Animal charity thanks MPs for showing support for domestic abuse victims who have pets

Thursday 24 October, 2024

[London, UK] – On October 22nd, MPs were invited to attend a charity event in Parliament to show support for those affected by domestic abuse where pets are involved.

The drop-in event was hosted by Gloucestershire-based animal welfare charity, Naturewatch Foundation, and the All-party Parliamentary Dog Advisory Welfare Group (APDAWG). Attending MPs were:

- Sadik Al-Hassan, Labour
- Jess Asato, Labour
- Alex Brewer, Liberal Democrats
- Jess Brown-Fuller, Liberal Democrats
- Mims Davies, Conservative
- Marsha de Cordova, Labour
- Rosie Duffield, Independent
- Cat Eccles, Labour
- Will Forster, Liberal Democrats
- Sir Roger Gale, Conservative
- Marie Goldman, Liberal Democrats
- Claire Hanna, Social Democratic and Labour Party
- Rebecca Harris, Conservative
- Tom Hayes, Labour
- Ruth Jones, Labour
- Alex Mayer, Labour
- Caroline Nokes, Conservative
- Joshua Reynolds, Liberal Democrats
- Greg Stafford, Conservative
- Robin Swann, Ulster Unionist Party
- Caroline Voaden, Liberal Democrats

Naturewatch Foundation highlighted that pets are often used to coercively control victims of domestic abuse. Perpetrators threaten to torture or kill animals in a bid to manipulate their victim, who often delay leaving to protect their pet. This increases the danger and adds pressure to already-stretched safeguarding resources.

As part of their ‘Protect Animals. Protect People’ campaign, the charity recommends:

- Adding animal abuse awareness to the domestic abuse prevention toolkit, and
- Increasing support for the animal victims of domestic abuse.

The campaign was launched to complement Naturewatch Foundation’s work aimed at breaking ‘the link’ between animal and domestic abuse. It formed the basis of their existing projects across Eastern Europe and, in June 2023, the charity extended the campaign into England and Wales. Since the launch, 95% of police websites across England and Wales have been changed and now offer advice to survivors of abuse where animals are involved. Police policies and training programmes have also been adapted.

Naturewatch Foundation’s campaign manager, Mark Randell, said: “We sincerely thank the MPs who attended our event and backed our campaign to improve support for domestic abuse victims who have pets. It was really encouraging to see cross-party concern regarding the link between animal abuse and domestic abuse.

“Domestic abuse makes up 18% of ALL recorded crime*. Abusers understand the special bond that exists between a person and a pet. Targeting that relationship is a way they can coercively control, in the same way that they cut their victim off from their family, friends, and financial independence. Tackling animal abuse should form part of any strategy to tackle domestic abuse, and a multi-agency approach is crucial. By ‘breaking the link’ and protecting animals, we can make people safer too.”

For more information on Naturewatch Foundation’s ‘Protect Animals. Protect People’ campaign, please visit their website – naturewatch.org

Media:



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Naturewatch Foundation :: APDAWG :: Rosie Duffield :: Domestic Abuse :: Coercive Control :: Labour Party :: Conservative Party :: Liberal Democrats :: SDLP :: UUP ::

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If you are affected by the issues covered in this article, there is help available:

- National Domestic Abuse Helpline - 0808 2000 247
- Dogs Trust Freedom - 0800 298 9199
- Cats Protection Lifeline - 03000 121212
- Refuge4Pets - 0300 4000 121
- Endeavour project - 01204 394 842

*Source: NPCC

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