

**Control of Horses (Wales) Act 2014 post-legislative scrutiny  
World Horse Welfare comments**

World Horse Welfare would like to thank the Environment and Sustainability Committee for the opportunity to comment on the Control of Horses (Wales) Act 2014.

We very much welcomed this Act when it came into force, and continue to believe that it represents an excellent step forwards in the fight against fly-grazing, which is one of the most prevalent equine welfare issues we have faced during the ongoing equine crisis.

The Act can be used very successfully if local authorities have the confidence, resources and motivation to take decisive action on this issue. Swansea and Cardiff in particular are making full use of the new powers available to them. However, we are concerned that some local authorities still choose not to use these new powers – we believe as a result of concerns about the resource implications of taking in large numbers of horses. This is despite the fact that fly-grazing can be very costly to local authorities, and the powers in the Act have the potential to save resources by allowing problems to be resolved more quickly.

We are concerned that the fact that this Act requires local authorities to act, rather than giving extra tools to private landowners, has left private landowners vulnerable to continued fly-grazing. Although landowners can request that local authorities take action, local authorities are not obliged to do so – meaning that landowners are still being forced to use 14 day notices under the Animals Act 1971. We believe that some of this may be fuelled by a lack of understanding of the Act.

We would suggest that further provision is therefore needed to ensure that landowners are not left disadvantaged by this Act – whether through granting extra powers to landowners and commoners, extra resources to local authorities, or looking into arrangement whereby the local authority posts 7 day warning notices, but the horses become the responsibility of the landowner once the deadline expires. We note that the Welsh Government has provided excellent and comprehensive guidance for local authorities on the Act – we would suggest that guidance should also be produced for commoners and private landowners, explaining how the Act could apply to the land for which they are responsible, and how they can request local authority assistance.

This Act has improved the equine welfare situation in Wales, and we encourage the Committee to seek improvements to the legislation to improve the situation even further.

**For further information:**

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