

## Agenda Items:

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)</b>		
<b>Date:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	<b>Time:</b>	09:30-12:00
<b>Location:</b>	Virtual		
<b>Members present:</b>	AWERB Chair / Named Information Officer (NIO) NACWO Chair of BRF User Forum NASPA Chair NEER Officer NTCO/HOLC PIL representative Independent, external lay member Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) Deputy NVS Research Integrity and Governance Officer		
<b>In attendance:</b>	AWERB Secretary		
<b>Minutes:</b>	AWERB Secretary		
<b>Acronyms</b>	AWERB – Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body BRF – Biomedical Research Facility ECR – Early Career Researcher FEO – Favourable Ethical Opinion HOLC – Home Office Liaison Contact NASPA - Non-Animal in Scientific Procedures Act NACWO – Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer NEER – Non-Establishment Ethics Review NIO – Named Information Officer NVS – Named Veterinary Surgeon PILh – Personal Licence (holder) PPLh – Project Licence (holder) PELh – Establishment Licence (holder) RIGC – Research Integrity and Governance Committee RIGO – Research Integrity and Governance Office SAGE-AR – Self-Assessment for Governance and Ethics – Animal Research URIC – University Research and Innovation Committee		

Item		Action
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b> Apologies received from: AWERB Deputy Chair and Academic staff with relevant research experience</p> <p>Chair welcomed all members.</p>	<p><b>Apologies for absence to be sent to Chair in advance of meetings. (ALL)</b></p>
2.	<p><b>Approval of minutes and update on action log</b> Previous minutes to be checked by AWERB members and any corrections sent by 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2024.</p> <p>August AWERB minutes (uploaded to BRF website)</p> <p>5/23 Draft 3Rs strategy document transferred back to 3Rs Champions. User forum and NASPA Chairs to present document to groups for their feedback. New action to be set at January meeting.</p> <p>4/24 PP8648098 –2-year retrospective review completed</p> <p>8/24 Spreadsheet to allow sharing of tissues was discussed during User forum meeting. The form for tissue received positive feedback but some issues have been raised for the tissue bank spreadsheet. The User Forum Chair will work with the NACWO to develop a useful tissue sharing system. Update to be provided in January AWERB meeting.</p> <p>9/24 – AWERB/NASPA Chairs organised a drop-in session. This did not result in much interest. Undergraduate projects are no longer held in School of Veterinary Medicine. A communication/information campaign to raise awareness of animal ethics was noted as a new action.</p> <p>10/24- The Chair continue to look for more volunteers to assist with BRF webpage update, this request is to be shared with the user group forum.</p> <p>12/24 BRF manager contacted Home Office and is waiting for updates about HOLTIF forum meeting.</p> <p>16/24 – Decision letters sent to ‘Microbiota’ researcher and request to submit new PPL</p> <p>17/24 Email sent to BRF manager documenting committee’s concern over potential loss of imaging equipment.</p> <p>18/24 Animal Tissue Research compliance audit documents uploaded to SharePoint site. Action plan completed, awaiting approval.</p>	<p><b>Standing item</b></p> <p><b>Standing item</b></p> <p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>Carried forward</b></p> <p><b>Completed 9/24 (new action 19/24)</b></p> <p><b>On-going</b></p> <p><b>Action deemed complete</b></p> <p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>Completed</b></p>
3.	<p><b>Named persons reports -key points from</b></p>	

	<p>NACWO/NVS - Environmental Enrichment program is ongoing, photos of mice taken during assessments shows hair regrowth. AWERB members offered help with analysing future photos.</p> <p>NTCO/HOLC- PPL application (“Mitochondrial and cellular function in the stressed heart”) response time by Home Office has been extended by 15 working days. PPL PP0204823 amendment awaits HO approval, minor comments were addressed by applicant.</p> <p>NIO – provided report and highlighted some new publications and upcoming trainings available</p> <p>NASPA report – Chair gave updates, three applications and one amendment were submitted. Advert to recruit new members for AWERB and NASPA committees will be released in January.</p> <p>NEER Officer – one project currently under review. Applicant has now moved to a different university so need for review will be checked.</p> <p>User Forum Chair– Tissue sharing document has been developed and presented at the last User meeting. The form for tissue request received positive feedback, some issues have been raised for the tissue bank spreadsheet. The Chair will work with the NACWO and AWERB/NASPA chairs on clarifying some of the questions raised to develop a useful tissue sharing system (item for the next User forum on December 16th).</p>	<p><b>AWERB/NASPA Chairs 20/24</b></p> <p><b>User Forum Chair (8/24)</b></p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>3Rs and Culture of Care Case examples for discussion.</b></p> <p>The AWERB Chair presented two fictional case examples to stimulate discussion about how best to support staff having difficult conversations.</p> <p>Case example 1: “near miss”</p> <p>An individual was seen about to perform an unauthorised procedure on a live animal. Animal care staff intervened leading to the incident being recorded as a near miss. The individual was reprimanded, restrained and only allowed to continue working with animals under close supervision. The individual will soon apply for a personal licence enabling them to have access to a wider range of animals and be authorised to perform more involved procedures. AWERB members were asked if this gave them cause for concern and what advice they would give to the animal care staff?</p> <p>AWERB members reflected that this would give them cause for concern but also acknowledged that understanding why the near miss incident occurred was important in assessing future risk. Being supportive of staff means not creating a punitive environment and instead helping individuals learn from mistakes. This example also illustrated the importance of ‘trust’ and how difficult it can be to reinstate this once it has been impacted.</p> <p>Case example 2: “slow responders”</p> <p>Animal technical staff had been struggling to get timely responses from a research group when issues arose related to their animals. What would AWERB members advise the animal technical staff to do to try and improve communication?</p>	

	<p>AWERB members suggested escalating the matter to the PPL holder, their line managers and PELh if behaviour continued. Using specific examples and taking the time to find out why communication was patchy would be useful for finding solutions. A temporary ban on ordering new animals until more effective communication strategies are found could also be considered. Two members were asked to share how their groups communicated. Email and/or group chats were used.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p><b>School visit:</b> PIL representative reported on a school visit talking about ethics and the use of animals in research. The students were receptive to the information presented, asked questions and gave positive feedback about this learning opportunity.</p> <p><b>PIL representative:</b> The current PIL representative will be leaving the University soon, and so another individual needs to be found to replace them. The Chair expressed thanks for their contribution to the committee over the years, in particular their efforts to increase awareness about animal research ethics within schools and the 3Rs.</p> <p><b>FOI - 523 - NXMPDQ4QP7:</b> Chair/BRF manager provided a response to this enquiry on animal use over the last 3 years. Much of the information was on the webpages.</p> <p><b>EARA Non-Technical Summary writing workshop:</b> Chair asked for a volunteer to join the workshop which will be held on-line on 27/11/24. AWERB would cover registration if individual reported back at next meeting and at User Forum meeting.</p> <p><b>Outcome from additional review meeting:</b> PPL “Physiological interaction between the intestinal clock microbiome and gut inflammation” was reviewed by the committee and is documented elsewhere. To summarise the meeting content, the applicant gave a presentation and answered members questions related to harm-benefit analysis; numbers of animals and explanations for breeding strategy; number of timepoints and if all were necessary; impact of darkness and need for single housing, and availability of funding. Application was approved by majority of members subject to satisfactory completion of corrections. Dissenting member(s) remained concerned about balance of harm-benefit analysis and lack of funding.</p>	<p><b>User Forum Chair 21/24</b></p>

**Next AWERB Committee Meeting**

<p>Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 1:30 pm (in person)</p>	
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