



Minutes of the Board meeting – 17 November

Present

Professor Dame Julia Buckingham (JB) *Chair*
Professor Cathy Abbot (CA)
Professor Paul Evans (PE)
Professor Christopher George (CG)
Ms Linda Horan (LH)
Professor Jane Hurst (JH)
Dr Tom Matheson (TM)
Professor Cathy Merry (CM)
Professor Nick Plant (NP)
Dr Vicky Robinson (VR)
Dr Clive Roper (CR)
Dr Andrew Scott (AS)

Staff members

Dr Anthony Holmes (AH) *item 4*
Dr Nathalie Percie du Sert (NPdS)
Ms Kayleigh Purdon (KP) *Secretariat*
Dr Suzanne McArdle (SMc) *items 6, 7 and 9*

Welcome

1. JB welcomed members to the meeting, noting apologies from Dr Sally Robinson.

Chief Executive update

2. Closed discussion

NC3Rs strategic review

3. Closed discussion

Global 3Rs developments

4. AH provided an overview of the evolving global landscape for non-animal methods, highlighting key advances across the EU, US and other countries, as well as the growing international drive for innovative technologies. The Government's recently announced *Replacing Animals in Science strategy* was

highlighted, with the Board noting the central role that the NC3Rs has in supporting its successful delivery.

Programme updates

5. A paper summarising the NC3Rs current projects, including associated risks and potential impacts, was tabled. The Board was invited to provide comments on the proposed prioritisation of projects, noting the constraints posed by limited resources and the implications for staff wellbeing while the review of the NC3Rs was finalised by the MRC. The Board noted that prioritisation should be aligned with the key actions the NC3Rs is responsible for under the Government's *Replacing Animals in Science strategy*, while continuing to recognise the importance of work on refinement and reduction. VR thanked the Board for its guidance on the prioritisation.

Financial and operational updates

6. SMC presented a summary of the NC3Rs financial position for financial year 2025/26. It was noted that the core funding allocation reflected the six-month extension provided by the MRC and BBSRC as part of the strategic review of the NC3Rs.
7. The Board noted that its ability to provide detailed comment on the NC3Rs mid-year financial position for 2025/26 was limited by the end of the Centre's core funding on 30 September 2025 and the absence of a formal confirmation of a future funding allocation.

Review of the NC3Rs events policy

8. The Board reviewed and approved the attendance policy for NC3Rs events and noted the importance of providing a safe environment to facilitate free and frank discussion.

Review of the NC3Rs risk register

9. SMC updated the Board on the NC3Rs organisational risk register, noting that all nine risks and their mitigating controls have been updated since the last Board review. Funding and staffing risks remain critical due to the review of the NC3Rs and its impact on resources and staff levels. Additionally, risks related to collaborations and communication have increased to 'very high', reflecting ongoing operational challenges. The Board agreed that the mitigating controls were appropriate.

AOB

10. The Board asked that its recognition of VR's leadership be noted. Gratitude was expressed to both JB and VR for their continued dedication in guiding the NC3Rs and its staff through a period of significant change.