

Minutes

CONFIDENTIAL



Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

Date: Monday 13 October 2025 **Start:** 14:00 **End:** 16:00
Location: Virtually via Teams
Present: AWERB Chair (CHAIR), Manager of the BRF (BRF), AWERB Administrator/Home Office Liaison Contact/Named Training and Competency Officer/Named Information Officer (NICO), Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS), Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers (NACWOs): [REDACTED], FELS, FEPS and OES, PPL/Scientific Representatives: PPL1 and PPL2, Chair of the [REDACTED] Animal Users Group (AUG), Cancer Sciences Representative (CSU), Student Representatives: SR1 and SR2, Statistician (STATS)
In Attendance: Minutes Secretary (MS)
Apologies: Establishment Licence Holder (ELH), 3Rs Champions Group Leads: 3RC1 and 3RC2, Expert Independent/Lay Member/Representative (LR)

1. Welcome and Introduction

CHAIR welcomed all in attendance to the meeting. Apologies from members not in attendance were noted by the group (as above).

NACWO [REDACTED] is now on maternity leave for a year's period. Their interim replacement on their committee was introduced and welcomed by members.

2. Disclosure of Interests

The committee noted that the 4 year report received for PPL: [REDACTED] was submitted by PPL2.

3. Approve Minutes from the Previous Meeting Held Wednesday 11 June 2025 and Notes from the AWERB Away Half-Day Meeting Held Monday 21 July 2025

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved by the committee. These minutes will be redacted and added to the public-facing website.

Action: MS to make suggested redactions to the minutes and add these to the public-facing website.

Deadline: Friday 17 October 2025

The meeting notes from the AWERB away half-day meeting were reviewed and approved by the committee. These notes will not be added to the public-facing website.

4. Discuss Matters Arising and Review/Update on Ongoing Actions from Previous Meetings

The list of the AWERB's ongoing actions from previous meetings was reviewed by the committee and updates were provided by members. The actions overview spreadsheet will be updated following the meeting.

Action: MS to update the actions overview spreadsheet and circulate this to the committee for reference along with the minutes from this meeting.

Deadline: Monday 3 November 2025

5. Received Reports from Named Persons

Discussion of key points from tabled reports

Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) Report:

NVS summarised key points from their report.

- NVS spoke to point 5 from the adverse incidents part of their report. NVS suggested dissuading people with animals where high fat diets are followed by weight loss regimes to use weight loss as an experimental endpoint as obese mice losing e.g. 20% body mass can be considered as still healthy. One PPLh has already submitted an amendment to their licence to the Home Office another has been approached to do this also.

- The committee noted NVS's report overviewing the list of reported events submitted to the Home Office from September 2024 – July 2024 (this was not reviewed at the AWERB away half-day meeting due to time constraints). No comments or issues were raised by members. This report has been added to the AWERBs SharePoint site for reference.

BRF operations manager (BRF) Report:

BRF summarised key points from their report.

- The refurbishment of the [REDACTED] facility is progressing well. The contractors have enquired if the remaining phases of the project could be merged to bring the end date forward to December 2025. BRF will investigate this as an option and liaise with the contractor.

Named Training and Competency Officer (NTCO) Report:

NTCO summarised key points from their report.

- There has been a high number of PPL amendments submitted over the summer that has been a challenge for NTCO to manage.
- NTCO has noticed articles being published from research groups which were dependant on animal research without acknowledgement or mention of animals being used. NTCO spoke to this at a recent user meeting and to other involved in Comms – NTCO and 3RC1 will be meeting with a member of the FMED Comms team about ensuring researchers are asked if animals were used in research. The committee encouraged this and agreed more could be done through SERG to emphasise the importance to PPL applicants.
- NTCO and BRF recently met with someone from the staff wellbeing team around compassion fatigue – which links to other work they are doing. They have agreed to incorporate compassion fatigue into their work developing resources and support. They have also agreed to run a “Coping with stressful situations for those working with animals”. This session, once organised, will be open to staff and researchers. As part of this session NTCO has been asked to send five case studies that can be used in the session. NTCO asked members to submit any suggestions/stories to them.
Action: AWERB Members to send case study suggestions/stories to NTCO/BRF for this session.
Deadline: Monday 15 December

Named Information Officer (NIO) Report:

The NIO summarised key points from their report - no comments were raised.

Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers (NACWOs) Combined Report:

NACWO [REDACTED] summarised key points from the NACWOs combined report.

- The issue with the steam generator in the [REDACTED] facility has been resolved – this was descaled and an engineer was called out to service the autoclave. This is operational again.

No comments or issues were raised on the NACWOs combined report.

6. Discuss and Approve Updated/Amended Outstanding PPL Review – 2 and 4 Year Reports from Previous Meeting

No outstanding 2 and/or 4 year reports were due for review at this meeting.

The committee however noted the changes that had been made to the 2 year report for PPL: [REDACTED]. (This was approved by key members outside of the meeting following revisions requested at the last meeting).

6. Discuss and Approve PPL Review – 2 Year Reports

PPL: [REDACTED] (Approved)

The committee discussed and approved this report.

Action: MS to feedback this outcome to the PPLh.

Deadline: Friday 17 October 2025

PPL: [REDACTED] (Not Approved)

The committee raised several queries (below) and has requested revisions.

- Q.4b (reduction) – the PPLh detailed that they had reviewed published papers with similar aims, from this they were able to reduce the number of replicates – allowing for a reduction of ~5 mice from the original plan. The committee queried how they had been able to do this, asking for more details and could any of the group’s own data have been used?
- Q.4c (refinement) – the PPLh mentioned “enriched bedding”, the committee asked for clarification on this. The PPLh also mentioned that “regular bedding changes were provided to reduce stress”. The committee asked for clarification as mice would be disturbed more often with regular bedding changes leading to more stress, not reducing it.
- Q.5c – The AWERB understood the answer provided but suggested a change to the wording to “To date, no animals have reached experimental endpoints, therefore review and implementation of changes to endpoints has not been possible yet.”

The AWERB is happy for this report to be approved outside of the meeting by key members once revisions are made.

Action: MS to feedback comments onto the PPLh. CHAIR and NTCO to review/approve this report once revisions are made. A report overviewing changes should be brought back to the next meeting for the committee to note.

Deadline: Monday 27 October 2025

6. Discuss and Approve PPL Review – 4 Year Reports

PPL: [REDACTED] (Not Approved)

The committee raised several queries (below) and has requested revisions.

- The AWERB asked that the report be sent back to the PPLh and re-read to correct grammar mistakes. The articles listed in the report are not current and do not match with this project dates.
- NVS will investigate some of the details outlined in the answer to Q.5a.

The AWERB asked that this report be resubmitted for the next meeting.

Action: NVS, CHAIR and NTCO will discuss this report outside of the meeting and feedback to the PPLh.

Deadline: Monday 27 October 2025

PPL: [REDACTED] (Approved in Principle)

The committee discussed and approved this report in principle.

- The AWERB asked the PPLh (PPL2) to include the number of eggs that were used even though they are classified as non-regulated in their answer to Q.3b. The PPLh was able to answer this question during the meeting and added this information to their report which was approved by CHAIR and NTCO outside of the meeting.

6. Discuss and Approve PPL Retrospective Assessment for Submission to ASRU

No PPL retrospective assessments were due for submission for this meeting.

7. PPL Applications, Amendments and Approvals

A list of PPL applications and amendments submitted to the Home Office (or in the process of being submitted) since the last meeting was noted by the committee.

7. ERGO Applications and Approvals

A list of ERGO (ASPA and non-ASPA) applications that had been submitted and their review outcomes since the last meeting was noted by the committee. No concerns with any applications were raised.

8. AWERB Meeting Focus (October 2025) - Research Integrity

Reviewing updated metrics document:

CHAIR discussed through the updated metrics which demonstrate effectiveness and impact of AWERB activities document – information for the 2024/25 academic year has been included.

Action: CHAIR asked members to look at this document and pass any suggestions to CHAIR and/or MS for inclusion.

Deadline: Monday 3 November 2025

Once this deadline has passed, MS will finalise this document and replace the current version featured on the AWERBs SharePoint site.

Discussion on managing Conflicts of Interest for Named Persons:

NTCO shared a document with members which provided some background on why this was being raised for further discussion by the AWERB. NTCO previously suggested some wording to be included in NACWOs conflict of interest forms, but concerns were raised. NTCO noted three ways other establishments are managing this for the AWERB to consider. This was discussed by the AWERB. BRF raised some concerns/points of view from the NACWOs. The AWERB agreed that it cannot be stated that 'conflicts of interest will be avoided where possible' if current working practices carry on as they are. A way to acknowledge and manage this within the current staffing structure must be found which does not hinder animal welfare, which is the highest priority.

This requires further discussion outside of the meeting – CHAIR asked members to forward any comments onto CHAIR/NTCO regarding this and ask technicians in the groups for any additional thoughts (if appropriate). CHAIR and NTCO intend to discuss this further with the BRF academic lead.

9. The 3Rs at the University of Southampton (Standing Item)

CHAIR summarised key points from the 3Rs Champions Group report - no comments were raised.

10. Update on AWERB Sub-Committees and their Work (Standing Item)

NTCO highlighted key points from the AWERBs sub-committees and working groups.

- There has been a high number of ERGO applications.
- Members discussed point 3 from the incidents, complaints and appeals section of the Animal Committee (AC) report – PPL2 raised that supervisors are sometimes not prompted to approve projects/applications from students or aren't familiar with the system process and understand what is required from them.
Action: CHAIR agreed to discuss this further with [REDACTED] if needed, as an interim action, will seek advice from the Animal Committee (AC) chair regarding supervisor input into SoBS applications.
Deadline: Monday 3 November 2025
- NTCO recommended that the annual AC report submitted to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) should be featured in the AWERB meetings papers for members to note at the first AWERB meeting of each new academic year. CHAIR agreed and suggested the same should be done for the AWERBs annual report to the Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC).
Action: MS to add this to the AWERB decisions log as a formal decision.
Deadline: Friday 17 October 2025
- NTCO emphasised the need to get PPL applications/amendments to a better standard before submission to the SERG – NTCO is asking for NACWOs and the NVS to look at applications at an earlier stage or will be pushing back applications if they are not ready for submission.

11. Outcome/Report from the ASRU Facilities Audit (July 2025)

NTCO highlighted key points from their report on the outcome of the ASRU facility audit of university facilities carried out in July 2025. Overall, the visit went well – only minor findings were reported back and have been actioned. NTCO has reported back to ASRU updating them on actions but has not received any response yet. NTCO will continue to chase this and keep facility managers informed.

12. Summary of the UoS Culture of Care Workshop (September 2025)

The AWERB discussed the report LR and their colleague from the RSPCA Animals in Science Department had drafted following the culture of care workshop. This was approved by members to be included on the public-facing website. Members thanked LR and their colleague for their work on this workshop.

Action: MS to feedback to LR and their colleague, discuss with them about adding this to the public-facing website and what wording they would like included.

Deadline: Monday 27 October 2025

Any Other Business

Nothing to report.

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 10 December 2025 - 10:00 - 12:00 - Via Teams