UK Research and Innovation

[redacted]

15 April 2026

Dear [redacted]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2026/00224

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 14 March in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I am writing to request information regarding the assessment and decision-making process for the Pre-clinical Translational Models Hub (MC_PC_2603), which is part of the government's 2025/2026 "Replacing Animals in Science" funding commitment.

To ensure transparency regarding the "experiential confidence" and potential institutional bias of the assessors, please provide:

The names and host research organisations of all individuals appointed to the Assessment Panel (including the Chair and any "Introducing Members") for the MC_PC_2603 opportunity.

The number of these panel members who currently hold a Home Office Project License (PPL) or act as the Establishment License Holder (PEL) at their respective institutions.

Any Conflict of Interest declarations submitted by these panel members specifically relating to their institution's reliance on animal-testing infrastructure or "Golden Triangle" collaborative frameworks.

The criteria provided to the panel for weighing the "validation" of human-relevant models (NAMs) against legacy animal-based benchmarks, particularly where the assessors have a career history primarily based on in vivo research.

Confirmation of whether any representatives from the NC3Rs or human-relevant technology biotechs are voting members of this specific panel.

Our response

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) does hold some information relevant to your request.

Information on the names of the individuals who have been recruited at this time is exempt from disclosure under Section 22(1) of the FOIA as it is intended for future publication.

Section 22 is a qualified exemption meaning that it is subject to a public interest test.
UKRI understand that being transparent in regard to panel membership is in the public interest. However, the data is still incomplete, and we are of the view that releasing the information as it currently stands would be inaccurate, incomplete and misleading and thus not in the public interest.

MRC will publish the membership of this panel here[1] when the recruitment process has been concluded. There is no confirmed date for publication currently though this is expected over the coming months.

As the panel appointment process has not yet been concluded Declarations of Interests for panel members are not held.

UKRI does not collect information on whether panel members hold a Home Office Project License (PPL) or act as the Establishment License Holder (PEL) at their respective institutions.

As specified in the live funding opportunity for the Hub, the Hub will not conduct animal experiments. The Hub may compare newly developed models to existing animal data, however, models will primarily be validated against human samples and clinical data. The assessment criteria for the panel can be found in the funding opportunity text.[2]

Your rights

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[3].

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]
Information Governance
Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
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[1] https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/mrcevaluationandanalysis/viz/MRCPanelOutcomes/Overview
[2] https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/pre-clinical-translational-models-hub/
[3] https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target