

# MSP Emma Harper highlights practice of illegal puppy trafficking.



MSP Emma Harper will lead a Members' Business debate today at Holyrood to highlight the practice of illegal puppy trafficking.

Scotland's animal welfare charity has been spearheading a multi-agency fight against the ruthless puppy trading industry and welcomes Harper's debate at the Scottish Parliament on the topic.

SNP MSP Emma Harper said, "The illegal farming and trafficking of puppies is an abhorrent breach of animal welfare and can also be linked to serious and organised crime. On both counts we should be taking action to tackle this issue. I first became involved when I was approached by concerned constituents in Stranraer who told me about the puppy trafficking which has been taking place through the port at Cairnryan.



"The Scottish SPCA has been doing some excellent work which is resulting in the seizure of puppies and, ultimately, in prosecutions. I also want to pay tribute to Dumfries & Galloway Council's Trading Standards staff, who have worked particularly closely and effectively with the Scottish SPCA to detect puppy trafficking at Cairnryan.

"I want to do what I can to help, so I'm delighted to be leading a Members' Business debate at Holyrood on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December to highlight the extent of this problem, the

action that a range of agencies and the Scottish SPCA in particular are taking to tackle it, and to start a real debate on what more we can do to promote animal welfare and make life as difficult as possible for the illegal puppy traffickers.

“One of the main messages I want to convey is that anyone buying a puppy should ensure they see the dogs in a home environment with the mother.



“Sometimes, dealers bring in a ‘show bitch’ to look like the pup’s mother – however buyers can ensure they are not being deceived by insisting on visiting the pup while it is still feeding from its mother and reserving it until it is old enough to be rehomed.

“Any legitimate breeder will not have a problem with this and if any excuse is made as to why this is not possible, potential buyers should walk away and contact the Scottish SPCA

“No one should ever buy a puppy in a public place such as a car park and it should set alarm bells ringing if this is suggested by the seller.

“I’m looking forward to the debate and to having the chance to draw public attention to this issue.”



Chief Inspector John Chisholm said, “We are currently working alongside partner organisations in Operation Delphin to tackle the multi-million pound puppy farming industry including ISPCA, USPCA, DSPCA, RSPCA, HMRC Trading Standards, Stenaline, Police Scotland Port unit and APHA.

“When trafficked pups reach their new owner via the dealers they often develop diseases such as parvo virus and giardia. Often the young dogs die from these diseases which is

extremely distressing for the owners.”

The charity has issued advice to anyone considering buying a puppy;

“Trafficked pups often look fine when they are purchased, but problems will begin to show at a later stage. By which time money has exchanged hands and the selling agent is long gone.

“We want to remind anyone looking to buy a puppy over the festive period please only go to reputable breeders, a list of breeders can be provided by the Kennel Club.

“Always view the mother of any puppies that are for sale when the pups are still feeding from the mother, where possible it is best to view both parents. Never buy a puppy from a car park or allow for home delivery without visiting the breeder’s premises.

“If you have purchased a puppy that shows any signs of illness or distress take it to the vet immediately.”

Anyone with concerns or information about puppy trafficking should call our animal helpline on 03000 999 999. Information is received in strict confidence and can be left anonymously.