

The University of Leeds, Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Committee Minutes 25 July 2018

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

The minutes of the meeting on 30 May 2018 were received and approved.

Matters arising

Received paper AWERC17/27

17/132 Following a brief discussion about non-regulated work the Establishment Licence (PEL) holder confirmed that a paper on mechanisms for the review of non-regulated work would be brought to a future meeting. ACTION: Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) and PEL holder.

17/133 The involvement of members of the Committee working to improve laboratory animal science education and animal welfare standards in countries outside the UK (e.g. in China and India) was acknowledged.

PEL holder's report

17/134 The PEL holder reported that the University was still in correspondence with the Home Office (HO) about one Condition 18 report that had been submitted previously. Another Condition 18 report had been submitted, details of which would be provided by the NVS in his report.

17/135 During the previous week the HO inspector had made her second visit to Leeds of the year. The visit included the observation of a surgical procedure and some post-operative animals. The Inspector then met with researchers. No issues were raised during the visit. It was noted that the University could expect fewer inspections due to HO inspectorate workloads.

17/136 A guidance on writing non-technical summaries, produced by Understanding Animal Research (UAR), had been circulated for information and the Committee was invited to suggest ways in which this could be best used to inform researchers. The Chair advised that comments had been sent to UAR during drafting of the guidance. It was agreed that the guidance should be sent to project licence (PPL) applicants at the time when they were writing their applications, along with the "PPL applicant briefing" provided by the Committee, with a statement to remind applicants that the Committee would welcome clear, easy to read documents. ACTION: Administrator.

NVS's report

17/137 A Condition 18 report concerning one mouse, out of 21 on a study, which had died 26 days after a procedure had been submitted to the HO. No adverse effects or tumour growth had been seen in the animal and the death was sudden and unexpected. A response was awaited.

- 17/138 Following the resignation of the service PPL holder and after consultation with the HO inspector regarding options for continuing the licence, it had been agreed, as an interim measure, that the licence would be transferred to an existing PPL holder with expertise in breeding genetically altered mice. The new licence was expected to be granted soon. A long-term proposal that PPL applicants should include relevant protocols, as necessary on a scientific basis, in their applications had been agreed with the HO inspector.
- 17/139 The NVS had been asked to facilitate training in procedures involving surgically prepared pigs at two other establishments.
- 17/140 Two project licence applications were still with the HO and had yet to be granted.

Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers' (NACWO) report

- 17/141 The NACWO reported that, following the resignation of the genetically altered (GA) mouse manager, the unit staff had continued to provide the GA breeding and cryopreservation service. This would continue under the new PPL once granted.
- 17/142 With regard to the concerns about reverse lighting which had been previously reported (min 17/116) the company responsible was still working to provide an alarm and notification system. It was expected that, when available, this would be put into use on both sites.
- 17/143 A control power shut-down was reported which had affected two empty rooms. Whilst no animals were affected it had been necessary to reschedule and relocate work that had been planned for the space.
- 17/144 The Committee was told that one delivery of rats had been severely delayed. Whilst there had been no signs that animal welfare had been compromised the staff had been trying to obtain information (including the driver's log) in order to feed-back concerns to the companies responsible for sending and transporting the animals.
- 17/145 The NACWOs had asked to be included in any discussions relating to the closure of one of the University's animal units as a result of building refurbishment. The PEL holder reminded the Committee of the background, explaining that the institutional view favoured a single facility to serve the needs of the research community effectively and efficiently, and emphasising that any changes would need adequately to address potential consequences for animal welfare and research, including appropriate alternative provision. The NVS along with University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee (ULBSC) representatives were involved in discussions so the Committee could be assured that any animal welfare concerns would be raised in future reports. Documents were being compiled to inform the group moving forward
- 17/146 The Committee asked for reasonable alternative solutions to safeguard animal welfare to be in place before any decision would be taken and asked for a report to be provided. The view of the Committee should be conveyed to the University.
ACTON: PEL holder.

17/147 It was agreed that this should be added to the Schedule of Business as a regular Agenda item. Action: Administrator.

17/148 The Committee was told that work on the configuration of the new IT system was nearing completion and that training materials were being developed in readiness for the roll-out to research staff.

Draft annual report

Received AWERC 17/28

17/149 The Committee received the draft annual report and were advised that this had been circulated for a first reading.

17/150 During brief discussions two suggestions for additions were made. These were:

- information about recent visits to the unit and observation of procedures by new members; and
- a sentence regarding continuing professional development requirements and provision to be added under “training”.

17/151 Comments were invited by 24 August. ACTION: All.

Project licence reviews

Mid-term review MR31

17/152 Discussions included the low level of animal use; the difference in the number of animals bred and those used; and the decision to use male animals. The NVS reported that there had been no welfare concerns in relation to the work.

Mid-term review MR33

17/153 The Committee was told that the reduction in animal use had possibly been due to relocation of the work between sites. The NVS confirmed the technical excellence in procedures and that no animal welfare issues had arisen.

17/154 The NVS advised the Committee that a good working relationship exists with both licensees.

17/155 Following discussion of a number of possible ways to improve project review the Committee agreed to invite PPL holders to attend meetings for a 10-15 minute review in future. It was agreed that some basic information should be requested on paper before the meeting, along with a short statement from the NACWO concerned (either on paper or to be delivered at the meeting). A link to the short lay paragraph and non-technical summary on the University’s Animal Research Web pages would also be provided. The remainder of the information should be sought through developing a set of focused questions for the Committee to use that could be shared with the PPL holder in advance of the meeting to help them to prepare. ACTION: Administrator.

Induction pack for new members

Received AWERC/17/29

17/156 The Committee received the induction material that had been amended to include comments from members. The lay members acknowledged that the information was very good and had been extremely helpful in providing general background to the Act and introducing them to the responsibilities of the Committee. One further addition to include "ULBSC" in the Glossary was requested and a member asked if details of the Named Persons could be provided. ACTION: Administrator.

Schedule of business

Received AWERC/17/30

17/157 The Committee received the updated schedule of business for information.

Other business

RSPCA Lay Members' Forum

17/158 The next Lay Members' Forum had been arranged to take place in Edinburgh on 21 September. This would be in addition to the regular meeting held in London (date to be confirmed). The Chair recommended attendance to the new lay members and the secretary agreed to forward details. ACTION: Administrator.

Northern Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) Hub meeting

17/159 The NVS reported that the next meeting of the AWERB Northern Hub would be held at the University on 7 November. Confirmed topics, involving speakers from the University, included ethics and non-regulated work. The Chair of the AWERB Northern Hub had invited the hub members to suggest other topics. Members would be notified of final arrangements in due course. ACTION: NVS.

NC3Rs Workshop

17/160 A workshop at the University, co-hosted by the National Centre for the 3Rs (NC3Rs), was being arranged with topics to include NC3Rs funding opportunities and use of the experimental design assistant. Researchers had been asked to propose topics of interest and a small group (NVS and researchers) had been established to arrange the workshop. Subject to the number of places available colleagues from neighbouring establishments would be invited to attend.

Date of next meeting

17/161 The next meeting would be held at 1000 on Wednesday 26 September.