

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
ANIMAL WELFARE ETHICAL REVIEW BODY
Minutes of meeting held on 20 Jan 2025

Fifteen members attended the meeting. Apologies were received from three individuals.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 24/32 The minutes of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body held on 7 November 2024 (AWERB/24/15) were approved.

Matters Arising

- 24/33 Minute 24/20 – Expressions of interest are still being sought for the existing AWERB vacancies by the Animal Facilities Manager.
- 24/34 Minute 24/23c – The Animal Facility Manager and NVS will prepare a draft protocol to utilise existing schedule 1 stock to support the delivery of internal in-vivo training. This was postponed until the original NVS returned from leave and the role was handed over from the covering NVS.
- 24/35 Minute 24/23d – The gaps in understanding across UG, Taught PG and PGR education discussed at the last meeting will be addressed by an email to the Directors of Student Education, Directors of Graduate Schools, the Doctoral College and Pro-Deans within the relevant faculties. A draft of this communication will be drawn up following the AWERB meeting and sent to the PEL Holder and Lay Chair.
- 24/36 Minute 24/25b – A SBS User Group has been scheduled for January 2025 by the Animal Facilities Manager to discuss the storage and relocation of existing equipment.
- 24/37 Minute 24/26 – The PEL Holder has written to the Pro-Deans for Research and Innovation in the Faculties of Medicine and Health to identify an academic chair for the University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee.

PEL Holder Update

- 24/38 The University PEL holder provided the committee with the following updates, as set out in paper AWERB/24/16:
- a) The University Veterinary Officer will return to work on 27 January 2025, and that the covering NVS has been contracted for emergency ad-hoc support going forward.
 - b) The slides from the LASA PEL Holder Forum held in October, which are now available following the update at the previous AWERB meeting (*Minute 24/22*).
 - c) Members received the Animals in Science Regulation Unit's 2023 Annual Report for information. The PEL holder highlighted the useful summary of non-compliance cases on page 24 of the document.

Named Veterinary Surgeon Update

24/41 In their report (AWERB/24/17), the NVS noted that:

- a) There were no significant health or welfare concerns since the previous reporting period.
- b) A recent PPL amendment regarding work conducted on pigs has been approved by the Home Office and the work has caused no adverse effects to the animals.
- c) A virtual visit has been undertaken of the refurbished rooms at the University Farm, due to be added to the University's PEL.
- d) A review would need to be conducted on how animals are chosen for delivery by the University Farm.
- e) A subcommittee meeting was held to review a PPL conducting work around predator fish and their effect on native species as a result of climate change. The PPL requires amendment and circulation to the full AWERB committee before it can be fully approved.

Annual Farm Veterinary Report

24/42 The AWERB noted the information contained within the quarterly Farm Inspection report (AWERB/24/18), undertaken by an external (DEFRA regulated) clinician on 5 November 2024. Colleagues noted the introduction of a trial in which animals' tails would not be docked (as is currently farm practice) to assess the effect on tail biting, and the ongoing monitoring of tail biting in the farm animals every 3 weeks at the finisher stage.

Animal Facility Manager Update

24/43 Members noted the information contained within the Animal Facility Manager's report (AWERB/24/19):

- a) Discussions around movement of remaining equipment at the SBS facility are ongoing, and the space is due to be reclassified as storage to reduce costs.
- b) Work has begun at the Bradford site now that PPLs have been approved by the Home Office, and arrangements have been made for suitable technician cover across both sites. This includes the completion of inductions for the relevant colleagues (as mentioned in *Minute 24/25a*).
- c) The building issues causing flooding within the animal facility have been escalated to the Faculty Facilities Manager and Faculty Operations Director for a solution.
- d) Plans are in place for a refurbishment which will include the movement of most external regulated rooms late in 2026 – members were invited to view the proposed plan for the refurbished space.

Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers' (NACWO) Report

24/44 The AWERB considered the information set out in the NACWO Report (as set out in paper AWERB/24/20). This included a refinement to the pig pens via the introduction of radios, to produce background noise which has been shown to be calming for the animals.

24/45 The NACWOs updated colleagues on 3H (Housing, Handling, and Habituation) refinements and enrichments, especially the ongoing work towards phasing out tail handling by September 2025. Colleagues noted the following:

- a) An update was provided by the NACWOs following a visit from technicians from Newcastle University, to provide workshops and practical training on refined handling.

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- b) Facility staff have moved away from tail handling and are using refined handling where appropriate.
- c) A Leeds research group who moved their work to York are routinely using tunnel handling and have given positive feedback regarding the change, which is useful information to note when approaching facility users about the change in handling methods.

Additional Enrichment Standard Operating Procedures

- 24/46 Any details to be covered in this verbal update were agreed by the committee to have already been adequately covered in the NACWO report.

Review of AWERB Openness & Policy Statement

- 24/47 Members of the AWERB committee agreed that the Openness & Policy Statement (AWERB/24/21) required a rewrite by the PEL Holder and Lay Chair in order to eliminate repetition and more accurately reflect the sector as it currently is.

Update on External Meetings

- 24/48 Members were asked to share information about external meetings/training attended, or in planning. In discussion, it was noted that some colleagues would attend:
- a) The Institute of Animal Technology Northeast England Branch AGM, to be held at the University of York on 5 February 2025.
 - b) The PIL refresher provided by Red Kite on the 21st of March.

Date of Next Meeting

- 24/49 The next meeting of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body will be held at 2pm on Thursday 20 March 2025. The meeting will be held in the Ziff Boardroom, with an option to join the discussion via Teams.