

PHILIP DUNNE MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT

MSU/4/5/6/is

5th November 2015

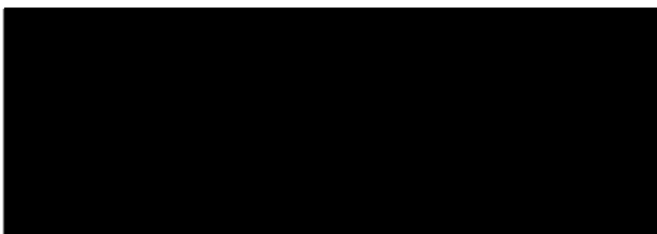
Dunne



We have received a number of campaign postcards addressed to the Secretary of State for Defence, the Rt Hon Michael Fallon MP, concerning animal research. I am replying to you as the Minister responsible for the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), which has been responding to your supporters' concerns on behalf of Mr Fallon.

Dstl undertakes scientific research on behalf of the Ministry of Defence; part of the remit of Dstl is to conduct research into safe and effective medical countermeasures for the UK and its Armed Forces against the threat of biological and chemical weapons. In addition to this, Dstl conducts research to enhance the treatment of conventional casualties on the battlefield and to produce effective protection against bomb blasts and fragments. This research has not only provided medical countermeasures against chemical and biological threats that allow our Armed Forces to operate effectively and safely in a non-permissive environment but has also resulted in changes to the management of severe trauma that has saved the lives of many of our Armed Forces recently deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of these advances will also have applicability in the civilian population. Dstl is proud of the research undertaken by its staff and believes that the remit to provide the safe and effective countermeasures outlined above could not currently be achieved without some use of animals. We hope that you will find the following information useful in putting Dstl's work with animals into context.

Dstl Porton Down uses less than half of one per cent of the total number of animals used in research annually in the UK. All research involving the use of animals at Dstl is conducted under the terms of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, as amended (2012). Dstl is licensed to conduct research involving animals by the Home Office whose inspectors make both announced and unannounced visits several times a year; all Dstl research involving animals is carried out under licences from the Home Office and all projects require a dedicated project licence.



Dstl operates an ethical review procedure for all projects that will involve the use of live animals; it also has an active programme in animal welfare and seeks to enhance the experimental environment. The results of research undertaken at Dstl will not only contribute to saving the lives of UK Service Personnel but many of the medical countermeasures and procedures developed through MOD-funded research will also protect those in parts of the world where certain infectious diseases are endemic, such as most recently in successfully countering the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone.

Dstl operates in accordance with the principles of the three Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) and has an active programme to increase the implementation of the three Rs by exploring the use of non-living models in order to reduce the requirement for animal experimentation. Tissue and cell cultures, and physical or computer-based modelling are used whenever it is possible and commensurate with best practice. However, where these alternatives are considered inadequate as a means of predicting the human response, studies on animals may be necessary.

I trust that this information explains the important role of animal studies in saving the lives of our Armed Forces through the development of medical countermeasures and techniques.

Yours sincerely



PHILIP DUNNE MP