

Neal Gartland
Director of Animal Health and Welfare
Policy Division



Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs

An Roinn

Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Department of

Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: TOF-1205-2024

Sara Steele
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Via email:
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3 May 2024

Dear Ms Steele

New Safeguarding Measures for XL Bully Breed Type Dogs

Thank you for your letter, of 23 April 2024, to Minister Muir in which you raised concerns regarding the impact of the upcoming XL Bully legislation for councils and animal welfare charities. You also enquired about what resources will be allocated to deal with the impacts. Your correspondence has been passed to me for reply in my capacity as Director of Animal Health and Welfare Policy Division within the Department.

Officials are continuing to engage with Northern Ireland Dog Advisory Group (NIDAG) on the implementation of the policy; this includes ascertaining what additional costs will be incurred for councils as a result of the new restrictions. This work is currently ongoing, and, in the weeks ahead as the exemption scheme is finalised, consideration will be given as to what financial assistance the Department can provide. However, please be assured that the Minister is acutely aware of the impacts on councils and has publicly expressed his desire to work with councils to support them where possible, within the Departmental budget.

I am very conscious that there may be some organisations within the animal welfare charity sector that will be impacted because of the restrictions, however, the Department has no legislative powers to intervene or provide financial assistance. Historically, the Department has not funded any animal welfare charities directly in the past, nor does it

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have any budget to do so in the future. The Department for Communities (DfC) remains responsible for policy and strategy relating to the voluntary and community sector. It can provide advice to charities on sustainability and does offer targeted funding initiatives, which are open to qualifying organisations.

I trust that you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neal Gartland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

NEAL GARTLAND
Director of Animal Health and Welfare Policy Division

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