



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

The Rt Hon Lord Benyon
Minister of State for Climate,
Environment and Energy

Sir Robert Goodwill MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

23 April 2024

Dear Robert,

It has come to my attention that during the oral evidence session of 28 November of the EFRA select committee inquiry on Pet Welfare and Abuse, I inadvertently misspoke when answering Ms Murray's question (Q349) on the matter of rabbits.

When drawing the Committee's attention to the resources available to rabbit keepers to better understand and meet the welfare needs of their pets, I referred to [the Good Practice Code for the Welfare of Rabbits](#), issued by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Animal Welfare (APGAW). I also referred to the British Rabbit Council, which issues its own [Codes of Practice](#). I did not intend to suggest that the British Rabbit Council issued the former code. Both codes offer useful advice to pet owners and my department seeks to make owners aware of them where the opportunity arises.

The Government continues to take positive action to protect the welfare of companion animals - including domestic rabbits. The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (the 2018 regulations) require anyone who is in the business of selling rabbits as pets to obtain a valid licence from their local authority. Licences must meet strict statutory minimum welfare standards which are enforced by local authorities who have powers to issue, refuse or revoke licences. The 2018 Regulations are supported by [statutory guidance](#) which provides specific information about the keeping of rabbits for sale.

I will place a copy of this letter in the library of the House. My colleague Lord Douglas-Miller would be happy to assist should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely, *ever*

Richard

THE RT HON LORD BENYON