

The University of Leeds, Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Committee Minutes 26 September 2018

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

The minutes of the meeting on 25 July 2018 were received and approved subject to the addition of a missing minute number at minute 17/142.

Matters arising

Received paper AWERC18/01

18/1 Discussions regarding the review of non-regulated work were progressing and this would be brought forward for discussion at a subsequent meeting. Other items in the update had either been actioned or were included as Agenda items.

Establishment Licence (PEL) holder and Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS)'s report

18/2 There had been no Condition 18 reports since the last meeting. However, one incident, reported to the Committee in May, had led to an investigation by the Home Office (HO), which had highlighted an ambiguity in the project licence (PPL) protocol approved by the HO. The project licence has since been amended to clarify this point. It was noted that the issue was self-reported by the project licence holder.

18/3 The PEL holder reported that an incident in REDACTED in August that had resulted in the death of four mice had been investigated internally and reported to the HO. The investigation had resulted in changes in working practices: a revised standard operating procedure (SoP) for the room was now in use and the University were not anticipating any further action. The Committee discussed details of the incident and it was agreed that a periodic review of SoPs should be considered. This would be raised with the NVS and reported at the next meeting. Action: PEL holder.

18/4 A Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO) had been appointed for REDACTED and approved by the HO. It was agreed that the NACWO should be invited to join the Committee. ACTION: Administrator.

18/5 The Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) Northern Hub meeting being arranged to take place at the University on 7 November had to be cancelled due to a conflicting AWERB Roadshow that had subsequently been arranged and advertised by the Animals in Science Committee. It was expected that the AWERB Northern Hub meeting would be rescheduled to take place in January.

18/6 Plans for the workshop at the University, co-hosted by the National Centre for the Three Rs (NC3Rs), were nearing completion and invitations would be sent in due course. Members of the Committee would be welcome to attend.

18/7 The PEL holder reported that due to rail problems he had been unable to attend the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) meeting in Edinburgh. Dates for the Lay Members' Forum to be held in London were still awaited. Members would be notified once details were received. ACTION: Administrator.

18/8 The HO had published the annual statistics for 2017 in July. Key points included a 4% reduction in procedures which were the lowest since 2010. However, over the decade as a whole, the number had risen overall by 4%. Half the procedures had been experimental and half in relation to genetically altered mouse production and whilst the figures for industry had reduced those for academia had increased. This was thought to be due to restructuring in industry which had taken work out of the UK. A significant number of procedures reported had been mild [50%] or below threshold [10%].

University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee (ULBS) report

18/9 The last meeting had been held in July during which there had been considerable discussion regarding the animal facilities concerning matters such as space, staffing and a predicted increase in work involving pigs. Data concerning facility usage had been collated for one site and was being collected for the other. This information would be taken forward as part of the discussions on future strategy for the units. Feedback from the two user groups had also been received.

18/10 Introductory training for the new IT system had been given to the first two user groups in advance of the go-live date of 1 October. The importance of having an integrated unit management IT system had been identified by the University's internal auditors as a means of giving compliance assurance to the University. A further update on progress would be brought to the next meeting. ACTION: PEL holder and administrator.

18/11 The ULBS Chair had stepped down and a new ULBS Chair had been appointed.

Animal Facilities Update

18/12 The University was compiling an options appraisal in which animal welfare would be one of the important criteria to be addressed. Whilst the direction of travel was the eventual closure of REDACTED plans for transition arrangements and for new facilities would have to be considered. During discussions the Committee was told that a Biomedical Services Project Group (BMSPG) had been established, involving a number of Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Committee (AWERC) members, and that this Group would be asked to report regularly to the Committee. ACTION: BMSPG members.

Project licence application and review

Mid Term review MR34

18/13 Since the licensee was unable to attend it had been agreed that the review would be deferred until the next meeting, in November.

Application A343

18/14 The Committee welcomed the applicant to the meeting and received a brief presentation outlining the proposed work. Matters discussed included pre-procedure habituation; the duration of the procedures; their likely adverse effects; animal welfare during procedures; power analysis; and prospective severity (for which only mild effects were anticipated).

18/15 The applicant was asked to check published papers in order to provide evidence, to be included in the application, of the potential effects of the technique on the animals' physiology and to provide a welfare assessment score sheet as an appendix. The applicant was asked to incorporate a number of changes to the application with the assistance of the NVS before it was submitted to the HO. The Committee agreed to thank the applicant for an interesting and informative presentation and to confirm its support for the scientific content. ACTION: Administrator and NVS.

Proposed Changes to Mid-Term Review Process

18/16 After agreeing to introduce a time limit of 15 minutes for presentations, the Committee confirmed that the draft documents should be finalised and put into use for mid-term reviews to be considered at the next meeting. ACTION: Administrator.

Review of AWERB Openness

18/17 The Chair confirmed that the web pages provided relevant and useful information about the Committee and the use of animals in research at the University. The visibility of the pages via online search was discussed.

Review of Terms of Reference Oversight

18/18 As part of its rolling programme of reviewing how it could most effectively discharge its responsibilities, the Committee discussed the bullet points relating to function 1f) regarding culture of care and agreed that an additional point relating to support provided, particularly in relation to techniques that could be stressful for an individual to perform, should be added. ACTION: Administrator and NACWO.

18/19 The Committee also discussed means to improve integration and cross-communication between researchers and animal facility staff and a number of examples were given. It was suggested that the NACWOs should have input into project licence applications as well as project review and agreed that this was part of a wider discussion which should involve all the NACWOs and the NVS. This would be added to the Schedule of Business. ACTION: Administrator.

Student Survey Findings

18/20 The Committee agreed that this item would be deferred until the next meeting, in November.

Schedule of business

Received AWERC/18/05

18/21 The Committee received the updated schedule of business for information.

Other business, membership

18/22 A member had tendered her resignation from the Committee and a replacement was being considered.

Date of next meeting

18/23 The next meeting would be held at 1000 on Monday 5 November.