

Alliance for Cruelty Free Science • MP Briefing • Summer 2026

Support the Call for a Parliamentary Inquiry into the Oversight of Animal Research

The Alliance for Cruelty Free Science (45,000+ campaigners across the UK & Ireland) has written an Open Letter to the Chairs of the Science, Innovation & Technology Committee, Home Affairs Committee, Lords Justice & Home Affairs Committee, the APPG on Phasing Out Animals in Medical Research, and sponsors of EDM 465, calling for a dedicated parliamentary inquiry into the effectiveness of oversight and enforcement of project licences under the Animapls (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

THE ISSUE: AN ENFORCEMENT DEFICIT

Project licences under ASPA must only be granted following a favourable evaluation that properly applies the principles of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement (the 3Rs) and subjects the proposed programme of work to rigorous assessment. However, there is substantial evidence that the current system relies overwhelmingly on self-reporting with limited independent verification or proactive auditing by the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU). This raises serious questions about whether licences are being granted in full compliance with the law, and whether the regulatory framework is keeping pace with rapid advances in human-specific technologies now being adopted internationally.

The last major parliamentary inquiry — the House of Lords Select Committee on Animals in Scientific Procedures (2002) — heard evidence from our patron, Dr André Menache. Many concerns regarding oversight and the practical application of the 3Rs remain unresolved more than two decades later.

THE ASK: A DEDICATED INQUIRY

We call on Parliament to establish a dedicated inquiry into the effectiveness of ASRU and Home Office oversight of animal research licensing. This could be achieved by:

- The Science, Innovation and Technology Committee — given its remit on scientific evidence and research frameworks.
- The Home Affairs Committee — with direct responsibility for scrutinising the Home Office and its bodies.
- The Justice and Home Affairs Committee (House of Lords) — which has highlighted problems from complex Home Office rules.
- Or a new dedicated Select Committee inquiry specifically focused on oversight and enforcement of ASPA 1986.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THIS CALL

- **Raise the issue with Select Committee chairs, relevant ministers, or in parliamentary questions.**
- **Support the APPG on Phasing Out Animals in Medical Research and related Early Day Motions (e.g. EDM 465).**