



Animal Research at Nottingham

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Open Response to the Animal Justice Project Universities Guinea Pigs Campaign

Thank you for raising your concerns about the use of guinea pigs by the University of Nottingham.

The University of Nottingham is committed to using animal-free research methods where at all possible and our research teams actively develop alternatives to animals use in collaboration with the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Science NC3Rs, as well as FRAME whose Alternatives Laboratory is based within the Medical School at Nottingham.

While advancements in this area have been significant in recent years and resulted in an overall reduction in animal use within the UK and globally, animal studies are still required for certain aspects of research. This is widely recognised in society, which rightly expects the highest standards of healthcare for their family, for their pets and for other animals. As a result, the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 allows carefully controlled use of animals in research.

Animal studies still play an important role as unfortunately even the most complex non-animal models cannot mimic the complexity of the behavioural, physiological and immunological workings of the animal or human body, and understanding these biological systems is key to identifying many of the solutions.

The University of Nottingham undertakes world-leading research to develop new medicines, to understand life threatening disease processes, and to improve agricultural practices as well as understanding basic biological and ecological systems. The contribution of animal studies is vital to ensure that such research produces real, translatable benefits for society, whether new treatments of cancer and heart disease or for better veterinary treatment of animals across the world.

The University genuinely places great emphasis on the requirement to conduct animal research to high standards. The Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body of the University carefully scrutinises every proposal for the use of animals in scientific procedures to ensure that all aspects of the 3Rs have been considered and that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure animal welfare.

A highly dedicated team of vets and animal care staff, independent of the research teams, oversee the husbandry and welfare of all animals. The University was one of the first to appoint a research programme manager from the NC3rs who assists the research community at Nottingham to develop alternatives to animal testing, and applies best practice to reducing animal use and refining, still further, current experimental and husbandry procedures.

Our research staff, animal technicians and veterinary staff are acutely aware of how much the animals in our care are dependent upon us. We are acutely aware that we have both a legal and moral obligation when undertaking animal-based research. Together we actively take steps to minimise the impact of the essential research that involves animals. The animal technicians in particular, are extremely dedicated to the care of their animals and provide an essential safeguard to ensure that humane animal research is conducted.

The University is committed to transparency regarding the use of animals in our research programmes, you can find out more about this on our animal research webpages.

While we appreciate you may disagree, we hope this reply offers you a greater understanding of why animal studies are still required and assurance that the University recognises not only our legal obligation, but also our moral obligation to the animals in our care.