

The work streams of Understanding Animal Research

UAR works across a number of areas to explain animal research, correct myths and promote science. Our objectives are to hold a conversation with the public, press and policy makers about why and how animals are used in scientific research, and to maintain a supportive operating environment for biomedical research in the UK

Engagement

During 2015, UAR published the first annual progress report on the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK. This sets out the ways that organisations have fulfilled their Concordat commitments to be more open and transparent about their work. We have continued to provide support and training to the Concordat's 101 signatories in developing strategies to meet these commitments.

During 2016 we have carried out research into how research establishments can recognise and develop a culture of care.

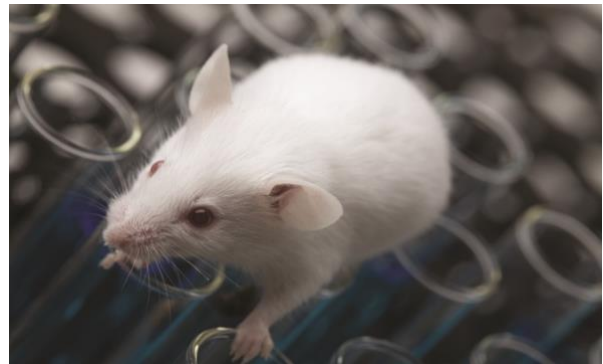
Education

UAR provides training for scientists and animal technologists and arranges for them to visit secondary schools across the UK to explain their work and the role of animal research, and to answer questions and challenges from young people. It also conducts its own school talks, and visits science fairs, using a rubber rat, lab coats, syringes and goggles in interactive sessions that allow students to conduct an animal 'procedure' of their own. The 2015-6 academic year saw the continuation of our Open Labs project, with groups of young people from 15 schools visiting nine animal facilities.

Policy

UAR works proactively with the Government to form strong policy, with political parties to propose sensible policy and with individual MPs to educate about animal research. This involves high-level meetings with civil servants, personal briefings and laboratory visits for politicians, and feeding into political policy formation processes.

In the early part of 2015, much of our work focused on the General Election, working behind the scenes on manifesto development and providing information for prospective parliamentary candidates.



International collaboration

In 2015, UAR continued to host and support the [European Animal Research Association](#) as a separate, stand-alone entity that now has 43 member organisations. We worked with EARA and the Wellcome Trust to prepare for the 2017 review of Directive 2010/63/EU and UAR's work was also presented at the 2015 AALAS Conference in Phoenix, Arizona.

Media

UAR engages both proactively and reactively with the media. Since the publication of the Concordat, we have seen an increase in the number of organisations proactively communicating about their animal research. UAR also works to counteract negative messages, correct myths and explain context. We set up lab visits for journalists and help them to produce feature pieces, including acting as the scientific adviser for in-depth articles. Activist letters to local and national newspapers are countered as are activist comments online.

Online

UAR uses a wide range of social media outlets to complement and reinforce our online presence in addition to our three websites. We have over 3,300 Twitter followers, over 8,200 Facebook Likes (not to mention the tens of thousands of “likes” for our Facebook content) and increasing traffic over our other channels.

As our society’s use of social media evolves, so does ours, and during this last year we have taken advantage of Facebook’s competition with YouTube for video dominance to increase the number of people who have viewed our video material on both channels.

Last year we stated we were experimenting with an Instagram account. This has now become an established part of our social media repertoire in addition to the previous channels we had already used.

Content is still key and we expect our current project, the creation of a set of virtual laboratory tours and the videos and other materials they will contain, to bring in still more visitors.

“A great, comprehensive video - and, of course, fantastic research. Well done.”

Recent YouTube comment

Member support

We provide a consultancy service and direct support for our members connected with the wide range of issues that we work on. Much of this work is confidential, concerning specific problems when members are targeted by animal rights groups or when they need to address public views on animal research.

One of UAR’s strategic goals is to maintain a supportive operating environment for animal research in the UK. Together with BIS and the ABPI, we lead a cross-sector group which carries out horizon-scanning to identify potential threats to the supply chain. We also continue to negotiate with transport companies to try to open up surface cross-channel routes for the import and export of animals for research.

UAR also provides training on a range of communications and engagement activities, both for our members and for Concordat signatories.

Engagement

Concordat on Openness

The Concordat has now been signed by 101 UK organisations and we are still welcoming new signatories.

There have been many examples of great openness work in the two years since the Concordat was published and we are currently compiling the second Annual Progress Report. This will be reviewed by the Concordat Steering Group in July and UAR will publish the Report in September 2016.



December 2015 saw the second UAR Openness Awards, which recognised some outstanding openness projects undertaken by Concordat signatories. Professor Sir Colin Blakemore gave

the Paget Lecture, 'Four stories about the brain', which can be seen on the UAR website. Nominations for the 2016 Openness Awards will open soon and the Paget Lecture and Awards ceremony will be on December 5 2016.

Culture of care

UAR, supported by the Wellcome Trust, Agenda, the IAT and LASA is investigating the factors that create an effective culture of care in animal facilities. This work began in the Spring of 2016, and findings will be available in the Autumn. It will feed into further work on establishing an institutional Culture of Care in the UK and in Europe.

The project has looked principally at the ways that researchers and animal technologists interact and work together in an animal facility, as they provide care and welfare. We have used focus groups to gain a deep understanding of what happens 'on the ground', supported by interviews to provide input from other key roles in the work of the unit.

Education

School talks

As usual, school and college talks have been at the centre of the Education team's activities over the past year. We have a target of 300 talks to be run in UK schools in the academic year 2015-16 and are on track to meet that target.

Out of school

We have continued to work with the Women's Institute this year including a presentation to the general meeting of East Kent Federations which generated a lot of interest for 2017. We have run a regular bi-monthly series of training workshops for speaker volunteers and others at the UAR offices, and delivered 13 off-site training and workshop sessions. We have collaborated with the Roslin Institute, the Babraham Institute and Imperial College on summer school and outreach days.

Open Labs

Nine organisations ran Open Labs events bringing young people to animal units over the year. We are in the process of organising the first events for the 2016-17 academic year and aim to increase the total number of participants substantially as many of our partners will be better placed to accept visitors following refurbishments and other disruptions.

Policy and media

Media

UAR's relationship with the media continued to evolve in 2015/16, with stories generated through a combination of Concordat signatories placing stories, UAR initiatives and us being recognised as the go-to people for both analysis and comment. As such, we have been in a position to place or advise on dozens of stories. In many cases, journalists have chosen not to write up misleading press releases from animal rights organisations once they have checked the facts with us.

We as usual assisted journalists with lab visits and provided 'talking heads' for radio and television interviews. The frequency of reactive media has been in sharp decline as journalists know to come to us to analyse whether there is anything to campaigners' press releases. Not only has this prevented many misleading stories, but journalists have started to ignore campaigners with a poor track record of accuracy. This year's 'World Day for Animals in Labs' received no national coverage at all, and limited local coverage.

UAR completed a second animation, looking more generally at animal research, available via our website and [YouTube channel](#).

We also did a substantial amount of media work in relation to the B&K dog breeding planning application in Hull, giving briefings and quotes to local and national journalists.

Public Affairs

The policy year was initially focused on engaging with Scottish Nationalist Party MPs who swept to power in the 2015 election.

As a left-wing party, they tend to be sympathetic to animal causes, but many have leading universities conducting animal research in their constituencies. UAR has created custom materials pertaining just to Scotland to aid with this.

UAR has secured sponsorship from MP Scott Mann for a Parliamentary exhibition, which we hope to hold later this year. The exhibition space, outside the committee corridors, is free to use but must be secured via ballot.

A highlight of the policy year was UAR's appearance at the Associate Parliamentary Group on Animal Welfare meeting in December, which held an enquiry into the use of dogs and cats in medical research.

Chris Magee, Head of Policy and Media, was able both to explain how dogs are used and debunk pseudoscience advanced by various individuals and organisations opposed to the use of dogs and cats in research.

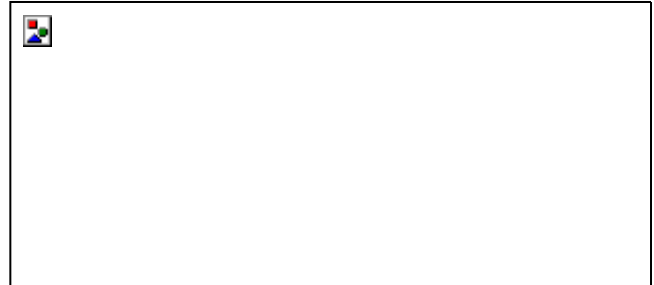
UAR has been involved in reform of the policies of both the Green and Cooperative parties, supporting Green members who are proposing a change in policy, and feeding directly into the Co-operative's policy review.

Both parties currently feature eye-catching but flawed policies calling for the banning of various forms of animal research.

A century of Home Office animal research reports

UAR has digitised 140 years' worth of historical documents including annual returns, notes from the advisory committee (the pre-1986 version of the Animals in Science Committee) and inspectors' notebooks.

We did this to preserve this material and make it more readily available for historical research.



These records provide a fascinating insight into past practice as well as giving us a resource we can use to give our communications a different perspective.

UAR is after all the descendant of the Research Defence Society set up over a century ago.

Online communication

Training to help others produce online resources

Our education team of two manages the work of dozens of volunteers to enable hundreds of school visits. In an analogous way we are seeking to help colleagues in our member organisations to produce more video material so that their communication around animal research becomes more effective. To do this we have trialled a new course: [Filming with a smartphone](#). This day course was held at our offices and had eight participants from four organisations.

We have also held two media training courses here that allow participants to experience being interviewed on camera about their scientific work.

Recently we led a bespoke video production workshop for a new communications team at the NIHR Biomedical Research Centre, Guy's and St

Thomas's NHS Foundation Trust and King's College London Research and Development Department.

We anticipate running further communication courses both here and out in your establishments during the coming year.

Statistics

We measure the number of people who have visited and interacted with our websites and social media sites every month. The annual pattern of our statistics rises and falls with the educational calendar, but overall we seem to be increasing our audience. We also measure how 'trusted' our websites are using Alexa.com and we are glad to see that our websites are climbing up the ranking.

Alexa ranks worldwide web traffic: Google is #1, Youtube #2, Facebook #3, the BBC #111 in the world.

We are interested in whether our positions have gone up or down. Recently they have climbed up.

Global rank: January - May 2016

- Animalresearch.info - #540,582, up ~200,000 since January
- UAR - #562,443, a great increase from January when we were #1,050,657
- EARA - #2,008,791, another great increase up from #4,583,924 in January

Virtual laboratory tours

In 2015 the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* in France published a virtual tour of a primate facility. You can see it here: <http://visite-animalerie.cnrs.fr/#/accueil/>

We talked to the CNRS about the how and the why of this production and this conversation led us to decide to make our own virtual tour of a number of facilities. We want to show a good range of work and workplaces and have been fortunate enough to be given access to several members' facilities to take photographs and film interviews.

Campaigns

As UAR expands its campaigns work there have been more opportunities to combine traditional and social media into longer term projects.

Communications

Following on from the success of our charity communications guide we developed alongside the AMRC, 2016 saw the publication of our new guide, "Communicating the role of animals at your research institution", aimed at universities and other research institutes. We worked alongside member organisations to gather case studies showing outstanding examples of communication on this issue.



Nobel Prizes

With the support of BRET, UAR created its first online quiz to help celebrate the history of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. Over 1400 people took part, with our Facebook posts on the subject being seen by over 120,000 people and being liked over 400 times. We also created a set of infographics to support our celebrations.

Telling the Truth about Cosmetics

Building on our previous success, UAR created a second internet quiz to find out what the public knew about cosmetic testing in the UK. This quiz was completed over 4,000 times. The results showed that only 38% of respondents were aware that it is illegal to test cosmetics or their ingredients on animals in the UK.

Respondents were asked to select from a list which shops they believed used animals to test the cosmetic products they sold in the UK.

Boots, Tesco and Sainsbury's were all picked by over 40% of people; The Body Shop was selected by 30% and Lush by 14%.

Our promotional video for the campaign was viewed 50,000 times, and our Facebook posts advertising the internet quiz were seen over 170,000 times.

We are now writing to supermarkets to show them our findings and urge them to improve their instore information, to ensure that the public is not misled by "not tested on animals" and "cruelty free" logos.

Member support

While much of our member support is confidential consultancy work, Freedom of Information requests and presentations to member organisations continue to be core activities for UAR.

In early 2015 we piloted a number of communications training courses for our members, in addition to the regular training sessions for people interested in joining our schools' speaker programme.

The workshops covered Social Media and Infographics, Debating, Public Engagement and Media Training and were so popular that we re-ran them in the autumn. These will now be run annually and are free for people working at any of our member organisations. We can also arrange bespoke training for individual member organisations.

International collaboration

In 2015 UAR worked with the Wellcome Trust, EARA and many other UK and European science organisations to counter the 'Stop Vivisection' European Citizens Initiative. Despite managing to collect the required number of signatures in a number of EU member states, the organisers were not able to persuade MEPs or the European Commission that the current EU Directive on animal research should be abolished.

We will continue to work with our partner organisations to promote strong animal welfare and science in the run-up to the review of the Directive in 2017.

UAR was invited to speak and also run a workshop at the 2015 AALAS meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, and we hope to continue to work with colleagues across the world to promote the openness agenda around animal research.