



Animal Welfare Report | 2018



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk





Introduction

In Northern Ireland, the welfare of animals is protected by the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the 2011 Act). The 2011 Act includes a duty of care in respect of all “protected animals” (i.e. animals under the control of a person whether permanently or temporarily). Responsibility for the welfare of an animal remains with the owner at all times.

The review of the implementation of the 2011 Act, in 2015, recommended that DAERA publish an annual report setting out information in relation to the animal welfare service. This is the third report produced by the Department using information provided by the three enforcement bodies and detailing the range and level of animal welfare activities during 2018.

Background

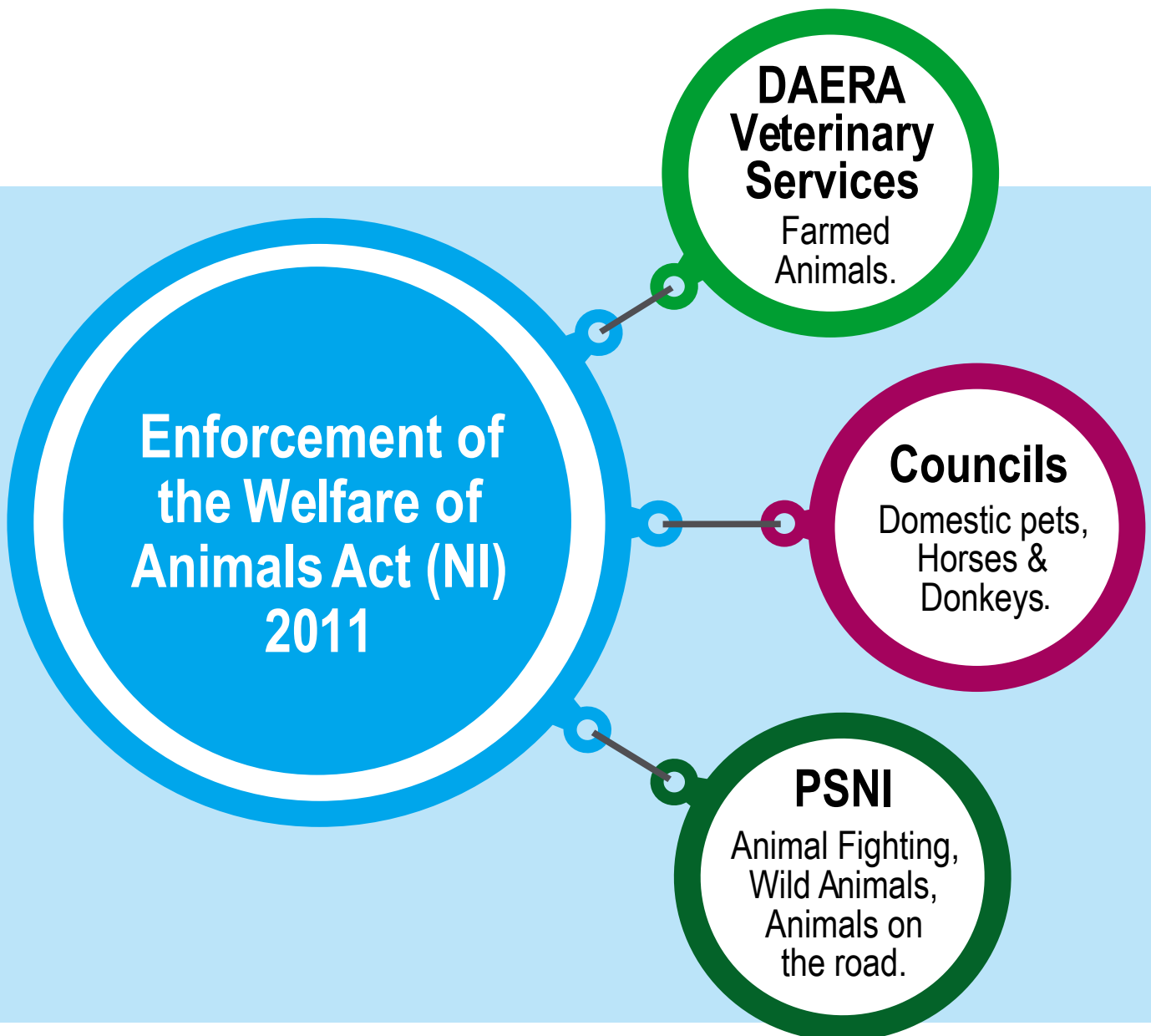
The 2011 Act provides the same level of protection for both farmed and non-farmed animals and sets out the “five needs” of an animal.

The vast majority of owners and keepers comply with their duty of care, however, there are occasions when owners fail to do so and the 2011 Act sets out offences regarding animal welfare, for example: it is an offence to fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that the welfare needs of an animal are met; and it is an offence to take action, or fail to take action, that causes an animal to suffer unnecessarily.





Responsibility for the enforcement of the 2011 Act has been conferred on three enforcement agencies; Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and local Councils.



If a member of the public has any concerns regarding the welfare of an animal they should contact the relevant enforcement body. Contact information can be found in the nidirect.gov.uk [Animal Welfare section](#). Full details of all complaints will be recorded and passed to Enforcement officers, who will investigate and take action to ensure the owner or keeper complies with the legislation.



DAERA enforces the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (NI) 2012 (the 2012 Regulations), which were made under the 2011 Act. The work is delivered by DAERA Veterinary Service Inspectors and Veterinary Officers (VOs) located across Northern Ireland in 10 local DAERA Direct offices. DAERA also has responsibility for the licensing and inspection of pet shops and of animal boarding, riding and zoological establishments under the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 1972. During these inspections the welfare of the animals is always paramount.

Veterinary Service Inspectors may utilise a range of options when dealing with an animal welfare case such as: providing advice; giving a warning; issuing the owner with a legally binding Improvement Notice; and prosecution.

The following information outlines enforcement actions by DAERA.

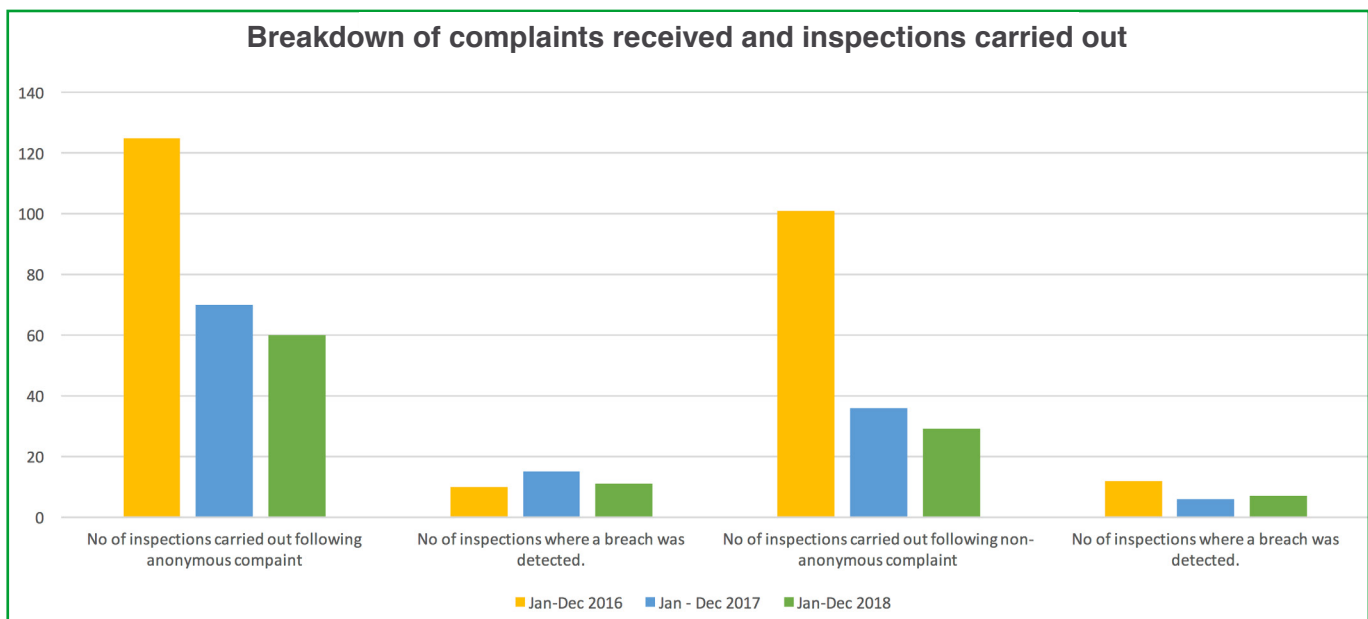
Farmed Animal Welfare Inspections

During the period 01 January 2018 to 31 December 2018, 1,239 production site inspections for compliance with animal welfare requirements were completed. The overall compliance rate was 95%, a result which includes risk based and randomly selected sites. This was an increase of 1% when compared with the period 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017 and an increase of 5% when compared with the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016.





Breakdown of complaints received and inspections carried out:	Jan - Dec 2016	Jan - Dec 2017	Jan - Dec 2018
No. of inspections carried out following anonymous complaint.	125	70	60
No. of inspections where a breach was detected.	10	15	11
No. of inspections carried out following non-anonymous complaint.	101	36	29
No. of inspections where a breach was detected.	12	6	7
Convictions.	20	8	7
No. of welfare seizures	2	0	0
Total animals seized.	178	0	0



Welfare of Animals investigations closed during period 01 January 2018 to 31 December 2018

Case withdrawn	Compliance achieved	Warning letter issued	Formal caution delivered	Convicted in Court	Dismissed in Court	TOTAL
6	N/A	N/A	2	7	2	17

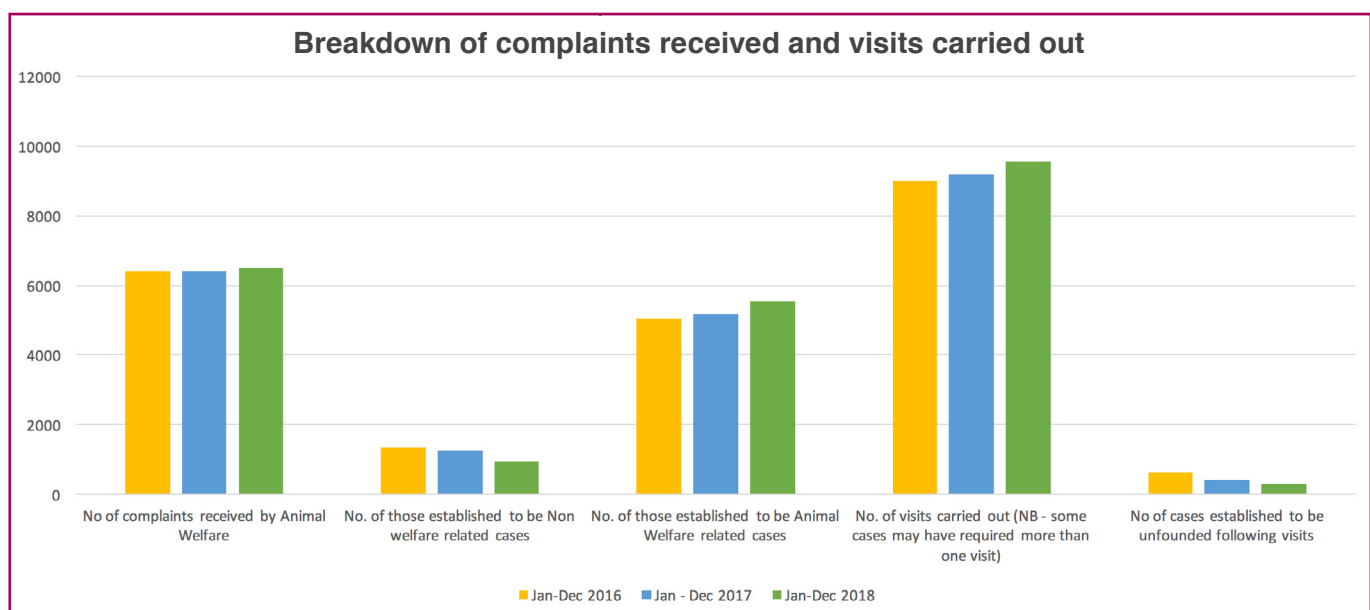
The penalties for animal welfare convictions included fines, liability for costs, community service and disqualification from keeping animals.



Regional Councils' Animal Welfare Service

The 2011 Act requires Councils to enforce the legislation in respect of non-farmed animals, for example, domestic pets of any vertebrate species and equines. Councils have adopted a collaborative regional approach to delivering the animal welfare legislation with nine appointed Animal Welfare Officers enforcing the Act. These Officers have statutory enforcement powers and can take a range of action to improve the welfare of non-farmed animals including: providing advice; issuing an improvement notice; taking animals into their possession (in extreme cases of suffering), and initiating prosecution action.

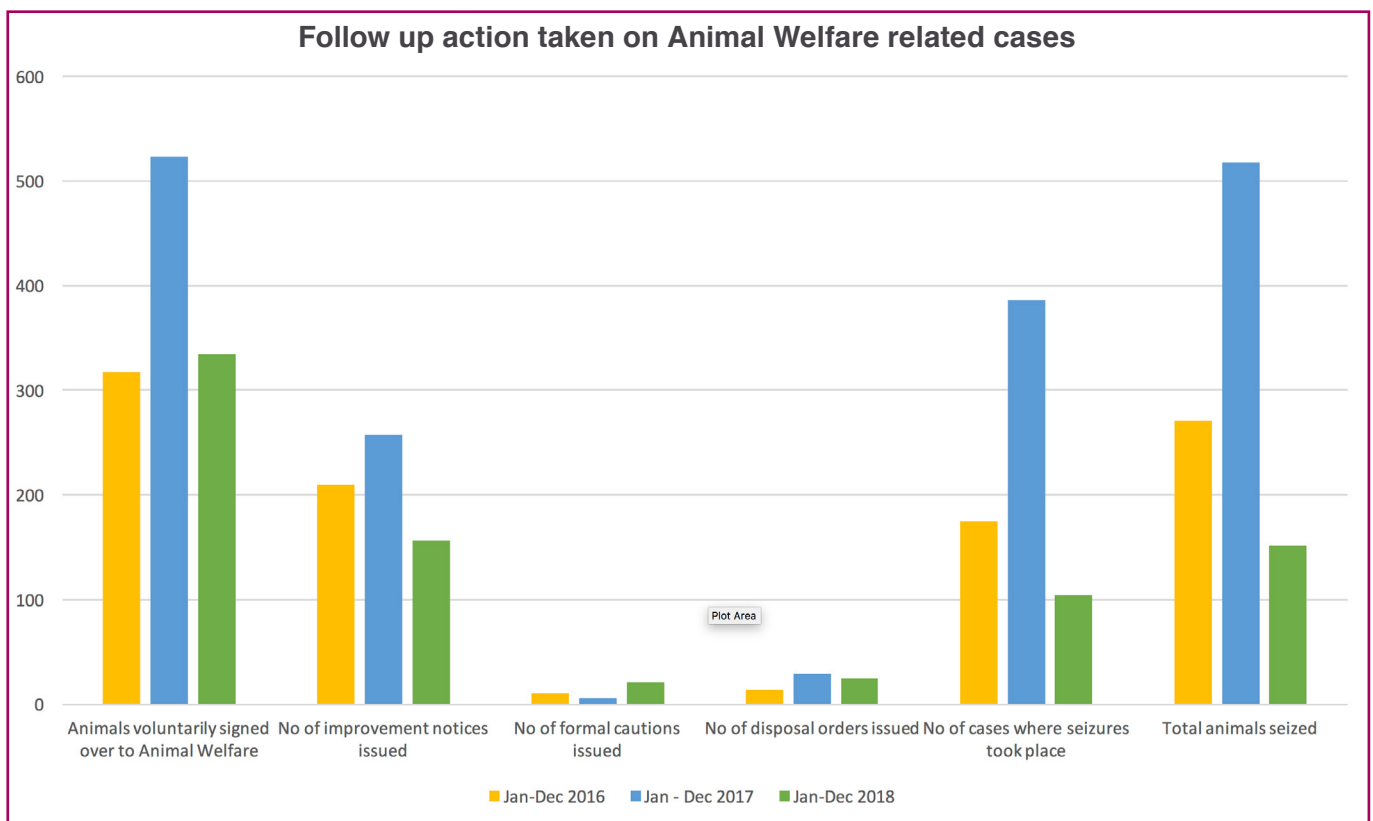
Breakdown of complaints received and inspections carried out:	Jan - Dec 2016	Jan - Dec 2017	Jan - Dec 2018
No. of complaints received by Animal Welfare.	6391	6414	6480
No. of those established to be Non Welfare Related cases.	1334	1240	948
No. of those established to be Animal Welfare related cases.	5057	5174	5532
No of visits carried out (NB - some cases may have required more than one visit).	8987	9189	9553
No. of cases established to be unfounded following visits.	639	420	300





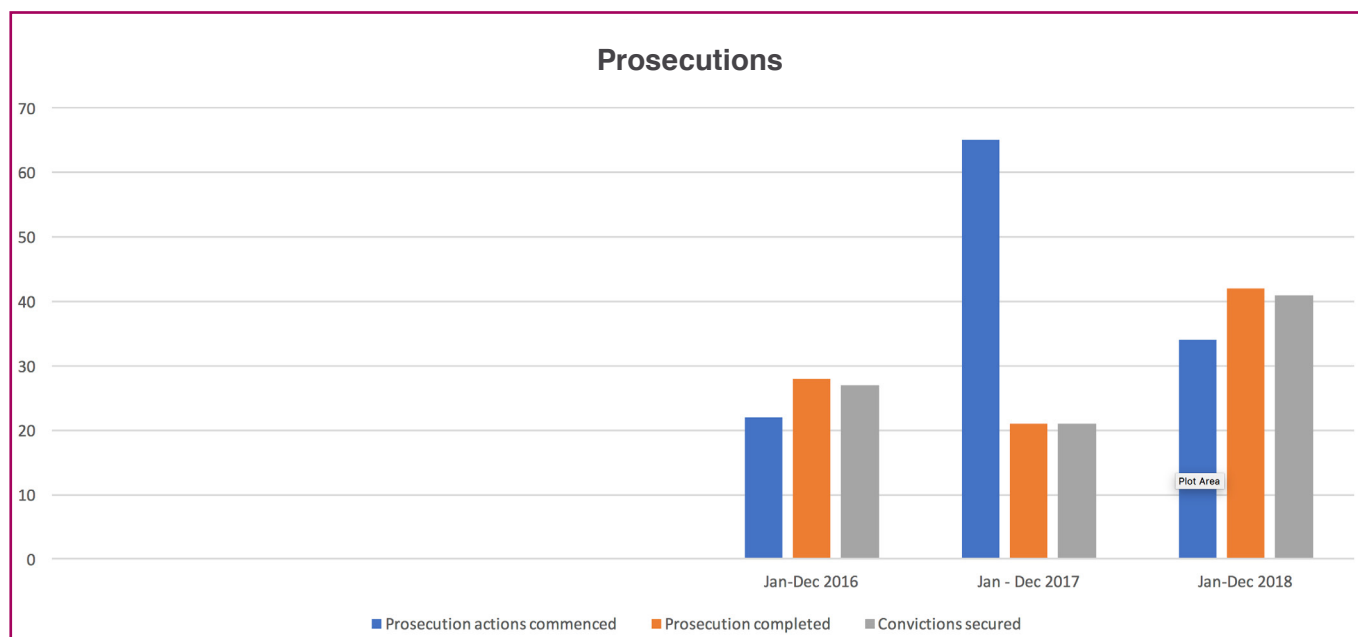
Follow up action taken on those Animal Welfare related cases:	Jan - Dec 2016	Jan - Dec 2017	Jan - Dec 2018
Animals voluntarily signed over to Animal Welfare.	317	523	334
No. of improvement notices issued.	210	257	156
No. of formal cautions issued	10	6	21
No. of disposal orders issued	14	29	25
No. of cases where seizures took place.	175	386	104
Total animals seized.	271	518	152

*** All contact visits received informal advice, unless they result in formal action.**





Prosecutions:	Jan - Dec 2016	Jan - Dec 2017	Jan - Dec 2018
Prosecution actions commenced.	22	65	34
Prosecution completed.	28	21	42
Convictions secured.	27	21	41



Prosecutions completed may refer to prosecutions commenced in a previous year.

The 41 convictions in 2018 resulted in a variety of penalties comprising of fines; liability for costs; community service; conditional discharge; restrictions or bans on keeping animals for varying periods and custodial sentences.

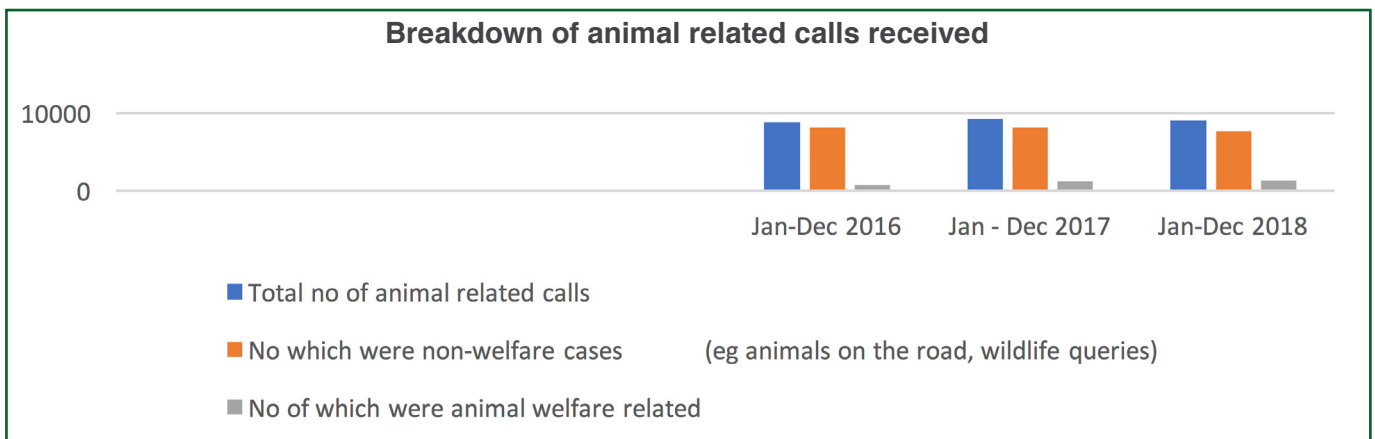
Breakdown of follow up action taken on those Non Animal Welfare related cases:	Jan - Dec 2016	Jan - Dec 2017	Jan - Dec 2018
No. referred to DAERA, (e.g. farmed animal complaints).	93	82	75
No. referred to dog wardens (e.g. stray dogs).	511	505	342
No. referred to Environmental Health (e.g. dirty yards/noise complaints).	20	19	35
No. referred to PSNI (e.g. animal fighting/snared animals/straying on roads).	84	70	48
No. classified as others (e.g. queries relating to rehoming or adopting referred to animal sanctuaries).	626	564	448



Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

The 2011 Act gives the PSNI power to deal with welfare offences involving wild animals and offences such as animal fighting, or where other criminal activities are involved. In addition to its responsibilities under the 2011 Act, the PSNI has responsibility for animals on roads and wildlife crime.

Breakdown of calls received and enforcement actions taken:	Jan - Dec 2016	Jan - Dec 2017	Jan - Dec 2018
No. of calls received which were in respect of animal related incidents.	8833	9237	8957
No. of which were in respect of non-welfare cases (e.g. animals on the road, wildlife queries).	8109	8046	7696
No. of which were animal welfare related.	724	1191	1261





Follow up enforcement actions taken:	Jan - Dec 2016	Jan - Dec 2017	Jan - Dec 2018
No. of incidents which led to seizure.	6	22	28
Total no. of animals seized.	25	54	106
No. of offences prosecuted.	13	46	19
No. of prosecutions resulting in conviction.	5	9	11
Penalties incurred in relation to the convictions.	2 probation orders 5 monetary penalties Imprisonment/detention Community service order Suspended sentence		

A variety of actions were taken on the reported animal welfare/cruelty related cases which included:

- information/advice dispensed with no visit required;
- visit carried out and information/advice dispensed;
- referrals made to another agency as appropriate, e.g. local council Animal Welfare Officer/Dog Warden/Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs;
- no offence disclosed.

PLEASE REFER TO THE DAERA WEBSITE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, INCLUDING CONTACT DETAILS IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE ABOUT AN ANIMAL WELFARE RELATED ISSUE

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/introduction-animal-welfare>

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