



PHE AWERB: terms of reference

1. Role of the AWERB

The AWERB is a local framework acting to ensure that:

- the use of animals is carefully considered and justified
- account is taken of all possibilities for reduction, refinement and replacement (the 3Rs)
- high standards of accommodation and care are achieved and maintained
- the 4 commitments of the Understanding Animals in Research (UAR) Concordat are maintained (see below)

2. Organisation, management and membership

The Home Office requires that all use of animals regulated by the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (ASPA) 1986 should be subject to consideration by an AWERB.

PHE has 3 establishments performing research using animals:

1. PHE Centre for Radiation.
2. Chemical and Environmental Hazards (CRCE) Chilton.
3. PHE Colindale and PHE Porton.

Each establishment has a Place Establishment Licence (PEL) approving its suitability for performing such research, and its own AWERB.

All studies carried out under ASPA require a Project Licence (PPL) and individuals performing procedures on animals require a Personal Licence (PIL).

The Place Establishment Licence Holder (PELH) has overall responsibility for the implementation of ASPA and the operation of the AWERB. At each PHE establishment support is required by:

- the Chair
- the Secretary
- a Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO) – responsible for the care and welfare of animals within the establishment
- a Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) – provides advice on the health, welfare and treatment of animals within the establishment
- a Named Training and Compliance Officer (NTCO) – responsible for continued training requirements (including records) of those dealing with animals within the establishment
- a Named Information Officer (NIO) – ensures those dealing with animals have access to any information they need about the species they are using
- a Named Compliance Officer (NCO) – (usually the PELH) ensures compliance with ASPA and PEL requirements
- a Home Office Liaison Contact (HOLC) – communicates with the Home Office involving licencing matters and disseminates relevant information from the Home Office to AWERB and those dealing with animals within the establishment
- the manager of the animal facility
- an animal technician
- a PPL holder
- a PIL holder
- a lay person

3. Minimum AWERB membership required by ASPA

NACWO, NVS and one lay member plus a scientist for establishments using animals for research.

4. Aims

PHE AWERBs will:

- promote awareness of animal welfare and the 3Rs
- provide a forum for open discussion on all matters related to animal welfare
- provide independent ethical advice to the PELH, particularly with respect to project licence application and standards of animal care and welfare
- provide support to named people and other staff dealing with animals regarding animal welfare and ethical issues arising from their work
- promote the development and uptake of initiatives leading to the widest possible application of the 3Rs
- promote openness and transparency regarding research using animals, in accordance with the UAR Concordat

5. Tasks

Specifically, each PHE AWERB will:

- review all applications for new PPLs and amendments to existing PPLs, considering how the 3Rs are being applied and bringing local knowledge and expertise to bear
- consider additional availabilities (additional internal or external facilities for animal housing and/or research)
- ensure the best standards of animal care and accommodation
- review animal acquisition, breeding, and usage
- review PPLs during their lifetime and retrospectively
- advise on methods that could contribute to the 3Rs
- ensure all staff working with animals and licence holders are trained and competent
- ensure all staff working with animals are kept informed of new developments (for example, best practice and relevant legislation)
- ensure management systems are suitable
- advise on re-homing schemes where appropriate
- respond to enquiries, and consider advice received from, the Animals in Science Committee (ASC)

6. Operation

PHE AWERBs meet a minimum of twice per year and are able to consider urgent licence amendments either by correspondence or through an additional meeting.

PPL applications and amendments are evaluated in terms of the likely cost to the animals, the expected benefits of the work to society and the balance between the 2 – then scrutinised to ensure the 3Rs have been applied and optimised.

The Chair or Secretary circulates draft applications, collates responses and advises AWERB members, the PELH and the applicant when the ethical review process is complete.

PPL holders report progress, animal numbers and retrospective severity analysis to AWERB as required (a minimum of a mid-term and end-of-term licence report).

Annual animal numbers and annual AWERB reports summarising the AWERB activities over the previous year of each PHE AWERB are shared with interested internal and external parties via the .gov.uk website.

7. UAR Concordat

PHE is a signatory on the UAR concordat on openness on animal research in the UK. Information such as animal numbers and or annual reports from AWERB activities will be fed into the annual concordat report as appropriate to address the 4 commitments, we will:

1. Be clear about when, how and why we use animals in research.
2. Enhance our communications with the media and the public about our research using animals.
3. Be proactive in providing opportunities for the public to find out about research using animals.
4. Report on progress annually and share our experiences.

24 July 2019.