



Home Office

Rt Hon John Hayes MP
Minister of State for Security

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Dr John Landers
Animals in Science Committee
2 Marsham Street
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Dear Dr Landers,

17 / 5 / 16

Commission for the Animals in Science Committee 2016-17

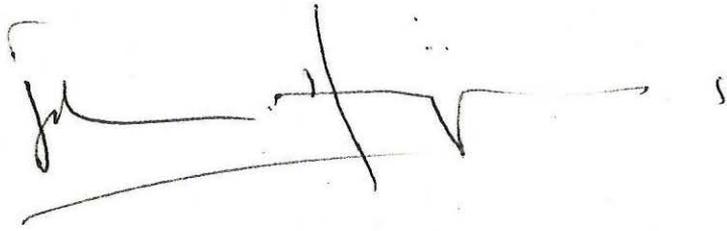
I am writing to you, in your capacity as chair of the Animals in Science Committee (ASC), to thank you for the work the ASC has delivered over the last eighteen months. I take the role of the ASC very seriously in supporting the Government's delivery of our strong regulatory framework regarding the use of animals in the life sciences.

The Committee provides balanced advice which has enabled the Government to publish a Code of Practice on the housing and care of animals and to implement a ban on animal testing of household products. Incorporating your advice, we have also published guidance on the use of Animals Containing Human Material as well as a number of advice notes that better support the delivery of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. In addition, your Committee has scrutinised and provided valuable advice on a number of licence applications referred to you.

In addition, I am grateful for the work you have done to improve the sharing of knowledge and good practice amongst licensed establishments through the development of Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Board (AWERB) hubs, and for your representation of the UK at meetings of chairs of National Committees in all Member States.

It is important that the Committee continues to make a contribution to the Government's aims in this area and, in the attached Annex, I have outlined the key priorities where I would welcome your focus and expertise over the next twelve months. My aim is to balance the requirement for essential advice with providing sufficient headspace for the Committee to work on pertinent issues of its own choice.

I encourage you to continue meeting regularly with my lead officials, both individually and in committee, to ensure that we remain fully aware of the Committee's thinking as policy decisions are being taken. I also welcome the opportunity to meet with you from time to time and to receiving reports of the Committee's activities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Hayes', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rt Hon John Hayes MP

Animals in Science Committee - commission of work 2016-17

This document details the work commissioned by the Rt. Hon. John Hayes MP, Minister of State at the Home Office, to be undertaken by the Animals in Science Committee (the ASC) between May 2016 and April 2017.

It proposes a programme of commissioned advice whilst providing headspace for the ASC to work on pertinent issues of its own volition. It aims to ensure that the ASC continues to fulfil its independent advisory role on the regulation of the use of animals in science both in the UK and more widely.

1. Harm-benefit analysis

In 2015, ASRU published a note describing the manner in which the harm-benefit analysis is currently being carried out by inspectors. This note, and Appendix I of the Guidance on the Operation of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, are together intended to support the ASC's review of how the Harm-benefit Analysis is conducted.

The ASC's report should provide advice on:

- a) The current arrangements for performing a harm-benefit analysis, whether this might be improved and, if so, how.
- b) The most severe procedures and, in relation to particular types or values of benefit, the level of harm above which licences should not be granted.

It is essential the harm-benefit analysis continues to be robust to ensure work using animals is only authorised where no practicable alternatives exist, and there is a favourable balance of benefit.

2. Advice on specific additional referrals

During 2015, the government published guidance to ban the testing in animals of household products and of ingredients intended for use in such products unless, in the latter case, a strong justification can be made. The guidance commits to referring such applications to the ASC. New government guidance was also published in February 2016 regarding Animals Containing Human Material which commits to consulting the ASC on certain applications.

In addition, the current process by which certain licence applications are referred to ASC, and how the effectiveness of the ASC's expert scrutiny may be maximised in a strategic way, is currently under review by the Committee.

The ASC should work with ASRU officials to determine the means by which all of these referrals can be appropriately scrutinised in an efficient and effective manner.

3. Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies

The ASC has a responsibility to engage with Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies (AWERBs) and to promote sharing of good practice. Excellent progress has been made in developing a support network of AWERB hubs to facilitate this requirement.

The ASC is encouraged to continue this engagement which will ensure AWERBs play an active role in promoting the 3Rs and a culture of care at a local level, and to share experience and good practice with similar committees in other Member States.

4. Section 24

The confidentiality requirements of section 24 of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) are now out of step with the government's policy on openness and transparency. A review of section 24 has been completed and the outcome will provide greater openness and transparency in the field of animal research whilst maintaining adequate protection for sensitive information such as identities of people and places and information which is academically or commercially sensitive.

ASRU officials will be progressing with the necessary legislative change and will be seeking the advice of the ASC both in drawing up the legislation and in developing a suitable scheme for publication of relevant information following the change.

The ASC should also continue to act as an example of greater openness and transparency, communicating with a wide range of stakeholders in the area of animal research.

5. Review of EU Directive 2010/63/EU and Article 13

The UK transposed Directive 2010/63/EU into ASPA in 2013. The Directive regulates the care and use of animals intended for scientific purposes, and seeks to embed the principles of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of the use of such animals). The Directive also promotes harmonisation across Member States as well as improving protection for animals used in scientific procedures and requiring greater transparency about their use.

The Commission has committed, through Article 58 of the Directive, to complete a review by November 2017. The review will: *"..take into account advancements in the development of alternative methods not entailing the use of animals, in particular of non-human primates, and shall propose amendments, where appropriate.."*

During 2016, the UK will be asked to provide initial information towards the review. This will reflect experience with implementation of the 3Rs in the UK since 2013, including the application of Article 13 relating to regulatory testing, and the ASC will be asked to provide advice on the draft UK response.

Looking to the future, the Directive also requires an Implementation Report by November 2019 in line with Articles 54(1) and 57(1). Therefore, in 2018, a more systematic evaluation process will begin with Member States providing reports on all aspects of their implementation. The advice of the ASC will continue to be important during this review.

6. Other functions

The ASC is well placed to consider material from multiple sources which is associated with good practice regarding the care and use of animals in procedures. Where the ASC considers material to be of high quality and relevance it might be brought to the attention of appropriate organisations and groups widely. This includes when the ASC is representing the UK at EU-level, for example at meetings of National Committee Chairs and relevant expert groups.

17 May 2016.