

By email
Carolyn Thomas MS

20 June 2025

Dear Carolyn Thomas MS,

Thank you for your correspondence in relation to Petition P-06-1497 entitled "End Welsh Govt funding of animal experiments and divert funds to modern, human-relevant technologies".

Cardiff University is committed to providing open and transparent information about our research involving animals and our standards of animal care and welfare. We have signed the [Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK](#). As well as this, we provide information [on our website](#) which outlines our commitments in relation to animal testing.

Cardiff University uses cells grown in a lab, computer models and human tissues for some of our biomedical research. However, in certain cases, animals provide the only way for us to develop our scientific knowledge and produce treatments and cures for many serious conditions. Research using animals has saved and improved the lives of millions of people and animals.

We are increasingly able to use alternative methods of research, and are at the international forefront of developing many of these methods. We are also committed to the principles of replacement, refinement and reduction - the 3Rs. However, the study of animals remains essential. In these cases, our researchers who work with animals follow all the high ethical standards and strict legislation that safeguard animal welfare in the UK. I have included more information on our commitment to the 3Rs as an appendix.

In addition to this, we fully support and endorse the [ARRIVE](#) (Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments) guidelines, developed as part of an NC3Rs initiative to improve the design, analysis and reporting of animal research.

If you have any further questions on this matter, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Wendy Larner
Vice-Chancellor



Mae'r Brifysgol yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.

The University welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.

Elusen Gofrestredig, rhif 1136855
Registered Charity, no. 1136855

Appendix: Reduce, refine, replace

Cardiff University is committed to the principles of reduction, refinement and replacement. The 3Rs state that procedures on animals for scientific research may only be carried out if there are no scientifically suitable alternatives that can replace the use of animals, reduce the number of animals needed, or refine the procedures to cause less suffering.

We recognise individual achievement in the application of the 3Rs, as well as contribution to innovation in the 3Rs. We do this both through local initiatives and by participating in national working groups established by the [National Centre for the 3Rs](#) (NC3Rs) and other bodies.

Replacement

We ensure that animals are used only when there is no alternative by:

- guiding applicants for project licences to demonstrate that they have given full consideration to non-animal methods and have consulted the information on alternatives available on the web
- investing in the continued development of non-animal methods, such as computer modelling and in vitro tissue cultures where we have sufficient understanding of processes. For example, the School of Biosciences has developed a [micro-lung](#) using human tissue available as a by-product of lung and heart surgery. We are making a major investment in [brain imaging equipment](#) to study human brains in living people.
- encouraging non-animal methods through training, development and seminar programmes.

Reduction

We ensure that researchers reduce the numbers of animals used by:

- regularly reviewing the numbers of animals used under individual project licences
- providing researchers with advice on experimental design and statistical analysis from experienced project licence holders
- managing breeding programmes carefully
- investing in the continued development of advanced technologies, including imaging techniques such as PET scans'



Refinement

We achieve the highest possible standards of animal care and welfare and embed a culture of care in all those involved in research by:

- putting in place many safeguards to ensure the welfare of animals
- ensuring all of our animals, whether within a breeding colony, held as stock or involved in research, receive the same level of attention to their welfare from our committed animal carers
- ensuring the use of environmental enrichment in the form of nesting materials, toys, houses, fun tunnels, chew sticks etc.
- ensuring our researchers are constantly assessing their procedures to find improvements for the experience of the animals used in research.



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Dear Carolyn Thomas MS,

Chair of the Petitions Committee

Thank you for your letter dated 12 May 2025 regarding Petition P-06-1497: *End Welsh Government funding of animal experiments and divert funds to modern, human-relevant technologies*.

Please find below a formal response from Swansea University, provided on behalf of the institution by Professor Helen Griffiths, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation:

Swansea University recognises the ethical considerations and public concern surrounding the use of animals in research. We are committed to the highest standards of animal welfare and ethical conduct in all aspects of our research. While the University has not set a definitive timeline for ending all animal use in research, our practices reflect a strong commitment to the principles of the 3Rs — *Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement* — which guide the responsible use of animals in science.

In particular:

1. **Conservation-led research:** A significant portion of our animal research is conducted in the context of conservation, where the species under study is often the most appropriate model. For example, Swansea University's Centre for Sustainable Aquatic Research (CSAR) was awarded the Animal Health and Welfare Award at the 2025 Annual Aquaculture Awards (20 June 2025), recognising our dedication to the welfare and protection of aquatic species.
2. **Commitment to alternatives:** Where research relates to human health or biomedical advancement, animal models are used only when no viable alternative currently exists. Swansea University actively supports and invests in the development of alternative methodologies, including advanced *in vitro* systems and computational models. Notably, the University is a UK leader in developing *in vitro* approaches for nanoparticle safety assessment — further details can be found on our [Nanotechnology and Safety Research page](#).
3. **Governance and ethical review:** All animal research proposals undergo rigorous ethical scrutiny through our Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB), which ensures that animals are only used when essential, and that research design minimises harm and maximises welfare.
4. **Training and oversight:** All staff and students involved in animal research are trained and regularly assessed to ensure compliance with legal, ethical and scientific standards. This includes adherence to the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) and ongoing evaluation of competency.

Swansea University is also a signatory to the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK and is committed to transparency regarding the use of animals in research.

More information about our approach can be found here: [Animals in Research – Swansea University](#)

We hope this response provides clarity on our current position and the measures we are taking to minimise and ultimately reduce the need for animal use in research. Please do not hesitate to contact us if further information is required.

Yours sincerely,

Olivia Wild

On behalf of Professor Helen Griffiths

Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation

Olivia Wild

Swyddog Portffolio (SLT) | Portfolio Officer (SLT)

Carolyn Thomas MS
Y Pwyllgor Deisebau / Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru/ Welsh Parliament

30th July 2025

Trwy ebost/By email: petitions@senedd.wales

Petition P-06-1497 End Welsh Govt funding of animal experiments and divert funds to modern, human-relevant technologies

Thank you for your letter dated 12th May 2025 and subsequent email dated 22nd July. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Details of the University's position on the use of animal testing as part of our research activity is set out in detail on our website available [here](#). Aberystwyth University abides by the principles of the three R's in animal research: replacement, reduction and refinement which aims to minimising animal use through better experimental and statistical design, obtaining comparable levels of information from fewer animals or obtaining more information from the same number of animals, thereby reducing future use of animals.

Best wishes



Professor Jon Timmis
Vice-Chancellor

Bangor University prioritises the uptake and development of alternative methods to the use of animals in science, and promotes techniques that replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in research (the 3Rs). We adhere to the UK regulatory system for licensing animal studies and enforcing legal standards in the very limited areas of research involving animals at Bangor University.

Bangor University recognises that, in some areas of research, the use of animals in some research remains important in advancing our understanding of biological systems. This research contributes to the development of safe new medicines, treatments and technologies, and in testing chemicals. It helps protect both humans and animals from harm and supports the safety and sustainability of our environment.

At Bangor University, only a small proportion of research projects involve animals, reflecting a strong commitment to minimising their use.