

North Paws

Animals in Law

Animal Welfare Act 2006

Section 9: places a duty of care on all animal owners to ensure they meet the welfare needs of their animals. This means anyone who is responsible for animals must take positive steps to ensure they care for their animals properly and in particular must provide for the five welfare needs.

The Five Welfare Needs:

- **Health** – Protection from pain, injury, suffering and disease and treated if they become ill or injured.
- **Behaviour** – the ability to behave naturally for their species e.g. Play, run, dig, jump, fly etc.
- **Companionship** – to be housed with, or apart from, other animals as appropriate for the species. i.e. company of their own kind for sociable species like rabbits or guinea pigs, or to be housed alone for solitary species like hamsters.
- **Diet** – a suitable diet. This can include feeding appropriately for the pet's life stage and feeding a suitable amount to prevent obesity or malnourishment, as well as access to fresh clean water.
- **Environment** – a suitable environment. This should include the right type of home with a comfortable place to rest and hide as well as space to exercise and explore.

Failure to meet these needs will result in: removal of animal, prosecution, fine and life ban from keeping animals.

Animal Welfare Regulations 2018

Government guidance for conditions of 'selling animals as pets' and 'breeding dogs'

Lucy's Law 2019

Lucy's Law is named after a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel called Lucy, who was rescued from a Welsh puppy farm in 2013. A campaign was run in Lucy's name, focusing on the welfare of puppies when sold by third parties; dogs like Lucy are often forced to breed multiple times a year, with puppies being taken from their mothers at just a few weeks old and sold on to pet dealers and pet shops. Lucy's Law was approved by Parliament on 13th May 2019 and came in to effect in England on 6th April 2020. The law makes it illegal to sell puppies and kittens under 6 months old unless the seller:

1. has bred the puppy or kitten themselves, or
2. isn't a business (e.g. if they're a legitimate rescue centre)



The Welfare Livestock Regulations 1994

Although this generally covers farm animals and is not directly linked to domestic pets, a section does state legal requirements of rabbit housing:

“Any hutches or cages where rabbits are kept shall be:

- a. of sufficient size to allow the rabbit to move around, feed and drink without difficulty and to enable all rabbits kept in them to lie on their sides at the same time; and
- b. of sufficient height to allow the rabbits to sit upright on all four feet without ears touching the top of the cage”

In addition:

“where any rabbits are kept in any accommodation that is exposed to the weather, suitable steps shall be taken so as to ensure that the rabbits have access to shelter from the action of the weather (including direct sunlight)”.