

Dstl Secretariat

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Dstl is part of the
Ministry of Defence

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Our ref: FOI 2020/08793
Your ref:

Date: 3 September 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter received 21 July 2020 requesting the following information:

"Number of guinea pigs killed at Porton Down in 2019"

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 I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found below.

In 2019, no guinea pigs were used in regulated procedures under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 at Dstl Porton Down.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance), the UK and its Armed Forces are entitled to safe and effective protective measures. Part of Dstl's role is in providing the very best protection including where that can, currently, only be achieved with animal experiments. Animals are used in experiments to develop new vaccines, therapies and treatments that save the lives of UK military. The results of this research also benefit UK civilians and those in parts of the world where certain infectious diseases are endemic. It is MOD policy that all medicines that could be given to service personnel are licensed in the same way as any new pharmaceutical drug. Animal data to demonstrate that the medicines are safe and effective are required as part of all medicines licensure. All research involving the use of animals in experiments is regulated by the Home Office in accordance with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (ASPA). Home Office Inspectors have full access to all Dstl animal facilities and make announced and unannounced visits throughout the year. It is important to note that the Home Office does not grant licences for the development or testing of any offensive weapons and Dstl does not use animals in experiments for this purpose. Dstl minimises wherever possible the use of animals and uses less than half of one per cent of the total annual animal usage reported to the Home Office for Great Britain.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours Sincerely,

Dstl Secretariat