



April 2022

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 a large number of 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 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 assured me 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.

The UK has consistently led the way on animal welfare, recognising in law that animals can feel pain and suffering through the Animal Welfare Act. The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill, which is making its way through Parliament, would enshrine the recognition that animals are sentient in domestic law. It contains provisions to create an Animal Sentience Committee with experts which would produce reports on how well policy decisions have paid all due regard to the welfare of animals.

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.

I remain committed to robust regulation of the use 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 to all other standard conditions applied to any establishment licence, is assessed by the regulator as part of its compliance assurance programme.



Chris Heaton-Harris

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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.

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

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**