

# Policy paper: Draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill 2017

*Updated:* Added a link to the summary of responses for the consultation carried out on this draft bill.

This paper, laid in Parliament on Tuesday 12 December 2017, includes the draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill 2017, and the explanatory notes that accompany it.

The draft bill would do two things. It would increase the maximum penalty for animal cruelty offences from 6 months to 5 years imprisonment, and it would ensure that animals are defined in UK law as sentient beings.

We sought views on our draft Bill and have published a [response to the consultation](#).