

**London AWERB Hub**  
**Meeting held on Wednesday 07 February 2018**

[REDACTED]  
**14.00 – 16.00h**

A sandwich lunch was provided from 13.00-14.00h for those who were able to attend.

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

A warm welcome was extended to all in attendance at the inaugural meeting of the London AWERB Hub, which had been delayed following the very tragic and untimely passing of [REDACTED]. It was noted that, in [REDACTED] memory, all members were determined to make this forum a success and useful to all.

**2. MEMBERSHIP**

Following the AWERB Hub members agreeing to disclose their names and contact details, a list of names, their affiliations and email addresses was distributed. The Hub was also very pleased to welcome [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] as representatives from the Animals in Science Committee (ASC), and [REDACTED] as one of [REDACTED] Home Office Liaison Contacts (HOLCs) to act as meeting secretary. Brief introductions were given by all and apologies were noted.

It was agreed that prior to extending meeting invites on an *ad hoc* basis to observers, the London AWERB Hub should firstly establish their own remit. Invitations could be extended in the future if helpful.

**3. HISTORY, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF AWERB HUBS**

The ASC provides advice and promotes the exchange of information, and the AWERB Hubs were primarily set up to share best practices across AWERBs via the introduction of regional and multidisciplinary AWERB Hubs. Several workshops have previously been held to help facilitate discussions between AWERB Chairs across Establishments and proved very useful. During March 2017, the ASC investigated ways in which the aims and objectives of the regional AWERB Hubs could be developed, with an opportunity to improve communications between the ASC and AWERB Hubs and vice versa. For example, the promotion of good experimental design, best practices, a statistics guidance document, letters from the ASC to AWERB Chairs, working protocols, open-themed and break out groups could all prove beneficial in increasing the support currently provided for the work of AWERBs. [REDACTED] recommended the ASC's *AWERB Hub Support note version 1 March 2017* document, which had previously been distributed to members of this forum.

**4. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

It was agreed that the London AWERB Hub's terms of reference (ToR) would adopt sections 6.3.4 and 7.1 of the ASC's *AWERB Hubs Support Note*.

The distribution of the London AWERB Hub Minutes to its members was agreed, and a set of redacted Minutes would also be available in support of openness and transparency and in

anticipation of Freedom of Information (FoI) requests. The provision of agreed and redacted minutes will be discussed during the upcoming AWERB Chair workshop, although as [REDACTED] will be hosting the London Hub for the next 3 years, it may be appropriate for the Minutes to be available on [REDACTED] open access website in the first instance. The Minutes will be made available as soon as possible after each meeting and will be agreed electronically, rather than waiting for the next London AWERB Hub meeting. It was agreed that the ASC will also be provided with a copy of the redacted Minutes and that these would be reported into each of the London's local AWERBs, through possibly a fixed AWERB Hub agenda item.

All members agreed that visiting other Establishments AWERB meetings proves useful and the Chair of the London AWERB Hub offered to organise invitations to those who were interested in supporting an AWERB exchange.

**ACTION: To encourage AWERBs to include a report on the London AWERB Hub as a standing item on the agendas for their meetings**

## 5. COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

It was agreed that the topics of communication regarding the London AWERB Hub and between other Hubs had previously been discussed, and nothing further was added.

## 6. PROJECT(S) FOR 2018 – 2019

Part of the remit of the AWERB Hub is to promote the sharing of best practices across AWERBs for mutual benefit. The document, describing the *Internal review process for new PPL applications requesting primary availability under Establishment Licence [REDACTED] within [REDACTED] Campus*, was shared as an example of how this could work in practice and to facilitate discussions.

The AWERB review process for new PPL applications under [REDACTED] campus had evolved over several years and, in summary, now includes a mentor at the drafting stage to improve the quality of the application reviewed by AWERB, an expectation that all current [REDACTED] PPL Holders (PPLh's) will review approximately 1 new PPL application per year, and that a meeting with the review panel members (NACWO, NVS, PPLh and Lay member) and the applicant will be held unless deemed unnecessary by all reviewers.

Members of the London AWERB Hub shared their own experiences regarding their AWERB processes for reviewing new PPL applications, which often varied depending on the number of PPLs to review and the frequency of local AWERB meetings. For example, some Establishments hold monthly AWERB meetings where new PPL applications are discussed and which the applicant attends. The AWERB comments are captured during this meeting and one single person can be responsible for checking that the comments have been satisfactorily incorporated. Some AWERBs reported that a formal presentation from the PPL applicant failed to prove useful whilst a question and answer session was deemed more constructive. The involvement of senior animal technicians on a rota basis was adopted for some AWERBs and the overall PPL applicants' understanding of the AWERB review process, prior to Home Office submission, could be improved in some instances. Although the AWERB review can be a lengthy process, it is normally steered by the PPL applicant. It

can prove challenging for PPL applicants to write and submit their new application well ahead of their current PPL expiring, and the Home Office had discussed the possibility of imposing sanctions in such instances. Some Establishments offer a fast track review process which would be useful to discuss further during the next London AWERB Hub meeting.

**ACTION: To include 'fast-track review process' as an agenda item for the next meeting**

Training requirements for PPL applicants were also discussed. It was noted that [REDACTED] has introduced an online module 5 refresher training course, which will become compulsory from 01 May 2018. There may be scope for the London AWERB Hub to collaborate to capture expertise and provision of advice, particularly regarding the statistical and data analysis sections of new PPL applications. It was agreed that although the NC3Rs Experimental Design Assistant (EDA) will be extremely useful in helping researchers to improve and validate their experimental designs, the EDA is not intended to substitute for a formal appraisal of this aspect of a PPL.

The following points were also noted:

- A database of resources would prove helpful and there was scope for sharing such information via the AWERB hub.
- Some London based Establishments are currently considering embedding an NC3Rs member of staff to, amongst other things, support PPL applications.
- There may be an opportunity to hold a London based workshop to promote the improved use of statistics and perhaps recruit professional statisticians who could offer advice to PPL applicants and AWERBs.

Overseas working poses a reputational risk, but can prove difficult to control. One Establishment reported using the annual conflict of interest form to capture this information including collaboration work. AAALAC accreditation can prove helpful and grant applications capture any potential animal usage. However, it was noted that, at times, the distinction between ASPA and the Veterinary Surgeons Act can be a grey area.

**ACTION:**

[REDACTED] To discuss options for planning a workshop on experimental design and data analysis  
[REDACTED] To gather information on how establishments ensure A(SP)A compliance for research involving the use of animals that is carried out overseas

**7. AWERB Hubs Workshop (6<sup>th</sup> March 2018)**

The first AWERB Hub Chair workshop is being held on 06<sup>th</sup> March. The current London Hub Chairman noted a potential conflict because she is also a member of the ASC. To resolve this problem, another member of the hub [REDACTED] volunteered to attend the workshop as well. It was further noted that, any requests for agenda items for the London AWERB Hub Workshop should be sent to the London AWERB Hub Chair.

## **8. FUTURE MEETING**

It was agreed that two London AWERB Hub meetings would be held per year – one in January and the other during July. All members were asked to send the Chair any requests for agenda items.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Requests for future meeting agenda items included the AWERB fast track process for PPLs; outcomes of mid-term reviews and the dissemination of their findings; addressing responsibilities of AWERBs against ASPA and standardisation of procedures (for example: tamoxifen administration).

**ACTION: To include the ‘fast-track’ PPL review as an agenda item for the next hub meeting**

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The London AWERB Hub Chair will distribute an online Doodle Poll to establish a convenient meeting date during July. [This has now been confirmed as the **17<sup>th</sup> July 2018**