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Introduction of E-Collars:

I know people on both sides feel very strongly about this issue and I understand that you oppose a ban on these devices.

In my view, no animal should be made to suffer unnecessary pain and degradation. Many animal welfare organisations, including the Dogs Trust and the Kennel Club oppose the use of e-collars and instead promote positive training methods.

In 2014, the Government funded research on the use of e-collars on dogs. The research concluded e-collars can have long-term detrimental effects on the welfare of dogs, and in 2018 the Government announced its intention to ban hand-held remote-controlled electronic collars, encouraging the use of positive reward training methods. Following a public consultation in 2018 seeking views on its plans in England, the Government announced its intention to amend the Animal Welfare Act to implement such a ban.

The Government announced draft regulations on 27 April 2023 to ban the use of these devices, introducing fines for those in breach of these regulations. This legislation will have to be approved by Parliament before it comes into force.

In my view, this legislation is necessary. I welcome exemptions for those with protected characteristics to help those who have a legitimate need for collars that emit sound, vibration or other non-shock signals, whether for the benefit of the owner or the animal, such as for service dogs.

Although agreed by the House of Lords in June 2023, the motion to approve the legislation lapsed at the end of the last parliamentary session before it was debated by the House of Commons. In November 2023, the Government laid the legislation before Parliament again and said in January 2024 that it continues to support a ban. There is no current date scheduled for the next stages of scrutiny, but I will follow developments on this matter closely.

I believe all animals, whether they are on a farm, at home as a pet, at large in the wild or in the sea, deserve protection.

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