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06 March 2026

Dear Members of the Animals in Science Committee,

Re: Regulation of decapods used in science

I am writing to provide an update on the Government's proposed approach to the regulation of decapods used in scientific procedures as agreed by Lord Hanson of Flint.

Following consideration of policy options, Lord Hanson has endorsed a phased approach to developing proportionate and evidence-based arrangements for decapods used in science, following the recognition of their sentience under the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022. This approach combines the endorsement of industry led welfare standards for decapods, alongside exploring the development of a clear roadmap towards potential future inclusion of decapods as "protected animals" under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA).

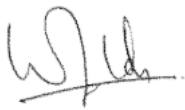
The initial phase of the roadmap focusses on the adoption of baseline, industry led welfare standards for decapods used in science, supported by voluntary reporting, targeted training and preparatory work with the Animals in Science Regulation Unit. Subsequent phases will address any remaining guidance gaps and potential commissioning of targeted technical advice, before any future consideration of inclusion of decapods as a "protected animal" under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 is taken.

We are now developing a plan and roadmap setting out the objectives and key milestones for this approach. The plan is intended to provide clarity and assurance to stakeholders, while allowing time to build the necessary evidence base, technical

expertise and sector readiness to support any potential future legislative change. In parallel to this planning, the team will produce a commission for the Committee seeking its advice on key aspects of this policy.

This staged approach seeks to ensure that welfare considerations are applied appropriately and proportionately, while preserving scientific capability and public confidence.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Reynolds', with a horizontal line underneath.

Will Reynolds

Strategic Lead for Science Regulation and Innovation