



September 2022

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about animal research.

Animal research plays a vital role in providing safety information for potential new medicines. It is worth remembering that, as a result of findings from animal studies, a large number of potential new drugs never get as far as being tested in humans. Some aspects of the toxicological assessment of new medicines cannot be adequately assessed in humans, and animal data will be the only kind available.

I would like to reassure you that the UK's rigorous regulatory system ensures that no animal testing or research takes place if there is a non-animal alternative that would achieve the scientific outcomes sought. The National Centre for the 3Rs (NC3Rs) is the UK's leading scientific based organisation dedicated to replacing, refining and reducing the use of animals in scientific research and testing. The NC3Rs supports the research community to use the latest science and technology to replace animal studies, providing new approaches for biomedical research and avoiding the time and cost associated with animal models.

Since the NC3Rs was launched in 2004, the Government has invested £77 million in research towards developing new approaches to Replace, Reduce and Refine the use of animals in scientific procedures, and an additional £32 million through its CRACK IT programme for SMEs and universities to work with the pharmaceutical and chemical industries on collaborative 3Rs projects that aim to generate commercial opportunities in this area.

Without animal testing it is highly likely that a large number of potentially dangerous new medicines would be tested in healthy volunteers and patients in clinical trials. This would be completely unacceptable. That said, I welcome the Government's commitment to the development of non-animal technologies. Such technologies have the potential to reduce the reliance on the use of animals, improve the efficiency of drug research and development and to deliver safer, cheaper, and more effective medicines to patients. Ministers have also stressed that they continue to actively support and fund the development and dissemination of techniques that replace, reduce, and refine the use of animals in research.

I am aware that EDM 223 calls for the creation of a specific Ministerial responsibility for the eradication of the use of animals in science. For the reasons I have already outlined, I will not be signing this particular EDM as I do not believe it is a desirable course of action on the grounds of public safety. I am, however, reassured that there are stringent measures in place to minimise the suffering of animals in science.

Establishments, such as MBR Acres, that either breed dogs for use in science elsewhere or conduct regulated procedures on dogs are required to provide care and accommodation to those dogs in line with the published code of practice for that purpose. Adherence to that code of practice, and



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to all other standard conditions applied to any establishment licence, is assessed by the regulator as part of its compliance assurance programme.

Establishments breeding, supplying or using dogs in science are contributing to critical activities to protect human health and advance scientific progress. They are operating legally within a regulatory framework that requires licensure and assessment of their compliance. For this reason, and those I have already outlined, I will not sign EDM 278.

I appreciate that you have concerns regarding the licences issued for animal experiments. While you may not agree, I hope I have explained why animal research is undertaken when alternative approaches are not available. However, I understand how strongly you feel about this and therefore will pass on your concerns regarding this issue to the Home Office, in order to ensure your views are heard at the top of Government.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY