



#TargetZero Petition Government Response

After reaching 10,000 signatures the Government published a disappointing response to the petition. It fails to recognise the views of the tens of thousands of people who have signed the petition and lacks ambition to accelerate the phase out of animal tests.

We have prepared an answer to the Government's response.

Key points to note are:

What they say: the Government funds and supports the development of techniques that replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in research (3Rs). This is primarily delivered by the National Centre for the 3Rs.

What we say: the £100m allocated to the NC3Rs covers a period of 16 years since 2004 and only a proportion of that funding has gone towards the replacement of animal testing. Approximately 36% has been spent on other work such as reduction and refinement. Not only is this figure dwarfed by the amounts spent on animal experiments, but we also believe that much more focus should be on the full replacement of animals in testing with new cutting-edge methods that have a much greater relevance to people.

What they say: Under UK law no animal testing may be conducted if there is a non- animal alternative available and such testing is strictly limited to that necessary to achieve the scientific benefits.

What we say: in practice, we don't believe this legal requirement is adequately enforced. The Home Office publishes non-technical summaries of licences that have been granted for animal experiments which include a question about an applicant's strategy for searching for non-animal methods. The inadequate responses in these summaries would suggest that this important question is not being treated with sufficient gravity. We also know that there are some cases where animal tests are licensed despite the existence of animal-free methods. In 2020, for example, 452 skin sensitisation tests were carried out on mice, even though validated non-animal tests are available. The Government continues to license batch potency tests on tens of thousands of mice for botulinum products despite the availability of a non-animal method AND the fact that most of these products are used for cosmetic purposes.

You can read the full document [here](#).

We urge MPs to help us challenge the Government response on behalf of the constituents in every UK constituency who have added their voices to the petition calling for urgent change.