

Developing inductions for AWERBs run fully or partly online

Has your induction process for AWERB members been adequately adapted for remote working?

This question was raised at an RSPCA/LASA/LAVA/IAT AWERB-UK meeting on ‘Maintaining an effective AWERB in the age of COVID-19’, held online on 8 February 2021 ([see pdf file for information on running AWERBs online](#)). This short document on online induction was subsequently produced as supplementary material to the 2017 RSPCA/LASA guidance on ‘[Developing induction materials for AWERB members](#)’.

The existing RSPCA/LASA guidance includes a self-assessment training tool covering three main areas:

- i. Understanding the role and functioning of the AWERB in general, the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPAs) and the regulatory process
- ii. Knowledge of the member’s own establishment and its AWERB
- iii. Personal factors such as personal values, time commitments and expectations

Much of points (i) and (ii) above involves access to factual information, which may easily be provided online. However, there are aspects that are difficult to deal with remotely and which, if not addressed, could have a serious impact on the ability of AWERB members to contribute fully. This, in turn, can affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the AWERB. Some issues and potential solutions are outlined below. Good communication is essential in dealing with all of these and with induction generally.

| Issues | Solutions |
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| Knowing how online meetings are organised and run in comparison with face to face meetings, e.g. what is done within and outside meetings, how to comment and ask questions. | Make sure all members receive adequate guidance on how the remote AWERB process works, including how to access any online platforms. Ensure they know how to contribute and are comfortable doing so. |
| Getting to know key individuals, such as named persons, personally when face to face meetings are not possible. | Arrange for members to meet key individuals and other AWERB members online (or face to face if this can be done safely) outside of AWERB meetings. Make sure they know who to contact for information or support and how to do this. |
| Visiting the animal unit to see animal husbandry and procedures, and to meet and enhance communication with staff. | Offer members virtual tours of the facility, for example using Microsoft Sway, GoPro cameras or similar technology. |
| Understanding practical issues, e.g. relating to PPL review where this is done through the ASPA e-licensing ASPeL system. | Provide practical 1:1 online training in the use of the system in advance of any licence review. Explain what is expected by the AWERB in terms of comments to the AWERB and feedback on the licence to the applicant. |
| Being confident to contribute online; some people find speaking up online easier than face to face, but others find it more intimidating or practically more difficult. | Enlist the help of the Chair to contact members to discuss how best they can contribute during (and outside of) online meetings. They may prefer to start by commenting via the “chat” function, so ensure they know how to use this. |
| Getting an overall ‘feel’ for the establishment’s policies, attitudes and culture. | There is probably no easy solution to this but dealing with all the points above should help. |

It is important to address these issues, especially if your AWERB is planning to continue with a ‘hybrid’ approach to meetings – including members who will be attending remotely – when COVID-related restrictions are lifted.

RSPCA [Animals in Science Department](#) / [LASA](#) Education, Training and Ethics Subcommittee

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