



University Court

Minutes of Welfare and Ethical Use of Animals Committee

A meeting of the Committee was held on 31st October 2024.

Present: The Convener, the Director of Biological Services (DBS), a Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO), the named training and competency officer (NTCO), the Named Information Officer (NIO), one scientist Personal Licence (PIL) holder, three Project Licence (PPL) holders (also PIL holders), four lay members and a member of court. A scientific advisor to the Aberdeen AWERB was also in attendance. The University Veterinary Surgeon provided input into all business on the agenda in advance.

Apologies: Five members had sent apologies.

1 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The last meeting was held on 4th July 2024 and the minutes were approved.

2 MATTERS ARISING

- a. **AWERB Reflection.** The convener shared meeting reports from attendance at a national and a local AWERB hub meeting. The committee discussed current systems in place, provision of information and if there was a requirement for training following from outcomes from these hub meetings. The lay members asked for more clarity on what was expected. Induction packs have been provided as well as links to RSPCA guiding principles. In addition, lay guides to colony management will be prepared to aid understanding of animal numbers. For those who have not already attended, Facility tours will be arranged. Training was not seen to be necessary, rather experience on the committee was deemed more valuable.
- b. **Retrospective Reviews.** The committee reviewed two RR, one licence expiring in June 2025, the other in October 2025. Both project licence holders attended the meeting and answered questions clarifying the content of their reports. Due to time constraints another RR will be shared electronically for comment. One of the project licence holders is not a lead grant holder and discussion was held as to whether Policy should be waived on this occasion to apply for a new licence. A consensus could not be reached and therefore the establishment licence holder will be provided with the information to make a decision.
- c. **Summary of shipment issues in a GA line.** The NVS provided a summary presentation with speech in advance of the meeting summarising the issues, data to date and a resolution proposal. The committee approved this approach, and two project licence applications affected will be submitted to the Home Office.
- d. **Reporting of infrastructure failure.** The DBS summarised a repeat occurrence of a steam leak in the Containment Level 3 area. Animal welfare was unaffected, however there was significant damage to critical equipment and delay to research.
- e. **Ethics for working with insects.** The discussion on insect sentience is ongoing after the inclusion of cephalopods and decapod crustaceans were included under the animal sentience act. Whilst the insect work in Dundee is not regulated under ASPA, as a committee we encourage the ethical principles of the 3Rs across whatever species are being used.

3 REPORTS FROM THE NVS AND NACWO ON ANIMAL WELFARE

[Standing agenda item]

The NACWO reported as follows since the last meeting:

- Ten incidents were added to the near miss register. All have been resolved with improved systems in place.
- Two experimental studies developed unexpected adverse effects that are under investigation.
- There was a loss of two animals from a cohort of 40 on shipment from a commercial supplier. This is a genetically altered mouse line that seems to experience an extreme stress response in approx. 10%. We believe that this issue can be resolved; refer to point 2c.
- The departing Dundee scientist using xenopus has shipped 44 to their new establishment for continued use in research. We have also rehomed the remaining colony to France.

4 REPORT FROM THE UVS ON COMPLIANCE

[Standing agenda item]

The UVS reported that all SC18 reports to date have been closed with no further action required.

There have been two SC18 reports since the last meeting:

- One where mice developed lumps under the skin following administration of a control and a drug solution. This study has been conducted on many occasions without the development of lumps. Investigations could not identify the reason for these lumps. Animals did not experience any adverse welfare as a result.
- One animal was found dead one-week post-surgical implantation of vascular cannulae. The postmortem seemed to indicate a rapid dissecting aneurysm of the carotid artery, that reached the heart, and which would have caused rapid loss of consciousness (seconds to minutes) and death. There was a possible complication at the time of surgery that was probably responsible for this, relating to instrument failure; relevant equipment has been replaced.

5 REPORT FROM THE TRAINING COORDINATOR

[standing agenda item]

Training is proceeding as normal. Since the last meeting there have been:

- 35 DOPS assessments, 16 Online Modules, 2 new PIL AB, 1 new PIL C, one person currently on PIL practical training and one surgical session held in-house.
- We held a refresher session of PIL and PPL holders, 14 PILs attended, and 11 PPL attended. Further training will be held in December.

6 REPORT FROM THE NIO ON 3Rs

[standing agenda item]

- NIO networking with local establishments to gain understanding of practice elsewhere and promote collaboration.
- A comprehensive list of plans and outputs from 3Rs Champion Group working on Reduction and Refinement was shared with the committee.
- Refinement of in vitro fertilisation methods during rederivation of mouse lines into the establishment. This data will be presented as a poster at LASA, November 2024.
- Researchers have been provided information on improving genetic recording of their genetically altered strains (LAG-R guidelines). Some groups have implemented testing, and we expect this to extend to other groups in time.
- We have been working with research groups to trial a template to ensure ARRIVE guidelines are followed for publication of data. We expect the final template to be shared with research groups soon.
- We are developing guidance on writing Non-Technical Summaries (NTS) to share with project licence holders.

7 REPORT FROM THE DBS ON LICENSING MATTERS

[standing agenda item]

A comprehensive review of progress of each application submitted to the committee and to the Home Office since the last meeting was discussed. The turnaround time within the committee is very good. The time taken at the Home Office is on average 40 working days for a new licence application (service level expectation), on most occasions less for minor amendments.

The sub-committee approach to reviewing full applications and sharing a summary report with the whole committee is working well but the lay members would like to trial their involvement at this stage of the process.

8 AOCB

- a) Successful award of an NC3Rs grant for public engagement
- b) Transparency events: 3Rs online public event with five Scottish establishments and FRAME, work experience week for 16–17-year-old schoolchildren, PhD induction presentation and facility tour
- c) ASRU update on current response time frames
- d) Reminder RSPCA Lay members meeting December 9th London
- e) UVS chairing awarding committee at Norecopa 3Rs meeting in light of contributions to the lab animal community on the culture of care and 3Rs (<https://norecopa.no/about/>)
- f) UVS invited speaker to the inaugural conference for the American association for lab animal enrichment, February 2025

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

23rd January 2025.

24th April 2025.

3rd July 2025.

2nd October 2025.

10 ACTION LOG

	Actions	Responsibility	Update
04/07/2024 Item 2d	Share the NTS document with new project licence applicants. Contact the public engagement team to discuss the content of the NTS guidance document	NIO/DBS NIO/DBS	Ongoing
04/07/2024 Item 6	Replacements. Share a list and/or case studies with the DBS	Scientists on the committee	Ongoing
31/10/24 Item 3a	To share RSPCA guiding principles to the committee as an aid when reviewing applications To arrange tours of the Facility for those who have not yet done so To prepare a lay person’s diagram and explanation for colony management so committee members can understand the numbers used in applications	DBS NIO	Done 1/11/24 Dates shared 1/11/24 In preparation
31/10/24 Item 3c	To share the summary of discussion with ELH for comment To share Stephen Martin’s retrospective review electronically for comment	Convenor DBS	1/11/24 Email sent to ELH 1/11/24 -15/11/24