

London AWERB Hub Meeting
26th February 2020

Apologies

Apologies were received from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and authorised for publication on members websites.

Welcome and Introductions

[REDACTED] attended the meeting in place of [REDACTED]

Matters Arising

Nothing to report

NC3R #21

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

event schedule in place. Experimental design was still considered to be the best subject for a future event, [REDACTED] will contact [REDACTED] to check if he can still host the next workshop.

Action point: [REDACTED] to contact [REDACTED] about possibly hosting a workshop in 2021

Standard Operating Procedure Discussion

This discussion was postponed, as the speaker was unable to attend.

Brexit Matters

Previous suggestions from last year that, [REDACTED], animals may be waved through customs no longer appears to be the case.

Any impact on animal welfare caused by longer journeys, due to customs checks will be strongly opposed by UAR. The horseracing community may also be an unlikely ally in lobbying for animal freedom of movement. The aim is to have research animals treated differently than those being move for agricultural purposes.

The Channel Tunnel will not allow transport of animals for research or food, the aim is to revisit this policy.

The new points-based immigration system recently proposed suggests that skilled technicians should still be able to immigrate.

Harm Benefit Analysis Guidance Document

The draft guidance document from the ASC was previously circulated for discussion. The group felt that some areas were productive, but there were reservations in others, particularly the language was somewhat impenetrable, and the increased workload placed on AWERBs. It also seemed quite prescriptive in how tasks should be performed. It was suggested that some areas could drive a wedge between the AWERB and scientists.

There was concern that if a formal HBA is required at establishment level, it could present a significant Freedom of Information burden.

Wider distribution of the draft to AWERB members would be helpful. [XX] agreed to circulate his thoughts on the object.

Action Point: [REDACTED] to contact [REDACTED] for specific comments about the draft document

Coronavirus Contingency Plans

Discussion on plans in event of the Covid-19 outbreak escalating mainly focused on staffing levels of animal units, either in the event of an establishment shutdown, or a critical number of Named Persons being indisposed. Additionally, increased demand may make obtaining PPE difficult. Contact lists of critical personnel should be compiled. An exchange of business continuity/disaster plans was proposed.

Forced Swim Test

The Porsolt forced swim test (FST) has recently come under scrutiny, following campaigns by PETA and the AJP. Following Freedom of Information requests, several establishments have been misrepresented in the press as having banned the procedure, whereas they have only stated that they have no current plans to perform it. The ASG (RSB) is planning a consensus document on the subject.

The test is used in two ways. Firstly, as a model of depression, which is not validated. Secondly for testing of antidepressants. All antidepressant drugs show a delay of immobility in the FST. Regulatory bodies such as the MRHAS or FDA do not prescribe what tests should be used on drugs, but the FST is the main one. Should the FST be banned outright in the UK, it is likely that any testing of novel antidepressant compounds would simply move abroad.

Promoting Timely Submission of PPL Applications (update)

The group reported that licensees are still being left without licence coverage due to lack of timely engagement. There is seemingly no push for timely comments from the HOIs

ASC Activities (update)

animal work.