

**University of Leeds**  
**Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Committee**

**Minutes of meeting of 12 July 2023**

11 members attended the meeting with 2 people in attendance.

**Minutes**

22/128 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2023 were received and approved.

**Matters arising**

22/129 (Min 22/101) Options for recruitment of a new student member were being considered. Members were asked to nominate any relatively new PhDs who might wish to join the Committee.

ACTION: ALL

22/130 (Min 22/103) The statement for Research Ethics Committee Chairs had been deferred until September.

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

(Received paper AWERC/22/29)

22/131 A new Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO) had been added to the PEL at the REDACTED. There is no legal requirement to have a NACWO located at a place other than the establishment licence (POLE) site but since some regulated work is to be done at the site under POLES permissions in future having a NACWO available was considered to be beneficial and an example of good practice beyond the minimum requirements of the Act. Some further NACWO changes were imminent with one former NACWO being asked to take responsibility for rooms external to the facility and another NACWO stepping down in REDACTED whose area of responsibility will be covered by an existing NACWO colleague.

22/132 A recent compliance issue will be included in the NACWOs' report.

22/133 A Standard condition 18 report had been submitted to ASRU, involving a group of mice, injected with a substance that had previously caused no issues, having had an adverse reaction. Possible causes considered had been genetic drift, immune responses and disease. An amendment was being drafted to make sure that potential adverse effects would be covered in the licence and procedures had been put in place for monitoring the animals more closely. Investigations to identify the cause would continue and should any issues with the animals be identified those would be fed back to the supplier as appropriate.

22/134 Except for urgent requests the NVS was still awaiting responses from the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) for all the SC18 reports submitted since February. Through liaison with ASRU and with colleagues at other UK licensed establishments it was clear that no SC18 responses had been received during this period. The delays were expected to be ongoing for an undefined period and the additional pressure on researchers, who were having to take appropriate steps when making decisions in the absence of ASRU advice, was noted.

22/135 A few non-regulated study requests had been received and the Committee was invited to comment.

22/136 The Deputy VC for research, who sits on the NC3Rs Board, had been given a full tour of the animal facilities with the NVS, an important visit given discussions around the merger of facilities. His support for the work being done around environmental enrichment was reported.

### **Animal facilities update**

- 22/137 The facilities manager reported that the proposal paper from the Deans had been approved by the University's Executive Group (UEG) and that Faculty Executive Committees had met, towards the end of June, to approve the decision within the Faculties and establish a way forward. An email had been sent to staff and licensees to inform them of the decision. A meeting had also taken place between Human Resources and the Unions to make them aware that a decision had been made. Several different working groups would be taking the work forward, including a group to look the options around cleaning REDACTED facilities and consultations would take place with academics, in particular those researchers most affected. The Programme Board would not meet again until September and it was hoped that the cleaning group would have identified a way forward before that meeting. Lay members asked to receive the communication sent to staff and licensees and would be added to the appropriate distribution list to receive updates in future. ACTION: Administrator
- 22/138 Regarding infrastructure, the quarantine room temperature fault in REDACTED had been repaired and was working. In REDACTED the issue with lighting alarms on the conventional side of the facility was ongoing. Another issue relating to access was being investigated with a view to timing any repair work to coincide with the move of researchers which should minimise disruption.
- 22/139 The PEL holder advised that, whilst proposals had been approved by the UEG, this had been with absolute recognition that considerable work, around cleaning, maintaining biosecurity status and other investigative work around practicalities, had to be explored. The visit to the facilities by the Deputy VC for research had served to ensure that the complexities and scale of the exercise would be understood. The outcome of working groups would be welcomed in due course. ACTION: Unit Manager

### **NACWOs' report**

(Received paper AWERC/22/30)

- 22/140 The issue previously reported where head wounds had been found to be opening about one week post intracranial surgery was continuing to be addressed. The issue did not appear to adversely affect the animals as no behavioural changes had been observed. The NVS would be providing suture training for the researchers concerned so that sutures could be used in addition to tissue adhesive which should resolve the problem.
- 22/141 A compliance issue had occurred due to a researcher not responding to a NACWO's request to not undertake any procedures late in the day. The researcher had out-of-hours access to the facility withdrawn and would be re-inducted to the unit. Following re induction it was proposed that for a period the researcher should only be permitted to work during normal hours, when a NACWO would be present, and the situation would be reviewed after an agreed period. Investigation to establish how this had happened would continue and measures would be put in place to prevent recurrence. The Committee agreed to the proposed actions.
- 22/142 A NACWO provided a presentation of the environmental enrichment tests that had been undertaken involving numerous options available. Following agreement with colleagues the animals were now being provided with the chew blocks and nest pucks that were found to be better received and appropriate to their species, size and colour. The NACWO was thanked for the report which was considered critical to the scope of the Committee.
- 22/143 The role of "3Rs champion" was being considered following a meeting hosted by the NC3Rs which a

NACWO attended in May. The NC3Rs were expected to produce guidance in due course which should inform the approach to the role/s and help to determine if this was something we would wish to implement at the University. The guidance would be shared with the Committee when published.

ACTION: Administrator

### **ULBSC report**

(Received paper AWERC/22/31)

22/144 A new technician had been appointed and two recently appointed technicians had completed their probationary periods. A new theatre booking system was being trialled before being rolled out to users.

22/145 Some relocation of Schedule 1 and terminal work within the REDACTED was planned which would require movement of equipment, inspection and ASRU approval before new rooms could be registered for use. Planning for breeding prior to the move would have to be considered.

ACTION: NVS to discuss outside the meeting.

22/146 Activity had reduced and it was unclear how this would be affected by the merger moving forward. One of the main concerns expressed by users had been regarding clarity of when the REDACTED facility would close and around how the closure would impact work under active project licences (PPLs), some of which would continue beyond the merger.

### **Review of terms of reference**

(Received paper AWERC/22/32)

22/147 The Committee received the terms of reference for review and considered whether environmental enrichment should be explicitly mentioned. It was agreed that this was covered under points a) and b), animal welfare and the 3Rs.

### **Update from NW AWERB Hub meeting - maximising the effectiveness of your AWERB**

(Received paper AWERC/22/33 and 34)

22/148 The NVS highlighted salient points from the meeting from paper AWERC/22/33, these included culture of care, which should include staff wellbeing as well as consideration of the animals' welfare; wide use of sub-committees to consider PPL applications and reduce time pressures; whether all the 'R's were being addressed and if replacement and reduction were being given sufficient consideration/time; requests for details of the documentation referred to by PPL applicants when looking for replacements; and access to statisticians, where some groups had been funding access and some were asking for specific information about consultation with a statistician.

22/149 Some establishments had conducted a gap analysis of what was being covered by their AWERB. The second paper (AWERC/22/34) provided a detailed analysis of the [LASA Guiding principles on good practice for Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies](#) and how each of the tasks was being covered at the University. Members were invited to consider the document, to score what is being done, add anything that has not been included and suggest other things that might be done. The responses could then be used to identify areas of focus for forthcoming meetings, for example to have a discussion of ethical issues around the types of research that would not be supported for development of local guidance to clearly state what might be discouraged.

ACTION: NVS to circulate amended paper, ALL members to respond

### **Cryopreservation procedures**

22/150 A senior technician was invited to present to the Committee on cryopreservation as an opportunity for reduction. Current and proposed processes were presented and the Committee noted that a change to IVF would reduce the number of animals necessary for the service. During discussion the technician

answered questions and advised that, apart from additional solutions, all the equipment needed to implement the change was already available. The Committee agreed that discussions of this should be brought forward as an important 3Rs consideration and that plans should be put in place to continue the service following the merger. The Facilities Manager confirmed that the matter had been discussed, albeit briefly, as an important contribution to the 3Rs. A suitable space would be sought for the service to continue in REDACTED using the IVF approach which should be more easily accommodated. A NACWO reported that having the facility at the University had received support from ASRU and the PEL holder observed that the Committee, having responsibility for the 3Rs, would want cryopreservation work to continue. Refresher training might be needed to keep up with recent refinement initiatives, the technician was encouraged to pursue the change and it was agreed that additional staff should be trained. The proposals received full support of the Committee.

#### **PPL applications reviewed by sub-committees**

22/151 An application to look at wound healing in mice had been received. The sub-group had been supportive of the application and requested changes to the application and NTS were being made. When the application was in a final state it would be submitted to the Home Office and the lay summary and Non-technical summary circulated to the Committee. Members who had attended the meeting agreed that there had been good opportunity for discussion and that the new approach, having sub-committees focussed on looking at a single application, was working well.

#### **PPL amendment**

22/152 No concerns had been raised and the Committee agreed that the amendment could be submitted to ASRU.

#### **Schedule of business**

(Received AWERC/22/35)

22/153 The updated schedule of business was received for information.

#### **External meetings**

22/154 As previously reported members would be attending the PEL holders' meeting and LASA annual conference later in the year. Two NACWOs had attended a training and competency workshop but felt that the content was repetitive; a NACWO had attended an NIO course; the NIO had attended the PIL course as an observer and the unit manager had attended the IAT northern branch meeting with two new technicians. At the IAT meeting the information regarding grimace scales had been particularly well received. It was agreed that staff should be encouraged to attend relevant forthcoming meetings and workshops as they occur.

#### **Other business**

22/155 A lunch was being arranged for the PEL holder to meet with NACWOs and technicians.

#### **Date of next meeting**

22/156 The next meeting would take place on Thursday 14th September 1300 – 1500. This would be a face-to-face meeting preceded by lunch at 1230 as previously advised.