



Polling shows MPs must act to save cruelty free cosmetics

This September, polling carried out by YouGov¹ for Cruelty Free International shows that most people in the UK are against the continued use of animal experiments and don't want to see a return to cosmetics tests on animals.

Key findings

Across multiple demographics, including age, gender and work status:

- 85% of people are against testing cosmetics and their ingredients on animals.
- Almost 7 out of 10 of people have a favourable view of MPs who oppose all cosmetics testing.

Cosmetics testing ban must be upheld

When polled by YouGov, 85% of people found it unacceptable to test cosmetics and cosmetics ingredients on animals.

Despite this clear demonstration of public opinion, the Home Office has admitted in a letter to Cruelty Free International that it now allows most if not all animal testing for cosmetic ingredients, including those used solely in cosmetics.

The problem originated because of the way in which the European Commission and the European Chemical Agency (ECHA) are interpreting the relationship between the Cosmetics Regulation and the REACH (chemicals) Regulation.

Symrise AG, a major fragrance producer based in Germany, was instructed by the ECHA to carry out animal tests on two substances used solely in cosmetics products. The ECHA decision means that even ingredients used only in cosmetics must be tested on animals to ensure they are safe for handling in the manufacturing process.

Disappointingly the Home Office has taken the decision to align with the ECHA decision even though the UK now runs its own chemicals policy and is under no obligation to align or comply with ECHA decisions and despite the fact that the decision in the Symrise case is currently the subject of an appeal.

The Home Office decision destroys the gold standard UK animal testing ban for cosmetics and their ingredients that came into force in 1998.

¹ All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,765 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 13th - 14th September 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

Calls for MPs to save cruelty free cosmetics and end animal tests

Constituents believe their MPs have a leadership role to play on this issue.

- Almost 7 out of 10 people polled (68%), across all major political parties, have a favourable view of MPs who oppose all cosmetics testing.
- 65% of the public have a favourable opinion towards political parties who commit to phasing out animal testing (not just cosmetics).

Public opinion is clear, constituents want to see their MP strongly defend the cosmetics testing ban.

Alternatives to animal tests

Many viable non-animal alternatives exist, but regulators and their requirements have not kept pace with technological advances and continue to require animal tests.

Non-animal tests are often not only more effective than traditional animal tests but also quicker and less expensive. For example, *in vitro* tests for skin and eye irritation can be conducted within a day whilst the corresponding tests on rabbits take two to three weeks to complete. Skin sensitisation tests can also take just one day to carry out whilst the corresponding test on mice takes at least six times that. These tests can already be done at a financial cost equivalent to the animal test in less time and without the cruelty.

The UK public does not want to see animals used in cruel and unnecessary tests.

- More than 8 in 10 (82%) find it unacceptable for experiments on animals to continue where alternative, viable non-animal methods exist.

The Cruelty Free International [RAT list](#) identifies animal tests with viable alternatives and which could end immediately. One example is botulinum toxin testing which still takes place in the UK on tens of thousands of animals each year for botox products. A dose is injected into the abdomens of mice, and many are paralysed and suffocate to death within days. Botox is mainly used in cosmetics procedures.

This test continues in spite of the fact that there is a non-animal cell-based alternative for this test.

It is unacceptable for cruel tests to continue where an alternative exists.