

# RSPCA

## ANIMALS IN SCIENCE

Working together to enable effective Animal Welfare Bodies

Registered charity in England and Wales. Charity no. 219099.

## Our top five priorities for lab animals

**Phase out  
animal use**

**End  
severe  
suffering**

**Strengthen  
laws and  
regulation**

**Challenge  
whether and  
how animals  
are used**

**Promote  
animal welfare  
worldwide**



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# The RSPCA and the UK Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

**Produce resources** for AWERBs

**Hold meetings** for AWERB members

RSPCA Lay Members' Forum

RSPCA/LASA/LAVA/IAT AWERB-UK

**On UK National Committee** (independent capacity) when UK AWERB network was established

Involved with **ENAWB**



## The AWERB directory



AWERB tasks



Information sheets for AWERB members



E is for Ethics



Self-assessment for AWERBs



AWERB member induction and training



For Lay Members



AWERB-UK



Upcoming meetings for members



Scientist-AWERB engagement



RSPCA ethical review pages



Ten top tips for a successful AWERB



Resources from other organisations

[rspca.org.uk/awerb](https://rspca.org.uk/awerb)



[tinyurl.com/AWERB-RSPCA-LASA](https://tinyurl.com/AWERB-RSPCA-LASA)

# What I will talk about

What an effective AWB looks like

Potential problems for AWBs, and how these might be overcome

The benefits of collaborating with other AWBs

What ENAWB is planning



## The five minimum AWB tasks

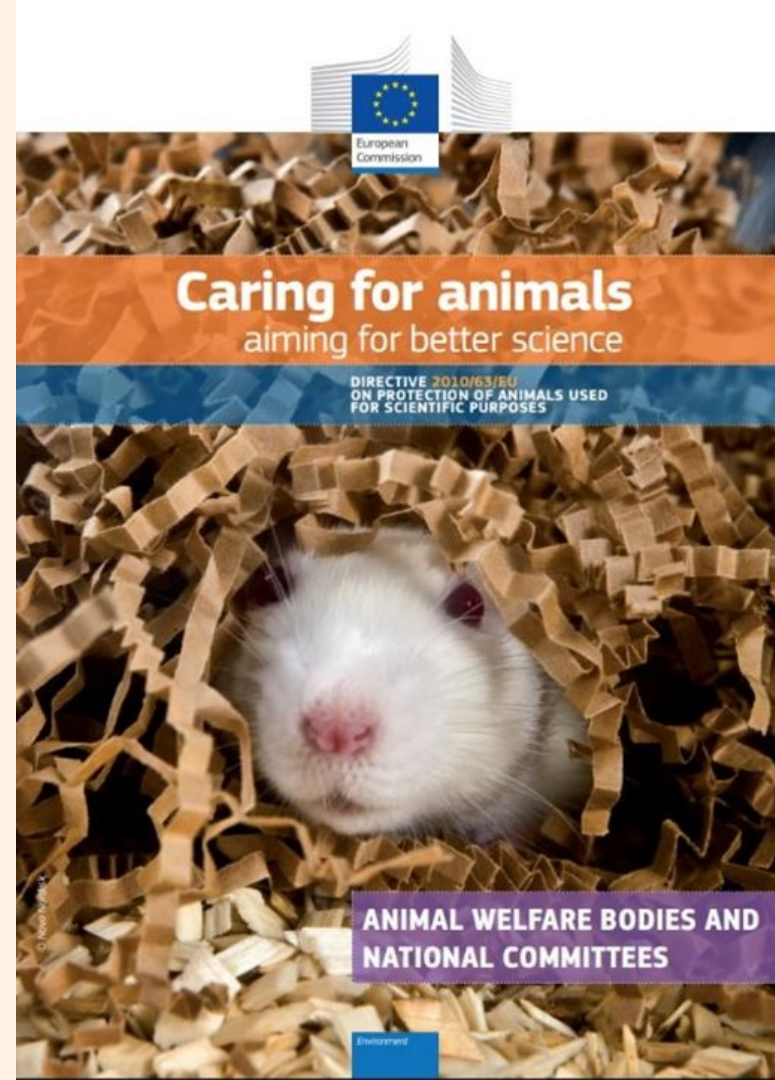
1. Advise on **animal welfare**, relating to acquisition, accommodation, care and use
2. Advise on the **3Rs**, keeping staff informed of technical and scientific developments
3. Establish and review **processes** for monitoring, reporting and follow up relating to animal welfare
4. Follow **project development and outcome**, taking into account effects on animals, identifying further 3Rs opportunities
5. Advise on **rehoming**, including socialisation





## Going above and beyond the minimum

- A wider membership - thinking about this in terms of the competencies required
- Developing effective Terms of Reference, which are supported by management
- Contributing to the education and training framework
- Fostering a Culture of Care
- Ensuring good communications about animal use, both internal and external







### Ten top tips for a successful AWERB

- 1) Ensure that senior management understands and is committed to the AWERB and provides leadership and support
- 2) Ensure that the aims and expected outcomes of the AWERB are well thought through and clear
- 3) Make sure that in discharging its functions the AWERB 'adds value' over and above the work of other external or internal bodies
- 4) Make sure *all* the AWERB functions are addressed in some way
- 5) Think carefully about the selection of participants and particularly the Chair
- 6) Make sure the process is organised efficiently
- 7) Ensure that there is effective communication between all parts of the AWERB and any other bodies that affect its work: ensure that all staff know what the AWERB is for, why it is important, who is involved and how it affects them.
- 8) Be reactive and responsive to the needs of AWERB 'users'
- 9) At intervals, re-evaluate the AWERB's aims and outcomes and whether its operation is efficient and appropriate
- 10) Try to interact with and share ideas for good practice with participants in other AWERBs and the ASC

## 1. Ensure that senior management understands and is committed to the AWB and provides leadership and support

- The AWB needs to be recognised as a body with stature that senior management supports and listens to
- Demonstrable support from senior management, including person responsible for compliance
- Recognition that AWB must have an appropriate budget
- Staff contributions to AWB should be part of individual goals and performance appraisals



## 2. Ensure that the aims and expected outcomes of the AWB are well thought through and clear

- These are defined in the context of the individual establishment and its Culture
- Clear Terms of Reference are important for benchmarking and self-assessment as well as enabling everyone to understand what the AWB is for, and why it is important



### 3. Make sure that the AWB 'adds value' over and above the work of other internal or external bodies

- If the AWB does project evaluation, it is essential to make sure that it does not simply duplicate the Competent Authority
- If a task is performed by an internal body - for example, ensuring all are trained and competent - the AWB could just have oversight

## 4. Make sure all the AWB functions are addressed

- Consider a standing agenda item for each task
- Reflect on how well the AWB is doing and identify a suitable method for assessing this



## 5. Think carefully about the selection of participants, especially the Chair

- Identifying an effective Chair is critical to establishing an effective process
- Good Chairmanship is essential to ensure that:
  - the focus is on outcomes
  - the process is efficient
  - everyone has the opportunity to contribute and express opinions
- A good Chair creates a supportive, inclusive environment and encourages open, forthright discussions

## 6. Make sure the process is organised efficiently

- Check - are there existing systems that work well, e.g. a process for ensuring effective animal monitoring?
- Do not restrict discussions to scheduled meetings
- Make sure that processes for project review are efficient and this task does not take away from other important functions
  - Have fast track systems for non-contentious amendments
- Make sure that there is enough administrative report, and that processes are not over-complicated



## 7. Ensure effective communication between the AWB and all other relevant bodies and individuals

- Explain benefits of the AWB to all staff
  - animal welfare, good science, regulatory compliance, culture of care, public opinion
- Encourage staff to view AWB positively
- Include information on AWB in induction and training for all staff, encourage membership
- Include bodies such as Research Governance



## 8. Be reactive and responsive to the needs of AWB 'users'

- AWB should be accessible to all staff
- Engage with those whose activities it affects, e.g. personal and project licence holders, person responsible for compliance
  - encourage input and support, identify concerns
- Mechanisms for staff to feed back
  - and AWB should also feed back to staff and be transparent



## 9. Regularly re-evaluate the AWB's aims and outcomes and whether it is operating effectively

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### Self-assessment for AWERBs

It is important for AWERBs to assess how effectively they are operating, including whether they are fulfilling all their tasks, to ensure they are achieving their objectives relating to the 3Rs, animal welfare and the Culture of Care. These example self-assessment questions could be reviewed by individuals or small groups, or used as meeting agenda items.



#### The role, tasks and composition of the AWERB

- Does the AWERB have defined Terms of Reference and an annual work plan, including objectives relating to all its tasks?
- Is the AWERB effectively implementing all of its tasks?
- Does the AWERB include the requisite competencies to ensure that it is functioning effectively?
- Does the AWERB have a good collective understanding of each of the 3Rs, and does it advise on all of these (including Replacement)?
- Are AWERB members aware that there is more to 'doing ethics' than applying the 3Rs?
- Does the AWERB conduct a harm-benefit analysis of proposed projects, in a way that is understandable to all?
- Do members know about the Culture of Care, and the role of the AWERB in helping to define, develop and maintain this locally?
- Is enough time devoted to planning and holding meetings?
- Are there effective channels of information into the AWERB, and do people who are responsible for accessing and providing information, either to staff dealing with animals or to the AWERB, have the resources they need?
- Is the Chair adequately supported, and supportive of the AWERB and its members? For example, do they ensure that all of the above are achieved and that all members are able to participate fully?

#### Experiences of AWERB members

- Are members well informed about the establishment's own animal use?
- Are discussions balanced, with all members feeling that they are able to speak and will be listened to?
- Is adequate induction and training provided for all members, including the chair?
- How do AWERB members feel about their individual workloads?

## 10. Interact with, and share ideas for good practice, with other AWBs and the National Committee

- ✓ Belgium
- ✓ Denmark
- ✓ Finland
- ✓ France
- ✓ Portugal
- ✓ The Netherlands
- ✓ Spain
- ✓ Switzerland
- ✓ UK



## Potential obstacles to achieving the 'Top Ten'

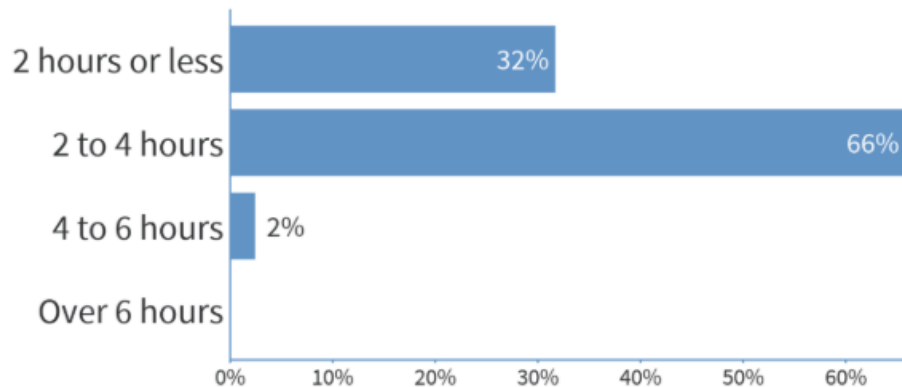
- Lack of support, engagement and endorsement from senior management
- Not enough time and resource allocated to ensuring that all tasks are fulfilled and there is sufficient time for discussion
- Inadequate induction and training for AWB members
- Poor relations with scientists
- Lack of 'committee skills'
- Poor communication, internally and externally



### 3. How long are meetings, usually?

When poll is active, respond at [PollEv.com/pennyhawkins181](https://poll-ev.com/pennyhawkins181)

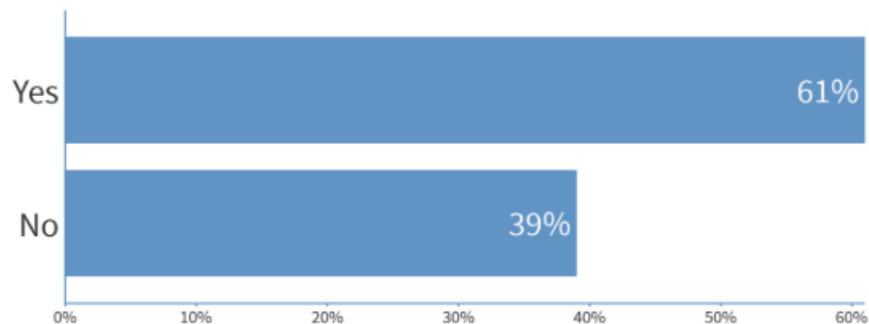
Text PENNYHAWKINS181 to 22333 once to join



### 4. Do you feel there is enough time at each meeting to cover everything on the agenda and have a proper discussion?

When poll is active, respond at [PollEv.com/pennyhawkins181](https://poll-ev.com/pennyhawkins181)

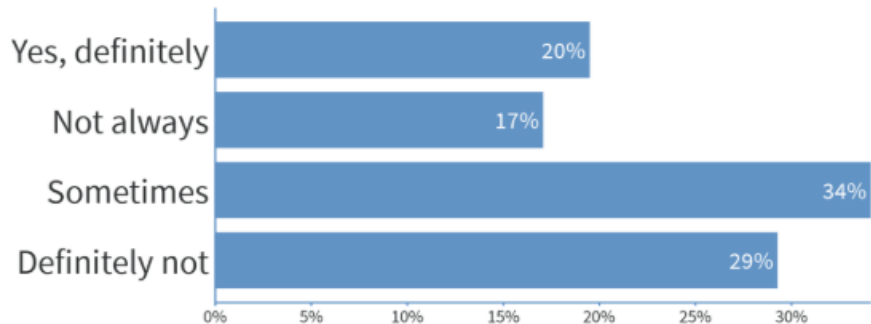
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### 5. Do you think your AWERB is allocated sufficient budget and resources?

When poll is active, respond at [PollEv.com/pennyhawkins181](https://poll-ev.com/pennyhawkins181)

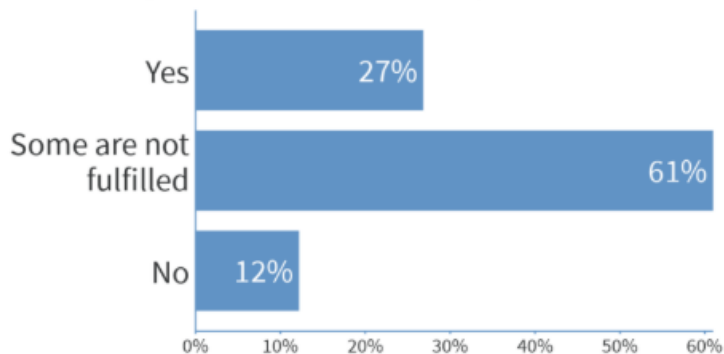
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### 6. Does your AWERB address all 13 of its tasks effectively?

When poll is active, respond at [PollEv.com/pennyhawkins181](https://poll-ev.com/pennyhawkins181)

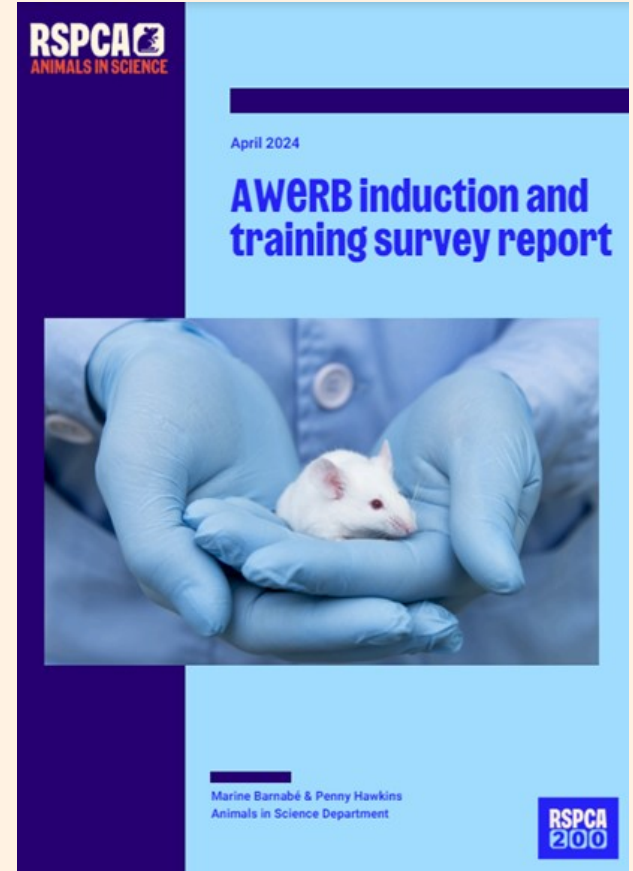
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## Potential obstacles to achieving the 'Top Ten'

- No standard practice for induction and training
- 14 % of respondents had received none at all
- Most respondents:
  - Were personally introduced to key persons on the AWB
  - Had a tour of the facility
  - Completed basic Home Office modules
  - Received the RSPCA/LASA AWERB document



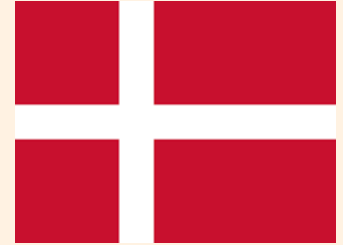


## AWB networks

Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the UK

- Share good practice
  - Fulfilling tasks and functions
  - Membership and competencies, including independent members
  - Processes
  - Resources and status
- Support one another
- Not to harmonise ways of working or decisions!

## Danish AWB network

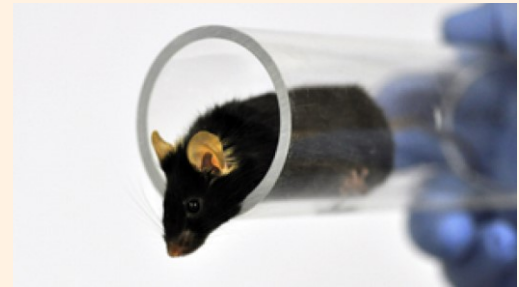


Formed in 2014, includes 46 AWBs

- Promotion of the 3Rs
- Input into advice to the Competent Authority
- Dissemination of good practice
- Exchange of information on the approach to project evaluation, to facilitate a coherent and harmonised approach at national level
- Input into guidance on specific topics regarding the acquisition, breeding, accommodation, care and use of animals

## Achievements

- At annual meetings: severity classification and minimising severity, animal transport, Culture of Care, Replacement
- Implementing the 3Rs during Covid-19
- Input into the National Committee's website on
  - Culture of Care
  - Lab animal housing
  - Lab animal handling
  - Refining procedures





## UK AWERB network

Went live in 2017, around 139 AWERBs

- Initiated by National Committee
- Divided UK into regions, to bring AWERBs from different establishment types together so they could share good practice for running AWERBs
- Each region has a 'Hub' AWERB (self-nominated) and NC member

The **ASC**  
Animals in Science Committee

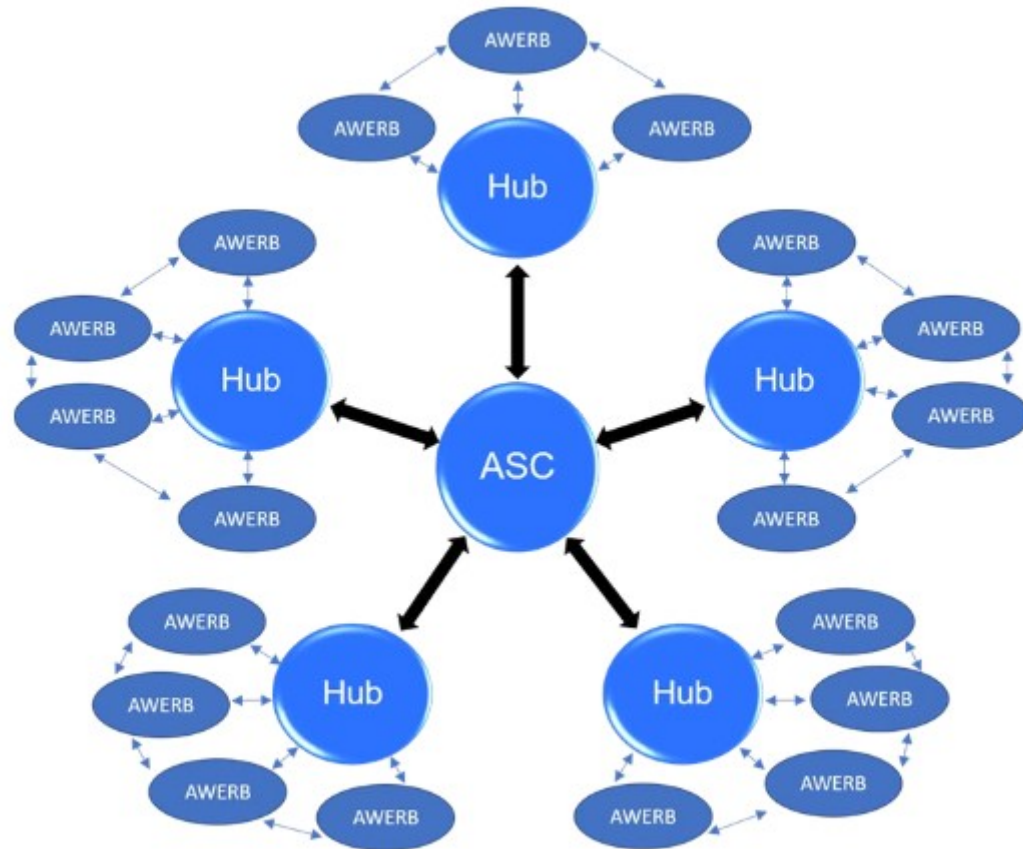
### AWERB Hub support note

February 2021

Animals in Science Committee

Authored by the AWERB Subgroup

Support note [here](#)



## Benefits for individual regions

- Developing a process for authorising and monitoring research done abroad
- A workshop on experimental design for lay members and named persons
- Sharing experiences and good practice for managing AWERBs through Covid-19
- External presentations, e.g. on ethics, openness
- Joint workshops on Culture of Care and joint 3Rs events
- Opportunities for visiting other facilities within the region
- A support network to discuss various aspects of managing AWERB tasks

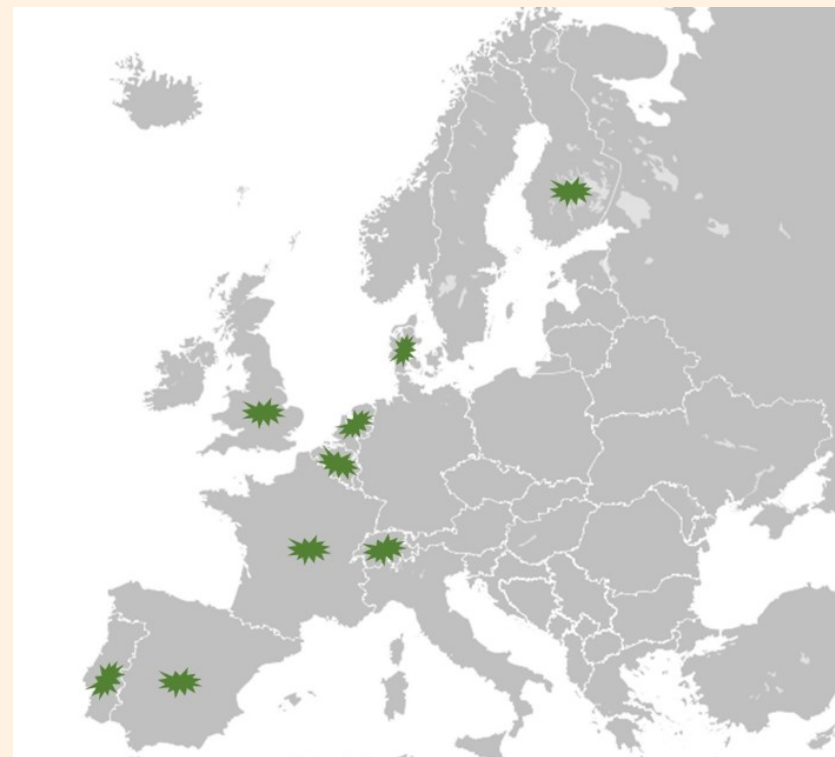
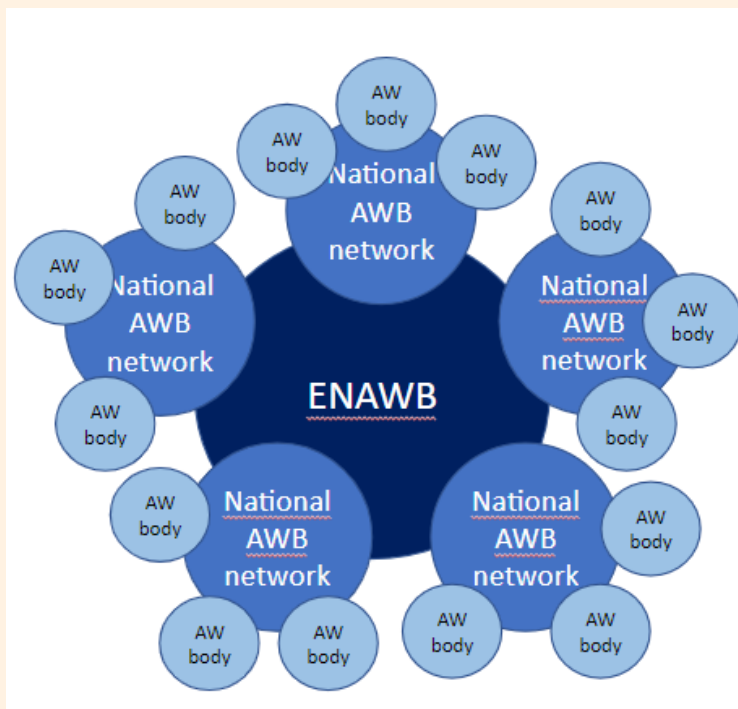




## European Network for National Networks of AWBs

- FELASA 2022: National Networks of Animal Welfare Bodies - Sharing Ideas and Good Practices
- ENAWB was established with the aim of encouraging and developing more national AWB networks
- The current core group includes representatives of national networks from Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the UK, with practical support from the EC





# ENAWB objectives 1

- **Promote animal welfare and facilitate the sharing of good practices between AWBs, through national AWB network representation in ENAWB**
- Help ensure that AWBs throughout Europe are able to deliver all their tasks effectively
- Encourage and facilitate existing and new national networks for AWBs, with the focus on outcomes and impact
- Liaise with stakeholders including the scientific community, competent authorities and National Committees
- Take a bottom-up approach without regulator governance, and without duplicating the tasks of the National Committees

## ENAWB objectives 2

- All AWBs successfully meeting the requirements of Directive 2010/63/EU
- AWBs supporting one another, learning from one another and sharing experiences on how AWB tasks are delivered
- Sharing of good practices on operational matters, regarding national AWB networks
- Discussion of AWB operational issues and challenges, and how these can be addressed
- Sharing of training materials for AWBs
- Enabling AWBs to address Replacement more effectively

## Current ENAWB activities

- 'How to set up an AWB Network'
  - Guidance resource to help countries set up, or develop, their own Networks
- EUSAAT 2024
- FELASA 2025
- Continue liaison with National Contact Points

... what would you like to see?



# Thank you

Scientific Officer  
RSPCA Animals in Science Department

[jessica.rodde@rspca.org.uk](mailto:jessica.rodde@rspca.org.uk)

