

To whom it may concern,

As we approach the festive season, preparations for Christmas celebrations will begin to take place throughout the UK. Sadly, a number of festive events will feature live reindeer, despite the detrimental effects this will have on these animals.

**We, the undersigned, urge venues to cease using reindeer in their Christmas events.** In 2023, we wrote to event organisers and councils to bring their attention to [a report](#) that highlighted the negative welfare impacts of events on reindeer, and recommended that their use in entertainment events be ceased. Last year, we sent footage from multiple reindeer displays to the author of that report, Dr Tayla Hammond, who identified that 75% of the reindeer in those displays displayed stress indicators, such as trembling or avoidance. **The evidence is clear - reindeer suffer when used for events.**

Reindeer are specifically named as animals covered by the Wild Animals in Circuses Act 2019. This legislation, and similar legislation for Scotland and Wales, bans the use of wild animals for performance and display in travelling circuses due to the stress inherent in transporting and displaying them, and the consequent risk of illness and injury. All mobile reindeer displays would be illegal in Great Britain if taking place in a circus. Whilst the reindeer events planned across the country may be legal due to the circumstance of not taking place under a circus big top, the same risks and ethical issues apply. **Responsible event planners should take the circus legislation as an example, and choose not to expose animals to stress and risk of illness and injury.**

Poor body weight, weight loss, muscle atrophy and general malaise are commonly reported problems in captive reindeer. Veterinarians have consistently voiced concerns that reindeer are hard to keep in captivity, and that problems are often seen in reindeer kept in private ownership for entertainment use. Research now provides overwhelming evidence that the pressures of regular long-distance travel, exposure to unnatural environments, physical labour such as pulling sleighs, and the lack of agency inherent in constant unfamiliar and unpredictable interactions with the public, result in **reindeer used in festive entertainment being at severe risk of physical and mental fatigue and associated illnesses.**

Research now provides overwhelming evidence that the unnatural environments and lack of agency (the ability of an animal to make free choices or have control over aspects of their lives) associated with **reindeer events are likely to lead to psychological distress and a state of poor welfare.**

Displaying live reindeer during the festive season is a harmful and unnecessary practice which must now come to an end. Many are leading the way: last year, **218 events** that had displayed live animals in previous years hosted fun, family-friendly, and compassionate animal-free events instead. **We urge all event organisers, venues and councils to join them this year, and cease using live reindeer in their entertainment.**

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



With the expert support of:

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