

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY

Minutes of meeting held on 18 September 2025

13 AWERB members attended the meeting, with 5 people in attendance. Apologies were received from 3 members.

Project Licence (PPL) matters

- 25/01 Members of the Committee received two PPL Applications (AWERB/25/09 and AWERB/25/10) which were supported by short presentations from the respective applicants who had dialled into the meeting to address questions. In considering all of the information provided, both protocols were approved, pending the inclusion of some comments in relation to AWERB/25/09 which would be shared outside of the meeting.
- 25/02 During the discussion, the Establishment Licence Holder proposed that the AWERB receive a presentation on the work of the National Mouse Archive at a future meeting.
- 25/03 Following the discussion at the previous meeting (minute ref. 24/78), colleagues noted that the PPL proforma had been updated and shared accordingly.

Minutes of previous meeting

- 25/04 The minutes of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body held on 8 July 2025 (AWERB/25/01) were approved.

Matters arising

- 25/05 Minute 24/78 – As discussed at the July 2025 meeting, the Chair would write to PPL holders to remind them of their responsibilities in contributing to the PPL sub-committee process.

Membership and Terms of Reference

- 25/06 AWERB reviewed its Membership and Terms of Reference for the 2025/26 session (AWERB/25/02). Noting the existing vacancy and the forthcoming departure of the former Chair, members agreed to seek the appointment of two new lay members (members who do not work with animals) to the AWERB – one drawn from the Chaplaincy and one from the IDEA institute or School of Philosophy, Religion & History of Science.

Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) Facilities Audit Report

- 25/07 Members reviewed the ASRU Report following the facilities inspection undertaken on 22 July 2025 (AWERB/25/03), noting the recommendations identified by the Home Office together with the list of proposed actions to be undertaken by University (AWERB/25/04). Emphasising the seriousness of the Report, the PEL Holder informed the AWERB of her intention to increase internal inspections of the facilities, noting that any areas found not to comply with ASRU's code of practice standards would be promptly removed from the Establishment Licence. Furthermore, the PEL Holder would plan to attend the upcoming Facilities User Group meeting, as well as speaking with the newly appointed Faculty Dean of Biological Sciences to relay the University's expectations in relation to animal research.
- 25/08 The PEL Holder commended the work of the NACWOs for their efforts to improve the environmental enrichment and segregation of animals which had been highlighted as an example of good practice within the Report.
- 25/09 Noting that a number of recommendations in the report related to the existing animal management database (Tick@lab), the University Veterinary Officer agreed to convene a meeting with relevant colleagues to identify an appropriate solution to ensure a

comprehensive electronic record is maintained for both animals and PIL holders.

- 25/10 Following a full discussion, the Chair requested that colleagues progress the relevant actions through their respective user group meetings. An updated summary of actions would be presented at the 25 November AWERB meeting, enabling colleagues to assess progress and ensure all actions are completed before the respective deadline. Colleagues also agreed that it would be helpful to share the ASRU Report and summary of actions with all licence holders.

Establishment Licence Holder/Named Veterinary Surgeon update

- 25/11 Members noted the information contained within Report (AWERB/25/05) and the University Veterinary Officer highlighted that:

- a) Screening of the stock mice housed in isocages within the new quarantine room continued to show 'negative' results around pathogen and biosecurity risks. Based on these good findings, three SCID (immunocompromised) mice would be ordered and housed under the same conditions and screening process.
- b) Detailed information relating to PETAs (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) position on sepsis research had been shared with the AWERB as an appendix to the paper, for information.

Animal Facility Manager's update

- 25/12 Members noted the information contained within the Animal Facilities Manager's Report (AWERB/25/06). Following discussions at the previous meeting, a contract to extend the use of the Bradford facility until 19 March 2026 was currently being developed. Consideration of that Unit's long-term viability was ongoing, and a further update would be provided at the meeting on 25 November.

Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers' (NACWO) Report

- 25/13 The AWERB noted the information set out in the NACWO Report (as set out paper AWERB/25/07).
- 25/14 The Unit had committed to implementing refined handling methods for all rodents with effect from 1 September 2025 (as agreed at the 23 July 2024 AWERB meeting). In discussion, the AWERB agreed that:
- a) The PEL Holder would issue a formal communication to remind Biomedical Services colleagues of their responsibilities in this area;
 - b) A standing agenda item would be added to the User Group and ULBS meeting agendas to provide regular reminders;
 - c) The process would continue to be monitored to ensure ongoing compliance;
- The NACWO's would continue to hold practical handling training sessions on request for any users.

Animal Facility User Group report

- 25/15 At its most recent meeting, the Animal Facility User Group reviewed the ASRU Facilities Audit Report recommendations, considered the current financial position and budgets, and continued discussions on the future of the Bradford facility and potential secondary availability establishments.

Proposals for non-regulated work

- 25/16 Three proposals for non-regulated work (AWERB/25/11, AWERB/25/12 and AWERB/25/13) were shared with the AWERB for information, having been reviewed and signed off by the University Veterinary Officer in advance of the meeting. Members agreed that this approach should continue to ensure similar proposals can be processed in a timely manner.

Standard Operating Procedures

- 25/17 The AWERB received – and endorsed – a draft Standard Operating Procedure, prepared by the NVS in liaison with the NACWO's, which describes the schedule 1 procedure by anaesthetic overdose via tail vein injection (AWERB/25/14).

AWERB member survey themes and recommendations

- 25/18 Members received paper AWERB/25/15, which outlined the key themes and recommendations from the AWERB members' survey which, due to lack of time, had been carried forward from the summer meeting. Members supported the Chair's proposal to convene a small working group to consider the survey findings in greater depth, with outcomes to be reported back to the AWERB at a future meeting.
- 25/19 In the meantime, colleagues noted that some activity to take forward the survey recommendations was already underway. This included work to promote animal welfare and the 3Rs, which would be led by the 3Rs Champion and the ULBS Chair. The PVC: Research & Innovation would also be invited to attend the AWERB as and when dictated by the agenda (minute ref. 24/84).

External meetings

- 25/20 Members were asked to share information about external meetings/training attended, or in planning. In discussion, it was noted that some colleagues would attend:
- Laboratory Animal Science Association (LASA) Establishment Licence Holders Autumn Meeting (*October 2025*);
 - Laboratory Animals Veterinary Association (LAVA) Conference, on the theme of antibiotic usage (*October 2025*);
 - Cryopreservation training (*October 2025*);
 - The Named Training and Competence Officer was in the process of arranging internal training on the use of individually ventilated cages which would most likely take place before the end of the year.

Date of next meeting

- 25/21 The next meeting of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body will be held between 14.00-16.00 on 25 November in the Ziff Council Chamber.