



Rt. Hon. Alok Sharma MP.
Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy,
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

11th August 2020.

Dear Secretary of State,

By way of introduction, we are a group of non-profit organisations with a shared aim of making life sciences in the UK the best they can be and the envy of rest of the world. We welcome Government initiatives to develop an R&D roadmap, to create an “ARPA” like funding body and increase public funding for research and development by 15% in the next fiscal year, ramping up R&D spending to £22 billion by 2024–25.

We believe however, in order to successfully deliver more productive and applied biomedical research with this investment, the UK reliance on animal models of disease for medicines safety testing and basic research needs to fundamentally change to one based on human relevant methods.

There is now overwhelming evidence that the role of animal research in the development of disease treatments and clinical knowledge is minimal, and is in fact in many cases, detrimental to advancing human therapeutic knowledge. The research is rarely drawn upon by doctors, clinical researchers and those drawing up clinical guidelines, and most major therapeutic advances over recent decades have actually been due to clinical innovation rather than to laboratory-based research. Indeed, in a 2016 lecture, the Government's chief scientific advisor at the time, Sir Mark Walport, suggested that the animal research community should subject to scrutiny its claims about how vital animal research has been to human health. This has striking implications for the UK's return on its investment of billions of pounds into UK science, both economically but also for the health and wellbeing of its citizens.

We understand that the Government considers that the carefully regulated use of animals in scientific research remains an important tool and that animals should only be used when there is no practicable alternative. However, we believe there is now an overwhelming body of evidence that these “tools” are not fit for purpose and should be replaced. Moreover, despite the general perception that there are no other ways to investigate human disease and treatments, significant advances recently in science and technology have provided myriad new research methods, which are based solely on the use of human tissues and cells. These are increasingly being used by researchers to gain unique and valuable insights into human biology and disease and to develop new treatments. Fittingly, many of these have originated directly from UK institutes and enterprises. We believe it is now time to invest in methods that focus on human biology, to transform our ability to understand human disease and develop new medicines, otherwise the UK risks quickly falling behind other nations in this field.

Our organisations are fully aware of the NC3Rs and the work it does to progress the 3Rs, but despite repeated, independent efforts on our parts, we have all been unable to secure time with the organisation to discuss our views further in an open and constructive manner. We also know from correspondence with Amanda Solloway MP, Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, that the Minister recognises the potential of advances in *human relevant* biomedical science and technologies to provide new opportunities to reduce reliance on the use of animals in research. We are therefore turning to you, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Minister for

Science, Research and Innovation herself, to ask that a meeting with our organisations, yourselves and the NC3Rs be arranged at your convenience, in order to share how we believe this transition may be accelerated to deliver opportunities not only for economic and industrial growth, but for a more efficient and effective health system.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours faithfully,



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