

Press release: 5% decrease in number of scientific procedures on animals

The number of scientific procedures carried out on live animals has decreased by 5% in the last year, according to the [annual statistical report released today](#), Thursday 13 July 2017.

The total number of procedures decreased to 3.94 million from 4.14 million, a 206,000 reduction compared with 2015.

The number of experiments rose to a peak of 5.61 million in 1971, followed by a steady fall to 2.62 million procedures overall in 2001. Since then, the number of procedures has shown a general increase, predominantly due to the advent of gene technology and the breeding and use of genetically altered animals, but in recent years has remained around 4 million.

Of the 2.02 million experimental procedures that took place in 2016, 5.6 % (114,000) were assessed as severe procedures compared to 5.9 % (123,000) in 2015.

Of the 1.91 million procedures that took place in 2016 involving the creation/breeding of genetically altered animals that were not used in further procedures, 2 % (40,000) were assessed as severe, compared to 3 % (62,000) in 2015.

A Home Office spokesperson said:

The UK has one of the most comprehensive animal welfare systems in the world and we are completely committed to the proper regulation of the use of animals in scientific research.

This research helps us to ensure that medicines are safe to use and to find treatments for cancer and other diseases, among a range of other benefits.

Our legislation provides a rigorous regulatory system that ensures animal research and testing is carried out only where no practicable alternative exists and under controls which keep suffering to an absolute minimum.