



ADDRESSING THE DEFICIT

A MANIFESTO TO ENHANCE ANIMAL WELFARE IN NORTHERN IRELAND



USPCA

PROTECTING ALL ANIMALS ESTD 1836



INTRODUCTION

The animals around us play an essential role in our society and natural environment, enhancing our quality of life, but at the same time can be taken for granted or worse still, abused. Within an advanced society, protections are put in place to ensure abuse does not take place. It is important that these protections are kept under review and updated to keep pace with economic and societal changes.



Manifesto



“A SOCIETY WHERE ALL ANIMALS ARE RESPECTED
AND FREE OF UNNECESSARY SUFFERING.”

Vision



IN RECENT YEARS, NORTHERN IRELAND HAS FALLEN BEHIND GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND IN LEGISLATING TO ENHANCE ANIMAL WELFARE; THE USPCA WISHES TO ENGAGE WITH POLICY MAKERS AND THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY TO INFORM AND INFLUENCE THE DEBATE ON A RANGE OF PRIORITY ANIMAL WELFARE ISSUES WHICH INCLUDE:

Seeking greater controls on selling puppies on-line in order to tackle the illegal and cruel puppy dealers. **Page 6**



Recognising developments in the business of animals - updating licencing regulations to ensure appropriate welfare standards at animal shelters, grooming parlours, doggy day care and mobile animal exhibits. **Page 8**



The introduction of a Register of Banned Animal Welfare Offenders – to reduce reoffending by those banned from keeping animals. **Page 7**



The introduction of Finn's law to Northern Ireland – providing appropriate protection to service animals. **Page 9**



THESE EIGHT PIECES OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION PROVIDE REACHABLE STEPPING STONES TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MANIFESTO VISION - A SOCIETY WHERE ALL ANIMALS ARE RESPECTED AND FREE OF UNNECESSARY SUFFERING.

The introduction of Lucy's law to Northern Ireland – banning the 3rd party sale of puppies under 6 months old to tackle the rogue puppy traders. **Page 10**



Banning hunting with dogs – to end the cruelty inflicted on defenceless wildlife. **Page 12**



Banning wild animals in circuses – to protect these special animals from needless abuse. **Page 11**



Compulsory microchipping of cats – to enhance traceability and reunite lost or stolen animals with their owners. **Page 13**



The USPCA also recognises the eradication of bovine TB as a priority animal welfare issue and suggests a multi layered response which would include enhanced cattle testing, improved bio security on farms, badger vaccination and cattle vaccination. **Page 14**

ON-LINE SALES OF PUPS

Greater controls are required on selling puppies on-line, to tackle the illegal puppy dealers.

Unregulated on-line advertising of pets for sale, provides easy access to an unsuspecting public for the illegal Puppy Farmer/Dealer.

Puppies are exchanged for hundreds of pounds out of car boots in car parks and laybys all over the country with little or no thought given to how they were bred, what vaccinations they have received or the consequences of buying a sick dog that could cost thousands of pounds in vet bills if they survive the first few months of life.

At our Animal Hospital in Newry our Vets see too many sad cases of distraught families with puppies they love suffering from disease or genetic abnormalities that cannot be cured as a result of these illegal puppy dealers.

The illegal puppy farmer/dealer exploits the unregulated online sales platforms to gain access to the unsuspecting public; often posing as a caring hobby breeder.

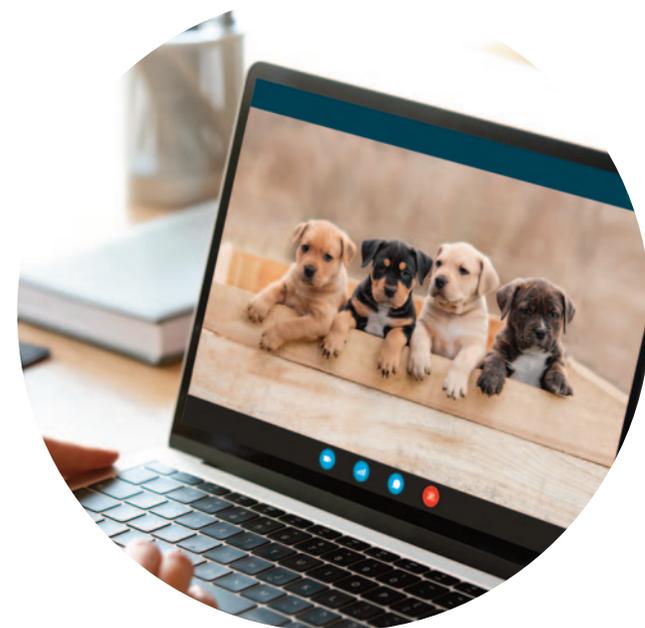
Legislation should require any person who sells or supplies more than 5 pet animals in a calendar year to register with their local council. Sellers of pet animals on line should then be required to include their registration number on any advertisement.

Such legislation would provide full traceability and thereby hold to account the illegal puppy farmer and rogue trader, delivering a serious blow to this cruel trade and significantly improving the welfare of puppies being offered for sale.

Regulation such as this was brought into law in RoI in February 2020.

THE USPCA CALLS FOR

Compulsory registration of breeders and display of registration numbers on adverts: to provide traceability of rogue traders.



REGISTER OF BANNED ANIMAL CRUELTY OFFENDERS

The introduction of a Register of Persons Banned from Keeping Animals would help Stop reoffending.

In 2019 the USPCA launched a campaign that aims to establish an accessible register of convicted animal abusers banned by the Courts from the keeping of animals. Such a resource would assist responsible pet retailers and re-homing charities when verifying the suitability of those wishing to acquire companion animals.

Northern Ireland's laws in regard to animal cruelty have been strengthened in recent years and the USPCA welcomes this development including bans being imposed on convicted offenders, however, such bans are relatively worthless in the absence of a Register of Banned Offenders.

Currently, offenders can be banned by the Courts one week and the following week acquire animals again. Recent court cases are evidence of this. It is the

view of this Charity that the compilation of a central database, a Banned Offender Register similar to the Sex Offender Register, which can be accessed by reputable pet retailers and animal rehoming charities, would address this serious issue.

In the absence of such a Register, it is vital that the Animal Welfare Officers of local councils, who have a statutory responsibility for the welfare of companion animals and DAERA with regard farm animals, regularly visit those banned from keeping animals in order to provide the public with assurance that bans are actually being complied with.

**THE USPCA
CALLS FOR**

The Introduction of a Banned Offenders Register: To reduce reoffending by those banned from keeping animals.



UPDATING ANIMAL WELFARE LICENCING REGULATIONS

Recognising the growth in new types of animal businesses which are currently unregulated.

Northern Ireland has seen a growth in new types of animal businesses such as shelters/sanctuaries, mobile animal exhibits, doggy day care and pet grooming parlours.

Shelters or 'sanctuaries' do invaluable work to rehabilitate and rehome animals, but a lack of safeguards exist to protect the welfare of animals based in such settings. As it stands, anybody can establish a sanctuary without being inspected or putting any welfare standards in place.

Animal exhibits including mobile zoos/animal encounters often provide enjoyable experiences at festivals or other community celebration, however, there is a risk that exhibition and all this entails has a detrimental impact on the welfare of the participating animals and they, therefore, deserve protection and safeguards.

The demands of a busy working life and the continuing desire to benefit from the companionship of a dog or cat has driven the growth in doggy day care establishments and pet grooming parlours. While recognising the important service provided by these establishments, the USPCA believes licencing is required to ensure certain standards are adhered to, and to offer assurances to the public that their pet's health and welfare will not be compromised.

**THE USPCA
CALLS FOR**

Minimum standards regulations for animal shelters, mobile exhibits, doggy day care and groomers: to ensure animal health and welfare is not compromised.



FINNS LAW

Providing enhanced Protection for Service Animals

In April 2019, The Animal Welfare (Service Animals) Bill, also known as Finn's Law, was introduced by Sir Oliver Heald MP to make it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to service animals in England and Wales.

The campaign for the bill followed the stabbing of a police dog, called Finn, whilst on duty in 2016.

The law will afford service animals, be they canine or equine, protection which was denied to them in the past, when causing death or injury to such an animal was prosecuted as 'criminal damage', the equivalent of breaking a window or damaging a police radio.

Service animals in Northern Ireland are currently deprived of the protection which is now available to their counterparts in the rest of the UK. The USPCA was pleased that on 10th February 2020 the Northern Ireland Assembly approved a motion to introduce Finn's law in Northern Ireland.

We would now encourage the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and his officials to act quickly in bringing forward the necessary public consultation and draft legislation, recognising there is a short window of opportunity as there is only two years left in the current Assembly term.

**THE USPCA
CALLS FOR**

The introduction of Finn's Law to Northern Ireland: to provide appropriate protection for service animals.



LUCY'S LAW

The introduction of a Ban on 3rd party sale of puppies under 6 months old.

Lucy's Law is named after the Cavalier King George Spaniel who suffered multiple health conditions including a curved spine, bald patches, epilepsy, and infused hips as a result of spending most of her life kept in a cage and used to breed litters of puppies at a Welsh puppy farm.

In 2013 Lucy was rescued by Lisa Garner, who used social media to spread the word about the conditions in puppy farms. Lucy's Law campaign was launched in her memory, and new legislation has become law in England this year, 2020.

The USPCA supports the local introduction of such legislation which affords young and vulnerable companion animal's protection from abuse by criminals.

The USPCA is an active member of Operation Delphin, working with our partners in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland to disrupt the illegal trafficking of pups through this jurisdiction and into the GB market. By banning third party sales of young pups, 'Lucy's Law' would impact significantly on the retail activities at the end of a supply chain that brings misery and expense to pets and people.

THE USPCA CALLS FOR

The introduction of Lucy's Law to Northern Ireland: to ban the third party sale of pups and help tackle the heart-breaking rogue traders in dogs and cats.



WILD ANIMALS IN CIRCUSES

We have major concerns for the welfare and unnecessary suffering of animals who currently live the circus life.

The USPCA calls for a ban on the use of wild animals in circuses in Northern Ireland. The use of wild animals for entertainment purposes is unacceptable and unnatural. These animals experience regular transportation in cramped conditions, they are forced to train and then forced to perform in front of large and noisy crowds.

The use of wild animals in circuses is banned in England, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. A ban is due to come into effect in late 2020 for Wales however Northern Ireland is falling behind. Animals in Northern Ireland should be 'afforded protection from needless abuse' the same protection as their counterparts in Great Britain and Ireland.

**THE USPCA
CALLS FOR**

The Banning of Wild Animals in Circuses: to protect these special animals from needless abuse.



HUNTING WITH DOGS

Killing defenceless wild animals with dogs is sadistic and cruel in a compassionate society.

Northern Ireland remains the only part of the UK where hunting with dogs remains legal. England, Wales and Scotland already have bans in place and Northern Ireland is lagging behind. Hunting does not have public support; most people are either opposed to or ambivalent towards this so called sport.

The arguments against a ban are based on tradition or pest control. It is the USPCA view that the cruelty involved far outweighs any supposed benefit. Its legality also provides cover for those engaged in the illegal killing of badgers, euphemistically known as badger baiting.

Hunting dogs will kill any companion animals they come across and hunt members simply shrug off these incidents as collateral casualties. Tame deer are

'carted' into the countryside and released in order to be persecuted by dogs, an activity that is already illegal. The farming community is surviving in economically challenging times; disease control in animals and crops is a priority. Many farmers, acutely aware of the need for bio-security, are less than happy at the hunt crossing their land and have banned them from their land.

It is a priority to get a Hunting Bill before the Assembly and establish the depth of support for a ban that would bring us into line with our UK counterparts.

THE USPCA CALLS FOR

The Banning of Hunting with Dogs:
to end the cruelty inflicted on
defenseless wildlife.



COMPULSORY MICROCHIPPING OF OWNED CATS

These wandering free spirits can be lost to their owners through tragic accident or theft.

Cats roam by their nature, and a microchip increases the chances of a lost or injured cat being reunited with their owner. Similarly, if a cat has been involved in a road traffic accident, a microchip allows the relevant local authorities to inform the owner, helping to prevent further distress for those involved. We acknowledge there would be numerous challenges to the enforcement of such a law, and what cats it could cover effectively, for example, the difficulty represented by feral cats. However, we believe microchipping of owned cats would have significant public benefit.

**THE USPCA
CALLS FOR**

Compulsory microchipping of owned cats:
to enhance traceability and help reunite lost or stolen animals with their owners.



BADGERS & BOVINE TB

The indiscriminate culling of badgers, a protected species, cannot be justified.

The USPCA does not support the culling of healthy badgers to tackle Bovine tuberculosis and calls for a bovine TB strategy built on robust evidence and not assumptions or prejudice. We would remind everyone that badgers remain a protected species and that willfully or recklessly harming badgers or their setts is a criminal offence.

The USPCA recognises the trauma and suffering caused at a basic human level on farms affected by bovine TB not to mention the cost – £40m per year spent in tackling the disease and so Northern Ireland needs a new but more importantly – an effective strategy to eradicate the disease.

The debate around a badger cull is almost a side show in terms of meaningfully addressing the problem of the disease. There are bigger and more impactful issues to be looked at such as the inadequacy of the current testing regime, which is leaving undetected infectious animals on farms, leading to a continuous spiral of further infection. That is what has to be addressed.

Badgers only live for 3-5 years so vaccination would quickly break the population transmission cycle. This would be a much more progressive, humane and effective approach. We believe that this approach, combined with enhanced cattle testing, could be the basis of an effective and acceptable strategy to reduce the prevalence of bovine TB in both cattle and badgers.

A recent collaborative project at Gatcombe Farm in Devon has demonstrated that bovine TB can be eradicated in a herd without resorting to badger culling. Dick Sibley, a private vet, has been pioneering enhanced testing using the novel Actiphage test. The herd in question is now clear of TB and this approach is being adopted by farmers in Wales.

Actiphage is already licensed for use in England and Wales and the USPCA would urge DAERA to make this available to farmers in Northern Ireland to address the reservoir of infection in herds currently undetected by existing tests.

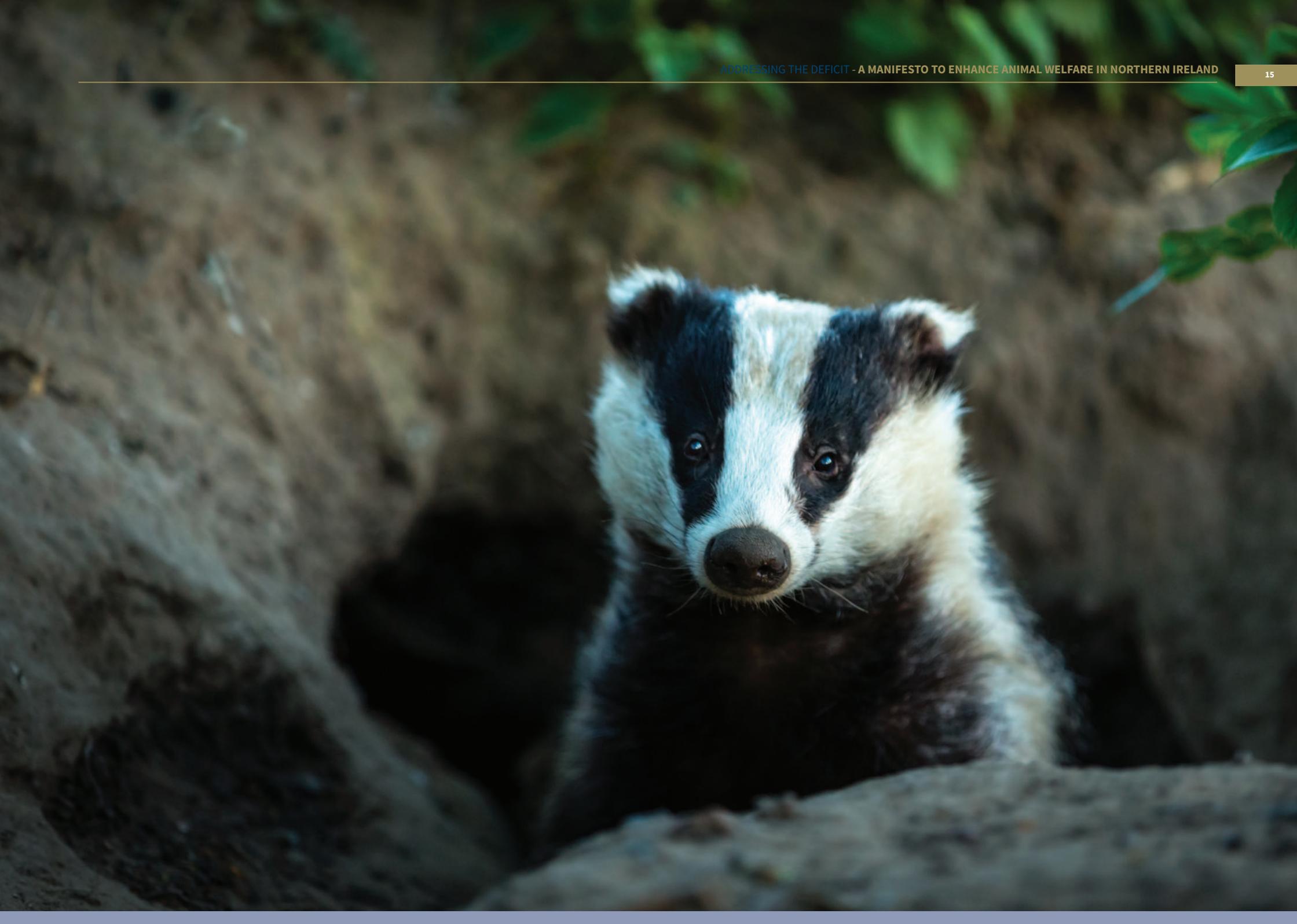
THE USPCA CALLS FOR

Enhanced Cattle Testing: To tackle the undetected reservoir of the disease in infected herds.

Improved Biosecurity: All possible measures should be pursued to prevent disease transmission on-farm.

Badger Vaccination: Support the use of injectable badger BCG vaccine.

Cattle Vaccination: Support the introduction of vaccinating cattle as part of the eradication strategy.





Veterinary Services

Dedicated to the relief of animal suffering. Subsidised services for pet owners on low income. Almost 6000 cases treated annually.



Social Rehoming

Helping to find a new caring owner where an individual is no longer able to look after their companion animal because of changed circumstances such as a family crisis. Support given to almost 300 cases each year.



Animal Cruelty Investigations

Uncovering and exposing criminal cruelty such as puppy trafficking and badger baiting.

USPCA Services



Pet Food Parcels

Providing pet food parcels to food banks across Northern Ireland, ensuring continued companionship from and good health for the family pet despite financial adversity. Over 4000 parcels distributed annually.



Wildlife Rescues

Rescuing and treating injured wildlife before releasing them back to their native habitat. Almost 1000 animals rescued each year.



Schools Programme

Promoting responsible pet ownership and an appreciation of our native wildlife in 40 schools across Northern Ireland annually.

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Unit 5/6 Carnbane Industrial Estate
Newry BT35 6QH

NI Charity Number. NIC102755.

