

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY

Minutes of meeting held on 7 November 2024

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

Minutes of Previous Meeting

24/16 The minutes of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body held on 9 September 2024 (AWERB/24/07) were approved.

Matters arising

24/17 Minute 24/02 – Following the discussion at the 30 January meeting (minute 23/102), colleagues noted that the revised form – focusing only on the animal aspects of non-regulated work – was awaited.

24/18 The AWERB received a short summary on the work being undertaken by the Research Ethics Policy Task & Finish Group and noting the low risk associated with non-regulated animal work, were supportive of the Group's suggestion to propose that: in non-regulated studies where animal welfare was the major ethical issue, the work should be approved by the AWERB, with ethical scrutiny (if required) provided by a Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) Chair. If animal welfare was not the principal ethical issue (but the research still involved non-regulated animals or animal tissues), ethical review would be by a FREC, with ethical scrutiny (if required) by AWERB.

24/19 Minute 24/08 – following the agreement of the AWERB at its meeting on 23 July 2024, the Establishment Licence (PEL) Holder had circulated a formal communication to notify Biomedical Services colleagues of plans to cease the use of tail handling by September 2025.

24/20 Minute 24/13 – expressions of interest were being sought for the three existing AWERB vacancies and the Chair and PEL Holder would be updated outside of the meeting.

PEL Holder update

24/21 The University's PEL Holder provided an update following their attendance at the Annual LASA Establishment Licence Holder's Forum (as set out in paper AWERB/04/08), the focus of which had been around Supporting Named Persons.

24/22 The key areas discussed during from the Forum were:

- PEL Holders, NACWOs and NVSs perspectives and experiences in relation to Home Office operations;
- ASRU regulation changes which were causing significant delays in the processing of protocols, causing major challenges across the sector;
- The Labour Party's 2024 manifesto to phase out the use of animal testing.

The event slides would be shared with AWERB colleagues in due course.

Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) update

24/23 In introducing the report (AWERB/24/09), the NVS reported:

- a) There were no significant health or welfare concerns since the previous reporting period;

- b) The NVS had conducted a final visit to the SBS Facility to ensure that animals were fit to travel prior to their transportation to the University of Bradford Animal Unit. No concerns were identified, and all mice had since been transferred successfully;
- c) Members discussed the proposal to utilise existing 'schedule 1' stock to support the delivery of internal in-vivo training. The AWERB were supportive of the proposal, in principle, and the Animal Facility Manager and NVS would prepare a draft protocol to be considered at a future meeting;
- d) A member raised the gaps in understanding across UG, Taught PG and PGR education which was discussed by the group. To address the issue, an email communication would be drafted and shared with Directors of Student Education, Directors of Graduate Schools, the Doctoral College and Pro-Deans within the relevant Faculties;
- e) The Biomedical Services Assistant would ensure that the information on non-regulated animal work was recorded from November 2024 onwards.

Farm Veterinary Report update

24/24 The AWERB noted the information contained within the quarterly Farm Inspection Report (AWERB/24/10), undertaken by an external (Defra regulated) clinician on 20 August 2024. Colleagues noted the introduction of saline to reduce tail biting incidents and the issue would be monitored closely to ensure the reduction of cases.

Animal Facility Manager's update

24/25 Members noted the information contained within the Animal Facilities Manager's Report (AWERB/24/11):

- a) The necessary equipment had successfully been transferred to the University of Bradford Animal Unit. Work was currently being undertaken alongside Bradford colleagues to ensure the alignment of Standard Operating Procedures and out-of hours working arrangements. The relevant colleagues would be invited to undertake an induction at the Bradford Animal Unit in due course;
- b) A SBS User Group meeting would be scheduled to discuss/agree the storage and relocation of some existing equipment;
- c) In a discussion about campus space, the group were advised that the Animal Facilities Manager and NVS had planned to meet with building architects to discuss the planned relocation of external animal rooms and the associated Home Office requirements. In discussion, the PEL Holder suggested that it would be useful for the AWERB to review a summary of both the existing and planned space to ensure that requirements were being met.

University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee Report

24/26 Members of the Committee noted the University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee Report (AWERB/24/12). Colleagues noted the need to identify an academic Chair for the Committee and the PEL Holder agreed to write to the Pro-Deans for Research and Innovation in the Faculties of Medicine and Health and Biological Sciences to progress the matter.

Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers' (NACWO) Report

24/27 The AWERB considered the information set out in the NACWO Report (as set out paper AWERB/24/13).

24/28 The NACWO updated colleagues on 3H (Housing, Handling, and Habituation) refinements and enrichments, and in particular, plans to cease the use of tail handling by September 2025. Colleagues noted that:

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- a) An Action Plan had been developed and agreed by all Technical staff;
- b) A method of habituating rodents to alternative handling was discussed and agreed with all CBS staff. Likewise, alternative approaches to handling were now being applied during PIL A/B practical handling sessions and any other handling demonstrations;
- c) Arrangements were underway for the delivery of on-site training for Technicians, Named Persons and Researchers.

Project Licence (PPL) Amendment

24/29 Members were presented with a PPL Amendment (AWERB/24/14) for the continuation of previous work, which had been updated to incorporate feedback received from the Subcommittee. The AWERB were content with the information received and the PPL Amendment was endorsed.

External meetings

24/30 Members were asked to share information about external meetings/training attended, or in planning. In discussion, it was noted that some colleagues would attend:

- a) 13 November: 'Opening up on Research' (University of York)
- b) 21 November: Writing non-technical summaries (webinar) – information relating to the webinar had been shared with AWERB members via email
- c) 9 December: Annual RSPCA Lay Members' Forum (London)

Date of next meeting

24/31 The next meeting of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body will be held at 2pm on Monday 20 January 2025. The meeting will be held in the Ziff Boardroom, with an option to join the discussion via Teams.