



Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

DECS Reference: MIN/0968048/23

29 August 2023

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 14 July 2023 on behalf of your constituents regarding the regulatory safety testing of cosmetic ingredients on animals and also Section 24 of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA). I am sorry for the delay in this reply.

I am pleased to confirm that the Government has taken action to ban animal testing for worker and environmental safety of chemicals used exclusively as cosmetic ingredients. On 17 May 2023, the Home Secretary announced a licensing ban with immediate effect.

The Government is committed to replacing animals used in science wherever scientifically possible and is confident that the UK science sector and industry has the talent to provide the solutions.

The cosmetic regulations require manufacturers to demonstrate that their products are safe for use by consumers. Alternatives to animal tests are available and therefore animal testing for consumer safety of cosmetics and their ingredients was banned in the UK in 1998. This ban remains in force.

I can assure you that no new licences will be granted for animal testing of chemicals that are exclusively intended to be used as ingredients in cosmetics products. The Government is presently engaging with the relevant companies to urgently determine a way forward on legacy licences.

In addition, the Government is undertaking work to review at pace the effective administration of the ban over the longer term (including the legal framework for this). This will have due regard of the needs of the science industry, the need to ensure worker and environmental safety, and the need to protect animals from unnecessary harm.

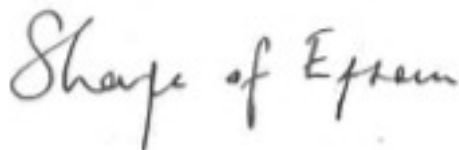
In addition to the ban, the Government is actively pursuing how we can accelerate the development and implementation of alternatives to animals used in testing where there are presently no alternatives. We will continue to seek opportunities to design non-animal testing strategies for these chemicals. Working with industry, the Government is seeking to improve safety by the application of new non-animal science and technology.

Your constituents also raise concerns about openness and transparency which is vital to maintain public confidence in this policy area. The Home Office routinely publishes information about the regulation of the use of animals in science, including: non-technical summaries of every project licence granted; detailed annual statistics of animals used in science each year; and, the Regulator's annual report including information on inspections and compliance. Detailed information about how the Regulator operates can be found on its website. This includes Guidance on the operation of ASPA and a Code of Practice for the care and accommodation of animals.

The science sector regularly publishes its work and I can confirm that it is not restricted by Section 24 of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) from voluntarily releasing information about its work to other organisations or the public. Under the sector-led Concordat on Openness, many establishments in the science sector are sharing and communicating information about their work.

Section 24 of ASPA remains under active review. The desire for transparency must be balanced against the need to protect confidential information. Unfortunately, ongoing and recent events have demonstrated that there are a small minority who are willing to go to extreme lengths, including intimidation and harassment of law-abiding citizens at their place of work and criminal acts. Therefore, we will strive to be as open and transparent as possible to increase and support public understanding but protect information where its release would be harmful to individuals or businesses.

I hope you find this useful in responding to your constituents.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharpe of Epsom". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Lord Sharpe of Epsom**