



Resource Sheet Number 16 – Public Order Act 2023 Amendment

Timeline of the amendment to the Public Order Act 2023 and the inclusion of ‘life sciences’ as key national infrastructure similar to roads and railways.

[Government Timeline Link](#)

17th July 2025

It is of no coincidence that Feryal Clark MP responded to a written question by Ben Obese-Jecty MP that “MBR Acres is a critical part of the UK’s preclinical research infrastructure, which in turn is crucial for domestic **pandemic** preparedness. Another **pandemic** is the top rated risk in the National Risk Register and discovery and development of therapeutics and **vaccines**, which relies on preclinical research, is one of the outcomes of the UK Biological Security Strategy.” [MP written question](#)

It was later admitted that dogs are not used for **pandemic** planning/vaccines, and soon after that the Public Order Act 2023 amendment was proposed to include **ALL** life sciences and breeding Establishments.

18th July 2025

The first of three Ministerial meetings took place with MBR Acres as part of a wider meeting with Contract Research Organisations (CROs). The minister in attendance at all three meetings was Patrick Vallance (Lord Vallance of Balham) who is the Minister of State for the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). On checking the DSIT transparency data for DSIT Meetings July - September 2025, this meeting was also attended by Understanding Animal Research (UAR), the lobby group for the life science sector, Charles River, Labcorp and Sequani. The three contract research organisations (CROs) are the only known customers of MBR Acres that only supplies beagles for toxicity testing – these CROs do not undertake pandemic planning/vaccine work that in any event does not use dogs.

17th September 2025

The second of three meetings, Sir Vallance met with Scott Marshall, the CEO, of Marshall BioResources. They met at MBR Acres, laboratory beagle factory, Sawtry Way, Huntingdon PE28 2DT and in a covering letter to the Home Office he said ‘As ever we appreciate all your help and support in progressing the necessary legislation. My number is below and happy to chat through anything, if helpful.’ [FOI Link](#)



Resource Sheet Number 16 – Public Order Act 2023 Amendment 2nd October 2025

The third of three meetings of Sir Vallance with MBR Acres.

27th November 2025

Papers Laid before the House of Commons. Papers subject to Affirmative Resolution Draft Public Order Act 2023 (Interference with Use or Operation of Key National Infrastructure) Regulations 2025 (by Act), with an Explanatory Memorandum (by Command) (Secretary Shabana Mahmood).

Also laid before the House of Lords.

House of commons - Public Order, Secretary Shabana Mahmood.

That the draft Public Order Act 2023 (Interference with Use or Operation of Key National Infrastructure) Regulations 2025, which were laid before this House on 27th November, be approved.

Notes: The instrument has not yet been considered by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments.

Sarah Jones MP letter, dated 27.11.25 [Letter link](#) to Rt Hon Dame Chi Onwurah DBE MP, Chair, Science, Innovation and Technology Committee stated:

*“Recent protest activity has deliberately targeted the life sciences sector, threatening the UK’s sovereign capability to produce **vaccines** and disrupting crucial supply chains that are vital to research and **national health protection**.”*

9th December 2025

Information Paragraph provided by the secondary legislation scrutiny committee (SLSC).

Draft Public Order Act 2023 (Interference With Use or Operation of Key National Infrastructure) Regulations 2025.

These Regulations would designate the Life Sciences sector as ‘key national infrastructure’, thereby making increased powers available to the police to take action against disruptive protest activity against Life Sciences organisations. The Home



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Office states that the sector “*is being targeted by protestors who oppose current clinical research methods*”, with current police powers being inadequate to respond. The Home Office therefore says the change is necessary to “*protect the UK’s ability to respond to a medical crisis, such as a **pandemic**, in line with requirements under the National Risk Register*”, and to prevent an erosion of confidence in the UK as a “*central hub*” for the industry.

Sectors currently listed as key national infrastructure are: transport facilities, such as roads, rail and air transport and harbours; energy-related activities such as onshore oil and gas exploration and electricity generation and distribution; and newspaper printing. The changes would add two types of life science activity: pharmaceutical research and development; and animal research and testing. In response to our questions, the Home Office stressed that animal testing was included because it is currently “*still required for the development of medicines and **pandemic preparedness***” and is therefore “*critical to protecting public health*”. The Home Office noted that a strategy on Replacing Animals in Science is being developed. We commend the Home Office on the well-drafted and informative explanatory material it provided alongside these draft Regulations.

17th December 2025

Not drawn to the special attention on the Houses by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments (JCSI). At its meeting on 17 December 2025 the Committee considered the instruments set out in the Annex to this Report, none of which were required to be reported to both Houses.

Delegated Legislation Committee (DLC) debate. [Debate Transcript](#)

During the Third Delegated Legislation Committee on 17th December 2025. Sarah Jones MP stated, in part:

*“Recent protest activity has deliberately targeted the life sciences sector, threatening the UK’s sovereign capability to produce **vaccines** and therapies, and disrupting supply chains vital to research and **national health protection**.”*

*“In that moment of national crisis, we had to produce a **vaccine** that saved lives. As hon. Members can appreciate, ensuring that we are prepared for a second **pandemic** is very high on this Government’s risk register.”*

*“Where disruption or interference risks undermining our sovereign capability to prepare for and respond to a **pandemic**, we have a responsibility to act. The life sciences industry is of vital importance to this country, and it must be protected. That*



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is why we have brought forward this instrument, which I commend to the Committee once again.”

7th January 2026

Decision of motion to approve the instrument deferred.

Motion made and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)), That the draft Public Order Act 2023 (Interference with Use or Operation of Key National Infrastructure) Regulations 2025, which were laid before this House on 27 November 2025, be approved. — (Sir Nicholas Dakin.)

The Deputy Speaker’s opinion as to the decision on the Question was challenged.

Decision deferred until Wednesday 14th January (Standing Order No. 41A).

9th January 2026

Ben Obese-Jecty MP written question asking about online activity. Reply from Sarah Jones MP was that this is not excluded from being criminalised. [MP Question](#)

14th January 2026

Instrument approved - Ayes: 301, Noes: 110 [Votes](#)

15th January 2026

Motion to stop the instrument becoming law tabled.

19th January 2026

A recent letter, dated 19th January 2026, from Angela Rayner MP to a constituent stated:

*“During the Covid-19 **pandemic**, our national response depended on having the tools and expertise to rapidly develop new **vaccines** and treatments. Recent disruption from protests to this vital industry risks weakening the country’s ability to act swiftly in a medical crisis.”*



Resource Sheet Number 16 – Public Order Act 2023 Amendment 28th January 2026

Motion to approve the instrument tabled by the government.

4th February 2026

House of Lords Chamber debate. [Transcript](#)

Motion to stop the instrument becoming law rejected. Contents 62, Not contents 295.
[Votes](#)

Instrument approved. [Link](#)

Procedure completed in the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

5th February 2026

Instrument made (signed into law).

12th February 2026

Instrument comes into force as law. [Link](#)

13th February 2026

A MP written question [Link](#) which was answered on 13th February 2026 asked about DSIT ministerial meetings with MBR Acres. MP written question the answer was that “*The Department has held three Ministerial meetings with MBR since 5 July 2024.*” All meetings were attended by Minister Vallance.

17th February 2026

Information Commissioners Office Decision Notice on release of documents under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 says:

The Home Office explained that protests by animal rights and protection groups targeting companies (Contract Research Organisations – CROs) have recently escalated to levels not seen since the early 2000s. CROs and trade association groups have written and supplied evidence to the Home Office detailing the rise in recent activism and the impact of this on their staff. Additionally, court proceedings



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regarding the theft of dogs from an establishment were underway in March 2025, with a hearing scheduled for late 2025. These factors were prevalent in the Home Office’s consideration of the use of an NCND response on the grounds of health and safety.

The Home Office further explained that it has verifiable evidence that staff at multiple CROs have been subjected to extreme, unwarranted harassment and intimidation. It went on to provide a variety of examples of the evidence it holds:

Staff have been followed to their homes, had their houses spray painted, and had photos and videos of themselves shared on activist social media sites.

ASRU inspectors, assumed to have inspected a particular site, have been “doxxed” – whereby their details were posted on sites having been scraped from LinkedIn.

Protestors having been camped outside supplier organisations until they cut ties with an establishment they were dealing with.

Recent incidents have deleteriously affected the mental health of individuals at establishments. For example, at a particular establishment there is an ongoing physical threat to individuals on-site, as they enter/leave the premises, and they have been targeted through methods such as ANPR at home or another locality. The relevant Police services are currently significantly involved in actions at that locality.

The Home Office referred to several Parliamentary Questions that Ministers at the Home Office and DSIT have responded to regarding a particular establishment, which clearly demonstrate the critical and sensitive nature of this matter.

The Home Office stated that the material impact of actions such as those noted above has been such that the government has developed an amendment to S7 of the Public Order Act to designate scientific establishments as national critical infrastructure. The statutory instrument can be viewed alongside a draft Explanatory Memorandum, which contains information that clearly articulates the government’s concern over the ability for establishments to continue normal activities.

The Home Office summarised that all the evidence demonstrates that the public identification of licensed establishments has led to targeting by extremists prepared to engage in harassment tactics, including intimidation, abuse and causing criminal damage. The evidence shows that there is a real risk to the physical and mental health and safety of individuals associated with licensed establishments.



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Conclusion

It is clear that the reasoning behind this amendment is being presented as protecting the public against future pandemics. This begs the question as to why the handful of licenced establishments engaged in pandemic planning/vaccines, ONLY, are not being protected from a perceived threat.

It is obvious the legislation referred to in the meeting of 17th September 2025 is the Public Order Act and it is ONLY being put through to protect MBR Acres, the only supply chain that has is beagle puppies to contract research organisations (CROs). Note at this stage there is nothing mentioned about pandemic planning, which is simply being used to scaremonger the public.

Extensive internet searches reveal no disruptive protests by animal rights campaigners at any pandemic planning sites. The location of such sites are not even known to the public.