



Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs

Government response to Animal Sentience Committee: Assessment of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Bill

December 2025

**Department for Environment, Food, and Rural
Affairs**

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**Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 3 of the Animal Welfare
(Sentience) Act 2022**

We are the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We're responsible for improving and protecting the environment, growing the green economy, sustaining thriving rural communities and supporting our world-class food, farming and fishing industries.

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Summary

This is the government's formal response to the Animal Sentience Committee's assessment of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Bill published on 2 September 2025.

Introduction

The Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Bill was a Private Members' Presentation Bill, sponsored by Aphra Brandreth in the House of Commons and Baroness Coffey in the House of Lords. The Bill successfully completed its passage through Parliament on 5 December 2025 and awaits Royal Assent before becoming an Act.

The Bill amends the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 ("the Act"). The amendments primarily focus on the following key areas:

1. modernising definitions in, and the scope of, the Act
2. strengthening police powers to support better enforcement; and
3. increasing the penalty for the offence of worrying livestock on agricultural land to an unlimited fine.

We note the Committee's view that the Bill clearly enhances the welfare of livestock by increased protection measures and that adequate due regard has been given for the welfare of sentient animals in this policy.

We also note the Committee's concerns about the potential negative impact of the welfare of dogs where they are seized and detained under the Act and the associated recommendations made by the Committee.

It is the Government's view that addressing livestock worrying and reducing the number of incidents requires a balance to be struck between a range of factors, including the impact of livestock worrying on livestock welfare, the loss of livestock to farmers, the emotional impact of livestock incidents on farmers, dog welfare and the property rights of dog owners. The Government considers that the new powers which the police will have through this Bill to seize and detain a dog where the police have reasonable grounds to believe there is a risk that a dog could attack or worry livestock are important tools to help address the risk of incidents of livestock attacks or livestock worrying. The Government recognises potential negative impact on the welfare of dogs that are seized and detained under the Act for extended or frequent periods. Whilst the exercise of these new powers is a matter for the police, the Government would only expect dogs to be kennelled during a court case in exceptional circumstances where there are concerns of the dog attacking or worrying again. The Government will keep the implementation of the Act under review.

We would like to thank the Committee for its consideration of the Bill.

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