

# **Scottish SPCA celebrates some of its wonderful achievements in 2020**

**The Scottish SPCA is celebrating some of its achievements from the last 12-months which has been one of the most challenging in its 180-year history.**

The animal charity has shared some of its successes of 2020 including the transformation of animal welfare law, rescuing over 150 puppies from the low-welfare puppy trade and supporting people and animals affected by domestic violence.



Photo Scottish SPCA  
They were forced to adapt to continue to deliver vital services during the pandemic.

Rehoming was suspended for a short while but was reintroduced with extra safety precautions in place such as virtual home-checks and online applications.

Animal rescue officers and inspectors continued to attend emergency animal welfare calls and educational resources were made available online and delivered to those without internet access.

One of the most momentous occurrences of the year was the updating of existing animal welfare law.

The charity have long campaigned for these changes and this year tougher penalties for animal cruelty came in to force, which includes a maximum custodial sentence of five-years and an unlimited fine.

Also introduced was Finn's Law which protects brave service animals. Further transformational changes will be introduced over 2021 that will be of great benefit to animal welfare.

Due to the rising numbers of reports of violence in the home over the pandemic, they revived their pioneering domestic violence campaign, First Strike.

The landmark programme was first introduced in 1998 to highlight the link between domestic violence and animal cruelty.

First Strike was adopted by The Links Group which consists of medical professionals, veterinary surgeons, police and many more. The link is now widely recognised around the world.

First Strike aims to assist people and animals in a domestic violence situation.

The pandemic saw an explosion in public demand for puppies which saw a huge increase in low-welfare puppy dealers.

As part of Operation Delphin, a multi-agency taskforce set up

to tackle the illegal industry, the charity have seized over 150 puppies so far from raids at puppy farms and at ferry ports.

Chief executive, Kirsteen Campbell, said: "This really has been a year unlike any we have ever experienced. But we have adapted and evolved to ensure we have continued to be there for Scotland's animals and people when they need us.

"From the animals we have rescued and rehomed, the young people and communities we have educated and supported, the investigations that have resulted in court cases and the transformational changes to legislation, we have achieved so much this year despite the challenges we have faced. I am so incredibly thankful to our team, volunteers, supporters and partners. And so proud to be part of a such a dedicated and passionate team that has continuously gone above and beyond for animal welfare.

"We are looking forward to the future and to continuing to be there in Scotland's communities making lives better for people and animals."