

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

18th August 2020

New Content,

RE: WARFARE EXPERIMENTS ON ANIMALS.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding warfare experiments on animals; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

I understand your concerns regarding the use of animals in scientific testing. I believe that the use of animals should be avoided wherever possible, and in the limited cases when animals are used, this should be done in accordance with strict guidelines to ensure any suffering is minimised.

As I am sure you are aware, the work done by the Defence Science & Technology Laboratory (DSTL) at Porton Down helps provide the latest scientific and technological advantages for the UK Armed Forces and wider security organisations. Unfortunately, finding solutions to the technological problems faced by our service personnel cannot all be addressed without the use of animals in research. I know and understand why this is upsetting for many people, but please be assured that I will continue pressing the Government to find alternative methods of conducting tests wherever possible.

I am, however, reassured by the fact that strict procedures are in place to ensure the suffering of animals is kept to a strict minimum. When research programmes are planned, DSTL follows the '3Rs' principle which either replaces the use of animals, reduces the number of animals used, or refines how the animals are treated during the process. I therefore welcome the fact that the number of animals involved in scientific procedures at Porton Down between 2011 and 2019 fell from 9,722 to 1,490 as a result of this.

As necessary as animal testing is for scientific research, I am relieved and heartened that DSTL is able to continue its important work protecting the lives of our Armed Forces, whilst also ensuring animal testing is kept to the absolute minimum.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE