This report covers the work undertaken over the past year in support of cat health and welfare.

**Canine & Feline Sector Group**

CFSG has continued to meet approximately every three months during the pandemic, we have used Zoom to facilitate such meetings. The group has a couple of sub-groups which have also continued to meet regularly via Zoom or Team.

The Group has discussed and supplied advice to the Animal Welfare Board for England and DEFRA, and through them to Government. Our main achievements during the past 12 months include:

- **Brexit** – CFSG has had several discussion about Brexit and the consequences for pet travel, importation of cats and dogs, and future availability of veterinary medicines, among other things. As a result of such discussions we offered comments and advice to both the Animal Welfare Board and DEFRA. Now that a deal has been agreed with the EU, the UK has third country status with regard to animal import/export and pet travel. Information and guidance has been placed on the GCCF website along with links to the GOV.UK website giving detailed information on post Brexit rules.

- **Advice and guidance during the Covid 19 pandemic** - CFSG members worked to pool their knowledge and resources and developed guidance expressed in a series of colourful infographics for pet owners. These infographics were based around some of the challenges arising from COVID19, but may also be generally useful for recognising if a pet has a behavioural or health issue and knowing what to do, as well as preventing any of these problems arising in the first place. The infographics are posted on the GCCF website and have been updated as Covid rules have changed over the months to ensure they remain relevant and useful in helping to protect animal welfare and support owners and breeders of cats.

- **Report on conformation in dogs** - Recognising there are many issues with poor conformation and breed health, CFSG has produced guidance to seek to improve this problems. The guidance was written to bring an evidence based and scientific perspective whilst also making the guidance understandable and clear for dog owners. A subgroup is planned to work on the production of a sister report on conformation in cats, but this work has been delayed because of Covid restrictions. I am a member of the subgroup and we hope to start work this year.

- **Importation of puppies and kittens** – CFSG has been campaigning on this issue since 2014 and has regularly lobbied and supplied evidence to ministers. The group has twice presented to the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England on this issue, most recently in July 2020, and will continue
to push for the Government to raise the age to six months for importing dogs and cats and welcomes the recent petition seeking a debate on this matter. We wrote to the Minister again in July 2020 and are speaking to the civil servant team responsible for companion animals.

- **Compulsory micro-chipping of cats** – I am a member of this subgroup, which has met twice during February 2021 to consider the proposal to legislate on this issue. The group has addressed the questions posed by DEFRA and has written a covering letter to enable us to give more detailed feedback not possible within the confines of the set questions. We support the micro-chipping of cats and have given advice about how it should be implemented and enforced to prevent unintended negative consequences.

**Licensing of cat breeding in Scotland**

In October GCCF was invited to contribute to the stakeholder consultation on the introduction of legislation on the Licensing of Activities Involving Animals in Scotland. I spoke with some breeders living in Scotland and drafted and submitted a response, which has been uploaded onto the GCCF website, where delegates can read it. I have since been contacted by the Scottish Government and asked to work as part of a small group to develop guidance for both local authorities and each of the sectors that will need to comply with the new licensing requirements when they are introduced.

**All Parliamentary Group on Cats**

This group met in February and September 2020, the latter meeting conducted via Zoom. Topics discussed covered COVID19 and particularly abandoned cats and cat rescue during the pandemic; Brexit issues that will specifically affect cats; licensing; addressing the issue of “back-yard breeders”; compulsory micro-chipping of cats; the Animals Welfare (Sentencing) Bill which aims to introduce tougher sentences for animal cruelty; and the launch of the loneliness report (role of companion animals in addressing loneliness).

Looking forward to 2021 the group will be reviewing its list of relevant policy areas to ensure it remains up-to-date. As well as the themes of housing and pet friendly policies, and cats and loneliness, the list also includes: air guns and cat shootings; animal cruelty sentencing; breeding and sale of cats; effectiveness of microchipping; electronic shock collars and containment devices; government policy on animal welfare and its impact on cats.

SC 9/2/21