

(PLEASE COPY AND PASTE BELOW INTO EMAIL TO LOCAL MP)

Dear **NAME**,

I would like to express my deepest concerns with regards to the current welfare standards for elephants at a select number of UK zoos. I was shocked to learn that the ankus (a long stick with a sharp hook at one end) is still being used as a training tool for captive elephants at four different zoos across the UK.

As a member of the electorate, I hope you will take on board my views with regards to the cruel practice of elephant handling which is still rife in the UK. Whilst I appreciate that it is not within your remit to recommend one elephant management system over another, I trust that my views will be considered and represented.

As long-lived animals, elephants have incredible memories, surpassing that of many other species. Elephants remember once being threatened by an ankus and 'behave' this way through fear of physical and psychological torment. The main use of the ankus in UK zoos is to ensure the elephants can 'perform' to a paying public. Many of the behaviours expressed by an elephant in captivity, in front of a crowd, are unnatural and have been taught by keepers using the ankus. With a different management approach, such as Protected Contact (PC), elephants and keepers do not share the same space, providing elephants with freedom of choice, leading to positive welfare ramifications.

Of the 15 zoos in the UK which house captive elephants, 11 have switched to PC. I am contacting you to please appeal for the use of the ankus at four UK zoos (Whipsnade Zoo, Colchester Zoo, West Midlands Safari Park and Woburn Safari Park) which combined totals 20 elephants, to be reviewed.

Animal welfare must be an absolute priority at any UK zoo, however this current management approach fails to provide hard evidence that it does indeed result in positive welfare ramifications for captive elephants.

Whilst elephants remain in captivity, it is absolutely paramount that their welfare is recognised as utmost importance. Please listen to me and people around the world calling for change and adopt a PC management approach at all UK zoos.

Yours sincerely,

**FULL NAME**