

## **PETA's Answer Guide to the Welsh Government's Consultation on Mobile Animal Exhibits, Including Animal Circuses**

Below are PETA's suggested responses to the Welsh Government's consultation on the use of wild animals in circuses. Please answer as many questions as you're able to. However, if you're pressed for time, we encourage you to prioritise answering Question 8. If you can, please personalise your responses.

The deadline is 8 October 2017.

The consultation can be completed [online](#).

### **General**

**Question 1: We have proposed the following definition of a MAEs: 'Individuals, groups or commercial enterprises that travel to exhibit domestic and/or wild animals, for entertainment, therapy, educational and/or other purposes'. Do you agree with this definition? If no, please explain why.**

The use of animals in travelling exhibits is an important issue worthy of public debate and scrutiny. However, because the proposed definition of mobile animal exhibits (MAEs) is so broad and because the welfare needs of domestic animals are wholly different to those of wild animals, we wish to comment only so far as this consultation pertains to the use of wild animals in circuses and therefore neither agree nor disagree with this definition.

**Question 2: Do you consider that the display of animals in MAEs has a positive or negative impact on the development of respectful and responsible attitudes towards animals in children and young people?**

Specifically in relation to the use of wild animals in circuses: there are no educational benefits to watching animals perform the confusing and physically gruelling manoeuvres featured in a typical circus act – many of which are entirely unnatural to them. Furthermore, exposing children and young people to the abuse of animals in the circus industry teaches them that it is acceptable to dominate, whip, chain, and beat other living, feeling beings – which, of course, it isn't. Such lessons in insensitivity are not what most parents would knowingly want to teach their children.

Experts in early childhood development have recommended against taking children to circuses that force animals to perform. They found that such acts inhibit young people's ability to develop empathy towards both humans and other animals by teaching them that living beings are merely objects to be manipulated for their own enjoyment.

**Question 3: It is a mandatory requirement of licensed zoos to undertake conservation measures, including promoting public education and awareness in relation to conservation. Should MAEs be required to undertake similar activities?**

Specifically in relation to the use of wild animals in circuses: animal circuses cannot contribute in any meaningful way to conservation. The captive breeding of wild animals in or for circuses also does nothing for conservation, as none bred in such conditions will ever successfully be introduced into the wild.

**Question 4: The health and safety of the people who interact with MAEs, and the animals involved, is of concern to us. If you own or work for an MAEO, what measures do you take to minimise the risk of injury or disease, both to humans and the animals?**

N/A

### **Licensing/Registration**

**Question 5: Do you consider that any MAEs, circuses with animals, or both, which are based in or exhibit their animals in Wales, should be licensed or registered? (Definitions taken from page 5 of "Consultation Document")**

**Licensing – When someone applies for approval and commits to certain conditions and limitations. The licensee may have to pay a fee and prove capability in some way in order to gain the licence.**

**Registration – A way of informing authorities that you intend to do something. A fee is normally required. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, registrations can be issued from one to three years.**

Specifically in relation to the use of wild animals in circuses: no. Anything short of a complete ban on wild-animal circuses would fail lions, tigers, and other species, whose complex needs simply cannot be met in a circus environment. This is a view held by all experts, including the British Veterinary Association. In addition to being subjected to premature maternal separation, the constant threat of physical punishment, and prolonged and unnatural confinement, these animals are deprived of the opportunity to satisfy virtually all of their species-specific instincts. The welfare problems they experience in travelling circuses are inherent in their use and cannot be corrected by any change in practice.

**Question 6: If you consider that MAEs and/or circuses should be licensed or registered, do you think that they should pay a fee for the licence or registration? If yes, please explain why.**

N/A

**Question 7: The proposed definition of an MAE is very broad. Do you consider that there should be any exemptions included in any licensing or registration scheme?**

N/A

### **Wild Animals in Circuses**

**Question 8: At present there are no circuses based in Wales but they do visit. The Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs has not dismissed the possibility of Wales banning the use of wild animals in circuses. Do you consider that such a ban should be considered? Please give your reasons for this.**

Yes, a ban on the use of wild animals in circuses must be brought forward as a matter of urgency. Extreme confinement and stress during transport – in combination with the use of psychologically and physically abusive training methods – inevitably compromise their welfare.

Tigers are apex predators with home ranges of hundreds of square miles in the wild, yet circuses force them to spend most of their lives in transport cages that are barely bigger than their own bodies.

In nature, grazing animals, such as zebras and camels, spend a large part of their day eating. Circuses cannot provide permanent outdoor paddocks for grazing, so these animals spend much of their time confined to indoor stalls or tied to transport vehicles. In addition, social species, such as elephants, are often kept in isolation, while those who are naturally solitary, such as tigers, are commonly kept in groups.

In 2009, Animal Defenders International released undercover footage documenting that elephants in a circus exhibited a pattern of disturbed, abnormal types of behaviour such as rocking, swaying, and head-bobbing. Animal behaviourists believe these movements to be signs that an animal is suffering and unable to cope with his or her situation. This suffering is not specific to one circus but endemic to the industry. This view was echoed by a report commissioned by the Welsh Government, which concluded that "Life for wild animals in travelling circuses ... does not appear to constitute either a 'good life' or a 'life worth living'."

What's more, there is nothing to be gained from forcing animals to perform in an unnatural environment, which is why, in 2010, 94.5 per cent of respondents to a Defra consultation voted in favour of an outright ban on all wild animals in travelling circuses. At least 19 other countries have now introduced bans on such exhibits, while Scotland introduced legislation on the issue earlier this year.

## **Welsh Language**

**Question 9: We would like to know your views on the effects that licensing or registering MAEs would have on the Welsh language, specifically on:**

- a. opportunities for people to use Welsh; and**
- b. on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.**

N/A

**Question 10: What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be**

**increased, or negative effects be mitigated?**

N/A

**Question 11: Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy could be formulated or changed so as to have:**

**a. positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and**

**b. no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.**

N/A

### **General**

**Question 12: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.**

Specifically in relation to the use of wild animals in circuses: a complete ban on animal performances would undoubtedly have a positive impact on circuses that currently use these archaic acts by giving them an impetus to reinvent themselves and thereby increasing their revenue. With growing public awareness of the cruelty inherent in using animals in circuses, interest in exhibits that continue to do so is declining. Circuses that do not use wild animals – such as the hugely popular Cirque du Soleil – remain profitable, indicating, at the very least, that such use is not essential. A ban would also bring Wales and the circus companies more in line with the public mood, which is overwhelmingly opposed to keeping and exhibiting wild animals in this way.

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Thank you for completing the consultation. Your time is greatly appreciated and could help achieve meaningful change in the lives of animals used in circuses. For more information, please visit [PETA.org.uk](http://PETA.org.uk).