

## **The RSPCA and the 3Rs: the scientific animal welfare organisation as a catalyst for change.**

Animals are used for many different purposes in research and testing and each area of use raises specific ethical, welfare and scientific issues. The RSPCA adopts a constructive, practical approach, critically questioning the necessity and justification for animal use and arguing the need to reduce the conflict between the interests of animals and of science.

The RSPCA Research animals department has been involved in the formation of expert working groups (EWG) tasked with discussing current best practice and formulating guidance for the wider scientific community. These groups are usually formed of academic and industry scientists, animal technologists and veterinarians, all with expertise in the field being discussed.

Between 1998 and 2011, the RSPCA, British Veterinary Association, Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments and the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare formed a series of Joint Expert working Groups to look at subjects including mouse husbandry, telemetry, dog husbandry, primate husbandry and welfare assessment.

Recently, we have built upon this concept to form EWGs to focus on implementation of the 3Rs in areas of research with the potential for severe suffering. To date we have published guidance reports on refinement of models of seizures and epilepsy, experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis, rheumatoid arthritis and sepsis. The latest group is looking at models of spinal cord injury and will publish a report in late 2016.

This talk will set out how we have been able to work with the scientific community and UK regulator, as well as providing more information on the RSPCA's resources on practical implementation of the 3Rs.