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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about animal research.

Animal research still plays a role in providing vital 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.

Without animal testing it is highly likely that many potentially dangerous new medicines would be tested in healthy volunteers and patients in clinical trials, and I know Ministers believe that this would be quite unacceptable. However, animals are only used when there are no suitable alternatives, and by encouraging new cutting-edge approaches to science we will ensure that standards of animal welfare are improved. I am opposed to animal tests where alternative approaches could be used. 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.

I fully support all steps to establish new methods and to support the life sciences and research industry. Since 2017, the Government has invested around £1 billion through two Life Sciences Sector Deals, helping to generate significant levels of industry investment in the UK. I am committed to making the UK the leading global hub for life sciences.

The Life Sciences Investment Programme (LSIP) aims to unlock the potential of the UK's best health and life science innovations, allowing companies to grow in the UK. This investment programme consists of up to £600 million of joint Government and industry investment.

It is important to remember that with existing scientific research methods, by the time medicines reach clinical trial, risks are significantly reduced.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY