



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

**The Rt Hon the Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park**  
Minister of State

Iain Stewart MP  
House of Commons  
London  
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Our ref: MC2022/07457/AD

19 May 2022

Dear Iain,

Thank you for your email of 1 April on behalf of your constituents about puppy smuggling. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and I apologise for the delay in doing so. Defra is currently dealing with high volumes of correspondence.

We operate one of the most rigorous and robust pet travel checking regimes in Europe. All non-commercial dogs, cats and ferrets entering Great Britain on approved routes (every route other than Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies) under the Pet Travel rules undergo 100% documentary and identity checks by authorised pet checkers.

To enter Great Britain pets must have been implanted with a microchip or have a legible tattoo imprinted prior to 3 July 2011. A pet's identity is checked by ensuring that the microchip or tattoo details correspond to the details in the pet's documentation, which includes the date of birth of the pet animal. Carriers can refer suspected non-compliances to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), including cases where any dog appears underage. APHA staff are highly trained to deal with intercepted shipments.

APHA works collaboratively with Border Force and other operational partners at ports, airports and inland, sharing intelligence to enforce the pet travel rules, disrupt illegal imports, safeguard the welfare of animals and seize non-compliant animals.

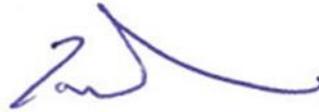
The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill completed its Commons Committee Stage in November and following the passing of a carryover motion by the House on 25th April 2022, will continue its passage in the next Session. The Bill will be reintroduced in the third session in the form in which it was suspended and go straight to Report stage in the House of Commons before continuing its passage in the House of Lords. The Bill allows us to further protect the welfare of pets by introducing restrictions to crack down on the low welfare movements of pets into Great Britain and includes powers to introduce new restrictions on pet travel and the commercial import of pets on welfare grounds, via secondary legislation.

In August 2021 the Government launched an eight-week consultation on our proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets into Great Britain. This included proposals to ban the import of puppies under the age of six months, dogs with cropped ears or docked tails, and dogs that are heavily pregnant.

We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation and will publish a summary in due course. This will allow us to take onboard the views of the public and interested groups in order to shape our future policy. We will continue to work closely with stakeholders prior to the introduction of the legislation to ensure that our final measures are well considered and led by the latest evidence.

Thank you once again for your email.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Paul', written in a cursive style.

**THE RT HON THE LORD GOLDSMITH OF RICHMOND PARK**