

The ASC

Animals in Science Committee

Dr Sally Robinson, Chair of the Animals in Science Committee
5th Floor, 2 Ruskin Square, Broad Green, Croydon, CR0 2WF
Email: asc.secretariat@homeoffice.gov.uk

18 August 2025

Dear Lord Hanson,

Cumulative severity in project licences authorising use of non-human primates in severe procedures

The Animals in Science Committee (ASC) is responsible for providing advice to the Secretary of State on project licence applications of particular societal interest, such as the use of non-human primates in severe procedures. Applications meeting these criteria are reviewed by the ASC Project Licence Application Subgroup as requested by the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU).

Two licence review meetings were held on 1 August 2025. Following the review of both licences, the ASC discussed the consideration of cumulative severity in such licences, which had been raised previously in relation to similar licences. Noting this as a recurring theme, the decision was taken to bring this to your attention.

The ASC recommends that ASRU undertakes a themed audit to quality assure the process by which the project licence holder determines the actual severity assessment, and how they consider cumulative severity in licences using non-human primates in severe procedures. This would present an opportunity to more fully understand the retrospective assessment processes used and to be assured of their effectiveness. Such an exercise may also provide the basis for improved guidance in relation to non-human primates used in severe procedures. This would aid in sharing best practice between establishments.

I trust that action taken as a result of this recommendation will support continued improvements to the ethical oversight and rigour of these licences. I would be happy to meet with your officials to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

S. Robinson

Dr Sally Robinson

Chair of the Animals in Science Committee