

Meeting:	Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)		
Date:	19 May 2026	Time:	13:30-16:30
Location:	30BB03 / Teams		
Members present:	AWERB Chair NASPA Chair Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) NEER Officer NACWO/HOLC/NTCO representative and BRF Manager Chair of BRF User Forum PIL representative (x1) Academic staff with relevant research experience (x2) Professional Services Staff with research experience (x1) Independent, external lay member (x2)		
In attendance:	AWERB Secretary		
Minutes:	AWERB Secretary		
Acronyms	AWERB – Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body BRF – Biomedical Research Facility ECR – Early Career Researcher FEO – Favourable Ethical Opinion HOLC – Home Office Liaison Contact NASPA - Non-Animal in Scientific Procedures Act NACWO – Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer NEER – Non-Establishment Ethics Review NIO – Named Information Officer NTCO – Named Training and Competence Officer NVS – Named Veterinary Surgeon PILh – Personal Licence (holder) PPLh – Project Licence (holder) PELh – Establishment Licence (holder) RIGC – Research Integrity and Governance Committee SAGE-AR – Self-Assessment for Governance and Ethics – Animal Research URIC – University Research and Innovation Committee UAR – Understanding Animal Research		

Agenda Items:

Item		Action #
1.	Welcome and Apologies The Chair welcomed all the members, including the new independent, external lay member. Apologies received from: Deputy AWERB Chair, NIO, Deputy NVS,	Apologies for absence to be sent to Chair in

	Communications representative, Assurance representative, PIL representative (x1), Academic staff with relevant research experience (x1), Establishment Licence holder.	advance of meetings. (ALL)
2.	Culture of Care 3Rs day (update) This event aims to promote work ongoing on the 3Rs and the culture of care across the University. It will take place over two days (1-2 July). The first day will include presentations on work in this area, including from external speakers. The second day will be a sandpit event – from the pool of submitted abstracts, four will be selected, with potential to bring innovation in the 3Rs. There will be the opportunity for participants to work collaboratively on the ideas. A panel will then review the pitches, and the winning group will be awarded seed funding to support the development of their project. The programme is currently being developed and will be circulated once confirmed.	
3.	Approval of minutes and update on action log Previous meeting minutes (March 2026) were reviewed for accuracy and approved. 10/24: Webpage Working Group – Progress has been made, and the work is now in the latter stages of development. Once it reaches an appropriate stage, it will be circulated to the group for comment. The aim is to have it ready ahead of the Culture of Care 3Rs event. To provide an update at the next meeting in July 2026. 19/24: Communication planning on animal ethics. This links to the webpage work (action 10/24), but also includes wider communication activities, such as visiting Schools across the University to provide an update on the different animal ethics committees and replacement activities. To provide an update at the next meeting in July 2026. 10/25: NEER support – please see item 5 in the minutes for an update on NEER support. 12/25: 3Rs assessment tools – this is currently on hold with the NC3Rs. The broader issue of the integration of 3Rs at the University level was also highlighted, and potentially having a 3Rs Champion, to promote activities in this area.	Carried forward Carried forward On-going On-going

	14/25: Placements Team and screening of animal-related student placements. It was noted that a new placement is going to be set up in Argentina, involving animal work. It can only go ahead if the work being undertaken is in line with UK legislation and University expectations. This will come under NEER. 15/24: Tissue sharing platform – this is working well and tissues are being utilised. 1/26: Culture of Care/3Rs event – please see the update under item 2 in the minutes. 2/26: Statistician to support AWERB – The statistician role on AWERB has been vacant for some time. Members and licence applicants have identified a need for statistical input to support researchers developing project licence applications, particularly in relation to experimental design, pilot studies, sample-size justification and planned analyses. This support is also important for ensuring that licences and proposed programmes of work meet the required statistical and experimental-design standards. An in-house statistician with relevant expertise in experimental design has now been identified. They currently provide statistical support to students and are considered well placed to contribute to AWERB. Funding to support their involvement in the committee is being finalised and is expected to be agreed shortly.	On-going On-going On-going On-going
4.	Named Persons reports: NVS: Follow up of previously reported issues with mice with clinical signs a few days after surgical procedures under PP0204823 - NVS is performing physical checks of the animals before they undergo surgery and after surgery. Any mice with health concerns are not undergoing surgery. The dietary supplements they receive post-surgery have also been changed (high fat diet treats) to help with the recovery. On 23 April, 20 mice, under PP0000000, received a local anaesthetic drug (Bupivacaine), instead of an opioid drug (Buprenorphine), together with a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (Meloxicam), as part of the analgesic	

	protocol during optic nerve crush procedure. The PIL prepared the wrong drug combination. Three of the mice showed some scaring tissue on 28 April, probably associated with insufficient pain relief in the first few days after the procedure. Animals were then provided with an extra 3 days of Buprenorphine+Meloxicam. The animals maintained their weights through the experiment and did not show signs of pain at any point. Measures have been put in place to prevent further issues when preparing drugs. On 12 May, a cage of 3 mice belonging to the environmental enrichment project (which started on 5 May) was found without food inside the cage, and the mice had lost weight. In this experiment, larger cages are used without a food hopper, with food scattered instead, so that the mice have to forage for it, as part of environmental enrichment. However, this can make it difficult to monitor, as food can get buried in the bedding. Measures have been put in place to prevent future events. This includes filling up a food hopper (which would be used in the standard cages) and getting this poured into the corner of the cage, rather than relying on scattering handfuls of food. It was also noted that, as part of the enrichment protocol, the mice are provided with high-fat diet treats. NACWO: The environmental enrichment study started on 5 May. There was some fighting when the mice were moved to the larger cages, even though the mice were kept in their same cohorts. Additional houses and tunnels were provided and they are being monitored. NTCO/HOLC: There was an unannounced Home Office visit on 29 April, with two inspectors. A draft copy of the report has now been received. There was one minor finding, which was some cage cards did not have the start date of the protocol on the front (although it was on the back). This is a standard condition for the PILs to ensure start dates are added to the front of the card. All cards were updated after the visit. There were also three recommendations to consider: • Central database or adding disposal record to the current spreadsheet.
--	--

	• Removing rooms not currently used off the establishment licence. • A central log of NVS visits and findings. NASPA Chair: 9 SAGE-AR submissions, with 4 NASPA applications, received since 27 March 2026. It was noted that the documentation for the Veterinary Biobank application has been received, and due to its wider implications, will be circulated to AWERB for information/comment following full NASPA review and responses from applicants. NEER Officer: NEER received a revised application (OUT095b). Feedback on the initial application was that it could not be supported due to an unpermitted protocol and the severe severity classification. The revised application was reviewed by the same reviewers, who unanimously found that these points had been addressed, and the application has now been approved. Committee agreed that this represents an excellent example of how NEER improved animal welfare through the review process. User Forum Chair: The environmental enrichment project started on 5 May and will run for two months. Thanks were expressed to all those involved in supporting the project, including acknowledgment of the financial support received. It was also noted that the User Forum Chair will be stepping down (please see item 5 in the minutes for more details), and that the NC3Rs 3Rs assessment tool is currently on hold. NIO: No ethical concerns to report. NIO provided a comprehensive report with articles, papers, resources, and training information.	
5.	Committee member updates The User Forum Chair will be stepping down and the AWERB Chair expressed thanks for their long-standing contribution. The User Forum Chair is an important role, acting as a conduit between the Users and AWERB. The AWERB Chair will seek expressions of interest from current licence holders. The current User Forum Chair also suggested the	3/26 AWERB Chair

	possibility of an initial co-chairing arrangement to support the transition process. It was further noted that the current User Forum Chair will move into the role of Deputy Chair of NEER.	
6.	Ratify PPL updates The PPL application discussed at the AWERB meeting on 24 March (to further understand the pathogenesis of a neglected tropical disease, caused by a bacterial disease of skin) has been approved by AWERB. The comments raised by AWERB on the PPL application, discussed at the AWERB meeting on 28 January (one health vaccine technologies), are in the process of being addressed by the researcher.	
7.	Any other business One Freedom of Information request was received regarding animal work on a species not studied at Surrey; a nil return was provided.	
Next AWERB committee meeting: 21 July 2026 13:30-16:30 (Teams)		13:30-16:30