

News story: Reducing the use of animals in research: apply for funding

The [National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research](#) (NC3Rs) and its sponsors have £2 million to invest in a series of challenges to reduce the use of animals in experiments.

NC3Rs is an independent scientific organisation that supports UK scientists in finding ways to replace, reduce or refine the use of animals in research.

Its CRACK IT programme invites small and medium-sized businesses and researchers to find solutions to specific challenges.

These 3 challenges are co-funded by the [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council](#), with contributions in kind by [Galvani Bioelectronics](#), [GSK](#), [MRC Harwell Institute](#) and [Sanofi Pasteur EU](#).

This funding competition is being delivered by Innovate UK through SBRI (the Small Business Research Initiative).

2018 CRACK IT challenges

Single or 2 phases

The challenges are run in either a single phase or 2 phases.

Single-phase challenges involve less research and mainly focus on the validation of new technologies.

Two-phase challenges require significant funding and can include research, development and validation of new technologies.

ImmuLiver

The aim of this 2-phase challenge is to develop an in vitro model of the human liver for assessment of yellow fever vaccine.

Current yellow fever vaccines are assessed in macaques. Projects should overcome the lack of 'immune competency' in existing in vitro models.

There is up to £100,000 to fund projects lasting up to 6 months in phase 1. Up to £1 million is available in phase 2 to support projects lasting up to 3 years.

RaTS

One of the biggest challenges facing scientists is the imaging of affected joints in rheumatoid arthritis. Joint pain and inflammation in animal models can only be monitored indirectly by detecting the response to external

stimuli.

The aim of this 2-phase challenge is to develop a handheld imaging device to monitor the progression of rheumatoid arthritis in conscious rodents.

There is up to £100,000 to fund projects lasting up to 6 months in phase 1. Up to £750,000 is available in phase 2 to support projects lasting up to 3 years.

Moshers

This single-phase challenge aims to develop an approach or device that will accurately measure individual food intake in mice housed in groups of 3 to 5.

A measurement of food intake is an indicator of general welfare and of recovery from surgery. It is also an important measurement when carrying out studies.

Accurate measurement of feeding patterns is technically challenging, particularly when mice are housed in social groups.

Up to £100,000 is available for projects lasting up to 1 year.

Competition information

- the 3 challenges open for applications on 10 September 2018
- the deadline for ImmuLiver and RaTS is at midday on 7 November 2018
- the deadline for Moshers is at midday on 14 November 2018
- any organisation that can demonstrate a route to market for its idea can apply
- successful projects will attract 100% funded development contracts

Statement to Parliament: Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme

Madam Deputy Speaker, today gives us a new start.

Westminster has been rocked by allegations of bullying and harassment since last November, but today we can demonstrate our determination to put our house in order – and ensure that in the future, everyone will be treated with dignity and respect.

This debate and vote come as a result of the tireless work and dedication of the Programme Team who have driven the implementation of the Working Group's proposals.

The Programme Team were overseen by a cross-party steering group made up of staff representatives and members of both Houses. To everyone who has been involved with this process and who have supported and provided advice, I am extremely grateful.

And most importantly, we probably wouldn't be having this debate at all if it wasn't for the bravery and spirit of those women and men who have chosen to speak out about their personal experiences. We thank them for taking that step on behalf of everyone who has been treated wrongly.

The motion on the Order Paper today asks the House to endorse specific changes that were identified in the Working Group's report, which was published and agreed by the House in February. The principles of that report will today become reality.

Today's motion will approve the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme Delivery Report, and in doing so it will:

- Ask the House to endorse a new Behaviour Code that makes it clear to all of us who come here – whether an MP, a member of staff, a Peer, contractor or visitor – the standard expected of everyone in Parliament
- Ask the House to eliminate the threat of exposure which prevents many from coming forward, by ensuring that all investigations are managed confidentially
- Provide the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards (PCS) with a broader set of powers, and makes changes to the Committee on Standards, including to the voting role of lay members
- Propose that a further independent inquiry will be established in similar terms to the Dame Laura Cox inquiry, to hear historic allegations about Members, peers and their staff
- Make provision for a full review of these arrangements at six and 18 months

In addition to the measures in today's motion, the Steering Group has established:

- Two independent helplines, one to deal with bullying and one to deal with sexual misconduct
- Independent HR advice for staff
- An aspiration to improve the general culture of Parliament; including through a new programme of training

I would like Members, staff and the public to rest assured that this Independent Complaints and Grievance Policy (ICGP) puts the complainant at the heart of the process, whilst also upholding the principles of 'innocent until proven guilty'.

The ICGP will be fair, transparent, and I believe, will win the confidence of everyone.

What Have We Done?

Today, Madam Deputy Speaker following an intensive period of implementation, is the final Parliamentary hurdle to getting this much-needed new scheme up and running. This is the first step, not the final step, towards the culture change we all want to see.

That's why we have built in a 6 and an 18-month review of the scheme to ensure it achieves exactly what we set out to do.

Importantly, the 6-month review will take careful account of the findings of the independent inquiry by Dame Laura Cox QC, and the further independent inquiry we are establishing today.

So, turning to the key elements of today's motion.

Behaviour Code

First, the new behaviour code will apply to everyone on the Parliamentary estate.

It has been drawn up following extensive consultation with Trade Unions, staff associations and the public, who were asked for their views on what behavioural expectations we should have of those working for and within Parliament.

It seeks to ensure that:

- Everyone in Parliament is respected and valued;
- We take a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct;
- Unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with seriously, and with effective sanctions.

Changes to the Commissioner for Standards and Standards Committee

Today's motion will also make changes to Standing Orders for the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, and to the Committee on Standards on confidential investigations.

Firstly, we are proposing that the Commissioners of both Houses keep their investigations entirely confidential, until such time as there is a finding.

This is crucial if individuals are to place their trust in the new system. There is clearly a balance to be struck between the public interest in transparency, and putting the complainant at the heart of the process by protecting their identity – that is absolutely vital. So in deciding to publish any finding, the Parliamentary Commissioner on Standards will put the complainant's wishes at the heart of the decision.

In thanking the Rt Hon. Gentleman for Rother Valley (Sir Kevin John Barron MP) for the extremely thoughtful and collaborative way he and his committee have come to today's position – I must point out to Members that we have had

to respectfully disagree on one issue, and that confidentiality should also be observed in cases prior to the introduction of non-ICGP cases.

I would be the last person to want to avoid transparency, but I do think it's vital that we achieve consistency. The amendment by the Standards Committee would effectively mean that there was one process for ICGP cases and a different one for non-ICGP. As I am sure Members will appreciate, such a difference in the process will be lost on those who would observe it and will inevitably lead to confusion. Right from the beginning, this scheme has sought to put the complainant at the heart of the process and all the evidence we have taken demonstrates that confidentiality is a key factor that will encourage victims to come forward.

I can't emphasise this enough – if we don't protect the confidentiality of victims, then the evidence shows that they will not come forward. So, if we are serious about changing the culture in this place, confidentiality and consistency are vital elements.

So again, in thanking the Rt Hon. Gentleman for his careful consideration, I must urge members to vote against his amendment.

This motion will also significantly extend the scope of the independent Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards to consider complaints arising from the Scheme. The Commissioner will be given access to a wider range of sanctions, enabling her to deal more effectively with many cases through apologies, training, behaviour agreements, and so on; as well as ensuring independent oversight of investigations.

The motion also sets out changes to the procedures of the Standards Committee, who will receive both appeals and the most serious cases for their consideration. Their voting system will be changed at their request so that all members, including all lay members, will have a vote.

How Will the New System Work?

Should the House accept these changes, detailed guidance will be available online. But I do want to briefly outline how the new scheme will work.

For anyone with a complaint the first step is to contact a confidential helpline, where their issue can be considered and triaged.

Where individuals decide to pursue a formal complaint, they will be supported to access one of two independent services – one dealing with bullying and harassment and a separate one to deal with sexual misconduct.

Should a complaint have criminal implications, the Steering Group has agreed to establish an Information Sharing Protocol with the Metropolitan Police to make them aware, in the interests of safeguarding and ensuring the Scheme does not prejudice a criminal investigation, when such a complaint has been made. The protocol will maintain the confidentiality of complainants, who will decide for themselves whether or not to take their complaint to the police.

For each complaint the telephone helpline and investigatory service will seek mediation and informal resolutions, wherever these are possible or appropriate. Where that is not the case, an independent investigation will be opened.

Complainants of sexual harassment or assault will have access to an Independent Sexual Misconduct Advisory Service – which is a specialist service that can provide confidential, independent, specialist and trained support in relation to sexual misconduct.

In the case of complaints against Members of Parliament, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards will oversee the independent investigation and she will apply sanctions as appropriate, or in more serious cases she will refer it to the Standards Committee. The Standards Committee can, of course, apply sanctions right up to a lengthy suspension triggering The Recall of MPs Act 2015.

Following a decision on any case, there is an opportunity for appeal.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when the Working Group report was published, there were two outstanding issues that I am pleased to be able to provide clarity on today.

Firstly, when the Working Group started taking evidence last November, we were advised that House staff had access to the Respect policy, which was considered to be entirely adequate for their needs.

Since then it has come to light that there have been difficulties with the Respect policy, and so the Steering Group has been clear about its desire to give all staff access to the new ICGP Scheme.

I am pleased that the House Commission has now agreed that staff of the House of Commons and the Parliamentary Digital Service should be able to access the ICGP from day one.

Secondly, whilst anyone can call the new helplines with a complaint, investigations under the new scheme can only go back as far as the beginning of this Parliament.

The Steering Group are, however, determined that we should be able to help all of those with complaints no matter how long ago they occurred.

Today's motion will therefore also establish an independent 6-month long inquiry into historical allegations, using similar terms of reference to the Dame Laura Cox inquiry. The findings of both inquiries will be taken into careful account when we undertake the review of the ICGP after six months of operation.

Conclusion

I want to conclude by making clear that this is the beginning, not the end of our efforts to change the culture of Parliament.

With our new behaviour code, complaints scheme, and sanctions – this is an excellent step in the right direction.

Our ultimate ambition is for a culture where people can work and visit Parliament, and take part in our democracy, free from unacceptable behaviour, free from bullying or harassment, and where individuals are free to thrive and make a difference.

This is a once in a generation opportunity for Parliament. We want to be a role model for legislatures around the world, in our determination to tackle our challenges head-on.

Many millions across the world look to Westminster as a beacon for democracy and freedom and I hope today will be seen as Parliament leading by example in our determination to treat everyone with dignity and respect.

I commend this motion to the House.

[News story: Insolvency Service's busy yet successful year commended at annual event](#)

Now in its third year, the Insolvency Service's annual event 'Insolvency Live!' welcomed more than 90 delegates to the BEIS Conference Centre in Westminster on Monday 23 July.

[Chief Executive Sarah Albon](#) kicked off proceedings welcoming participants and she was followed by the [Insolvency Service's Chairman, Steve Allinson](#), who reflected on the past year in insolvency.

The Chairman revealed that it's been a busy year for the Insolvency Service and insolvency has been prominent in the news over the past 12 months with the collapse of a number of high-profile businesses, as well as proceedings taken against several well-known directors.

However, Steve Allinson added that most cases don't hit the headlines, demonstrating that insolvency affects a substantial number of organisations, employees, creditors and smaller businesses.

The Chairman then highlighted some of the key results from the Insolvency Service's recently published Annual Report, including the number of Bankruptcy and Debt Relief Orders, successful enforcement outcomes and the millions of pounds returned to creditors.

Next on the agenda was [Dr John Tribe of Liverpool University](#), a senior law

lecturer with interests in insolvency law, bankruptcy history and equity and trusts. Dr Tribe's engaging presentation looked at the use of [Company Voluntary Arrangements \(CVAs\)](#) on the high street, comparing 2018 to previous years.

Central to Dr Tribe's argument was the idea that while there are low numbers of CVAs with regards to high street businesses, they should be considered as a viable option to help rescue businesses and save jobs.

Following Dr Tribe there were further presentations from the Insolvency Service's Adjudicator office and Statistics team, as well as a panel discussion focusing on how the Insolvency Service handles complex investigations, with a specific look at Carillion.

Delegates were also given the opportunity to engage with various teams from the Insolvency Service at the Trade Fayre and after lunch people had the choice to attend two separate workshops, one looking at insolvency practitioner regulation and the other exploring whether people are choosing the right debt solutions.

The penultimate presentation was delivered by Sarah Albon, who in contrast to the Chairman, looked at the year ahead.

Sarah Albon spoke about the Insolvency Service's core purpose of delivering economic confidence and said that over the coming year, we will continue to help build, improve and maintain business and investor confidence and drive responsible business practices to support the Government deliver an economy that works for everyone.

Supporting those in financial distress, tackling financial wrongdoing and maximising returns to creditors remains central to the Insolvency Service. In particular, we will be preparing for Brexit, ensuring the effective oversight of regulatory system for Insolvency Practitioners, centralising in-bound call handling and continue to handle high-profile cases.

The final act of the day was a Q&A session with the Insolvency Service's [Senior Management Team \(SMT\)](#). Chaired by Steve Allinson, people had been invited beforehand to submit questions to be put to the SMT before the session was opened up to the floor. Questions ranged from will there be changes to forms as a result of Brexit, were there plans to introduce digital creditor applications and the levels of funding for the Insolvency Service's services.

Commenting on the event, Steve Allinson said:

The past year was a successful one for the Insolvency Service but we should not rest on our laurels as there is still more work to do to ensure the UK has the best insolvency framework to support a strong economy.

I would like to thank everyone who attended and participated in what was a productive and engaging Insolvency Live!, while recognising all the hard work put in by my colleagues to bring this event together – congratulations.

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Press release: UK aid helps Welsh charity to train Ethiopian beekeepers

The honey and wax produced by Ethiopian bees is helping to generate income for beekeepers across the country, and now Welsh charity Bees for Development is helping to grow the numbers of entrepreneurial Ethiopian beekeepers further.

UK aid has awarded Bees for Development, based in Monmouth, Wales, £50,000 through the Small Charities Challenge Fund (SCCF). This funding will train and start the new businesses of beekeepers in the Amhara region of Ethiopia. Bee keeping offers young people without access to land a viable income earning opportunity with very low start-up costs.

Penny Mordaunt, International Development Secretary said:

Small, UK-based charities up and down the country, often staffed by volunteers, are incredibly valuable in making a difference around the world. DFID's Small Charities Challenge Fund celebrates their innovative work in some of the world's poorest countries.

Bees for Development is a great example of how a small community in Wales is helping to make a huge difference in Ethiopia. They are providing an invaluable entrepreneurial experience to young people, helping them thrive and support their own community.

Alun Cairns, Secretary of State for Wales said:

I am delighted that the hard work of Welsh charities such as Bees for Development is being rewarded for the international impact they have in encouraging entrepreneurship in a way that protects our environment. I hope that the funds awarded will go a long way to continue the great work they do across Ethiopia.

The Bees Ethiopian project has four aims:

- To deliver beekeeping training to vulnerable communities to build sustainable and resilient livelihoods
- Help beekeepers secure best value for their bee produce by accessing strong market chains, which are fair and rewarding
- Ensure that honey bee populations thrive as a result of environmental protection

- Enable beekeepers to access high quality, relevant information about methods, market opportunities and policy development

Dr Nicola Bradbear, Director of Bees for Development said:

Bees for Development helps the poorest people earn extra income through beekeeping. We are a specialist organisation, with a niche set of skills. This grant from the Small Charities Challenge Fund will enable us to help families in Ethiopia keep bees profitably, so they can earn extra income to buy school uniforms, pay medical costs, buy food and pay-off debts.

All SCCF projects are chosen for their ability to strengthen the capacity of grassroots development organisations working with the most marginalised to ensure that no one is left behind.

Note to Editors:

- The Small Charities Challenge Fund was launched in 2017 specifically to provide funding to smaller charities with an income of £250,000 or less. Bees for Development is the first recipient to be announced from the first round, other successful applicants will be announced later this summer. More information on the Small Charities Challenge Fund can be found here: www.ukaiddirect.org/apply/sccf
- For more information on Bees for Development please visit their website: www.beesfordevelopment.org