

Animals in Science Committee

Minutes of the 27th Meeting: 18th May 2020

1. Welcome, Introductions and Conflicts of Interest

1.1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the 27th meeting of the Animals in Science Committee (ASC), which took place via teleconference.

1.2. The Chair informed the Committee that Dr Noelia Lopez-Salesansky had stepped down and was no longer an ASC Member. Recording their thanks to Dr Lopez-Salesansky for her work with the ASC, Members commented that to maintain the Committee's breadth of expertise they would welcome a new member with similar practical first-hand experience as a named veterinarian.

1.3. No apologies were received, and a full list of attendees are in Annex A.

2. Minutes and Actions from the previous ASC meeting.

2.1. Minutes from the previous meeting were delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, these had now been circulated to members for comments and would be published following receipt of these.

2.2. Actions were complete with the following exceptions:

- i Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) to share DASH board summaries (in an appropriate format) with the secretariat for transmission to ASC members. (See para 4.1)
- ii ASRU to provide the ASC with a timescale setting out procedures for auditing, and assuring the accuracy of reporting retrospective severity by its next plenary meeting. (See para 4.3)
- iii ASRU Head of Policy (HoP) to update the ASC on identifying a suitable methodology to identify service licences that use NHP's. (See para 4.4)
- iv ASRU to provide advice about use of recognised animal husbandry on animals and where this intersects with ASPA to ensure institutions are in compliance with ASPA guidance. (See para 4.5)

3. Chair's Update

3.1. Meeting with ASRU and NC3Rs

- 3.1.1. The Chair advised the Committee that on the 10 March he had met with Vicky Robinson and representatives of the NC3Rs Board. The meeting discussed two issues:

- i Oversight of all governmental policy that affects animals in science
 - ii Governance around the provision of assurance on legislation compliance.
- 3.1.2. A meeting had been scheduled for the autumn to hold further discussion with a wider group of stakeholders, subject to the policies in place for the management of Covid-19.

3.2. Ministers Response to HBA

- 3.2.1. The Chair advised the Committee that this had been submitted for publication. However, there were ongoing publication delays due to the prioritisation of operationally essential publications.
- 3.2.2. Publication would likely be at the end of May and the Secretariat would alert the Committee when the report had been published.

3.3. Letter to the Minister

- 3.3.1. The Chair advised that a letter summarising the ASC's progress on the Minister's 2018/2019 Commission of work would be sent to the Minister ahead of the ASC receiving the new Ministerial Commission for 2020.
- 3.3.2. As requested by ASC members during the 26th Plenary meeting in February, information about the new ASC Subgroup on brain organoids, reanimation and sentience, had been added to the letter.
- 3.3.3. The Secretariat advised they were liaising on sending this to the Minister's Office.

Action: Secretariat inform Committee members when the letter had been sent to the Minister.

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

4.1. ASRU Performance Summary - Dashboard

- 4.1.1. ASRU Head of Unit (HoU) advised the ASC that an ASRU Dashboard (a reporting tool which summarises ASRU's key delivery metrics) would be completed and be available to the ASC from September 2020. ASRU would welcome feedback on the design and structure of the performance dashboard from the ASC.

Action: ASRU to provide the ASC with its Dashboard by September 2020.

4.2. Inspector Training

- 4.2.1. ASRU HoU advised the ASC that there were no current dates for the next Inspector training sessions. Once dates were available, ASRU would forward these to the Secretariat for circulation. Training would take place online rather than in person due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Action: ASRU to provide Secretariat with details of training dates for Inspectors; Secretariat to circulate dates to ASC members with an invitation to participate.

4.3. Severity Reporting

- 4.3.1. ASRU HoU informed the Committee that ASRU HoP was drafting a position paper to assist ASC understanding where differences occur regarding retrospective severity reporting, and how those differences are reviewed. ASRU would circulate this paper ahead of the September ASC Plenary meeting.

Action: ASRU to provide the ASC with a position paper on retrospective severity reporting before the next ASC Plenary meeting on 14 September.

4.4. Project Licence Application (PLA) Referrals to the ASC

- 4.4.1. ASRU HoU advised the ASC that ASRU were not lawfully entitled to ask applicants for their grant assessment information, so could not facilitate this, but fully support the ASC asking the applicants for grant assessments in future PLA Referrals.
- 4.4.2. The ASC were advised that ASRU had collated all Project Licences that contained Non-Human Primates (NHPs), these were being reviewed to determine how many contained regulatory service elements. ASRU HoU noted that it was not possible to carry out a specific search of ASPeL for regulatory licences, therefore they need to be identified manually. A manual review would take some time but would be completed by the next meeting.

Action: Ahead of the ASC September Plenary meeting, ASRU to provide the Committee with the number of project licences with a regulatory element which also involves NHPs and the number of NHPs, before the next ASC Plenary meeting on 14 September.

- 4.4.3. ASRU HoU informed the Committee that ASRU had provided all overdue PLA Responses. The Secretariat noted that there was still one outstanding reply about which the ASRU Head of Policy (HoP) had been notified. The ASC requested that all future PLA Responses be sent to the ASC at the same time as they are sent to the applicant, to avoid any further delays. ASRU HoU agreed that this was a suitable process and would confirm the timeline with ASRU HoP.

Action: ASRU HoU will confirm with the HoP the timeline in which ASRU will respond to the ASC advice and recommendations following PLA SG review meetings and report this back to Committee members by 22/05/20

- 4.4.4. ASRU HoU gave apologies for the incorporation of test material into the most recent PLA document bundle. ASRU HoU advised a written explanation would be provided to the ASC along with the accurate information.

Action: ASRU HoU to write to the Committee to explain how the issue regarding the NTS documentation occurred in the PLA Review process held in May and provide revised NTSs.

4.5. Animal Husbandry

- 4.5.1. This action had been de-prioritised due to the Covid-19 situation. ASRU HoP would draft a response for the ASC ahead of the September Plenary Meeting.

Action: At the September Plenary meeting, ASRU to provide advice to the ASC about use of recognised animal husbandry on animals and where this intersects with ASPA to ensure institutions are in compliance with ASPA guidance.

4.6. Non-Technical Summaries and New e-Licensing System (ASPeL)

- 4.6.1. The 2017 and 2018 Non-Technical Summaries had been published on the ASRU website, the 2019 NTSs were ready but publication of these would be delayed due to Covid-19. The 2019 NTSs would be published as soon as possible, but a date was not yet available.

- 4.6.2. ASRU HoU advised that when the review of the first 200-licence's uploaded to ASPeL was due to start ASRU would contact the Secretariat to invite an ASC member to attend as the ASC representative delegate who can advise on the totality of ASPeL, its use within the research community and, where necessary, more broadly.

Action: ASRU to inform the Secretariat when the ASPeL review of 200 licences is due to take place, ASRU will request a delegate from the ASC to take part in this review.

- 4.6.3. Following an enquiry by ASC members, ASRU had considered the practicality of uploading the ASPeL System questions on their website, however due to the application being formed of multiple branching questions, it would be impossible to read without the software. The new system was designed to provide applicants with a more tailored application.

5. Presentation from ASRU

- 5.1. ASRU HoU provided the Committee with a presentation in which he provided an update on ASRU Operations and their response to Covid-19, including an overview of their Business Continuity and a timeline of actions taken. The Committee were also provided with an update on the progress of ASRU's Strategy development and its 2020 Commission.

Action: ASRU HoU will provide the Committee with a summary of the main questions from establishments submitted to ASRU during the Covid -19 pandemic.

- 5.2. The Chair thanked ASRU HoU for the clarity provided on the role and activities of ASRU, which relate to regulating for compliance with the Animals (scientific procedures) Act 1986, versus the oversight from other areas of government of wider policies that affect animals in science. Committee members provided ASRU HoU with feedback on the information provided during the presentation.

6. AWERB Subgroup Update

6.1. Harm Benefit Analysis Recommendations for AWERBs

- 6.1.1. The Subgroup Chair advised the Committee that the Subgroup had received feedback from a Hub which raised various issues about the way the report's format. The Subgroup had discussed this and would hold a further teleconference in early June for more in-depth discussion, to decide on the best approach to delivery of the HBA Recommendations.

6.2. Institute of Animal Technology (IAT) Representatives

- 6.2.1. The Chair advised the Committee as part of the pre – workshop feedback forms, the AWERB Subgroup had asked AWERBs about IAT representation within their establishment AWERBs. With about 40 responses received, the Subgroup would begin to collate and analyse the feedback over the summer in order to feedback to the IAT.

- 6.3. Ahead of the meeting the Committee were provided with a written update on the following topics:

6.4. Hub Chair Workshop

- 6.4.1. The Hub Chair workshop had now been postponed until late October. The Subgroup had agreed to wait until further information was released regarding the plans on the Covid-19 response and ongoing need for social distancing, before confirming a date and circulating to attendees.

6.5. AWERB Hub Network Update

- 6.5.1. As most AWERBs were now conducting business remotely, the AWERB Subgroup had used this opportunity to engage the network through the AWERB Knowledge Hub. Initiating a conversation regarding Covid-19 and encouraging those not yet signed up to the Knowledge Hub to do so and engage in the discussion. As a result, there had been several new sign ups to the Knowledge hub.

6.6. Support Note

- 6.6.1. The original timeline for the Support Note and Mechanisms work streams had included some initial discussion at the postponed March Workshop. This stage would now be skipped, and written feedback already received would be used in its instead to progress this work.

6.7. NTS Guidance

- 6.7.1. The Subgroup would continue with their work on the NTS guidance, by reviewing the sample NTSs received from ASRU. Six weeks prior to the Workshop the Subgroup would request a new set of NTS's to perform readability scores upon.

7. Task and Finish Groups

7.1. Licence Analysis (LA) Subgroup Update

- 7.1.1. The final draft of the Licence Analysis Report had been circulated to ASC Members ahead of the meeting. The Chair asked the Committee for ratification of the report for publishing.
- 7.1.2. The Committee agreed that the Licence Analysis Report could be submitted for publication, subject to a minor change in paragraph 9.4 where the word 'severe' should be removed and replaced with appropriate wording that addresses all harms rather than just severe.

Action: DB to edit paragraph 9.4, replacing the word 'severe' with 'all expected harms' or similar.

7.2. Futures Capability Group

- 7.2.1. The Subgroup Chair advised the ASC that feedback had been incorporated this into the final Terms of Reference which had been circulated ahead of the meeting.
- 7.2.2. The Committee confirmed their approval of the Terms of Reference, agreeing the Subgroup Chair should begin scheduling subgroup meetings.

Action: ASC Secretariat to liaise with Futures SG Chair to arrange meeting dates for the SG.

7.3. Brain Organoids, Reanimation and Sentience Group (BORSG)

- 7.3.1. The Chair introduced ASC Member Professor Christine Watson as the Chair of the new Subgroup. The Chair advised the ASC on the current Subgroup membership and requested that any further members who wished to be involved indicate their interest.
- 7.3.2. The Subgroup Chair advised the ASC on the particular focus of the group and welcomed comments and feedback on the Terms of Reference circulated ahead of the meeting and any thoughts on additional topics for the group to consider.

Action: ASC Members to submit any comments on BORSG Terms of Reference to the Secretariat and indicate if they wish to take part in this Task and Finish group.

Action: ASC Members to submit any suggestions to the Secretariat on additional topics to be included in the workstream and expertise required for the BORSG.

8. AOB

8.1. Members were notified of a request for feedback from ASRU about the recent licences presented to the ASC for review. These were the first licences to have been created on the ASPeL system.

8.2. It was noted that responses for NTS remained long and technical, with one Committee member commenting that all other aspects of the new system seemed to work very efficiently.

Action: ASC Members to provide ASRU with comments and feedback on the new ASPeL system ready to contribute to the 200 PPL review. Members requiring re-invitation should contact the Secretariat.

8.3. ASRU HoU informed the ASC that an ASRU Survey was currently being circulated and which they would like to share with the ASC for feedback on ASRU's functionality.

Action: ASRU to share their Service Survey with the ASC.

Annex A

Animals in Science Committee Members

Dr David Main (Chair)

Mrs Wendy Jarrett

Professor Stephen May

Dr Donald Bruce

Dr Virginia Warren

Professor Christine Watson

Dr Sally Robinson

Mr Barney Reed

Professor Clare Stanford

Mrs Susan Sparrow

Professor Andrew Jackson

Professor Johanna Gibson

ASRU

Mr Will Reynolds (Head of Unit, ASRU)

Science Secretariat

Mrs Caroline Wheeler (ASC Secretary)

Ms Jessica Daly (ASC Secretariat)