**The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill**

**Background**

Our manifesto commits us to legislate for animal sentience. Article 13 of the Lisbon Treaty recognises that animals are sentient beings and says that policy decisions should reflect this. The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill both recognises the sentience of animals and introduces a proportionate accountability mechanism to help reassure that policymaking takes this into account.

**Headline**

The Government is committed to maintaining the **very highest standards of animal welfare** and is committed to legislating for animal sentience. There has never been any question that this Government believes that animals are sentient beings.  We are introducing legislative reforms which provide further reassurance that government policymaking recognises the sentience of animals.

**What’s new in this Bill?**

The Bill **recognises** **that animals are sentient in domestic law**.

This Bill involves the Defra Secretary of State appointing experts to a new **Animal Sentience Committee** which may issue reports.

These reports will assess how well central government policies have paid **‘all due regard’** to the welfare needs of animals as sentient beings, alongside other considerations.

The Bill requires the relevant Minister to respond to committee reports with a Ministerial statement to Parliament.

This committee may issue a report at **any stage** of central government policy making from formulation to implementation.