

Dear Deputy Jeune and Members of the Panel,

Thank you for the invitation to submit views on the Draft Animal Welfare (Jersey) Law 202-. I am responding on behalf of Jersey Canine Academy, where I (Lauren Tohill) work directly with dogs and owners through training, education and behaviour support. Alongside my team who run our dog walking services.

Overall, I support the intention behind the Draft Law, particularly the move towards prevention, early intervention and recognising modern animal welfare standards. Updating the existing legislation is necessary and the focus on reducing suffering is welcome.

From a practical point of view, the success of the Draft Law will depend heavily on clarity and guidance. In particular, clearer explanation would be helpful around who is considered “responsible” for an animal in situations where care is shared, such as within families, temporary care arrangements (walkers, daycares and kennels/boarding), or when dogs are working with trainers or other professionals. It is important that responsibility is applied fairly and does not discourage owners from seeking professional help.

The welfare provisions are broadly sensible, but consistent interpretation and enforcement will be key. Clear thresholds, along with education and support for owners, would help prevent issues escalating unnecessarily.

Licensing can be a positive tool if it is proportionate and straightforward. Clear definitions of who needs to be licensed, reasonable costs and avoidance of unnecessary duplication would help ensure that good operators are not discouraged. There is also an opportunity for licensing to support education and best practice, rather than focusing solely on compliance.

Codes of Practice could be very useful if they are developed with input from experienced practitioners, are easy to understand and allow reasonable transition periods when changes are introduced.

In terms of public safety, I believe welfare and safety are closely linked. A focus on education, training and early support for owners is likely to achieve better long-term outcomes than enforcement alone, particularly where dog behaviour is concerned.

We were not directly consulted during the development of the Draft Law and greater engagement with frontline professionals could help identify practical issues before implementation.

Overall, the Draft Law has the potential to improve animal welfare and control in Jersey if it is supported by clear guidance, proportionate enforcement and a strong emphasis on education and prevention.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

Kind regards,

Lauren
Jersey Canine Academy