

Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses

Research Briefing

June 2019



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Senedd Research

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Paper Overview:

The use of wild animals in travelling circuses has received a lot of public and political attention across Wales and the rest of the United Kingdom. In July 2018, the Welsh Government announced that a Bill to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses would be brought forward within the next 12 months. The draft Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Wales) Bill was published on 1 October 2018 and aims to enforce a ban on using wild animals in travelling circuses in Wales, on ethical grounds.

This briefing has been published in anticipation of the Bill's introduction and focuses on the policy background and issues associated with the use of wild animals in travelling circuses within Wales and the rest of the UK.



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1 Background

Current situation

The use of wild animals in travelling circuses has received a lot of public and political attention across Wales and the rest of the United Kingdom. There are currently no legal barriers prohibiting wild animal use in travelling circuses in Wales. Calls for a ban on this practice have been considered by the Assembly Petitions Committee and have resulted in proposed action from the Welsh Government.

In February 2018, the then-Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths AM, **announced** that she was ‘exploring opportunities to bring forward legislation to ban the use of wild animals in circuses in Wales’. This followed a **consultation** on a licensing or registration scheme for Mobile Animal Exhibits (MAEs) (July 2017) which included the question of introducing a ban on the use of wild animals in circuses. There was overwhelming support for a ban from respondents. In July 2018, the then-First Minister, Carwyn Jones AM, **announced** that a Bill to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses would be brought before the National Assembly for Wales within the next 12 months.

In October 2018, the Welsh Government **consulted** on the **draft Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Wales) Bill** (PDF, 86KB). The draft Bill aims to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses in Wales on **ethical grounds**. This is possible with the coming into force of the *Wales Act 2017*. The Welsh Government has published a **summary of responses** to the consultation (see Section 3 for more information). Box 1 provides detail on the timeline of relevant events.

Box 1. Timeline of events relating to banning wild animals in travelling circuses in Wales

October 2015 – The **RSPCA submits a petition** with >7,000 signatures calling for a ban on wild animals in all circuses.

December 2015 – The Welsh Government **announces an independent review** (the ‘Harris review’) into animal welfare of wild animals in travelling and non-travelling circuses.

March 2016 – The then-Deputy Minister for Farming and Food, Rebecca Evans AM, publishes a **written statement** having received the draft report of the Harris review. The Chief Veterinary Officer is asked to consider the final report and seek advice from **Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group** and other expert groups.

April 2016 – The Welsh Government publishes the Harris Review which provides scientific evidence on animal welfare in travelling circuses. It concludes that the welfare needs of wild animals in travelling environments cannot be satisfied to the same extent as in static environments.

December 2016 – The then-Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths AM, states that whilst the Welsh Government is developing a licensing or regulating scheme for Mobile Animal Exhibits (MAEs), including circuses, she has ‘not dismissed the possibility of a future ban on the use of wild animals in circuses in Wales’.

July 2017 – The Welsh Government consults on a licensing or registration scheme for MAEs which includes a question on banning the use of wild animals in circuses.

December 2017 – The Welsh Government publishes a summary of the MAE consultation responses, and states it is tasking officials to develop a licensing scheme for MAEs, subject to consultation in 2018. It states there was overwhelming support from respondents to ban wild animals in circuses.

January 2018 – Linda Joyce-Jones submits a Petition to the Assembly, with >6,000 signatures calling for a ban on wild animals in all circuses.

February 2018 – Lesley Griffiths AM, then-Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, announces she is exploring options on a ban of wild animals in circuses in Wales.

July 2018 – The Welsh Government states it will bring forward a Bill banning the use of wild animals in travelling circuses over the next 12 months.

October 2018 – The Welsh Government consults on the proposed legislation to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses in Wales.

September 2018 – Linda Joyce-Jones et al. submit a further Petition, calling for a ban on the use of all animals in circuses and travelling shows in Wales. The petition is still collecting signatures.

January 2019 – The Welsh Government publishes a summary of responses to the consultation on proposals to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses.

March 2019 – The Chief Veterinary Officer updates the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group, commenting that ‘the Circus Bill is progressing well and should receive Royal assent on schedule in 2020; and work is continuing on Mobile Animal Exhibits’.

Calls for a ban

Members of the public and third sector organisations have expressed concern for the welfare of some animals kept in travelling circus conditions. Concerns include suitability and size of temporary housing, changes in normal behaviour, the performance of ‘unnatural behaviours’ and the impact of frequent transport events. As well as a perceived welfare issue, stakeholders have voiced ethical concerns, believing that the ‘unnatural’ performance of wild animals for human entertainment, and the living conditions that come with this, mean it is an ‘outdated notion and [is] ethically unacceptable’.

The **Welsh Government’s 2018 consultation** found 97% of respondents supported the introduction of legislation to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses. This level of support for a ban was similar to the **2009 UK Government Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) consultation** (PDF, 105KB) and the **2014 Scottish Government consultation** responses (detailed later).

There have been three petitions calling for a ban considered by the Assembly’s Petitions Committee:

- RSPCA Cymru submitted a **petition** in October 2015 with 7,700 signatures, calling for a ban on the use of wild animals in **all** circuses in Wales;
- Linda Joyce-Jones submitted a **petition** with 6,398 signatures, also calling for a ban on the use of wild animals in **all** circuses in Wales, which was first considered in January 2018; and
- Linda Joyce-Jones, Kirsty John and Jayne Dendle submitted a **petition** in September 2018, calling for a ban on the use of **all** animals in circuses and travelling **shows** in Wales. At the time of writing, this petition has gained 660 signatures and is still open.

In January 2018 a **Defra review** found that circuses regularly experience protests against their animal use whilst on tour.

RSPCA’s survey results (2016) (Table 2 of report) found that 10 out of 22 local authorities in Wales have enforced bans on animal use in circuses to differing extents.

Scale of the issue

There are currently no Welsh circuses with wild animals, but circuses from other countries do visit, and can legally use wild animals in their acts.

In England (but not Wales), circuses with wild animals require a licence under **The Welfare of Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (England) Regulations 2012** (see Section 2 of the briefing for further details).

Currently, two circuses are licensed under the English regulations to use wild animals, and they both regularly visit Wales. These are Circus Mondao and Peter Jolly's Circus. As of the end of 2017, the Defra **Post Implementation Review of The Welfare of Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (England) Regulations 2012** stated that the two licences covered a total of 19 wild animals, consisting of: six reindeer, four zebra, three camels, three racoons, a fox, a macaw, and a zebu.

This is a change from November 2013, when the UK Government **confirmed** that there were 28 licensed animals including (amongst other animals) six snakes, four tigers and two lions. Big cats have only recently stopped visiting Wales, with the **cancellation of Thomas Chipperfield's lions and tigers show** in Porthcawl in October 2015.

Reviews on animal welfare in circuses

Both the UK and Welsh Governments have commissioned reviews into wild animals in travelling circuses, with differing scopes and outcomes.

The **'Radford Report' (2007)** (PDF, 251KB) was carried out by the Circus Working Group (a mix of industry and animal welfare representatives). It was established to inform the UK Government of any scientific evidence relating to a potential ban under the **then-Animal Welfare Bill (now 2006 Act)**. The report considered evidence relating specifically to the transportation and housing needs of non-domesticated species. Although the authors identified that the present situation acted against the animals' interests, they found insufficient evidence that animals kept in travelling circuses were better or worse off than those in static environments. The report states:

...in the absence of compelling scientific evidence, any attempt to ban the use of an animal would fall foul of the principle of proportionality. Accordingly, it is proposed that further primary legislation would be required to have any realistic prospect of achieving a lawful ban.

The remit of the Radford Report did not include factors such as performing and training, leading the authors to speculate whether their inclusion would have resulted in a different outcome for animal welfare.

In contrast to this, the **'Harris Review' (2016)**, commissioned by the Welsh Government, drew a different conclusion. Professor Stephen Harris was commissioned to review the collective effect of all aspects of the travelling circus (and mobile zoo) lifestyle on wild animal welfare. The review covered environment, travelling and management practices. It found that the controlled environments (needed for portability, ease of handling, and compliance of the animals) led to 'extremely limited or non-existent' environmental enrichment. The review concludes that in these environments, the animals:

...do not achieve their optimal welfare requirements, as set out under the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*, and the evidence would therefore support a ban on using wild animals in travelling circuses and mobile zoos on animal welfare grounds.

Mobile Animal Exhibits (MAEs)

Mobile Animal Exhibits (MAEs) have also raised animal welfare and ethical concerns from stakeholders for many of the same reasons as travelling circuses. MAEs can display domestic and exotic animals, and include exotic pet displays, falconry and hawking displays, reindeer events and travelling circuses. MAEs are used for educational school visits, themed events, parties, weddings, and corporate functions.

As with travelling circuses, there is no standard licensing or registration scheme for all MAEs in Wales currently. Some may be registered under **The Performing Animals (Regulation) Act 1925** or licensed under the **Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976**, but neither require regular inspections of all wild animals kept.

In July 2017, the Welsh Government **consulted on MAEs**, asking for views on the proposed definition of MAEs: 'individuals, groups or commercial enterprises that travel to exhibit domestic and/or wild animals, for entertainment, therapy, educational and/or other purposes'. It also asked whether a licensing or registration scheme would be appropriate and sought views on:

- Exemptions/additional requirements for specific species, the number kept and the nature of activity;

- Evidence of the MAE's contribution to conservation and/or education; and
- Safeguarding against the spread of disease from animals to humans.

The consultation also included a question on banning the use of wild animals in circuses, with most respondents supporting a ban.

Since the consultation, a January 2019 **Welsh Government statement** details that it has held workshops with stakeholders to gather feedback on the proposed licensing scheme for MAEs, and plans to put this to public consultation sometime in 2019.

2 Current Legislation

Wales

There are various laws and regulations that apply to travelling circuses in Wales, but these are not circus specific and do not prohibit animal use. These include:

Animal Welfare Act 2006 – covers the welfare of all vertebrate animals. Wild animals are covered in **Section 9** under the Duty of Care of a person responsible.

The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (Wales) Order 2007 – the implementation of the **Council Regulation (EC) 1/2005** which applies to the welfare of animals in transport in EU Member States. The Harris review states that animals in travelling circuses are not within the scope of the Order, except in regard to Article 4 which covers basic provisions on protecting animals in transit. This is due to housing in travelling circuses seeming to be permanent and not temporary travelling accommodation.

Performing Animals (Regulation) Act 1925 – includes provisions that animal circuses must register with local authorities.

The Animals and Animal Products (Import and Export) (Wales) (Laboratories, Circuses and Avian Quarantine) Regulations 2007 – which implements **Commission Regulation 1739/2005** and details requirements for moving circus animals between EU Member States.

Developments across the UK and wider Europe

In a **policy paper** accompanying a draft Wild Animals in Circuses Bill (2013), the UK Government sought the views of the Devolved Administrations on the UK Government legislating on their behalf. The general response from all Devolved Administrations was that they would need time to consider whether to introduce a ban before proceeding. However, since then each of the Devolved Administrations has been developing their own measures. In February 2016, at the time the Welsh Government commissioned the Harris Review, the then-Deputy Minister of Farming and Food in Wales, Rebecca Evans AM, stated:

Despite discussions at official and Ministerial level, the UK Government has consistently failed to implement plans to implement a ban on an England and Wales basis.

The following sections set out the current state of play across the UK countries.

UK Government

In December 2009, the UK Government launched a **consultation** (PDF, 105KB) on safeguarding the welfare of wild animals in circuses, and asked respondents to consider options for the regulation/banning of circuses.

Of the 10,576 respondents, 94.5% thought that a complete ban was the best option.

The UK Government chose to seek legal advice around the introduction of a ban due to **opposition to a ban in Austria** being taken to the European Commission. The European Circus Association complained that the Austrian ban was contrary to the free movement of services in the EU, and that it was discriminatory to circuses. After starting infringement proceedings against Austria, the Commission eventually dropped the case on the grounds that that national authorities were best placed to decide on matters of animal welfare. It stressed that every Member State has the right to restrict the free movement of services for overriding reasons of general interest, such as animal welfare.

Following legal advice, the UK Government **stated** that:

The very strong legal advice that we have received, which is consistent with the case being prepared against Austria, is that a total ban on wild animals in circuses might well be seen as disproportionate action under the European Union services directive and under our own Human Rights Act 1998.

It stated that pursuing a ban 'in the light of that legal advice would have been irresponsible'. Instead, in May 2011, the UK Government **announced** its plans to introduce a licensing scheme under the **Animal Welfare Act 2006**.

In March 2012, the UK Government launched a **public consultation** on a licensing regime. Its position on a ban had changed and it confirmed that primary legislation for a ban would be brought forward as soon as parliamentary time allowed.

The Welfare of Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (England) Regulations 2012

came into force in January 2013. 'Sunset provisions' in the regulations mean that they will expire in January 2020. The regulations must be reviewed five years after coming into force. The objective of the regulations was to:

...introduce an effective licensing scheme to promote and ensure high standards of welfare for all wild animals used in travelling circuses in England..The Regulations require that all travelling circuses in England wishing to use wild animal acts must be licensed by Defra, and adhere to strict welfare standards.

These welfare standards include: having care plans in place for animals; keeping records; notifying of tour itinerary; regular veterinary inspections; and specific welfare requirements for their training, performing, transport and environment.

Following the Radford Report's conclusions that there was insufficient evidence to introduce a ban on animal welfare grounds, the UK Government decided to pursue a ban on **ethical grounds**. A **draft Bill** was published in April 2013 for pre-legislative scrutiny by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee. The Committee **suggested a range of amendments to the Bill**, for example, the addition of a provisional list of wild animals, and for the powers of inspection to be extended to police constables. The UK Government **rejected** these recommendations. The Bill did not progress.

In February 2016, the UK Government **stated** again that a ban would be introduced when parliamentary time allowed. Defra published the **Post Implementation Review of The Welfare of Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (England) Regulations 2012** in January 2018, confirming that a ban will be enacted prior to January 2020 in England.

Since 2016 there have been two Private Members' Bills (**2016-17** and **2017-19**) aiming to ban wild animals in circuses (which have not progressed through Parliament).

The UK Government introduced the '**Wild Animals in Circuses (No.2) Bill 2017-19**' on 30 April 2019. The Bill has had its second reading in the House of Commons, and report stage took place on 4 June 2019.

The **Wild Animals in Circuses (No.2) Bill 2017-19** sets out the offence as follows:

- Prohibition on use of wild animals in travelling circuses in England
- (1) A circus operator may not use a wild animal in a travelling circus in England.
 - (2) For the purposes of this section, a circus operator uses a wild animal in a travelling circus if the animal performs or is exhibited as part of the circus.
 - (3) A circus operator who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine.

In this Bill, an animal is considered a 'wild animal' if it is not commonly domesticated in **Great Britain**. The powers of inspections are not extended to constables.

Scottish Government

In May 2017, Scotland became the first country in the UK to introduce legislation to ban travelling wild animal circuses; the **Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Scotland) Bill**. This followed a **public consultation** in 2014 which found that 98% of respondents were in support of a ban on the use of wild animals for performance in travelling circuses. The consultation also found that 96.4% of the respondents supported a ban on the use of wild animals for exhibition (without performing) in travelling circuses in Scotland. The Bill received Royal Assent on 24 January 2018.

The **Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Scotland) Act 2018** makes it an offence for an operator to use, or cause, or permit another person to use, wild animals in travelling circuses. The offence only applies if an animal is transported from one place to another and is used in a travelling circus. However, an animal does not need to be travelling at the time for the offence to apply, neither does it matter if the transport of the animal is with or part of the travelling circus.

In this Act, the term 'used' relates to animals that perform, are displayed or are exhibited. A 'wild animal' is any animal, other than those domesticated in the **British Islands**. The power of enforcement is given to inspectors and constables. Ministers have the power to specify what is classed as a wild animal or travelling circus through Regulations.

Northern Ireland Executive

Northern Ireland has not had a sitting Assembly since March 2017, so primary legislation cannot be passed through the Northern Ireland Assembly at the time of writing. The Northern Ireland Executive has made no firm commitments to introducing a ban, but **has stated** it is investigating an all-island approach, implemented through a code of practice.

Government of Ireland

In January 2018, the Republic of Ireland introduced the **Circuses (Prohibition on Use of Wild Animals) Regulations 2017**, under the **Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013**, which prohibit the use of wild animals in circuses.

Other EU Member States

Several EU Member States regulate the use of wild animals in circuses through a variety of ethical and animal welfare laws. For example, a **report on Wild Animals in EU Circuses** by Euro Group for Animals found that Government Decree 222/2007 (VIII.29) in Hungary states that no wild animal can be kept or displayed in a circus menagerie, for reasons of animal protection and wildlife conservation. According to the Euro Group for Animals report, as of June 2017, 11 EU Member States had banned the use of wild animals in circuses. However, most EU Member States do not have specific laws for the protection of animals in circuses, generally they are covered in other animal welfare and protection-related Acts. For example, Greece has Articles in Law No. 4039, 2012, which mean that no animal can be used in any kind of entertainment show, event, or activity. As in England and Wales, many local areas in EU Member States have taken their own steps to ban the practice.

Both the **Harris Review** (up to date as of 2016) and Euro Group for Animals **report on Wild Animals in EU Circuses** (PDF, 769KB) (up to date as of 2017), give good overviews of the legislation in the EU covering wild animals in circuses.

3 Draft Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Wales) Bill

Overview of the draft Bill

The **draft Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Wales) Bill** was published on 1 October 2018. If enacted as drafted, it would introduce a ban on ethical grounds. It states:

A person who is an operator of a travelling circus commits an offence if the person uses, or causes or permits another person to use, a wild animal in the travelling circus in Wales.

An explanation of the terminology used in the draft Bill can be found in Box 2. The draft Bill proposes to fine convicted offenders. It sets out enforcement powers by inspectors to enter any premises, other than dwellings, by showing identification, or dwellings by showing a warrant, to complete an inspection. The inspector has powers to seize anything, other than an animal, that can be used as evidence of an offence, and, with the accompaniment of a constable, to stop and search vehicles. The draft Bill proposes that regulations may be made by the Welsh Ministers, for example, to specify what is classified as a wild animal, or regarded as a travelling circus. This is unlike the proposed UK Government Bill, in which there is no definition of a travelling circus.

Box 2. Terminology Used in the Draft Bill

“Use” – A wild animal is ‘used’ if the animal performs or is exhibited.

“Operator” – The owner of the travelling circus, a person other than the owner with overall responsibility for the operation of the travelling circus, or if neither are in the United Kingdom, the person with overall responsibility for the operation of the circus.

“Animal” – Has the meaning given by the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

“Wild animal” – An animal of any kind that is not commonly domesticated in the British Islands. An animal is domesticated if the behaviour, life cycle or physiology of animals of that kind have been altered as a result of the breeding or living conditions of multiple generations of animals of that kind being under human control. Wild animals can also be specified by regulations made by Welsh Ministers.

“Travelling circus” – A circus which travels from one place to another for the purpose of providing entertainment at those places, including those where there are periods during which it does not travel. This does not include a circus that travels to relocate to a new fixed base. Regulations made by the Welsh Ministers can amend what is and is not considered a travelling circus.

“Power of entry” – Allowing an inspector to enter premises other than dwellings with identification, or to enter dwellings with a warrant.

“Inspector” – A person appointed by a county council or county borough council in Wales or by the Welsh Ministers.

Consultation on the draft Bill proposals

From 1 October to 28 November 2018, the Welsh Government launched an eight week **consultation on its draft Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Wales) Bill**. The Welsh Government expressed a desire to hear the views of young people and children, stating:

Animals should not be objectified or perceived as commodities for our entertainment, rather as sentient beings with their own unique sets of needs. I want children and young people in Wales to develop respectful and responsible attitudes towards animals...

The **summary of responses** sets out the remit of the questions, clarifying that:

The consultation did not seek views on whether the use of all animals in circuses should be banned, or whether the use of animals in any other form of entertainment should be banned.

An overview of the consultation responses can be found in Box 3.

Box 3. Consultation Responses to the Proposed Bill

97% support the proposal to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses.

97% agree the ban will have a positive impact on the attitudes of young people towards animals.

60% think the ban will impact the circus industry, most think in a positive way.

88% agree to the proposed offence.

90% agree the offence should apply to the operator.

90% agree with the definition of ‘operator’.

83% agree with the definition of ‘wild animal’.

91% agree with the definition of ‘travelling circus’.

57% agree the Welsh Ministers should have powers to make regulations on what is and is not a wild animal.

78% agree the Welsh Ministers should have powers to make regulations on what is and is not regarded as a travelling circus.

78% agree with the enforcement provisions.

Almost all think the ban will have no effect on the Welsh language.

Specific concerns about the draft Bill proposals

Although many of the respondents agreed with the need for a ban, there were concerns over the wording, unintended consequences and ethical standing of the draft Bill.

Ethical concerns

Those in favour of the ban stated that it will teach children to respect animals as sentient beings. Some respondents felt wild animal circuses ‘desensitise’ children, with RSPCA Cymru claiming the ‘inappropriate tricks’ do not educate or foster respect. Those opposing the ban believe that the behaviours in training are no different to what the animal would partake in the wild. They state that allowing children and adults to learn about the animals increases awareness of conservation efforts of their counterparts in the wild.

Concerns with draft Bill’s definitions and scope

Scope of the draft Bill

The most divided of responses were those relating to the wording of the draft Bill. Many agreed with the general offence and hoped strict penalties would be effective. However, it was highlighted that the draft Bill’s focus is narrower than that of the English 2012 Regulations. The offence outlined in the draft Bill only relates to wild animals that perform or are exhibited, as opposed to the English 2012 Regulations which apply to all wild animals.

Many respondents called for an all-animal ban, suggesting the welfare concerns of wild animals in these conditions would apply to the domestic animals. Similarly, some argued that if the ban is on ‘ethical grounds’, these should apply to all animals.

Some suggested the ban should cover both static and travelling circuses.

Those opposing the offence said that people had no right to dictate to the owners about their animals, and that their specialist knowledge from working closely with them and the current regulations were sufficient. Others believed the draft Bill was discriminatory against circuses citing other industries such as racehorses and donkeys on the beach.

Definition of ‘operator’

The description and application of the offence to the ‘operator’ was largely agreed with. Some suggested the offence should be applied to the person who owns, trains, or uses the animal as well as the operator of the circus. Others wanted more clarity on what an operator is, for example, do managers, ring masters and circus owners come under this definition?

Definition of ‘wild animal’

Many also agreed with the definition of ‘wild animal’. However, some called for the definition of ‘wild animal’ to align with the *Zoo Licensing Act 1981* to avoid any loopholes and inconsistencies (e.g. animals considered wild in a zoo and domestic in a circus). Some respondents were concerned that circuses may claim their animals are domesticated or captive bred, with RSPCA Cymru suggesting the removal of the section in the definition on domestic animals (see Box 2), stating this can be open to interpretation.

Definition of ‘travelling circus’

In regard to the definition of ‘travelling circus’, some respondents thought it too vague. There were concerns that travelling circuses could rebrand themselves as MAEs or claim that they do not travel. Some called for specific timescales for movement to define a circus as travelling or not. Some felt that it is ‘impossible’ to define what a circus is.

Powers of Ministers

The consultation document asked respondents to consider the power of Ministers to specify and amend some of the definitions. These were some of the most divisive questions. Some were in favour of exemption/inclusion lists for wild animals stating it will avoid loopholes (e.g. by inclusion of hybrid or semi-domesticated animals). Others thought it could result in loopholes if the list is not exhaustive. There was concern that the wording was unclear, with worries that captive animals in the film and TV industries may be included in these lists.

This division in opinion was also true for exclusion/inclusion lists defining the 'type of undertaking, act, or entertainment'. If other industries were listed, beyond the traditional travelling circus, it was felt that there was opportunity for the circuses to rebrand themselves by looking for loopholes. Conversely, some felt a comprehensive list would prevent this.

Enforcement

Some respondents wanted enforcement to include seizure of animals and for powers to be extended to constables, and not just to appointed inspectors.

Welfare of the circus animals following a ban

Most respondents supported the ban, but some were concerned about the future of the animals following the ban. Some worried the animals may still travel with the circuses, even though they are not performing (see the definition of 'Use' in Box 3). Others expressed the opinion that animals carrying no economic value to the circuses could be transferred to sanctuaries, which may provide a worse life than the travelling circus environment.

Opponents of the ban stated that circuses with animals are already well regulated, with high standards of animal welfare, and that they provide safe breeding programmes for the animals. Others stated that it could be considered an 'act of cruelty' to take an animal from its normal environment, keeper/trainer, and regime.

Industry concerns

Around 60% of respondents thought the draft Bill would affect the circus industry, mostly in a positive way. Many thought there would be a reduction in animal care costs and transportation time and costs, increased visits from the public, and the ability to perform without protestors. Some also thought it would be beneficial for the local community, as local acts would be needed to replace the animal acts.

However, there were worries that local communities may lose rental income if less land is required for keeping animals. Concerns were also raised relating to a drop in ticket sales, if the animals were not present. Others felt that replacement acts would be more costly.

Some representatives of the TV and film industry commented on the effect that banning wild animals in travelling circuses could have on their productions. Equity (a union for creative performers) stated:

Other forms of entertainment such as film and television often use animals from circuses and their trainers for their productions and there is a risk that such animals and skilled workers would no longer be available to these industries.

Current status of the Bill

The Welsh Government's Wild Animals and Circuses (Wales) Bill is expected to be formally introduced to the Assembly shortly. The Minister is due to make a statement on the Bill on the 9 July 2019.

Senedd Research will produce a Bill summary at the end of Stage 1 scrutiny in autumn 2019.