

**Animals in Science Committee
and
Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body
Hubs Workshop**

6 March 2018

Workshop Report

This report is not intended to be, and should not be interpreted as, a policy statement or a work plan. The Hubs workshop was convened and held under the aegis of the ASC's AWERB Subgroup. The views summarised in this report are those expressed by attendees of the workshop, and do not necessarily represent the views of the ASC.

1.0 Introduction

- The fourth Animals in Science Committee (ASC) and Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) Hubs Workshop was convened on 6th March 2018.
- The aim of the day was to provide an opportunity for attendees to share what had worked well, and less well, within the Hub Network and to explore some possible options for improvement. Attendees also looked at issues which risked impinging on operation matters.
- Workshop attendees included chairs of the regional UK AWERB Hubs, or their nominated representatives, members of the ASC AWERB Subgroup, and presenters. The workshop was chaired by Dr Sally Robinson. The agenda for the day can be found at Annex A.
- This report sets out the points and issues raised by attendees. Presentations provided at the workshop will be made available to attendees to share with their AWERBs.

2.0 What has worked well

2.1 Regional Structure

- Despite initial concerns by members about the grouping of AWERBs by region to form the Hub Network (Annex A), it was agreed that this had worked well in most cases. Some establishments, particularly those working with rare species, continued to have difficulty finding common ground with establishments that did not carry out similar research. The attendees were reminded that the primary purpose of the Hub network is to share processes around operation on an effective AWERB, something they all have in common.
- Inviting members from other AWERBs, in addition to the AWERB Chair, had raised the profile of the AWERB Hub resulting in improved engagement.

2.2 Sharing good practice

- The breadth and diversity of institutions and people within the networks had afforded unique opportunities to share knowledge on diverse subjects, as well as compare processes (e.g. avian vs large animal, large vs small institute). As a result of these exchanges, some organisations had altered their processes such as how they undertaking licence reviews.

2.3 Meetings

- Those Hubs that rotated the hosting of Hub meetings reported the advantages of sharing administrative burdens alongside the benefit of being able to view the facilities and practices at other establishments. Some Hubs had focused their agendas on particular topics, such as the licence review process, non-A(SP)A work, putting ethics into practice, AWERB role in promoting the 3Rs, promoting an Culture of Care and this had improved engagement and outputs.
- One Hub reported having focused their agenda on licence reviews, and as a result had identified differences in approach, with some AWERBs meeting to

carry out reviews and others deliberating and deciding electronically. Attendees asked whether a process existed to audit the quality of licence reviews.

3.0 What has worked less well

3.1 Sign-up to Hubs

- A number of AWERBs had not responded to requests to identify themselves to their Hub. Legislative constraints to the sharing of personal information had compounded this difficulty for some Hubs.
- Whilst some Hubs had developed and implemented clear effective ways of working, other Hubs were not communicating regularly, or at all, with their affiliate AWERBs. The reasons for this were not clear. Some suggestions to help improve communication were setting up a Hub email distribution list and a shared file storage area.
- It was noted that not all attendees had seen the ASC Newsletter despite its wide circulation. It was suggested that the 'justmail' system, used by the Home Office Liaison Contacts (HOLCs), might be a useful communication tool.

3.2 Regional Structure

- For Hubs, such as those in Scotland, the regional structure had made meetings difficult to arrange with the physical distance between AWERBs being compounded by poor transport links.
- The West of Scotland and the Isles Hub comprised very few AWERBs which brought separate challenges. Attendees agreed that this Hub would benefit from interaction with another Hub. A proposal was put forward to merge the Scottish Hubs.

3.3 Lack of Guidance from the ASC

- Attendees agreed that initial guidance from the ASC on how to structure Hub meetings would have reduced time and effort to establish initial meeting frameworks and communication protocols. It was noted that members of the ASC AWERBs Subgroup had been paired with regional Hubs to enhance two-way communication. Details of AWERB Hub Network regional organisation and ASC member/Hub pairing can be found at Annexes B & C respectively.

3.4 Hub Membership

- AWERBs reported difficulties in recruiting lay members and indicated that an exploration of fresh recruitment perspectives might be helpful to all AWERBs.
- A protocol setting out the steps for changing Hub Chairs was required. A reminder was given to attendees that this is already outlined in the Hub support note¹.

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629862/asc_hub_support_note.pdf

4.0 Sharing experiences from the Hubs: Proposed improvements

4.1 Induction and Training

- Hubs representatives raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of current induction practices. It was reported that at some establishments induction had been provided by non-experts to non-experts and that as a consequence 'ethics' had received limited attention.
- It was suggested that the provision of a glossary and providing the opportunity for lay members to attend the meetings of other AWERBs might aid learning and the sharing of good practice.

4.2 Reinvigorating ethical consideration

- AWERB meetings were run inline with set processes and procedures. Attendees felt that it would be beneficial to review current ways of working to promote and refocus on ethical consideration.

4.3 Group Dynamics

- Attendees noted the correlation of good group dynamics with successful meetings. Having a mixture of lay and scientific members of varying seniority was beneficial. A meeting protocol, including tips on managing difficult situations, would be helpful.

4.4 Communication

- To improve communication, and renew interest, it was suggested AWERBs could have a section in the ASC Hub newsletter 'The Hub' for updates and events, as well as sharing good practice.
- To assist in wider sharing and dissemination of good practice, attendees asked for an IT solution to provide a secure platform for the sharing of information.

4.5 Setting Hub Objectives

- Attendees agreed that to generate a real sense of purpose it would be helpful if the ASC set a series of objectives and/or questions or discussion topics for Hubs to address in working with their AWERBs.

4.6 Hub attendance

- It was raised that some Hubs choose to operate that only AWERB chairs attend regional Hub meetings whereas others operate a more open invitation. On reflection, attendees agreed that it would be useful for all Hubs to expand this invitation, to assist with the completion/dissemination of actions and outputs.
- It was noted that, whilst Hub meetings whipped up enthusiasm with participants agreeing to take forward tasks, without support it was often difficult to maintain this enthusiasm.

5.0 Role of AWERBs in non-A(SP)A research

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- Attendees were asked to reflect on what role, if any, AWERBs could play in non-A(SP)A research.

5.2 Ethical considerations

- It was noted that regulation, licensing and record keeping varied across jurisdictions with some being either 'light touch' or non-existent. Attendees queried whether, if a UK establishment had refused to have certain protocol carried out on its premises for ethical reasons, it would be appropriate for another UK establishment to undertake the protocol? Would this stimulate a 'race to the bottom'?

5.3 Risk to reputation

- Issues of primary and secondary association were discussed e.g. if the establishment licence covered an institute comprising small businesses was the licence holder responsible for the actions of this business?
- Concern was expressed that if work conducted by, or in association with, the establishment did not go well this might result in reputational damage to the institution. Therefore should a 'master list' of potential routes to reputational damage, particularly those not typically considered, be maintained and held by the AWERB?
- One institute reported it had a separate committee which considered all non A(SP)A work which was then fed back to its AWERB.

5.4 Culture and communication

- It was suggested that AWERBs could facilitate communication on non A(SP)A research; fostering a culture which encouraged researchers to seek AWERB views. One potential lever might be an establishment 'permission to publish' step to encourage AWERBs to improve engagement.
- Attendees queried whether AWERBs had sufficient resource to also consider non-A(SP)A research.

6.0 Non-Technical Summaries

6.1 Mandated by the amended A(SP)A, a non-technical summary (NTS) must be prepared for every licence application. It must be written in non technical language, and published.

6.2 Attendees were invited to reflect on the current requirements for NTS. They agreed that:

- An NTS should be written in language that could be easily understood by the AWERB lay member, though a balance needs to be struck between accessibility and being patronising;
- The NTS should include details on potential adverse affects as well as how these would be managed;
- Those drafting the lay summary should consider using diagrams/visual representations;
- No licence should be passed to the ASRU unless the lay member could understand the lay summary; and that

- AWERBs might consider asking the institute press officer to review NTS. As communication experts they would be well placed to assess the accessibility of the lay summary language.

7.0 How do AWERBs “do” Ethics?

- 7.1 Having received a presentation on ‘How do AWERBs “do” Ethics’, attendees were asked to discuss a series of case studies which a particular focus on Harm-Benefit Analysis and concluded that this had been a useful way to promote a more nuanced discussion about ethics and would be useful as a training aid.

8.0 Emergent themes

- 8.1 A number of generic themes had arisen during the day:

- Communication - there was scope for improvement, including between the ASC and Hubs, between Hub chairs, and between Hubs and their AWERBs.
- The need to maintain the enthusiasm and momentum of the Hubs – possibly through identifying goals or more focused agenda.
- Improved engagement of AWERB members, including encouraging lay and other members to attend the meetings of other AWERBs, extending the invitation to attend Hub meetings to others beyond the AWERB Chair.
- Raising the profile of AWERBs. Consideration was required as to how the profile of AWERBs might be raised as a means of, for example, bringing on new members, to aid an establishment’s current operational processes for considering non-A(SP)A research.
- More training and support would be helpful – particularly around NTS and retrospective analysis of licences.
- ASC Road Show event/s – it would be helpful for AWERBs to have the opportunity to speak directly with members of the ASC.
- The ASC could help by setting out key topics on an annual basis for Hubs to discuss.

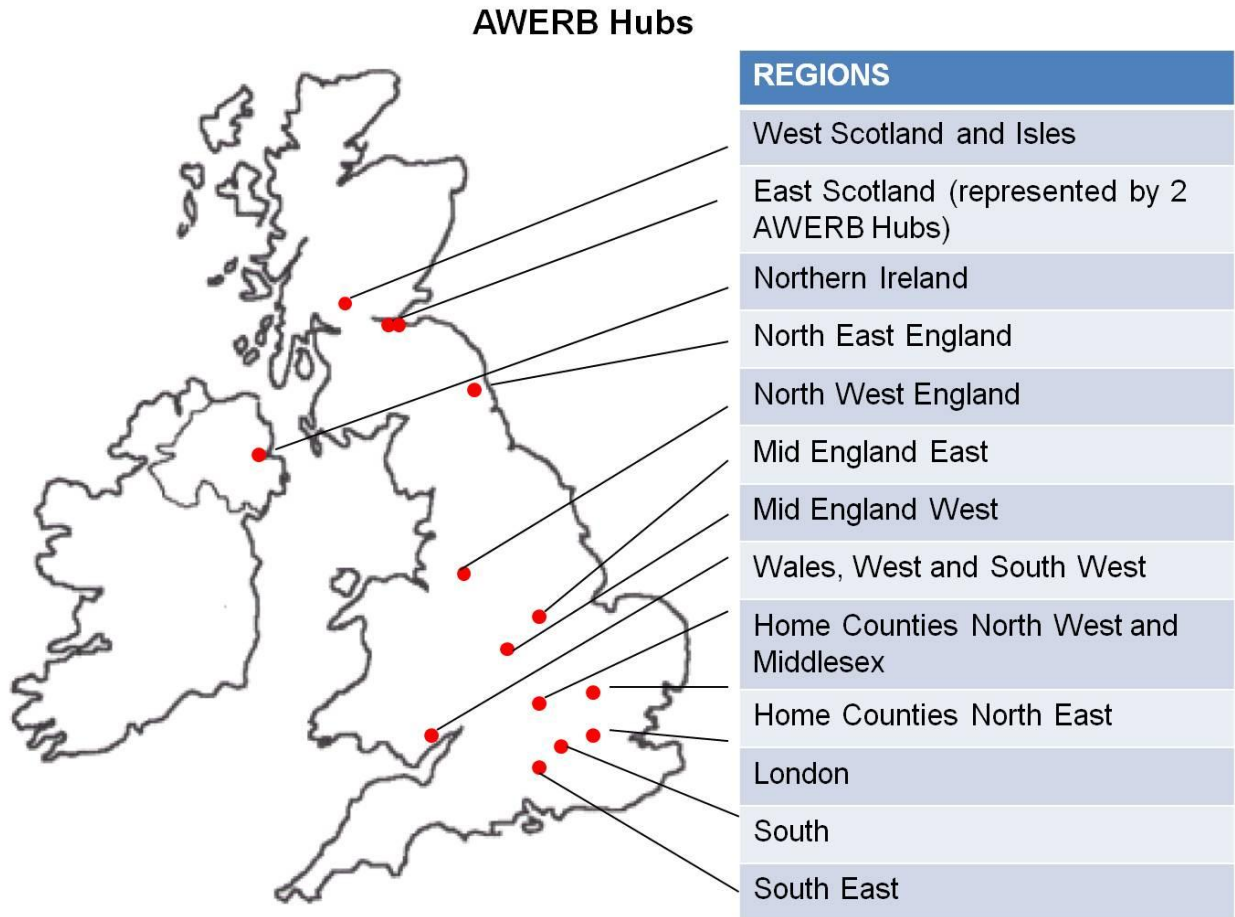
9.0 Next Steps

- It was agreed that a note summarising discussions at the workshop would be forwarded to all Hubs. Slides presented at the workshop would also be circulated enabling attendees to share the learning.
- The ASC AWERB Subgroup would now reflect on the points raised and how to address these for the Hubs and their AWERBs.

**4th Animals in Science Committee and
Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies Hub Workshop**
06 March 2018, 10.00 – 16.00
Coffee available from 09:30

10.00 – 10.05	Welcome	Sally Robinson (ASC)
10.05 – 10.15	Update on the work of the ASC Presentation/Q&A	Sally Robinson (ASC)
10.15 – 10.50	What’s gone well, not so well, with AWERB Hubs? Group discussion	ASC members (discussion support)
10.50-11.05	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
11.05 – 11.40	Sharing experiences from the Hubs Feedback/plenary discussion	Sally Robinson (ASC)
11.40 – 12.00	Role of AWERBs in non-A(SP)A research Group discussion	ASC members (discussion support)
12.00 – 12.25	Non-technical summaries – what is required? Presentation/feedback	Peter Thornton (ASRU)
12:25-12:30	Tips on improving the non-technical summary Task Introduction	Donald Bruce (ASC)
12:30-13:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
13.30 – 14.15	Tips on improving the non-technical summary Group discussion/feedback	Donald Bruce (ASC) (discussion support)
14.15 – 15.00	How do we “do ethics”? Presentation/feedback	Jane Smith
15.00 – 15.45	Beyond the harm-benefit analysis Group discussion	Penny Hawkins
15.45 – 16.00	Concluding remarks, emerging themes, and next steps	Sally Robinson (ASC)

Regional Organisation of the AWERB Hubs



East Scotland is represented by two Hubs

ASC AWERB SG member/ Hub Pairing

Region/ Hub	ASC AWERB SG member
Northern Ireland/ Belfast	Wendy Jarrett
North West England/ AstraZeneca/ Manchester	Sally Robinson
North East England/ Newcastle	Sally Robinson
West Scotland and Isles/ Strathclyde	John Landers
Mid England East/ Leicester	John Landers
Mid England West/ Aston	Gilly Stoddart
London/ UCL	Wendy Jarrett
South/ South East / APHA	Clare Stanford
South East/ Pirbright	Clare Stanford
Wales/ Cardiff	John Landers
Home Counties North West & Middlesex	Clare Stanford
Home Counties North East (Oxford)	Ken Applebee
East Scotland (Edinburgh)	Donald Bruce
East Scotland (Moredun)	Donald Bruce