

Animal Welfare Service Delivery Statistical Bulletin 2017



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk



Introduction

In Northern Ireland, the welfare of animals is protected by the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the 2011 Act). The 2011 Act includes a duty of care in respect of all “protected animals” (i.e. animals under the control of a person whether permanently or temporarily). Responsibility for the welfare of an animal remains with the owner at all times.

The review of the implementation of the 2011 Act, in 2015, recommended that DAERA should publish an annual report setting out information in relation to the animal welfare service. This is the second statistical bulletin produced by the Department, using information provided by the three enforcement bodies and detailing the range and level of animal welfare activities during 2017.

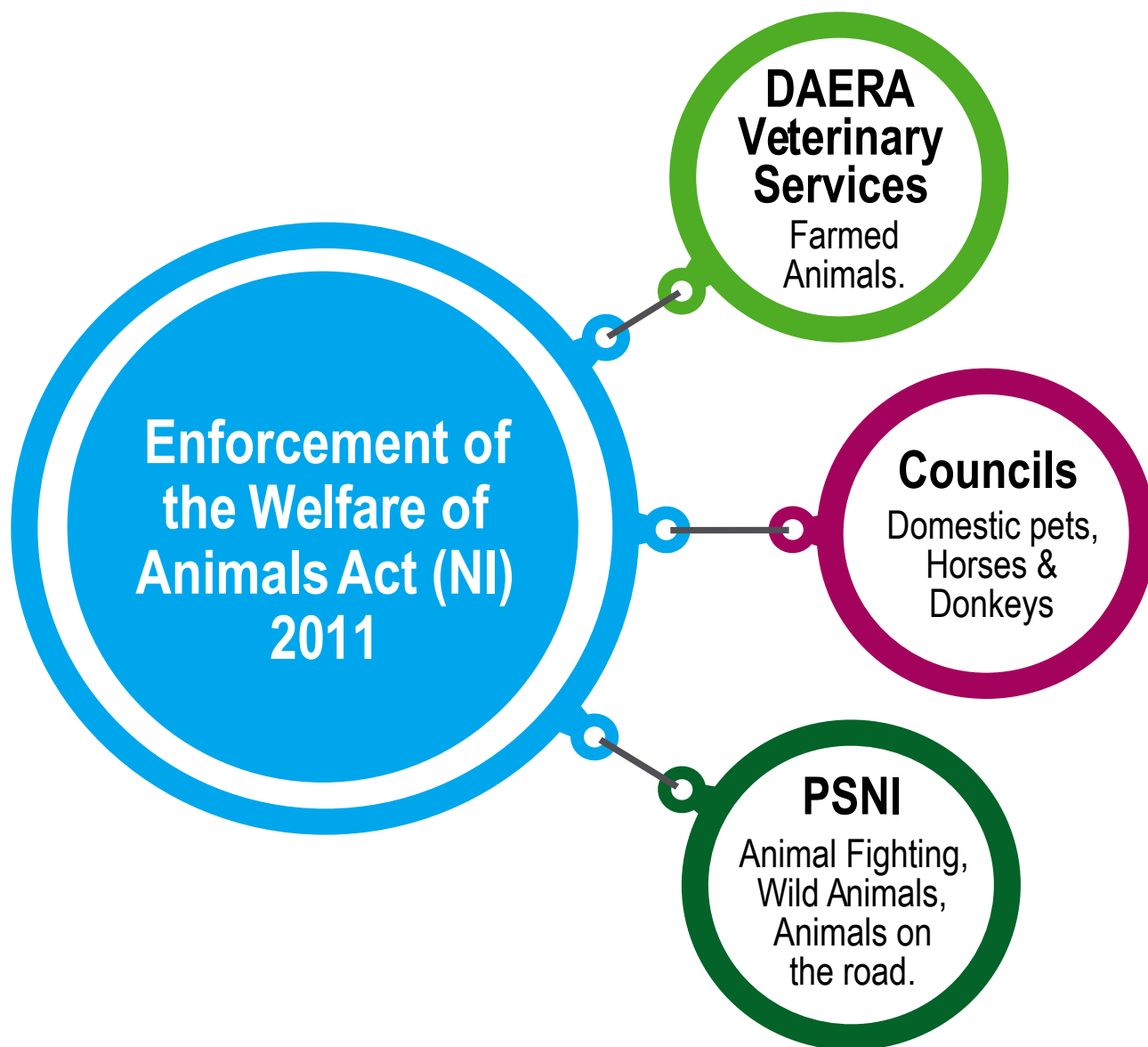
Background

The 2011 Act provides the same level of protection for both farmed and non-farmed animals and sets out the “five needs” of an animal.

The vast majority of owners and keepers comply with their duty of care, however, there are occasions when owners fail to do so and the 2011 Act sets out offences regarding animal welfare, for example: it is an offence to fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that the welfare needs of an animal are met; and it is an offence to take action, or fail to take action, that causes an animal to suffer unnecessarily.



Responsibility for the enforcement of the 2011 Act has been conferred on three enforcement agencies; Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and local Councils.



If a member of the public has any concerns regarding the welfare of an animal then they may contact the relevant enforcement body. Contact information can be found in the nidirect.gov.uk [Animal Welfare section](#). Full details of all complaints will be recorded and passed to Enforcement officers, who will investigate and take action to ensure the owner or keeper complies with the legislation.

DAERA enforces the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (NI) 2012 which were made under the 2011 Act. The work is delivered by DAERA Veterinary Service Inspectors and Veterinary Officers (VOs) located across Northern Ireland in 10 local DAERA Direct offices. DAERA also has responsibility for the licensing and inspection of petshops, and of animal boarding, riding and zoological establishments, under the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 1972. During these inspections, the welfare of the animals is always considered.

Veterinary Service Inspectors have a range of options when dealing with an animal welfare case: providing advice; giving a warning; issuing the owner with a legally binding Improvement Notice; and prosecution.

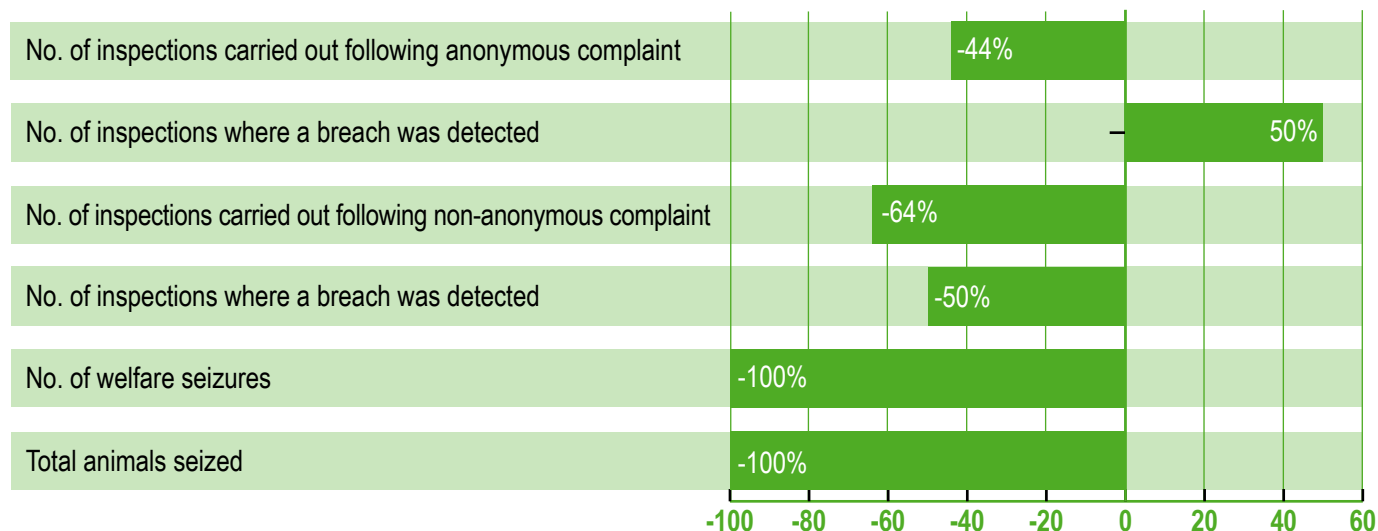
The following information outlines enforcement actions by DAERA.

Farmed Animal Welfare Inspections

During the period 01 January 2017 to 31 December 2017, 1,330 production site inspections for compliance with animal welfare requirements were completed. The overall compliance rate was 94%, a result which includes risk based and randomly selected sites. This was an increase of 4% when compared with the period 01 January 2016 to 31 December 2016.

Breakdown of complaints received and inspections carried out.	Jan - Dec 2016	Jan - Dec 2017	Change	% Change 2016 to 2017
No. of inspections carried out following anonymous complaint.	125	70	-55	-44%
No. of inspections where a breach was detected.	10	15	+5	+50%
No. of inspections carried out following non-anonymous complaint.	101	36	-65	-64%
No. of inspections where a breach was detected.	12	6	-6	-50%
No. of welfare seizures	2	0	-2	-100%
Total animals seized.	178	0	-178	-100%

% Change from 2016 to 2017



Welfare of Animals investigations closed during period
01 January 2017 to 31 December 2017

Case dropped	Compliance achieved	Warning letter issued	Formal caution delivered	Convicted in Court	TOTAL
7	1	4	1	12	25

The penalties for animal welfare convictions included fines, liability for costs, community service and disqualifications from keeping animals.



Regional Councils' Animal Welfare Service

The 2011 Act requires Councils to enforce the legislation in respect of non-farmed animals, for example, domestic pets of any vertebrate species and equines. Councils have adopted a collaborative regional approach to delivering the animal welfare legislation, and 9 Animal Welfare Officers enforce the Act. The Officers have statutory enforcement powers and can take a range of action to improve the welfare of non-farmed animals including: providing advice, issuing an improvement notice, taking animals into their possession (in extreme cases of suffering), and initiating prosecution action.

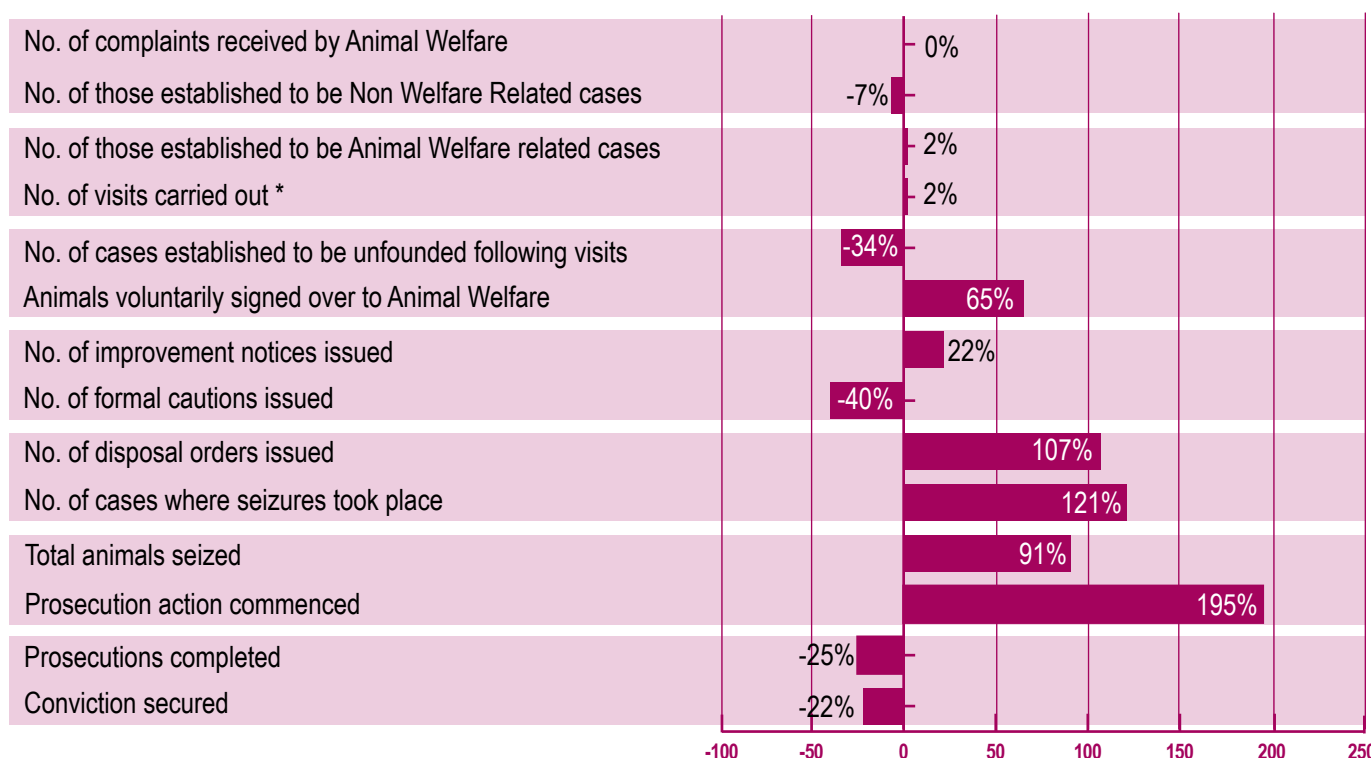
Breakdown of complaints received and inspections carried out.	Jan - Dec 2016	Jan - Dec 2017	Change	% Change 2016 to 2017
No. of complaints received by Animal Welfare.	6391	6414	+23	+0.3%
No. of those established to be Non Welfare Related cases.	1334	1240	-94	-7%
No. of those established to be Animal Welfare related cases.	5057	5174	+117	+2%

Breakdown of follow up action taken on those Animal Welfare related cases:	Jan - Dec 2016	Jan - Dec 2017	Change	% Change 2016 to 2017
No. of visits carried out * (NB – some cases may have required more than one visit).	8987	9189	+202	+2%
No. of cases established to be unfounded following visits.	639	420	-219	-34%
Animals voluntarily signed over to Animal Welfare.	317	523	+206	+65%
No. of improvement notices issued.	210	257	+47	+22%
No. of formal cautions issued.	10	6	-4	-40%
No. of disposal orders issued.	14	29	+15	+107%
No. of cases where seizures took place	175	386	+211	+121%
Total animals seized.	271	518	+247	+91%
Prosecution action commenced.	22	65	+43	+195%
Prosecutions completed.	28	21	-7	-25%
Convictions secured.	27	21	-6	-22%

* All contact visits receive informal advice, unless they result in formal action.

The 21 convictions in 2017 resulted in variety of penalties comprising of fines; liability for costs; community service; conditional discharge; restrictions or bans on keeping animals for varying periods; custodial sentences.

% Change from 2016 to 2017



Breakdown of follow-up action on those Non Welfare Related cases	Jan - Dec 2016	Jan - Dec 2017	Change	% Change 2016 to 2017
No. referred to DAERA, (e.g. farmed animal complaints).	93	82	-11	-12%
No. referred to dog wardens (e.g. stray dogs).	511	505	-6	-1%
No. referred to Environmental Health (e.g. dirty yards/noise complaints).	20	19	-1	-5%
No. referred to PSNI (e.g. animal fighting/snared animals/straying on roads).	84	70	-14	-17%
No. classified as others (e.g. queries relating to rehoming or adopting referred to animal sanctuaries).	626	564	-62	-10%

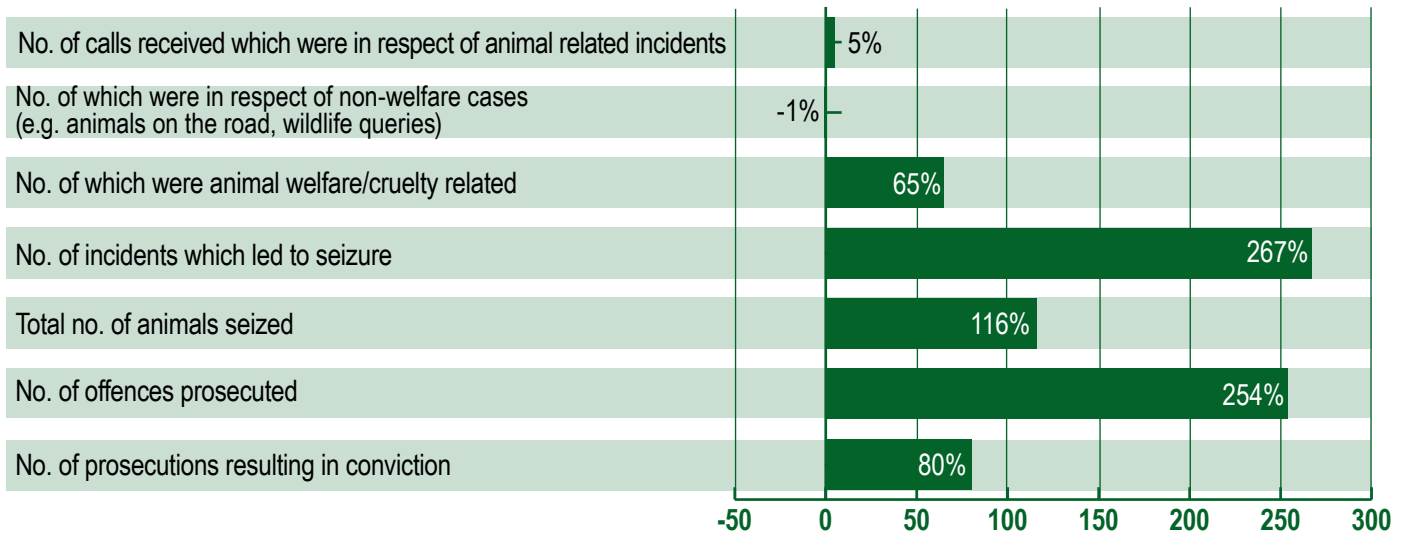


Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

The 2011 Act gives the PSNI power to deal with welfare offences involving wild animals, and offences such as animal fighting, or where other criminal activities are involved. In addition to its responsibilities under the 2011 Act, the PSNI has responsibility for animals on roads and wildlife crime.

Breakdown of calls received and enforcement actions taken	Jan - Dec 2016	Jan - Dec 2017	Change	% Change 2016 to 2017
No. of calls received which were in respect of animal related incidents.	8833	9237	+404	+5%
No. of which were in respect of non-welfare cases (e.g. animals on the road, wildlife queries).	8109	8046	-63	-1%
No. of which were animal welfare/ cruelty related.	724	1191	+467	+65%
No. of incidents which led to seizure.	6	22	+16	+267%
Total no. of animals seized.	25	54	+29	+116%
No. of offences prosecuted	13	46	+33	+254%
No. of prosecutions resulting in conviction.	5	9	+4	+80%
Penalties incurred in relation to the convictions.	Suspended sentences	Imprisonment Suspended sentences Monetary penalty		

% Change from 2016 to 2017



A variety of actions were taken on the reported animal welfare/cruelty related cases which included:

- information/advice dispensed with no visit required;
- visit carried out and information/advice dispensed;
- referrals made to another agency as appropriate, e.g. local council Animal Welfare Officer/Dog Warden/Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs;
- no offence disclosed.

**PLEASE REFER TO THE DAERA WEBSITE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION,
INCLUDING CONTACT DETAILS IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE ABOUT
AN ANIMAL WELFARE ISSUE.**

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/introduction-animal-welfare>

ISBN 978-1-84807-920-5



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

