

Animals in Science Committee

Minutes of the 24th Meeting: 16th September 2019

1. Welcome, Introductions and Conflicts of Interest

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the 24th meeting of the Animals in Science Committee.
- 1.2. Professor Andrew Jackson joined the meeting via teleconference. Apologies were received from Professor Johanna Gibson. A full list of attendees is provided at Annex A.

2. Minutes and Actions from the previous Animals in Science Committee (ASC) meeting

- 2.1. Minutes from the last meeting had been agreed and published on the ASC website.
- 2.2. Actions were complete with the following exceptions:
 - 2.2.1. Animal Scientific Regulation Unit (ASRU) to send their response to the recommendations in the ASC's Harm Benefit Review Report. (See para 4.1)
 - 2.2.2. ASRU to consult Home Office Legal Advisors (HOLA) on the status of Animals Scientific Procedures Act (ASPA) in relation to the research on reanimated tissue and to report back to the ASC. (See para 4.2)
 - 2.2.3. ASRU to update the ASC on Animal Sentience legislation and any potential effect on ASPA. (See Para 4.3)
 - 2.2.4. ASRU to provide an update to the ASC on the issues related to primate licences. (See par 4.5)

3. Chair's Update

3.1. Annual meeting with the Royal Society of Biology Animal Science Group (ASG)

- 3.1.1. The Chair informed members that he had met with the Chair of the ASG on the 9th July, where he provided an update on the membership and the current work of the committee. Following the meeting, AWERB SG Chair Dr Robinson had been invited to the December 2019 Animal Science Meeting and would present and facilitate table discussions on the work of the Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body subgroup and role of AWERBs.

3.2. Chair Visit to a research establishment

- 3.2.1. On 24th July the Chair, accompanied by an ASRU Inspector, visited a research establishment where he met with establishment staff and visited the research laboratories.
- 3.2.2. The Chair noted the excellent relationship between the Inspector and establishment staff which was reflected in the very good work being undertaken by the establishment in the 3Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement). Committee members also discussed the role of Inspectors' professional judgement when assessing establishments, and how this can be recorded to ensure transparency of the assessment. Members also noted ASRU's intention to develop a set of practice standards for Inspectors to unify their approach to assessments.

4. Update from the Animals Science Regulation Unit (ASRU)

4.1. ASRU response to ASC Harm Benefit Analysis Review Recommendations

- 4.1.1. ASRU Head of Unit (HoU) informed the ASC that the response to the Harm Benefit Analysis Review Recommendations was ready to send to the Minister. A further update would shortly be provided to Committee members.

Action: ASRU to provide an update on the response to the ASC Review of Harm Benefit Analysis Review at the next ASC meeting.

4.2. Yale: Post Mortem reanimation of pigs' brains

- 4.2.1. ASRU HoU advised that advice had been sought from HOLA on the status of ASPA in relation to the research on reanimated tissue.
- 4.2.2. ASRU await a response from HOLA and would update the ASC Committee at the next meeting.

Action: ASRU to provide an update on the advice received from HOLA on status of ASPA and reanimated animal tissue at the next ASC meeting.

4.3. Animal Sentience

- 4.3.1. ASRU HoU explained that new legislation from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) could include recognition of decapod crustaceans as being sentient. ASPA does not currently recognise decapod crustaceans as sentient and so would potentially require an amendment to be consistent.
- 4.3.2. The Home Office would continue to liaise with DEFRA on the progress of the new legislation and keep the ASC updated.

Action: ASRU to liaise with DEFRA on the progress of the proposed change to the legislation relating to sentience and to update the ASC at the next meeting.

4.4. UK Exit from the EU

- 4.4.1. ASRU HoU clarified that when the UK exits from the EU, the ASPA EU Exit regulations¹ would apply. In effect, this would remove references to the EU Directive 2010/63 and any mandatory requirement to share information with the EU.
- 4.4.2. Establishments would need to consider whether their activities might be affected by other legislation, for example that covering transport of animals and regulations relating to inspection at borders. It had been noted that some establishments would not allow any animals to be ordered in the first month post exit. This was a precautionary step to avoid animals being held in delays at borders.
- 4.4.3. ASC members discussed issues relating to the inspection procedures on the border for animals carrying pathogens. ASRU HoU advised the ASC that DEFRA were currently working on this issue.

Action: ASRU to update the ASC at the next meeting on EU Exit plans.

4.5. Primate Licence Matters

- 4.5.1. The ASRU Chief Inspector (CI) informed the Committee that discussions had taken place with a representative from the Named Veterinarians community, and Laboratory Animals Veterinary Association (LAVA) Council, to clarify the status of surgical procedures carried out on animals in scientific research, whether they were being undertaken under ASPA or the Veterinary Surgeons Act. A further meeting had been scheduled for November with LAVA, and Committee members would be given a further update in December.
- 4.5.2. Members also discussed with ASRU issues relating to retrospective reporting of severity. Specifically, members sought clarification as to the checks that ASRU currently make to confirm the accuracy and consistency of retrospective reporting of severity, and also what follow up actions were available to ASRU where it was considered that retrospective severity was being mis-classified or reported in a less severe category without legitimate justification.
- 4.5.3. ASRU confirmed that actual severity category ratings were assessed as part of establishment inspections and advice given if inaccuracies were suspected or found. However, ASRU do not carry out specific or formal 'audits' of recorded severity, noting guidance on retrospective severity scoring was published as part of ASRU's Returns of Procedures.²
- 4.5.4. Members suggested that such an auditing system would be helpful towards the collection and publication of accurate and comparable data on the severity of procedures being carried out on animals,

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5bb2499aed915d25845170ec/01_10_18_-_Proposed_Negative_ASRU_-_002977.pdf

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-testing-and-research-annual-returns#guidance>

which would also better inform future discussions around harms, benefits and implementation of the 3Rs. Finally, Committee members noted that there may be benefit in ensuring specific guidance was available relating to the retrospective reporting of severity in non-human primates (NHPs) in neuroscience studies.

Action: ASRU to consider developing mechanisms to audit retrospective severity reporting as part of their wider strategic review.

Action: ASRU to review actions available to address mis- or under-reporting of severity in retrospective reporting as part of their wider strategic review.

4.5.5. ASRU CI advised Committee members that updates on Project Licence Application (PLA) review responses to the ASC are being prepared, noting that a review of the process was underway to ensure that in future it is managed seamlessly.

Action: ASRU to send the PLA responses to the ASC.

4.6. New E-Licensing System (ASPeL)

4.6.1. ASRU reported to members that the new licensing system had been rolled out to all research establishments and was now fully functional.

4.6.2. Committee members discussed with ASRU some issues relating to the large size of some applications completed on new ASPeL. ASRU explained that new ASPeL applications were made up of an increased number of questions that require shorter answers. Applicants who had incorrectly completed the new style questions with larger old-style answers could end up with very lengthy licence applications. ASRU had provided guidance to establishment Home Office Liaison contacts (HOLCs) to disseminate within their establishments. Future instances of this should reduce as applicants adjust to the new system.

Action: ASRU undertake a review of the new ASPeL licensing system once 200 project licences have been processed.

4.7. ASRU Presentation on Strategic Planning.

4.7.1. ASRU HoU gave a presentation to ASC members on the ASRU strategy plan. The presentation covered strategic planning, themed inspections and the operating model for the Inspectorate.

5. Presentation on Futures Capability

5.1. The Committee received a presentation on the Futures tools and methods used by departments to assist policy development.

5.2. The Committee discussed a project proposal to develop a futures and horizon scanning subgroup (SG) that would use futures methodology to look at areas such as societal concerns. Welcoming the proposal, Members also noted the potential to gather significant amounts of information and data, therefore further refinement to the focus of the SG would be necessary. To assist this, the Secretariat would draft a Project Initiation Document (PID) describing the purpose and structure for the SG. Following this, Members agreed to further discussion at the December plenary meeting with the aim of finalising the format of the SG.

Action: Secretariat to prepare a draft PID for review at the next ASC meeting.

6. AWERB Subgroup Update

6.1. Terms of Reference

6.1.1. The AWERB SG had revised their Terms of Reference (ToRs) to include new workstreams and sought ratification by ASC Members ahead of publication on the ASC website. The Committee approved the TORs for publication, subject to a date change in section 4.3.

6.2. Hub Chair Workshop Report 2019

6.2.1. The AWERB Chair thanked Committee members for their ratification of the Hub Chair Workshop 2019 Report, confirming this had been published on the ASC website and the AWERB Knowledge Hub.

6.2.2. The SG Chair introduced a 'Top Tips' poster and PowerPoint presentation, based on contributions from workshop attendees, which highlighted some advice for AWERBs regarding their role and operation. It was confirmed that this would also be published on the AWERB Knowledge Hub.

6.2.3. The 5th edition of ASC Newsletter "The Hub" would also reinforce the outcomes from the Workshop and would shortly be published on the ASC website.

6.2.4. Though the SG's focus would move to their new workstreams, the SG Chair confirmed the utility of the annual Hub Chair Workshop, and that the SG would host another in Spring 2020.

Action: AWERB SG to finalise content for 'Top Tips Poster' and update the ASC at the next meeting.

Action: ASC Secretariat to publish SG's revised ToRs, liaise with SG on plans to circulate 'Top tips' Poster, Power Point and publication of 'The Hub' newsletter.

6.3. Hub Structure

- 6.3.1. The Committee were advised further changes to the structure of the Hub network were planned by the Subgroup and would be implemented over Autumn.

6.4. AWERB SG Workplan

- 6.4.1. The SG Chair provided the Committee with the following updates:
- i A potential new project reviewing aspects of the processes used in human ethics reviews, and their potential applicability for use by AWERBs, would be discussed at the next AWERB SG meeting.
 - ii Preparation of guidance to AWERBs on Non-Technical Summaries. Preceding this, members would like to view a selection of NTSs from recently authorised projects to better understand the impacts of the new ASPeL system.
 - iii The distillation of the AWERB specific recommendations from the Harm Benefit Analysis Report and advice to AWERBs in their implementation.
 - iv Updating the AWERB Hub Support Note.

Action: ASRU will provide NTS examples for the review.

7. Task and Finish Group Updates

7.1. Licence Analysis Subgroup Update

- 7.1.1. The SG Chair reported that the review of licences had been completed and the report was in the drafting stage.
- 7.1.2. The SG Chair advised that the report would be presented to the next full committee meeting on 9th December.

7.2. Non-Human Primate (NHP) Welfare Assessment Subgroup

- 7.2.1. The SG Chair reported that some relevant materials (e.g. videos and images) appropriate for assessing animal behaviour and welfare, and potentially developing guidance and training, had been collated, but not as much as originally hoped for. It was suggested that the UK expert primate group could be approached for additional video data.
- 7.2.2. The SG Chair was also seeking to recruit a Macaque specialist to help assess the materials that had been collected so far.
- 7.2.3. Committee members discussed how best to progress the project, suggesting further collaboration with other organisations from within the scientific and animal behaviour community. The ASC Chair and Subgroup Chair would explore how to take this forward.

Action: Subgroup Chair to discuss the project with UK expert primate group with a view to locating additional video data that may be used by the SG.

Action: The ASC and Subgroup Chair to explore potential pathways of the project, and the scope for additional contributors.

7.3. Comparative study of Regulation

7.3.1. The Chair confirmed that this work area remained 'on pause' for the moment and would be reviewed at the December plenary meeting.

8. AOB

8.1. External Presenters

8.1.1. The committee members agreed that external speakers would be useful as long as the topics covered were in direct relation to the work of the ASC.

8.1.2. Members to send their suggestions for presenters to the Secretariat.

Action: Committee members to send suggestions for presenters to the Secretariat.

Annex A

Animals in Science Committee Members

Dr David Main (Chair)

Mrs Wendy Jarrett

Professor Stephen May

Dr Donald Bruce

Dr Hannah Clarke

Dr Virginia Warren

Professor Christine Watson

Dr Sally Robinson

Mr Barney Reed

Dr Noelia Lopez-Salesansky

Professor Clare Stanford

Mrs Susan Sparrow

Professor Andrew Jackson

ASRU

Mr William Reynolds (Head of Unit, ASRU)

Dr Kate Chandler (Chief Inspector, ASRU)

Mr Giles Paiba (Head of Policy, ASRU)

Mr Martin Whiting (Head of Operations, ASRU)

Science Secretariat

Dr Joanne Wallace (Head of Science Secretariats)

Mrs Caroline Wheeler (ASC Secretary)

Ms Jessica Daly (ASC Secretariat)