approach and would welcome DARD guidance in relation to acceptability criteria to be used in assessing suitability</p>
<p>29. DARD consider licensing of animal sanctuaries, re-homing charities and dog pounds.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in general support although, for example, 7th Heaven Animal Rescue Trust questioned whether this will involve large fees, as the smaller charities will not be able to afford it, and whether it will apply to individuals. They warned that the introduction of a licence could dissuade these individuals. Countryside Alliance Ireland commented that animal sanctuaries, re-homing charities and dog pounds <i>should</i> be licensed and monitored to ensure their animal welfare standards and practices are compliant, however, this must not impinge on the good work they carry out or deter them from operating.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causeway Coast Dog Rescue said that spot inspections should be carried out on all Council pounds to ensure animal welfare regulations are being met also records checked to ensure if a dog has been ill or injured on arrival into Council care that appropriate veterinary care has been given to dogs. • Lucy's Trust are extremely pleased to support this recommendation and said that it is imperative to see a standard basic code of practice that each rescue must sign up to, and

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	<p>that they agree to have their premises inspected regularly. An annual license would be a good starting point, with any breaches of the code of practice, leading to a loss of said license.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cats Protection highlighted the need for enforcement, saying that a licensing regime that imposes a financial and administrative burden on animal welfare charities that have the highest standards of welfare but which is not enforced against those with poor standards (including those who are well – meaning but unaware of veterinary and behavioural issues) would be an unsatisfactory outcome. • The Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association suggested use of a Primary Authority Scheme should be included in this recommendation. <p>(2) Seven Councils and the Animal Welfare Project Board responded acknowledging the need for revised and extended licensing and recommending that such a scheme should be on full cost recovery or fully funded by central Government.</p>
<p>30. Councils make guidance available on how the public and animal welfare organisations should deal with an animal welfare incident.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, Cats Protection would welcome the opportunity to see this guidance in draft form and offer advice to ensure this guidance is most useful to CP and other animal welfare organisations.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Irish Coursing Club asked for an addition to the recommendation - That DARD immediately informs the ICC. <p>(2) Seven Councils and Animal Welfare Project Board responded and requested that the wording of the recommendation is amended to read “that all enforcement bodies involved in animal welfare make guidance available”.</p>

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<p>31. Councils to meet annually with key animal welfare representative groups to discuss enforcement of the 2011 Act as regards non farmed animals.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, Causeway Coast Dog Rescue said they work well with their AWO officer for their area and have on many an occasion taken in dogs that have been surrendered into his care, they feel this is often much better for the dog rather than going into the kennel environment. They are able to place them into a foster home and properly assess and meet the dogs needs before placing them up for re-homing, this is definitely a benefit for the dogs concerned and one they will strive to continue to do when possible. Also the time dogs spend in kennels while cases are pending is too long, the priority should be to ensure the dogs are out of the kennel environment as soon as possible to ensure they have a better chance of re-homing.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Causeway Coast Dog Rescue said that Councils should work more closely with Charities in their areas and yearly figures should be passed from the charities to Councils and vice versa so there is a more clear understanding of the work being done.• The Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association would like to see meetings extended to encompass groups such as pet shop owners.• Cats Protection requested clarification on whether annual meetings will be held in each of the 11 Council areas (preferred option would be one annual meeting with representatives of all Councils).• The Irish Coursing Club proposed that DARD allow a representative of their organisation to attend such an annual meeting. <p>(2) Six Councils and Animal Welfare Project Board responded commenting that they do meet annually with Animal Welfare Groups and will continue to meet annually with key animal welfare representative groups.</p>
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<p>32. Councils meet with their counterparts in the Republic of Ireland on an annual basis or more frequently if require, to discuss issues of joint interest.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. Blue Cross commented that the BBC Scotland programme “The Dog Factory” highlighted the cross border nature of the problem, with dogs from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland eventually ending up in other parts of the UK. They feel that it is essential that Northern Ireland works with its counterparts in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland to tackle the problems around intensive puppy breeding and dog trafficking in a joined up manner. They feel this recommendation is a sensible way forward and would encourage this approach and would also encourage more joined up working with the rest of the UK.</p> <p>(2) Six Councils and Animal Welfare Project Board responded to say that they will meet with their counterparts in Republic of Ireland as required.</p>
<p>33. DARD establish a single animal welfare website to bring together information from all enforcement bodies.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, the British Veterinary Association commented that education and clear and accessible advice for the public must underpin the principles of the Act and they therefore fully support the recommendations to establish a single animal welfare website bringing together information from the various enforcement bodies.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causeway Coast Dog Rescue commented that a single website dedicated to providing all relevant information could also be used to inform the public of cases that have been in court and the outcome, have simple downloads fact sheets that charities, Councils and schools can print off and use when needed. • Cats Protection are happy for there to be links to the Cats Protection website where there are numerous leaflets regarding all aspects of cat care, veterinary guides and videos. • Countryside Alliance Ireland agreed that it needs to be easier for the public to access telephone numbers and guidance and hope that the new animal welfare website will go some way to addressing this. Stakeholders should also take some responsibility and they could assist by providing a link on their websites to the animal welfare website. <p>(2) Six Councils and Animal Welfare Project Board responded to welcome the new single animal welfare website to be established by DARD.</p>

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<p>34. DARD provide a series of 'quick-guides' to explain the legal responsibilities of animal owners and the enforcement arrangements.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, the British Veterinary Association commented that they therefore fully support the development of a series of 'quick-guides' to explain the legal responsibilities of animal owners as education and clear and accessible advice for the public must underpin the principles of the Act.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battersea Dogs and Cats Home commented that it is important with Codes of Practice that they are used and targeted effectively. It is not always clear that the Codes of Practice perform a dual role both in terms of informing enforcement what they should consider when looking after animals, and communicating a duty of care to the public. DARD should carry out a review of the effectiveness of the Codes in conjunction with animal welfare organisations in Northern Ireland, as DEFRA is currently doing with animal welfare charities in England. • Cats Protection would recommend a quick guide with advice to anyone considering getting a cat or cats including adoption from a rescue or purchase on what to consider. They would be happy to be involved with such a quick guide. <p>(2) Six Councils and Animal Welfare Project Board responded to welcome the quick guides to be established by DARD.</p>
<p>35. An awareness campaign be undertaken to increase public awareness of who to contact if they are concerned about the welfare of animals.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, Causeway Coast Dog Rescue commented that the public are vital in reporting cases of cruelty, illegal breeding and abandonment and therefore it is only right that they are well informed on what to do in these situations. Another respondee commented that priority needs to be given to re-educating the public which is the root problem and people need to be made aware of who they contact in all cases of animal welfare even if it's that they can't cope with their animals anymore, witness an act of cruelty or come across a straying animal on a road, they don't know who to contact. 7th Heaven Animal Rescue Trust commented that there is still a great deal of confusion surrounding this, for instance whether the police, or only the Council, can investigate domestic animal abuse.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of suggestions to increase awareness including:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A universal logo be developed to be used by Councils, police and the charities to promote the issues on their website and literature. ○ Literature and posters etc should be shown prominently in police stations and Council offices. ○ Adverts on the seriousness of animal welfare should be put in all local newspapers, again with the recognisable logo displayed prominently. ○ If funds are available, an initial advertising campaign on TV would get the issue of animal welfare into the public's consciousness and then every time they see the logo they would immediately associate animal welfare with it. ○ The Councils spend a vast sum of money advertising on buses about dog fouling but not a penny on animal welfare advertising. <p>(2) Councils commented that they would be willing to assist with any public awareness campaign developed by DARD.</p>
<p>36. Enforcement bodies revise, update and enhance sources of information on animal welfare, including provision of guidance, leaflets and CoP and links on Council websites and ensure that the CoP for non-farmed animals should be publicised.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, 7th Heaven randomly selected 6 Council websites and the PSNI website to see how they advertise the reporting procedure for animal abuse and concluded that the information was confusing, not easily found, not contained in A-Z, and listed under areas not relevant to animal welfare.</p> <p>(2) Councils that responded stated they were content to work with the other enforcement bodies to enhance sources of information on animal welfare.</p>

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<p>37. Enforcement bodies continue to encourage the public to report information that might indicate a welfare concern and consider how such information is gathered, analysed and acted upon to see if any improvements are possible.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support.</p> <p>(2) Councils responded by saying they will work with enforcement bodies to continue to report information and if criminal activities were involved PSNI should carry out any further investigation.</p>
<p>38. DARD provide an annual report setting out information relevant to the public in relation to the animal welfare service provided by each of the three enforcement bodies.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, Causeway Coast Dog Rescue commented that an animal report available to the public would enhance their confidence in reporting cruelty and also allow them to see how well their Council is performing. David Wilson commented that the public need more information on the outworking of the 2011 Act.</p> <p>(2) The Councils are content to work with other enforcement bodies to assist DARD in producing an Annual Report.</p>
<p>39. Enforcement bodies should work with their respective media services to review Press Releases (including content, recipients and timing) to maximise uptake. Press Releases should also be published on the single animal welfare website.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, Causeway Coast Dog Rescue commented that media should be used to highlight all cases that have been in courts and prosecutions that are successful.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causeway Coast Dog Rescue also commented that Facebook is a major tool to use to get the public informed and aware of the work AWOs are doing, thus giving the public a confidence in the work that is being done. <p>(2) Councils will continue to work with their media reps to review Press releases and assist with raising public awareness. They will also liaise with DARD in relation to Press releases on a single animal Welfare website.</p>

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<p>40. Enforcement bodies include a standard line in Press Releases to inform the public how to report an animal welfare concern and provide a link to the animal welfare website.</p>	<p>(1) No specific comments were made by respondents on this recommendation although a number indicated that they were generally content.</p> <p>(2) Councils will consider inclusion of this information in Press Releases.</p>
<p>41. Officials in DARD and DE to meet to discuss how they might highlight animal welfare educational awareness programmes in schools.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, Ballysaggart Environmental Group commented that education in all primary and secondary schools should be mandatory and could be given by welfare agencies who all have people who are trained to teach animal welfare. This would be a preventative measure for the future and would have minimal cost.</p> <p>Further comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kennel Club referred the Review to a programme they have recently developed which meets the national curriculum standards and is due to shortly be rolled out in some schools in England. It is based on their Safe and Sound programme which teaches children how to interact with dogs safely. • Battersea Dogs and Cats Home commented that to maximise the resource available and get the best return on investment for highlighting animal welfare in schools and through educational workshops in society, it would be sensible for DARD and DE to look towards the work already being done by charities across the province. They also referred to the work of their Community Engagement Team. • Cats Protection referred to their extensive education programme in Northern Ireland, which delivers talks to schools and community groups through a network of volunteers. They welcome this recommendation and should be pleased to share and discuss the content of their educational resources regarding cat welfare and responsible cat care. <p>(2) Councils would welcome animal welfare educational awareness programmes in schools.</p>

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<p>42. Enforcement bodies provide briefing material on the 2011 Act, including on the welfare needs of animals to media outlets, which should be updated regularly.</p>	<p>(1) All of the respondents that commented on this recommendation were in support. For example, Causeway Coast Dog Rescue commented that the media very rarely outlines when reporting on a case of animal cruelty how the Animal Welfare Act has been broken, this would give us the impression that reporters are not well informed about the welfare act to include it in their news reports. They would like to see the media briefed on the seriousness of breaking the Animal Welfare Act so in turn they can relay that back to the public via news reports.</p> <p>(2) Councils are happy to consider but need to agree content, timing and frequency with DARD and PSNI.</p>
<p>43. Councils review their policy on publication of their complaints procedures.</p>	<p>(1) No specific comments were made by respondents on this recommendation although a number indicated that they were generally content.</p> <p>(2) Councils will consider this matter as it is a matter for each individual Council to address.</p>

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Equines

Issue	Summary of comments
<p>Abandoned Horses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countryside Alliance Ireland (CAI), Crosskennan Lane Animal Sanctuary (Crosskennan), Pamela Scullion, the Equine Welfare Network (EWN) and Jane Watt called for clarification in relation to the current legislation and more help and advice to be given to landowners when an equine is abandoned on their land. • Crosskennan suggested that NI looks to Wales who passed the Control of Horses (Wales) Bill in their National Assembly in December 2013, which subsequently became the Control of Horses (Wales) Act in January 2014. They said that the current situation has now reached epidemic proportions in NI and it is no longer acceptable for the authorities to continue to ignore the problem. • CAI said that they are aware that the abandonment of horses is a major issue within Northern Ireland and that measures need to be taken to reduce, and ideally cease, this terrible practice. It is an ongoing problem and unfortunately, such practices are the work of a minority of irresponsible horse owners. While supporting the Department's plans to further research the option of legislation to give local authorities and landowners greater powers to tackle the issue of 'fly-grazing' and the abandonment of horses, CAI said that as regards emulating the Control of Horses legislation in England and the Republic of Ireland, CAI feel that we should delay any decisions until the consequences of the Act in England are more thoroughly known. Whilst 'fly-grazing' is a serious problem and a large burden for the land owners, it is imperative that such legislation only targets true cases of abandoned horses and not those which may have simply been separated from their owners temporarily. • Councils called for consideration to be given to amending legislation to ensure there is no ambiguity in relation to abandonment of equines as this can have a negative impact on the Animal Welfare budgets.

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Reclassification of horses as an agricultural animal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and EWN called for equines to be reclassified as an agricultural animal, whilst Crosskennan is strongly opposed to this.
Enforcement of horse passport legislation including microchipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crosskennan and EWN called for proactive enforcement of the Horse Passport Regulations. Crosskennan stated that we need to have a robust, fraud-proof, passport system in place that will be enforced with vigilance, whilst also creating a central database containing all details of horses registered in NI or entering NI. This would make the job of welfare charities much easier when it comes to identifying stray/abandoned horses, saving time, money and stress for all involved. • EWN called for assurance that vets record all treatments in equine passports and that DARD should be the only agency responsible for issuing microchips and passports.
Equine welfare database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EWN asked for the creation of a database of welfares/charities/sanctuaries that have a clear statement of what equines they rescue as there is evidence the crisis is being enhanced due to a lot of welfares being full to capacity. The database would show whether the equines are being collected/purchased horses from the pound, bought from the meat man, or taken as abandoned or neglected equines etc.
Over production and Indiscriminate breeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EWN indicated that there is no process currently in place to stop the indiscriminate and over breeding of equines. They also feel that the passport legislation which allows for stamping 'not for human consumption' along with cost of euthanasia and carcass disposal costs are adding to the welfare problems.
Castration clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EWN called for development of a gelding, passporting and microchipping scheme, and have indicated that such a scheme is currently being rolled out by the British Horse Society in England.
Appointment of a governing body for equine welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EWN has called for the appointment of a governing/regulating body for all equine welfare matters.

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Specific training in equine welfare for Animal Welfare Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crosskennan and EWN have indicated that Animal Welfare Officers require a greater knowledge of equines and should receive specific training in the needs of equines.
Rehoming of Council-seized equines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EWN suggested that re-homing of seized equines should be reinstated. They also suggest access to a list of seized equines which are available for re-homing from the Council care provider.
Equine cull/Assisted Euthanasia Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crosskennan and EWN recommended that a disposal scheme for equines should be made available as this would reduce the number of abandonments and would also be of assistance to those who find they can no longer afford to keep their animals.
Registration of equine premises/notification of equine movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EWN called for the introduction of registration of equine premises and that this could be linked to the introduction of an Equine Herd Movement similar to what is already in place for farmed animals as they feel this would lead to better traceability.
Regulated grazing programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EWN raised concerns that recent changes in the farm payments system has resulted in a very noticeable reduction in availability of grazing land, and feel this may be adding to the problem of fly grazing. They propose a register be set up of grazing land available to horse owners.
Establishment of a holding and assessment centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EWN called for the establishment of a holding and assessment centre for seized and abandoned equines with the purpose of having a realistic approach to quality of life of the individual animal.
Stallion tax/licensing of stallions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crosskennan called for the introduction of a tax on the owners of all stallions, as they are of the opinion this would significantly reduce the number of unwanted/abandoned horses. • EWN recommended that owners of stallions should be required to obtain a special licence for any colt over the age of 2 years, as they feel this approach would reinforce gelding.
Working together with British Horse Society (BHS) approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EWN suggested that BHS approved yards should be asked to volunteer to investigate welfare claims as soon as calls come in, and if action required beyond advice, that the Animal Welfare

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yards/skilled approved volunteers	Officer (AWO) would then be alerted. Skilled approved volunteers in each Council area could also be called upon to assist AWOs in capture, handling, transporting and rescue situations.
Export/import of live equines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EWN called for tighter regulations regarding the export/import of live equines and more physical checks at all ports.

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Dog Breeding

Issue	Summary of comments
Legislation and enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All animal welfare organisations that responded called for better enforcement of dog breeding legislation with organisations such as Dog’s Trust, Lucy’s Trust, British Veterinary Association (BVA) and the USPCA asking for a review of the legislation and its enforcement. • NI says “No” to Animal Cruelty (NISNTAC) said that breeding establishment licences on a commercial level should be revoked and replaced with breeders working on a reduced scale; and urged Government to implement an Approved Breeder Registration Scheme similar to the Landlord Registration Scheme. http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/landlord-registration-scheme. • Five respondents including NISNTAC and Dog Welfare Matters called for unannounced frequent inspections and ad hoc behavioural checks to be carried out. With the USPCA suggesting that operator should absorb the cost of such visits. • One member of the public felt the standards that inspectors use for inspections should be enhanced.
Breeding establishment requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents made suggestions to improve the operation of licensed breeding establishments, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ six respondents including Causeway Coast Dog Rescue and Dog Welfare Matters felt there should be a cap on the number of breeding bitches as dogs are companion animals and should be treated as such; ○ Causeway Coast Dog Rescue also suggested that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breeding establishments should be open to the public; - extensive details to be recorded for dogs kept on the premises; - socialisation must be a priority for breeders;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - follow ups are needed to ensure the regulations are being met and adhered to; - failure to have the facilities or man power to socialise the dogs should see the breeding licence revoked immediately; - more details on how breeders are regulated regarding the number of litters their bitches are having in a 3 year period must be made available; - hobby breeders need to also be regulated as the term is being used for back yard breeders to abuse; - rehoming of dogs no longer being used for breeding needs to be regulated more; - all records should be extensive and available to Council officials and vets; and - a complete list of all breeders should be available to be viewed online by the public; o one member of the public called for automatic feeding tubes to be banned; o the BVA said that health screening should be mandatory for all dogs on the premises and called for minimum staffing levels; and o four respondents including Causeway Coast Dog Rescue and the BVA said guidance should be issued on what should be included in a socialisation programme and proper exercise facilities should be available for the dogs; and o Dog Welfare Matters called for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a definitive list of checks to be carried out on animals in the care of breeders; - providing pieces of paper to show socialisation should be scrapped, and instead the inspectors should carry out ad hoc behavioural checks and any failings should result in immediate removal of the dogs; - independent vets and animal specialists to carry out ad hoc checks on the health of the dogs on the premises; the same vet should not carry out checks on the same premises year in and year out, but a vet should be selected from an independent body or volunteer groups; and - all dogs to be named, photographed, and microchipped, with any individual markings to be looked for and noted so as to identify when a dog has died on the premises and keep an accurate record of the fate of all of the dogs on the premises.
<p>Breeder ID and database</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causeway Coast Dog Rescue called for the introduction of a registered breeder’s database so that the public could access it with each establishment identified by a unique breeder ID, with

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	<p>NISNTAC suggesting the details on the register would be shared with the Inland Revenue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causeway Coast Dog Rescue also said that breeders should be given a unique ID to use if selling online and information should be given to the public on what to do if the puppy or dog they purchased dies or is sick, and they need to know they have the right to complain to their Council about a breeder in their area; and all Council websites should have a simple report option available to the public so it is fast and easy for them to report a back yard breeder, puppy farmer or a registered breeder.
<p>Overbreeding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lucy's Trust said that current licensing is not reducing the numbers of dogs bred in Northern Ireland, whether adhered to or not, so in effect it is a useless piece of legislation. DARD needs to recognise the problem of overbreeding in Northern Ireland, and somehow aim to address that. They felt that while dog breeding goes effectively unregulated and uncontrolled, this is a major contributor to the source of dog related welfare issues in NI. While dogs are very easy to buy, new puppies listed everywhere on buy and sell sites, websites, newspapers etc, it leads to a "throw away" mentality towards dogs. • NISNTAC also said that over-breeding needs to be addressed and called for mandatory neutering and spaying of all dogs that are re-homed or sold. They also said that ideally Animal Welfare Campaigners and Rescue Organisations would welcome a temporary ban on breeding and selling, at least until the current situation is under control. • One member of the public felt there should be no grounds for breeding pedigree/named breed dogs for profit unless the dog is in danger of extinction. They also called for designer breeds to be banned. • Causeway Coast Dog Rescue said that Councils should also be asking local rescues for their figures at the end of each year to get a proper scope on just how many dogs have been unwanted in their area, as the Council figures are only a small portion of the true figures. They also said that it makes sense to somehow limit the breeding of dogs, perhaps by mandatory neutering and spaying, for at least 10 years, we would then see a reduction in unwanted dogs.

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	<p>They recognise that this would not be a popular decision in some quarters and are not suggesting that breeding stops completely, but to make it an offence to breed a dog without the proper registration. They urged DARD to consider a separate consultation specifically targeted at reviewing the source of the problem.</p>
<p>Training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Cross felt that enforcement officers need to be provided with adequate training, time and resources to properly enforce these regulations and ensure that all breeding establishments meeting the three litter threshold are licensed and inspected regularly.
<p>Education of the public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causeway Coast Dog Rescue said that Councils need to make more of an effort to ensure the public are well informed of their rights when purchasing a puppy from breeders, and information on what to do if the puppy they purchase is sick or dies should be available on their websites along with what to look out for when purchasing a new puppy. • Blue Cross said that education of the public was needed to inform buyers of what they should do when buying a dog.

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Related and other issues

Issue	Summary of comments
<p>Section 8.1 – regulation of online selling of pets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine respondents including the Kennel club and Dogs Trust have called for the regulation of selling of animals online and in newspapers, etc. For example, NISNTAC said that advertising regulations should be introduced to identify the seller in all advertisements. The advertisement should state the Approved Breeder Licence number, licence holder’s name and business address, a landline contact number and VAT registration number. Regulation of advertising laws would enable the detecting and reporting of illegal puppy famers. • The Kennel Club and Blue Cross commented that they already work as part of the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG) which monitors websites on a voluntary basis and the Kennel Club advised that PAAG would benefit from more resource. • Blue Cross commented that from their work with PAAG they know that there are a large number of people essentially operating virtual pet shops selling large numbers of animals each year. They believe that any review of the regulations that govern pets shops need to take into account both the growth in the online marketplace for pets and its associated problems as well as the increase in the range of species being sold and their often complex welfare needs. • Causeway Coast Dog Rescue said that a complete list of all breeders should be available to be viewed online by the public; breeders should be given a unique ID to use if selling online which can be placed on their advertisement, this would then be on a database for members of the public to check if this person is indeed a registered breeder or not. This would in effect help to stop illegal breeders using social media to sell their puppies and dogs. • The Kennel Club, Blue Cross and Dogs Trust welcome the plans to review the regulations for welfare of animals in pet shops, animal boarding, riding and zoological establishments. The Kennel Club and Blue Cross said specifically that they are opposed to the sale of pups in pet shops.

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Section 8.2 - Financial support for animal charities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crosskeenan Lane Animal Sanctuary and Michael Milliken said that financial support should be provided to animal charities. • Countryside Alliance Ireland do not support the use of public money to fund charities.
Section 8.5 - licensing of cat breeders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Milliken said that licences for cats should be introduced. • Countryside Alliance Ireland opposed this suggestion.
Section 8.6 - Cat licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cats Protection and Michael Milliken said that licences for cat breeders should be introduced and have suggested it should also be dependent on number of cats available in charities. • Cats Protection also called for a review of cat breeding in the province and the issues for cat population and cat welfare.
Section 8.8 – humane treatment of animals in slaughterhouses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corinne Jordan raised concerns about the lack of humane treatment of animals in slaughterhouses.
Section 4.5 - follow up of Improvement Notices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kennel Club feel it is not clear how compliance rates with Improvement Notices are being monitored and whether or not any improvement can be seen. • The Equine Welfare Network wants Councils to ensure that Improvement Notices are being complied with.
Section 4.6 - proactive enforcement by Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countryside Alliance Ireland believes it is important for Councils to be proactive to prevent animal welfare concerns. Attendance at horse fairs and other such events is welcomed to help raise the Councils' profile in respect of animal welfare matters. However, enforcement must remain the priority. • Equine Welfare Network called for Councils to act proactively.

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Section 5.2 - dedicated animal welfare unit within the PSNI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Milliken has suggested a dedicated animal welfare unit should be set up within PSNI.
Section 5.3 - PSNI intranet system kept more up to date and officer training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • League Against Cruel Sports asked that the PSNI Intranet system is kept more up to date and officers are adequately trained in procedures and protocols involved in animal welfare cases.
Section 6.8 - Feral cats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7th Heaven Animal Rescue Trust and Cats Protection feel the status of these animals needs to be reviewed as there is confusion as to whether the Council or PSNI should handle these cases. • Cats Protection also stated that only 33% of owned cats are microchipped compared to 55% in UK, which may mean cats considered strays are in fact owned. Cats protection are also calling for DARD to disseminate advice regarding feral cats to ensure feral cats are protected, and are seeking clarification regarding feral status.
Section 7.4 - central contact point to report animal cruelty 24/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battersea Dogs and Cats Home and NI Badger Group called for the introduction of a central point of contact to report animal cruelty which should be available 24/7.
Ban on fox and deer/stag hunting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • League Against Cruel Sports and Michael Milliken have called for a ban on hunting and the killing of animals (foxes, deer) by dogs or by shooting and the use of dogs to flush out wild mammals from below ground. • NI says “No” to Animal Cruelty called for the removal of the exemption for hunting from the 2011 Act, and have raised the point that if hunting is not cruel then there should be no need for any exemption.
Ban on greyhound racing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7th Heaven Animal Rescue Trust would like to see a ban on greyhound racing as due to the nature of the sport the animals suffer injuries, stress and pain.
Introduction of welfare legislation relating specifically to greyhounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dogs Trust remains hugely disappointed that there is no welfare legislation relating to racing greyhounds.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One member of the public called for greyhounds, lurchers etc to covered by the 2011 Act as companion animals.
Banning of tail docking in lambs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One member of the public called for the banning of tail docking in lambs.
Ban on the use of shock collars and prong collars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lucy's Trust called for the removal from sale of shock collars and prong collars.
Ban on the use of snares and cage traps for foxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Ireland Badger Group called for cage traps for foxes to be licensed and the setting of snares to be banned.
Dedicated hotline for charities to report cases of cruelty to the Council or access to AWO's mobile numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cats Protection would like to see the introduction of a dedicated hotline for charities to contact AWOs in person to avoid calls being fielded by a receptionist and the charities thus being delayed, or for the AWOs mobile numbers to be made available to charities.
Concerns that Councils assign contracts to NGO's with known Anti-fieldsport agendas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irish Working Terrier Federation have concerns that Councils assign contracts to NGO's (Animal Welfare Charities) who are known to have anti-fieldsport agendas. They raised an issue about personal indemnity insurance cover of representatives of these organisations entering private property.
Establishment of a quality assurance committee to oversee animal welfare enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NI Badger Group has called for a quality assurance committee to be set up, including independent members, to oversee animal welfare enforcement in NI.
Dog/cat licences to be granted subject to the fulfilment of the '5 needs' and not automatically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Milliken would like to see dog/cat licences to be granted subject to the fulfilment of the '5 needs' and not automatically, and should be backed up by a home visit.
Farmed and non-farmed animals be categorised together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ballysaggart Environmental Group has called for both farmed and non farmed animals to be categorised together.
Communication with DARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ballysaggart Environmental Group indicated that communication with DARD is not good as it is assumed that everyone has the latest technology and compatible software.