

# **AWERB Hub Workshop**

23 April 2026  
13:00–16:00

*Welcome — we will be starting shortly!*

# Agenda

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presenter(s)</b>
<b>13:00 – 13:10</b>	Welcome, Introductions and Workshop Protocol	Caroline Chadwick
<b>13:10 – 13:25</b>	Update on the work of the Animals in Science Committee	Tina O’Mahony
<b>13:25 – 13:40</b>	The Top 5 Operational Challenges for AWERBs	Dr Penny Hawkins
<b>13:40 – 13:50</b>	Lay Members’ Forum and RSPCA Guidance	Ellie Muscat
<b>13:50 – 14:00</b>	The Scientific Perspective	Dr Stuart Greenhill
<b>14:00 – 14:10</b>	The Lay Perspective	Jason Booth
<b>14:10 – 14:20</b>	The Independent Perspective	Dr Jessica Eddy
<b>14:25 – 14:35</b>	Break	
<b>14:35 – 15:15</b>	Breakout rooms and feedback: Lay and Independent Members	
<b>15:15 – 15:55</b>	Breakout rooms and feedback: AWERB Standards and Named Persons	
<b>15:55 – 16:00</b>	Final thoughts and feedback	Caroline Chadwick

# Workshop Protocols



Remain on mute when not speaking



Ask questions during dedicated Q&A time by raising your hand or using the chat function



Attendees are welcome to use chat and reaction functions



Audience contributions will be recorded for writing the workshop report – this does not apply to breakout rooms



In breakout rooms, please use hands-up feature and briefly introduce yourself before speaking



Some attendees may have problems using MS Teams functionality due to organisational policies.  
Please email [asc.secretariat@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:asc.secretariat@homeoffice.gov.uk) for any technical issues

# Polling and Q&A

[www.slido.com](http://www.slido.com)

Joining as a participant?

# 1730021



- You can access Slido on your phone or Desktop to vote in polls and submit anonymous questions. No download required.
- Please still feel free to raise your hand in MS teams or use the chat function during the dedicated Q&A sections to ask questions.



# Poll



**What is your role within your AWERB?  
(select all that apply)**

Chair

NTCO

Secretary

NPRC

PIL holder

NIO

PPL holder

HOLC

NVS

Lay member

NACWO

Independent member

Statistician

Other (tell us in the chat!)

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# 1730021



# Poll



How long have you been an AWERB member?

1

< 6 months

2

6 months–1 year

3

1–2 years

4

2–5 years

5

5–10 years

6

10+ years

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# Update on the work of the Animals in Science Committee



## Tina O'Mahony

Tina O'Mahony is a Biofacility Manager at Cambridge University. She is currently a NACWO with over 30 years' experience, including 10 years as an NTCO. Tina is the interim Chair of the board of Education, the Chair of the board of assessors, and an Institute of Animal Technology council member. Tina is passionate about how we educate both animal care staff and researchers alike. She has taught on module training courses for over 20 years as well as bespoke courses on how to implement the 3Rs in the care of our animals as well as the procedures carried out.

# Appointments to the ASC: April 2026

- Six new members have been appointed to the Animals in Science Committee (ASC) for 3 years:
  - Dr Andrew Benest, Associate Professor in Cancer Sciences, University of Nottingham
  - Dr Beth Clark, Lecturer in Food Marketing, Newcastle University
  - Dr Juliet P. Dukes, Research Manager, Replacing Animal Research
  - Dr David Grumett, Senior Lecturer in Theology and Ethics, University of Edinburgh
  - Dr Ilyena Hirskyj-Douglas, Lecturer in Animal Computing, University of Glasgow
  - Professor Alastair Wilson, Professor of Evolutionary Biology, Centre for Ecology and Conservation, University of Exeter
- You can find [full biographies for the new and existing committee members](#).

# Completion of Tenure: April 2026

- Five members have completed their tenure with the Animals in Science Committee (ASC):
  - Mrs Wendy Jarrett, Chief Executive, Understanding Animal Research
  - Professor Andrew Jackson, Professor of Neural Interfaces, Faculty of Medical Sciences Newcastle University
  - Professor Johanna Gibson, Herchel Smith Professor of Intellectual Property Law, Queen Mary, University of London
  - Professor Christine J Watson, Professor Emeritus of Cell and Cancer Biology, Department of Pathology, University of Cambridge
  - Professor Stephen May, Former Senior Vice-Principal and Professor of Education, The Royal Veterinary College, University of London

# ASC AWERB Hub workshop report for October 2025

 GOV.UK

[Home](#) > [Business and industry](#) > [Science and innovation](#) > [Animal research and testing](#)

Corporate report

## ASC and AWERB Hub workshop report: October 2025

Report for the Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body (AWERB) subgroup of the Animals in Science Committee's (ASC) 13th workshop on 15 October 2025.

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From: [Animals in Science Committee](#)  
Published 8 January 2026

[ASC and AWERB Hub workshop report: October 2025 - GOV.UK](#)



# Leading Practice



The screenshot shows a GOV.UK page with a blue header containing the GOV.UK logo. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Business and industry > Science and innovation > Animal research and testing. The main content area features the text 'Research and analysis' followed by the title 'Strengthening leading practice in the animals in science sector' in a large, bold, black font. Below the title is a subtitle: 'Animals in Science Committee response to a ministerial commission for advice.' At the bottom of the page, it says 'From: [Animals in Science Committee](#)' and 'Published 19 January 2026'.

[Strengthening leading practice in the animals in science sector - GOV.UK](#)



# Leading Practice

## Purpose and Method

- Commissioned by the Home Office on strengthening leading practice in the animals in science sector.
- Drew on available evidence and was further informed by a public stakeholder call for evidence and follow-up workshop (sector & non-sector).

## Key findings

- There are significant gaps in the system of leading practice, including unclear roles and responsibilities, the absence of a structured framework for emerging practices to transition to the expected standard, and insufficient incentives for establishments to innovate and adopt improvements.

## Recommendations for AWERBs


- AWERB members should be expected to meet minimum CPD requirements specifically in relation to the 3Rs.
- AWERBs should assess progress against the 3Rs during their reviews and share learning more widely.

## Recommendations for ASRU

- Set and enforce minimum 3Rs CPD
- Assure active 3Rs implementation
- Define when new practices become standard
- Speed up 3Rs refinements
- Assess and promote leading practice culture
- Drive improvement focus
- Collect and use 3Rs data
- Incentivise excellence



# Replacing animals in science strategy

 GOV.UK

[Home](#) > [Business and industry](#) > [Science and innovation](#) > [Animal research and testing](#)

Policy paper  
**Replacing animals in science strategy**

The strategy will help create, test, and adopt alternative methods to animal testing so we can work towards phasing out the use of animals in all but exceptional circumstances.

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From: [Department for Science, Innovation and Technology](#), [Home Office](#) and [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#)

Published 11 November 2025

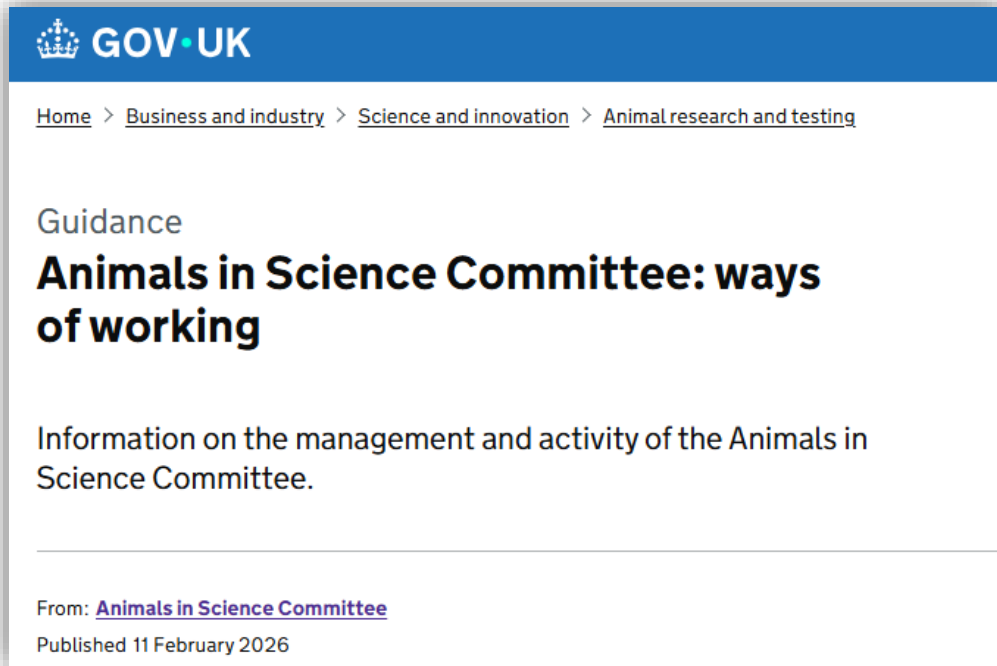


[Replacing animals in science strategy - GOV.UK](#)

The ASC will:

- **Provide ministerial leadership on alternative methods**
- Be formally involved with DSIT in the direct commissioning and receipt of advice.
- Help enable better advice on alternative methods. The government will establish an alternative methods committee, with input by the ASC on membership.

# Ways of working



The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website header with the navigation path: Home > Business and industry > Science and innovation > Animal research and testing. The main heading is 'Animals in Science Committee: ways of working' under the 'Guidance' section. A sub-heading reads 'Information on the management and activity of the Animals in Science Committee.' At the bottom, it states 'From: Animals in Science Committee' and 'Published 11 February 2026'.



[Animals in Science Committee: ways of working - GOV.UK](#)

- The Animals in Science Committee (ASC) has a new [Ways of Working and Working Protocol](#).
- This update includes revisions to establish a new mechanism for DSIT to directly commission the ASC for advice with agreement from the Home Office, enabling DSIT to fulfil its responsibility to support the development and validation of alternative methods.
- This new commissioning mechanism will lay the necessary foundations to meet the commitment made in the strategy.

# Home Office Correspondence

## [Cumulative severity in project licences: response from Lord Hanson](#)

Lord Hanson has responded to the Animals in Science Committee's letter on cumulative severity in project licences.



## [Regulation of decapods: letter from the Home Office](#)

The Home Office has written to the Chair of the Animals in Science Committee to provide an update on the regulation of decapods.



# ASC Published Correspondence

## [Animals in Science Committee role in the alternatives strategy](#)

Letter from the chair of the Animals in Science Committee (ASC) to Lord Vallance on their role in the strategy to adopt alternatives to animal testing.



## [Generative AI in animals in science: letter to Lord Hanson](#)

The Chair of the Animals in Science Committee has written to Lord Hanson about the use of artificial intelligence in animals in science.



# Ongoing Commissions

- The following commission for advice from the Home Office to the ASC was published on the ASC website in January 2025: [strengthening the functioning of AWERBs and Named Information Officer](#).
- [The Chair of the ASC wrote to Lord Hanson](#), who has agreed to divide the formal commission into two parts, focusing separately on the functioning of AWERBs and the responsibilities of named persons.

Responsibilities of Named Persons	AWERB Standards
Leading practice to ensure that the NIO functions effectively at establishments	Best practice guidance for AWERBs, particularly relating to their duties regarding the 3Rs (replacement, refinement, and reduction) and training.
Leading practice to ensure that other named roles functions effectively at establishments	Standards of effectiveness and governance for AWERBs
	The questions that AWERBs should ask project applicants to check that replacement methodologies have been fully considered.
	A review of the ASC AWERB network model to assure dissemination of leading practice

# Any Questions?



# Poll



**What methods has your AWERB used to recruit new lay/independent members? (select all that apply)**

- National organisations (e.g., NC3Rs, RSPCA)
- Establishment employees
- Internal recommendations or contacts within the establishment
- External advertising (e.g., website, job board, mailing lists)
- Professional networks or community organisations
- Other (please specify)
- Not sure

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# The Top 5 Operational Challenges for AWERBs

## Lay Members' Forum and RSPCA Guidance



### **Dr Penny Hawkins**

Penny is head of the RSPCA Animals in Science Department, which works to achieve the fullest implementation of the 3Rs and robust ethical review of animal use. She has been with the RSPCA for 29 years and her main areas of work are reducing and avoiding severe suffering, and supporting the AWERB and its members. She is a Vice President of the Institute for Animal Technology and a member of the Animal Sentience Committee.

### **Ellie Muscat**

Ellie Muscat joined the RSPCA Animals in Science Department in 2025, supporting the work to promote effective ethical review of animal use with a focus on AWERBs, as well as promoting the need for a 'Culture of Care'. Prior to joining the RSPCA, Ellie worked as an animal technician and also holds a BSc in Animal Science from the University of Nottingham and an MSc in Advanced Biological Sciences (Animal Sciences) from the University of Liverpool.



# RSPCA

## ANIMALS IN SCIENCE

The top 5 operational challenges for AWERBs

Penny Hawkins

Animals in Science Department

 @RSPCA\_LabAnimal

Registered charity in England and Wales. Charity no. 219099.

## The AWERB is an essential committee

- Its statutory duties are essential for compliance with the ASPA
- It should be actively enabling 'leading practice' within a good Culture of Care
- It should play a vital role in ensuring openness and transparency helping to develop and maintain public trust

**All AWERBs ought to have the resource, engagement and recognition to work properly**

## In an ideal world, every AWERB would:

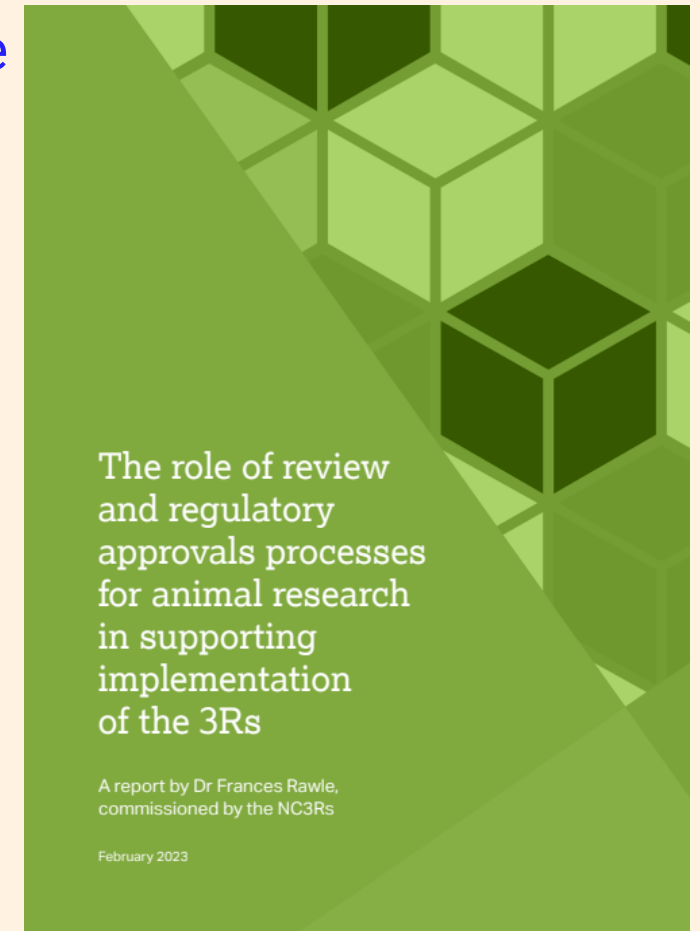
- ❑ Enable everyone within the establishment to be **aware of the AWERB** and its tasks, including **two-way engagement** that encourages people to be supportive
- ❑ Review how effectively **all tasks are addressed**, including benchmarking, a gap analysis and **work plans** to progress towards properly fulfilling them
- ❑ Ensure proper interaction and **liaison with other internal bodies** responsible for research integrity, internal and external communications etc
- ❑ Liaise effectively with **other AWERBs** in their region and the **Animals in Science Committee**

## In an ideal world, every AWERB would also:

- ❑ Provide adequate **induction, training and CPD** for all AWERB members and Chairs
- ❑ Provide **information for the public** about the AWERB and its work, e.g. around the Culture of Care (NB this is not the same as explaining, or promoting, the establishment's animal use)
- ❑ Have the interest, and support, of **senior management**
- ❑ Be able to secure **adequate funding and resources**

# The Rawle Report

- Workload and time constraints, leading to neglect of some tasks
- Gaps in knowledge, training and expertise
- Resourcing and support issues
  - Insufficient resource
  - Lack of senior management engagement
  - Poor support for NIOs
- Focus on 3Rs over ethics
- Lack of liaison with other bodies

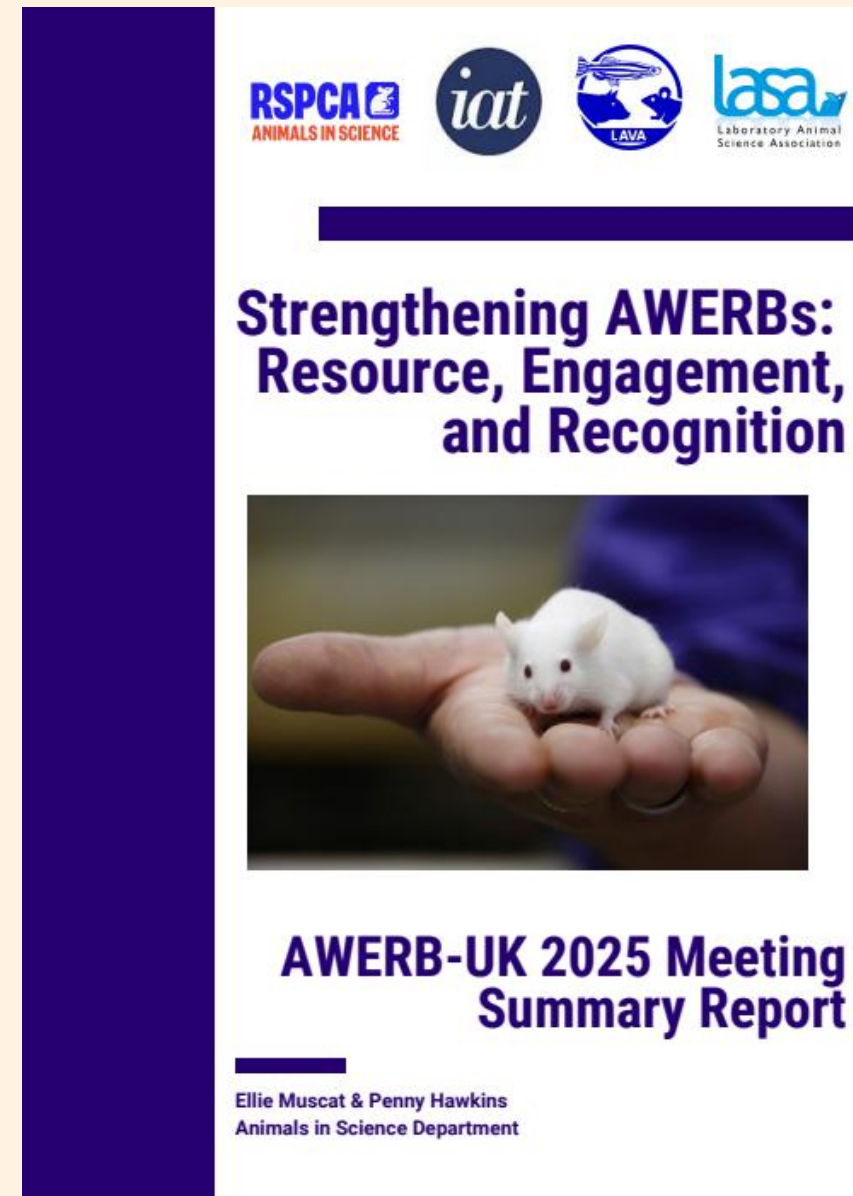


# Strengthening AWERBs: Resource, Engagement and Recognition AWERB-UK 2025

Topic: How to ensure adequate resources for the AWERB, with respect for and engagement with it across the entire establishment

# Top 5 operational challenges


1. Lack of recognition and reward for AWERB members
2. Lack of training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for members
3. Insufficient time for all those directly and indirectly involved
4. Need for 'professionalisation' of the AWERB (including career progression)
5. Lack of liaison with Research Integrity Committees and similar bodies



**RSPCA** **ANIMALS IN SCIENCE** **iat** **LAVA** **lasa** Laboratory Animal Science Association

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## Strengthening AWERBs: Resource, Engagement, and Recognition



### AWERB-UK 2025 Meeting Summary Report

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Ellie Muscat & Penny Hawkins  
Animals in Science Department

# 1. Lack of recognition and reward for AWERB members

- Secure robust support from senior leadership, including financial support, for the AWERB and its members (a requirement of Standard Condition 6)
- **Formally acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of the AWERB and its members**
- Integrate and acknowledge AWERB work within Human Resource (HR) processes
- **Provide tangible recognition and compensation for members** (e.g. awards, funding to attend events, paying independent members)



## 2. Lack of training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for members

- **Provide induction, training and CPD for all AWERB members** (compare to NHS REC members)
- Establish a national syllabus
- **Provide accessible training** (both general and tailored, e.g. to lay members)
- **Incorporate CPD into meetings**



### 3. Insufficient time for all those directly and indirectly involved

- Increase the total time allocated to AWERB meetings
- Formalise time allocation for AWERB members who are staff at the establishment
- **Enhance operational efficiency** (e.g. triage systems, 'pools' of lay/independent members)
- **Set realistic time commitment expectations**
- Use technology, e.g. AI (with the usual caveats about reliability and security)



## 4. Need for 'professionalisation' of the AWERB

- Define clear roles
- Establish a competency based certification programme (e.g. accreditation, transferable skills)
- Integrate into career frameworks



# 5. Lack of liaison with Research Integrity Committees and similar bodies

- Ensure cross-representation
- Implement regular reporting
- **Foster collaboration** (e.g. regular joint meetings or workshops)



<b>AWERB members (including lay/independent)</b>	<b>AWERB Chairs</b>
Read the <b>AWERB-UK report</b> and discuss whether any challenges apply to you - if they do, act on them	Set out clear <b>Terms of Reference</b> and job descriptions for all AWERB members
Research and define an appropriate AWERB <b>self-assessment process</b> (or review any processes that are already in place) with gap analysis	Provide <b>induction and training</b> for all members; require them to undertake a minimum amount of CPD per year. Integrate some CPD into meetings
Ask for <b>training and CPD</b> , with some kind of certification/recognition and a Personal Development Plan	Think creatively about making <b>extra time</b> for AWERB business and improving the <b>efficiency</b> of processes, making a case for additional budget if needed
Review the potential to <b>increase the use of technology</b> to facilitate remote meetings and assist with project review (with caveats; see report)	<b>Review your approach</b> to lay/independent membership, including job descriptions and having a pool of members
Check the <b>level of integration</b> with other internal bodies and external AWERBs	Ensure that lay/independent members are at least paid expenses and look into <b>paying them</b> for their time, if this is not already the case



## Lay Members' Forum and RSPCA guidance

**Ellie Muscat**

**Animals in Science Department**

**[animalsinscience@rspca.org.uk](mailto:animalsinscience@rspca.org.uk)**

Registered charity in England and Wales. Charity no. 219099.

# The RSPCA Lay Members' Forum

Since 1999, the RSPCA has organised an annual meeting for lay and other members of Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies (AWERBs)

The events aim to train and empower lay/independent members, and to share information and experiences around good practice across UK establishments



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The first Lay Members' Forum report!

# The RSPCA Lay Members' Forum

Last year we held the 26th Lay Members' Forum

Discussions included:

- Strategies for replacing animals in science
- Overview of the 2025 AWERB-UK meeting
- Current topics
  - Rehoming
  - Sex-Inclusive Research Framework
  - Enrichment for Zebrafish
- Advising on the 3Rs



## Summary Report: Lay Members' Forum 2025



February 2026  
Animals in Science Department



<https://science.rspca.org.uk/science-group/researchanimals/ethicalreview/who/forum>

# Other resources



[tinyurl.com/ys25nh3w](https://tinyurl.com/ys25nh3w)

## The AWERB directory



- [Induction for AWERB members](#)
- [Ethical review of non-ASPA animal use](#)
- [Culture of Care](#)
- [Cage cleaning: mice and rats](#)
- [Humane Killing](#)
- [Visiting the animal unit](#)
- [Environmental enrichment for zebrafish](#)
- [Refined methods of genotyping zebrafish](#)
- [The AWERB Dictionary: A handy guide for AWERB members](#)
- [Scientist AWERB engagement](#)
- [Roadmap to reduce severe suffering](#)
- [Avoid mortality in animal research and testing](#)
- [Questions to ask about replacement](#)
- [Providing ethical advice](#)

[rspca.org.uk/awerb](https://rspca.org.uk/awerb)

# 7<sup>th</sup> International Focus on Severe Suffering meeting

## 'Progress in Refinement: Addressing Severe Suffering Across Disciplines'



**Madrid, Spain**



**22 - 23 June 2026**

Register [here](#) for  
this **FREE** event

Sessions will include:

- Case studies in oncology
- Case studies in neuroscience
- Case studies in infectious diseases
- Compassion fatigue
- Workshop on the Roadmap to reducing severe suffering



For more information, email: [animalsinscience@rspca.org.uk](mailto:animalsinscience@rspca.org.uk)

**FOCUS ON**   
**SEVERE SUFFERING**

**RSPCA**   
**ANIMALS IN SCIENCE**

# Questions ...?

[animalsinscience@rspca.org.uk](mailto:animalsinscience@rspca.org.uk)



# The Scientific Perspective



## Dr Stuart Greenhill

Dr Stuart Greenhill is a Reader in Neuroscience within the School of Medicine, Pharmacy and Biosciences at Aston University. With a background in pharmacology and electrophysiology, and expertise in cellular and network neuroscience, his research is focussed on the contribution of synaptic plasticity to brain development and the emergence of neurological conditions such as epilepsy.

# Legislation and Guidance

The requirement for AWERBs is outlined in ASPA and is implemented through section 2C licence conditions. The Act allows discretion as to additional AWERB membership beyond named persons. Guidance issued under section 21 of ASPA sets out the Secretary of State's expectation that this discretion should be exercised to include wider, including lay and independent, perspectives in order to support ethical review and public confidence.

## ANIMALS (SCIENTIFIC PROCEDURES) ACT 1986 Conditions in section 2C licences

6.—(1) The licence holder is required to have established, and to maintain, an Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body.

(2) The Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body must consist at least of—

- the named animal welfare officer and named veterinary surgeon,
- if this licence authorises the application of regulated procedures to protected animals at the establishment, the holder of a project licence which specifies the establishment as a place where regulated procedures may be carried out, or another person with suitable scientific credentials acceptable to the Secretary of State, and
- such other persons as may be specified in guidance issued by the Secretary of State.



Home Office

Guidance on the  
Operation of the  
Animals (Scientific  
Procedures) Act 1986

### Minimum membership

- At least one NACWO and NVS
- Scientific Member (if user establishment)
- You should ensure establishment NIOs and NTCOs are actively involved with the AWERB

### Additional members

- “We expect establishment licence holders to arrange for their AWERBs to actively seek a wider membership”:
  - Views of people who do not have responsibilities under ASPA
  - One or more who are independent

# Brief history of me

- BSc Pharmacology, University of Edinburgh
- PhD Neuropharmacology, Bath University
- Postdoc career across Edinburgh, Warwick, Cardiff
- Faculty at Aston since 2016
- Electrophysiologist, from human tissue/total replacement to *in vivo* telemetry and long-term recordings
- PiL Holder >20 years, PPL holder at various points over the last 10 years, AWERB member and NIO

# All AWERBs are different

- Some will be self-contained
- Some will be divided into specialist groups
- Some will be mostly concerned with (lots) of PPL applications and retrospective assessments
- Some will be very frequent, some less so
- Some will have 2-3 species, some >10

**All of them can benefit from a layperson's perspective, and an outside view**

# Laypeople I have known

- Academics from other departments
  - Sociology
  - Business
  - History
- Professional Services staff
  - Security
  - Estates
  - Health and Safety
- Senior administrators
  - Registrar
  - Senior Counsel
  - Financial Management
- “Semi-independent”
  - University Council
  - Adjunct Staff
  - Emeritus Staff

# Everybody loves peer review

- Having a layperson puts fresh eyes on to old processes
  - Means you have to explain *why* you're doing something
  - Helps craft non-technical summaries that are actually useful
  - Lets you see the wood for the trees
- “But they're not a (scientist/vet/medic/whatever)”
  - Good! Enables you to overcome dogma
  - They are usually very qualified in their own field
  - Can often bring their expertise to the fore (risk management etc)

# Independent Members

- Worth bringing in even if not to every AWERB
  - Often very much not a layperson
  - Less worried about internal politics
  - Can help enable more robust review of certain processes...
- Get an external perspective however you can
  - Even if it's your NVS, often they are not university/company employees
  - Just remember that Lay and Independent are not the same thing!

# The Lay Perspective

## Jason Booth

Jason Booth previously worked as a Financial Clerk for the Biomedical Services Unit (BMSU) at the University of Birmingham (UoB), where he also provided administrative support to the named people working at BMSU. He now works in Public Sector Procurement & Supply Chain Management, ensuring ethical practices in supply chains and responsible spending of public funds. He volunteered to sit on the UoB AWERB because he wanted to support beneficial welfare outcomes for animals in research and contribute to the ethical oversight of Animal Research.

# AWERB: Lay Member

Jason Booth

# Introduction

## My background

- I'm an independent lay member the University of Birmingham (UoB) AWERB
- I've previously worked for the Biomedical Services Unit (BMSU) at UoB as a Financial Clerk
- I currently work in Public Sector Procurement



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM



# Journey to AWERB

## What led me to AWERB?

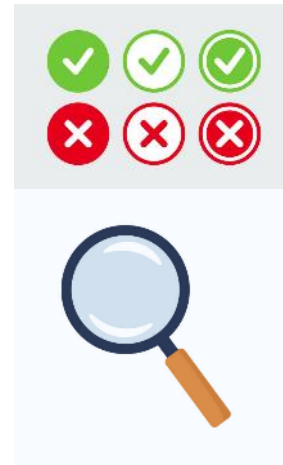
- My recent work has focused on interpreting and translating legislation into policy which I feel lacks compassion
- Awareness of and adhering to high ethical standards has been an important aspect of my work
- Animals have fewer safeguards to protect them from harm – supporting the safeguards that are in place is important



# Journey to AWERB

What does ethics mean to me?

- Abridged dictionary definition: principles of right and wrong
- Transparency
- Willingness to be challenged and earnestly and constructively engaging that challenge
- I often associate ethical practices with compassion outcomes



# Journey to AWERB

## Ethics and Animal Research

- Is Animal Research Ethical? I don't know, but it's a very important question to keep asking
- I believe ethical oversight is essential
- Better welfare outcomes for animals will generally lead to higher quality data for researchers



# AWERB Activity

What do I hope to achieve on the AWERB

- Contribute to ethical oversight of Animal Research
- Support transparency and accessibility
- Advocate for animal welfare and humane animal research



# AWERB Activity

UoB AWERB format

**Circulation** PPL papers are circulated to the committee ahead of a meeting

**Presentation** PI is invited to give a short presentation to the committee to supplement the PPL

**Question** The committee is given the opportunity to ask the PI follow up questions

**Deliberation** The committee deliberates on whether to support submission of the PPL

# AWERB Activity

My general approach to AWERB

- Taking the opportunity to engage with AWERB and being a presence on the committee
- Ask fundamental questions
- Contribute proportionally and listen to the subject matter experts on the committee



# AWERB Activity

## Non-technical Summary

- Focus on the Non-technical Summary:
  - **Language** – minimise ambiguity, particularly considering the prevalence of A.I.
  - **Understandability** – will the public be able to comprehend the NTS
  - **Representative** – does the NTS accurately represent the research and the reality of the welfare impacts

# AWERB Activity

## Animal Welfare

- Animal Welfare is a priority discussion point:
  - **Animal Experience** – focus on the “what will be done to the animal” section – is this representative and does it meet the committee’s expectations?
  - **Welfare Impacts & Mitigations** – focus on the “expected impacts” section – does this provide a comprehensive description of likely impacts and are applicable mitigations also listed?

# AWERB Activity

## Summary

- Why did I volunteer to sit on the UoB AWERB?
  - I was aware of the AWERB and wanted to support its work
  - Ethics is an important aspect of my current work
- How do I approach my role on the AWERB?
  - Engage and ask questions
  - Focus my attention on the non-technical aspects

Thank You

# The Independent Perspective



## **Dr Jessica Eddy**

Dr Jessica Eddy joined the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs) as a Regional Programme Manager for the GW4 Alliance in 2018 and is now part of the Training & Engagement Team which facilitates and accelerates the uptake and integration of the 3Rs into research practice across the UK. Jess currently sits on three AWERBs as an independent member.



National Centre  
for the Replacement  
Refinement & Reduction  
of Animals in Research

# The value independent members bring to AWERBs

**Dr Jessica Eddy**

NC3Rs Programme Manager

**ASC AWERB hub workshop**

23 April 2026

# What are independent members?

*“...in order to help ensure the integrity of the process, we expect establishment licence holders to arrange for their AWERBs to actively seek a wider membership, taking into account, in a transparent manner, the views of people who do not have responsibilities under ASPA, as well as one or more persons who are independent of the establishment.”*

## **HO Guidance on the operation of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986**

*“In practice, people from diverse disciplines may be regarded as lay, and may be recruited either from within the establishment or be entirely independent from it. It is possible to have a ‘lay’ member who works at the establishment, but is not involved in the science (e.g. an administrator). It could be argued that such a member is not truly independent, but the right person can still bring a valuable lay perspective. It is also possible to have a completely independent member, who is not connected to the establishment in any way, but who has a scientific or animal welfare background so is not really ‘lay’.”*

## **RSPCA and LASA, 2026, Guiding Principles on Good Practice for Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies (4th edition)**

# What advantages do independent members bring?

## **Independence and objectivity**

- Independence from the establishment and/or animal research activities.
- Unbiased scrutiny.
- Balanced decision making.
- Challenge the “this is how things are usually done” mindset.

## **A broader perspective**

- Different knowledge background and/or expertise.
- Stimulate new or different ways of thinking about the ethical, animal welfare and scientific issues.

## **Strengthen the 3Rs**

- Highlight opportunities or issues that internal staff may miss.

# What advantages do independent members bring?

## **Enhance transparency and public confidence**

- Contributes to an open and transparent review process.
- Enhances public confidence.
- Supports institutional credibility and trust in animal research oversight.

## **Contribute to a culture of care**

- Encourages open discussion.
- Ethical self criticism.

**Lay independent members also help to ensure communication is accessible and decisions are understandable to non-specialists.**

# How can AWERBs make effective use of independent members?

## **Be clear about the purpose of the independent role**

- Independent members are most effective when everyone understands why they are there.
- Explicitly articulate this role in AWERB terms of reference.

## **Thoughtful recruitment**

- Recruit for independence *and* confidence.
- Avoid tokenistic appointments.

## **Provide structured, ongoing induction and support**

- Provide a tailored introduction and peer support.
- Offer refresher sessions.

# How can AWERBs make effective use of independent members?

## **Support open challenge**

- Chairs actively invite independent members to comment.
- Time is built in explicitly for ethical reflection, not just technical review.
- Prevent dominance by technical experts.

## **Involve independent members beyond meetings**

- 3Rs strategies.
- Policy development.
- Public engagement materials.

## **Review the effectiveness of independence over time**

- Periodically reflect on whether independent membership is functioning as intended- gather feedback.

# How should independent members be supported?

## **Thorough induction**

- Information on the AWERB, the local establishment and relevant internal processes.
- Key resources, documents and webpages.
- Personal introductions and buddy systems (peer support).
- Relevant jargon and acronyms (e.g. building names, internal committees etc.).

## **Access to the animal facilities**

- A tour of the facilities with opportunities to interact with staff, including animal technologists and scientists.

## **Training opportunities tailored to their role**

- Initial training (e.g. introductions to ASPA, the 3Rs, PPLs etc.) licence interpretation and animal care basics.
- Offer ongoing development such as attending training modules or workshops ([RSPCA Lay members Forum](#)).

# How should independent members be supported?

## **Encourage full participation**

- Promote a supportive and respectful meeting culture where independent members are encouraged to participate and feel comfortable challenging.

## **Promote a culture of care that includes them**

- Foster a culture of care within the establishment that ensures independent members' voices are valued and their concerns about welfare or ethics are taken seriously.
- Include them in discussions about improvements and the 3Rs.

## **Address confidentiality and security concerns**

- Ensure they have access to shared documents.
- Address any concerns they may have with the publication of AWERB membership/minutes.

# Resources

- RSPCA and LASA, 2026, [Guiding Principles on Good Practice for Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies](#) (4<sup>th</sup> edition).
- UAR article '[What is an AWERB and how does it help promote high standards of animal welfare in research?](#)'.
- RSPCA AWERB-UK Workshop '[The role of lay and independent members in AWERBs.](#)'
- RSPCA, 2024, [Induction for AWERB members](#) (2<sup>nd</sup> edition).



National Centre  
for the Replacement  
Refinement & Reduction  
of Animals in Research

# Thank you!

**For more information**

 [nc3rs.org.uk](https://nc3rs.org.uk)

 [linkedin.com/company/national-centre-3rs](https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-centre-3rs)

 [@NC3Rs.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/nc3rs.social)

**Keep in touch**

Our monthly newsletter provides the latest updates from the NC3Rs, including funding calls and events [www.nc3rs.org.uk/register](https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/register)

**Pioneering Better Science**

# Break

Please return at 14:35

# Breakout Rooms: Lay and Independent

## 1. Supporting Effective Contribution

- In your opinion, what is the difference in perspective between lay and independent members?
- How can we encourage lay and independent members to contribute effectively during AWERB meetings?
- How can independence be preserved while still ensuring members feel included and valued?

## 2. Recruitment and Advertising

- How does your institution advertise roles for external/lay/independent members?
- What barriers limit public advertising? How can these be overcome?
- How do you identify genuinely lay members when recruiting?

## 3. Induction, Training, and Support

- What induction or training is currently provided for lay and independent members?
- What information is most critical for new members to feel confident contributing early on?
- How can ongoing development (e.g. refreshers, mentoring, shadowing) be improved or standardised?

## 4. Defining the Role

- How would you define the role of the lay and independent member?
- Are “lay” and “independent” the most appropriate term for this role within the AWERB, or is there an alternative term that better reflects the contribution these members make?



# Breakout Rooms: Named Persons and AWERB Standards

## 1. Named Persons

- Do you feel as though the named role(s) you hold is/are broadly well defined? Why or why not?
- Do you feel as though the named role(s) you hold is/are broadly effective at their duties under ASPA? Why or why not?

## 3. AWERB Standards

- Do you feel that your AWERB goes beyond the minimum requirements? Can you give examples? What are the barriers?
- What are the top 3 priorities for improving AWERB standards?



## 2. Named Persons Barriers

- In our call for evidence on named roles, barriers that came up across many roles was
  - “engagement with ASRU”
  - “engagement with others within the establishment”.What practical changes could be made to help resolve these issues?

## 4. AWERB Standards Barriers

- How can we reduce the time burden on AWERBs?
- What training courses would be most valuable for AWERB members?
- Does your organisation recognise the commitment of AWERB members? What recognition would be effective?

# Final thoughts and feedback

# Poll



How confident are you that your establishment best supports and incentivises their lay and/or independent members?

1

Not at all confident

2

3

4

5

Very confident



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# Poll



How useful did you find this workshop?

1

Not at all useful

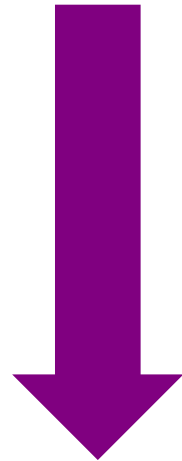
2

3

4

5

Very useful



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# Thank you!

## Useful links:

ASC website – [Animals in Science Committee - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

AWERB Knowledge Hub – [Welcome - Knowledge Hub \(khub.net\) \[khub.net\]](http://khub.net)  
(please email [asc.secretariat@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:asc.secretariat@homeoffice.gov.uk) to join)