

## How effectively are Animal Welfare Bodies (AWBs) driving the Culture of Care, as set out in the EC working document on AWBs and national committees?

As discussed at the international Culture of Care network meeting, held on 10 June 2019 (kindly sponsored by [Norecopa](#)).

An interactive session explored whether, and how, our institutions implemented the five suggestions for AWBs with respect to promoting a Culture of Care, as listed on page 18 of the EC Working document on AWBs and national committees. We used 'bingo' cards to survey which of the suggestions were being put into practice and the results are set out below. Note: there were over 20 participants, but not all came from user establishments.

Number of institutions implementing	The five suggestions for AWBs with respect to promoting a Culture of Care
12	Encourage scientists to work with (and value the contribution of) animal care staff
11	Provide for on-going involvement of project holders in the AWB
10	Provide the opportunity and encouragement for any staff member to raise issues with, and to attend AWB meetings
10	Communicate with all staff (presentations /newsletters/web page) and spread the word about the Three Rs, welfare improvements, policy changes, roles of care staff, training persons and veterinarians, and the AWB itself
6	Provide information on the role and functions of the AWB for new staff and encourage their contributions

Three people were from establishments that did all 5, so were able to complete their bingo cards. This was a very rough and ready poll, with a small sample size, but it appears that more could be done to include information about the AWB for new starters. For people taking specific roles under the Directive (e.g. under Articles 24, 25 or 38), this would be included in local module 50 (introduction to the local environment [establishment]). Maybe this component of the course could be reviewed and/or extended to other staff?

Before the session, we had used an online form to collect examples of how members' AWBs were implementing the five suggestions. These are summarised in the table over the page, for you to consider encouraging at your own establishment.

See: EC Working Document on Animal Welfare Bodies and National Committees - [ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab\\_animals/pdf/guidance/animal\\_welfare\\_bodies/en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/pdf/guidance/animal_welfare_bodies/en.pdf)

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**Culture of Care network discussion: How effectively are Animal Welfare Bodies (AWBs) driving the Culture of Care, as set out in the EC working document on 'AWBs and National Committees'?**

<p>1. Encourage scientists to work with (and value the contribution of) animal care staff</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. hand over and post study meetings between scientist and animal staff</li> <li>2. two way recognition processes and feedback e.g. through AW(ER)B awards</li> <li>3. include scientist and animal care/technical member roles on AW(ER)B</li> <li>4. joint departmental meetings covering science and welfare, opportunity for animal care staff to present</li> <li>5. joint 3Rs initiatives</li> <li>6. at annual retrospective review allow for feedback from both scientific and animal care staff on areas to improve including communication and areas linked to our culture of care pledge - that is then addressed wherever possible</li> </ol>
	<p>In our work protocol, we ask scientists to write a summary of the study in simple terms. The animal care staff reviews the WP and for novel or difficult protocols, a meeting is arranged between animal care staff and researchers prior to the start of the experiment. Any comments and questions need to be addressed by the scientist prior to commencement of the study. We do, however, see room for improvement here (there are large differences between individuals and how they communicate)</p>
	<p>Meetings with scientists and ACTs are frequently held, typically when a new animal model (or significant changes occur) is being introduced. The purpose is to inform about critical issues and to align on operational issues. Less frequently evaluation meetings, in-life as well as after study completion, are held. The purpose is to share learnings and observations and to potentially modify animal care and housing. In our large animal facility an annual meeting is held where scientists present top-level results of their research (value ACT contributions) and where future plans are outlined.</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) For breeding colonies: users have to meet with staff when they start a new line to understand breeding practices, problems that might arise and to avoid waste of animals</li> <li>ii) 2 ways communication system (from user to staff and from staff to user) in place to flag welfare issues.</li> <li>iii) 24/365 availability of vets</li> <li>iv) users have to discuss procedures and related welfare issues with ACWO and DV before submitting project to Ethics Committee</li> </ol>
	<p>Meetings with scientists and ACTs are frequently held, typically when a new animal model (or significant changes occur) is being introduced. The purpose is to inform about critical issues and to align on operational issues. Less frequently evaluation meetings, in-life as well as after study completion, are held. The purpose is to share learnings and observations and to potentially modify animal care and housing. In our large animal facility an annual meeting is held where scientists present top-level results of their research (value ACT contributions) and where future plans are outlined.</p>

<p>2. Provide information on the role and functions of the AWB for new staff and encourage their contributions</p>	<p>1. this is included in induction of new staff to the animal facility (scientist, personal licence holder), they meet with the Establishment Licence Holder who also discusses role of AW(ER)B &amp; who is on it, provides AW(ER)B Terms of Reference, discusses AW(ER)B confidential mail box and culture of care pledge</p> <p>2. AW(ER)B meeting is open to all staff. In vivo staff in particular are encouraged to attend</p> <p>All new staff (researchers, technicians and animal care takers) meet with the AWB. In the meeting, all general information on legislation and internal policy is provided, there is room for questions and we have an ethical debate on animal experimentation.</p> <p>The AWB ensures that new staff is qualified for working with animals and ensures that staff is competent in procedures they perform. If not, ensure that they are able to achieve competence through proper training</p> <p>An introduction course is held biannually (or annually) for new employees working with laboratory animals, where the company's bioethics set-up – including the AWB – is presented.</p> <p>Institutional ACWO discuss AWB role with new staff of the animal unit. Institutional ACWO collects information from all technician and make a single report for AWB.</p>
<p>3. Provide for on-going involvement of project holders in the AWB</p>	<p>Yes they are either AW(ER)B members or invited to participate for other reasons</p> <p>Project holders are encourage to join our peer review group to review new projects from colleagues</p> <p>Project holders and other staff are encouraged to organize workshops together with the AWB to show other groups what they are doing and enable cross-fertilization of ideas and skills</p> <p>We have a 'sounding board' of staff involved in animal experiments that convene several times a year to discuss issues that need the attention of the AWB.</p> <p>We visit all departments on a yearly basis to discuss with them any new issues such as changes in legal requirements, new internal policy documents, the main focus on and outcome of internal audits and governmental inspections</p> <p>The AWB engages with license holders/study responsible by inviting them to AWB meetings to present new models. AWB also engages with license holders/study responsible at on-site 'study visits'.</p> <p>An AWB representative meets on a regular basis with license holders to inform about legislative matters and relevant 3R updates.</p> <p>Whenever deviation from project happens, users meet with ACWO and DV before submitting a report to DV.</p> <p>At the end of the project, holders present at AWB how 3Rs have been implemented and outcome of project.</p>
<p>4. Provide the opportunity and encouragement for any staff member to raise issues with, and to attend AWB meetings</p>	<p>1. AW(ER)B meetings are open</p> <p>2. Staff encourage to raise concerns openly - to Establishment Licence Holder, AW(ER)B chair, NVS, NACWO, manager or in group meetings</p> <p>3. AW(ER)B has confidential mailbox managed independently should a member of staff prefer this route</p> <p>We have a system in place to report and log unexpected discomfort</p> <p>We have a hotline to report concerns on animal welfare</p>

	<p>For meetings, see 3.</p> <p>Attendance at AWB meetings is in general not open for non-members. Issues or concerns in terms of animal welfare can be raised through the attending vet(s), line management, an AWB member or a compliance hot-line.</p> <p>All Technical Officer can attend AWB meetings (though for now they're not very keen to come, but AWB is changing its way of working).</p>
<p>5. Communicate with all staff (presentations /newsletters/web page) and spread the word about the Three Rs, welfare improvements, policy changes, roles of care staff, training persons and veterinarians, and the AWB itself</p> <p>See also our poster on communication (<a href="#">here</a>)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have a quarterly newsletter entitled 'Welfare First'</li> <li>2. We run an annual 3Rs poster event</li> <li>3. We promote our annual global 3Rs, Culture of Care and Openness awards</li> <li>4. we invite external speakers (e.g. UK NC3Rs, mouse handling presentation from Jane Hurst etc)</li> <li>5. we share 3Rs activities across sites through global projects and global network</li> <li>6. We present to staff not working on animals and discuss all the roles described above</li> <li>7. we take staff not working with animals on tours and discuss the roles above</li> <li>8. we circulate 3Rs information (e.g. NC3Rs newsletters)</li> <li>9. we circulate information on relevant meetings e.g. IAT, LASA, RSPCA, NC3Rs</li> <li>10. we have an internal communication tool that we can share 3Rs information through – it's called workplace and based on face book technology</li> <li>11. we have a global governance group that sets policy and provides statements in good practice, this group has a webpage on our internal internet</li> </ol> <p>We have an active website  We have a monthly newsletter  We spread animation videos for important information  We teach in veterinary education and course for scientists (FelasaB)  See 3 for other types of communication</p> <p>The major event for communicating 3R issues etc with all staff is the annual 3R award event. Locally the theme is addressed at department meetings, tour-de-facility, meetings described in 1) and 3)</p> <p>Welfare improvements are shared via emails and links. In the case of tunnel handling, one by one session has been set up to watch videos from UK NC3Rs website and training has been carried out. Policy changes are discussed among staff, implemented for a trial period and then fully implemented. Once fully implemented, AWB and users are informed and trained (if needed). Unfortunately not all staff is fully committed to 3Rs implementation, most difficult ones are those that have been working in the same unit for 20 or more years and don't want to change.</p>