

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

August 2022

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for your email 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 of 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.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Gibson".

PETER GIBSON MP

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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