Reporting Summary

Nature Portfolio wishes to improve the reproducibility of the work that we publish. This form provides structure for consistency and transparency in reporting. For further information on Nature Portfolio policies, see our Editorial Policies and the Editorial Policy Checklist.

Statistics

For all statistical analyses, confirm that the following items are present in the figure legend, table legend, main text, or Methods section.

☐ n/a ☐ Confirmed

☐ ☐ The exact sample size (n) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement

☐ ☐ A statement on whether measurements were taken from distinct samples or whether the same sample was measured repeatedly

☐ ☐ The statistical test(s) used AND whether they are one- or two-sided

  Only common tests should be described solely by name; describe more complex techniques in the Methods section.

☐ ☐ A description of all covariates tested

☐ ☐ A description of any assumptions or corrections, such as tests of normality and adjustment for multiple comparisons

☐ ☐ A full description of the statistical parameters including central tendency (e.g. means) or other basic estimates (e.g. regression coefficient) AND variation (e.g. standard deviation) or associated estimates of uncertainty (e.g. confidence intervals)

☐ ☐ For null hypothesis testing, the test statistic (e.g. F, t, r) with confidence intervals, effect sizes, degrees of freedom and P value noted

  Give P values as exact values whenever suitable.

☐ ☐ For Bayesian analysis, information on the choice of priors and Markov chain Monte Carlo settings

☐ ☐ For hierarchical and complex designs, identification of the appropriate level for tests and full reporting of outcomes

☐ ☐ Estimates of effect sizes (e.g. Cohen’s d, Pearson’s r), indicating how they were calculated

  Our web collection on statistics for biologists contains articles on many of the points above.

Software and code

Policy information about availability of computer code

Data collection ☐ Two photon imaging was performed using Vidrio Technologies’ Scanimage 2017a software.

Data analysis ☐ Analysis was performed using MATLAB 2019a.

For manuscripts utilizing custom algorithms or software that are central to the research but not yet described in published literature, software must be made available to editors and reviewers. We strongly encourage code deposition in a community repository (e.g. Github). See the Nature Portfolio guidelines for submitting code & software for further information.

Data

Policy information about availability of data

All manuscripts must include a data availability statement. This statement should provide the following information, where applicable:

- Accession codes, unique identifiers, or web links for publicly available datasets
- A description of any restrictions on data availability
- For clinical datasets or third party data, please ensure that the statement adheres to our policy

Code is available on Github; data is available at Dryad. DOIs are provided in the main text.
Field-specific reporting

Please select the one below that is the best fit for your research. If you are not sure, read the appropriate sections before making your selection.

- Life sciences
- Behavioural & social sciences
- Ecological, evolutionary & environmental sciences

For a reference copy of the document with all sections, see https://www.nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf

Life sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

- **Sample size**: Sample size was determined from standard practice in the field.
- **Data exclusions**: Animals were selected based on quality of the imaging window and the vigor of whisking. No data were excluded.
- **Replication**: We recorded data across seven animals; all replications were successful.
- **Randomization**: Not applicable - we did not use distinct groupings of animals across which animals could be randomized.
- **Blinding**: Not applicable - there were no experiments where distinct animal groups were being compared for which identical treatment was needed.

Reporting for specific materials, systems and methods

We require information from authors about some types of materials, experimental systems and methods used in many studies. Here, indicate whether each material, system or method listed is relevant to your study. If you are not sure if a list item applies to your research, read the appropriate section before selecting a response.

### Materials & experimental systems

- n/a
- □ Involved in the study
- □ Antibodies
- □ Eukaryotic cell lines
- □ Palaeontology and archaeology
- □ Animals and other organisms
- □ Human research participants
- □ Clinical data
- □ Dual use research of concern

### Methods

- n/a
- □ Involved in the study
- □ ChiP-seq
- □ Flow cytometry
- □ MRI-based neuroimaging

Animals and other organisms

Policy information about studies involving animals: ARRIVE guidelines recommended for reporting animal research.

#### Laboratory animals

This information is reported in the methods - mice were all of a single transgenic strain from Jackson, Ai162 X SIC17a7-Cre

#### Wild animals

No wild animals were used.

#### Field-collected samples

No field collected samples were used.

#### Ethics oversight

All procedures were performed in compliance with the New York University University Animal Welfare Committee.

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.