

Date: Friday, 21/03/25

Time: 1.30pm

To: Committee Members

At: Held virtually using MS Teams

Subject: AWERB Operations Committee

Attendees: [REDACTED]

Apologies: [REDACTED]

Minutes: [REDACTED]

Mentioned within text:

1. Minutes

The minutes from the meetings on 24^h January and 21st February were distributed prior to the meeting.

2. Matters Arising

Regarding the minutes from 21st February, [REDACTED] gave clarification about the animal technician swap with [REDACTED] from the Biofacility Infrastructure section. The feedback from the technician that visited [REDACTED] was mostly positive except for some welfare implications that were raised. The technician said the visit highlighted how good the standards here are. [REDACTED] asked that any welfare implications from [REDACTED] that should be tactfully raised should be sent to him.

3. Establishment Licence Holder Report/Update

[REDACTED] sent out an update. Please let her know if you did not receive it. Things are taking longer with the [REDACTED] now. The [REDACTED] will not reply to Standard Condition 18's if everything is ok. However, we are left uncertain about how long it will take them to reply if there is an issue. The [REDACTED] have not yet clarified this.

The [REDACTED] Committee are leading a consultation aimed at strengthening leading practice for the 3Rs. [REDACTED] has responded to this.

4. What is happening in your unit?

█ had a Health and Safety visit. The heat box in the █ room is too big which is blocking the cabinet. █ to send dimensions to █.

a) What is happening with animals in your unit?

No updates

b) What is happening with staff in your unit?

There are 180 people in the department. We are not employing as many temp to perms as it is becoming increasingly difficult to place them. There are now three bank staff. However, █ need a new member of staff and there is a member of bank staff that would like to fill this role.

c) What is happening with researchers in your unit?

No updates

5. Overview of RCA's

Four learning cards were distributed out prior to the meeting. There were no comments on these.

6. Overview of SC18s

█ shared a pie chart with the committee which included numbers from January to March 2025. There were 73 animals, but two of these were instances of zebrafish so each individual fish was not counted. Over half were for unexpected adverse effects, 23 were unknown reasons, 5 were due to procedural error, 3 were for PPL constraints and 1 was for Tamoxifen. The pie chart now includes a breakdown of how many SC18s each unit is submitting.

7. Biofacility Infrastructure

Capital programmes has now been removed from the FOM agenda.

█ improving.

The Building Services position at █ is still being recruited for.

There is an interview at █ on Wednesday.

8. Health and Safety (RA's, COSHH)

The safety visits are continuing to go well with a focus on ergonomics and RPE management. People management to make sure processes are followed needs to be worked on.

The risk assessment review across UBS is going well. █ have been trialling risk assessments on █ and this has been successful. █ and █ will be trialling this next.

The health and safety working group has now developed a code of practice for UBS █ It still needs to have its final review by the Biological Safety Committee.

The UBS RPE policy has now been finalised and circulated, and the signed documents have been returned.

The University Safety Management Hub is ongoing. Ergonomics has been recognised as high risk within UBS. This will be followed up with ergonomic champions, training and open safety culture.

Cardinus DSE risk assessment system roll out has been delayed.

Over the last nine months 20% of incidents reported to AssessNET have been physical, 26% have been mouse bites and 14% were sharps. Over the last three months mouse bites have been 34% so this is still a concern. Sharps training has now been incorporated into inductions in a more structured manner and has been encouraged for existing staff.

There have been discussions around reducing mouse bites. DOPS assessments for handling animals is now mandatory.

There is no obvious cause for the physical incidents.

There are now 10 either established or in training mental health first aiders. Posters highlighting key contacts will be displayed.

On 8th April there will be an introduction to mental health awareness webinar which [REDACTED] has distributed the information about.

[REDACTED] recently attended a health and wellbeing conference. The main takeaway from this was that any changes need to be supported by senior management and line managers should be trained to fill supportive roles due to sensitivity in those conversations.

Occupational Health and staff counselling are coming together to strengthen support for mental health in the workplace. New processes are expected to come into place from August.

9. Training and Competencies

The Assessor Refresher course is now live.

There is a training and assessment webinar every month, ideally for new researchers but anyone can attend. The link is on the Training Centre website.

For the next academic year, the blended learning option for the IAT courses is being dropped. This will now be online with structured tutorials. More details to follow.

The bank staff are doing well.

There was a serious reminder that 6.3 training is compulsory and the theory is taken before the practical training.

The NACWO refresher course is ready, and access will be set up on Moodle. The course should be completed in 3 months.

If you need to request help from [REDACTED], please email the Training Centre with your request so this can be scheduled in.

The PIL practical assessment 3.2 and 8 forms for species other than rodents will be updated by the end of the month. Please use the new forms from 1st April.

10. Any other business

[REDACTED] is the new Biofacilities Manager for the [REDACTED] floor at [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] put the link in the chat for the "Call for evidence: strengthening leading practice in the animals in science sector" so individuals can respond.

The Surgery Group minutes were distributed before the meeting. The minutes discussed the DOPS used for surgical skills. The group were looking at streamlining this and making sure the assessments were done by UBS staff where possible. This is to keep consistency in levels of care, particularly post and pre op care.

This is an ongoing project with the surgery technicians.

Friday 3rd October 'save the date' for a celebration of 10 years of UBS. There will be a buffet and presentations.



█ is part of the Technician Commitment group. Some courses will be running which are free and based around career development for technical staff.

As of 31st March, the waste stream will be changing.

Date of next meeting: Friday 25th April, █, Group 3