



13 March 2025

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2025/00216

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 18 February in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I am requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act concerning the financial years in the period 2020-2024. Please note 'ASPA' = the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

- 1) Did you fund any universities or projects within unis in Wales for human beneficial scientific research involving animals under ASPA?*
- 2) If so, please indicate which universities and how much award was received by each (including direct animal costs and indirect costs such as housing or consumables).*

Our response:

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) holds some information relevant to your request. Please see the information below.

All research funded by MRC is targeted towards improving human health and is therefore considered to be 'human beneficial'. Given this, we can confirm that funding has been provided to Universities in Wales for human beneficial scientific research, involving animals under ASPA.

The Universities, number of awards and total sum of funding are provided below for financial years 2020/21 to 2023/24.

Organisation	Funded Projects	Sum of Funding Awarded
Cardiff University	12	£17,500,000
Swansea University	2	Withheld, Section 38

Information on direct animal costs and indirect costs, such as housing and consumables, is not held. The figures included in the information above is not the specific cost of research involving animals, but the total costs of these grants, of which the use of animals may only be one aspect of the proposed research.

We consider that releasing the total sum of funding awarded to Swansea University for grants involving the use of animals, falls under the exemption at Section 38(1)(b) of the FOIA, where disclosure would, or would be likely to endanger the safety of any individual.

To explain further, due to the small number of grants funded involving the use of animals, and considering the figures awarded to each, when combined with information that is already available in the public domain, published on [UKRI's Gateway to Research](#)¹, it would be possible to identify these individual projects by their funding values.

¹ <https://gtr.ukri.org/>

This would in turn make individuals involved in the project identifiable and would likely risk the safety of these researchers.

Section 38 is a qualified exemption and requires UKRI to consider whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in its disclosure.

Public interest in favour of disclosure

- It would further the understanding and participation in the public debate on issues concerning the use of animals in research.
- It would promote accountability and transparency by public authorities for decisions taken with regard to public expenditure.
- It would promote accountability and transparency in allowing individuals, organisations and other bodies to understand decisions made by public authorities about research involving animals.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- The disclosure of information relating to research organisations or individuals may put at risk the safety of individuals associated with any relevant research.
- Disclosure of this information would make it available to individuals or organisations that may use this information to disrupt research or operations being conducted, or to target individuals or groups of suppliers by subjecting them to either physical harm or verbal harassment.
- UKRI has an obligation to protect information that may endanger the safety of individuals and organisations and ensure there is no harm from the release of grant information. This includes a duty of care to all individuals that undertake research with the funding we provide and there is a very substantial risk to the safety and well-being of individuals who are involved in any form of animal research.
- There are numerous animal campaign and activist groups operating both within the UK and abroad that have taken direct action in protest against individuals, organisations, and research facilities with links to animal research. This risk is live, ongoing, and not trivial as it concerns the fundamental right for individuals to conduct their work free from retaliation, harassment, and physical or verbal abuse.
- Disclosure is likely to draw attention that is unwarranted, stressful, or harmful to individuals that would be likely to endanger their safety.

We have concluded, taking the above arguments into consideration, that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure therefore the information is exempt from disclosure.

If you have any queries regarding our response please do let us know. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, explaining which elements of this decision you disagree with and why. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of our response and should be addressed to:

Head of Information Governance

Email: foi@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: www.ico.org.uk.

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see [UKRI's complaints procedure](#)².

Yours sincerely,


Information Governance
Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
foi@ukri.org | dataprotection@ukri.org

² <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>