
Summary Minutes: AWERB PPLs meeting

Status: FINAL

Meeting held: 23 August 2023 at 10am via MS Teams

Present:

14, plus 1 in attendance and 11 apologies

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 02 August 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record.

2 MATTERS ARISING/ACTION LOG

2.1 Item 2.8: PPL Holders Refreshers Workshop (28th June 2023 meeting)

PPL Holders have been asked to check that their training records on ASPeL are up to date. They have also been advised that to input details into ASPeL, the Home Office were only accepting certificates that have been awarded in the past 5 years. As a result of this PPL Holders were now starting to register for refresher training.

2.2 Item 2.1: Maintaining 3Rs expertise (28 June 2023 meeting)

The meeting to discuss potential options for maintaining 3Rs expertise had not yet been held due to people being on leave.

2.3 Item 2.3: Pest control contracts (28 June 2023 meeting)

There had been limited progress with this as the Campus Services Manager was currently off sick. A meeting had been held with other departments to discuss harmonising pest control contracts and this would be taken forward once the Campus Services Manager was back.

2.4 Item 2.6: Culture of Care (28 June 2023 meeting)

The draft culture of care questionnaire had been circulated to AWERB and their comments fed back. Further work on this had been delayed due to holidays. Once everyone was back a meeting would be arranged to discuss and finalise the questionnaire to get it submitted for ethical approval. The questionnaire would also be mentioned to HR.

2.5 Item 2.9: GA mouse breeding strategies at the RVC (6 December 2022 meeting)

A place would be booked onto a cryopreservation course taking place in February 2024.

2.6 Item 2.10: BSU Virtual Tour storyboard (28 June 2023 meeting)

A meeting had been held with senior management and a subsequent meeting held to take forward the actions from that meeting. A proposed plan of action had now been put together for approval.

3 3RS

3.1 DISCUSSION ITEM: Question from external report on the role of review and regulatory approvals process: *“AWERBS are increasingly asked to scrutinize experimental design, but can find it difficult to challenge a researchers “years of experience”. Do you have confidence that each project demonstrates good practice for the robust and reproducible science and that you (an) individual can challenge it?”*

The following comments were made:

- It was important to respect a researcher’s experience however it was also important to query experimental design if there were any concerns about it or there were areas that were unclear.
- If answers were provided by researchers that members did not understand, then it was important to make the researchers aware of that and to push for more understandable answers.
- Following a query, it was confirmed that PPL Holders were advised to use the NC3Rs experimental design assistant when writing their project licence applications or amendments. Questions relating to use of this tool was now included within ASPeL. It was suggested that the tool might perhaps be of most use to those researchers planning on carrying out clinical or translational type of work rather than discovery research.
- As well as experimental design, it was also important to focus upon the techniques and procedures being used, as well as following best practice and putting refinements in place.
- As part of the PPL reviews at these meetings, the specific questions asked by AWERB should be reviewed in the future to see if there was a pattern of questions being asked.
- There should also be a stipulated question at the end of each project licence review about how AWERB felt about the experimental design itself. This should be an element that AWERB considered whilst reviewing project licences.
- Just because a researcher had years of experience, it did not necessarily mean that they were carrying out the research in the best way – they might unwittingly be following bad practice or habits.
- it was important to be aware that the person writing the project licence, might not be the person that would carry out the work. It was therefore necessary to consider when questioning the PPL Holder to prompt them to think about those people who would be carrying out the work and how they would check in practice that they were doing it properly. Saying how things would be done and how they were then actually done could be completely different.

4 CULTURE OF CARE

The possibility of running a joint Culture of Care Workshop would be looked into.

5 NVS REPORT

5.1 Camden

- Mice: the study involving the mice that had experienced skin issues and infections had now finished.
- Guinea pigs: Following the recent aborted foetuses, nothing had been revealed on the postmortem microbiology to suggest a cause for the abortions. The ultrasound scan at 45 days gestation had been stopped in case that had been causing cumulative stress.
- Ferrets: the endemic coronavirus was still ongoing. One of the ferrets that had been really sick had improved and had not had any further episodes, however another ferret was now having repeated episodes of diarrhoea. Pre-emptive treatment was being

looked into. One suggested treatment involved using remdesivir that was used to treat cats, but it was very expensive and involved 12 weeks of treatment and no details had been found about how successful the treatment was. The remaining ferrets were being monitored for symptoms.

- Ferrets: The injections that had been used to stop the ferrets coming into season had been discontinued and was no longer available. Implants were being considered as an alternative.

5.2 Hawkshead

5.2.1 Dogs:

- the previous weekend there had been two successful and unaided whelpings, resulting in 11 puppies, who were all doing well and gaining weight.
- a male pup had to be put down due to an early phenotypic manifestation. Another pup from the same litter had previously had to be put down a day after its birth due to an inability to feed.
- There had been an incident in July, where a dog was given a higher volume of routine isotonic fluids intended over the 2.5 hours protocol. There were no adverse welfare consequences. A non-compliance report had been submitted to the Home Office. Actions have been put in place to avoid this incident happening again and the Home Office have closed the case with no further actions needed.

5.2.2 Frog unit:

- Two frogs had recently been found dead on the same day. They had been part of an old colony of frogs. There were two remaining frogs left in the colony but as they were also not looking well, the researcher who was responsible for these frogs, had been advised that they should be euthanised.

5.2.3 Sheep:

Following surgery, one of the sheep had remained very lame. A follow-up scan had found the reason for this and the sheep had to be euthanased. Options were being reviewed.

5.2.4 Teaching materials

The avian teaching materials were being updated.

6 NACWO REPORT

6.1 Camden

- Discussions were being held with Estates about replacing lights as the bulbs for these lights were no longer available.

7 NTCO REPORT

The main focus was on training records and ensuring training was up to date.

8 SCHEDULE 1 REGISTER REVIEW

AWERB noted the revised schedule 1 registers. These had been redesigned to separate out and identify all those that have been trained for methods of schedule one and also the methods of confirmation. This was following advice from the Home Office after the audit.

9 FEEDBACK FROM PPL HOLDERS THAT HAVE ATTENDED AWERB

AWERB noted the feedback reports that had been provided by two recent PPL Holders that had attended AWERB.

10 AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISHMENT LICENCE

AWERB noted that the Home Office had approved a change to the Establishment Licence.

11 NEW PROJECT LICENCES GRANTED BY THE HOME OFFICE

AWERB noted that two project licences had been granted by the Home Office in July 2023.

12 PROJECT LICENCES AMENDED BY THE HOME OFFICE

AWERB noted that the Home Office had approved the amendment of three project licences since 22 June 2023. An amendment to a licence that had secondary availability at the RVC had also been approved.

13 STUDY REQUESTS

- AWERB noted that 5 study requests had been approved since 22 June 2023.

14 MID TERM PPL REVIEW

AWERB noted the revised mid-term report.

15 APPROVED RETROSPECTIVE ASSESSMENTS

AWERB noted that the Home Office had approved a retrospective assessment that had been submitted.

16 AWERB TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW

AWERB reviewed the operational aspect of the Terms of Reference and confirmed that these were still applicable.

17 CONDITION 18 REPORTS

AWERB noted that a potential non-compliance report had been submitted to the Home Office, who have reviewed it and confirmed that no further action was needed.

18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for 5 September. It would be a PPL review meeting.

Secretary
31 August 2023