Herbie's Law: A Framework for Phasing Out Animal Testing

Herbie's Law: Introduction

- Herbie's Law would set a goal of phasing out animal experiments in medical research over the next decade, supporting the scientific community with the transition to more modern and human-specific techniques. It's named after a rescued beagle.
- A draft version of the Bill (titled the *Human Specific Technologies Bill*) describes how Government could drive progress, support scientists with the transition and collaborate on the global stage. It suggests measures to secure immediate progress, such as ending experiments on cats, dogs, monkeys and horses.
- Collaboration with the scientific community sits at the heart of the law, so it makes provision for the target year to be amended, should this become necessary.

Herbie's Law: scientific benefits

- Faster medical progress is urgently needed. Over 92 per cent of drugs that show promise in animal tests currently fail to reach the clinic and benefit patients, mostly for reasons of poor efficacy and safety that were not predicted by animal testing.
- Human-specific techniques, such as artificial intelligence and the advanced use of human cells and tissues, can provide results that are much more relevant to people. They're based directly on human biology, so don't need to be translated from one species to another.
- Animal Free Research UK-funded researchers around the country are already using these innovative methods to accelerate progress in medical research. A recent example is Professor Chris Denning at the University of Nottingham, who helped develop a human heart stem cell model that, when combined with computer modelling, can predict drug safety with 93% accuracy, significantly outperforming animal tests. Data generated directly influenced GSK's decision to use it to replace a rabbit heart tissue assay with this human-specific approach.

Herbie's Law: animal protection benefits

- 2,537,507 scientific procedures involving living animals were carried out in Great Britain in 2025. This represents just a 4% decrease compared to 2024.The number of procedures using specially protected species (cats, dogs, horses and monkeys) increased by 7% to 17,317. 95% of cynomolgus monkeys used were born in Africa or Asia, so would have had to endure the stress caused by transportation.
- A December 2024 Home Office report describes shocking incidents of welfare failings in British laboratories. Animals died after being left without food or water, newborn mice were killed when their cages flooded, and a mouse was accidentally put into a waste bin for around 45 hours, until they were discovered and euthanised.

Public and parliamentary support for Herbie's Law

- Polling has found that seven in ten people in Britain would support new legislation of this kind.[i] Herbie's Law is backed by more than 190 MPs and Peers from across the political spectrum.

Herbie's Law: current policy context

- Around the world, policymakers are taking bold steps to support the transition to human-specific science. For example, the US FDA has published a roadmap with a 3-5 year vision to 'make animal studies the exception rather than the norm for preclinical safety/toxicity testing.' While the UK Government's Replacing Animals in Science strategy is a welcome first step, it lacks the bold commitments that would position Britain as a global leader in this field.
- Herbie's Law would provide a practical pathway to implement the Government's manifesto commitment to work towards phasing out animal testing, in collaboration with the scientific community.

How you can help: actions for parliamentarians

- If you haven't already, join the list of over 190 MPs and peers who have supported Herbie's Law and urge the Government to introduce this without delay.
- Join the APPG on Phasing Out Animal Experiments in Medical Research as a Member.
- Table written or oral questions on this topic or apply for a debate (we can assist with drafting and provide briefing information).
- Meet with us to discuss further opportunities for working together – we have an exciting programme of events and initiatives planned.

Contact details and further information

- For more information or to arrange a short meeting, please contact Isobel Martin, our Public Affairs Director (isobel@animalfreeresearchuk.org; 07935 854 231)

[i] *All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,533 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 8th - 9th January 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).*

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