

Lucy's Law: Vets reveal the true cost of puppy and kitten farms

Stark new findings reveal that buying a pet from a low-welfare breeder could cost pet owners an extra £5,000 in vet bills over just 12 months, as a [new government campaign](#) is launched urging people to take simple steps to research the seller before buying a puppy or kitten.

More than half of vets surveyed (54%) said that the poor conditions of puppy or kitten farms can lead to illnesses and complications which would incur treatment costs of over £1,500 in the first year of the animal's life. In some severe cases, the costs could rise to £5,000 or even result in the pet being euthanised.

These new figures demonstrate the extent of suffering for both owner and pet caused by puppy farms and third party puppy and kitten sales as the trade relies on a high-volume, low-welfare model.

The government has already changed the law to ban commercial third party puppy and kitten sales, known as Lucy's Law, and is going further to improve the lives of animals including supporting a Private Member's Bill to raise the maximum penalty for animal cruelty from six months to five years, and consulting on tackling excessively long journeys for live animals.

Today's [launch of a government campaign](#) will call on the public to also play their part to tackle the cruel trade of puppies and kittens by encouraging prospective owners to be aware of illegal, low-welfare breeders and look for 'red flags' when buying a new pet. This will help to disrupt the demand for these animals and further suffocate the trade alongside the introduction of Lucy's Law. The campaign, called 'Petfished', outlines the deceitful tactics pet sellers use to trick buyers and sell their animals to line their pockets.

Christine Middlemiss, UK Chief Veterinary Officer, said:

Vets see the tragic effects of 'Petfishing' first-hand but so too do the public who may be put through the pain and cost of looking after, and even losing, a sick puppy or kitten due to the conditions it was bred in.

It's vital that prospective pet owners take responsibility for where they get their pets from and avoid puppy-farms and unscrupulous dealers. The campaign launched today sets out the simple steps that can be taken by the public to spot the warning signs and ensure their puppy or kitten is given the best start in life.

Animal Welfare Minister, Lord Goldsmith, said:

I am delighted that a ban on third party sales of puppies and kittens is coming into force – it is a crucial piece of legislation that will help us tackle the abhorrent and heart-breaking trade of pets.

Our campaign will help raise awareness of the dangers associated with buying pets online and deceitful sellers. The animals reared on puppy farms are often in awful conditions which can lead to chronic health problems, behavioural issues, and, in the most tragic cases, death. This simply has to stop and the public can do its bit to help.

We urge anyone thinking about getting a pet to do the right thing. Do thorough research and ensure you go to a reputable breeder in the UK – don't get 'Petfished'.

The poor conditions suffered by puppies and kittens include early separation from their mothers, huge numbers of animals cramped in unhygienic spaces, and the likelihood of long journeys from the place they were bred to their new home. All of these can contribute to an increased risk of disease and behavioural issues.

Our survey of vets showed the need to inform prospective pet owners of the issues attached with buying from disreputable breeders, with all questioned saying the public need clear advice on how to buy pets responsibly.

The campaign launched today urges people to ask themselves 'Who's the person behind the pet?'. It introduces a new phrase 'Petfished' – much like 'Catfished', when someone is lured into a relationship by a fictional online persona, it refers to deceitful pet sellers who use a similar tactic to trick buyers, mistreating animals and selling them at high-volume to line their pockets.

On 6 April 2020, the ban on commercial third party puppy and kitten sales – known as Lucy's Law – will come into force in England. The ban will help to crack down on puppy farms by disrupting the supply-chain of low-welfare breeders which relies on third party sales. This new legislation, married with the 'Petfished' campaign which seeks crack-down on the public's demand for this trade, is further evidence of the government's commitment to improving the welfare of the nation's much-loved pets.

Anyone looking to buy a pet can get tips and advice on the new website: getyourpetsafely.campaign.gov.uk

Claire Horton CBE, Battersea Chief Executive said:

Battersea strongly condemns the practice of puppy farming that puts profit ahead of basic animal welfare. Separated from their mother too early, sold for a vast profit and too easily bought on impulse, these pets can suffer lifelong health problems as a result of such early mistreatment.

No pet owner wants to find themselves taken in by 'petfishers' and end up having to make potentially heart-breaking choices, so we welcome Defra's new campaign which will provide much-needed advice on how to buy a pet responsibly. We also encourage anyone thinking about getting a new dog or cat to visit their local rescue centre where they can also gain helpful advice about whether a puppy or kitten is the right choice for them.

RSPCA Inspector Callum Issit, who appears in the Petfished short film, said:

There's always been a high consumer demand for puppies and kittens and sadly there are people out there who try and meet this demand by prioritising quick cash profits at the expense of animal welfare.

Puppy farming in particular is a disturbing industrial-scale attempt to meet this demand and the low-welfare conditions and animal illnesses this leads to are distressing.

Some of the worse cases I've seen have resulted from so-called 'back-yard' kitten breeders removing a kitten from its mother too early with little chance of survival or hundreds of puppies kept together in their own faeces with matted fur.

It's important the public remain vigilant. If you suspect foul play at any stage when researching and buying your pet, report the seller immediately to the RSPCA or your local authority to help us stop this. If you're looking for a new pet to join your family please consider giving a rescue animal a new home.

People should follow these tips to help spot warning signs that a puppy or kitten has been raised in low welfare conditions:

1. Research. Have a look at the seller's profile and search their name online. If they are advertising many litters from different breeds, then this is a red flag.
 2. Check contact details. Copy and paste the phone number into a search engine. If the number is being used on lots of different adverts, sites and dates then this is likely a deceitful seller.
 3. Check the animal's age. Puppies and kittens should never be sold under 8 weeks old – do not buy from anyone advertising a puppy or kitten younger than 8 weeks.
 4. Check the animal's health records. Make sure the seller shares all records of vaccinations, flea and worm treatment and microchipping with you before sale.
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Foreign Secretary's first Gulf visit to showcase Britain's strengths

The UK wants stronger partnerships with Saudi Arabia and Oman based on trade, security and closer work on global challenges like climate change and the worsening humanitarian situation in Yemen, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said ahead of his first official visit to the region.

The Foreign Secretary will set out his ambitions while in Oman and Saudi Arabia, where talks with counterparts are also expected to centre on the UK's hosting of climate conference COP26 and Saudi Arabia's presidency of the G20.

He will also raise the value of inclusive societies and discuss human rights concerns, including the use of the death penalty and restrictions to freedom of expression.

Mr Raab will seek to re-energise diplomatic efforts to bring peace to Yemen after five years of civil war. He will also seek the opportunity to push for a political solution to the crisis in Yemen, following the recent surge in Houthi violence and constraints on getting humanitarian aid to those in need.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The Gulf is important to UK security, but it's also a region of enormous opportunity. Both Oman and Saudi Arabia want to grow in sectors such as health, education and culture where the UK leads the world.

I look forward to discussing trade, regional security, climate change and human rights in this pivotal region.

In Oman, the Foreign Secretary will hold bilateral talks with the new Sultan, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and the Prime Minister travelled to the country to offer their condolences for the late Sultan in January. The Foreign Secretary will also meet with his counterpart, His Excellency Yusuf bin Alawi.

The UK is a proud friend and partner of Oman, which has a strong legacy of promoting peace and stability in the wider region.

In Saudi Arabia, the Foreign Secretary will meet the country's leadership to discuss the strong UK-Saudi trade partnership, the Saudi presidency of the G20 and the upcoming UK-hosted COP26.

The Foreign Secretary will also be holding talks in Riyadh with Yemeni President Hadi and is also expected to meet Foreign Minister Prince Faisal

bin Farhan.

Liz Truss kick-starts UK-US trade talks

The UK is today (Monday 2 March) publishing its negotiating objectives for a free trade agreement with the United States, with talks expected to begin this month.

Manufacturers of ceramics, cars and food and drink, and professional services including architects and lawyers are among the British industries expected to be the biggest winners from tariff free access to the US market.

The agreement will deliver for the whole United Kingdom, with Scotland, the North East and the Midlands forecast to benefit most from removing barriers to trade with the US.

Government analysis published today shows that the UK economy will benefit from a £3.4 billion boost, as the trade deal will increase transatlantic trade flows by £15.3 billion.

The negotiating objectives set out that any future agreement must protect our NHS and uphold our high standards on food safety and animal welfare.

The agreement will also include a chapter on digital trade, to maximise opportunities for businesses to trade digitally across the Atlantic.

On the UK side, talks will be overseen by Crawford Falconer, DIT's Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser, formerly New Zealand's Chief Negotiator and Ambassador to the WTO.

He will be supported by a team of negotiators, drawing on expertise from across government and the private sector.

Negotiating rounds will alternate between the UK and US.

The government will set out our negotiating objectives for Australia, Japan and New Zealand shortly, with the aim of having 80 percent of total UK external trade covered by free trade agreements by 2022.

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson said:

We have the best negotiators in the business and of course, we're going to drive a hard bargain to boost British industry.

Trading Scottish smoked salmon for Stetson hats, we will deliver

lower prices and more choice for our shoppers.

Most importantly, this transatlantic trade deal will reflect the unique closeness of our two great nations.

International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss said:

Striking ambitious free trade agreements with our partners around the world is one of the key opportunities of Britain becoming an independent trading nation once again.

This deal with our biggest single trading partner will cut red tape for our small businesses, cut tariffs for our great products from dairy to cars and increase growth in all four nations.

Mike Cherry, National Chair of the Federation of Small Businesses, said:

FSB research shows that the United States is the number one individual country that UK small businesses are looking to as they consider where to trade, with 46% of UK SME exporters prioritising the US market over the next three years.

This shows the sheer scale of ambition that will be unleashed, if we can take full advantage of the opportunities a Free Trade Agreement will open up.

As the FTA moves forward, we are working with the Department for International Trade to make sure SMEs are front of mind. The success of the UK economy rests on inspiring more small businesses to go global, and trade around the world.

The UK's overall negotiating objectives are to:

- Agree an ambitious and comprehensive free trade agreement with the United States that strengthens the economic relationship with our largest bilateral trading partner, promoting increased goods and services trade and greater cross-border investment.
- Increase UK GDP by opening up opportunities for British businesses and investors, and facilitating greater choice and lower prices for British producers and consumers.
- Rigorously protect the UK's freedom to provide public services, such as the National Health Service, in the national interest. The NHS is not for sale and the Government is committed to the guiding principles of the NHS – that it is universal and free at the point of use.

- Throughout the terms of the agreement, ensure high standards and protections for British consumers and workers, and build on our existing international obligations. This will include upholding the UK's high domestic standards on food safety and animal welfare.
- Futureproof the agreement in anticipation of rapid technological developments.

Background

Our negotiating objectives for all proposed agreements are also underpinned by one of the biggest consultations ever undertaken with the UK public, businesses and civil society on new FTAs. We will continue to speak to businesses and interest groups in every part of the UK to ensure their views are taken into account.

[CMO for England announces 12 new cases of novel coronavirus: 01 March 2020](#)

As of 9:00am this morning 12 further patients in England have tested positive for COVID-19.

Three patients were close contacts of a known case, transmitted in the UK, identified as part of contact tracing. One patient, resident in Essex, had no relevant travel and it is not yet clear whether they contracted it directly or indirectly from an individual who had recently returned from abroad; investigations are ongoing.

Of the remaining eight cases, six had recently travelled from Italy and two from Iran. The patients who have recently travelled are from London, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, Hertfordshire and Gloucestershire. All are being investigated and contact tracing has begun.

The total number of confirmed cases in England is now 33. Following previously reported confirmed cases in Northern Ireland and Wales, the total number of UK cases is 35.

UK launches second call for proposals for Business Innovation Challenge in Kenya

The UK launched the second round of a business innovation challenge fund that will see an additional 5 promising businesses receive grant funding and technical assistance of up to KES 13,000,000 (£100,000) each. The call for proposals will seek to support initiatives that are innovative, sustainable and with the potential to stimulate job creation. The funding made available through the Kenya Catalytic Jobs Fund, will focus on three thematic areas: agriculture and manufacturing; the informal sector; and people in marginalised groups and areas.

The first call for proposals was launched in April 2019 and saw 5 successful businesses receive awards, namely: TakaTaka Solutions; Ten Senses Africa; Lynk Jobs Limited; Savanna Circuit Technologies Limited; and BuildHer

Supported by UKAid, the Kenya Catalytic Jobs Fund is a KES 650 million (£5 million), 4-year programme, which tests and support innovations with the potential to stimulate large-scale job creation. The programme is part of the UK Department for International Development's broader economic development portfolio in Kenya which: promotes greater private investment including for the poorer regions; invests in better planned urbanisation to expand access to economic opportunities; brings down the barriers and cost of trade; and helps Kenyan firms grow their export markets.

Speaking during the launch of the second call, the Head of DFID Kenya, Julius Court said:

The UK is delighted to be part of efforts to tackle such constraints and promote the growth of private sector in way that creates opportunities for youth. We are listening when Kenyans tell the world they want mutually beneficial partnerships that move beyond aid and attract quality investment and create millions of jobs.

The second call for proposals will close on March 15th, 2020. Applicants are requested to submit the online application form which can be downloaded from the Kenya Catalytic Jobs Fund [website](#)