



## Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Board (AWERB) Minutes 28/02/2023

The University of Edinburgh

Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986

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Minutes of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body held 28/02/2023

*Microsoft Teams*

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- 1. Welcome** The chair welcomes new Director [REDACTED] **separate attendance log**
  - 2. Presentation of PL09-23, project licence under consideration:** the committee heard a very interesting presentation on a new project licence application the aim of which is to understand the brain mechanisms underlying the learning of sensory predictions, and how this process is different in neurodevelopmental disorders like autism spectrum disorder.
  - 3. Minutes of Meeting held on 24/01/2023: approved**

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**4. (a) Project licences under consideration:**

**PL07-23**

Applicant is very experienced and this was a well laid out, clear, concise and well justified application. No concerns were noted and recommendation is for the application to be submitted directly to Home Office for consideration.

**PL08-23**

Generally well written, the application can be approved subject to consideration of the points below:

- One new model is described, [REDACTED]. This should be approached as a pilot to start with in PPL application. Exposure may be calibrated in embryos before applying to larvae.
- NMDAs without anaesthetic: the committee feels this use is justified and restricted to first 14 days of development. However needs further work in application to make endpoints clear.
- Would benefit from citations showing outcomes of previous PPL.
- Some typographical errors noted which requires revision.
- Some experimental protocols mention using fish up to 24 months. This should be changed to 18 months unless applicant specifically wants to use aged fish.
- NTS descriptions were mostly clear, some clarification of terms required..

**PL09-23**

Generally well written, the application can be approved subject to consideration of the following:

- Background section: the description of [REDACTED] – requires more clarification.
- Protocol 4 could be incorporated within protocols 3 and 5 with the addition of the relevant tissue collection step.
- Clarification of potential anaesthetic mortality is required, this should be 1-2%.
- Injections into CNS given as up to 500ul which is a large volume for injection into mouse CNS. Clarification on this is needed
- Clarify group sizes required for GA mice with specific behavioural phenotypes.



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- [REDACTED] – this should be in line with BVS guidelines and periods of restriction stated.
- Time period of daily monitoring to be described to give more flexibility.
- Non-Technical Summary: some responses are a little brief. Project harms and replacement section responses could be fuller.

### PL10-23

The committee noted that the application requires revision although it was noted that the models are well established and the concerns should be easily addressed. The application was approved subject to consideration of the following:

- Large number of typographical and grammatical errors – proof reading required
- The animal experience section requires review. Specifically, cumulative severity should be better described here taking into account procedures performed.
- Clinical scoring: clinical scoring sheets which are already available should be incorporated into the application detailing clear humane endpoints.
- Twice weekly monitoring of clinical signs seems insufficient to identifying interventions or humane endpoints. Monitoring of clinical signs should be more regular.
- Adverse effects need to be refined in respect to tamoxifen injection etc
- Lack of mobility within humane endpoints is an indication of a severe severity, not moderate this should be clarified.
- There is one mention of 25% weight loss, this should be 20%.
- The aim section within the NTS was very technical and needs rewording to be more suitable for a lay audience

### PL11-23

The project is well described and the application can be approved subject to revision of the points below:

- NTS is very good but a couple of words could do with definition: passerine, cloaca etc.
- Correction of typographical errors throughout.
- The protocol mentions attaching GPS trackers/dataloggers but there are no details on adverse effects predicted and more clarification on this is requested.

**Amendments – for consideration by full committee:**

**NONE**

**Applications submitted and considered by the amendment Sub-Committee**

**Approved:**

**A81-22, A03-23, A12-23**

## 5. **Reports**



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### BVS Deputy director update to the committee (Facilities)

- [REDACTED] cagewash designs will soon be signed off and then will be at to the costing stage. This will start next year and finish by end of 2024.
- New robot [REDACTED] not yet in use but plan is in place to make it useable by end of summer
- [REDACTED] facility will be opening a week later than plan in April.
- Yesterday we hosted visitors from [REDACTED] who wanted to see how our facilities have developed as they intend to develop their own facilities further.
- Four grade 3 posts currently being advertised. We've had three further resignations in the last week.
- [REDACTED]
- H&S category 3 and GM auditors are here this week. They'll be visiting facilities throughout the establishment.
- 13 people from our establishment will attend IAT congress this year, and 2 posters will be presented. We also have a poster planned for the next year. Chair invites deputy director to share posters with the AWERB members.

### NVS/3Rs update:

- Two SC18s related to adverse effects due to drug toxicity from within one group. One SC18 from liver injury model which may be a batch effect from the viral agent used by the researcher. Batch will be changed and animals will be more closely monitored
- Two NVSs led a technician training session on ERF forms. They also trained technicians around IPO (intestinal pseudo obstruction), which can affect lactating dams causing mortality midway through lactation.
- The first meeting of the rehoming workgroup to discuss writing a policy for rehoming was very positive. This will be followed up with species-specific meetings.
- The 3Rs committee meets this week to discuss the fair publication policy, which aims to ensure core facilities and their staff are recognised for the work they do contributing to publications. The policy also states that publications that mention core facilities should be sent to the facility so that technical staff can see the results of their work.  
**ACTION:** The Chair will discuss with the [REDACTED] group about the possibility of adding a question to the [REDACTED] publication questionnaire about whether any core facilities have been used.
- Surgery guidelines are currently being updated. Further discussion with stakeholders and NVSes is required before these are published as tighter guidelines on post-surgical monitoring would have an impact on weekend working and also when surgeries can be conducted.
- Humidity in one facility had led to an increased incidence of ringtail but these cases have now been resolved.

### NACWO report

- Modern apprenticeship scheme update. We currently have three MAs, one completed their training at a facility and is now embedded in another. The other two will shortly finish their training. They will gain an HNC in Applied Sciences at the end of three years.
- Facility update: [REDACTED] facility plans are progressing, [REDACTED] have been presented with three options. Now moving onto next stage to determine a budget.



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**NTCO update** New working group for developing three-month training program for technicians to improve consistency and recording of training. Part of that will be development of mentoring system, trialling in May/June this year. This is a positive step forward and will hopefully aid consistency and retention of technicians.

- Reaccreditation of the University PIL courses has been moved to June to allow transfer of course from [REDACTED]
- The Accreditation and Training Bodies Stakeholder Group are developing a framework to improve standards in training, ensuring a common standard of PIL courses across the three accreditation boards in the UK.

### **HOLC update**

- All 204 Returns of Procedure were submitted on time
- There will be additional training for PPLh from IT support and HOLC on completion of returns so that PPLh can make a start on collecting data accurately throughout the year. This will emphasise the main aspects of how to collect tick@lab data correctly.
- Animal data use figures have been distributed to AWERB members. Data has now been published to our front-facing animal research page and is available for public view.
- A survey circulated to IAT/LAVA/LASA and HOLTIF communities on the Change program in ASRU. The questions mainly focus on administrative burden and licence turnaround times so whilst they are appropriate for HOLCS they may not be appropriate for everyone, although the questionnaire will be circulated to AWERB members.
- Five PPLs have been through AWERB review this month, there were four last month as well as 25 amendments in the year to date.
- [REDACTED] asked how long turnaround is for amendments and new PPLs. Assessment period for PPLs is 40 working days. Most PPLs are returned with comments at the 40 working day point, with some exceptions where the applications are not complete and correct. The comments for such applications have been delayed on several occasions. Amendments, when urgent, are generally granted quickly.

### **BVS Deputy Director (Vets/home office) RI AWERB report**

- One amendment discussed in RI AWERB related to OPA, a prevalent disease in sheep.
- Another licence discussed swapping primary and secondary availability as the PPLh moved Establishment.
- Two vets have been interviewed to fill the NVS vacancy, one has been offered the role.

### **6. Retrospective review RR01-23**

- Retrospective review required as this licence had a severe protocol. All sections have been completed satisfactorily although some there are spelling and typographical errors to be corrected
- Replacement licence doesn't have a severe protocol, it would be good to note in the retrospective review why the severe protocol is no longer needed, as this is a good example of refinement



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- References might enhance the evidence but it isn't known if retrospective reviews can include references. HOLC to check this. Update: references are not permitted.
7. A.O.C.B –
- A report has been published on implementation of the 3Rs in research. It suggests 3Rs implementation can sometimes fall in the gaps between funding bodies and AWERB panels.
  - The Director thanked the committee and specifically the Home Office team for their hard work and looks forward to contributing to AWERB in the future.

Date of next Meeting: 10am 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023 [REDACTED]