**Call for evidence: strengthening leading practice in the animals in science sector**

The Animals in Science Committee (ASC) is an independent advisory body with a role to provide balanced, and objective advice to the Minister in areas relating to the use of animals in scientific procedures.

The Home Office Minister has commissioned the ASC to [provide advice on strengthening leading practice in the animals in science sector](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commission-on-leading-practice-in-the-animals-in-science-sector). As part of this, the ASC is reviewing how the sector currently develops, shares and uses leading practice for replacement, reduction and refinement (the 3Rs), and collecting evidence to inform its recommendations on how this culture might be improved.

To help with evidence-gathering, the ASC would be grateful to hear from organisations with an interest in this field. This is including, but not limited to, establishments that use animals in science, funders, regulators, societies, and those involved in animal care and/or welfare.

This exercise forms the first stage of evidence-gathering, and further engagement and evidence-gathering is likely to take place as the project progresses. The answers provided in this document will not be shared with the Home Office and will be used solely to inform the ASC’s advice. None of the questions are mandatory.

Please return the completed document to asc.secretariat@homeoffice.gov.uk by **5pm Sunday 23 March 2025.**

**Section 1 – Stakeholder details**

# **Name of organisation/individual**:

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|  |

# **Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of your organisation?**

|  |
| --- |
|[ ]  Individual |
|[ ]  Organisation |

# **What stakeholder group do you belong to?** Please select all that apply:

|  |
| --- |
|[ ]  Academia and research |
|[ ]  Industry |
|[ ]  Contract Research Organisation |
|[ ]  Funder |
|[ ]  Government and regulation |
|[ ]  Society  |
|[ ]  Veterinary and animal care |
|[ ]  Animal welfare |
|[ ]  Other(please specify):  |

# **If you would be interested in taking part in further engagement activities, please leave your name and email address below.** Please note that this is not a guarantee of participation.

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**Section 2 – Call for evidence**

# **a) What do you understand leading practice for the 3Rs to be in the context of the animals in science sector?**

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## **Please only open this question after you have completed Question 5a.** After clicking the arrow on the left, you will be shown the ASC’s working definition of leading practice and asked for your views.

The ASC Leading Practice Subgroup’s working definition for Leading Practice in Research involving Animals is:

“a culture which ensures the combined efforts of everyone – such as investigators, research managers and support staff, ethics review board members, research funding bodies, governance board members and regulators – to make continual changes that will lead to better research outcomes, better animal welfare, reduced/refined animal use and (where possible) replacement of experimental animals, and better professional development”.”

 **b) What are your views on this definition?**

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# **To what extent do you agree with the following statement:**

*“The culture of leading practice for the 3Rs in the animals in science sector needs to be improved.”*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [ ]  | Strongly agree |  [ ]  | Agree |  [ ]  | Neutral |  [ ]  | Disagree |  [ ]  | Strongly disagree |
| **Please explain your answer:** |

# **How do you currently seek information on leading practice for the 3Rs when planning or reviewing projects using animals?** This might be relevant to refinement, reduction or replacement. Please select all that apply.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|[ ]  Scientific literature and publications |[ ]  Regulatory and ethical guidelines |
|[ ]  Professional networks |[ ]  Conferences, workshops or training |
|[ ]  Animal welfare and 3Rs organisations (e.g. NC3Rs, RSPCA) |[ ]  Online databases or tools (e.g. repositories)  |
|[ ]  In-house expertise  |[ ]  Other(s) |
| **Please provide further details or describe other strategies that your organisation uses, as well as your assessment of how useful these strategies are:** |

# **How do you and/or your organisation currently share information on leading practice for the 3Rs with other organisations?** This might be relevant to refinement, reduction or replacement. Please select all that apply.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|[ ]  Training and workshops |[ ]  Collaborative networks |
|[ ]  Written guidance |[ ]  Digital platforms (e.g. online forums) |
|[ ]  Professional meetings and conferences  |[ ]  Informal meetings and communication  |
|[ ]  Other(s) |[ ]  I/We do not currently share information on leading practice with other organisations |
| **Please provide further details or describe other strategies that your organisation uses, as well as your assessment of how useful these strategies are:** |

The ASC is aware that there are existing organisations in the animals in science sector that promote leading practice techniques and/or initiatives. Any recommendations that the ASC makes for a national leading practice initiative will serve to complement the existing ecosystem, rather than to duplicate or override local systems. The following questions aim to gather evidence of the current ecosystem and any gaps and/or barriers that might exist.

# **What examples or evidence of a good culture of leading practice are you aware of, if any?** Please provide any examples of current practices.

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| 1. **Refinement and reduction**
2. **Replacement**
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# **What do you perceive to be the barriers to embedding a culture of leading practice for the 3Rs within an organisation, if any?**

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| 1. **Refinement and reduction**
2. **Replacement**
 |

For the next questions, please consider your ideal future system and culture of leading practice in the animals in science sector.

# **a) Who should be the key actor(s) in defining the techniques that are current leading practice?** Please specify if there are different actors for defining leading practice in refinement, reduction or replacement techniques.

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# **b) How should these key actor(s) achieve this?**

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# **a) Who should be the key actor(s) in assessing establishments for leading practice in the 3Rs?**

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# **b) How should these key actor(s) assess establishments?**

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# **a) Who should be the key actor(s) in motivating or incentivising establishments to go beyond legislative minimums when considering leading practice in the 3Rs?**

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# **b) How should these key actor(s) motivate or incentivise establishments?**

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