

Licensing scheme for Mobile Animal Exhibitions in Wales

The Welsh Government will engage with stakeholders and enforcement agencies to develop the licensing scheme.

Earlier this year, the Welsh Government consulted on the introduction of a licensing or registration scheme for Mobile Animal Exhibits (MAEs) in Wales. The majority of those who responded favoured licensing over registration.

The consultation also asked for views on banning the use of wild animals in circuses. The majority of the almost 1,000 responses only answered this question. There was strong support for a ban and, whilst a licensing scheme would include circuses, the Cabinet Secretary has asked officials to consider this as a separate work stream and develop options to address this issue.

Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths said:

“Earlier this week I made clear our position on animal sentience. Animals are sentient beings and should be protected from pain, injury, fear and distress at all stages of their life. Animal welfare is a priority for us as a government and it is clear to me from the responses we received to our consultation, that it is also a priority for the people of Wales.

“There is concern the welfare needs of some animals kept by MAEs, including circuses, cannot be met in a travelling environment. MAEs are diverse and there is no standard licensing regime or requirement for routine inspection.

“We received a great response to our consultation, with most favouring a licensing regime over registration. I have now asked my officials to begin work on developing a licensing scheme for MAEs in Wales.

“This will not be done in isolation. We will need to engage with stakeholders and enforcement agencies in its development, particularly on how we define MAEs, as well as working collaboratively with our counterparts in the other Devolved Administrations to ensure there are no cross border issues.

“By adopting this approach, we will deliver a scheme which will have a lasting impact on welfare standards to achieve our goal of promoting and improving animal health and welfare standards in Wales.”

“It was clear from the consultation responses that there was support for banning the use of wild animals in circuses. My officials will now consider how we address this issue.”