

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

PUBLICATION SCHEME

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The MRC aims to be as open as possible in informing others how we conduct our business through our publications, our website and face-to-face discussions. This Publication Scheme provides information about the MRC and our work, outlines the information we routinely publish and provides links to help you locate it.

The MRC is committed to openness, good record-keeping and effective communication in our handling of requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act. All information will be made freely available unless there is a good reason not to do so, in line with relevant exemptions under the Act. Our publications, our website and those of our units and institutes are developed with this goal in mind.

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PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Medical Research Council

The Medical Research Council (MRC) is a publicly-funded organisation dedicated to improving human health. We support and advance medical research in three main ways:

- Providing research grants and career awards to researchers in UK universities and hospitals.
- Funding research centres in partnership with universities.
- Supporting research with the MRC's own research facilities.

The heart of our mission is to improve human health through world-class medical research. To achieve this, we support research across the biomedical spectrum, from fundamental laboratory-based science to clinical trials, and in all major disease areas. We work closely with the UK Health Departments, the UK research councils, industry, charities and other national and international stakeholders to deliver our mission, and give a high priority to research that is likely to make a real difference to clinical practice and the health of the population.

The MRC is a Non-Departmental Body (NDPB) and receives annual 'grant-in-aid' funding from Parliament through the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Though government-funded, the MRC is independent in its choice of which research to support.

The MRC's mission, as set out in our [Royal Charter¹](#), is to:

- Encourage and support research to improve human health.
- Produce skilled researchers.
- Advance and disseminate knowledge and technology to improve the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the UK.
- Promote dialogue with the public about medical research.

1.2 Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 establishes a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, sets out exceptions to that right, and places a number of obligations on such bodies.

On making a request for information to the MRC, you are entitled to:

- To be informed in writing whether the MRC holds information of the description specified in your request.
- To have that information communicated to you, unless the information falls under one of the specified exemptions of the Act.

The Act provides a time limit for dealing with a request for information - that is, within 20 working days. The Act also provides for an appeal mechanism whereby you may apply to the [Information Commissioner²](#) for a decision as to whether a specified request was dealt with in accordance with the Act. A fee may be charged for processing requests for information under the Act.

¹ <http://www.mrc.ac.uk/documents/pdf/mrc-charter/>

² <https://ico.org.uk/>

1.3 Publication scheme

All public authorities designated under the Act are obliged to adopt and maintain a publication scheme. The publication scheme sets out:

- The classes of information public authorities publish, intend to publish or otherwise make available as a matter of course.
- How the information is, or is intended to be, published.
- Whether the material is, or is intended to be, made available to the public free of charge or on payment.

The purpose of the publication scheme is to ensure that a large amount of information is readily available to the public, i.e. without the need for specific consideration under the Act, and to inform the public of the extent of material that is available. The term "readily available" means that the information is available on the MRC's website, may be purchased from The Stationery Office (TSO), may be obtained from a public library, or will be supplied promptly on receipt of a written request to the MRC.

PART TWO of this scheme sets out the classes of information that the MRC publishes or intends to publish.

1.4 Responsibility for the publication scheme and comments and complaints about the scheme

The MRC's Freedom of Information Officer is responsible for maintaining the publication scheme.

Freedom of Information Officer
Medical Research Council
Corporate Affairs Group
2nd Floor, David Philips Building
Polaris House
Swindon SN2 1ET
e-mail: foi@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk
Telephone: 01793 41 6387

If you have any comments about the MRC's publication scheme, or if you think we have not supplied information in accordance with the scheme, you should contact the MRC's Freedom of Information Officer in the first instance.

1.5 Charges

The MRC normally expects to make the information outlined in PART TWO of this scheme available free of charge. However, it may be necessary to make a charge in some cases, for instance where the cost of extracting the information requested is high or where multiple copies of multiple publications or documents have been requested. Any potential charges will be identified by the MRC when acknowledging the request and would be payable in advance.

The MRC also reserves the right to charge fees in accordance the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulation 2004³.

1.6 Copyright

The material available through this publication scheme is subject to copyright protection unless otherwise indicated. MRC material protected by copyright may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium provided it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. Where any copyright items in this scheme are being republished or copied to others, the source of the material must be identified and the copyright status acknowledged.

Permission to reproduce copyright protected material does not extend to any material accessed through the publication scheme that is the property of third parties. Permission to reproduce such material must be obtained from the copyright holder(s) concerned.

1.7 Requests for non-personal information: the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR)

If the information you require is not specified in this publication scheme, you may request this information under FOIA or EIR by contacting the MRC's Freedom of Information Officer. To help us to locate any information that might be held, please outline your request as clearly as possible, providing any relevant dates, organisations or names. You may also wish to specify in what format you would like to receive the information, either in hard copy or in electronic format.

Your right to access information is subject to a range of exemptions. These may include security, information provided in confidence, that is intended for publication or which is commercially sensitive. Where we consider that an exemption might apply, we will consider the Public Interest Test to determine whether or not the information may be released.

We normally expect to be able to make any information requested available free of charge. However, the MRC reserves the right to charge fees in accordance the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulation 2004⁴ and guidance issued by the Information Commissioners Office⁵.

We aim to respond to your request within 20 working days from the date of receipt. However, there may be cases where we may need longer, for instance where we consider that qualified exemptions under the FOIA that require consideration of a Public Interest Test might apply. In such cases we will aim to provide an estimate of the time this work might take and provide and update as the work progresses.

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/3244/contents/made>

⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/3244/contents/made>

⁵ https://ico.org.uk/media/1635/fees_cost_of_compliance_exceeds_appropriate_limit.pdf

If you are not satisfied that we have complied with the Act or feel that your request has not been handled appropriately you may appeal by contacting the MRC's Freedom of Information Officer. If, after the investigation of your complaint, you remain dissatisfied then you may contact the MRC's Complaints Officer:

MRC Complaints Officer
Medical Research Council
14th Floor
One Kemble Street
London, WC2B 4AN
e-mail: customer.service@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk
Telephone: 020 7395 2421

The MRC aims to deal with the investigation of complaints within 20 working days, and aims to complete internal reviews also within 20 working days. Details of the [MRC's Complaints Procedure](#)⁶ are published on our website.

If you are still dissatisfied, you may refer your complaint to the [Information Commissioner](#).

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 0303 123 1113

1.8 Requests for personal information: the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998

Individuals have a statutory right of access (certain exemptions apply) to personal data about themselves under the [Data Protection Act 1998](#)⁷. If you wish to apply for access to your personal data, known as a "Subject Access Request", you can contact the MRC's Data Protection Officer using the details below.

Data Protection Officer
Medical Research Council
Corporate Affairs Group
2nd Floor, David Philips Building
Polaris House
Swindon SN2 1ET
e-mail: data.protection@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk
Telephone: 01793 41 6387

You can find more information relating to the Data Protection Act and how Subject Access Requests are handled on our website at:

<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/information-standards/data-protection/>:

⁶ <http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/information-standards/complaints/>

⁷ <http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/information-standards/data-protection/>

1.9 Review of the publication scheme

The MRC Publication Scheme will be reviewed on an annual basis but may be updated more frequently as required. The scheme is due for review in January 2018.

PART TWO: Guide to information

This section of the Publication Scheme outlines the classes of information we routinely publish and provides links to help you locate the information on our website, and details to allow you to request information accessible in hard copy.

2.1 Who we are and what we do

The MRC is a single organisation, which includes research units, centres and institutes located throughout the United Kingdom, and in Africa. Information about the MRC's mission and organisation can be found on the 'About us' pages of our website. This area provides information on our mission and history, organisational information and governance structures, and locations and contacts:

- About the MRC
- Our mission, corporate governance framework and management structure
- Facts and figures
- Our Chief Executive and Chairman
- Our Management Board
- Our origins and history
- Our research and administrative centres
- Our relationship with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

The 'About Us' pages are available from the following webpage:
<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/>.

Additional information about the MRC can be found at the following links:

- Our views and submissions to consultations (www.mrc.ac.uk/about/spending-accountability/accountability/).
- Working for the MRC (www.mrc.ac.uk/skills-careers/working-for-mrc/).
- Contact us (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/contact/>).
- The work of the The National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs), which is funded by the MRC and other public sector partners but which operates an independent scientific strategy (<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/landing.asp?id=2>).

2.2 What we spend and how we spend it

Information on the funding received and spent by the MRC is contained in our Annual Report and Accounts. Spending priorities, plans and progress are published in our Delivery Plans and Delivery Plan Reports. Details of research awards and the achievements and impact resulting from the work we support are published on our website and in our Annual Review. This area also provides information on MRC pay and grading benefits, and contracts and procurement.

- Details of the research we support can be found on the RCUK Gateway to Research (<http://gtr.rcuk.ac.uk>); and other information relating to MRC research, including success rates and how funding decisions are made, can be found in the Funded Research section of our website (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/research/funded-research/>).
- Our Annual Review provides a summary of key achievements each year and is available in the publications section of our website (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/publications/browse/tag/annual%20review/?searchSectionID=4BC7DBBA-1972-4E8B-898B31A1B8A6EEB0&sortBy=created&sortDirection=desc>).
- Our Annual Report and Accounts from 1999/00 are available in the publications section of our website (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/what-we-do/spending-accountability/annual-report/>).
- Our Delivery Plans and Delivery Plan Reports from 2005/06 are available in the publications section of our website (www.mrc.ac.uk/news-events/publications/).
- The MRC's Management Statement and Financial Memorandum agreed with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) update has been put on hold due to UKRI transition, the most recent version is 2005 and are available from the Knowledge and Information Management Team (corporate@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk).
- Information on spending over £25k and Government Procurement Card expenditure over £500 and on pay and staffing structures, including details of senior staff pay, is available in the transparency section of our website (www.mrc.ac.uk/about/spending-accountability/transparency/). Further information on pay and grading structures is available from the Knowledge and Information Management Team (corporate@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk).
- Information on allowances and expenses that can be claimed by MRC staff, Council and Board members is available from the Knowledge and Information Management Team (corporate@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk).
- The NC3Rs publish a range of reviews illustrating the impact of their work (<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/our-reviews>).
- The NC3Rs Annual Reports provide information on the aims and the research of the organisation, as well as a financial summary (<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/about-us/corporate-publications>).
- Details of research funded through NC3Rs schemes can be found on their Research Portfolio (<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/researchportfolio/page.asp?id=11>).
- Specialist purchasing and supply services are provided by the UK Shared Business Service (UK SBS) (www.uksbs.co.uk/services/procure/Pages/default.aspx). Information on procurement and tendering processes and contracts currently available for public tender is available from the Knowledge and Information Management Team (corporate@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk).

2.3 What are our priorities and how are we doing

Information about MRC strategy, priorities and delivery is available on our website. The following links show how this information may be accessed.

- MRC strategic plan 2014-2019 (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/research/strategy/>).
- MRC Annual Report and Accounts from 1999/2000 (www.mrc.ac.uk/news-events/publications/).
- MRC Delivery Plans and Delivery Plan Reports from 2011/12 onwards (www.mrc.ac.uk/about/spending-accountability/delivery-plan/).
- MRC Research programme awards and application and success rates (mrc.ac.uk/research/funded-research/success-rates/).
- NC3Rs Mission and Strategy (<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/page.asp?id=4>).
- NC3Rs Research Reviews www.nc3rs.org.uk/document.asp?id=2017)
- NC3Rs Annual Reports from 2005 (<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/about-us/corporate-publications>).

2.4 How we make decisions

Information about MRC decision making and records of decisions are available on our website. The following links show how this information may be accessed.

- MRC corporate governance and management structure (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/our-structure/>).
- MRC Council discussions (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/council/meetings/>).
- Major policy proposals and decisions by the MRC's Council (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/council/meetings/>) and advisory and decision making bodies such as the Research Boards and Panels (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/research-boards-panels/>).
- MRC research funding application success rates (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/research/funded-research/success-rates/>).
- MRC research funding decisions (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/research/funded-research/board-panel-meeting-outcomes/>).
- MRC assessment criteria for research proposals (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/how-we-assess/>).
- Public consultations conducted by the MRC, submissions to consultations conducted by other bodies and MRC role in informing policy development (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/spending-accountability/accountability/>).
- NC3Rs Board (<https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/our-board-members>).
- NC3Rs Board minutes from 2013-2015 (<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/page.asp?id=5>).
- NC3Rs grant application success rates ([https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/panel-meeting-outcomes#Success rates](https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/panel-meeting-outcomes#Success%20rates)).
- NC3Rs assessment criteria ([https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/panel-meeting-outcomes#Assessment procedure](https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/panel-meeting-outcomes#Assessment%20procedure)).
- NC3Rs staff (<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/page.asp?id=6>).

2.5. Policies and procedures

The MRC provides guidance to help our researchers to implement good practice and meet legal and ethical requirements to ensure that their work is of a high scientific standard, is conducted safely, and respects the wishes and integrity of any patients or volunteers involved. Policies relating to the recruitment and employment of staff, health, safety and security, the use of personal data and customer services and complaints are also in this section.

- MRC Ethics, Regulation & Public Involvement Committee (ERPIC) (<https://www.mrc.ac.uk/research/policies-and-guidance-for-researchers/erpic/>).
- MRC Policies and guidance for researchers (<https://www.mrc.ac.uk/research/policies-and-guidance-for-researchers/>).
- NC3Rs Information Portal: Information for applying the 3Rs and ensuring the best possible standards of animal welfare (<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/landing.asp?id=38>).
- Working for the MRC (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/skills-careers/working-for-mrc/>). Information prepared for MRC staff, including HR policies is available on the MRC Staff Portal and can also be requested (corporate@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk).
- MRC equalities policies and progress reports (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/information-standards/equality-diversity/>).
- MRC policies relating to health, safety and security <http://www.mrc.ac.uk/skills-careers/working-for-mrc/safety-security-resilience/>).
- Access to MRC information, customer services and standards and complaints (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/information-standards/>).
- MRC privacy policy and use of personal data (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/information-standards/>).
- Guidance on how to access MRC archives and records can also be provided by the Knowledge and Information Management Team (corporate@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk).
- Animals in research:
 - Policy and use of animals in research (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/research/research-policy-ethics/use-of-animals/>)
 - NC3Rs Information Portal: Information for applying the 3Rs and ensuring the best possible standards of animal welfare (<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/landing.asp?id=38>).

2.6 The services we offer

Information about the services and resources supported by the MRC are here:

- MRC research funding and career development opportunities (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/funding/>).
- MRC Policies and guidance for researchers (<https://www.mrc.ac.uk/research/policies-and-guidance-for-researchers/>).
- MRC news and features outlining the MRC's work and the research we support (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/news/browse/>).
- MRC support for public engagement and communication activities (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/research/public-engagement/>).
- General information about the MRC (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/contact/>).
- NC3Rs funding schemes and career development opportunities (<https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/our-funding-schemes>).
- NC3Rs Information Portal (<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/landing.asp?id=38>).

2.7 Lists and registers

Current registers of interests declared by MRC Council and Board members can be accessed in this section.

- Council, Board and Panel Members' registers of declared interests (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/about/council/members-declarations-of-interest/>).
- NC3Rs Board Members' register of declared interests (<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/page.asp?id=5>)
- The MRC's Fixed Asset Register is available on request from the Knowledge and Information Team (corporate@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk).

This publication scheme and any of the links and documents referred to within it can be provided as hard copy.