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Our ref: FOI 2014/03377
Your ref:

08 August 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 11 July 2014 requesting the following information:

1. *By species: How many animals were used in research by The Public Authority during 2013?*
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 2013, 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.*
3. *Funding for research involving animals 2009-2013: What funding from registered Charities, in the form of research grants/awards etc, was received by The Public Authority or by its employees for research involving animals? From which Registered Charities (National and/or International) did the funding come from? What species and numbers of animals are/were licensed for the aforementioned Charity funded research?*

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).

While I can confirm that Dstl does hold information within the scope of your request, I have to advise you that in accordance with Section 12 of the FOI Act 2000 (FOIA), we will be unable to answer your request without exceeding the appropriate limit.

It has been calculated that to provide this information would take one person 7.5 days to complete because of the manner in which the information is held; this is explained in more detail later in this letter in accordance under section 16 of the FOIA, and for these reasons the time and effort to complete this task is over cost.

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for the public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central Government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting it.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance), you may find it helpful to note that the use of animals in research is very carefully governed and monitored by the Home Office via the Animals Scientific Procedures Act (ASPA) 1986. This Act requires the return of specific categories of information on an annual basis, at the end of January for the previous calendar year, including numbers and species of animals used. As a public authority, Dstl publishes this information in Hansard in response to Parliamentary Questions.

Normally we would ask you to refine and reduce your request but after careful consideration we can confirm that in relation to your first question, the information required would be covered by section 21 as it is published in Hansard, <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/>. Additionally, in relation to your second question, a reduction and refinement of your initial request to a single aspect of AWERB and/or single year would be refused as the information requested would be covered by section 41 of the FOIA in accordance with the requirements of s24 of the ASPA 1986, and section 38 Health and Safety of the FOIA.

In relation to your third question "funding for research involving animals 2009-2013" What funding from registered Charities, in the form of research grants/awards etc., we can advise you that we have not received any funding from registered charities for specific research studies involving the use of animals.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied 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