

# **The University of Leeds Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Committee Minutes 4 December 2019**

10 members were present at the meeting with one person in attendance.

## **Minutes**

19/24 The minutes of the meeting on 20 September 2019 were received and approved.

## **Matters arising**

Received paper AWERC/19/06

19/25 The update on actions was received for information. Confirmations for the workshop on 28 January (min 19/4) had been positive with only a small number of members yet to respond.

19/26 The Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) advised that a Continued Professional Development (CPD) workshop for licensees had been arranged for 9 January (min 19/6) and that invitations had gone out to licensees. Registrations had been slow coming in so it was agreed that a reminder should be sent by the Establishment Licence (PEL) holder. Action: NVS, member concerned and PEL holder.

19/27 With regard to near misses (min 19/12) the NVS confirmed that mechanisms were in place to share information with licensees quickly and effectively. The Committee was told that specific concerns would be raised in the NVS report and it was agreed that members would be able to discuss these with staff and researchers during visits to the animal units. The NVS would share correspondence on a recent near miss with a lay member. ACTION: NVS.

19/28 A member agreed to liaise within the Faculty regarding the recruitment of a student PhD member (min 19/18). The Committee agreed that student membership could be reviewed at the time of rotation in three years. ACTION: Member concerned.

19/29 Arrangements for lay members to observe procedures (min 19/19) had been held up due to an unexpected pause in the project.

## **Establishment licence (PEL) holder's update**

19/30 One condition 18 report had been submitted to the Home Office (HO) Animals in Science Research unit (ASRU) following the death of two animals out of 18 under a severe protocol one week after procedures. No underlying issues had been found and a response from the Home Office was awaited.

19/31 The HO inspector had made one visit to the University which had included an unannounced visit to CBS during which single-use of hypodermic needles and animal handling methods had been observed as part of the current round of "themed inspections". The inspector had also observed surgical procedures in mice being

carried out by two personal license holders and had not raised any concerns with the license holders, NVS or Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO).

19/32 The Home Office Liaison Contact (HOLC)/Named Information Officer (NIO) was congratulated on receiving the award of honorary membership from the Laboratory Animal Science Association (LASA). The Committee welcomed the opportunity for another NACWO to join LASA and meet the quota for the University's organisational membership subscription.

19/33 There was nothing of substance to report from the Biomedical Services Project Group. Academic strategy and future rationalisation of existing facilities were still under consideration and the senior team was involved. One member made a suggestion for external interim housing of rodents should it become necessary and the PEL holder observed that in the event of external support being sought matters such as welfare, security and reputational factors would have to be taken into account.

### **NVS's update**

19/34 The NVS reported that one of the main subjects of the recent Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) Hub meeting had been oversight of non-regulated work and that most establishments attending the meeting had reported having arrangements in place that were similar to those at Leeds.

19/35 During the HO inspector's recent visit, project licence applications had been discussed with applicants in light of the new HO Animals in Scientific Procedures e-Licensing (ASPeL) IT system. It had been clear that the HO inspectorate were also learning to use the new ASPeL. A member informed the Committee that the issues within ASPeL would also be raised at the UK Biosciences Coalition meeting with the ASRU.

19/36 With regard to the Condition 18 report mentioned by the PEL holder (min 19/30) the NVS reported that actions had already been agreed with the HO inspector. The NVS advised that Condition 18 reports formed part of the overall risk assessment for establishments. The University was currently assessed as low risk and any considerations that might affect this assessment would be raised with the PEL holder during the annual review meeting. The Chair asked if it was possible to produce an annual summary of the Condition 18 reports as a percentage of procedures undertaken at the University. ACTION: NVS and HOLC/NIO to include in the annual statistical report to the Committee.

### **Project Licence (PPL) Applications and reviews**

#### **PPL Application A358**

19/37 The Committee received the second submission of the PPL application following incorporation of earlier comments from the Committee and further revisions following discussions with the NVS and HO Inspector.

19/38 After an explanation of the work and the changes made to the application to make the work more focused the Committee felt that numbers could be reduced further still to reflect what could reasonably be achieved within the 5 year duration of the project. During considerable discussion with the applicant matters of interest included signs of adverse effects; the need for clear correlation between these and the proposed increased frequency of monitoring; arrangements to work over weekends in order to monitor animals; clarification of the use of single and multiple tracers; the need for quantitative information regarding each of the stages in the project; reporting adverse effects and the need to identify and remove contradictions; details of maximum volumes; and the consideration of cumulative adverse effects. The section regarding the use of less sentient animals had been left blank and would need to be completed.

19/39 With regard to the short lay paragraph the applicant was asked to clarify the link to breast cancer and reduce the use of technical phrases throughout. Some information about the staged approach would be useful and informative.

19/40 A member of the Committee agreed to speak to the applicant to assist with the changes before the application was put back to the Committee for final review.  
ACTION: Member concerned, NVS and HOLC/NIO.

#### **PPL mid-term review MR35**

19/41 Due to time constraints the licensee agreed to defer the review until the next meeting.

#### **PPL mid-term review MR36**

19/42 The licensee provided information from her presentation to the Committee. During discussion, it was confirmed that no problems had arisen in respect of the work; current and anticipated future use of animals and the severity of the work were also discussed, and the Committee acknowledged the deliberate use of a less severe protocol as a refinement introduced since the project was granted.

#### **PPL mid-term review MR37**

19/43 In a description of the work on the project so far the licensee advised that in-vitro and ex-vivo work was done as much as possible. Also ex-vivo tissues were split three ways for study to make the best use of them and reduce animal numbers. Following the presentation the licensee answered a number of questions concerning the reduction in adverse effects by switching methods; the overall balance of severity throughout the duration of the licence where severity was expected to reduce for the remaining work; condition 18 reports and the introduction of additional checkpoints for monitoring animals to catch adverse effects earlier. The considerable outputs from the project were acknowledged.

#### **PPL review schedule**

Received paper AWERC/19/07

19/44 The updated schedule of upcoming PPL reviews was received for information. Members were asked to note that the highlighted Section 5B review scheduled for

the meeting in January would be reported to the HO. This would meet the requirement for specific licences (for example those with severe protocols) to undergo formal retrospective assessment by the HO. The Animals in Science Regulation Unit had been advised of the proposed date of the review.

### **Schedule of business**

Received paper AWERC/19/08

19/45 The updated Schedule of Business was received for information. A number of items of business that would normally be considered at the meeting in January would be deferred to accommodate the planned workshop. PPL applications and reviews would be prioritised at the January meeting.

### **Other business**

19/46 A lay member reported that she had enjoyed attending the legislation and ethics modules of the University's licensee training course. The modules had been seen as very effective, a good opportunity to meet new PhD students who were planning to apply for licenses to undertake animal research, and had provided a useful triangulation.

19/47 Another lay member mentioned the possibility of attending the next Royal Society for the Protection of Animals Lay Members' Forum.

19/48 It was reported that no date had been set for the next AWERB Hub meeting.

### **Date of next meeting**

19/49 The workshop, "Ethical reflection on harms and benefits in animal research" would take place on Tuesday 28 January from 1100 to 1400 (including lunch) to be followed by a meeting to consider PPL applications and reviews from 1400 until 1600.