



Home Office

Baroness Williams of Trafford
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Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
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Dear George,

Thank you for your email of 8 March on behalf of your constituents regarding the use of animals in research.

The UK's rigorous regulatory system requires that no testing takes place if there is a validated non-animal alternative that would achieve the scientific outcomes sought. Project licence proposals for research on animals for which there is no non-animal alternative must comply fully with the principles of the 3Rs: replacement, reduction and refinement.

The Government only authorises procedures on animals after a rigorous assessment process, which is undertaken by the Home Office Inspectorate. The cornerstone of the assessment process is the harm benefit analysis. As part of the project licence application process, applicants are required to describe what steps they have taken to research non-animal alternative methodologies and why the use of animals is required to achieve their scientific objectives. Applicants are required to ensure that their specified programme of work does not involve the application of any regulated procedure to which there is a scientifically satisfactory alternative method or testing strategy not entailing the use of a protected animal.

This Government continues to champion and work closely with the NC3Rs (National Centre for the Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of the use of animals). The NC3Rs lead in developing and sharing techniques both in the UK and internationally which Replace, Reduce and Refine the use of animals. The various programmes and initiatives funded by the NC3Rs have both identified problems and found innovative solutions through science led approaches (<https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/>).

Your constituents request an end to use of animals in research. It is too soon to impose a timetable on those areas of scientific enquiry that are delivering benefits to people, animals and the environment, and require the use of animals to do so. The UK is committed to fully implementing the 3Rs and using non-animal alternatives wherever possible.

Baroness Williams of Trafford