The Wild Animals and Circuses (Wales) Bill and the accompanying Explanatory Memorandum have today been laid before the National Assembly.

The purpose of the Bill is to make it an offence for a wild animal to be used in a travelling circus.

There are no circuses using wild animals based in Wales, but they do visit, and each time they do there are renewed calls to ban the practice. Last year’s consultation on the draft Bill attracted over six and a half thousand responses. There was overwhelming support for my proposal to introduce legislation that would make it an offence for a wild animal to be used in a travelling circus.

A ban will send a clear message that this practice is outdated and ethically unacceptable. Travelling circuses have toured the United Kingdom for over two hundred years and will continue to be welcome in Wales, provided they do not use wild animals.

I will make an oral statement about the Bill to the National Assembly tomorrow. A copy of the Bill and its supporting documentation are available on the National Assembly’s website.