



# Use of Animals in Research

September 2024

## Policy Reference Information

Status	APPROVED
Author	Jane Ferguson
Approval	Trustees
Date of Last Review	NEW
Date of Next Formal Review	December 2026

## Related Policies

Policy Title
Ethical Fundraising Policy
Investment Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 NHS Lothian Charity is the official charity of NHS Lothian and a strategic asset to the health board. We use our resources including donated funds to help NHS Lothian provide outstanding care for patients, creating opportunities for research, development and innovation.

## 2. Position Statement

- 2.1 NHS Lothian Charity is committed to funding research and innovation to improve patient lives and outcomes through high quality research to better understand and treat disease. To achieve this, many types of research methods are utilised. These include clinical trials, use of tissues samples, computer models and, when appropriate, animals. All approaches, including research using animals, play a vital role in the medical research process.
- 2.2 NHS Lothian Charity's position on the use of animals in research is aligned with best practice, ie that of the Association of Medical Research Charities. That is, the principle of using animals in research, when necessary, to advance understanding and treatment of serious health conditions, where there is no alternative that can be used.
- 2.3 We do not take the decision to fund animal research lightly. It is essential to strike a balance between the benefits of research and the ethical treatment of animals. Our position reflects a commitment to minimising harm to animals while recognising the vital role that well-regulated and ethical animal research plays in advancing knowledge and improving health. We are committed to undertaking high quality animal research that is well-designed, uses rigorous and expert peer review, is well-reported, and ethically justified.
- 2.4 High standards of animal welfare – including housing conditions, well-trained animal technologists – are vital to NHS Lothian Charity. These minimise discomfort for animals and enable researchers to obtain reliable results. We believe that animals used in research must be treated with the utmost respect and care
- 2.5 We are committed to openness and transparency around the use of animals in research and encourage open communication about the purpose, methods and outcomes of animal studies. We also recognise that not everybody is comfortable with the use of animals in research. We are committed to continually reviewing through the

relevant committees and board our funding practices and engage with the wider scientific community to encourage better practice and development of animal alternatives.

## 2. Legislation

2.1 We support the regulatory frameworks governing the use of animals in research. The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) is the act which permits the use of animals in scientific research and provides the restrictions around which animals can be used and for what purpose. At the heart of this act is the requirement to:

- only use animals in research when there are no alternatives;
- use the minimum number of animals needed;
- only cause the minimum necessary pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm to animals.

## 3. Academic Partners

3.1 Our funding of research and in particular that which requires the use of animals is largely under the jurisdiction of academic partners including The University of Edinburgh and Heriot Watt University, who publish information animal welfare and ethics [here](#) and [here](#).