

1. Framework ownership

- Framework name: Animal Health and Welfare Framework
- Responsible portfolio Minister: Mairi Gougeon, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands
- Framework lead policy team: Paul McNulty
- Committees that the framework is being actively shared with:
 - Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee
 - Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee (for awareness)
 - Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee (for wider Frameworks programme interests)

2. Points for the Parliamentary Committees to note

a. Procedural

Date of ministerial sign-off of the provisional framework: The published version of the provisional framework was agreed by UK portfolio Ministers in January 2021.

b. Content

- Purpose of the framework:

The main objective of Animal Health and Welfare legislation is to:

- protect and uphold animal health and welfare standards
- protect public health from animal-related diseases
- prevent diseases entering the EU and UK
- enable trade in animal commodities, including pets
- assure the safety, quality and efficacy of veterinary medicines
- control diseases both endemic and exotic
- undertake surveillance for disease
- protect aquatic animal health
- protect bee health
- ensure animal welfare including on-farm, during transit, slaughter and at markets

The Animal Health and Welfare (AHW) Framework puts in place shared ways of working between Scotland, England, NI and Wales, and their arms' length bodies, to drive forward common approaches to AHW law and policy.

AHW policy is mostly devolved in legislative terms, including powers to control the movement of animals and products of animal origin. There are limited exceptions to this, including any trade in endangered species, procedures on live animals for scientific or educational purposes and veterinary medicines regulation (reserved for Scotland and Wales). Veterinary professional standards are also a reserved matter across the UK. The devolution settlements have common features in this area, but they are not identical.

The framework respects devolution, putting in place shared ways of working to drive common approaches where agreed by the four administrations.

The intention is not to mandate harmonisation, but to recognise that businesses and consumers in all four nations of the UK (as well as international trading partners) often benefit from there being one consistent set of AHW legislation (where those rules are considered to be in their interests) and agreed approaches for changing AHW rules.

The framework also recognises that diseases do not respect borders, and this requires a coordinated approach for prevention and control. Changes to animal welfare should be considered on a four-administration basis, to ensure maximum safety and effective biosecurity across all four nations.

The concordat sets out governance arrangements for joint decision-making based on formalising existing and well developed fora, and making best use of advice from AHW bodies (e.g. APHA, CEFAS and Marine Scotland).

There will be instances where it is appropriate for one or more of the four nations to take different approaches, and the Framework allows for divergence in these cases.

To ensure a meaningful four-nation approach and allow early and ongoing opportunities for each government to input into the development of UK policy change, the framework agreement includes a commitment from all parties to engage with each other at the earliest opportunity, when considering any potential policy development or changes, and to share evidence for decision-making openly and transparently.

Each administration has committed to seeking consensus on future proposed changes and working with the other administrations to resolve any disagreements when they arise.

Where consensus cannot be achieved, a dispute resolution process will be activated. There are very clear mechanisms for this within the framework.

- Relevant legislation:

Import of and Trade in Animals and Animal Products (Amendment etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

Trade in Animals and Related Products (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The Animal Health (EU Exit) (Scotland) (Amendment) Regulations 2019

Exotic Disease (Amendment etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018

Animal Welfare (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018

The Animal Welfare (Scotland) (EU Exit) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2019

The Seal Products (Amendments) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018

Livestock (Records, Identification and Movement) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies and Animal By-products (Amendment etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

Aquatic Animal Health and Alien Species in Aquaculture (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The Aquatic Animal Health and Alien Species in Aquaculture (EU Exit) (Scotland) (Amendment) Regulations 2019

Equine (Records, Identification and Movement) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

Veterinary Surgeons and Animal Welfare (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The Farriers and Animal Health (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

Veterinary Medicines and Animals and Animal Products (Examination of Residues and Maximum Residue Limits) (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018

The food, drink, veterinary medicines and residues (amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The Aquatic Animal Health and Plant Health (Legislative Functions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The Food and Feed Safety and Hygiene (EU Exit) (Scotland) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2019

The Animal Health, Plant Health, Seeds and Seed Potatoes (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The Animal Health, Alien Species in Aquaculture and Invasive Non-Native Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Amendment)(EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The Trade in Animals and Animal Products (Legislative Functions) and Veterinary Surgeons (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

Animal Health, Invasive Non-native Species, Plant Breeders' Rights and Seeds (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The Animal Health and Genetically Modified Organisms (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The Animal Health and Welfare and Official Controls (Animals, Feed and

Food) (EU Exit) (Scotland) (Amendment) Regulations 2019

- Significant differences between the provisional framework and phase 3 summary:
None
- Stakeholder engagement:
Views were sought during each phase of the framework drafting process from a diverse range of stakeholder groups, including, but not limited to: Chief Veterinary Officers from all four nations, the Animal Disease Policy Group, the Animal Welfare Policy Group, the TB Liaison Group, the Veterinary Risk Group, the Outbreak Readiness Board, the Disease Emergency Response Committee, and other external agencies, third sector and private sector representatives.