



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Nusrat Ghani MP
Minister for Science and
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Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
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6 October 2022

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email dated 28 July to the Department for Environment, Food & Affairs on behalf of a number of constituents regarding EDM 223 and the use of animals in science. Your correspondence has been passed to this Department and I have been asked to reply. I apologise for the delay in response.

The Government is supporting and accelerating advances in biomedical science and technologies to reduce reliance on the use of animals in research and importantly to avoid some of the scientific limitations of animal models of human diseases. This includes stem cell research, cell culture systems that mimic the function of human organs, imaging, and new computer modelling techniques.

The UK has a world leading reputation for the delivery of the 3Rs principles, a model that is being replicated internationally. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is strongly committed to the 3Rs and provides core funding for the National Centre for 3Rs (NC3Rs), which works nationally and internationally to drive the uptake of 3Rs technologies and ensure that advances in the 3Rs are reflected in policy, practice, and regulations on animal research. The NC3Rs is widely recognised as being world leading, supporting research and innovation that provides researchers in academia and industry with technologies that are more predictive, cost-effective, and humane than current animal models. Since it was established, the NC3Rs has invested £77 million in research and almost £27 million in contracts through its CRACK IT Challenges innovation scheme to UK and EU-based institutions, mainly focusing on new approaches for the safety assessment of pharmaceuticals and chemicals that reduce the use of animals.

Recently, NC3Rs and UKRI's Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council have launched a £4 million joint funding call focussed on supporting alternatives to in vivo models in bioscience research. The overall aim of this joint call is to support proposals that: develop the next generation of non-animal technologies that mimic the physiological environment enabling a whole system/multi-system approach for discovery and translational science; enhance the capacity and

confidence in non-animal technologies; and establish partnerships between academia, the SME sector and industry.

Programmes funded by the NC3Rs have both identified problems and found innovative solutions through science led approaches and alongside others, they have developed a Non-Animal Technologies Roadmap setting out a 2030 vision and strategy for how non-animal technologies could be used to replace the use of animals in research across a number of sectors. The NC3Rs has recently set out its strategy to increase the focus on animal replacement technologies as well as championing high standards in animal research. Further information is available at: www.nc3rs.org.uk/news/nc3rs-publishes-its-strategy-next-three-years.

Although there is a desire to replace the use of animals in scientific procedures with non-animal alternatives, the carefully regulated use of animals in scientific research remains necessary to protect humans and the wider environment. The use of animals remains important for improving the understanding of how biological systems work, in the development of safe new medicines, treatments and technologies, and in testing chemicals. Therefore, our current approach is to actively support and fund the development and dissemination of techniques that replace, reduce, and refine the use of animals in research (the 3Rs), and to ensure that the UK has a robust regulatory system for licensing animal studies and enforcing legal standards. The legal framework in the UK requires that animals are only ever used in science where there are no alternatives, where the number of animals used is the minimum needed to achieve the scientific benefit, and where the potential harm to animals is limited to that needed to achieve the scientific benefit.

Finally, with regard to the need for a UK strategy to accelerate a transition to animal-free science and that a Minister be appointed with specific responsibility for providing strategic leadership for this, the Government recognises that this issue touches on a number of departmental responsibilities. These departments will continue to work together to support the delivery of important scientific research and the protection of animals

I hope you and your constituents will find this reply helpful.

Yours ever,



NUSRAT GHANI MP
Minister for Science and Investment Security