
Minutes: AWERB minutes

Status: Chair approved

Meeting held: 21 November 2017 at 2pm in U5 Camden videolinked to Hawkshead Council Room

Attendees: 9 members present; 1 in attendance; 3 by invitation; 9 apologies sent.

1 WORKING GROUP UPDATES

1.1 Environmental Enrichment Working Group

The majority of the audit forms had been completed in time for the Environmental Enrichment Working Group (EEWG) meeting held on 3 November.

There had been a good discussion about the animals, including recognition of some innovative enrichments and some technicians who had shown great commitment in terms of the detail and thought that they put into their audit forms. The Group came up with some recommendations for many of the animals, which could be used as RVC guidelines for future users of the same species. Some recommendations would take little resource to action, but others were noted as requiring resource in the future (e.g. from research grants).

1.2 Sharing Resources Group

Figures would be circulated highlighting the number of resources that have been shared since the last AWERB.

1.3 Rodent Handling Group

Tunnel handling was being phased in. All students, staff and users (particularly new users) were being shown tunnel handling as the preferred method of initial capture, followed by cupping of mice. It would take a bit of time to introduce this method, as both the mice and the handlers need to learn the methods properly.

2 PROJECT LICENCE PRESENTATION:

There was a presentation by a project licence holder who wanted to make some changes to his project licence. The purpose of this project licence was:

- 1) To target a specific nerve at the level of the organ of interest with minimal surgical intervention, thereby achieving efficacy with minimal side effects – thereby improving and refining surgical access.
- 2) To define and to refine the stimulation or suppression parameters for neuromodulation, thereby offering personalised, proportionate, and adaptive treatment – thereby improving therapy around a specific nerve of interest.
- 3) To develop the device itself optimising the structure, material, and architecture of the implantable devices – thereby developing optimised, personalised, and safe implantable devices and electrodes that conform directly to the site of intervention.

The project licence had been running for 2 years, and the work had involved assessing the potential of neuromodulation, surgical feasibility, and translatability, of this approach, across a variety of target systems in terminal studies with positive outcomes. This new work was crucial to move this therapy towards the clinic. A new protocol needed to be added to the licence to allow chronic models to be developed enabling safety and efficacy testing needed before clinical application could be attempted.

A query was raised what training would the technicians need to undertake this work. The proposed training plans were set out.

Once the Project Licence Holder had left the meeting, the amendment was discussed and it was agreed that the key points to be fed back included:

- The non-technical summary needed to be updated to incorporate the new work
- The application of the 3Rs section needed updating as well as the harm benefits analysis.
- Several typos needed amending

AWERB noted that the acute work that had already been done, meaning that this was a good time to tackle this work on a chronic basis.

AWERB agreed that subject to the changes above, the amendment to the project licence should be approved for submitting to the Home Office.

3 ETHICALLY SOURCING ANIMALS FOR ANATOMY CLASSES

Following attendance at the July AWERB meeting the anatomy team had been further looking into alternative for transporting ponies to be used for teaching and had come up with a new proposal that they felt addressed the sourcing and transport concerns.

AWERB were very supportive of this new approach as it would be a much more humane plan for the horses and their welfare. They asked for reassurance that the facilities for handling the animals were adequate. AWERB were assured that was the case.

AWERB asked that they be provided with a report after the practicals had been done on how the new process had gone and whether any issues had been experienced.

4 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record.

5 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Item 2.1 (October meeting): Training records

Hawkshead: now had the information they needed to check that all current personal licence holders had up to date training records.

5.2 Item 2.4 (October meeting): CPD events

A training schedule of courses for technicians to attend had been put together. The technicians would also be tapping into year 1 veterinary nursing training and post-mortem training.

5.3 Item 3.1 (October meeting): Mouse Handling

A copy of the slides from the NC3Rs mouse handling workshop held on 27th September had been placed on the News Forum, along with a message explaining why the technicians were now supportive of this approach.

5.4 Item .1 (October meeting): Providing seminars to BSc students

The 1st year BSc course leader had been e-mailed to see if there was any scope in running similar sessions for 1st year BSc student to that which was organised for first year veterinary students.

5.5 Item 5 (October meeting): Refresher training to PPL Holders

The NVS team had been asked whether they could organise refresher training for PPL Holders. They were looking to get something in place. It would also include advice on writing project licences.

5.6 Item 13.2.2 (September meeting): Pigeons

The Pigeon Association had been contacted who had advised that the College should continue with current control methods.

6 FEEDBACK FROM MEETINGS ATTENDED

6.1 Culturing care in Laboratory Animal Technology

One of the technicians had attended a talk on culturing care in laboratory animal technology. The talk was based on a paper which looked into the ethics of how animal technicians treat animals depending upon their “use” and location over time. The authors had followed junior animal technologists and interviewed them over several years in order to question them about the issues they came up against in relation to culture of care and ethics. The paper went into far more detail about attitudes to animal research and potential conflict between scientific outcomes and the moral activity of caring for these animals but this talk focussed on the interviews and thoughts of the animal technologists.

Animal research relies on animal technicians to safeguard the welfare of the animals under their care and this can be a difficult and challenging role at times. Junior technicians are often given a lot of responsibility and this paper aimed to find out how their role put refinement and reduction into practice. They found that animal technicians have to work to certain minimum standards but they will often exceed these legal and ethical standards and also add their own refinements and ideas in order to create a culture of care. The general feeling in these interviews is that although they can sometimes feel undervalued, they will do their very best to care for the animals they look after and will often come up with innovative ideas to further refine the procedures performed on animals and reduce any potential “wastage” and that this has not necessarily been formally acknowledged. They also raised the possibility of future work into a way of sharing these ideas and innovations in a way other than through word of mouth, which is often the case at present.

7 ESTATES ISSUES

There were no estates issues raised.

8 ESTABLISHMENT LICENCE

AWERB noted that the Establishment Licence had been amended to add a new NACWO.

9 STUDY APPROVALS

AWERB noted that there had been 3 study requests submitted for approval.

10 CONDITION 18 REPORTS

AWERB noted that a condition 18 report had been submitted to the Home Office Inspector.

11 REHOMING

Owners that had rehomed dogs from the dog colony had been sent a questionnaire to see how things were going. Forty nine questionnaires had been sent, with 18 responses having been received back. The comments were generally positive, with the dogs interacting well with other dogs and adjusting to normal life. Some were nervous of car journeys, others of loud noises (such as a Hoover) and others said that they wanted to go off and hunt. The conclusion was on the whole the rehoming of the dogs was proving to be successful, with few reported problems. The questionnaire responses would be taken into consideration as to how the rehoming process could be improved. Any common themes

and problems that were highlighted by new owners would be monitored with the intention of incorporating appropriate training solutions and exposure into the socialisation programme for future adoption.

12 PROJECT LICENCE AMENDMENTS

AWERB noted that there had been one PPL amendment.

13 PROJECT LICENCES: END OF TERM PPL REVIEWS

Following a comment by a project licence holder that he did not know how much information to include in these reports, the template had been amended to emphasise that project licence holders needed to provide more comprehensive information to allow AWERB to determine what had been achieved during the 5 years of research. Any “yes/no” answers would be returned for further information.

14 PROJECT LICENCE MID TERM REVIEW

There had been one mid-term review of a project licence. The project licence holder would be asked to do another review in a year’s time when more work would have been done under the project licence.

15 NVS REPORTS

15.1 Camden

The NVS report for Camden was noted.

15.2 Hawkshead

An update for Hawkshead was received.

Secretary

23 November 2017