



Resource Sheet Number 13 – Non-Technical Summaries

Non-Technical Summaries (NTS) are a mandatory requirement as part of an application for a project licence. The purpose is to be transparent to the general public, using non-technical language while protecting intellectual property rights and the security of staff.

Understanding Animal Research (UAR), the public face of the UK bioscience industry, suggest that as the NTS is for the general public a reading age of 12 should be assumed.

https://www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/application/files/5516/5226/6818/Writing_NTS_summaries.pdf

The government states that publishing non-technical summaries helps put the debate on the use of animals in research and testing on a more informed footing.

The reality is ASPA 1986 was revised in 2012 to align with the EU (Directive 2010/63/EU) and the requirement to include an NTS was included in ASPA section 5A (1) (e) and (2) (a&b). So, this was an EU Directive not a UK initiative.

5A Application for a project licence

(1)(e) be accompanied by a project summary.

(2)A project summary is a statement, in non-technical language, which (subject to subsection (3)(a))—(a)describes the proposed programme of work and states the objectives of the programme, the predicted harm and benefits of the programme and **the number and types of animal to be used in the programme;**

(b)demonstrates that the proposed programme of work would be carried out in compliance with the principles of replacement, reduction and refinement.

NTS are periodically published by the Home Office in theory relating to the date the application is granted, in practice this is far from the case. They used to be published 6 monthly but more recently have been quarterly. They are now also split between projects that do or do not require a retrospective review.

A 2018, Cruelty Free International (CFI) report (Recommendations to improve the EU Non-Technical Summaries of Animal Experiments) consistently found for the UK that NTS were deficient in their description of what is being done to the animals and what they might experience as a result. <https://www.altex.org/index.php/altex/article/view/90/831>

<https://www.altex.org/index.php/altex/article/view/2714/2698>



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This 2014 update to the 2018 review of NTS still found that improvement was required to the reporting of adverse effects, including duration of and types of pain, suffering and distress.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-technical-summaries-granted-in-2025>

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(Just change the year at the end for earlier years.)

Recently each period of NTS have been split into those that require a retrospective assessment (RA) and those that do not. Retrospective assessments are required when there is use of a special species (dogs, cats, horses and NHPs) and where there is a severe harm classification. Often the number and species of animals used, and the harm classification are very different between the estimate in the NTS/project licence application and the retrospective assessment.

An Animals in Science Committee (ASC) September 2025 review of NTS and RA can be found here: [ASC NTS and RA review](#)

Like previous reviews this identified a number of problems and made a number of recommendations.

In addition to the issues raised by the ASC we have separately found a large number of errors just from a quick scan of published documents. In December 2024 ASRU responded that 'A fix has been deployed to ASPeL to correctly display the species type and numbers in a consistent manner in the NTS. The published NTS' will be updated in due course.' At the time of writing in November 2025 the NTS' have not been corrected and errors are still occurring.

See above 5A (3a) ASPA 1986 – it is a legal requirement for project summaries to show **the number and types of animals to be used in the programme**. Below we list a few instances where this legal requirement has not been met. All errors have been notified to the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU). Our questions to ASRU are in red and as of 26th November we await a response.



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Requiring Retrospective Assessment

January – March 2023

Pages 104-114, Project 12 Safety testing of medicinal products using dogs and minipigs
Beagles 4,800 adult – Page 111 says using **juvenile** to but this is not stated in the life stages on page 104.

If juvenile beagles are being used why is this life stage not listed on page 104?

July – December 2022

Pages 192 - 201, Project 19, Health and wellbeing requirements of cats and dogs across lifespan. Beagles 100 aged, pregnant, adult, juvenile, neonate. Labrador Retrievers (**no number given**) neonate, juvenile, adult, pregnant, aged. Cats 420 neonate, juvenile, adult, pregnant, aged.

What is the number of dogs and when will the NTS be corrected for the omission?

Pages 412 - 419, Project 39 Breeding and therapy of the de50-md dog model of duchenne muscular dystrophy DE50-MD Beagle cross juvenile, neonate, adult, embryo, pregnant, aged - **no number given**.

What is the number of dogs and when will the NTS be corrected for the omission?

January – June 2022

Pages 139 - 146, Project 17 Safety and efficacy of a microrna-based therapy for canine epilepsy. Client owned epileptic dogs refractory to adult – **no number given**.

What is the number of dogs and when will the NTS be corrected for the omission?

Pages 156 - 162, Project 19 Clinical veterinary studies of naturally occurring disease in animals (iii) Dobermans client owned, adult – **number not given**.

What is the number of dogs and when will the NTS be corrected for the omission?

July – December 2021

Pages 392 - 402, Project 39 Metabolism and pharmacokinetic studies of pharmaceuticals
Beagles 600 adult, cynomolgus macaques 500 adult, minipigs 500, goats 20. **Note no number given for other birds**.



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What is the number of other birds and when will the NTS be corrected for the omission?

Pages 493 - 502, Project 49 (now added when retrospective split into a separate document). Metabolism and pharmacokinetic of chemicals. **Beagles 100 + 50 in list of species twice.**

Why does it say Beagles 100, then Beagles 50 – is there a reason it is not just Beagles 150 – has there been an error in the species?

Document before retrospective split.

Page 1920 missing species? METABOLISM AND PHARMACOKINETIC STUDIES OF CHEMICALS – this is on original document before retrospective split - Species and numbers of animals expected to be used.

Goats: 20, Mice: 1,700, Rats: 1,650, Guinea pigs: 50, Rabbits: 100 : **200** : 50

What are the species that numbers of 200 and 50 will be used? When will this be corrected? Where is this NTS now to be found? It is no longer included in the publication for July – December 21

January – March 2025 NOT RA

Pages 350 – 360, Project 43. Phenotypic programming across the lifespan in birds: understanding ecological and welfare perspectives.

On page number 353 there is **no mention of number of pheasants** although these are listed on page 350.

What is the number of pheasants and when will the NTS be corrected for the omission?

Also, a quick look through the publication for **July to September 2024** the following ones also omit number of animals.

What should the numbers be and when will the NTS will be corrected.

Page 222 – 227 Project 27 Provision of Biological Materials; **chicken numbers not declared** (page 224 – it also says other birds which is inconsistent with chickens on page 222).

Page 243 – 252 Project 30 Polyclonal, biological, normal serum and antigen production; **alpaca numbers not declared** – page 245 says Camelids: No answer provided.



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Page 359 – 365 Project 45 Blood sampling for whole genome sequencing of wildlife species in the UK; **Bird numbers not declared** – page 360 says Other birds: No answer provided.

Page 414 – 422 Project 52 Biology and treatment of kinetoplastid diseases; **hamster numbers not declared** – page 416 no mention of hamsters at all.