



Home Office

Knowledge & Information
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<http://www.gov.uk/home-office>

By email

17 October 2025

Dear

Internal Review: IR2025/12607
Original Request: FOI2025/10900

Thank you for your email of 15 September 2025 in which you asked for an internal review of the response to your Freedom of Information (FOI) request. Your FOI request of 14 August asked for information about dogs housed at MBR Acres in extreme weather conditions. Your request can be viewed in full at **Annex A**.

I have now completed the review and have assessed the substance of the response provided to you. I can confirm that I was not involved in the initial handling of your request.

The FOI response provided you with information in answer to your questions. A full copy of the response can be found in **Annex B**.

The review is based on the points you have raised in your internal review request which can be found in full at **Annex C**.

I have carefully considered your comments and consulted with the business area that responded to your request.

Upon review, I find the response provided to you to be correct. The business area addressed each of your questions in the FOI response.

To provide you with further explanation, ASPA sets a legal requirement for all licensed establishments that they are responsible for the welfare of animals on their premises. This includes maintaining appropriate temperature conditions for the animals they hold. The Regulator conducts audits at establishments to ensure that these conditions are being met. It is a requirement that Establishments report any non-compliance with the terms of their licence under ASPA – this includes compliance with the Code of Practice. The Regulator does not routinely require additional information such as temperature logs to be sent in. When concerns are raised, or self-reported by an establishment, the Regulator

may ask for such logs to be sent to the Home Office, along with details of the welfare impact on the animals. If any welfare issues caused by excessive temperatures were reported, this will be considered as potential non-compliance and dealt with as per the Regulator's published Compliance Policy. If an incident of non-compliance was decided to have occurred, information on this would be published in the Regulator's Annual Report.

In conclusion, I am satisfied that the original response was correct. The business area provided you with a response to your request for information and further context has been provided as part of this internal review.

This completes the internal review by the Home Office.

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights Team

Annex A – original request dated 14 August 2025

I am attaching what is a standard reply to MPs from Lord Hanson of Flint. I have seen extracts of this letter many times, signed off by various people. Recently it has had extra paragraph information added re the welfare of the dogs at MBR Acres during heatwaves. I want to highlight: “These documents require contingency plans for temperature extremes and mandate daily welfare check by competent personnel” and “Recent reports regarding MBR Acres have been carefully examined. The welfare and care of the dogs at this facility are monitored, and we remain vigilant in assuring welfare through our regulatory processes.”

Also extracts from MPs letters are:

1. As you know establishments licenced to breed protected animals under the legislation governing animal testing are required to comply with the published Code of Practice, which sets out standards for the appropriate care and accommodation of animals. This includes dogs. It may help to know that the Animals in Science Regulation Unit conducts both announced and unannounced audits to ensure establishments are complying with the terms of their licences, the Code of Practice and the law.

Liam Conlon MP

2. ASRU is responsible for ensuring that establishments operate within the law and meet their obligations under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. If any breach has occurred, it is essential that this be fully investigated. Given the nature of the concerns—particularly around the welfare of animals in potentially extreme temperatures – I would advise, if not already done so, to report the matter to the RSPCA. They have the authority to investigate potential breaches of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, which applies to animals used in science when they are not undergoing procedures under licence. Their involvement could be crucial in ensuring independent oversight of the situation on the ground.

On behalf of Charlotte Cane MP

3. Please rest assured that we have looked into the concerns around the MBR Acres site, and James certainly does share your concerns about animal well-being and the need for more ethical testing.

On behalf of James McMurdock MP

4. I welcome that the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) provides protections for animals bred in the UK for use in scientific procedures. I am aware that all establishments licensed to breed protected animals under ASPA are required to comply with the published Code of Practice, which sets out standards for the appropriate care and accommodation of animals, including dogs.

Nusrat Ghani MP

5. Thank you for contacting me about your concerns regarding the welfare of beagles at MBR Acres during the recent hot weather. I fully understand the strength of feeling on this issue and appreciate you taking the time to highlight your concerns with me. While I am not in a position to comment directly on the specific allegations made, I have noted the concerns you have raised about the conditions and welfare of the animals at the site. I will ensure that your communication is passed on to the relevant ministerial colleagues at the Home Office for their information and consideration.

Daniel Zeichner MP

Code of Practice for the Housing and Care of Animals Bred, Supplied or Used for Scientific Purposes

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ee67ce5274a2e8ab48e98/CoPanimalsWeb.pdf>

Section 3, Chapter 5: Dogs Page 98:

1.2 Temperature

Dogs may be maintained within a wide temperature range provided that their welfare is not compromised. It is advisable to prepare suitable contingency plans to deal with extremes of temperature, seen occasionally in hot summers or cold winters, to ensure that a comfortable environment is maintained for the animals. A temperature range of approximately 15°C to 24°C (as determined by the investigator and justified as necessary) is appropriate when precise control is required for dogs under procedure. It is advisable to ensure that outdoor pens provide shelter against adverse weather conditions. As puppies have limited thermoregulatory control in the first ten days or so of life, it is advisable to provide additional local heating within the whelping enclosure. New-born puppies require a local environmental temperature of 26–28 degrees C for at least the first five to ten days of life.

Section 3, Chapter 1: Advice applicable to all animals

2.2 Ventilation (these are extracts)

The purpose of the ventilation system is to provide sufficient fresh air of an appropriate quality and to keep down the levels and spread of odours, noxious gases, dust and infectious agents of any kind. It provides for the removal of excess heat and humidity. For cats, dogs and primates, 10 to 12 air changes per hour may be adequate. Re-circulation of untreated air should be avoided. It is advisable that the ventilation system is designed so as to avoid harmful draughts and noise disturbance while delivering air as evenly as possible throughout the holding area.

Here are my questions specific to the dogs housed at MBR Acres in extreme weather conditions be it hot or cold.

1. Per Lord Hanson of Flint - daily welfare check by competent personnel, Please confirm is this just a once in a day check? Is it scheduled to be at a particular time when heat is at a maximum? What exactly comprises a welfare check? Is this just a walk past or each dog thoroughly examined?
2. What happens when the staff leave, and only security guards are site. How is the dogs welfare monitored? For instance, is there CCTV in the sheds with at least one person monitoring it outside of working hours?
3. Is a temperature log kept for each shed? If so, are multiple readings taken throughout the day and in different areas of the sheds?
4. As regulators when there is extreme weather does MBR Acres send across copies of their temperature logs? Have these logs ever shown interior heat to exceed 24 degrees C or temperatures below 15 degrees C?
5. As dogs are specially protected species and each must have its own record, for those that have died in MBR Acres has this ever been noted as due to extreme temperatures?
6. If temperatures notified to ASRU have been outside the range of the COP what action has been taken?
7. Can you confirm that MBR Acres only has air circulation units as opposed to air conditioning i.e. cooling capacity.
8. Are readings taken of air quality, is the system compliant with minimum ventilation rates (in litres per second)? Air circulation unit compliance, is governed by Building Regulations Part F. The regulations specify minimum ventilation rates. Employers are legally required to ensure adequate ventilation in the workplace, including the proper functioning of air circulation units. This involves providing sufficient fresh air and removing stale, humid, or contaminated air. Compliance involves maintaining ventilation systems, regularly checking air quality, and ensuring adequate fresh air

supply, which is generally recommended to be between 5-8 litres per second per occupant.

9. COP - Section 3, Chapter 1: Advice applicable to all animals, 2.2 Ventilation – how many air changes are there per hour?
10. Why do staff leave early on hot days? If the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 are not being met then neither is that ok for welfare of the dogs. Note that employers must provide a reasonable indoor temperature and ensure sufficient ventilation. Under regulation 6 employers must 'ensure that every enclosed workplace is ventilated by a sufficient quantity of fresh or purified air. Does ASRU examine Health and Safety assessments? There's no law for maximum working temperature, or when it's too hot to work, because every workplace is different. However, all workers are entitled to an environment where risks to their health and safety are properly controlled. Heat is classed as a hazard and comes with legal obligations like any other hazard. Employers must keep the temperature at a comfortable level and provide clean/fresh air.
11. What automated heating system does MBR Acres had. Is this compliant with ensuring 24/7 temperatures of 15 degrees C or above? Have ASRU noted any instances of minimum temperature not being met? Note this must be at least 13 degrees C for staff doing physical work or 16 degrees C if no physical effort - Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) L24.
12. If this Establishment does have air conditioning in any of the sheds or workplaces is the cooling capacity above 12W? If so, are there regular energy efficiency inspections under the Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations 2012.
13. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 says employers must ensure that working conditions are safe, including air quality and temperature. Whilst this law is for staff clearly what is not suitable for humans is also not for dogs. Do ASRU examine Health and Safety Executive reports?

Annex B – original response dated 12 September 2025

Thank you for your email of 14 August 2025, which we have included as Annex A. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

In response to questions 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 11, 12 licensed establishments are responsible for the welfare of animals in their care at all times, including during extreme weather. Under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA), all such establishments must comply with legal requirements and standards set out in the Home Office's published Operational Guidance and Code of Practice.

These documents require that the physiological needs of animals are met and require contingency plans (such as for temperature extremes). Establishment licence holders must ensure sufficient trained staff are in place to maintain high standards of care and facility management. Daily checks by competent personnel are mandated under Standard Condition 4 to monitor animal welfare and environmental conditions, with prompt action required to address any issues.

The Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) monitors compliance through regular audits, including both announced and unannounced visits, to assess animal welfare and adherence to ASPA.

In response to question 4, Standard Condition 18 is a legal requirement whereby any breaches, or potential breaches of licence conditions must be reported to the Regulator. I can therefore provide assurance that the framework provides for the welfare of dogs being closely monitored.

In response to question 5, the Animals in Science Regulation Unit contains a record of all incidents of non-compliance each year. The Annual Reports can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/animals-in-science-regulation-unit-annual-reports>.

In response to question 6, the Animals in Science Regulator takes any instances of non-compliance very seriously and has published its compliance framework which explains how it identifies and investigates potential incidents of non-compliance and decides on appropriate and proportionate measures and remedies where non-compliance has been found to occur. The Regulator's published compliance policy aims to reduce the risk of future non-compliance.

All cases of non-compliance are thoroughly investigated, and the outcomes are published in ASRU's annual report.

In response to question 8, Section 2.2.1 of the Code of Practice requires that air circulation, dust levels, and gas concentrations are kept within limits that are not harmful to the animals housed, and are appropriate for the housing system in operation.

In response to question 10 and 13, licensed establishments are responsible for the welfare of employees at animal testing facilities. The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) does not require the Regulator to review Health and Safety Reports.

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk, quoting reference **FOI2025/10900**. If you ask for an

internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request would be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you were to remain dissatisfied after an internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the FOIA.

A link to the Home Office Information Rights Privacy Notice can be found in the following link. This explains how we process your personal information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-rights-privacy-notice>

Annex C – internal review request dated 15 September 2025

Please may I request an internal review. In my request I ask very specific questions, some that require a simple yes or no answer, yet as far as I can see not one has actually been answered.

The ASRU annual report remains unpublished for 2024 and some of the questions I ask would not be reportable on there anyway.

I am well aware of the inadequate and poorly inspected operational guidance, code of practice and Establishment licence standard conditions – the whole ‘audit’ system relies heavily on self-reporting and whistleblowers.

Annex D - Complaints Procedure

If you remain dissatisfied with the response to your FoI request, you have the right of complaint to the Information Commissioner at the following address:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>