

P-05-895 Rosa's Legacy: Introduce a scheme to help people access veterinary care for their companion animals, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 16.06.20

To the Chair and Members of the Petitions Committee of the Senedd Cymru.

P-05- 895: Rosa's Legacy Introduce a scheme to help people access veterinary care for their companion animals.

Thank you for having my petition as an agenda item and for asking me to respond to the correspondence you have received.

The Minister's response to you - 7/4/2020

I would like to thank Lesley Griffiths MS for her response and in doing so may I say I totally understand that our Welsh Government's attention has to be focused primarily on the Covid-19 pandemic at this time.

I am very pleased to see that Lesley is now working with and involving CAWGW (Companion Animal Welfare Group Wales) . However I am still puzzled as to why the Welsh Government should be consulting with Local Authorities as it's my understanding this matter is not within their remit.

I agree with Lesley that the setting of fees by private veterinary practice's is a business decision. But this is a matter the RCVS (Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons) as the body who claims to regulate the profession in the UK **can** act on **if** they choose to do so . The BVA (British Veterinary Association) is not an organisation every veterinary surgeon has to join and they have no regulatory powers. The BVA have already stated to Members that they " do not have a position on this issue ". However as I stated in my previous submission I find this statement very puzzling as their Members must be aware of the issues I have flagged up.

Brief Update

Animal welfare is a matter devolved to our Welsh Senedd and Government. The Welsh Government have said that the welfare of animals is a high priority for them. The UK and Welsh Government's have jointly acknowledged that animals are sentient beings. In previous submissions both CAWGW and myself have touched on the issue of how such companion's improve the wellbeing of their owners.

I still feel the rapid corporatisation of the veterinary industry here in Cymru is a crucial issue here. That wagon roles ever forward to the detriment of animal welfare and us companion animal owners. In my part of North West Wales only one independently run veterinary practice remains **1**.

As Professor Noel Fitzpatrick MRCVS points out " **It's estimated that up to half of all primary care veterinary practices across the United Kingdom are now owned by venture capital equity groups....Some of these groups own hundreds of primary care practices, most have centralised referral centres and some have pet crematoria, own-brand drugs, online pharmacies, laboratories, out-of-hours surgeries, locum agencies and both online and retail shops** " **2.**

Again I wish to make clear that I am not attacking individuals within our veterinary profession . I consider that the corporate takeover affects them deeply too. As the rise in calls to the charity Vetlife confirms. **3.**

I am convinced that the current economic situation we find ourselves in when we come out of lockdown will months down the line have a significant effect on the choices people are forced to make in regards their companion animals.This combined with the corporates holding so many of the cards will result in a disastrous outcome for many.I really fear the card of " economic euthanisea " will be played time and time again . This to my mind should play no part in a modern Cymru- one in which animals like My late Rosa are Members of people's families and are classed as Sentient beings.

Conclusions- Next Steps.

Nearly two years after losing My beloved Lady Rosa I find myself increasingly frustrated by what I witness others going though with their beloved family members. On a personal level the pain I experience deep down inside remains. My battle against being overwhelmed by it is constant.

This is made worse by the knowledge and realisation that the very profession and the body who claims to be their regulator (RCVS) seems totally oblivious to what I and many others go through and the very valid points that we raise . The manner in which the RCVS plan to conduct their forthcoming long awaited " Under Care Review " speaks volumes. They (RCVS) have confirmed to me that they have no plans to involve any Member of the Senedd, only the Chief Veterinary Officer of the Welsh Government (herself a veterinary surgeon). Plus they will draft the legislation then consult the pet owning public **4.**

1. I would like to be actively involved in the collaboration that the Minister Lesley Griffiths MS refers to.

2. I would like Members of our CCEC to be informed about the issues I raise particularly surrounding the corporatisation of the veterinary profession in Cymru. Could this be an issue they look at as a Committee?

3. I think it may be of benefit if the CMA (Competition Marketing Commission) were approached to see if they have any concerns in regards to the corporate takeover.

Once again may I offer my heartfelt thanks for the diligent way Members have considered this matter. As always I would be willing to help you in any way I can.

Cofion.
Linda Joyce-Jones.
Arfon Constituency.
16/6/2020 .

1. <http://www.independentvets.co.uk/>
2. Professor Noel Fitzpatrick " Becoming The Supervet " page 256.
3. <https://www.vetlife.org.uk/>
4. <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/news/rcvs-publishes-outline-plan-for-review-of-under-care-and-247/>