

Council 26th February 2024

Item 7 refers

Petitions submitted by the Public.

Mandate Public Display of Animal Activity License Star Ratings by Councils and Businesses **Submitted by Victoria Owen**

On 20th July 2023, our beloved dog Bella was left at a doggy daycare & home boarding setting. Tragically, we never saw her again. We were told that the two safety barriers failed and Bella escaped the property. She was chased up the road where she was then hit by a car; the incident was fatal, she did not survive.

The investigating authority formally identified several matters which, as per current guidelines, constitute minor failings (which led to Bella's death). Consequently, they then reduced the business' Animal Activity rating to one star.

Despite being a DEFRA recommendation, crucial information about Animal Activity star ratings is often not publicly available on council websites, with the majority of councils directing the public to email them to request information. This seems to be an unnecessary hurdle and lacks transparency.

A licensing certificate shows the star rating yet more often than not, owners have no knowledge that the system exists. This is not the owners fault, this is because the criteria and results are not talked about enough!

I propose legislation that requires councils to display these ratings on public-facing platforms transparently. Furthermore, businesses should be mandated to visibly display their star rating on their doors ,just like with food hygiene ratings.

**** It's time to get the 'Paws on the Doors'**

If this change were to happen, it would have a direct and positive impact on licensed establishments which are:

- a) selling animals as pets
- b) providing or arranging for the provision of boarding for cats or dogs (including the provision of boarding for cats; kennels for dogs; home boarding for dogs; or day care for dogs)
- c) hiring out horses

As a result of the proposed change, I believe that the quality of care which the animals receive will improve dramatically as businesses would be more stringent in ensuring both basic and higher standards are met. These changes would also support the public in making informed decisions about which service to trust with their beloved pets.

Dogs and other animals are more than just pets; they bring joy, companionship, and positive impacts to our lives. They deserve better treatment and protection under the law. Unfortunately, my story is not unique - countless pet owners have faced difficult situations, often due to lack of transparency about animal welfare standards in businesses.

In 2019 alone, there were over 1 million registered complaints about animal welfare in England and Wales (RSPCA). Yet many owners remain unaware of the licensing star ratings awarded to businesses they trust with their pets' care. Every pet deserves safe care in licensed establishments with transparent ratings.

This incident has broken our hearts in a way we did not believe was possible. The least we can do is to try to bring about positive change from such tragic circumstances.

Please sign this petition if you believe in transparency in animal welfare standards across all councils and businesses- because our pets are our family too and deserve nothing but the best.

<https://www.change.org/p/mandate-public-display-of-animal-activity-license-star-ratings-by-councils-and-businesses>