



Our ref: 2017/04492

Your ref:

Date: 24 April 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 29 March 2017, requesting the following information:

*"1. By species : How many animals were used in research by "The Public Authority" from January 1st 2016 to December 31st 2016 ?*

*2. Minutes, reports and correspondence of any Animal Welfare & Ethical Review Board ("AWERB"), formerly known as the Ethical Review Committee ("ERC"), or sub-committee at University level, including but not limited to departmental committees, from 2015, where these relate to experimentation or other work involving captive live animals, in addition to any guidance issued by these committees at any time if currently in use. For the avoidance of doubt the term 'committee' is used in broad definition and is inclusive of boards, groups or similarly natured structural enterprises.*

*I must stress that I do not seek data which identifies those under the institution's employ and agree for such information to be redacted within reason".*

We are treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and we can confirm that information in scope of your request is held and can be found below.

Dstl returns the numbers of animals used in research to the Home Office on an annual basis in accordance with UK legislation. Details of Dstl's Annual Return to the Home Office for calendar year 2016 are given in the table below.

Year 2016						
Animal Species	Mouse	Rat	Guinea Pigs	Pigs	Non-Human Primate	Total
Number	2167	199	236	27	116	2745

Dstl Porton Down conducts less than half of one per cent of the total animal experimentation carried out in the UK.

Dstl's purpose is to deliver high-impact science and technology for the UK's defence, security and prosperity. As part of this, we develop and create battle-winning technology and protection equipment for UK Forces and Government. We are taking steps to reduce the number of animals used, but our role in helping to protect the UK and its Armed Forces requires us to

answer questions and develop life-saving solutions to problems that cannot currently be addressed without the use of animals in research.

Dstl Porton Down operates in accordance with the requirements of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (ASPA) 1986 and fully embraces the principles of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement).

In respect to your request for copies of the minutes of Internal Ethical Review Committee meetings, the information discussed at these meetings was given in confidence by members of staff undertaking requirements under the terms of the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act and is, therefore, exempt from public release under Section 24 of the Act (ASP). This section states:

*“24. Protection of Confidential Information.*

*(1) A person is guilty of an offence if otherwise than for the purpose of discharging his functions under this Act he discloses any information which has been obtained by him in the exercise of those functions and which he knows or has reasonable grounds for believing to have been given in confidence”.*

This exemption would mean that release of even the redacted minutes of these meetings would be withheld from release in accordance with Section 44 (Prohibition on Disclosure) of the FOIA.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely

Dstl Secretariat