

Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

Date: Wednesday 18 September 2024

Time: 14:00 – 16:00

Location: [REDACTED] and Virtually via Teams (Hybrid Meeting)

Present: AWERB Chair (CHAIR), Establishment Licence Holder (ELH), Manager of the BRF (BRF), AWERB Administrator/Home Office Liaison Contact/Named Training and Competency Officer/Named Information Officer (NTCO), Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers (NACWOs): Level G and PCU, PPL/Scientific Representatives: PPL1 and PPL2, Chair of the [REDACTED] Animal Users Group (AUG), Cancer Sciences Representative (CSU), Student Representative (SR1), Expert Independent/Lay Member/Representative (LR), Minutes Secretary (MS)

Apologies: Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS), Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers (NACWOs): [REDACTED] and FEPS, 3Rs Champions Group Lead (3RC)

Agenda item	Action	Person (s) responsible
1. Welcome/Apologies for Absence: CHAIR welcomed all attending the AWERB meeting held on Wednesday 18 September 2024. Apologies from members not able to attend the meeting were noted by the committee. CHAIR thanked the former AWERB chair, SR2 and PSY for their work on the committee. All have recently stepped down.		
2. Disclosure of Interests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The committee noted that the 2 year report received for PPL [REDACTED] was submitted by PPL2. - Several members of the committee raised that they conduct or collaborate with the research under the 2 year report received for PPL [REDACTED]. 	No Actions Arising.	
3. Review/Approve Minutes from the Previous AWERB Meeting Held Wednesday 12 June 2024: The minutes from the previous meeting were approved by the committee.	No Actions Arising.	
4. Discuss Matters Arising and Review Ongoing Actions The list of the AWERB's ongoing actions from previous meetings was reviewed by the committee and updates were provided by members.	Action: MS to update the actions overview spreadsheet.	MS

The AWERB actions overview spreadsheet will be updated following the meeting.		
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Minutes from the AWERB Meeting (Wednesday 18 September 2024)			
5.	Discussion of Key Points from Tabled Reports:		
5.	Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) Report:		
	<p>AWERB reviewed the NVS report which highlighted two unrelated Standard Condition 18 reports that had occurred since the last meeting in June 2024.</p> <p>LR queried the suggestion of reducing inoculating cell numbers by 75% mentioned in the second adverse incident reported. LR felt this was a large reduction and asked why the original number was so high to start, if the lower amount was effective? Could this suggested number be implemented going forward? LR will discuss this further with the NVS outside of the meeting.</p> <p>BRF added that the BRF facilities are increasing levels of biosecurity within units. Efforts have been made to declutter the Level G facility to make cleaning easier in the future.</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>	No Actions Arising.	
5.	BRF Operations Manager (BRF) Report:		
	<p>BRF summarised key points of their report.</p> <p>ELH urged BRF to prioritise the installation of critical SMS alarms for temperatures and humidity outside normal working hours for the Level G and PCU facilities. This is a Home Office action that needs to be completed urgently. ELH should be included in communications if there are any further delays.</p> <p>BRF has sent 3 animal technicians on a biosecurity course.</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>	<p>Action: BRF to report back on the progress of the installation of critical SMS alarms at the next meeting.</p>	BRF
5.	NTCO, NIO, AWERB Administrator, Home Office Liaison Contact and BRF Standards Officer (NTCO) Report:		

	<p>NTCO summarised their report and discussed matters arising with the committee.</p> <p>The committee discussed the potential non-compliance issue in the NTCO report. NTCO added that the two PILhs involved have been spoken to following this incident. This issue was self-reported after the event. This issue was down to poor communication between the PILhs and a failure to update cage/animal records on cage labels and A-Tunes. The mice involved were monitored closely following the incident and no negative effects were observed.</p> <p>NTCO discussed that the PPLh will not be carrying out any research work under a recently approved PPL. ELH commented that this licence was allowed to be applied for and held under the university's establishment licence in good faith and this licence was a special case, it is disappointing that a lot of work went into approving of the PPL. ELH suggested reviewing the university's Animal Research and Welfare Operational Guidelines to review who can hold a Project Licence. This should be amended to state only the principal investigator should hold a Project Licence (though there may be exceptions). NTCO added that the PPLh is due to leave UoS soon but had inquired about keeping the licence. The AWERB made no formal decision on whether the PPL should be revoked. NTCO will discuss this with the PPLh outside of the meeting.</p> <p>NTCO updated that 4 of the 5 PPL applications approved in principle by SERG have been submitted to the Home Office for review/approval. NTCO awaits the outcomes.</p> <p>NTCO recently attended an NC3Rs/LASA workshop for supporting Named Information Officers (NIOs) in London. At this meeting, NTCO suggested a separate NIO report for AWERB. All agreed for future meetings a report from the NIO should be included.</p> <p>NTCO has been contacted by UAR (Understanding Animal Research) to enquire whether the university wanted a session on how to speak in public for new staff/students about animal research. The committee agreed this would be beneficial and suggested sending a poll around to users to gauge interest and also add it as an item at the next BRF users meeting.</p>	<p>Action: NTCO to review the Animal Research and Welfare Operational Guidelines to see what is currently stated and amended if required.</p> <p>Action: NTCO to discuss the possible revocation of the PPL with the PPLh.</p> <p>Action: MS to set up a poll and send it out to users. community. Action: MS to add to users meeting agenda.</p>	<p>NTCO</p> <p>NTCO</p> <p>MS</p> <p>MS</p>
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	No further queries or comments were raised.		
5.	NACWO's Combined Report:		
	<p>NACWOs summarised matters arising from their reports and reported that animal welfare in their facilities remains at a good standard.</p> <p>NACWO Level G discussed further from their report about the RM1 maintenance diet changes. This was discussed by the committee who suggested NACWO Level G report back on this at the next meeting in December after holding talks with the supplier.</p> <p>ELH suggested a tour of the facility needs to be arranged with NACWO FEPS in the near future. ELH also hopes to visit BRF facilities in the new year (those on the committee who would like a tour of facilities are welcome to join).</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>	<p>Action: NACWO Level G to report on this at the next meeting in December.</p> <p>Action: MS to organise a tour for ELH of all facilities with NACWOs and NTCO.</p>	<p>NACWO Level G</p> <p>MS</p>
6.	<p>Discuss and Approve Updated /Amended Outstanding PPL Review – 2 and/or 4 Year Reports from Previous Meetings:</p> <p>No outstanding 2 and/or 4 year reports were due for review at this meeting.</p>	No Actions Arising.	
6.	<p>Discuss and Approve PPL Review – 2 Year Reports:</p> <p>The committee reviewed and discussed all reports below.</p> <p>PPL: [REDACTED] (Approved) The committee commented on how well-considered and written this report was and suggested the PPL share their report with other PPLhs.</p> <p>PPL: [REDACTED] (Approved) The committee felt this report was well written. Only a small amount of research has been carried out under this licence to date and the PPLh has explained the reasons.</p> <p>PPL: [REDACTED] (Approved) The committee commented on how well-considered and written this report was and suggested the PPL share their report with other PPLhs.</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>	<p>Action: MS to pass feedback onto PPLh.</p> <p>Action: MS to pass feedback onto PPLh.</p> <p>Action: MS to pass feedback onto PPLh.</p>	<p>MS</p> <p>MS</p> <p>MS</p>

6.	<p>Discuss and Approve PPL Review – 4 Year Reports:</p> <p>No 4 year reports were due for review at this meeting.</p>	No Actions Arising.	
7.	<p>Retrospective Assessments:</p> <p>The committee reviewed and discussed two PPL Retrospective Assessments required by ASPA.</p> <p>PPL: [REDACTED] (Not Approved) The committee felt this Retrospective Assessment was not ready to submit to ASRU. The committee suggested NTCO and CHAIR discuss changes that need to be made with the PPLh outside of the meeting. ELH added that they would like to be included in these communications.</p> <p>PPL: [REDACTED] (Approved) The committee commented that the report was well-considered and written.</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>	<p>Action: NTCO and CHAIR to discuss changes needed with PPLh.</p> <p>Action: NTCO to pass feedback onto PPLh.</p>	<p>NTCO/CHAIR</p> <p>NTCO</p>
8.	<p>PPL Applications, Amendments and Approvals:</p> <p>A list of PPL applications and amendments submitted since the last meeting was noted.</p> <p>NTCO updated that the PPL amendment for PPL [REDACTED] has now been granted by the Home Office.</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>	No Actions Arising.	
8.	<p>ERGO (ASPA and Non-ASPA) Applications:</p> <p>The list of ERGO (ASPA and non-ASPA) applications that had been submitted and their review outcomes since the last meeting was reviewed by the committee.</p> <p>The committee noted that the title for the ERGO application [REDACTED] was not very descriptive and suggested that NTCO check if this has been updated.</p> <p>The committee noted that the dates applications were approved are missing on several of the applications ([REDACTED]).</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>	<p>Action: NTCO and MS to check if the title has been updated and update this document.</p> <p>Action: NTCO and MS to check the dates of approval and update this document.</p>	<p>NTCO/MS</p> <p>NTCO/MS</p>

9.	<p>Discussion of the 3Rs at the University of Southampton (Standing Item):</p> <p>CHAIR summarised matters arising from the 3Rs Champions Group report. A meeting will be scheduled with the three members soon. The aim is for the newest member taking over as the group lead so the current lead can step down.</p> <p>The group will also be tasked with planning another 3Rs workshop for the summer/autumn term of 2025.</p> <p>NTCO raised that the NC3Rs will be holding an online workshop with university researchers in the Autumn term. This talk will be focussing on “Animals in Research: An Introduction to Ethics and the 3Rs”. NTCO hopes such sessions can be held once each term with a different subject covered at each workshop.</p> <p>LR requested they be forwarded the invite so they can attend also.</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>	<p>Action: MS to forward the invite to LR.</p>	MS
10.	<p>Meeting Focus (October 2024) – Research and Integrity:</p> <p>Review/Approve AWERB ToR for the 2024/25 Academic Year:</p> <p>CHAIR and NTCO reported that they have made several proposed changes to the AWERBs Terms of Reference ahead of the meeting. This document was shared briefly and changes were highlighted. This version will be circulated to members following the meeting. Further changes will be implemented where needed and a finalised version will be circulated when ready.</p> <p>Review of Metrics Which Demonstrate Effectiveness and Impact for AWERB Activities:</p> <p>This document was shared briefly with the committee and changes were highlighted. Information for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 years have been added. This document was discussed by the group. The committee approved these changes.</p> <p>The committee noted that the AWERB has not had the opportunity yet to reach out to the research community or make a formal survey of staff and researchers to give their anonymous feelings about the AWERB.</p>	<p>Action: NTCO and MS to circulate the ToR for review/comments.</p> <p>Action: NTCO and CHAIR to address any comments. MS to circulate.</p> <p>Action: NTCO, CHAIR and MS to generate a survey for users about their perceptions of the AWERB and any suggestions for improvement. This should be circulated and advertised to users at the Spring</p>	<p>NTCO/MS</p> <p>NTCO/CHAIR</p> <p>NTCO/CHAIR MS</p>

	<p>The committee agreed a survey should be set up and sent out to the user community in 2025 (and advertised at the users meeting).</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>	<p>users meeting. The responses can be reviewed at a subsequent AWERB meeting.</p>	
11.	<p>Updates from the AWERBs Sub-committees and Working Groups:</p> <p>NTCO highlighted key points of the reports from the AWERBs sub-committees and working groups.</p> <p>ELH raised that they hope the new co-chair of the Animal Committee will eventually take over as the sole chair of this committee to free up NTCO. ELH is happy to push for this with the Dean of FELS if needed. NTCO welcomed this but stated the co-chair requires more training before they can take over as the chair. Additional members may also need to be brought onto the committee to give better oversight for FMED.</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>		
12.	<p>Recruiting New Members to the AWERB:</p> <p>Efforts to recruit a new deputy chair (ideally from FMED) and student representative are ongoing. SR1 agreed to discuss the student representative role with anyone interested in the post.</p> <p>Currently, the animal behaviourist post will not be refilled. CHAIR will discuss this role outside of meetings with NTCO and ELH. If this specific post cannot be filled by a suitable replacement, a second lay member will be considered for AWERB.</p> <p>CHAIR and NTCO will complete a metrics review of the AWERB to identify any shortfalls in the expertise of committee members and ensure adequate training is provided, or additional members are brought onto the AWERB.</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>	<p>Action: CHAIR will draft an expressions of interest advert for the deputy chair post. This advert will be circulated soon.</p> <p>Action: MS to recirculate the advert for the student representative post.</p> <p>Action: Advertise the post at the next BRF users meeting in October.</p> <p>Action: CHAIR and NTCO to carry out a metrics review of current AWERB member's areas of expertise.</p>	<p>CHAIR</p> <p>MS</p> <p>MS</p> <p>CHAIR/NTCO</p>

13.	<p>Update on Preparation for ASRU Full Systems Audit (Standing Item):</p> <p>The BRF now has all documentation requested for the audit drafted and in place. These documents will be reviewed again and updated where needed. BRF facilities are actively working to ensure units are prepared in the event of a full systems audit by ASRU.</p> <p>NACWOs OES and FEPS are to report at the next meeting in December on their facility's progress.</p> <p>The BRF has written guidance on the audit for PIL and PPL holders which was circulated previously. The BRF will be asking research groups for an update on their progress towards the audit following guidance published at the next user meeting in October.</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>	<p>Action: NACWO OES and NACWO FEPS to report on their progress towards the ASRU audit at the next meeting.</p>	NACWO OES/ NACWO FEPS
14.	<p>Review/Approve Proposed Changes to AWERB Website and Infographic (Animal Numbers Used in Research Under ASPA at UoS):</p> <p>The draft proposal of changes to the university's website on animal research was circulated to members ahead of the meeting with a draft of an infographic on animal numbers used in research under ASPA at the university for members to comment on.</p> <p>Only LR had comments, and these will be discussed outside of the meeting. Once LR's comments have been addressed, the committee agreed they are happy for changes to be implemented.</p> <p>The committee welcomed the idea of the infographic and agreed for its content to be added to the website following cosmetic changes being made to some of the graphs featured which were hard to read. The inclusion of this infographic is good for openness.</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>	<p>Action: NTCO, CHAIR and MS to address LR's comments before implementing changes to the website.</p> <p>Action: MS to update the website.</p> <p>Action: MS to make suggested changes to the infographic before adding to the website.</p>	<p>NTCO/CHAIR MS</p> <p>MS</p> <p>MS</p>
	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <p>NTCO reported that they have been in contact with a researcher who will be writing a new Project Licence to</p>		

	<p>work with fish soon. They will be signed up for the relevant courses they need to sit first.</p> <p>CHAIR announced that they will be submitting the AWERBs annual report to the RIGC (Research and Integrity Governance Committee) for the 2023/24 academic year soon.</p> <p>No further queries or comments were raised.</p>		
<p>Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 18 December 2024 – 14:00 – 16:00 – Virtually via Teams</p>			

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