



Members' guide to the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK



Foreword



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The pharmaceutical industry in the UK is constantly researching and developing life-enhancing and life-saving medicines. Countless numbers of patients worldwide have benefited thanks to these innovative new treatments.

Many of these developments, however, could never have taken place without the use of animals. Animals are only used in medical research when absolutely necessary and in situations where appropriate alternatives are not available, but they play an important, albeit often controversial, role in the development of medicines.

The majority of the UK public supports the use of animals in medical research. The most recent poll shows that 68% of the population believes that animal experimentation for medical research is acceptable but that 55% of people would be interested in finding out more about ongoing work to find alternatives to using animals in research.

The aim of the *Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK* is to foster a culture of openness within life science organisations and to enable people to discuss the use of animals in research from a knowledgeable position and draw their own conclusions about its place in the development of medicines and treatments.

This guide is designed to give all ABPI members, especially those who have signed the Concordat, suggestions of practical steps that they can take in order to meet the Concordat's commitments and develop a culture of openness around the animal research they are involved with.

Introduction

More than 80 organisations involved with life sciences, including universities, learned societies and pharmaceutical companies, have signed the *Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK* and are committed to being more open about the ways in which they use animals in scientific research.

This includes the ABPI and a number of member companies who have signed up to the Concordat's four commitments with the aim of providing accurate, up-to-date information about the role animal research plays in the discovery and development of medicines and treatments, how it is regulated, the importance of animal welfare and the drive to replace, refine and reduce the way that animals are used in research.

This guide has been developed to support ABPI member companies, particularly those who have signed up to the Concordat, to meet the four commitments by providing advice on practical steps they can take within their own organisations to create a culture of openness; it is not a comprehensive guide to activities under the Concordat.

All signatories to the Concordat are required to report to Understanding Animal Research (UAR) annually on their progress towards each commitment, and the advice, information and examples in this publication are intended as a guide for members, who will need to tailor their activities under the Concordat to meet their organisation's specific requirements.



Meeting the Concordat commitments

There are four Concordat commitments which signatories have agreed to work towards achieving. For each commitment this guide highlights examples of practical steps which can be taken towards achieving that commitment.

Concordat commitment 1:

We will be clear about when, how and why we use animals in research

This commitment seeks to ensure that organisations acknowledge, internally and externally, their involvement with animal research and are transparent about the use of animals in research.

External communications:

- When communicating about research involving animals, companies should be honest in highlighting both the **benefits** and **limitations** of the research. For example, a press release regarding a new Ebola vaccine entering human trials could highlight both the promise from non-human primate studies, but also the limitations of this work, and that human trials will be important to establish safety and efficacy.
- When communicating about the use of animals, companies should be open about what the research involves and its impacts on welfare. For example, when responding to queries, we should be open to explaining the types of procedures carried out on animals in drug design and development, and the steps we take to minimise pain and distress. A good example of this is in [GSK's frequently asked questions](#). UAR also has materials on [procedures](#) which could be used to aid communications.
- Companies should be prepared to respond to all reasonable queries about the use of animals in research. It is recognised that it may not be possible to disclose all requested information, for example personal data or commercially sensitive information. In these instances the reasons should be clearly explained and general information given as appropriate.
- Whilst contract research organisations cannot of course disclose commercially sensitive information, they should be prepared to provide generic information about the research they carry out on behalf of clients, such as common types of procedure.

Internal communications:

- As a minimum, the company's policy statement (see commitment 2) should be made available and visible through companies' intranets. More comprehensive internal communication is desirable to meet this commitment. Companies could consider making all public-facing information on animal research available on intranets; making promotion of the policy statement and their position on animal research part of the appointment and induction of new

starters, including, where feasible and applicable, new starter visits to animal facilities; and regular 'all staff' updates through meetings and internal publications.

- Other ways to engage the wider staff population with animal research programmes could include using staff as lay members on Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies (AWERB) and engaging mathematicians, engineers or statisticians in 3Rs (Replace, Refine and Reduce) programmes. One good example of this is the involvement of statisticians at Pfizer in the development of an Assay Capability Tool. This tool can be used to guide the development of drug discovery assays, to address issues of robustness and reproducibility in animal research, ultimately leading to reduced, or more efficient, use of animals. For more information [see here](#). Some companies, including Huntingdon Life Sciences and AstraZeneca, hold open AWERB sessions, facilitating engagement of the wider staff population with animal research.

Concordat commitment 2:

We will enhance our communications with the media and the public about our research using animals

This commitment builds on commitment 1, to ensure that organisations' involvement in the use of animal research is readily accessible by the public, including through a policy statement on websites and media releases.

Policy statement:

- This commitment requires that signatory companies make a policy statement available on their website and through a link on the UAR portal. The ABPI policy statement is available on our [website](#) and companies are welcome to use this as a starting point if they wish, tailoring it to their organisation's policy and work. Policy statements can be used as the basis from which to work towards other commitments, for example for staff communication, or as a starting point for responding to some queries.
- Policy statements and all other material on animal research should be easily accessible on signatories' websites. This demonstrates the spirit of openness and helps to reduce the burden of further enquiries.

Media:

- Press offices should have appropriate training and support to be able to provide accurate and substantive information about animal research, both reactively and proactively. Companies should have an identified point of contact and spokespeople prepared and supported to provide media interviews/briefings on the subject. It may be useful for animal welfare, policy and communication colleagues within companies to have regular 'intelligence sharing' meetings to ensure a common understanding of the issues and policy in relation to animal research in order to provide effective media management.

Companies should also encourage and support those who work with animals who wish to engage with the media about their work, where this does not conflict with normal operational procedures.

The ABPI is planning to work with UAR to run a workshop to support both media and policy colleagues in meeting this commitment.

- Animal research does not have to be mentioned in every press statement but it should be included where relevant, for example in reporting early stage research breakthroughs, or new collaborative or open innovation projects which will involve the use of animals. The reference to animal research does not have to be in the headline or the main text; it could feature in notes to editors and still be considered as being open and transparent.
- In the wording of media statements or releases, companies should consider being explicit about the use of animals rather than using phrases such as 'preclinical tests', 'early stage research' or 'safety assessments', as many members of the public may not understand what these involve. The ABPI has a [timeline of medicine development](#) showing when animals are used in the development of new medicines, which companies are welcome to use or refer to.

Reporting animal research:

- Where companies publish research involving the use of animals, researchers are encouraged to follow good reporting practice, for example following the NC3Rs [ARRIVE guidelines](#), so that accurate information about the use of animals in scientific advancement is available to the public and the scientific community.

Animal use and the 3Rs:

- Common areas of interest from the media and the public are the number and type of animals used, and the areas of research where animals are used. There are some good examples of companies sharing this information on their websites, such as [AstraZeneca](#), which others may wish to consider replicating according to their own company perspective and policies. There are also resources covering [animals used in research](#) available from UAR, which companies may wish to make use of.
- Many companies already highlight examples of how they apply the 3Rs in their research via their websites, for example [GlaxoSmithKline](#) and [AstraZeneca](#). Companies could consider a similar approach to explain how they are replacing, reducing and refining their use of animals. The ABPI has [resources](#) on the principles of the 3Rs and examples in the pharmaceutical industry, which companies can use. Companies may also wish to highlight the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) annual reports on progress towards delivering on the 3Rs in pharmaceutical research, or highlight National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs) projects they are involved in.

Concordat commitment 3:

We will be proactive in providing opportunities for the public to find out about research using animals

This commitment aims to encourage public discussion about animal research in the UK including the provision of materials and information to facilitate debate.

- Under this commitment companies are encouraged to engage in public dialogue, or schools work, on the use of animals in research. Companies could consider developing materials, images and videos for such work. The ABPI has a **number of publications** available on its website which companies can use directly in public dialogue, or can be used to help develop company-specific materials. These include publications on why animal research is necessary, myths vs. reality of animal research, alternatives to the use of animals, and materials for use in schools. UAR also has **many resources**, including images and films, available on its website.
- Companies are encouraged to facilitate visits to animal facilities where applicable, for example by the media, patient groups or other external stakeholders. It is recognised that this is often a complex issue for large companies, especially within the short timescales involved in media requests, but it is strongly encouraged wherever possible as a positive way of demonstrating the reality of animal research and exploding common myths.
- One example of a company that has hosted countless visits to its animal facilities over a number of years is Huntingdon Life Sciences. These include visits from local schools and colleges, membership groups such as Rotary, politicians and other interested parties – all are invited to tour animal facilities. Journalists and documentary makers have also visited many times, photographing and filming animal research in progress.

Concordat commitment 4:

We will report on progress annually and share our experiences

This commitment covers the monitoring and implementation of the Concordat to ensure its success.

- The ABPI will report to UAR on the activities it has undertaken to support industry in meeting the commitments of the Concordat.
- Signatory member companies will report separately to UAR on their activities towards the commitments. Reporting back to UAR will ensure visibility for the progress being made by industry.
- The ABPI will collect examples of best practice from its members and produce a yearly round-up of progress made against the Concordat. UAR will hold events to celebrate examples of openness and to share best practice among signatories.
- Member companies could also publish the annual ABPI and UAR round-ups on their websites.



More information

For more information on the Concordat and advice on delivering against its commitments or issues connected with animal research, visit our [website](#) or contact:

Nicola Platt
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More information is also available from:

[Association of Medical Research Charities](#)

[Understanding Animal Research](#)

[Science Media Centre](#)

[National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research](#)

Concordat signatories

ABPI members currently signed up to the Concordat are:

- AstraZeneca
- Charles River Preclinical Services
- Covance
- GlaxoSmithKline
- Huntingdon Life Sciences
- Lilly UK
- Pfizer
- Sequani
- UCB
- Wickham Laboratories

New signatories to the Concordat are welcome at any time. If you are interested in becoming a signatory, please contact [UAR](#) for more information.

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