

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act ('the Act') to request the following information.

Official Government advice states that anyone with horses, livestock or other animals (except for cats and dogs) should call their local authority if they are too unwell to care for their animals due to Covid-19 and if they don't have anyone to help them. The official advice is contained at this webpage, which I last accessed on 13th April 2020: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-people-with-animals>. Please can you advise:

1. Has the local authority received any calls of the above nature?
 - a. If this information is held, please advise which species help has been requested for.
2. What is the local authority's official response to such calls for help?
3. What arrangements has the local authority made, or planned to make, for those animals that cannot be cared for by owners in the above circumstances?
 - a. Please describe the nature of any temporary arrangements that may be being made. Please break this down by species and/or animal type if appropriate.
 - b. Please describe the nature of any permanent arrangements that may be being made. Please break this down by species and/or animal type if appropriate.
4. How much financial resource does the local authority have access to to help people with animals in the above circumstances?
 - a. Is this being provided by the local authority itself or by central Government?

Dear Requester,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information Request.

The response from the departments concerned are as follows:

Has the local authority received any calls of the above nature? **No**

a. If this information is held, please advise which species help has been requested for. **N/a**

2. What is the local authority's official response to such calls for help? **We would work closely with The Animal Plant Health Agency (APHA) to respond accordingly, with regards to livestock left uncared for if their owner became ill etc. It would depend on the severity of the situation re disease and animal welfare risks. Our priority focus in animal health work is on disease control rather than purely animal welfare. In practice they are often inextricably linked as if there are carcasses found amongst livestock it would be a disease risk etc.**

3. What arrangements has the local authority made, or planned to make, for those animals that cannot be cared for by owners in the above circumstances?

a. Please describe the nature of any temporary arrangements that may be being made. Please break this down by species and/or animal type if appropriate.

b. Please describe the nature of any permanent arrangements that may be being made. Please break this down by species and/or animal type if appropriate.

The recent ACTSO National Animal Health Panel guidance covers this issue;

What can LA's do if they are made aware of a keeper that has been taken ill and is not in a position to look after their livestock?

The Animal Plant Health Agency is still responding to welfare referrals and as such any complaints suggesting breaches of the welfare rules should be referred to them as below:
England: telephone 03000 200 301 or email customeradvice@apha.gov.uk
Wales: telephone 0300 303 8268 or email apha.cymruwales@apha.gov.uk
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency/about/access-and-opening>

Guidance has been produced by Defra giving advice for people with animals.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-people-with-animals>

Local authorities can play a valuable role in working with APHA and the farming industry to identify developing issues and assist in co-ordinating a response.

Instances in which keepers are struggling to care for livestock should be discussed with the regional APHA as they can provide guidance on how a keeper may be able to address any welfare issues or concerns. Keepers of livestock have for a long time been encouraged to put in place contingency plans that outline local support if they become affected by illness and every effort must be made by local authorities to encourage and identify such support using the links and data that they can access.

If no such support can be identified the NFU have agreed to assist in the co-ordination of any local farming industry response. As such local authorities are encouraged to contact the NFU Regional Livestock board secretaries in these circumstances.

When someone is poorly and unable to look after their domestic pet, social services under the Care Act will make arrangements for its welfare – this includes someone being poorly under Covid-19.

4. How much financial resource does the local authority have access to to help people with animals in the above circumstances?

a. Is this being provided by the local authority itself or by central Government?

There is no specific fund set to one side to cover this scenario.

Each case depending on the circumstances would be assessed independently. In the main if the owner falls ill there is an obligation for them to pay for the animals care.

I hope this now satisfies your request, and should you have any further enquiries please do not hesitate to contact me directly on the details below.

In addition to this and for future reference Nottingham County Council regularly publishes previous FOIR,s and answers on its website, under Disclosure logs. (see link)

<http://site.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/thecouncil/democracy/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log/>

You can use the search facility using keywords.

If you wish to raise any concerns about the way your request was dealt with, then please write to the Team Manager, Complaints and Information, County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP or e-mail foi@nottscc.gov.uk quoting the reference number above.

Kind Regards

Complaints, Information & Mediation Officer.
Complaints and Information Team
Chief Executive's Dept
Nottinghamshire County Council
County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP