



Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK **Annual Report 2023**

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Foreword

Approaching the ten-year anniversary of the Concordat on Openness, it is extraordinary to see just how far we have come. The Concordat was set up to create an open dialogue about the use of animals in scientific research: a dialogue between those involved with this research and the public for whose ultimate benefit the work is carried out. And that is exactly what it has done. We have witnessed a cultural change in the life-sciences sector, much of it driven by the dedication and imagination of Concordat signatories who are manifestly committed to the spirit of the initiative, never letting it become a mere exercise in ticking boxes.

When the Concordat was launched in May 2014 with 72 signatories, I couldn't imagine the opportunities that would open up for the public to find out about animal research. Ten years on we have lab visits and virtual tours, social media takeovers and events, videos, images, and animal-use statistics that are becoming commonplace on websites. Signatories could have become complacent during this time, but enthusiasm remains high and every year we see the development of new projects in support of openness.

This journey hasn't been without its challenges. The COVID pandemic, for example, had a considerable impact on the way signatories engage with the public, particularly over face-to-face events. But the tide is most definitely turning, and even these in-person events are once again becoming normal. I am sure we will see even greater improvements and innovations in the year to come.

The Concordat is not only embedding change within the UK's life-science sector, but also beyond it. In 2023 we saw the launch of the tenth openness agreement (this one in Australia) and work is well underway towards the launch of an agreement in the US.

I have been Chair of the Concordat's Steering Group since 2012 and am proud of the progress made during this time. As I step down from this position, I want to thank all those involved with the Concordat who have made it such a success. I look forward, with confidence, to seeing what is achieved in the next ten years.



Geoff Watts

Chair of the Steering Group
Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK

Executive summary

About this report

All organisations that have been signed up to the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK for a year or more are required to report on their progress towards greater openness by completing a survey issued by Understanding Animal Research (UAR). This obligation constitutes the fourth commitment of the Concordat. This report is a summary of the survey data received from 121 Concordat signatories: 100% of the organisations that, on 14 May 2023, met the reporting requirement. No formal audit is made to verify the information provided, with the exception of information pertaining to organisations' websites, which is reviewed by UAR.



The annual survey provides a snapshot of the sector's progress towards greater openness on its use of animals in research. This report covers activities that took place during the period May 2022–May 2023.

As in previous years, this report includes case studies that illustrate the innovative work being done by Concordat signatories and the impact it is having.

The Concordat on Openness

The Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK was launched in May 2014. Developed by the life-sciences sector over 18 months, it brings organisations involved in the use of animals for scientific research together to support openness with the public.

Concordat signatories sign up to four commitments:

1. We will be clear about when, how and why we use animals in research
2. We will enhance our communications with the media and public
3. We will be proactive in providing opportunities for the public to learn about animal research
4. We will report annually on our experiences and share practices

Following a review of the Concordat in 2017, signatories have noted the following impacts of the Concordat on the life-sciences research sector:

- Better public access to information about animals in research, directly from those who do the research
- A greater understanding and appreciation of the role of animal care staff, both in and outside the sector
- Increased profile of animal facilities within their establishments, leading to greater investment and better animal welfare
- Better access to see inside animal facilities
- Fewer reactive communications on the use of animals in research, due to more information proactively placed in the public domain

The Concordat is contributing to a culture change in the life-sciences sector that is expected to have an ever-deeper and wider impact as it progresses. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for high-quality public information about biomedical research, including research on animals, became more apparent than ever. Heated disputes and debates about the status and validity of biological science and scientific processes sprang up, with important implications for public health policy. The disputes over the response to COVID-19 were connected to a rise in vocal opposition to biomedical science in many parts of the world.

Activism and direct-action movements have grown in strength and have developed sophisticated misinformation campaigns, starting with those focussed on COVID-19 but not limited to that area. The challenge to research culture and research communications has spread to other areas and has given rise to loud voices which polarise discussions, including those about the need for animal research. Some organisations experienced increasing protest from organised campaign groups. These protests have continued into 2023.



Key areas that have proved challenging for signatories of the Concordat, and where a need for additional support has been noted, are:

- Accurate communication of harms done to animals in research remains a difficult topic for the research community, and although some organisations take steps to provide balanced information, others could provide more
- While many organisations comply with the Concordat, only a few are leading, and others should be encouraged to see the value in taking bolder steps
- Non-academic organisations can find it challenging to work with the media to explain their research to public audiences and many establishments need more support to work with the press
- The role played by non-research organisations within the Concordat should be clarified and steps taken to ensure that the administrative processes provide for and are appropriate to them

In 2019, following consultation with Concordat signatories and the Steering Group, Leaders in Openness was created to recognise organisations that consistently achieve good practice and successfully embed openness in their work. It was agreed when this new standard was created that Leader in Openness status would be held by an organisation for three years, after which they would need to reapply.

The reapplication process required applicants to show how they had developed their work towards openness on animal research between 2020–2022, in particular showing changes that related to aspects of their original (2020) application which were felt to need attention.

This year, the University of Edinburgh was successful in becoming Leader in Openness 2023–2025.



Concordat signatories in 2023

The majority of Concordat signatories are organisations that carry out research on animals. In 2023, 121 signatories to the Concordat on Openness qualified to complete the annual return, of which two thirds (80) are research organisations and the remainder (41) are organisations that do not carry out their own research but fund or otherwise directly support researchers. These supporting organisations include research charities, trade bodies and learned societies.

Progress towards Concordat commitments



Concordat signatories are required to be clear about how, when and why they use animals in research. This requirement has led to a substantial increase in the amount and depth of information about animal research in the public domain. In the past, images from inside research facilities were a rarity, but now signatory organisations increasingly use video, virtual tours and case studies to show what life is like for their animals.

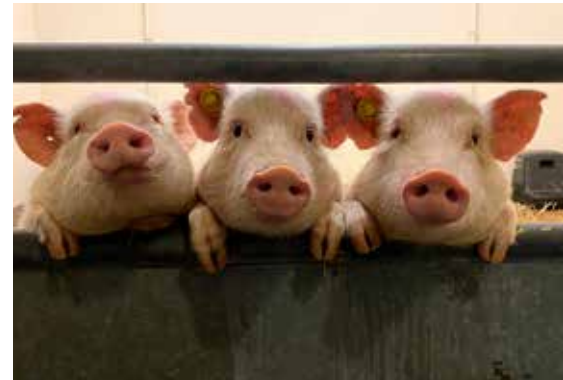
During 2020 and 2021 all work, regardless of sector, was overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many signatories saw their animal facilities restricted, activities shut down and communications teams furloughed. While work was inevitably restricted, signatories adapted to the new situation with a focus on online engagement. The reporting period for the 2023 annual survey was the first since the 2019 annual survey not to include any national lockdowns. This is reflected in an increase in face-to-face engagement, although many activities still haven't recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Online engagement remains at an all-time high even while face-to-face engagement increases with many Concordat signatories continuing to develop their animal research webpages and adding information, images, and videos that explain their research more clearly.

The standard of webpage content is now extremely high, with the majority of signatories going well beyond the minimum requirement of a statement of policy. Many websites include images of research animals and details about the number of animals used or the proportion of projects funded that involve animals. Online engagement, including social media, has been embraced by many signatories and continues to be a popular way to engage different audiences. Previously, there has been a degree of nervousness about the risks of social media, including concerns about the speed at which information is exchanged. This changed during the pandemic, when traditional means of engaging the public with research were restricted and many organisations directed their energies towards increased social media output. Face-to-face engagement activities are returning, and printed sources of information remain important, but we expect social media activities to play an ever-greater role in organisational communications in the coming years.

While all Concordat signatories are required to provide a public-facing policy statement to show clearly why they support the use of animals in research, the number of organisations which provide more extensive information increases every year. The webpages of 61 research signatories now share the numbers and species of animals that are used in their research.

Charities are increasingly open about the research they fund with seven signatory charities providing information about the proportion of their funded research that relates to animal work. This is an important figure to provide, helping charity supporters to better understand how their donations are used and to recognise the value of animals in biomedical research.

Commercial organisations have limitations around information sharing related to their commercial interests and research methods. They may be unable to share information about, for example, the numbers of animals they use in a year. However, these organisations often excel in their application of the 3Rs and invest heavily in animal welfare practices. Despite restrictions, commercial signatories have developed ways to overcome their limitations and provide more accessible information to the public. While numbers of specific species often cannot be reported, it is now accepted practice for commercial organisations to present information about the species used and the proportion of studies they are used for on their public-facing websites.



In previous years signatories have considered staff attitudes and fear of activism to be a significant barrier to openness despite the extremely low levels of violent activism around animal research in the UK. One impact of the pandemic has been to draw public attention to biomedical research, which has led to an increase in activism and campaigns to stop animal research. Fortunately, these campaigns, which started in 2021 and have continued into 2023, do not seem to have impacted the majority of signatories' work towards openness.

When the Concordat was launched, partnership working was a key concern for signatories, but for many organisations this concern has significantly reduced over recent years. Within the academic sector many organisations find that their partners are, themselves, signatories to the Concordat on Openness, while government and charity sectors report that partnerships have provided them with opportunities to explain the importance of openness about animal research and to highlight their position. Commercial and funding organisations which rely on international partnerships find it more challenging to balance their commitments to the Concordat with sensitivity towards the expectations and working policies of their partners. Some commercial organisations are also restricted by confidentiality agreements. These organisations have found formal policies, processes and guidance documents helpful in communicating their Concordat commitments to partners, allowing them to be sensitive to the needs of both parties while encouraging openness when practical.

Providing balanced information that shows the harms as well as the benefits of animal research is an important aspect of the Concordat that ensures its credibility. Concordat signatories are increasingly showing the reality of animals undergoing procedures, such as mice with tumours and animals with headposts, moving away from the tendency to downplay the less palatable aspects of research that had previously been common. Although we still see some minimisation of the more challenging aspects of research, it is increasingly straightforward for those with genuine interest to access balanced information which allows public consideration and scrutiny of animal research. Images, videos and virtual tours from inside animal facilities help to provide this information to the public. Many organisations now talk explicitly about how they use the 3Rs to limit harms and provide details of the actual severity of procedures undergone by their animals.

Providing the media with access to high-quality information about the use of animals in research that they can use to communicate the science effectively has been an aim of the Concordat since its outset. Concordat signatories are encouraged to develop policies and processes to support the provision of information to the media, and to ensure that key people in their organisations understand why this is important. This year, 16 signatories reported that they had a formal media policy in place, while a further 65 followed informal procedures. Sixty-six signatories reported that they had provided staff with training to help them talk to the media about work involving animals.

Concordat signatories are asked to follow good publication standards, such as the ARRIVE guidelines or equivalent. These guidelines are endorsed and actively supported by 79 signatories (including research organisations, learned societies with publications, and funders) and 44 organisations stated that they also use the PREPARE guidelines to underpin ARRIVE. Twenty-two research organisations have developed specific practices for ensuring that the guidelines are followed by researchers, and several commercial organisations employ their own standards based on ARRIVE which are required for all published work. ARRIVE is also relevant to the community of learned societies, a number of which are academic publishers. There is a growing tendency to require that manuscripts submitted to learned societies meet, as a minimum, the top ten ARRIVE guidelines.

Management of the Concordat

UAR manages the Concordat and asks for feedback from signatories on the support they have been given over the year.

Most Concordat signatories (98%) agreed or somewhat agreed that they understand the Concordat commitments and the support available to help fulfil them, and nearly all (99%) saw the Concordat as an important step forward for biomedical research. Only a small proportion of signatories (13%) felt the Concordat would not lead to real changes in their organisations – a decrease since 2022, although a larger minority of organisations (21%) expressed concerns about their ability to meet Concordat commitments.

Most signatories (83%) found the Concordat communications helpful. The newsletter and stand-alone website were seen as particularly useful, providing clear examples that others could follow. Several organisations felt that an additional visit or onsite presentation would be helpful to better inform new staff about the Concordat and how it works.

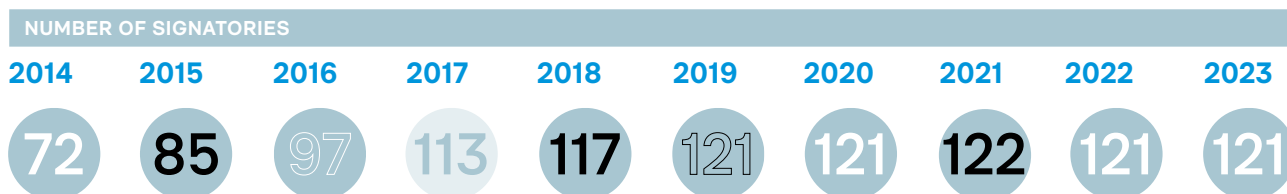
Since the end of the COVID-19 lockdowns UAR has received many requests for site visits, presentations and training to support staff in research and other key roles who are new to the Concordat. UAR is working hard to support understanding of the Concordat on Openness commitments and the best means of achieving them.



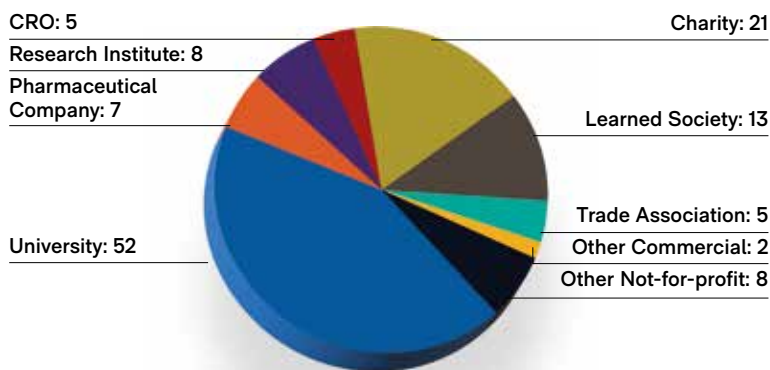


Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK

Commitment 1: We will be clear about when, how and why we use animals in research
Commitment 2: We will enhance our communications with the media and the public about our research using animals
Commitment 3: We will be proactive in providing opportunities for the public to find out about research using animals
Commitment 4: We will report on progress annually and share our experiences



May 2022 – September 2023



80
Organisations that carry out research

41
Organisations that provide support for animal research

14 Leaders in Openness

2021 - 2024 / 2022 - 2025 / 2023 - 2026

AGENDA LIFE SCIENCES
 IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON
 NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
 ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE
 THE BABRAHAM INSTITUTE
 THE FRANCIS CRICK INSTITUTE
 THE INSTITUTE OF CANCER RESEARCH
 THE PIRBRIGHT INSTITUTE
 UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
 UNIVERSITY OF BATH
 UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
 UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
 UNIVERSITY OF READING



Engaging with the Media and the Public

97

signatories communicated their work on the 3Rs with the media and public

63

signatories provided staff with public engagement training on animal research

45

signatories made comments to the media about animal research

69

signatories engaged with the local community about animal research

58

signatories discussed animal research in a media release

45

signatories engaged with schools about animal research

66

signatories provided staff with media training on animal research

47

signatories provided visitors from outside their organisation access to animal facilities

8

signatories provided media access to animal facilities

Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK launched in 2014

TRANSPARENCY AGREEMENTS IN:

Spain launched in 2016
 Portugal launched in 2018
 Belgium launched in 2019
 France launched in 2021
 Germany launched in 2021
 New Zealand launched in 2021
 Netherlands launched in 2021
 Switzerland launched in 2022
 Australia launched in 2023

Engaging with internal stakeholders

85 79 67 64 62 17

signatories gave talks and presentations about the use of animals in research

signatories endorsed and actively supported the ARRIVE guidelines

signatories offered opportunities for non-research staff to visit animal facilities

signatories produced internal newsletters and publications that mention animal research

signatories explicitly mentioned animal research during the recruitment and induction process

signatories offered an open AWERB invitation or included student representatives on the AWERB

Communicating animal research online

66 65 63 37 31 15

signatories mentioned animal research on social media

signatories had images of animal facilities, research animals, or animals undergoing procedures on their websites

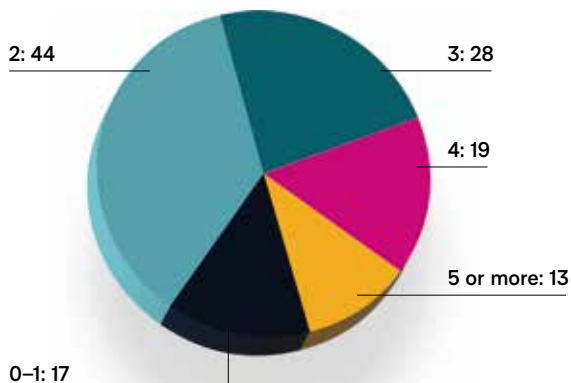
signatories provided details on the number and species of animals used at their institution

signatories provided details on actual severity of animal procedures on their website

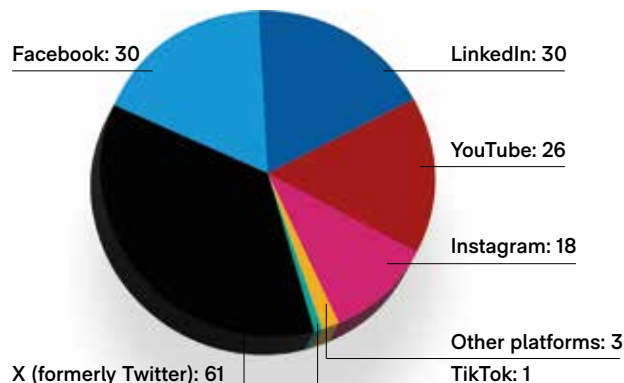
signatories had video footage of animal facilities, research animals, or animals undergoing procedures on their website

signatories provided details on the proportion of their funded research that relates to animal work

Clicks to reach animal research position statement from signatory's homepage



Signatories using social media to talk about animal research



Introduction

The Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK is a voluntary code of practice which sits alongside legislation, providing a structured framework and guidance for the research sector to develop more transparent communications about its use of animals in research. It was the first agreement of its type and has subsequently given rise to similar agreements and practices in nine countries, while several other countries have similar agreements in development.¹



The Concordat was launched in 2014 and this report covers the ninth year of activity by signatories towards meeting its four commitments:

- We will be clear about when, how and why we use animals in research
- We will enhance our communications with the media and public
- We will be proactive in providing opportunities for the public to learn about animal research
- We will report annually on our experiences and share practices

These commitments and the supporting guidance were developed by the UK life-sciences sector over an 18-month period and were directly informed by

a deliberative public process². Public interest in how and why animals are used in scientific research, and public expectations of the information that should be provided about this issue, lie at the heart of the Concordat's aims and the framework for communication that it offers. The four commitments are still considered by the signatories and the Steering Group to be appropriate and have remained the same throughout the lifetime of the Concordat, although guidance and practices around the Concordat have been continually updated to reflect changing circumstances and practices.

To sign the Concordat, organisations must carry out animal research themselves, directly support organisations that use animals in research (for example through funding), support members who carry out or fund animal research, or breed animals for research under Home Office licence (breeders were admitted to the Concordat in 2022). Signatories include academic bodies, pharmaceutical companies, commercial research organisations and breeders, medical research charities, learned societies, research funding bodies and others who are concerned with the accessibility of public-domain information about animal research.

The Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK is managed by UAR and overseen by an independent Steering Group which meets annually. Signatories commit to upholding the four commitments and to ensuring that their rationale for using animals in research is in the public domain.



¹ <https://concordatopenness.org.uk/resources>

² <https://concordatopenness.org.uk/about-the-concordat-on-openness/history-of-the-concordat>



Concordat aims

1. Support confidence and trust in the life-sciences sector
2. Build open dialogue with the public on the reality of the use of animals in research
3. Foster greater openness and practical steps that will bring about transparency around the use of animals in research

Concordat objectives (2017–2023)

1. Improve public access to information about what happens to research animals and why
2. Raise the expectation of openness and transparency around the use of animals in research for research organisations, their funders, animal breeders and other professional organisations associated with animal research
3. Recognise and champion best practice in openness
4. Provide better quality and more accurate information to the media
5. Alert the research community to the risks of secrecy, and provide support for greater transparency, highlighting its benefits for science, animal welfare and communications
6. Gain buy-in for greater openness among practitioners and stakeholders in the animal research sector, from both the top-down and the bottom-up

Culture change supported by the Concordat to date

In 2018 the Concordat was assessed for impacts and, although it was too early to fully determine changes, signatories felt that, alongside other initiatives, the Concordat had led to impacts on:

- Public access to information about animals in research directly from those who do the research
- A greater understanding and appreciation for the role of animal care staff, both in and outside the sector
- Increased profile of animal facilities within their establishments, leading to greater investment and better animal welfare
- Better access to see inside animal facilities
- Fewer reactive communications on the use of animals in research, due to more information proactively available in the public domain

Signatories agreed that many impacts had not, so far, been felt beyond the life-sciences sector itself.

Independent review of research concordats

In 2021, UUK, UKRI and the Wellcome Trust initiated an independent review³ of 12 UK research concordats and the role they play in the UK academic sector. These agreements make a significant contribution to the practices and culture that underpin the broader landscape of UK research. The review aimed to identify learning, areas of commonality, and outcomes. Phases 1 and 2 of this review are now complete, and reports have been published.

All 12 concordats require research organisations to implement a policy, report on compliance and/or develop an action plan to address an issue relevant to research.

Phase 1 of the review highlighted the benefits of these initiatives in focusing institutions on key issues that are easily disregarded, and on promoting inclusivity and support in usually challenging areas. The review found that many organisations, particularly research-intensive higher education institutions, recognised the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research to be an important initiative because of the powerful signal it sends to the research sector.

Phase 2 of the review looked at how the different Concordats might be aligned to enhance their impact on research culture while reducing administrative burdens.



Key benefits of the Concordats:

- They focus the attention of senior leaders on significant issues of relevance to the research sector
- They inform organisational strategy and policies to support high-quality research
- They provide good practice and shared learning, helping to break down silos and encourage collaboration
- They provide a mandate for action on important issues

The review found that research concordats in general, and the Concordat on Openness in particular, improved staff morale and the culture of inclusivity in organisations where they had been adopted. A case study of the Concordat on Openness is cited in the report.⁴

As an example, one of our case study interviews was with an independent research organisation that had a long history of animal research but, until they became a signatory to the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research, had rarely shared details of the work undertaken. Researchers were even secretive with their own families and friends about their work. The concordat was seen to provide a flexible framework and the impetus to adopt a different approach to communicating about the research carried out with animals. With support from leadership, this resulted in putting additional information on their website and hosting a public engagement event, both of which benefited staff as well as the organisation itself. It raised awareness of which other organisations were working with animals, enabling networking and information sharing.

"We had some technicians saying, 'I've never been able to talk to my family about what I do as a job. But I've brought them to this event. And we're talking about it now at home.' They didn't feel that they were in a job where they don't talk about it; in some ways that they were stigmatised. But now they could. They felt proud about what they were doing, how they were supporting science." **STRATEGIC INFLUENCER, RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

³ Research concordats and agreements review www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/publications/research-concordats-and-agreements

⁴ Concordats and agreements: their role in supporting effective research culture and working environments www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2022-03/concordats-agreements-review_0.pdf



Minimum compliance requirements

To meet the minimum requirements of the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research, all signatory organisations must provide a copy of their logo to be displayed on the Concordat website, along with a policy statement outlining their position regarding the use of animals in scientific research. This statement must be unique to the organisation and explain its ethical position on the use of animals with reference to organisational structure, values and research interests. If the organisation supports or funds – rather than carries out – research on animals, the statement should explain why this is the case. These statements must be easily accessible on the organisation website, and clearly linked to from the Concordat on Openness website. The links must be working and provided to UAR annually as part of the reporting process.

Signatories are required to provide an annual report on their progress and activities undertaken towards openness (Commitment 4). A survey is undertaken annually by UAR to support this process. The Concordat on Openness on Animal Research annual report is created from the data collected through the annual survey.

Signatories are also expected to make a commitment to improving internal structures and communications around their use of animals in research. The form of these structural changes will depend on the organisation, but all are expected to commit to a new approach to open communications that will form the basis of their future practices.

Further support and Leaders in Openness

Past reports have highlighted targets for improvement in areas that have proved challenging to signatories and where additional support in taking practical steps towards the Concordat commitments is needed.

In particular, Concordat signatories have identified difficulties in:

- Providing clear and accurate information around harms done to animals
- Taking bold steps to provide open information in the face of potential disapproval
- Working with the media to reach public audiences (this particularly applies to non-academic organisations)
- Identifying a clear role for non-research organisations in moving the Concordat and openness forward

The Leaders in Openness initiative was introduced in 2019 to support and extend the Concordat, providing clearer direction and aims for sector leaders and change-makers around openness on animal research. Leaders in Openness are expected to address not only the four challenges given above, but the longer list of good practice recommendations given below. The ways in which these organisations are actively embedding change are shared widely within the research sector, to provide leadership and stimulate similar practices elsewhere.



Because Concordat signatories come from very different organisations across the life-sciences sector, not all signatories will be able to achieve all the listed recommendations. Concordat organisations are encouraged and supported to find ways that they can achieve more open practices, while remaining mindful of the limitations imposed by their business and organisational structure.

Change following the COVID-19 pandemic

This report covers the period of May 2022 to May 2023, and while there were no official restrictive measures in place during this time, there are enduring effects caused by previous lockdowns, travel restrictions, and rapid changes to working practices in 2020 and 2021. All sectors were severely affected by the pandemic, but the academic sector, which accounts for the largest proportion of signatories to the Concordat on Openness, saw possibly the most dramatic and long-lasting changes.

Some animal facilities were stretched to capacity to meet an intense workload, while others were reduced to a minimum operation. The charity and education sectors saw great changes to their business models as public engagement moved online, the focus of media attention shifted, and students and volunteers no longer joined together in shared physical spaces.

As this period has drawn to a close it has taken some time to move back to the way we used to work. While changes to online engagement, particularly social media and remote workshops, are welcome because of the opportunities they provide for reach and inclusivity, many openness initiatives around media and public engagement have stopped or greatly changed over the past three years. Staff who had worked on technical issues around animal research have now moved on, and those who have taken their place may not fully understand the importance of open communication.

Changes to funding and the direction of some institutions mean that three organisations are leaving the Concordat, but we have also welcomed three new signatories.

The dramatic changes to working practices across every sector throughout 2020 and 2021 continue to impact this report. However, now that we are seeing a return to meetings and face-to-face events, we hope to see a rapid return to previous levels of outreach enhanced by the flexibility provided by improved online content.



Good-practice recommendations for signatory organisations, compiled from previous reports on the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK

Good practice about how, when and why animals are used in research

- Follow UAR / RSPCA guidance to provide more balanced information, acknowledging harms as well as benefits of animal research, including commenting critically on models that they use
- Develop communication resources to move sector-based discussions that review, critique and evaluate protocols using animals into the public domain
- ARRIVE Guidelines (or equivalent standard) are actively endorsed, and supported by a process that checks compliance
- Actively support information sharing between animal facility and communications staff through processes and organisational structures (such as communications representatives on AWERB)
- Ensure non-technical summaries of research projects clearly communicate their objectives, harms, benefits and 3Rs considerations to lay audiences, making these, or other research summaries, available through the organisation's website

Openness with staff, students, members and supporters

- Mention animal research during staff recruitment, ideally at interviews for all staff
- Include an animal facility tour in the induction process for new staff
- Offer an animal facility tour to existing non-research staff⁵
- Provide seminars or publications on the ethics of using animals in research to staff, students or members
- Hold AWERB sessions that are open to all staff
- Include a student representative position on the AWERB or ethics committee
- Offer work experience in the animal facility
- Recognise individuals who have made outstanding contributions to openness through internal awards

Partnerships and working with others

- Ensure recipients of grants, prizes or funding are made aware of their funders' commitments under the Concordat and the importance of openness about the use of animals in research
- Have a partnership or collaboration policy which outlines commitments and expectations under the Concordat when working with non-signatories

⁵ Possibly via another organisation (such as UAR)



Providing accessible information to the public

- Enquiries from the public about animal research are provided with direct responses wherever possible, with supporting resources available to answer common questions
- Reception and other frontline staff are trained to respond to enquiries about animal research
- Make a substantial amount of material about how, when and why animals are used in (their) scientific research openly available through their organisation's website
- Share the species and numbers (or proportions) of any animals used in their research
- Grant-awarding organisations share the proportion and value of grants awarded that fund animal research
- Encourage staff (including researchers where applicable) to undertake training for speaking with public audiences or media about the use of animals in research

Communicating through the media

- Where animals have been used in research, any media communications mention the species used
- Partnership agreements include expectations of how animal research should be communicated to the media (even where clients are a step removed)
- Have an access procedure for press looking to visit animal facilities
- Actively engage with (local or national) media requests to join panels or participate in interviews about animal research
- Provide media training for key spokespeople, supporting them to engage with the media on their organisation's use of animals in research

Supporting engagement with the use of animals in research

- Produce guidelines to support researchers and others in planning public engagement events around animal research
- Participate in programmes to allow interested members of the public to see inside animal facilities, including remote or virtual tours
- Participate in science festivals or other public engagement events
- Hold family or community days that staff can participate in and talk about their animal work

About this report

The first part of this report summarises the information provided by Concordat signatories under the fourth commitment of the Concordat on Openness. It describes activities and approaches to openness and provides a picture of how communications are improving under the Concordat and where there is still some distance to go.



The second part of the report provides a series of case studies that illustrate how leading Concordat signatories have met good practice recommendations and created excellent, transparent communications around their use of animals in research.

Data collection methodology

This report is based on data collected from signatories through an electronic survey. The survey was distributed in May 2023 and was completed by all signatories within 12 weeks. Survey questions remained similar to previous years in order to show trends. Research and non-research organisations answered separate sets of survey questions.

Responses were provided by the named signatory contact, but most represent a co-ordinated response on behalf of the organisation, and it is usual for a committee such as the Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body (AWERB) to be involved in drafting the response.

Data was analysed using SmartSurvey's in-built survey analysis software and by manually theming and coding qualitative data.

In most cases the views and activities described in the report were volunteered by signatories and have not been externally assessed or audited. The exceptions to this are around points of compliance such as the structure of webpages and the placement of policy statements on institutional websites, which are checked and verified by UAR.

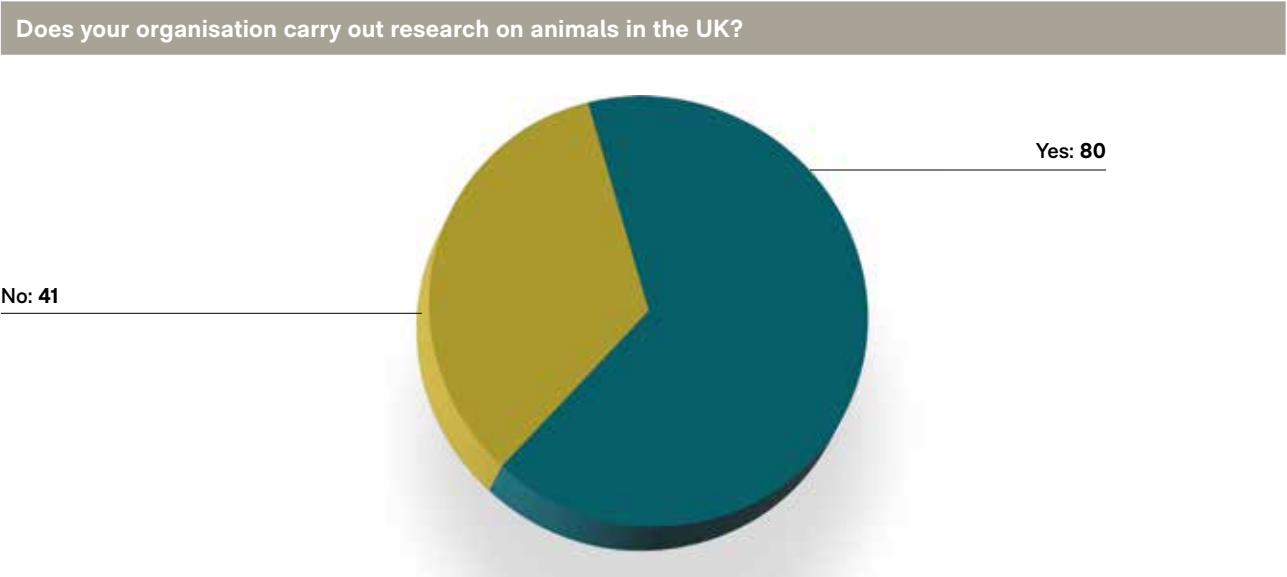
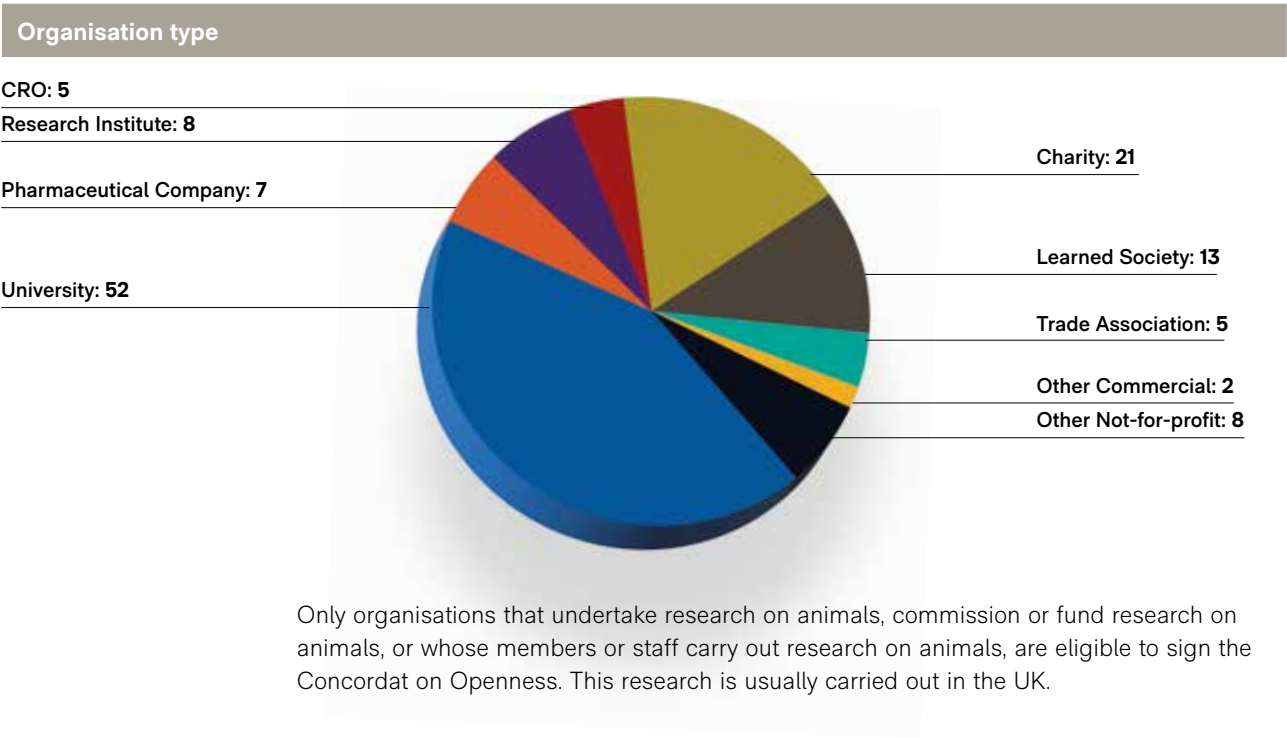
Organisations were not asked to provide responses to every question. Throughout the report respondent numbers are provided as absolute values, reflecting the changing number of total respondents for each question. As in previous reports, the names of organisations have been removed to allow organisations to report their experiences freely. Where organisations are quoted, the type of organisation (charity, university, commercial, etc) is indicated to provide context.



Concordat signatories in 2023

In May 2023 there were 121 signatories of the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK who met the requirements to complete the annual return, reporting on their progress.

Completion and return of the survey is required as a condition of membership of the Concordat on Openness, and data was returned by all 121 eligible organisations in 2023.



Nearly half of Concordat signatories (43%) are universities that use animals in their academic research. The majority of signatories (66%) directly carry out research on animals in their own facilities. A third of signatories (34%) do not themselves conduct animal research but commission or support research that is undertaken by other organisations.

PART ONE

Progress in openness on animal research in the UK

May 2022 – May 2023



Commitment 1

We will be clear about how, when and why we use animals in research

This Commitment seeks to ensure that all organisations acknowledge, both internally and externally, that they or their members carry out or fund animal research. It also seeks to ensure that they are transparent about the use of animals in that research. All signatories are expected to agree to these basic principles of openness, which underpin the whole of the Concordat.

1.1 Harms and benefits

When we communicate about the use of animals in research, we should provide accurate descriptions of the benefits, harms and limitations of such research, be realistic about the potential outputs of such research, and be open about its impact on animal welfare and the ethical considerations involved.

“To provide information on harms: percentages of each severity are provided plus a few examples as to what may occur within each severity category. We avoid the term ‘cure’ and try to ensure that only realistic information is provided on the University central webpages. We explain how research is regulated, why we use animals in our research. We explain the harms and benefits. We also explain the alternatives to animal research and their limitations.” – UNIVERSITY

Providing transparent information about the balance of harms to the animals and benefits to research is central to the Concordat on Openness. It is important that openness includes information about the experience of the animals, acknowledging that, no matter how well they are cared for, they will experience harm in the process of scientific research.

Openness means providing information that allows people to make up their own minds about the ethics of animal research. It means accepting that research can only be carried out with a public mandate, and there is, therefore, a legitimate public interest in having access to sufficient information to make a fair judgement about whether that mandate should be extended. Signatories are expected to provide balanced information that highlights the benefits of research but also acknowledges harms inflicted on the animals.

Determining the right tone and balance of information in that context can be difficult. In most organisations there is a natural tendency to emphasise the positives – the quality of research and, especially, the health benefits it promotes – rather than directing attention to animal harms, ethical complexities and procedural grey areas.

For some communications teams, animal research can seem like a bad-news story that must be mitigated or played down, or they may, themselves, be uneasy about the idea of animal research and feel uncomfortable discussing it. Many signatories are concerned about releasing information that might show their research or institution in a negative light, while others feel that mentioning harms may open the door for their work to be misrepresented or taken out of context. However, telling only one side of the story is misleading and weakens public confidence. The sector's credibility depends on providing a realistic picture of what animal research means for the animals. That picture is what reviewers and commentators from the general public most often tell us they are looking for. Encouragingly, most are extremely surprised at the quality, breadth and comprehensiveness of information available to them when they are directed to look at resources provided by signatories under review.

As a minimum, signatories are expected to discuss their approach to the 3Rs on their websites, illustrating key aspects of their approach to animal welfare. Even better is to publish statements or webpages that summarise and explain the discussions of their ethics committees about the acceptability of different types of research and the circumstances under which various protocols are permitted. Best practice includes discussion of the 3Rs and highlighting the experience of animals through case studies.

Increasingly, signatories that carry out research on animals (research signatories) provide indicators of the severity of procedures on their public-facing webpages; 37 research signatories currently do this, the highest number we have ever reported. Eight research signatories reported that they show images of animals that have clearly been harmed undergoing a procedure, such as mice with visible tumours.

Half of all research signatories (40) publish summaries of their research on their websites. A number of organisations have suggested that they will place a greater emphasis on the analysis of harms and benefits in their research summaries in the future, giving visitors to their webpages a better insight into the ethical deliberations that are involved and the likely experience of the animals in each project. The number of signatories providing this type of information is increasing year on year, as research signatories develop a greater understanding of how balanced information can be provided.

“Our scoring system for openness events has a criterion for ethical reflection and this rates the activity on how much detail it has given about animal research including harms, limitations and benefits.” – PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY

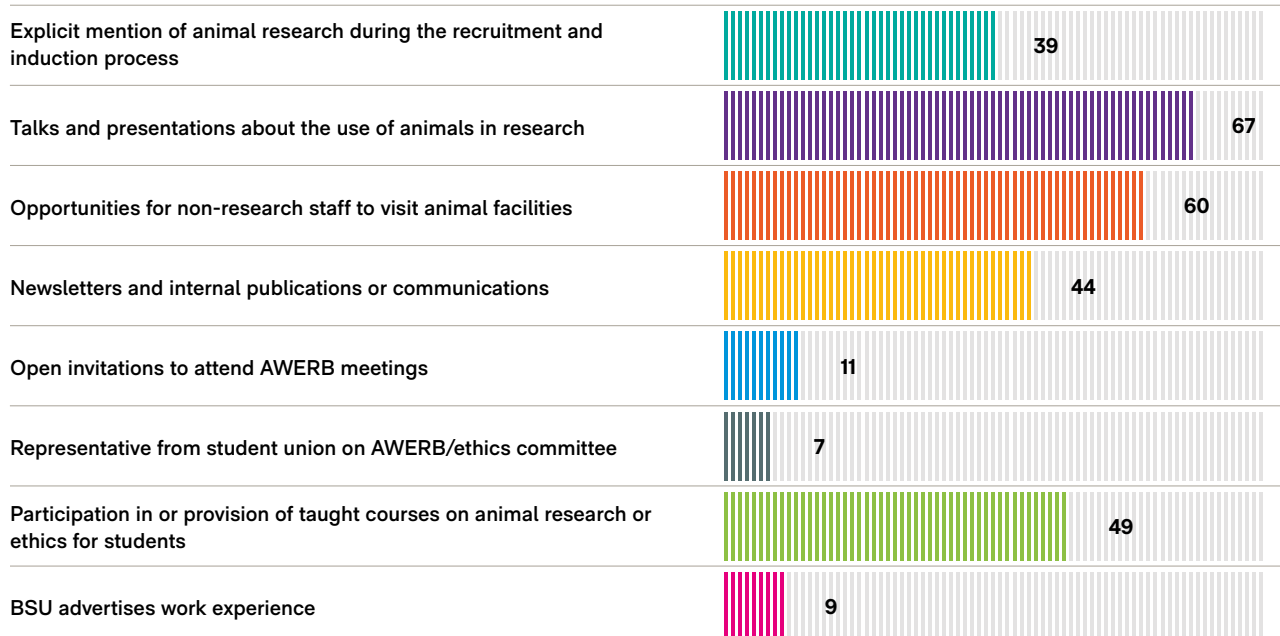
For commercial organisations, which are bound by extensive regulations around competition, intellectual property and commercial sensitivities, public discussion of harms and benefits can be more difficult to achieve. However, the contribution of these organisations to research sector discussions on mitigating harms, improving experimental design and supporting better animal care is substantial. Internal and sector-facing communications about animal use, even within very large organisations, can be frank, honest and accessible, leading the way with initiatives such as open ethics committees and promoting global standards of animal care.

1.2 Staff awareness

We will take steps to ensure that staff (and students, where relevant) are aware of our organisation's involvement with or support for the use of animals in research.

"At staff interview, we make candidates aware that the charity funds research involving animals. Staff who are interacting directly with our supporters and the public are provided with a FAQ sheet to help them answer any questions about animal research. All staff can also access our leaflet, policy web pages, case studies and blog on animal research." – RESEARCH CHARITY

Do you make your use of animal research clear to researchers, staff or students, beyond those who work directly with animals, through any of the following? (Research signatories n=77)



Do you make your support of animal research clear to researchers, staff or students, beyond those who work directly with animals, through any of the following? (Non-research signatories n=33)



Under the Concordat, research signatories are asked to ensure that all staff are aware that animal research is carried out by their organisation. In the past, staff whose role was not directly connected with the use of animals in research, such as those in administrative roles or other departments, sometimes had no knowledge of the animal work. The Concordat encourages signatories to be open with staff, students, and others internal to the organisation, enabling concerns to be voiced and providing accessible information to those who want to know more.

Since the Concordat was launched, signatories have developed many initiatives to raise the profile of the animal facilities within their organisations, and this process is considered by many to be a great success of the Concordat. Many signatories have excelled in this crucial area, which ensures that animal research is no longer conducted in an atmosphere of secretiveness. Increasingly, staff from research institutions understand that animal research is not something done elsewhere and by other people, but something that happens where they work and that they can understand the need for. If they are uncomfortable, they are now able to make it known and find out more, dispelling misinformation by improving transparency.

It is now considered good practice for animal facilities to advertise positions openly, allow non-research staff to visit the animal facility and to include interview questions highlighting that the organisation carries out animal research as part of the recruitment process for all staff, regardless of their role. For some organisations, recruitment processes are more structured, ensuring that new starters understand how animal research fits into the structure and ethics of the organisation.

Opportunities for non-research staff to visit the animal facilities are offered by most research signatories (60), a figure that is now close to the pre COVID-19 level of engagement. Working conditions mean that not all research signatories are able to offer lab tours, but many are now offering virtual tours as an alternative way of letting a wide range of staff and interested members of the public experience the reality of life inside an animal facility.

“Our Openness Champion trialled an interactive virtual tour of the animal facility. They were situated in a lecture room with Pharmacology Year 1 students, and, using Teams via a mobile phone link, the facility manager used the phone's camera to walk the students around the facility. The facility manager talked about all aspects of animal care and welfare, the 3Rs and the Concordat on Openness and students could ask questions during the tour via the live link.” – UNIVERSITY



Non-research signatories are asked to make their use of or support for using animals in research clear to internal stakeholders, including staff, grant holders and supporters. Most non-research signatories (23) explicitly mention animal research during their recruitment processes. Seven non-research signatories also provide their staff with opportunities to visit animal facilities and learn about the research carried out first-hand.

Very small organisations are encouraged to consider how this commitment could be applied to the appointment of outside contractors and agencies such as accountants, auditors, insurance companies and web designers as well as employees. The ultimate aim is to ensure that everyone who works with Concordat signatories has an informed understanding of their connection to animal research.

It is important that staff feel comfortable when talking to their friends and family about their job and how it is connected to the research involving animals carried out or supported by their organisation. Forty-four signatories provide training, either through UAR or in-house, to support their researchers and other staff to talk about this topic with confidence.



"Researchers and staff that are engaging directly with the public are provided with a booklet of FAQs. This includes information on how to respond to questions from the public regarding animal research. We also provide copies of our leaflet on animal research if people would like to find out more, and the leaflet is stocked at [charity] shops to help staff respond to any inquiries." – RESEARCH CHARITY



1.3 Explaining involvement with the use of animals in research

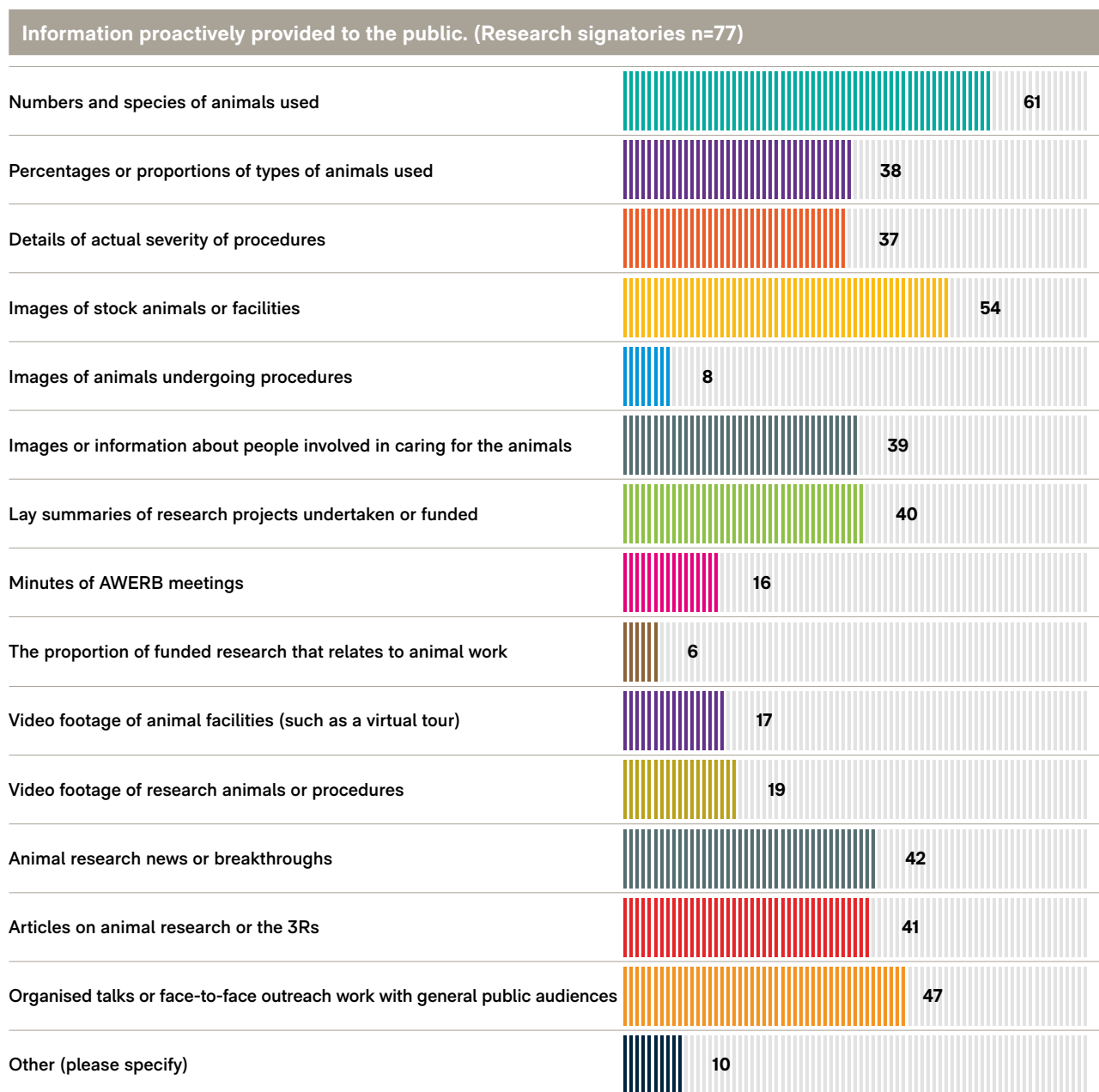
We will be prepared to provide information explaining our involvement with the use of animals in research and will be prepared to respond to reasonable enquiries about the nature of the animal research we support. Where there are reasons not to respond to enquiries, we will explain those reasons to the enquirer.

“We held a Celebration Day for staff and their family. Staff were invited to bring along family members for a day of discovery, interaction and celebration. Teams and research groups from across the Institute presented interactive exhibits, hands-on experiences, and competitions to inspire and educate people of all ages. The Institute holds a stall at the annual village fair which provides a great opportunity to meet with the local community and the wider general public to promote the work carried out at [the Institute].” – RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The amount of information that Concordat signatories provide proactively increases every year. As a minimum, signatories are required to have a public-facing statement explaining their policy and approach to animal research on their website, but most see this only as a starting point and go much further, developing online content that explores their use of animals in great detail and in a manner that is attractive and easily accessible to non-specialist readers.












For research signatories, these resources include information on the numbers and types of animals used in research (61), the percentages or proportions of types of animals used (38), and details of actual severity of procedures (37). This information was not publicly available from any UK organisation prior to the launch of the Concordat on Openness.

For business reasons around competitiveness and confidentiality, many commercial signatories have felt unable to discuss the numbers of animals they use, and instead describe only the species and relative proportions of animals, but this is beginning to change with some commercial organisations starting to publish the numbers of animals that they use in research.

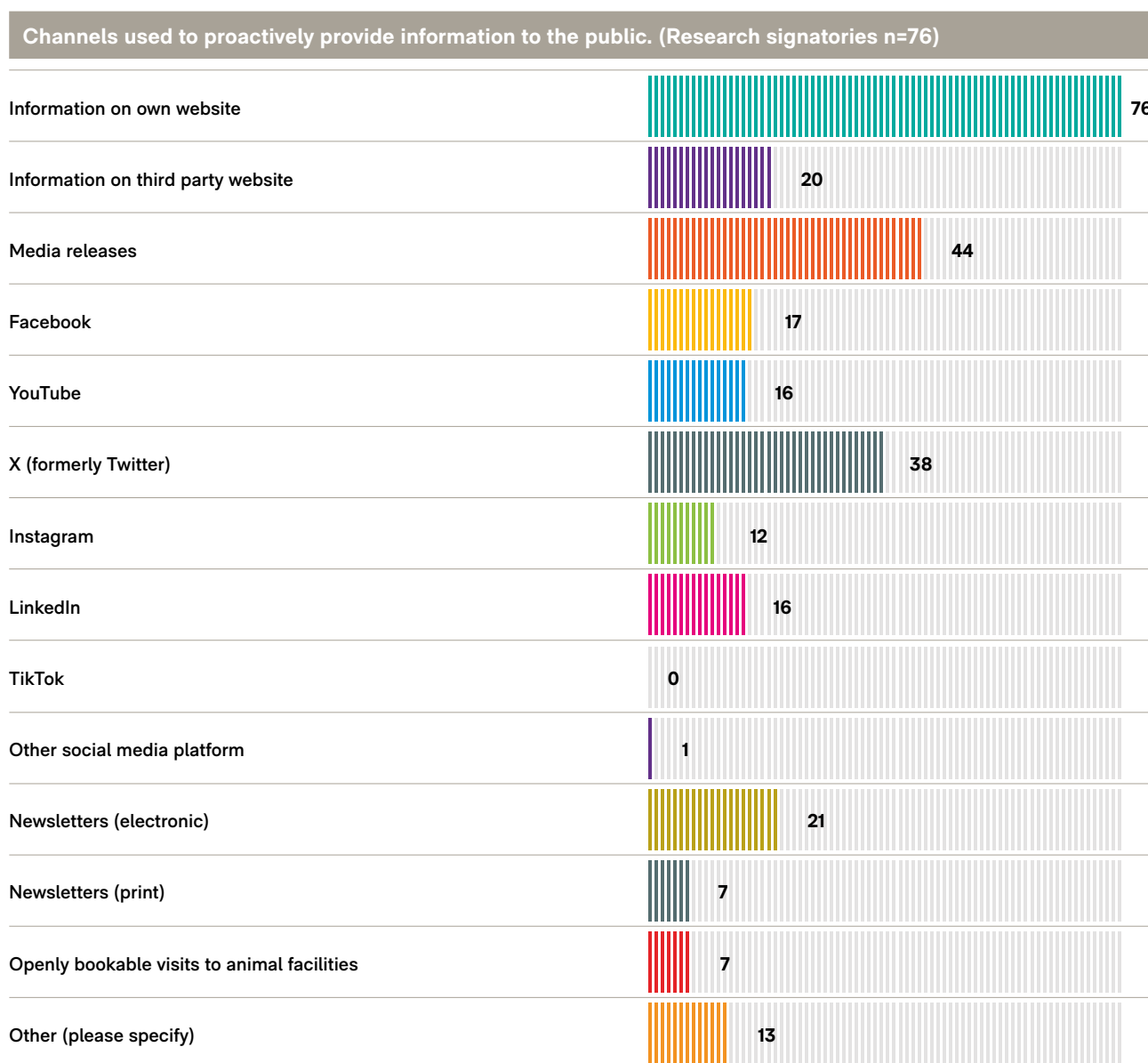


The number of signatories carrying out organised talks and outreach events (55) is at an all-time high as the disruption caused by the pandemic fades. These events are aimed at a variety of audiences including the general public, internal staff, and friends and family of employees. Some commercial signatories are very large employers and are able to engage large numbers of people through internal communications initiatives.

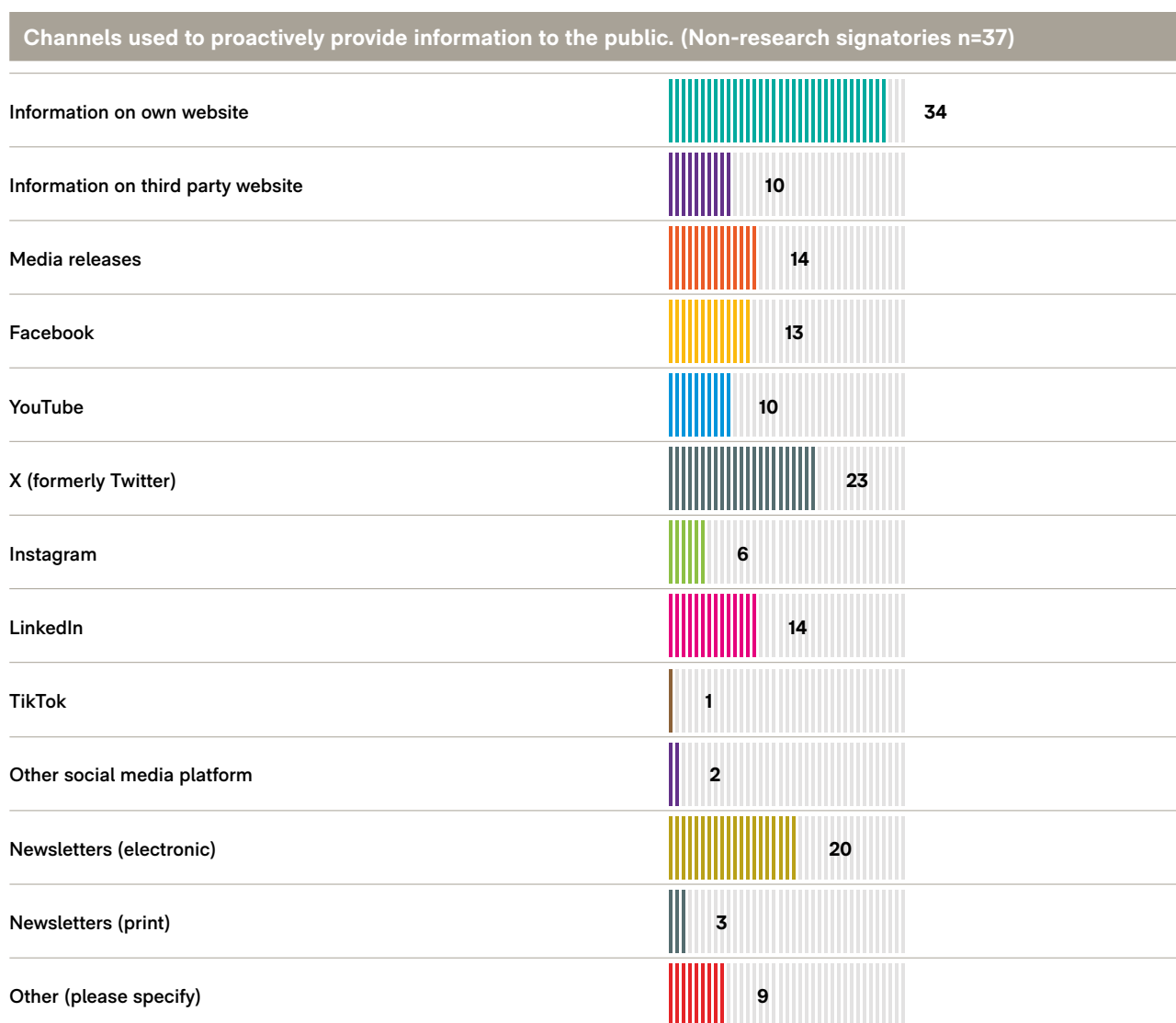
Information proactively provided to the public. (Non-research signatories n=37)

Images of stock animals or facilities		9
Images of animals undergoing procedures		3
Images or information about people involved in caring for the animals		8
Lay summaries of research projects funded or carried out by members		23
The proportion of funded research that relates to animal work		9
Video footage of research animals or procedures		3
Video footage of animal facilities (such as a virtual tour)		3
Animal research news or breakthroughs		17
Articles on animal research or the 3Rs		21
Organised talks or face-to-face outreach work with general public audiences		8
Other (please specify)		9





"The University has a dedicated section of the website for animal research which includes animal numbers, project summaries and news stories, as well as the University's position statement and FAQs on animal research. Additional information is provided via web articles, video including YouTube, social media posts (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and, occasionally, Instagram) and media releases." – UNIVERSITY

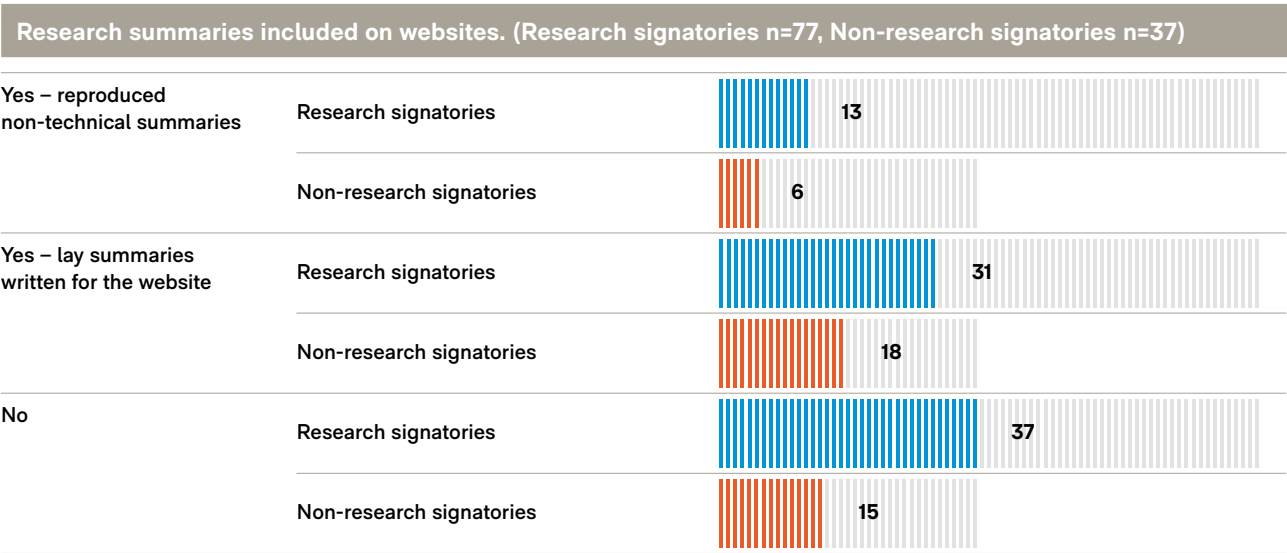


Signatories are increasingly active in sharing animal research information on social media, with X (formerly known as Twitter) being the most popular platform, used by half of all signatories (61). In recent years we have seen novel social media initiatives from signatories such as infographics, Instagram takeovers, and vlogs that have been particularly successful in engaging younger and more diverse audiences. After X, Facebook (used by 30 signatories) and YouTube (used by 26 signatories) are the most popular social media platforms reaching a variety of audiences from the general public to the life-sciences sector.

The more traditional approaches to proactive communications have not been neglected either. Both research and non-research signatories actively promote animal research stories to the press and to third party websites, often providing photos and videos of animals and their facilities.

Non-research organisations have often felt less well placed to contribute to public communications as they do not themselves carry out research. However, as the Concordat has developed, many societies and funders have come to better understand the opportunities presented in communicating with their members and stakeholders on the significant – if sometimes small – role of animal research in their work. These are important and often influential audiences, and it is clear that non-research organisations have a key role to play in public communication and openness.

Animal facility tours are becoming more common, and the ability to deliver these virtually has made them possible for facilities that have wet barriers, containment issues or security concerns. Virtual tours are not necessarily an easy or inexpensive option, but they hugely expand the opportunities for public engagement of this sort and have become valuable aids for teaching and recruitment.



“We do not perform research as an organisation but do have some public statements and webpages explaining how animals are used in toxicology, and how our members use animals in their research.” – LEARNED SOCIETY

Every year the number of signatories that publish non-technical summaries and/or other forms of research case studies on their websites increases. This year, 40 research signatories and 22 non-research signatories, including a number of charities that fund medical research, reported including this information. Although some non-research signatories felt that they were unable to offer case studies, others have overcome this obstacle by partnering with other signatories to share information about the types of research they fund or support.

Three research signatories were concerned that their small size would allow their research groups to be identified through published research summaries. However, one of these institutions said that, despite these concerns, the majority of academics agree to these summaries being published.



“Where possible we publish the non-technical summaries of current project licences ... together with details of the potential adverse effects on the animals and how to minimise these adverse effects ... these NTS often will be easy to associate with particular researchers. Despite this, the vast majority of academics agree to these being published on our website.” – UNIVERSITY

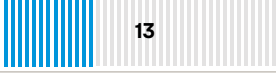

The principal obstacle to increasing public communications remains, in most cases, a lack of resources, although a reluctance from some researchers to be named in communications, and risk-averse fundraising and marketing teams are also factors. Some organisations where commitment to openness has been strong have become the focus of active campaigns from pressure groups which have caused considerable stress to staff and consequently an understandable tendency towards greater caution and reticence. Some organisations noted that the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent reprioritisation of resources have limited what has been possible towards furthering their Concordat objectives.

1.4 Partnership working

Where signatories to the Concordat are working together on a research project, all the relevant parties will agree to take an open approach to communications about the research and to support their partners in this. Where there are partnerships with non-signatory organisations or there are issues of confidentiality or commercial sensitivity, signatory organisations will be as open as possible in sharing information with the public while respecting these constraints.

“Partnerships with other Concordat signatories and colleagues have in fact increased our focus on openness.” – LEARNED SOCIETY

**Have you implemented any of the following practices when working in partnership?
(Research signatories n=39, Non-research signatories n=20)**

A policy in place outlining requirements around openness on animal research when working in partnership	Research signatories		14
	Non-research signatories		8
Guidance for staff to encourage openness when working in partnership	Research signatories		13
	Non-research signatories		14
Participation in or the delivery of meetings and events to facilitate partnerships and ensure openness around animal research	Research signatories		29
	Non-research signatories		9

For the majority of signatories, working in partnership with others is seen as a benefit and an opportunity to share practices that encourage openness. Many signatories report that all their partners are Concordat signatories, and that if they were not, sign-up would be expected.

For a small number of signatories there are sensitivities around partnerships where cultures and values may be very different from one another. In particular, signatories involved with overseas partnerships may encounter practices and expectations that present obstacles to meeting Concordat commitments. These signatories may find that developing policies that specify their expected culture of openness as well as animal welfare norms would be helpful in managing expectations and ensuring clarity for new projects when working in partnership.

Commercial partnerships can present particular difficulties due to commercial and security interests and confidentiality clauses. Commercial research organisations do not have the freedom to communicate about specific pieces of work in the way that other organisations are able to; there are additional limitations on their communications. While, for example, they may provide images of animals on a study to a third-party website, they may not be able to provide details of particular trials or the partners they work with.

“Where [the university] works in partnership on animal research-based projects with other organisations, we require such partners to accept and commit to the same principles of openness. Preferably we seek for such partners to also be signatories to the Concordat.” – UNIVERSITY





Commitment 2

We will enhance our communications with the media and the public

The purpose of this Commitment is to ensure that relevant details about signatories' involvement in the use of animals in research are readily accessible by the public. It builds on Commitment 1 by outlining some of the practical steps that organisations can take to facilitate their communications around animal research.

2.1 Position statements on animal research

Within one year of signing up to the Concordat we will make a policy statement about the use of animals in research available via our own websites, to provide clear information about the nature of our own involvement with animal research and its role in the wider context of our research aims, and link this to a central portal, publicly available on the Understanding Animal Research (UAR) website, or provide this information to UAR for inclusion in the portal.

"In 2022, we completed an overhaul of our external pages on animal research. Images of laboratory animals were included for the first time. To communicate the role animal research plays in the discovery and development of new medicines and vaccines we have an open position statement on animal research and the 3Rs in a new public policy position. Our new public policy position is linked from the webpages on the 'responsible care and use of animals at [company]' and also listed alongside other corporate policies." – PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY

All Concordat signatories are required to have a public-facing position or policy statement online that clearly explains the organisation's rationale, including their ethical position, for supporting the use of animals in research.

All 121 Concordat signatories have public-facing position statements online, which are linked to from the Concordat website. Each year signatories provide UAR with a URL to their statement so that the Concordat website can be maintained. UAR periodically checks links throughout the year to make sure they are active and that the Concordat website is up to date.

Signatories are strongly encouraged to see their position statements as a minimum requirement of openness and to create webpages with full and extensive information about the animal research they carry out, fund, or support, bringing some of the vast amount of information that is held in members' filing systems and intranets into public view.

The Concordat has been instrumental in a huge increase in the amount of information about animal research that is available online, including detailed information about research practices and the animals kept in animal facilities. Many websites now exceed the minimum requirements and set a new standard for best practice in openness. These websites include information on numbers and species of animals used, proportions of grants or funded research involving animals, examples of research projects in lay language, information on the 3Rs and animal welfare, videos, images, and details of harms experienced by the animals such as severity statistics. More organisations are now using digital content such as videos, virtual tours and infographics to provide in-depth and accessible information.

It is an ambition of the Concordat that this information should be easily accessible to everyone and not just those actively seeking it out, so it is important that these pages can be reached from website homepages within a few clicks and without searching. The majority of Concordat signatories (89) now provide this information on pages that can be reached in three clicks or fewer from their homepage.

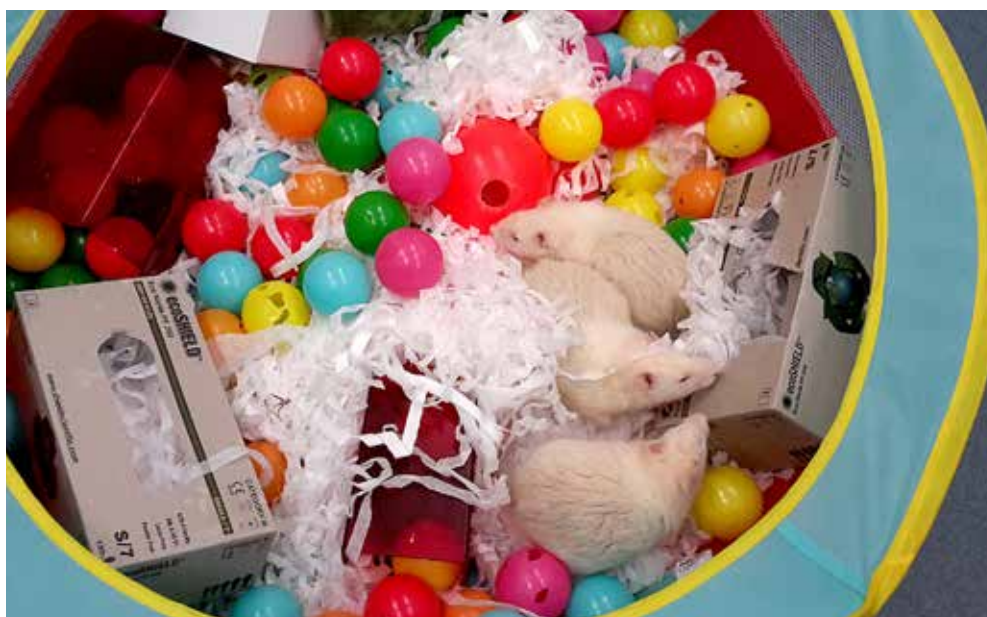
A full list of URLs for all animal research policy statements is provided in the appendix.

2.2 Inclusion of animal research in communications and media releases

Where animal research has played a significant role in a scientific advance and/or product development, we will include information about that animal research in relevant communications, including media releases.

"Press releases we issue are reproduced as news stories on our dedicated animal research web pages so that people can easily find out about the kinds of animal research we carry out. Before media releases are prepared about studies involving animal research, the University's media team liaise with senior colleagues in Bioresearch & Veterinary Services to discuss any possible sensitivities and improve information sharing." – UNIVERSITY

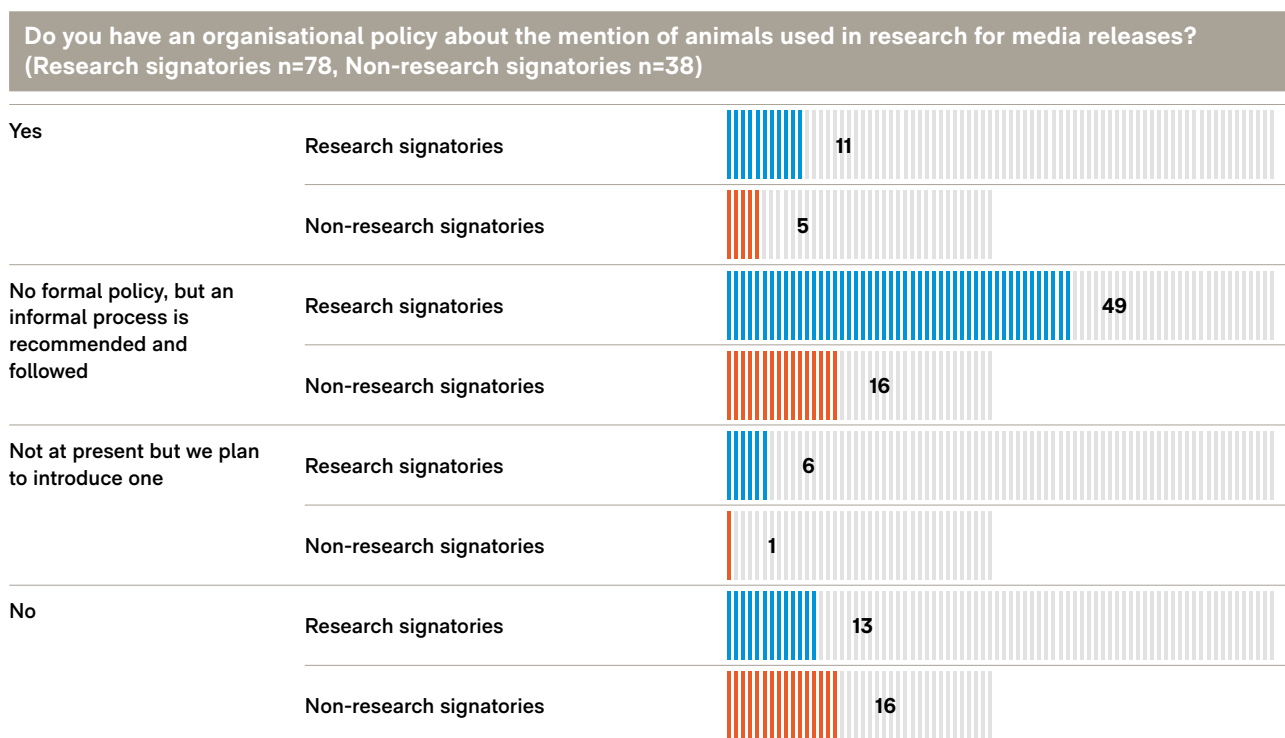
Many Concordat signatories have capable press offices which now include stories and comments about animals in science as standard practice. Signatories have reported many ways of engaging with the media about their involvement with animal research, including commenting to the media on a general issue around animal research (23), providing reactive comment to the media (19), providing proactive comments to the media (24), providing panel members for press conferences or briefings (3), arranging media access to animal facilities (8) and providing interviews or long-form pieces where the use of animals in research was a key topic (16). While these numbers are still reduced compared to media engagement before the pandemic, they have increased compared to last year.



**Have your organisation, researchers or staff provided any of the following in the last year?
(Research signatories n=42, Non-research signatories n=8)**

Comment to the media on a general issue around animal research	Research signatories		18
	Non-research signatories		5
Reactive comment to the media regarding your own use of animals in research	Research signatories		17
	Non-research signatories		2
Proactive comment to the media regarding your own use of animals in research	Research signatories		22
	Non-research signatories		2
Panel member for a press conference or briefing on animal research	Research signatories		2
	Non-research signatories		1
Arranged media access to animal facilities	Research signatories		8
	Non-research signatories		0
Interviews or long-form pieces where the use of animals in research was a key topic	Research signatories		15
	Non-research signatories		1





The adoption of a formal policy that requires animal research to be proactively included in media releases and media enquiries is recommended good practice for Concordat signatories. Such a policy helps ensure that expectations around openness are fully understood and saves time when handling media enquiries. A majority of signatories (81) reported that they either have a formal policy in place or that an informal process is recommended and followed. Where media policies are used by organisations, they describe what information should be included in press releases, how to handle media enquiries, how pictures of research animals should be used, and how lab visits should be conducted.

“We will not issue press releases from our own press office, or approve press releases jointly issued with other organisations, if these do not make clear that animals were involved in the research, if this was the case.” – UNIVERSITY

Signatories are recommended to include information about the animal research they carry out, fund, or support in other forms of communication such as annual reports and official documents, public-facing leaflets and brochures, and magazines and posters. Animal research details are now included in annual reports by 30 signatories, while 21 signatories reported that they communicate about animal research in leaflets and brochures. Signatories have also included animal research in annual reviews, public newsletters, policy papers and on social media.

Concordat signatories represent a wide range of organisations, and not all are public facing or regularly involved with the press. In these cases, they are more likely to engage in proactive communications by other means, such as expert panels and briefing sessions. For example, commercial organisations and smaller, not-for-profit organisations rarely issue media releases about their animal work but often have established communication channels with stakeholders and policymakers where they lead on communications around the 3Rs and publication standards.



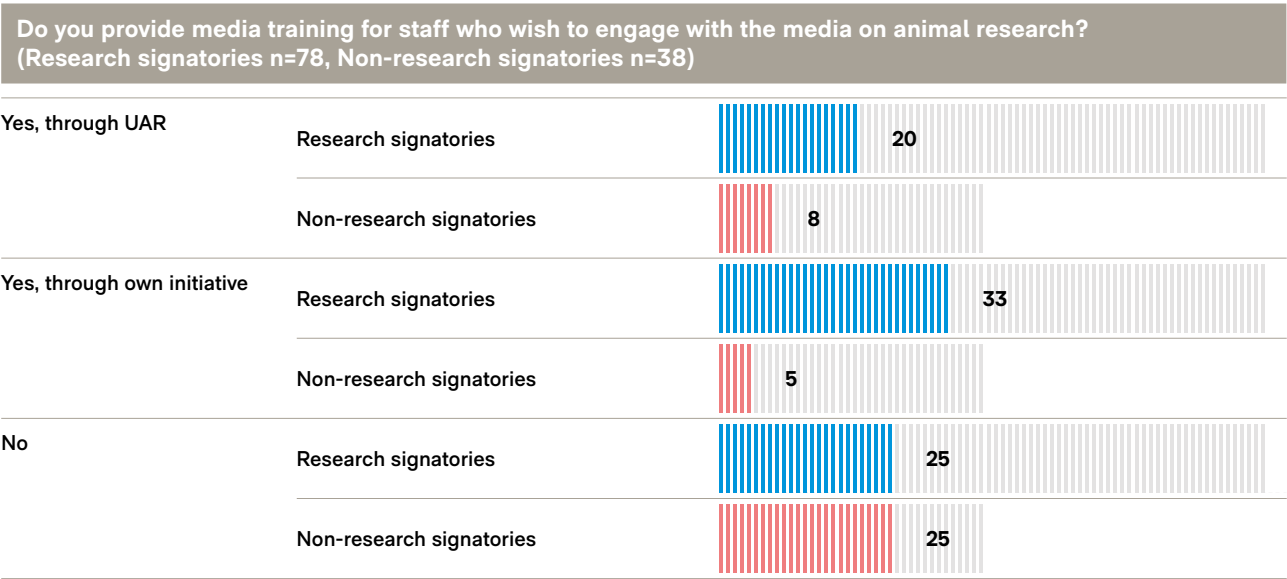
“As a Learned Society there are limits to what we can do to meet this commitment as we do not ourselves carry out research or have facilities to invite media or public to visit. We encourage our members to fulfil this commitment further through their own establishment or society.” – **LEARNED SOCIETY**

2.3 & 2.4 Support for media and public engagement on animal research

We will support and encourage researchers and staff who wish to engage with the media where this does not conflict with normal operational procedures.

We will identify a point of contact for information about the organisation’s involvement in the use of animals in research and will aim to provide one or more spokespeople to talk about this use.

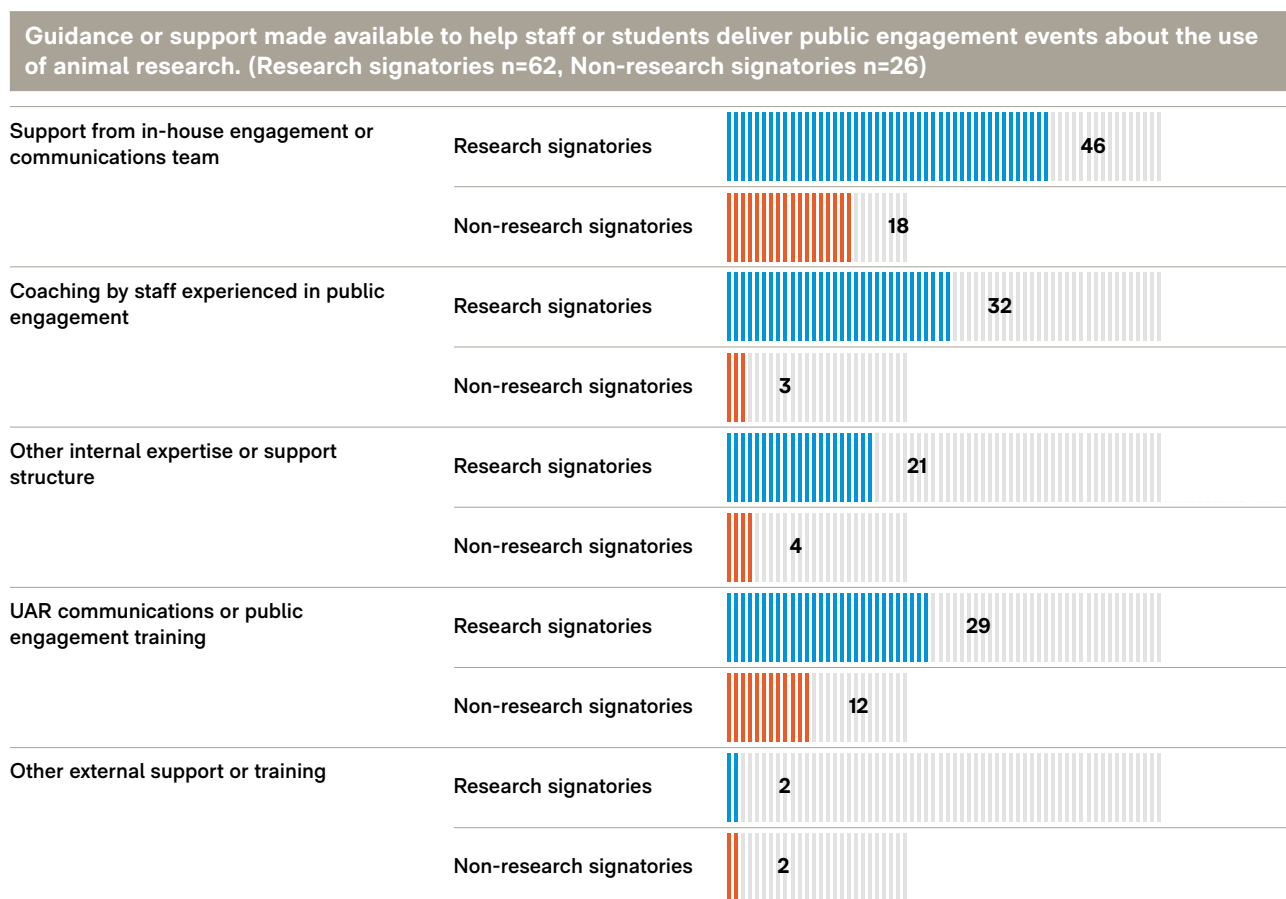
“We arranged a professional, mediated media training session focussed on animal research for senior staff from the Bioresearch & Veterinary Services. The aim of this was to help enable staff to more openly and confidently engage with the media on how and why animals are used in research at the university.” – **UNIVERSITY**



Signatories are continuing to support the development of media-trained champions who can respond to stories about the use of animals in research on behalf of their organisation. UAR provides media training to some signatories while others use alternative providers or provide in-house media training. Sixty-six signatories reported that they provide media training for staff and/or members who wish to engage with the media on animal research, which is a return to pre-pandemic levels.

Many of the non-research signatories provide general media training but not specific training around animal research. Some organisations, particularly learned societies, indicated that they are unlikely to work directly with media and so see little value in media training for their staff.

“Specific one-to-one or general training from the communication department is given to anyone that wishes to engage with the media on animal research. Moreover, twice a year there is the Engagement with Controversial Issues workshop. These sessions explore controversial research more generally with animal research as an area of focus.” – UNIVERSITY



In addition to media training, signatories offer staff and/or students a variety of other resources to support the delivery of public engagement events, including in-house communications support (64), coaching by staff with communications experience (35) and UAR's public engagement training (41).

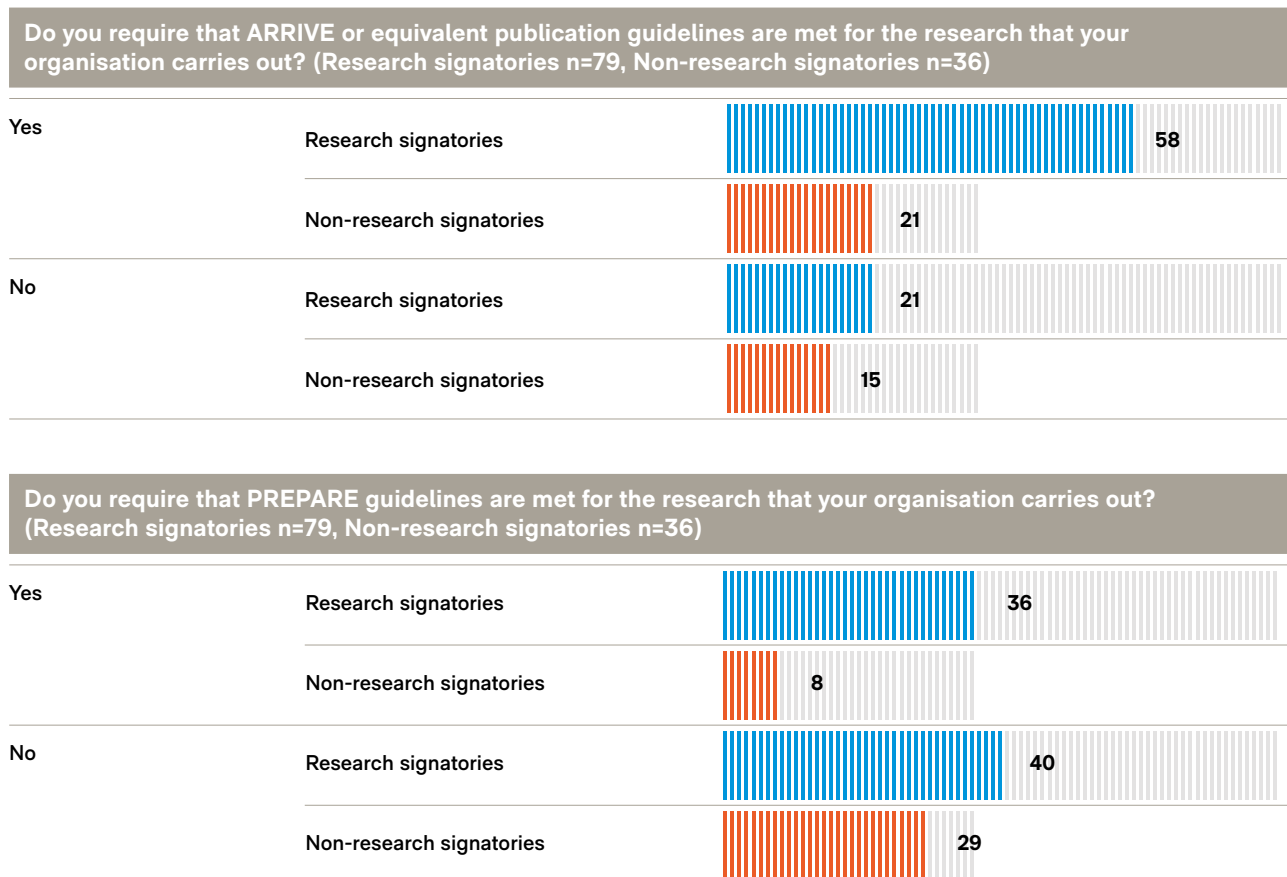
As with Commitment 1, the primary barriers to successful engagement were felt to be lack of resources and perceived risk to reputation. Some non-research organisations found Commitment 2 difficult to meet because they lack facilities or research programmes of their own. They are, however, able to support their members to communicate proactively on animal research.

2.5 & 2.6 Good practice in publication guidelines

In order to help to ensure that information about the role of animal research in scientific advancements is available for the public to view in scientific journals, signatory universities, pharmaceutical companies, learned societies and research funders will encourage researchers to follow acknowledged good practice when publishing the results of their animal research (eg the principles enshrined in the ARRIVE guidelines).

Signatory universities, pharmaceutical companies, learned societies and research funders will report and/or explain how they are working to promote better application of the 3Rs (Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of animals in research) and will make examples of their progress in the 3Rs publicly available.

“We publish three scientific journals. For all of these, we require the authors to confirm they have followed the ARRIVE guidelines or equivalent for all submissions. This is monitored via a specific question on this topic at submission stage.” – LEARNED SOCIETY



It is recommended that signatories institute a checking process to ensure that best practice in publication standards is followed. While not all signatories enforce adherence to the ARRIVE guidelines⁶, 79 signatories stated that they endorse and actively encourage staff to meet them. These signatories include organisations that carry out their own research and members that are involved in research practice.

“Our AWERB reviewed a cohort of publications from the [university] against the ARRIVE checklist. As a result, AWERB established a tailored training programme to address specific under-reported areas in accordance with ARRIVE ... Our Project Licence Holders were required to attend the workshops ... We are optimistic that the attendees will consider the ARRIVE guidelines a lot more carefully when writing their future papers.” – UNIVERSITY

It is often assumed that the onus on ensuring that ARRIVE guidelines are followed falls on the journals, who can enforce them as a condition of publication. However, the Concordat recommends that research organisations and other associations whose members are researchers assume the responsibility of ensuring that adhering to ARRIVE or an equivalent framework is embedded as normal good practice in their organisations, regardless of the requirements of particular publications, thereby supporting transparency and reproducibility of research. From 2020 we noted that many signatories had begun to mention their work in following the PREPARE⁷ guidelines (44 signatories in 2023).

PREPARE guidelines are not publication standards but provide a framework for ensuring that experimental design and data collection will support the requirements of ARRIVE.

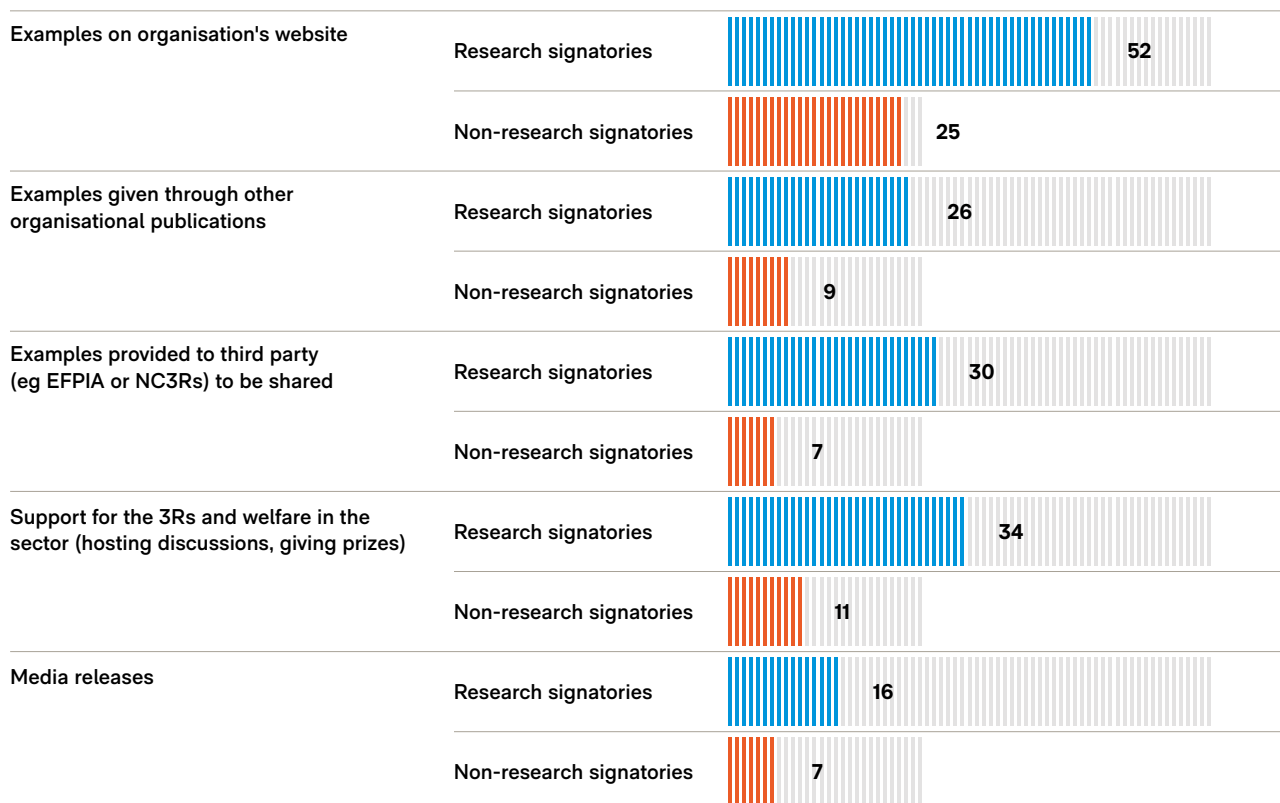
“PREPARE guidelines are discussed at BRF General inductions and reminded at annual refresher workshops for all personal and project licence holders. All Y1 PhD students who work with animals attend a compulsory ‘responsible animal research workshop’ where PREPARE guidelines are discussed. Additionally, the guidelines are discussed during the project licence drafting process.” – RESEARCH INSTITUTE



⁶ <https://arriveguidelines.org/>

⁷ <https://norecopa.no/prepare>

How signatories have communicated work towards the 3Rs. (Research signatories n=69, Non-research signatories n=28)



Signatories are encouraged to communicate their 3Rs work to the media and the public. Signatories reported that they include information about the 3Rs on their websites (77), other organisational publications such as leaflets, reports, and magazines (35), and media releases (23). Support for the 3Rs and animal welfare in the sector is also on the increase with 45 signatories reporting that they host 3Rs discussions and prize-giving events.

“Our annual Culture of Care Day promotes the 3Rs and discusses improvements in animal welfare across the sector. Our Culture of Care Day was promoted both internally, and externally to users of other local establishments, and a 3Rs prize was awarded on the day.” – UNIVERSITY

Commitment 3:

We will be proactive in providing opportunities for the public to learn about animal research

This Commitment aims to encourage more public discussion in the UK about animal research. It builds on Commitments 1 and 2 by suggesting ways in which signatories can engage proactively – directly and indirectly – with the public, over and above the provision of information.

3.1 Co-operative working to provide explanations of animal use in research

We will work co-operatively to provide more comprehensive explanations of animal research projects and procedures. These explanations could, where appropriate, include images and films; they could be presented either as stand-alone materials or accompanying other communications, such as media releases, and should include information about the context of the research.

“Our partnering institutes are organising science festivals and the [institute's] staff takes part in those events. Additionally, scientists taking part in Pint of Science and all events described above are examples of collaborative efforts to talk about animals in research.” – RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Signatories were asked to provide examples of when they had collaborated with other organisations to provide information about the use of animals in research. Forty-seven organisations provided examples of collaborative work, which were enormously varied including presentations to other organisations, social media campaigns and outreach events. Post-pandemic, there seems to be less concern about the potential risks of social media engagement, and many organisations employ these new tools. Many have also connected with other organisations to reach new audiences and to provide better information to the public.

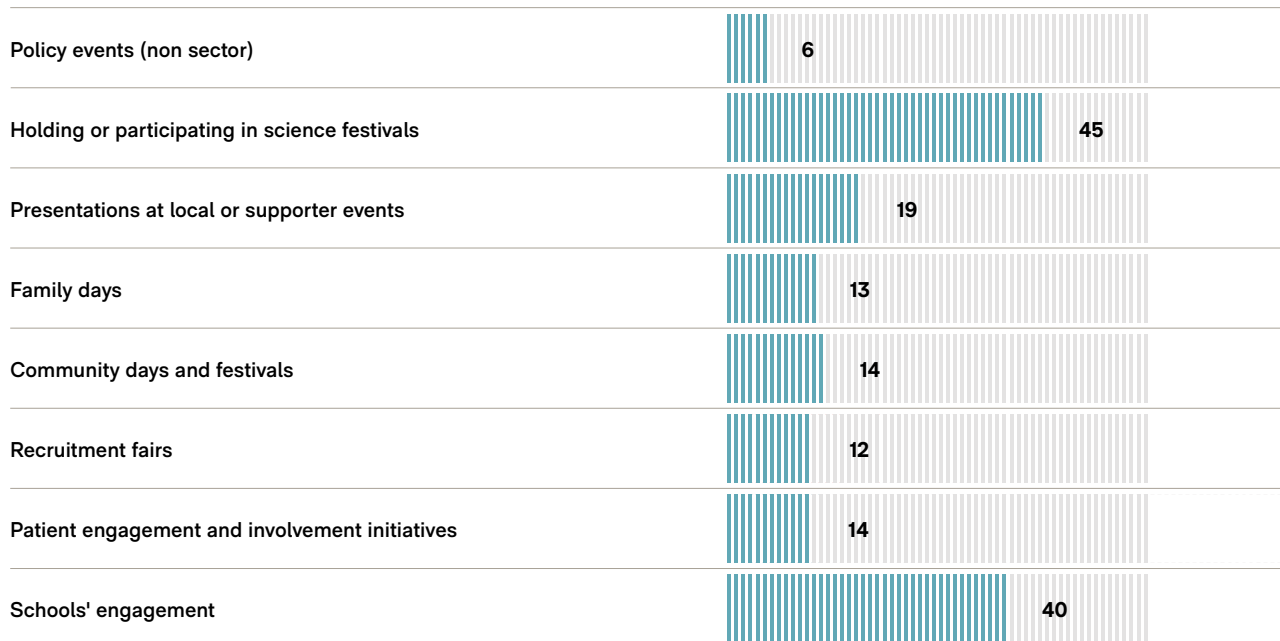
3.2 & 3.3 Activities that encourage public engagement with the issues of animals in scientific, medical and veterinary research

Where relevant, representatives of signatories will include information about the role of animals in any talks or public events they take part in, for example at schools or with the local community.

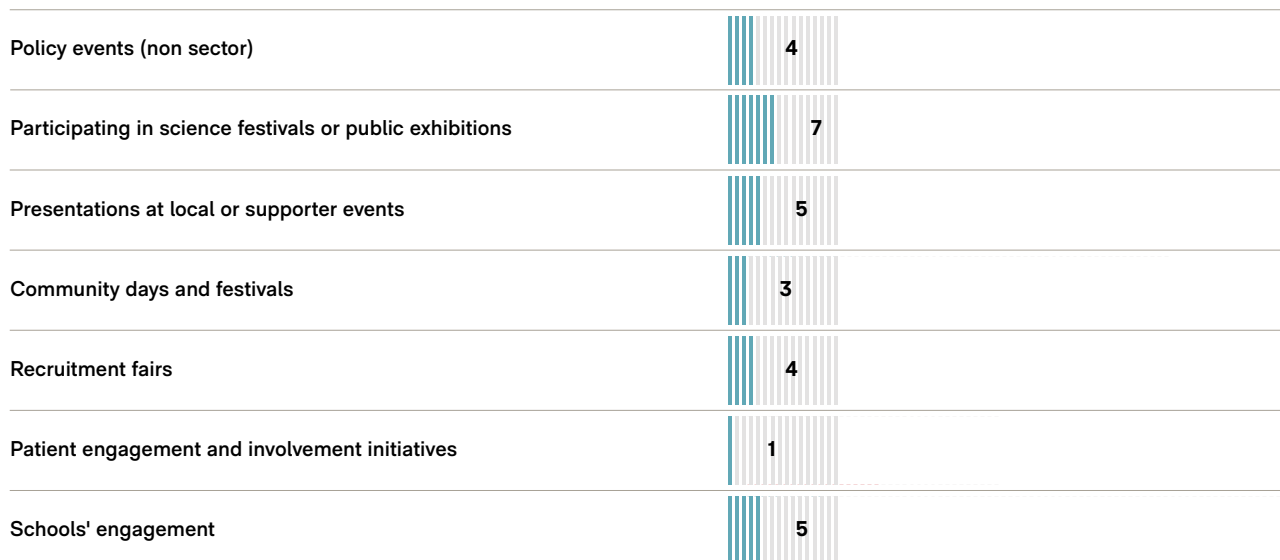
Signatories will consider ways in which they can facilitate activities that will encourage public engagement with the issue of animals in scientific, veterinary and medical research.

“Public engagement with research involving animals remains one of the most advanced areas of openness at the University. Information about the range of activities we carry out – including public talks, participation in science festivals, schools' outreach, facility tours and work experience programmes – is shared through our dedicated animal research web pages.” – UNIVERSITY

Have you engaged with the public or community around the use of animals in research through any of the following public engagement activities? (Research signatories n=60)



Have you engaged with the public or community around the use of animals in research through any of the following public engagement activities? (Non-research signatories n=16)



Signatories are continuously developing innovative ways to engage and talk about animal research with the public. This aspect of openness brings the research to life and, while many organisations now have well-developed resources for online engagement, we are starting to see in-person activities return to their pre-pandemic levels.

Many of the smaller, non-research signatories do not directly develop public engagement activities, but encourage their members to become STEM Ambassadors, allowing them to be part of an active outreach network. Some associations encourage outreach through prizes and awards, while others encourage their members or funding recipients to take part in these events.

Popular activities include participating in science festivals (52), engagement with local schools (45), community days and festivals (17), presentations at local events (24), recruitment fairs (16), and patient engagement initiatives (15). All these activities have increased since last year.

“Our Public Engagement programme continues to work to engage school students and public audiences with the Institute’s science, including about the use of animals in research. All these events involved discussions relevant to openness, for example, our research involving animals, animal facility set-up, and animal technician careers ... We are continuing to develop our virtual tour of the facility to reach wider audiences. We are also continuing to develop relationships with schools and colleges in the region to expand our schools’ programme to raise the profile of technical careers.” – UNIVERSITY

**Does your organisation support researchers or staff to give talks in schools about animal research?
(Research signatories n=77, Non-research signatories n=36)**



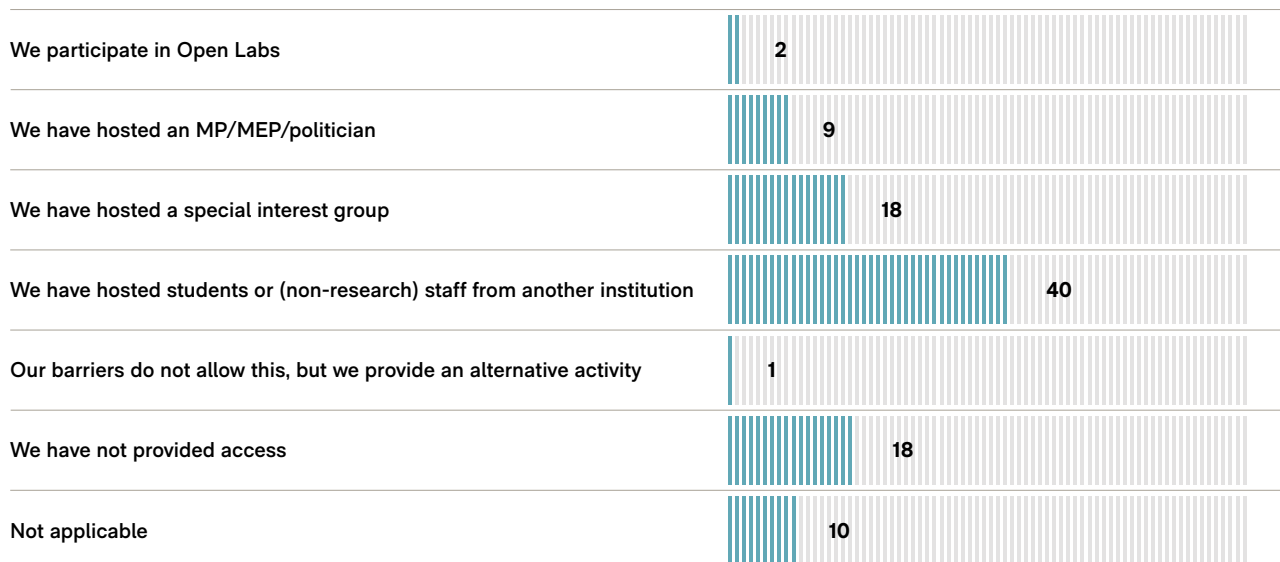
Many signatories support openness around animal research through schools' engagement, which is valuable for bringing young people into the sector as well as for raising awareness of animal research, animal welfare and the importance of humane research practices. Many of the signatories that carry out animal research reported that their usual schools' engagement was impossible during the pandemic, but these programmes are beginning to take place again. Seventy-three signatories support researchers or staff to give talks in schools either through UAR or through their own initiatives.

"The Imaging-Inside-Out programme had three aims: To discuss how physics is central to the development and implementation of diagnostic imaging techniques. To discuss why we need to use animals in medical research. To give demonstrators more confidence in speaking publicly about animal research to public groups." – UNIVERSITY

When possible, signatories that carry out research are recommended to allow public access to animal facilities, so that visitors can see what is involved in the research and how animals are cared for. Signatories aren't required to do this under the Concordat, but it is one of the best and most effective ways to provide members of the public with opportunities to learn about animal research. The number of these visits has increased to almost pre-pandemic levels.

As with other commitments, the main barrier to increasing engagement activities is reported to be a lack of resources. This is especially the case for small facilities.

During the last year, have you provided access to your animal facilities to visitors from outside your organisation? (Research signatories n=74)



PART TWO

Openness case studies

Submitted March 2022 – February 2023

Introduction



The Leaders in Openness standard recognises a structured and embedded culture of openness, which communicates effectively to colleagues within, and the public beyond, the life-sciences sector. Leaders in Openness are those signatories that provide clear, transparent and relevant information to people from a range of backgrounds and ethical views.

This initiative was launched in 2019 to recognise those organisations that consistently meet stretch goals beyond those required by the recommendations of the Concordat. The assessment process looks at complex areas such as the balance of information about harms and benefits in detail, and the initiative supports all signatories by providing clear examples of embedded good practice from a range of organisations. Candidates' public-facing communications are reviewed by members of the public and by peer reviewers against criteria for current good practice in openness around media communications, staff engagement, website development and public engagement. Full details of this initiative, including the criteria and assessment process, are available on the Concordat on Openness website.⁸

Leaders in Openness are presented annually and, once awarded, they are held by an organisation for three years. The first 13 Leaders in Openness were announced in 2019. They were joined in 2020 by the University of Edinburgh and in 2021 by the University of Reading. In 2022, for the first time, Leaders in Openness were required to reapply, and 12 organisations made successful reapplications.

In 2023, the University of Edinburgh successfully reapplied.

Here, we offer selected case studies of excellence to share good practice implemented by the Leaders in Openness.



Leaders in Openness 2023

- University of Edinburgh
- Agenda Life Sciences
- The Babraham Institute
- The Francis Crick Institute
- Imperial College London
- The Institute of Cancer Research
- Newcastle University
- The Pirbright Institute
- Royal Veterinary College
- University of Bath
- University of Cambridge
- University of Leicester
- University of Manchester
- University of Reading

⁸ <http://concordatopenness.org.uk/leaders-in-openness>

Babraham Institute

Website

www.babraham.ac.uk/our-research/animal-research

The Babraham Institute's clear and easy to navigate animal research webpages are excellent examples of how Concordat signatories can display openness on animal research through their websites.

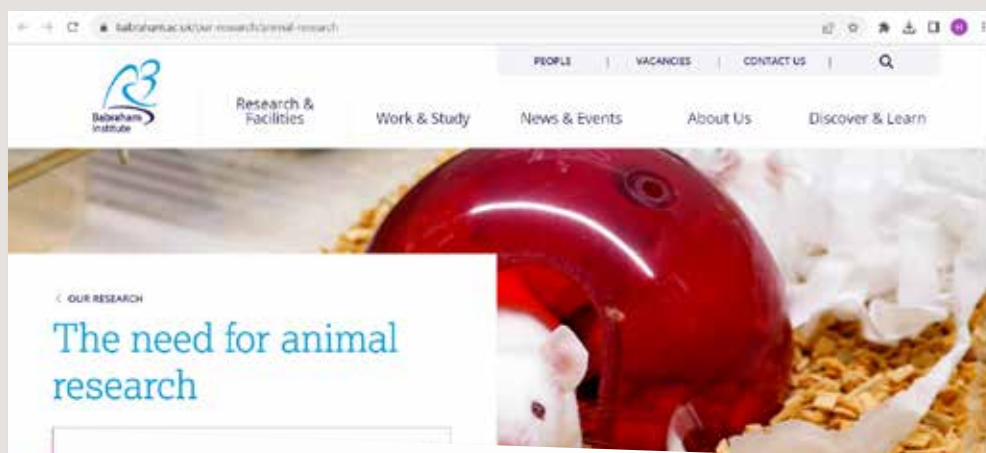
Each section of the Babraham Institute's animal research webpages aims to engage with a larger public on the need for, and outcome of, animal research, animal welfare, and the Institute's good practices in the sector. In doing so, these webpages clearly explain how and why the Institute carries out scientific research using animals.

When visitors first arrive on the animal research landing page, they are introduced to a clear and concise answer as to why animals are needed for research at the Babraham Institute. Immediately after, visitors can see how and when alternatives to animals are used in research at the Institute.

The landing page also offers two paths for visitors to navigate across other webpages in the section. In this manner, visitors can find information on the Institute's animal use statistics, practice of the 3Rs, FAQs, and more. Throughout its pages, the Institute makes sure to include pictures of the animals, shown in the Institute's animal facility, which helps the public visualise how animals are used in research and illustrates the Institute's culture of care.

The 'Examples' section is used to provide case studies of discoveries made within the organisation using animal research. These provide the public with concrete examples of the need for animal research and achievements within the area. Elsewhere, the Biological Support Unit webpage includes a video that brings viewers into the Babraham Institute's animal research facility, providing further transparency.

There is also a page dedicated to the ethical review of animal research undertaken by the Institute. Here, the organisation outlines the needs and benefits of animal research, while also addressing the harms. The Institute also shares its animal use statistics from 2020 onwards, which includes the severity ratings of procedures. Communicating about harms is an important element of open animal research communication, and the Babraham Institute's commitment to this is reflected in the way it discloses this information by also providing examples of the type of procedures belonging to each severity rating, which makes this information accessible to a wider audience. Doing this demonstrates the efforts taken by the Babraham Institute to present an honest and realistic assessment of animal research.



Why animals are needed for research at the Babraham Institute

"Scientists only use animals when there is no alternative". This is a much-repeated phrase but what does it mean? Which animals? What alternatives? Why can't these replace all animal research? What do we find out using animals and why do we need to know this?

Babraham Institute scientists study fundamental processes in our cells: how they develop, survive, function, age and die. This basic biology underpins future medical advances, just as past research led to the treatments we receive today. The benefits will be felt in our children's and grandchildren's generations but without today's basic science there will be no foundation for tomorrow's medical research.

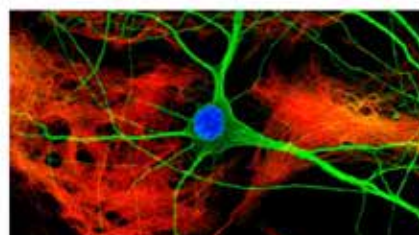
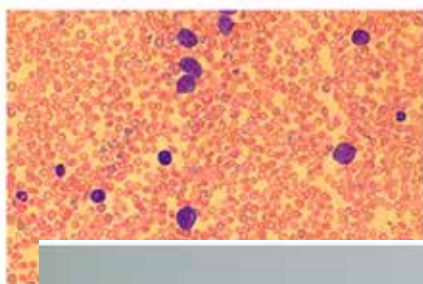
Mammals differ widely in size and shape but their cells and genes are broadly similar. Because of this, information from studies of mice or rats can be relevant to other mammals including humans, pets and farm animals.

[Here are some examples of what we have learned from animal research at Babraham.](#)

IN THIS SECTION

- Animal Use Statistics
- Animal Welfare & Care
- Reduction, Refinement and Replacement
- About our Animal Facility
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Concordat on Openness on Animal Research
- Ethical Review
- Examples
- Policy

Discoveries made using animal research at Babraham



ANIMAL RESEARCH

Animal Use Statistics



University of Cambridge

Media engagement

The University of Cambridge's Research Communications team is diligent in its publishing of press releases and news articles involving animal research. Animal use is made clear in the title and/or opening summary of the press release or article. These press releases and articles are uploaded to the general news section of the university's website and tagged appropriately so that they also populate the animal research webpages to provide this section with the most up-to-date information.

Additionally, the university uses the Academy of Medical Sciences labelling system for press releases, which makes it possible for journalists to see clearly if research was carried out using animals. These measures demonstrate the university's commitment to sharing media surrounding animal research in transparent and accessible ways to a wide range of audiences.

The university continues its strong use of media channels by creating engaging video content that highlights the need for animals in research while also emphasising the importance of animal welfare. A recent video titled 'Animal research aims to improve the prospects for future organ transplant patients' explored how research in pigs at the university aims to understand why organ failure occurs and what new promising treatments may look like. Importantly, the film explores this subject matter while addressing ethical considerations and demonstrating the rigorous standards set in place to conduct responsible animal research in the UK.

This video was published across various digital channels to coincide with the release of the Home Office's report on the statistics of scientific procedures on living animals in Great Britain in 2022. In doing so, the Research Communications team demonstrated how the use of media can promote existing communications on animal research in the sector to a wider audience.

The University of Cambridge is also developing a 3Rs Enquiry List that aims to share animals, tissues, technique experience, and knowledge and training in the 3Rs to further the university's efforts in reducing, refining, and possibly replacing the use of animals in research. This project will be published once the data analysis is complete and has been analysed, providing one database for the university's researchers while demonstrating how it uses its media channels within the institution to support the 3Rs. The university has also spoken about the 3Rs on the Cambridge Festival 'Say That Again Slowly' podcast in the 'Animals in Biomedical Research' episode. Podcasts are an ever-growing form of media that have the potential to make complex topics more accessible, so in participating in this venture, the University of Cambridge continues to demonstrate its commitment to openness.

The university's Office of External Affairs & Communications provides advice and training for staff who wish to engage with the media on any topic, including animal research. Their webpage on working with the media clearly delineates this by including the protocol researchers should follow before publishing any sort of development, which includes media training when necessary and working closely with the communications team at every step of the way. Importantly, their webpage has a dedicated section for speaking about animal research with the press that includes additional useful resources.

This strong use of media channels demonstrates why the University of Cambridge has been selected as a case study of excellence in media engagement by a Leader in Openness.



Animal research aims to improve the prospects for future organ transplant patients



UK organisations release annual statistics for use of animals in research

19 July 2023

The ten organisations in Great Britain that carry out the highest number of animal procedures – those used in medical, veterinary and scientific research – have released their annual statistics today.

[Read More >](#)



Unborn babies use 'greedy' gene from dads to 'remote-control' mums into feeding them extra food

11 July 2023

A study in mice has found that fetuses use a copy of a gene inherited from their dad to force their mum to release as much nutrition as possible during pregnancy.

[Read More >](#)



HIV drug helps protect against build-up of dementia-related proteins in mouse brains

26 April 2023

Cambridge scientists have shown how the brain's ability to clear out toxic proteins is impaired in Huntington's disease and other forms of dementia – and how, in a study in mice, a repurposed HIV drug was able to restore this function, helping prevent this dangerous build-up and slowing progression of the disease.

[Read More >](#)



Animals in Biomedical Research: Replacement, Refinement, Reduction - with Selina Ballantyne

University of Cambridge

1 year ago

Science



**SAY
THAT
AGAIN
SLOWLY**



Royal Veterinary College

Internal engagement

At the Royal Veterinary College (RVC), all potential staff members, including those not involved with research, are made aware during the application process that the RVC uses animals in research. This is then specifically discussed at the interview stage as well, ensuring that there is open internal communication on the matter from the very beginning.

The RVC recognises the importance of being specific when communicating with potential staff members at interviews. Recently, it replaced its standard animal research question (Are you aware that RVC is involved in animal research?) with the following statement: "The RVC does carry out very carefully vetted research work on a variety of animal species. Each piece of work is approved via Home Office licences and considered and managed by our Animal Welfare and Ethics Review Body. All work is done to improve medical outcomes for both other animals and human beings. We alert all prospective staff to this fact so that they may consider working at the RVC in the context of this knowledge. You can also find further information on our website."

Such a statement is important in clearly communicating the use of animal research at the college to future staff members in a way that is open, honest, and specific.

The effort to engage in clear, internal communication on animal research also extends to all first-year undergraduate students, who receive lectures on animal research and the related ethical issues. All prospective PhD students are also asked to discuss the topic as part of their graduate school interview process, where they are made aware that the RVC performs animal research.

Importantly, the RVC has made concerted efforts to discuss animal research with clinicians, nurses, receptionists, and other staff associated with the Queen Mother Hospital for Animals on its Hawkshead campus. The college understands that researchers, carers, and other employees all have differing levels of knowledge about the nature of animal research. For this reason, it is important that the researchers involved with animal research have open channels of communications with the rest of the staff who may otherwise be uncomfortable with the work being done.

At the RVC, veterinary nurses and receptionists have been shown around the college's experimental animal facilities, and researchers regularly present the results of their studies to hospital staff so that they are informed about the work being done. RVC staff and students can access all of the material on the internet and can request a tour of facilities, further demonstrating the commitment of the college to internal, cross-departmental engagement.

Internal engagement at the RVC also extends to the ways in which it runs the AWERB. The college has increased student involvement on the AWERB, and it now has representation from postgraduate, veterinary, and BSc undergraduate students. The college has also made calls for members of staff who are not involved in animal work to join the AWERB as lay members. Moreover, any RVC member interested in attending AWERB meetings as an observer can contact the secretariat. AWERB meeting minutes along with dates for upcoming meetings are all available on the college intranet message-board.

The steps taken by the RVC to engage with staff members on animal research are a crucial contribution to openness in the sector and make the RVC a case study of excellence in internal engagement by a Leader in Openness.

Ethical review of research at the RVC

Ethics and Welfare Committee

The Ethics and Welfare Committee (EWC) is a committee of the Council of the Royal Veterinary College which oversees the governance of ethics of all research undertaken at the College and the welfare of animals involved in teaching and research at the College ensuring that best practice is followed, with three sub-committees dealing with project licences and ethical application reviews.

The three sub-committees deal with the ethical approval of research, depending on the type of research undertaken as follows:

AWERB – for projects involving the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) as amended 2013

CRERB – for clinical animal and human research not involving the A(SP)A

SSRERB – for research involving social science

AWERB - The Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body

The Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body (AWERB) undertakes the AWERB requirements set out by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 to ensure that College research within its remit satisfies the legal requirements of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and other associated and relevant legislation. This includes ensuring that any study within its remit involving experimental animal subjects or veterinary patients (studies undertaken under ASPA) is conducted ethically and with due regard to scientific validity, welfare, has an acceptable harm benefits analysis and, for veterinary patient studies ensuring there is no compulsion, maintaining both confidentiality and anonymity based on the concept of informed consent. In addition, AWERB ensures that the following are of high quality and fit for purpose: (i) the training and assessment of competence by the College of staff and students working under A(SP)A; (ii) the facilities and staff provided to care for experimental animals; (iii) the information made available to researchers on the 3Rs (Reduction, Refinement, Replacement) and advise the College Establishment Licence Holder of any deficiencies in these areas; (iv) framework for record keeping for all activities associated with A(SP)A.



AWERB

All licenced establishments must ensure they have an Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB).

AWERB Meetings

As part of The Royal Veterinary College's commitment to the Concordat of Openness, the summary minutes of AWERB meetings that have been held since 2016 are published below (pdf format, opens a new window):

2023

- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 28 June 2023
- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 13 June 2023
- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 26 April 2023
- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 5 April 2023
- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 8 March 2023
- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 22 February 2023
- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 8 February 2023
- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 11 January 2023

2022

- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 06 December 2022
- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 23 November 2022
- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 1 November 2022
- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 5 October 2022
- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 21 September 2022
- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 7 September 2022
- Minutes of AWERB meeting held on 2 August 2022

University of Edinburgh

Public engagement

The University of Edinburgh's public engagement efforts continue to be an excellent example of education and openness for the public. The university conducts a variety of activities in this arena, such as public talks, participation in science festivals, outreach to schools, and work experience programmes. Details of these activities are recorded on a dedicated webpage, which makes it easier for a wide range of audiences to access this information.

Recent public engagement activities conducted by the university include, but are not limited to:

- Short talks by professors at the Edinburgh Science Festival, where those who have used animals in their research mentioned the how and the why of doing so.
- Workshops with children at the Edinburgh Science Festival where elements of reproductive health were discussed and explained using embryonic mice.
- A work experience programme for secondary students that delves deeper into the work and life of research scientists. As part of this programme, the students take tours of animal facilities and attend presentations, workshops, and discussions on the use of animals in research and the 3Rs.
- Hosting a politician to give further insight into animal research at the university.

Within the university, the public engagement and communication staff from the University of Edinburgh's research institutes provide informal support and training to staff and students talking about animal research, thus supporting them to effectively engage with the public. This support includes one-to-one chats with those planning their own activities that mention animal research.

Additionally, the Roslin Institute's public engagement team developed a training session for a doctoral training programme titled "Engaging audiences with animal research". It aims to expand on this training to deliver it to more students and staff in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, further expanding on the resources available to engage responsibly with the public on animal research.

Notably, the university co-created the Imaging-Inside-Out programme for Scottish secondary students that aims to: **(1)** discuss how physics is central to the development and implementation of diagnostic imaging techniques. **(2)** Discuss why we need to use animals in medical research. **(3)** Give demonstrators more confidence in speaking about animal research to public groups.

This programme – developed by Professor Carmel Moran from the Centre for Cardiovascular Science – took place at Castlebrae High School and during the course, participants were led in discussions on the use of animals in research. Of the 158 students who took part, 124 wrote down a word or phrase about how they felt about the use of animals in medical research – 65% of these were broadly supportive.

The organisers have been invited to Castlebrae High School to deliver the programme again, and the materials for this course were also used to demonstrate ultrasound imaging to a group of secondary students in Latvia.

These examples demonstrate the many ways that the University of Edinburgh continues to be an exemplar of engaging openly with various members of the public on the importance and reality of animal research in the UK, which is why it has been selected as a case study of excellence in public engagement by a Leader in Openness.



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

ANIMAL RESEARCH

Animal research home

Facts & figures

Regulation

Animal welfare & ethics

Alternatives and improvements

Our research

Your questions answered

Opportunities to engage

Home > Research > Animal research > Opportunities to engage

Contact us

Opportunities to engage

We provide a number of opportunities for members of the public to find out more about our research involving animals.

Science Insights

Science Insights is a work experience programme for 5th year high school pupils, which takes place over a week in the summer holidays. The programme provides the opportunity for the pupils to take part in a variety of workshops and lab sessions, enabling them to gain insight into research in biological sciences, medicine and veterinary medicine and how animals are used in this research.

[More information on Science Insights](#)

Let's Talk About Health and Disease

Let's Talk about Health and Disease is a series of public lectures that run annually from October to March.

The talks are aimed at senior school pupils interested in studying medicine, veterinary medicine or the life sciences at university, as well as health professionals and the wider public.

The series allows scientists pioneering new research to share their latest ideas and discoveries with the public. It provides attendees with the opportunity to advance their knowledge of health and the processes associated with disease.

Each lecture includes a Q&A session. Many also include the chance for pupils to meet young researchers during lab tours and interactive workshops. Where relevant, some events include the opportunity to visit animal research facilities at the University. Vets who look after our research animals are available at an information table to talk about their work and how animal research is overseen.

[Let's Talk about Health and Disease - More information](#)

'Imaging Inside-Out' - Castlebrae High School

Our imaging experts visited the Castlebrae High School to deliver the 'Imaging Inside-Out' public outreach activity.

On the 16th May 2022, Professor Carmel Moran, Triin Ounapuu (PhD student; Centre for Reproductive Health), Dr David Hardman (Research Fellow; Usher Institute) and Dr Mairead Butler (Postdoctoral Researcher; Heriot Watt University) engaged with 43 pupils from S1 and S2 age groups during three successive sessions. The activity entitled 'Imaging Inside-Out' involved a hands-on experience where participants used lightweight hand-held ultrasound scanners of varying frequencies to obtain live images of 3D printed miniaturised 3D shapes and mice embedded at different orientations in opaque gels.

Students were also informed about the importance of using animal models in medical research and were encouraged to ask questions in an open discussion with the researchers.



“ I had a brilliant time introducing the world of ultrasound and animal research to the students of Castlebrae High School. I really enjoyed interacting with the students and seeing their enthusiasm when they had a chance to scan the objects themselves. The pupils were really engaged during the discussion about the animal research and were not shy to ask some intriguing questions, e.g. what happened to animals after the experimental work was finished. Overall the event was a great success. I am looking forward to our next session in June! ”

— Triin Ounapuu, PhD student

PART THREE

Concordat administration

Evaluation of management processes

"Useful questionnaire flagging areas for improvement. Website is currently being revamped which will give the opportunity to improve some of our public-facing information." – RESEARCH INSTITUTE

UAR manages the Concordat and asks for feedback from signatories on the support they have been given over the year.

Signatories reported that they are happy with the Concordat, find it valuable, and feel that it is enabling change in their organisations. The reporting process is seen as useful, and signatories prefer the shorter form for returns. The Concordat on Openness aims to represent the range of organisations that fall within its scope. The reporting serves as a reminder of what other organisations are doing, but also provides an opportunity for comment by organisations that do things differently.

Concordat signatories agreed (83%) or somewhat agreed (15%) that they understand the Concordat commitments and the support available to help fulfil them. Only one organisation did not agree.

Similarly, 84% of signatories saw the Concordat as an important step forward for biomedical research, while 15% qualified their agreement as 'somewhat', and one organisation neither agreed nor disagreed.

Only 13% of signatories were unconvinced that the Concordat would lead to real changes in their organisations. For some organisations internal and structural difficulties can make implementing the Concordat challenging and small, sector-focused organisations whose work is not public facing can feel less involved with openness, although they are supportive.

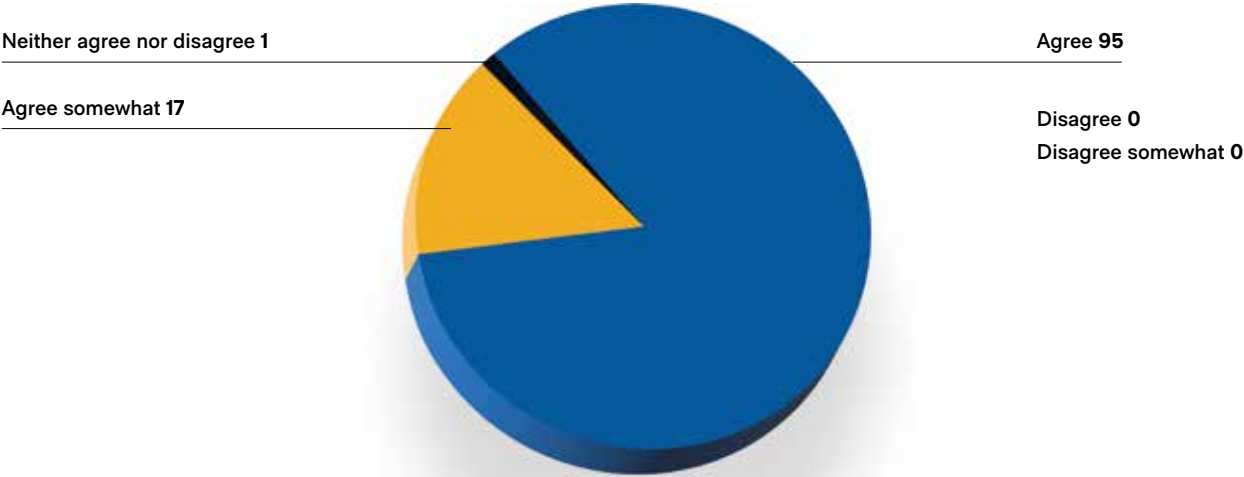
Most signatories (88%) found the Concordat communications helpful. The newsletter and stand-alone website were seen as particularly useful, in providing clear examples that others could follow.

Most signatories (88%) agreed that they knew how to get help in meeting the Concordat commitments, and most signatories are happy with the support they receive in implementing the Concordat (77% agreed or agreed somewhat).

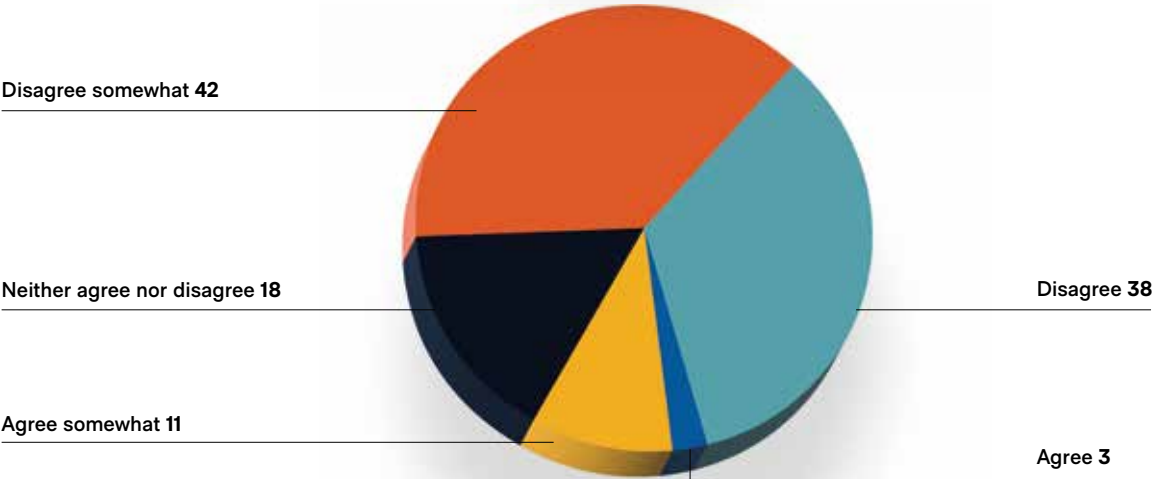
As in previous years, concerns about meeting obligations under the Concordat were mixed across a variety of organisations, who gave different reasons, including internal structures, resources, continuing fearfulness of researchers and distance from the research process which can reduce animal research as a priority.



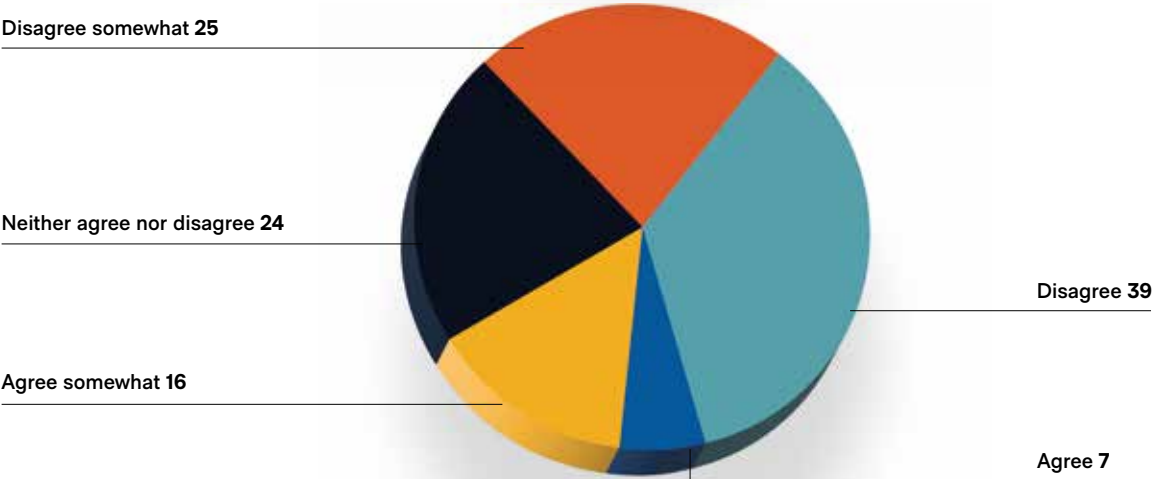
The Concordat is an important step forward for UK-based biomedical research. (n=113)



The Concordat is unlikely to lead to real changes in signatory organisations. (n=112)



I am worried that my organisation will not be able to meet the Concordat commitments. (n=111)





We asked signatories about areas where they would like more support or that they would like to see the Concordat address, and the following themes emerged:

- Face-to-face events for Concordat signatories to share ideas and experiences with one another
- Focus on learned societies and how they can support openness most effectively
- Discussion on how to develop public engagement events and what others are doing
- Guidance on developing social media use without becoming a target for extremists
- Developing joint communications initiatives with other signatories

Appendix

Concordat signatory online statements about the use of animals in research

Research Organisations

Aberystwyth University:	www.aber.ac.uk/en/rbi/staff-students/ethics/animals/#statement-on-the-use-of-animals
Agenda Life Sciences:	www.agendalifesciences.com/animal-research-position/
Animal and Plant Health Agency:	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency/about/research#ethics-committee
Aston University:	www.aston.ac.uk/research/integrity-ethics/animals
AstraZeneca:	www.astrazeneca.com/Sustainability/ethics-and-transparency/animals-in-research.html
Babraham Institute:	www.babraham.ac.uk/our-research/animal-research/policy-on-using-animals-in-research
British Heart Foundation:	www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/our-policies/animals-in-research
British Horseracing Authority:	www.britishhorseracing.com
Brunel University London:	www.brunel.ac.uk/about/administration/governance-and-university-committees/Animal-Research-at-Brunel
Cardiff University:	www.cardiff.ac.uk/research/our-research-environment/integrity-and-ethics/animal-research
Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science:	www.cefas.co.uk/about-us/animals-in-science/
Charles River Laboratories:	www.criver.com/sites/default/files/noindex/legal-compliance/animal-welfare-humane-treatment-animals-policy.pdf
Compass Pathways:	www.compasspathways.com/our-work/animal-welfare/
Durham University:	www.dur.ac.uk/research/ethics--governance/animal-research/
Fera Science:	www.fera.co.uk/about-us/standards-and-accreditation
The Francis Crick Institute:	www.crick.ac.uk/research/platforms-and-facilities/biological-research-facility/use-of-animals-in-research-policy-version-80
GSK:	www.gsk.com/en-gb/company/policy-positions/?item=responsible-use-and-care-of-animals
Harper Adams University:	www.harper-adams.ac.uk/research/concordat-on-openness/
Hoeford Research:	www.hoeford.com/animal-welfare
Imperial College London:	www.imperial.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/about-imperial-research/research-integrity/animal-research/
The Institute of Cancer Research:	www.icr.ac.uk/about-us/policy-and-engagement/position-statements/research-using-animals
King's College London:	www.kcl.ac.uk/research-bsu/policy-animals-scientific-research
Labcorp Drug Development:	https://biopharma.labcorp.com/about/animal-welfare.html
Lancaster University:	www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/research-services/research-integrity-ethics--governance/awerb/
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine:	www.lshtm.ac.uk/research/research-governance-and-integrity/animal-research
Medical Research Council:	www.ukri.org/who-we-are/mrc/our-policies-and-standards/research/research-involving-animals/
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency:	www.nibsc.org/about_us/our_use_of_animals.aspx
Moredun Research Institute:	www.moredun.org.uk/
Newcastle University:	www.ncl.ac.uk/research/researchgovernance/animal/animalpolicy/
Nottingham Trent University:	www.ntu.ac.uk/research/research-and-impact/research-integrity/research-involving-animals
The Open University:	www.open.ac.uk/research/governance/ethics/animal/faqs#policy
The Pirbright Institute:	www.pirbright.ac.uk/our-animal-research
Pancreatic Cancer UK:	www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk/for-researchers/other-research-policies/
Porton Biopharma:	www.portonbiopharma.com/animal-policy/
Queen Mary University of London:	www.qmul.ac.uk/research/strategy-support-and-guidance/animal-research/
Queen's University Belfast:	www.qub.ac.uk/sites/AnimalResearch
Robert Gordon University:	www.rgu.ac.uk/research/university-research-policies/animal-research
Rothamsted Research:	www.rothamsted.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Animals%20in%20Research%20at%20Rothamsted%20Research.pdf
The Royal Society:	www.royalsociety.org/topics-policy/ethics-conduct/animal-testing/
Royal Veterinary College:	www.rvc.ac.uk/research/animals-in-research/policy
Sanofi:	www.sanofi.com/en/our-company/social-impact/responsible-business-values/animals-in-research-and-productionhttps://www.sanofi.co.uk/en/our-responsibility/animal-welfare
Sequani:	www.sequani.com/Detail.aspx?page=Animal-Welfare
St George's, University of London:	www.sgul.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/use-of-animals-in-research
Swansea University:	www.swansea.ac.uk/science-and-engineering/research/fseethics/awerb/
UCB Biopharma:	www.ucb.com/our-company/Animal-welfare
UCL:	www.ucl.ac.uk/animal-research/

UK Dementia Research Institute: www.ukdri.ac.uk/animal-research

UK Health Security Agency: www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-health-security-agency-ukhsa-research-involving-animals

Ulster University: www.ulster.ac.uk/research/topic/biomedical-sciences/animals-in-research

University of Aberdeen: www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/documents/policy-zone-research-and-knowledge-exchange/ResearchGovernanceHandbook.pdf

University of Bath: www.bath.ac.uk/corporate-information/animal-research-policy-statement/

University of Birmingham: www.birmingham.ac.uk/documents/university/legal/use-of-animals-research.pdf

University of Bradford: www.bradford.ac.uk/research/strategy-quality/integrity/biological-services-unit/

University of Brighton: www.brighton.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/ethical-framework/index.aspx

University of Bristol: www.bristol.ac.uk/animal-research/

University of Cambridge: www.cam.ac.uk/research/research-at-cambridge/animal-research

University of Central Lancashire: www.uclan.ac.uk/research/integrity

University of Dundee: www.dundee.ac.uk/corporate-information/university-policy-use-animals-teaching-and-research

University of East Anglia: www.uea.ac.uk/about/university-information/university-policies/animal-research-concordat

University of Edinburgh: www.ed.ac.uk/research/animal-research

University of Exeter: www.exeter.ac.uk/research/about/aboutus/animalsinresearch/

University of Glasgow: www.gla.ac.uk/research/strategy/ourpolicies/opennessinanimalresearch/

University of Hertfordshire: www.herts.ac.uk/research/research-management/ethics-and-research-integrity/animal-research

University of Leeds: www.leeds.ac.uk/structure-governance/doc/reports-accounts-policies

University of Leicester: www.le.ac.uk/policies/research/use-of-animals

University of Liverpool: www.liverpool.ac.uk/research-integrity/animal-research/

University of Manchester: www.manchester.ac.uk/research/environment/animal-research/

University of Nottingham: www.nottingham.ac.uk/animalresearch/policy/policy.aspx

University of Oxford: www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/animal-research/university-policy-on-the-use-of-animals-in-scientific-research

University of Plymouth: www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/animals/ethical-review

University of Portsmouth: www.port.ac.uk/research/research-and-innovation-culture/research-using-animals

University of Reading: www.reading.ac.uk/research/research-environment/animal-research

University of Sheffield: www.sheffield.ac.uk/research-services/ethics-integrity/animal-research

University of Southampton: www.southampton.ac.uk/awerb/index.page

University of St Andrews: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/research/integrity-ethics/animals/

University of Stirling: www.stir.ac.uk/research/research-ethics-and-integrity/animal-research-at-the-university-of-stirling/our-research-involving-animals/

University of Strathclyde: www.strath.ac.uk/science/biomedicalresearchatstrathclyde/

University of Surrey: www.surrey.ac.uk/school-biosciences/biomedical-research-facility

University of Sussex: www.sussex.ac.uk/research/about/standards/research-procedures-involving-animals

University of York: www.york.ac.uk/research/animal-research/

Concordat signatory online statements about the use of animals in research

Non-research organisations

The Academy of Medical Sciences:	www.acmedsci.ac.uk/policy/uk-policy/animals-in-research
Alzheimer's Research UK:	www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/about-us/our-influence/policy-work/position-statements/animal-research/
Anatomical Society:	www.anatsoc.org.uk/research/animals-in-research-policy-statement
Association of Medical Research Charities:	www.amrc.org.uk/position-statement-on-the-use-of-animals-in-research
Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry:	www.abpi.org.uk/r-d-manufacturing/research-using-animals/
BBSRC:	www.ukri.org/councils/bbsrc/
Biochemical Society:	www.biochemistry.org/science-policy/policy-position-statements/
BioIndustry Association:	www.bioindustry.org/policy/pre-clinical-and-clinical-research/animal-research.html
Blood Cancer UK:	www.bloodcancer.org.uk/research/funding/resources-for-researchers/animals/
British Association for Psychopharmacology:	www.bap.org.uk/position_statement.php
British Neuroscience Association:	www.bna.org.uk/about/policies/#animal-research-policy
British Pharmacological Society:	www.bps.ac.uk/education-engagement/animal-research
British Society for Immunology:	www.immunology.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/the-use-of-animals-in-immunological-research-position-statement.pdf
British Toxicology Society:	www.thebts.org/animalsafety/
Cancer Research UK:	www.cancerresearchuk.org/our-research/involving-animals-in-research
Children with Cancer UK:	www.childrenwithcancer.org.uk/childhood-cancer-info/we-fund-research/research-involving-animals/
Cystic Fibrosis Trust:	www.cysticfibrosis.org.uk/the-work-we-do/research/animal-testing
Envigo:	www.inotivco.com/concordat-on-openness
EPSRC:	www.ukri.org/who-we-are/epsrc/our-policies-and-standards/policy-on-use-of-animals-in-research/
Institute of Animal Technology:	www.iat.org.uk/animaltechnology
Kidscan Children's Cancer Research:	www.kidscan.org.uk/our-research/policies-position-statements/position-animal-testing/
Laboratory Animal Breeders Association:	www.laba-uk.com/site?page_id=95
Laboratory Animal Science Association:	www.lasa.co.uk
Laboratory Animal Veterinary Association:	www.lava.uk.net/viewtopic.php?t=11
Leukaemia UK:	www.leukaemiauk.org.uk/research-and-advocacy/research-strategy/how-we-find-and-fund-projects/
Medical Schools Council:	www.medschools.ac.uk/our-work/research
Microbiology Society:	www.microbiologysociety.org/publication/position-statement/2015-use-of-animals-in-research.html
Motor Neuron Disease Association:	www.mndassociation.org/research/our-research/using-animals-and-stem-cells/animal-research/our-position-statement-on-animal-research
MS Society:	www.mssociety.org.uk/research/researchers/resources-researchers/animal-research
NC3Rs:	www.nc3rs.org.uk/who-we-are/our-mission
NERC:	www.ukri.org/councils/nerc/
Parkinson's UK:	www.parkinsons.org.uk/about-us/animal-research-at-parkinsons-UK
Pfizer:	www.pfizer.co.uk/responsibility/animal-welfare
The Physiological Society:	www.physoc.org/animals-research
PTEN Research:	www.ptenresearch.org/for-families-living-with-phts/our-research/use-of-animals-in-research/
Royal Society of Biology:	www.rsb.org.uk/policy/policy-issues/biomedical-sciences/animal-research
Society for Experimental Biology:	www.sebiology.org/membership/special-interest-groups/animal.html
UKRI:	www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/good-research-resource-hub/use-of-animals-in-research/
Understanding Animal Research:	www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/about-us/uar-position-on-the-use-of-animals-in-research
Universities UK:	www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/topics/research-and-innovation/concordats-and-agreements
Versus Arthritis:	www.versusarthritis.org/research/information-for-researchers/our-approach-to-research/our-research-policies/
Veterinary Schools Council:	www.vetschoolscouncil.ac.uk/research/concordat-on-openness-on-animal-research/
Wellcome:	www.wellcome.org/what-we-do/our-work/our-policy-work-animal-research
Wings for Life:	www.wingsforlife.com/uk/latest/animal-research-their-need-and-guidelines
Worldwide Cancer Research:	www.worldwidecancerresearch.org/news-opinion/2022/october/why-do-we-support-the-use-of-animals-in-research/



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ISSN 2754-4710