

The University of Leeds, Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Committee Minutes 30 January 2019

9 members were present at the meeting (one member for part of the meeting) with one person in attendance. The Home Office (HO) inspector was welcomed to the meeting as an observer.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 5 November 2018 were received and approved subject to the inclusion of one agreed change to minute 18/28 to clarify that considerable discussion had taken place.

Matters arising

(Received paper AWERC18/10)

18/33 The Committee received the update for information and noted that items for report and discussion would be brought up on the Agenda. With regard to minute 18/24 it was reported that a meeting between the establishment licence (PEL) holder, named veterinary surgeon (NVS) and named animal care and welfare officers (NACWOs) had taken place and that standard operating procedures (SOPs) were to be reviewed annually.

Project licence review FR36

18/34 The Committee undertook a mid-term review of a particular project licence. The NVS advised that there had been no concerns relating to the management of the project, which contained moderate protocols. The licensee was welcomed to the meeting and gave a brief summary of the work, explaining the problems which had been encountered and which had led to very few animals being used and the work being halted. It was noted that the project had been informed by an earlier paper (from an external research group) which had suggested on the basis of *in-vitro* work a potential therapeutic application. In the event, the compound in question had proved to be toxic even when administering a significantly reduced dose in mice and also when analgesia had been applied prior to administration. It was noted that only a small number of animals had been used as a pilot study and that the licensee and NACWO had taken immediate action to minimise harm to the animals as soon as it became clear that there was a problem.

18/35 The licensee confirmed that the work had been published in order to share the information and to correct the earlier work. The Committee recognised the value of conducting pilot studies and agreed that publication of the unexpected results had been appropriate in the circumstances. The Chair thanked the licensee for his clear presentation of the work.

PEL holder's update

18/36 The PEL holder reported that, following receipt of a letter of reprimand from the HO relating to the incident reported previously (m 18/28), he had had a helpful

meeting with the HO inspector who had confirmed that the incident had been regarded as attributable to human error rather than a systemic failing. The incident had not affected the University's risk rating. A rolling programme of reviews of SoPs had been agreed with unit staff. The Chair asked for this to be kept on the Agenda. Action: Administrator to update the Schedule of Business.

- 18/37 The annual Risk Assessment review meeting with the HO inspector had taken place in November 2018. A draft report from the HO had been received. The report was considered to have been quite positive and it indicated that the University continued to be a low risk establishment with a risk rating indicating 3 contact days/year. The HO inspector explained that a number of factors contributed to risk assessments, including the size of the establishment, type of research being conducted, communications among named persons and licensees and with the inspectorate to aid compliance. The Committee was told that the named persons' work to ensure that it was possible to report issues early and that a good working relationship with the HO was being maintained.
- 18/38 There had been problems with the platform on which the new IT system was being hosted and it had been determined that the system was in the wrong place. As a result IT was evaluating a proposition of the supplier hosting the system. However, this had meant that it could be some months before the system would be operational. The Committee was reassured that appropriate mechanisms for record keeping were anyway in place, albeit that an integrated single system remained the objective.
- 18/39 Two new rooms had been registered for animal use in connection with planned building refurbishment.
- 18/40 One Condition 18 report had been submitted about which the NVS would provide details.

NVS's report

- 18/41 A problem with temperature fluctuation had occurred on one day, a problem which was of very short duration. The problem had been immediately noticed and reported, and staff had been proactive in following this up. The Committee was reassured that this had not been connected with a recent power failure at the University (which had not affected the animal facilities).
- 18/42 One project licence (PPL) holder was in the process of submitting an amendment to an existing licence which had been discussed with the HO inspector. This would be reported in the annual report detailing PPL amendments. The NVS would continue to review PPL amendments on behalf of the Committee and only those applications requesting materially significant changes, for example involving an increase in severity, would be brought to the Committee.
- 18/43 As mentioned in the PPL holders' report (M 18/38) one Condition 18 report had been submitted to the HO, in which 1 out of 7 mice had been found dead 15 days

after a procedure. Whilst it was unclear whether the death had been related to the procedure it had been reported as such. No other mice on the protocol had been affected.

- 18/44 A very successful meeting with the National Centre for the Three Rs (NC3Rs) had taken place with good presentations. This had received positive feedback and a few initiatives for information sharing would be put into place as a result.
- 18/45 For information the NVS reported that a project involving work with sheep would be taking place in France. The work would have been non-regulated if done in the UK.
- 18/46 An Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) Hub meeting would be taking place on 28 February at which a member of the Committee would be presenting on "Ethical Challenges in Ethical Review". Members who hadn't already done so, in particular the NACWOs, were encouraged to register.

NACWOs' report

- 18/47 An issue with lighting which involved one room where the lights had remained on 24/7 had been quickly resolved through the installation of a system that would monitor this and other related lighting/ power issues. This was working well and had already identified and enabled the prevention of another lighting issue.
- 18/48 Two rats in a group delivered by an external supplier had been found dead on arrival. External appearance of these animals indicated that the rats had been dead for a while. After investigation it was found that duration of transport was likely to have been the main contributing factor. The suppliers were conducting their own investigation. The NACWO confirmed that this issue was a significant concern; the company concerned supplied a very few specialised strains of animals which were not available in the UK. To avoid recurrence the protocol for similar orders in future would be to ask for full details of travel plans for deliveries when placing an order.

University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee (ULBSC) report and animal facilities update

- 18/49 There was nothing to report from the ULBSC. With regard to the animal facilities, discussions were ongoing and the NVS advised that the group had been contributing to suggestions for the future but would not be making the final decision.

Project licence (PPL) application A344

- 18/50 The applicant was welcomed and introductions were made. After receiving some background to the work, which involved a mild protocol for blood sampling animals at different time-points, the Committee discussed a number of aspects of the application. These included animal numbers and the need for clear statistics; the project plan; the need to cross-reference the flow diagram; frequency of sampling;

and the use of scientific language in the non-technical summary. The applicant was asked to make a number of changes to the application before it could be submitted to the HO.

Review of Terms of Reference oversight

(Received papers AWERC 18/07 and AWERC 18/08)

- 18/51 The Committee agreed to the change that had been made to point 1f).
- 18/52 Following a brief discussion the Chair asked for a paper to address points made in the feedback to be brought to the next meeting. Action: NVS and administrator.
- 18/53 The HO inspector sought and was given the Committee's agreement to share the ongoing review of the Terms of Reference oversight as an example of good practice.

Arrangements for drafting PPL applications

- 18/54 The HO inspector (HOI) confirmed that, as a general principle, the HO was looking for more to be done at AWERB level. The HOI commented positively on the discussions which had taken place with the applicant during the meeting, and added that applications from the University, submitted in draft following Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Committee (AWERC) consideration, usually required little revision.
- 18/55 With regard to awareness of guidance such as ARRIVE and PREPARE the Committee was told that the NVS and administrator raised awareness during licensee training, the drafting of applications, on websites and in continued professional development. Suggestions made in feedback during the NC3Rs symposium would be put into action, including the introduction of an annual newsletter and greater visibility for the website. However, the HOI observed that PPL applicants/holders should take responsibility for remaining informed and updated.

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) Lay Members' Forum

(RSPCA LMF Papers 1 to 6 received for information)

- 18/56 Two members had attended and found the meeting useful and informative with ideas to think about going forward. The lay member reported that this had been a good opportunity to learn and consider how to be more effective.

AWERB Knowledge Hub

- 18/57 A number of members had subscribed to the resource which was reported to be evolving.

Schedule of business

(Received paper AWERC 18/11)

18/58 The Schedule of Business was received for information.

Date of next meeting

18/59 The next meeting would be held at 1000 on Wednesday 27 March. The NVS advised that there would be a number of PPL applications to consider at this meeting. In view of this members should expect the meeting to last up to three hours. Members would be contacted to enable them to amend their diaries.
Action: Administrator.