

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY

Minutes of meeting held on 13 March 2024

Ten members attended the meeting, with three joining in attendance. Apologies were received from five individuals.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 23/103 The minutes of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) held on 30 January 2024 were approved. Members recorded their appreciation to the recently retired Administrator/Home Office Liaison Contact for the preparation of the meeting minutes.

Matters arising

- 23/104 Minute 23/76 – the Chair confirmed that he had notified the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research & Innovation that the review of non-regulated animal studies would now be reviewed by the AWERB.
- 23/105 Minute 23/91 – 23/93: NC3R's Champion – further to the discussion at the previous meeting, the Committee noted that expressions of interest were currently being sought from the Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers' (NACWOs) in relation to the '3Rs Champion' role (*paper AWERB/23/20, 23/21*). It was hoped that expressions of interest for the Academic Lead could be pursued around June, following the reformation of the University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee. An update would be provided at the July AWERB meeting.
- 23/106 Minute 23/37: contact information – Brian Jackson reported that colleagues across the facilities had set up individual 'out of office' alerts to include up-to-date contact details, with a view to improving knowledge of the different roles/responsibilities and contact information. Longer term, up to date contact information for the different activities would be shared on the SharePoint site.

Finalised Animals in Science Regulation Unit Facilities Audit Report

- 23/107 Members of the Committee noted the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) Audit Report following the Home Office inspection undertaken on 31 October 2023. The Committee was reassured that measures were in place to address the recommendations outlined in the report, with no major concerns being highlighted.
- 23/108 A member reported that work to improve the consistency of Experimental Plans was being undertaken to improve governance processes and to reduce the risk of unauthorised procedures.

Establishment License (PEL) holder update

- 23/109 Members received the Establishment License Holder's update (AWERB/23/26). In presenting their report, the PEL Holder drew the Committee's attention to the low take up of Severity Assessment training which had been offered to staff since it being identified as an issue within the ASRU Report. As such, a communication would be circulated to all license holders to advise that the completion of such training would in future be mandatory to ensure the correct severity levels were stated within project licenses.
- 23/110 The Home Office had advised that the cost of personal licenses would increase to £329 per license from April 2024. As such a housekeeping exercise would be undertaken with a view to revoking any personal licenses which are no longer being

used.

Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) update

23/111 Members received an update report from the Named Veterinary Surgeon (AWERB/23/27) and colleagues noted that:

- a) Two Standard Condition 18 notifications had been reported to the Home Office since the previous meeting. An official response from the Home Office was awaited;
- b) Annual health screening was undertaken successfully within the SBS animal facility on 24 February. Cleaning within the CBS animal facility was currently being undertaken prior to health screening which would be carried out within the next few weeks;
- c) There were no major health or welfare concerns since the previous reporting period.

Animal Facility Manager's update

23/112 Introducing paper (AWERB/23/28), the Animal Facilities Manager provided the following update:

- a) Further to the discussion at the previous meeting, the Bradford University Animal Unit had been identified as a suitable alternative location for licensed work, following the closure of the SBS facility. The logistics would be considered over the coming weeks and an update provided at the next AWERB meeting. Contractual issues would be dealt with through the University Secretary & Registrar's Office;
- b) A full-time technical member of staff had been appointed on a 1-year contract to support ongoing work during the closure period of SBS;
- c) Recruitment of the Biomedical Sciences Administrative Assistant was currently being undertaken and an update would be provided at the next meeting;
- d) In addition to building and infrastructure issues contained within the report, the Committee were alerted to a further incident in which the Building Management System (BMS) had failed to raise an alert of an environment issue within the CBS facility. Whilst Estate Services had quickly repaired the BMS on this occasion, colleagues noted that the control system was reaching the end of its life cycle and would need to be replaced in due course. The Group noted that the University's Smart Buildings Manager would be invited to attend the next AWERB meeting to discuss options for its replacement and upgrade.

Annual Statistical Report

23/113 The Named Information Officer presented the Annual Statistical Report as set out in AWERB/23/29 which was noted by the Committee.

Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers' (NACWO) Report

23/114 In presenting their report (AWERB/23/30), the NACWOs reported that:

- a) The control panel in room 9.17 was currently being replaced, resulting in a fully functioning spare animal holding room for emergencies;
- b) Following the work undertaken in 2023 to manage pain levels consistently, a second research group were now using bupivacaine anesthesia for intracranial surgeries. Users of the revised procedure for managing such procedures had reported a significant reduction in the reopening of head wounds.

CBS User Group Report

- 23/115 A representative of the Leeds Biomedical Services Committee provided a verbal update on behalf of the CBS User Group. Members noted that a standardised approach to the development, documentation and use of study plans across the establishment (as identified in the ASRU report) had been agreed and would be shared with users accordingly.
- 23/116 In response to a question, the a member suggested that processes should be agreed on a study-by-study basis for immunocompromised projects, whereby animals are transferred across sites for short term studies/projects (dependent upon the strain of animal and immunocompromised vulnerability, etc).
- 23/117 The full CBS report will be shared with members after the meeting (see Appendix).

Project License (PPL) mid-term review

- 23/118 The Committee was presented with three Project License pro-formas (MR/66, MR/68 and (MR69), which had been updated following the feedback reviewed at the previous meeting. The Committee was content with the additional information provided (3Rs information and details of the Standard Condition 18 reports) and approved the pro-formas, subject to a correction in MR/66 which would be amended with support from the Named Veterinary Surgeon.

Project License (PPL) changes – secondary availability

- 23/119 The Committee reviewed protocols C/1 and C/2 which were approved, pending a minor amendment to the wording in C/1. The Committee noted that the protocols would also be reviewed and considered by the University of York's AWERB.

Discussion on the process for secondary availability application with the upcoming changes to activity for SBS users

- 23/120 Ahead of the planned closure of the SBS facility, the Committee discussed the process by which secondary establishment protocols are considered prior to endorsement for submission to ASPeL (Animals Scientific Procedures electronic Licensing) for approval. Recognising the time pressures – and potential delays in the latter stages of the process – members were supportive of the suggestion to have a Subcommittee to review the applications before the 8 May meeting of the AWERB. The Subcommittee would comprise of the NVS, a NACWO and a Senior Academic (license holder).

- 23/121 Colleagues noted that a meeting of the SBS User Group was due to be held within the coming week/two weeks, at which time Brian Jackson would be in a position to confirm the process and next steps.

Proposals for non-regulated work

- 23/122 Board members received two new proposals for the use of animals to undertake non-regulated scientific work (NR/5 and NR/6). Members agreed that there were no ethical or welfare concerns and the applications were approved.

- 23/123 Following the discussion at the previous meeting (minute 23/102), colleagues noted that the revised form – focusing only on the animal aspects of non-regulated work – was awaited.

Annual Review of AWERB sub-committees and mid-term review process

- 23/124 The Chair reflected on the revised review process since its introduction in January 2023 and colleagues noted that whilst this was rigorous (with each protocol taking around 45 minutes to review) the new process had been beneficial, particularly following the introduction of the revised form. Members of the Committee welcomed the approach and agreed that protocols should continue to be reviewed in this way.

External meetings

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23/125 One member had taken on the role of Chair of the Institute of Animals Technology (IAT) North East Committee, which was expected to open up opportunities to host meetings at the University of Leeds' main campus.

23/126 The NVS was due to attend the Laboratory Animal Veterinary Association Spring meeting in April.

23/127 Members were encouraged to notify respective colleagues of the free in-house Personal License (PIL) Refresher Workshop which would be held 27 March. This would assist the University in meeting one of the findings and recommendations of the ASRU inspection report.

Any other business

23/128 With the closure of the SBS facility fast approaching, colleagues noted that a meeting of the SBS Users would be held in light of the screening results received from the University of Bradford. Colleagues were mindful of the need to undertake review procedures by June 2024 to allow time (approximately 8-weeks) for the Home Office to be able to undertake its own consideration of the secondary availability requests.

Date of next meeting

23/129 The next meeting of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body will be held at 10.00-12.00 on Wednesday 8 May in the Ziff Boardroom (level 13, Marjorie and Arnold Ziff Building), with lunch being served at the conclusion of the meeting.

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CBS User Group Report

The situation is relatively stable with the CBS users. The efforts with regards to the Home Office audit in October 2023 were positive and feedback seems to reflect these efforts with good practice.

CBS is developing study plans to ensure animal staff understand the plan for each animals and the specific actions and checks that are needed in response to HO audit feedback. There has been some confusion regarding the level of detail required in these so the chair has produced an example and had this reviewed by a NACWO and the CBS Manager and will disseminate in advance of the next meeting.

The SBS closure continues to overshadow the thoughts of many users especially now that there is a suggestion from the Programme Board of more change in the next budget cycle in 24 months time. CBS users are concerned around space issues if changes are made to accommodate SBS users in CBS that will adversely affect delivery of current work and the potential of interruption if new building / refurbishments are warranted in 24 months time.

CBS User Group Co-Chair

March 2024