



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Lord Douglas-Miller
Minister for Biosecurity, Animal Health and Welfare

Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

T: +44 (0) 3459 335577
E: correspondence.section@defra.gov.uk
W: gov.uk/defra

Iain Stewart MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
iain.stewart.mp@parliament.uk

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Dear Iain,

Thank you for your email of 19 December on behalf of your constituents about cat theft. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

We understand the devastating impact that the theft of a pet can have. The Government launched a Pet Theft Taskforce in May 2021 in response to concerns about a perceived increase in pet theft during COVID restrictions. The Taskforce published its findings and recommendations in September 2021, including the creation of a specific abduction offence.

A Private Members' Bill has been introduced in the House of Commons by Anna Firth MP, looking to introduce new offences for dog and cat abduction. The Government welcomes this Bill and is supporting it through Parliament: [Government backs new pet abduction law in pet theft crackdown – GOV.UK](#)

The Bill is an important and crucial measure, which builds on and complements all the work this Government is doing to enhance our existing world-leading animal welfare standards. It also fulfils a key recommendation of the Pet Theft Taskforce.

We have also already introduced legislation to extend compulsory microchipping to cats in England from 10 June 2024. The new legislation is intended to increase the likelihood that lost or stolen pet cats can be reunited with their keeper, benefitting cat welfare. In 2022 we consulted on microchipping reform, including proposals to make it easier to identify keepers in England from an animal's microchip. We will issue a response to the consultation soon.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need further information.

Yours sincerely,

LORD DOUGLAS-MILLER