

## Council

Hybrid meeting to be held on Thursday, 8 June 2023 at 10:00 am in the Rosalind Paget Room at the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

## Agenda

	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationale <sup>2</sup>
1. <b>President's introduction</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2. <b>Apologies for absence</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3. <b>Declaration of interests</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
4. <b>Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2023</b>		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</b>
5. <b>Matters arising</b>		
a. Obituaries	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Council correspondence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. CEO update	Unclassified	n/a
6. <b>Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)</b>		
a. Review of Temporary Registration for Official Veterinarians	Unclassified	n/a
b. RCVS Delegation Scheme 2023	Unclassified	n/a
c. Council Culture Working Group –amendments to Election Scheme and Code of Conduct for Council (and Committee) members	Unclassified	n/a

<b>7. Reports of standing committees – to note</b>		
a. Advancement of the Professions Committee – unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
b. Audit and Risk Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
c. Education Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1</b>
d. Finance and Resources Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
e. Joint Audit and Risk / Finance and Resources Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
f. Registration Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
g. Standards Committee		
i. Meeting held 21 February 2023 – Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Meeting held 21 February 2023 – Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3</b>
h. Veterinary Nurses Council		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
i. PIC/DC Liaison Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 4</b>
<b>8. Reports of statutory committees – to note</b>		
a. Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
b. RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
c. Disciplinary Committee and RVN Disciplinary Committee	Unclassified	n/a

9. <b>Notices of motion</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
10. <b>Questions</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
11. <b>Election of Vice-President (Junior) – recommendation for confirmation at the AGM on 7 July 2023</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
12. <b>Any other College business (unclassified)</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
13. <b>Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified)</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
14. <b>Date of next meeting</b> Thursday, 7 September 2023 at 10:30 am at Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire TF10 8NB	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>15. Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)</b>		
a. Estates Strategy – update	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 3</b>
b. 2022 Draft Annual Report and Financial Statements	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2</b>
c. Registration and Retention Fees 2024 – 2025	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1</b>
d. Practice Standards Scheme Rules – amendments	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 3, 4</b>
e. RCVS Honours and Awards	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>16. Any other College business (confidential items)</b>		
a. Comments on classified appendices	Oral report <b>Confidential</b>	<b># TBC</b>
<b>17. Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)</b>		
	Oral report <b>Confidential</b>	<b># TBC</b>
<b>18. Veterinary Surgeons Act – Legislative Reform/Governance – Workshop</b>		
	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2</b>
<b>19. Reflective session (confidential item)</b>		
	Oral report <b>Confidential</b>	<b># TBC</b>

Dawn Wiggins Secretary, RCVS Council 020 7202 0737 / <a href="mailto:d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk">d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk</a>		
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## **<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

## **<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
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## Terms of Reference

### The vision of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [as agreed in the current strategic plan]

1. Our vision is to be recognised as a trusted, compassionate and proactive regulator, and a supportive and ambitious Royal College, underpinning confident veterinary professionals of whom the UK can be proud.

### Role of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [derived from the Charter]

2. The objects of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, as laid down in the Supplemental Charter granted on 17 February 2015 to the Royal Charter of 1844, ie:
  - a. To set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest.
  - b. The Charter also recognises those functions provided for in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, in terms of the regulation of the profession, and also recognises other activities not conferred upon the College by the Veterinary Surgeons Act or any other Act, which may be carried out in order to meet its objects, including but not limited to:
    - i. Accrediting veterinary education, training and qualifications, other than as provided for in the Act in relation to veterinary surgeons;
    - ii. Working with others to develop, update and ensure co-ordination of international standards of veterinary education;
    - iii. Administering examinations for the purpose of registration, awarding qualifications and recognising expertise other than as provided for in the Act;
    - iv. Promulgating guidance on post-registration veterinary education and training for those admitted as members and associates of the College;
    - v. Encouraging the continued development and evaluation of new knowledge and skills;
    - vi. Awarding fellowships, honorary fellowships, honorary associateships or other designations to suitable individuals;
    - vii. Keeping lists or registers of veterinary nurses and other classes of associate;
    - viii. Promulgating guidance on professional conduct;
    - ix. Setting standards for and accrediting veterinary practices and other suppliers of veterinary services;
    - x. Facilitating the resolution of disputes between registered persons and their clients;
    - xi. Providing information services and information about the historical development of the veterinary professions;
    - xii. Monitoring developments in the veterinary professions and in the provision of veterinary services;
    - xiii. Providing information about, and promoting fair access to, careers in the veterinary professions.

### The purpose of RCVS Council [derived from the Charter]

3. It is laid down in the Charter that the affairs of the College shall be managed by the Council as constituted under the Act. The Council shall have the entire management of and superintendence over the affairs, concerns and property of the College (save those powers of directing removal from, suspension from or restoration to the register of veterinary surgeons and supplementary veterinary register reserved to the disciplinary committee established under the Act) and shall have power to act by committees, subcommittees or boards and to delegate such functions as it thinks fit from time to time to such committees, subcommittees or boards and to any of its own number and to the employees and agents of the College.
4. The Council is also responsible for the appointment of the CEO and Registrar, and the ratification of the Assistant Registrars. Appointment of all other staff members is the responsibility of the CEO and relevant members of the Senior Team.
5. A strategic plan is developed and agreed by Council to facilitate the delivery of these activities and to ensure ongoing development and quality improvement.
6. A delegation scheme that outlines how Council's functions are managed via system of committees and other groups is agreed annually by Council.

#### How Council members work

7. In order to enable the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to fulfil its vision, and to discharge its functions under its Royal Charter and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, RCVS Council members will:
  - a. Abide by the Nolan Principles of Public Life
  - b. Work in the best interests of the public, and of animal health and welfare and public health
  - c. Respectfully listen to the voices of the professions, the public and other stakeholders, and reflect them in discussions where appropriate, ensuring they are put into context
  - d. Neither be answerable to, nor represent, any group of individuals
  - e. Support the College's vision and work towards the success of the College and its functions
  - f. Live the College's values
  - g. Act at all times in a constructive, supportive and compassionate manner
  - h. Exercise a duty of care to the staff employed by the College, working through the CEO and Registrar
  - i. Recognise the importance of a collegiate atmosphere where robust discussion is welcomed in the formation of policy and multiple points of view are listened to and respected
  - j. Respect and support the decisions made by Council when communicating externally
  - k. Communicate College activities and positions to relevant stakeholders
  - l. Abide by the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee members

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 16 March 2023
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 16 March 2023.
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix.
Attachments	Classified appendix ( <b>confidential</b> ).
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council 020 7202 0737 / <a href="mailto:d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk">d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Private / Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</b>

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## Council

Remote meeting held by Zoom on Thursday, 16 March 2023

### Members:

Dr M A Donald (President in the Chair)

\*Dr L H Allum

Mrs B S Andrews-Jones

Miss L Belton

Professor D Bray

Dr A L Calow

Mr J M Castle

Dr D S Chambers

Dr N T Connell

Mrs O D R Cook

Dr J M Dyer

\*Ms L Ford

Dr M M S Gardiner

Professor S A May

Mrs C-L McLaughlan

Professor T D H Parkin

\*Dr S Paterson

Professor C J Proudman

Mr M E Rendle

\*Dr K A Richards

Mr T J Walker

Mr W A S Wilkinson

\*Professor J L N Wood

Ms J S M Worthington

\*Denotes absent

### In attendance:

Miss H Alderton

Mr L Bishop

Ms E C Ferguson

Mr I A Holloway

Ms B Jinks

Ms G Kingswell

Ms L Lockett

Ms C McCann

Mr B Myring

Ms J Shardlow

Mr M Sundhu

Committee Liaison Officer (CLO)

Media and Publications Manager (open session only)

Registrar

Director of Communications (DoComms)

Standards and Advisory Lead (open session only)

Head of Legal Services (Standards) (open session only)

CEO

Assistant Registrar / Director of Operations (DoO)

Policy and Public Affairs Manager (PPAM)

Chair, Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)

Policy and Public Affairs Officer (PPAO)

### Guests (open session only)

Mr A Guthrie

Ms B Hulme

Mr J Loeb

Dr M Morley

Mr A Webb

*vetsurgeon.org*

EMS student at *Veterinary Record*

*Veterinary Record*

President, British Veterinary Association

*Veterinary Times*

## President's introduction

1. The President welcomed Council, staff and guests and outlined the order of the meeting.

## Apologies for absence

2. Apologies for absence had been received from:
  - Dr Allum
  - Ms Ford
  - Dr Paterson
  - Dr Richards
  - Professor Wood
3. Dr Middlemiss (UK CVO) (Council Observer) was not in attendance.

## Declarations of interest

4. There were no declarations of interest to record.

## Minutes of 15 – 19 December 2022, 19 January 2023, and 3 – 6 February 2023

5. Council had had the opportunity to comment electronically on the unclassified minutes and classified appendix relating to the remote decisions made on 15 – 19 December and 3 – 6 February 2023, and the meeting held on 19 January 2023.
6. A vote was taken to approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix from 15 December 2022 – 6 February 2023:

For:	18
Against:	0
Abstain:	1
Did not vote:	0

7. Professor Bray experienced technical difficulties and submitted a verbal vote that was included in the figures. The unclassified minutes and classified appendix were accepted as a true record of the meeting by a majority vote.

## Matters arising

### Obituaries

8. There had been no written obituaries received. It was noted that the College had received notification that Dave van Zwanenberg, who started his veterinary career in Devon, had died in his role as a voluntary firefighter after Cyclone Gabriel hit New Zealand in February; thoughts were with his family.
9. Council, staff and guests stood and observed a minute silence for colleagues and all members of the professions that had passed since it last met.

### Council correspondence

10. The President reported the following items:

#### Annual General Meeting 2023 (part of Royal College Day)

11. The 2023 AGM would be held on **Friday, 7 July 2023** at One Great George Street, Westminster. Full details would be sent out by the Events Team in due course.

#### RCVS Council and Veterinary Nurses (VN) Council Elections 2023

12. Information about candidates standing in both elections was on the RCVS website.
13. This year there were 10 candidates standing in the RCVS Council election including two existing Council members. There were five candidates standing in the VN Council election, including one existing VN Council member.
14. Voting opened this week when Civica Election Services, who run the election on the College's behalf, would send emails to eligible voters with details how to vote. All votes must be cast by **5:00 pm on Friday, 21 April 2023**.
15. The small number of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses for whom the College did not hold an email address would receive a letter with instructions how to vote, in addition to their security code to allow them access to the unique voting website; there would also be the opportunity to call Civica Election Services who were able to assist members with casting their votes.
16. Ahead of the start of the voting period, the College had invited members of the professions to submit one question to the candidates, who were then asked to respond in writing to two questions of their choice. Their answers would be published on the RCVS website.

### President's Reception

17. Due to the ongoing issues with train strikes, regrettably the event planned for the previous evening had to be postponed. It was now proposed that this would take place on the eve of Royal College Day on **Thursday, 6 July 2023** at the Royal College of Nursing to celebrate what had been achieved by the College over the last year and help it thank a range of stakeholders for their support. More details would come from the Events Team in due course, and the Council was reminded that it was a social, non-compulsory, event, so Loss of Earnings would not be payable.

### CEO update

18. The CEO reported that a lot of the work undertaken since the last Council meeting in January was covered in the committee reports before Council. She highlighted:

- recruitment had commenced for new Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) reviewers;
- there was a series of webinars ongoing exploring themes of the workforce action plan that had been well received;
- there had been an Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) session at the recent Society for Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS) Congress;
- a new popular, bite-sized, course had been launched on RCVS Academy that was about leadership versus management;
- since the Academy had launched nine months ago, 6,157 unique users had logged on; approximately 4,500 had gone on to start a course, many of whom had enrolled on more than one course as the overall enrolment figure was c. 7,500. Additional information regarding user comments, how long courses were taking to complete, etc., would be provided to the relevant committees that had been supporting the individual courses; thereafter an overview would be provided to Finance and Resources Committee. Thanks were recorded for the Academy Team;
- work continued with stakeholder groups since the Under Care and out of hours decision had been made in January; stakeholders had been asked to forward their questions and scenarios that the College would use to form the basis of the Frequently-asked Questions and scenarios on the RCVS website;
- the Mind Matters Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grant application period had opened; Council was asked to direct people interested in applying to the website;
- the Presidential Team had attended the recent British Veterinary Association (BVA) dinner. The Defra Minister, Lord Benyon, had spoken at the event, and was positive about the need for new veterinary legislation, as was the BVA President;
- members of staff and Council would be attending the forthcoming British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress being held in Manchester, where a Mind Matters neuro-diversity stream would be running, as well as bite-sized talks throughout the three days on EMS; 1CPD app; the Academy; sustainability; and, changes to the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS);
- re: College staff: as a service-driven organisation, the College stood or fell on the quality and effectiveness of its people, and it needed them to be supported and engaged, and feel well-developed. There were regular staff surveys, one of which had just closed. Considering the upheavals in the last few years, the headline results were very positive, although there were

always areas that could be improved, for example, career development in a small organisation was often a challenge. There was an all-staff away day planned for June, one topic for consideration would be how to maintain the College's culture in hybrid times;

- committee population for the forthcoming College year (July to July) would commence shortly, as would the budget process for 2024;
  - in May, there would be a meeting of the International Veterinary Regulators Network (IVRN) held in Dublin, which would be a useful event for horizon-scanning and identifying issues that could be addressed collaboratively; thereafter there was a broader international regulatory conference (CLEAR), at which the CEO would be speaking, alongside colleagues from veterinary regulators in Ireland and Canada, about compassionate regulation.
19. The CEO handed over to the Chair of the Council Culture Project Group, Mr Walker, for a further update.
  20. Mr Walker stated that the group had met for its second meeting in January, where there was a discussion about how to assess performance of Council members both individually and as a collective; a bespoke survey would be sent to members in due course.
  21. There had been a lengthy discussion on how Council members could evaluate their own individual effectiveness. It had been agreed that light-touch development was required, with a developmental approach to annual reviews that enabled individuals to grow as Council members and enable them to make their best possible contribution to the work of the College. Thinking was at an early stage and recommendations would be brought back to Council at a future meeting.
  22. There were no questions and both updates were noted. The President thanked the CEO and her staff team for the large volume of work undertaken.

## Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)

### Review of Under Care and out of hours – implementation

23. The Registrar introduced the paper. Council had approved the guidance around Prescription-Only Medicines – Veterinarian (POM-V) at its January meeting; the points that had been returned to Standards Committee had been reflected in the paper and in tracked changes. The College had asked its stakeholders for scenarios to assist with its communications to the profession and a number had been received; those, and the Frequently-asked Questions (FAQs), would be coming out shortly.
24. At the time of the January meeting, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) consultation on the Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMRs) had not been launched. The view of Council had been that the RCVS guidance should take effect not before 1 June 2023 and not after 31 December 2023. The VMD consultation was now live with results expected in c. three months, at the end of June 2023; the question now was when did Council want the guidance to come into

effect? A suggestion could be to leave some time for the VMD to analyse the results of its consultation and let the College guidance come into effect at the beginning of September 2023, which would also give the College more time to prepare scenarios, FAQs, etc.

25. The matter of a review had also been raised at the January Council meeting. It was noted that *all* guidance was open to review at any time, but that Council may wish to have a timescale set for this guidance, for example, in two-three years from implementation; the detail of what was to be reviewed would need to be agreed – a formal process could be brought back to Council in due course for agreement.
26. The Chair, Standards Committee (SC), added that the Committee had met twice since the last Council meeting to discuss items raised. Council was asked to consider the scenarios annexed to the paper in terms of their general direction, rather than getting into precise wording. Additional scenarios or questions from stakeholders would come forward in due course.
27. The President thanked the organisations that had submitted scenarios so far and reminded Council that the discussion should be on general principles rather than ‘word-smithing’, before opening the discussion to the floor. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:
- with regards to the review, there should be enough time to have useful data available and there was a suggestion that a set point, for example, in six months’ time, be put in place to check to ensure there had not been a seismic change within the veterinary profession. Also, how many organisations had submitted questions and / or scenarios?
    - a broad range of responses had been received from the veterinary sector and also from individuals;
  - had any submissions been received that the guidance did not cover?
    - no submissions had been received that could not be answered; some were incredibly detailed, and those answers would take longer to be developed; it would help to have a gap before guidance was implemented so that this work could be completed;
  - thank you for changing ‘*should*’ to ‘*must*’. The College should not rush into implementation and suggest a review point of one year post-implementation, sooner if any issues were raised. The scenarios were good for discussion as they threw up a lot of salient points, however, the most worrying one was the final scenario about prescribing from abroad and should be amended from ‘...*even Stuart*’ to ‘...*even if Stuart*’. Members of the professions and public needed to know how to report those working outside of the guidance; how would it be ‘policed’ and dealt with as it would only take a few instances before behaviour became embedded? At what point was the animal being taken remotely under care, was it before consultation or when you were about to prescribe / operate?
    - the College was not able to design a completely new system for “policing” – there were processes already in place so that the profession and the public could report matters to the College, with appropriate safeguards and checks in place to ensure there was

- sufficient evidence to take action; more scenarios could be produced in relation specifically to enforcement if it was felt that would be helpful. The guidance made it clear that when a person took responsibility for the animal it was at that point the animal was under care and that 24/7 cover needed to already be in place;
- enforcement had been part of the discussion and was why a veterinary surgeon to veterinary surgeon agreement in writing for 24/7 cover was required and it gave the College something it could reasonably request as the regulator. The scenario mentioned was where it had all gone wrong, because it was a requirement to have the agreement and inform the client before veterinary services were offered – if that was not clear it could be re-written;
  - clarification would be helpful. There should be a shortcut to the system via which the Royal College could ask to see written arrangements in place, otherwise it would take too long; find a way to do it quickly and reliably to maintain regulation of the profession;
    - veterinary professionals were required to respond to reasonable requests from its regulator; a reasonable request would be to ask for sight of the agreement with a veterinary practice to provide cover, which should be fairly quick;
  - on page 47 of the bundle relating to prescribing, equines had been added to the introductory paragraph, but in section nine, when it was specifically talking about antimicrobials, equines were not included, was that an omission?
    - that would be checked and amended if required;
  - if a remote consultation was being offered and the client signed up to it, then it could be assumed that the animal had been accepted by the vet; did the vet get to actively hear about the animal before saying it was taken under care as it had broader implications beyond the telemedicine debate;
    - it was at the point of taking responsibility for the animal and making decisions that related to it;
  - enforcement had become conflated with the guidance, could there be a separate communication regarding the remit of the RCVS and what being a self-regulating profession meant? People wanted to keep the self-regulating status but were then angry that it would fall to vets reporting vets; they did not understand that the College could not legally act without having concerns raised; it would be helpful to communicate when it was appropriate to report;
  - September 2023 would be an excellent time to implement the guidance, there was a Council meeting early in the month and it would give staff enough time to work out the rest of the scenarios and, hopefully, hear the outcome of the VMD consultation. From a monitoring and review point of view, 12 months felt right as the College should be able to get data and feedback from inquiries, questions, and reporting of wrong-doing; that did not mean, however,

that the College should not also keep watch for big changes as mentioned earlier. It would be useful to have a visual pathway of under care e.g. a flow diagram;

- at paragraph 2, it that those who had an animal under care must be able, on a 24/7 basis, to physically examine the animal, or visit the premises in the case of production animals, aquatic animals and game. There was no mention of small animals – was it a lack of brackets/comma in the document?
  - o this would be checked and amended if required;
- reflecting on enforcement, it was important to separate it from the guidance, but it was at the heart of what it was to be a professional and the duty of a professional was to report bad practice;
- there was a historical impression that the College discouraged 'blue on blue' reporting and it was a matter of how to better get across to the profession that it was *their* College; *they* were a part of it; the standards were for *everyone*;
- what data was the College currently collecting, and what was going to be considered as a comparative?
  - o other than that which had been collected as part of the review, no data was currently being collected, which was why this needed to start as soon as possible. Proposals of data to be considered would come back to Council;
- 1 September 2023 was a good time to implement the guidance, with data then considered in September 2024;
- think carefully about the kind of data to be gathered, some concerns related to organisations / business rather than misdiagnosis – the College could not get involved with business; gathering data around access to veterinary care was different and could be collected, parameters needed careful consideration and proposals could, potentially, cost money that would need to go to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval;
- data relevant to the issue was key; overseas advice and obtaining drugs from overseas from 'dodgy' pharmacies was happening already and would not necessarily change; tease apart the concerns and collect the correct data. Delay the introduction of the implementation of the guidance in order to have a positive communication program, with other veterinary associations, that would be extremely helpful and reassuring for the profession;
  - o there was the implication that the College accepted that it was OK to prescribe from overseas, but it was clear that the guidance did not allow that.

28. The President drew the discussion to a close.



29. Allowing for a grammar check, and the addition of '*equine*' to section 9 as discussed, a vote was taken to approve the proposed changes to the guidance on 'under care' and limited-service providers as set out at Annex A to the paper:

For:	18
Against:	0
Abstain:	1

30. The proposed changes were approved by a majority vote.

31. A vote was taken to approve the revised guidance for advice and information-only services as set out at Annex A to the paper:

For:	18
Against:	0
Abstain:	1

32. The proposed changes were approved by a majority vote.

33. Following discussion around the timing, a vote was taken to implement the new guidance on 1 September 2023:

For:	16
Against:	3
Abstain:	0

34. Ms Belton and Professor Bray experienced technical difficulties and submitted email votes that were included in the figures.

35. The proposed date of implementation on 1 September 2023 was approved by a majority vote.

36. Following discussion around the timing, a vote was taken to accept a review 12 months after the implementation of the new guidance, with a watching brief during that time:

For:	19
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

37. Professor Bray and Dr Connell experienced technical difficulties and submitted email votes that were included in the figures.

38. The proposal of a review 12 months' post-implementation of the guidance was approved by a unanimous vote.

### Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966 – offences

39. The Registrar introduced the paper. Discussions had taken place at Council in September 2022 around breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966 that it might be appropriate for the College to consider, and the measures that could be carried out internally by staff in various letters, etc., up to and including the potential for private prosecutions. Views had been expressed both for and against private prosecutions but uppermost in the College's mind had been animal welfare and protection and maintaining confidence in the profession.
40. Effectiveness of any process and deterrent value had also been considered, and concerns expressed that the College could be setting up expectations it may not necessarily be able to fulfil. It was stressed that if cases were about fraud or medicines, the College would not be a substitute for the police or for the VMD.
41. The paper set out a proposed Protocol for how the College might have a system of monitoring and follow up with prosecutions for serious cases where it felt to be appropriate. It was suggested that there should be a trial period of 12 months' duration with a 'ring-fenced' budget of £50,000, to be brought back to Council for review. If there had been any prosecutions, the cost, resourcing, outcome, etc., would be considered and decided whether the work would continue. In the meantime, pending coming back after the trial period, it was suggested that activity be reviewed on an ongoing basis at Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee. Whilst the suggested start date of 1 April 2023 was short notice for the Communications Team to get all of the information loaded to the College website, and would likely take longer, it did not stop the prosecution work commencing.
42. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:
- there was currently a backlog in the courts, if the College brought about a private prosecution, how long did it think it would take before it was heard?
    - o timing would depend upon which magistrate you were before, the College had to work within the confines of what was available;
  - this was good, and sent a message to the profession that the College would fight in its corner;
    - o the profession was looking for the College to be more active in that space, but the point was taken about the balance between spending the profession's money and being effective with it; the College should be active and prepared, where appropriate, to pursue things as far as a private prosecution;
  - this was not currently something under consideration with new legislation, was it something the College should be asking for in a new VSA to strengthen its hand?
    - o it was unlikely that there would be a new VSA within the 12-month trial period and it was believed that the College would be better informed thereafter, but it was a point well made, particularly as current legislation had low levels of fines – this clearly could be looked at in future legislation;

- having a policy did not mean the College had to use it, but it provided a pathway should that be appropriate.

43. A vote was taken to approve the proposed draft Protocol:

For:	18
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	1

44. Mr Rendle experienced technical difficulties and submitted an email vote that was included in the figures. The draft Protocol was approved by a majority vote.

45. As the draft Protocol was approved, a further vote was taken to confirm that it should be implemented for a trial period of 12 months with effect from 1 April 2023, with a maximum budget of £50,000:

For:	18
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	1

46. The implementation date and budget were approved by a majority vote.

## Reports of standing committees – to note

### Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

47. The Vice-Chair APC introduced the report and highlighted:

- RCVS Knowledge had reported on the successful conclusion of the antibiotic amnesty, the exercise would potentially be repeated in the future;
- (global stream) a twinning project with Botswana at the request of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) had been discussed, the College was scheduled to meet with a representative from Botswana, but this had been postponed due to unforeseen circumstances;
- (innovation stream) the student innovation competition was under way and open to vet and veterinary nurse student groups. Three of the innovation team would be attending the animal nutrition and technology innovation in Europe conference in March;
- the RCVS, in collaboration with the British Veterinary Chronic Illness Society (BVCIS), would be holding a survey on disability and chronic illness; the Institute of Employment Studies had been commissioned to undertake the design, administration, and data analysis;

- (Mind Matters Initiative stream) there would be a neurodiversity stream at the forthcoming BSAVA Congress;
- (sustainability stream) the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change (UKHACC) had a case study and meeting monthly; the College had been invited to become part of its network of members called upon specifically by media and communications; training would be provided and media outlets would be able to discuss current affairs specifically related to sustainability issues;
- (workforce stream) the workforce action plan sessions were now open for registration via the College's website; the discussion panel meetings were aligned with the seven different ambitions;
- (Fellowship stream) there had been a wide-ranging discussion on how to encourage more general practitioner vets to apply for Fellowship; the Application Review Working Party would be considering this and be part of the Fellowship remit moving forwards.

48. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

#### **Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)**

49. The Chair ARC introduced the report and highlighted:

- there had been a vigorous discussion on the assurance map that monitored the mechanisms in place to provide assurance on the controls and mitigations identified in relation to each risk in the Corporate Risk Register to be sure that the format presented was the best and most efficient way to examine it;
- two departmental risk registers had been considered – the Facilities Team and the People Team. There had been robust questioning, and the departments had items to think about to make their registers really precise;
- at the February meeting, the policy 'deep dive' had been the RCVS Data Retention and Deletion Policy; again there was robust questioning and some tweaks would be made to the Policy as a result;
- the Committee had for some time been conscious of the need to evaluate how it performed, and with the help of the Governance Manager, it was able to agree the format of a questionnaire that was due to be circulated to the Committee shortly, thereafter responses would be analysed.

50. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

#### **Education Committee (EC)**

51. The Vice-Chair EC introduced the report and highlighted:

- the European Association of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) visit had been confirmed to take place 5 – 7 June 2023;
- results of the 2022 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) audit had been received; some concerns regarding non-compliance had been referred back to the CPD Policy and Compliance Subcommittee for further discussion;
- the Committee had approved the Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) database specification;
- there had been a 25% increase in candidates for the Statutory Membership Examination (SME) compared to 2022; whilst positive, this had required further recruitment of examiners;
- the Committee had begun discussions around the percentage of telemedicine cases that could count towards meeting Advanced Practitioner requirements; it was agreed that more data and information was needed, and a detailed report would be put to a future meeting;
- there had been a fantastic clinical career stakeholder event in December, that facilitated further discussions about career pathways and advancement clarity. It was hoped that the outcomes would have a positive impact on retention rates within the profession. Proposals had been agreed in principle from Defra that requested funding to support direct accreditation of veterinary programs at certain EU schools;
- the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC) had discussed EMS requirements of teaching at veterinary schools and a further paper would be before the Committee at a later date.

52. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

#### **Finance and Resources Committee (FRC)**

53. The Treasurer introduced the report, noting that the following items of work were ongoing and would return to the Committee at its May meeting:

- the tender for the contract to run the SME;
- the College's investment managers, Investec, had provided a written report and would also present to the Committee at its May meeting;
- the resource mapping exercise was progressing.

54. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

#### **Registration Committee (RC)**

55. The Chair RC introduced the report and highlighted:

- there had been a 50% increase in overseas registrations compared to the same period in 2021;

- a number of Temporary Registered Official Veterinarians had attained Level 7 English qualifications and moved into the permanent registration category, 50% of whom were still working in the UK's public health sector, which was good news;
- temporary registration applications remained confidential, and the Committee was thanked for the often short notice work it had to undertake.

56. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Standards Committee (SC)**

57. The Chair SC introduced the report and noted that a lot of the work had been covered earlier in the meeting.

58. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC)**

59. The Chair VNC introduced the report and highlighted:

- at the workshop held in the afternoon session VNC had tried to provide some clarity around delegation between vets and vet nurses as it came up repeatedly as an area of concern for both professions. It was hoped to provide some case studies and additional guidance as it was something that decreased clinical efficiency and animal welfare; thanks were given to the College's legal team for the support in this process;
- the definition of 'veterinary nurse' had been finalised and circulated; feedback had been positive.

60. Congratulations were given for the definition of the veterinary nurse; it was important in relation to the title and governance as a profession.

61. There were no further comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **PIC / DC Liaison Committee (PIC/DC LC)**

62. In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair of PIC/DC LC, the Registrar introduced the report and highlighted:

- the annual statistics report had been ongoing for a number of years, the purpose of which was to allow the College to check that no specific sector was being disproportionately targeted or represented in cases that went forward to Disciplinary Committee (DC). As the number of cases before DC were small, the sample size was small, and some people also did not provide enough information, so the College was unable to guess a number of factors. However, the Committee was very reassured that there were no red flags or trends highlighted that could cause concern. The Committee agreed to continue gathering the statistics on an annual basis;

- recruitment for Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) and Disciplinary Committee (DC) in relation to RVN appointed members was just being finalised;
- recruitment for vet and lay appointments to PIC and DC would be launched shortly through the external agency Thewlis Graham Associates; there had been a successful online information evening held earlier in the week to try to reach as broad a range of people as possible, with 169 attendees and a recording available if anyone was unable to attend. It was very positive to see that level of interest in the statutory committees.

63. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

## Reports of statutory committees – to note

### **Preliminary Investigation Committee**

64. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee**

65. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Disciplinary Committee and RVN Disciplinary Committee**

66. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

## Notices of motion

67. There had been no notices of motion received.

## Questions

68. There had been no questions received.

69. Before moving to the next agenda item, the President clarified the voting process on the elections for the internal roles. As Council had moved to a remote meeting, a pro-forma voting form for a number of the roles had been sent to Council to be completed and returned to the Registrar in strictest confidence in order to collate the results. This would be done in the break between sessions of the meeting and the names of the successful candidates would be reported thereafter.

### Recommendation for the appointment of Officers – President and Vice-President (Senior) respectively, for confirmation at the AGM on 7 July 2023

70. In the absence of the current Vice-President (Senior), Dr Richards, who had submitted apologies for the meeting and was not in attendance, the next immediate Past President still on Council, Dr Connell, took the Chair for this item whilst the President left the meeting to ensure procedures and oversight were followed; the Vice-President (Junior) had also submitted apologies for the meeting and was not in attendance. As the item was a recommendation rather than an election, and related to internal roles within Council, no electronic decision had been loaded, nor had it been included on the pro-forma voting form.
71. Council was asked if it wished to have a private discussion, which was declined.
72. It was reported that Officer Team had recommended, in accordance with convention, that from the AGM in July, the incoming President to be Dr S Paterson, and that Dr M A Donald move to become Vice-President (Senior).
73. Council agreed the recommendations by a show of hands.
74. The President returned to the room and was congratulated. Dr Paterson would be informed of the result following the meeting.
75. The President re-took the Chair.

### Election of Vice-President (Junior) – recommendation for confirmation at the AGM on 7 July 2023

76. The President reported that no nominations had been received for this item. This meant that there would be a new nomination period with a shortened timeframe to be an agenda item at the forthcoming June Council meeting. Details would be sent to Council at the end of April.

### Election of Treasurer – recommendation for confirmation at the AGM on 7 July 2023

77. The President reported that there had been one nomination received:



Candidate: Dr M M S Gardiner

Supporters Miss L S Belton  
Dr N T Connell  
Ms L Ford  
Mrs C-L McLaughlan

Date of first joining Council: July 2021 (Elected)  
Current term due to end: July 2025

78. The candidate left the meeting in order that Council could have a confidential discussion if it so wished. This was declined and the candidate returned to the meeting.

79. It was noted that voting on this item would take place via the pro-forma voting form emailed to the Registrar; the result would be heard after the break between sessions.

## Other elections

### Chair, Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

80. The President reported that there had been one nomination received:

Candidate: Dr S Paterson

Supporters: Dr N T Connell  
Dr M A Donald  
Mrs C-L McLaughlan  
Dr K A Richards

Date of first joining Council: July 2014 (Elected)  
Current term due to end: July 2026

81. The candidate had submitted apologies for the meeting and was not in attendance. Council was asked if it wished to have a confidential discussion, which was declined.

82. It was noted that voting on this item would take place via the pro-forma voting form emailed to the Registrar; the result would be heard after the break between sessions.

### Chair, Education Committee (EC)

83. The President reported that there had been one nomination received:

Candidate: Dr K A Richards

Supporters: Dr A L Calow  
Mr J M Castle  
Dr M M S Gardiner  
Professor J L N Wood

Date of first joining Council: July 2020 (Elected)  
(Previously 2015 – 2019, elected)

Current term due to end: July 2024

84. The candidate had submitted apologies for the meeting and was not in attendance. Council was asked if it wished to have a confidential discussion, which was declined.

85. It was noted that voting on this item would take place via the pro-forma voting form emailed to the Registrar; the result would be heard after the break between sessions.

#### Chair, Standards Committee (SC)

86. The President reported that there had been one nomination received:

Candidate: Miss L S Belton

Supporters: Dr A L Calow  
Ms L Ford  
Mrs C-L McLaughlan  
Professor J L N Wood

Date of first joining Council: July 2019 (Elected)

Current term due to end: July 2023

87. The candidate left the meeting in order that Council could have a confidential discussion if it so wished. This was declined and the candidate returned to the meeting.

88. It was noted that voting on this item would take place via the pro-forma voting form emailed to the Registrar; the result would be heard after the break between sessions.

#### Any other College business (unclassified items)

89. There was no other unclassified business to report.

90. The President was pleased to report that Miss Jasmin Paris MRCVS was competing in the Berkeley Marathon 100 and had reached the fourth loop. Dr Connell congratulated Dr Laura Muir MRCVS for being the first British athlete to attain five gold medals in the Indoor European Championships.

## Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified items)

91. There were no new items to add to the College's Risk Register.

## Date of next meeting

92. The date of the next meeting was Thursday, 8 June 2023, at 10:00 am. The meeting had originally been scheduled as remote but following discussion it was decided to make it an in-person meeting to be held at the Royal College of Nursing.

## (Post-break) Results of internal elections

93. The Registrar reported that the following Council members had been successful in the internal elections:

Treasurer	Dr M M S Gardiner
Chair, APC	Dr S Paterson
Chair, EC	Dr K A Richards
Chair, SC	Miss L S Belton (subject to successful re-election in the forthcoming RCVS Council elections 2023)

94. Congratulations were given to all candidates.

## Matters for decision by Council and for report (private / confidential items)

### Estates Strategy – update (confidential)

95. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 – 2.

### Annual retention fee payment arrangements for veterinary surgeons 2023 – 2024 (confidential)

96. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 3 – 5.

### Reform of the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) – Governance (confidential)

97. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 6 – 18.

### RCVS Honours and Awards 2023 (private)

98. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 19 – 23.

**Any other College business (confidential items)**

**Comments on classified appendices**

99. There were no comments raised on the classified appendices.

**Other item to report**

100. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 24 – 26.

**Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)**

101. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 27.

**Reflective session (confidential item)**

102. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 28 - 29.

103. The President brought the meeting to a close.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	CEO update, including progress against Strategic Plan
Summary	This paper offers a summary of activity against the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	None
Author	Lizzie Lockett CEO l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Rationales</b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

## Background

1. The RCVS Strategic Plan 2020-2024 was approved at the RCVS Council meeting in January 2020 and came into immediate effect. The full report, including all of the narrative, together with case studies from the previous plan's successes, can be found here: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/rcvs-strategic-plan-2020-2024/>
2. At its meeting in July 2020, the Officer Team felt it appropriate that an update be given to Council three times a year – in September, January and June – and information about a specific action can be made available to any Council member on request in between times.
3. For each action, responsibilities, recent activities and next steps have been identified in the following table, alongside a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating, to show progress compared to what was anticipated at this point in the Strategic Plan's implementation.
4. Outside of those changes noted in the Strategic Plan table to follow, since the 16 March 2023 Council meeting we have also:
  - a. Called for submissions for the Mind Matters research symposium, and published new strategy and five-year evaluation documents
  - b. Run the elections for RCVS and VN Councils
  - c. Launched two new courses on RCVS Academy:
    - i. Working in the UK for overseas vets and VNs
    - ii. For newly-registered veterinary nurses
  - d. Launched our trial of the private prosecutions protocol
  - e. Hosted on-stand Learning Zones at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress and BVA Live
  - f. Supported the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe's United in Diversity campaign
  - g. Published guidance for practices on meeting our Practice Standards Scheme environmental sustainability requirements
  - h. Held parliamentary outreach sessions, with the British Veterinary Association (BVA), to discuss the need for new veterinary legislation
  - i. Announced the winners of our RCVS Honours and Awards
  - j. Launched, jointly with British Veterinary Chronic Illness Support, a disability and chronic illness survey
  - k. Launched a recruitment drive for members of the new Public Advisory Group
  - l. Written to congratulate Their Majesties on the occasion of their Coronations
  - m. Launched a new animated strategy for VN Futures

## A: Clarity

**Ambition:** to ensure that we have clarity of purpose and that our internal and external stakeholders and service-users understand our role in the world. We will endeavour to become a proactive regulator that remains a step ahead, even in the face of constant change and uncertainty. We will listen widely, consult meaningfully, make confident decisions, then communicate with clarity, appreciating that the final outcome may not suit everyone.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
1. Continue, via the work of the Veterinary Legislation Working Party (LWP) and other groups, to review the regulatory landscape to ensure we develop world-leading, robust standards and approaches that are grounded in evidence and risk-based, in order to safeguard animal health and welfare, and public health, and maintain trust in the veterinary professions.	Exec Office/ Ed/VN		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful event to promote the need for new legislation at the House of Lords in October 2022 and parliamentary drop-in session in April 2023. New microsites built to support the argument – which have been shortlisted for an award. Two educational webinars took place during May with RCVS and VN Council members, and representatives of BVA and the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA). Defra supportive, progress now depends on available time.</li> <li>• First accreditations using the new educational standards and methodology were completed in Liverpool (March 2023), and Aberystwyth / RVC (May 2023). Launched a comprehensive new online training programme for accreditation panel members via RCVS Academy, with positive initial feedback.</li> <li>• The evidence-base informing the new accreditation standards for vet degrees has been successfully published in an international peer-reviewed journal (<i>Journal of Veterinary Medical Education</i>).</li> <li>• Following VN support meetings, there have been three successful accreditations.</li> </ul>
2. Ensure that we are addressing what matters to our stakeholders and that we horizon-scan for issues that are beyond the scope of our immediate view. For example, regulation of new technologies, regulation of practices, review of our concerns and disciplinary process, and regulation of the wider veterinary team and the environment in which they work.	APC/ LWP/ PICDCL /EC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the 'Ambition Explored' sessions relating to the Workforce Action Plan have taken place, with nearly 300 attendees across the series.</li> <li>• Regulation of the wider veterinary team is linked to new veterinary legislation. We continue to investigate and debate the most appropriate groups to bring under any future regulatory umbrella, for example, discussion at 2022 Fellowship Day on behaviourists, and the first behavioural medicine roundtable hosted by the Fellowship Science Advisory Panel in May.</li> <li>• The new concerns process launched and website has been updated. The new Charter Case Committee will commence work before the end of 2023 – Committee members have been selected and training to take place shortly.</li> <li>• New plans for Extra Mural Studies (EMS) published and being communicated.</li> <li>• Report of Clinical Careers Pathway stakeholder event to be published shortly.</li> <li>• New Under Care/Out-of-Hours guidance from 1 September 2023, subject to any matters arising from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's consultation on Veterinary Medicines Regulations. Case studies and supporting guidance under development.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
<p>3. Review whether we can take a more proactive role around breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act involving unqualified individuals, or courses that purport to lead to registration but do not, both through education to end-users of veterinary services, and working more actively to support those wishing to raise concerns with the relevant authorities.</p>	<p>Registrar</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following approval at the March 2023 meeting of Council, the 12-month trial of a protocol for the private prosecution of breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act was launched on 1 April.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Work with our partners overseas to ensure that the UK remains relevant in the veterinary world post-EU exit, including sharing knowledge, marketing our standards and services, and building an engaged diaspora of members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MsRCVS) and registered veterinary nurses (RVNs). Ensure there is a global element to all that we do, and that our international members feel engaged and included.</p>	<p>APC/ FVE/ EC</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue improving engagement with overseas members.</li> <li>Work ongoing to develop more permanent solution to loss of mutual recognition of professional qualifications – paper currently being considered by Defra.</li> <li>First consultative accreditation visit to an EU school under our 2023 accreditation standards taking place in May.</li> <li>Pick up work with World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH – formerly OIE) regarding regulatory twinning project with countries that do not have well embedded structures - awaiting meeting date.</li> <li>Continuing strong relations with International Accreditors Working Group, Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, Mind Matters International and International Veterinary Regulators Network (attended IVRN meeting in Dublin in May and also presented at CLEAR international regulatory conference on compassionate regulation).</li> <li>Have been involved in ESNO (organisation for European specialist nurses) discussions on workforce shortages and retention, culminating in a report to the European commission.</li> <li>Academy course developed for overseas vets and VNs applying to register now launched.</li> <li>There are opportunities to promote and ‘sell’ some of our initiatives overseas but UK work takes priority during this busy time.</li> </ul>



Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
5. Build a closer relationship between the College, the professions and the public by continuing our outreach programme. Review how we gain input from stakeholders at all levels, including the development of an improved process for seeking input from members of the public.	APC/ Comms/ Exec		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment for Public Advisory Group underway.</li> <li>Programme of attendance at events and congresses for 2023 ongoing.</li> <li>Survey planned to evaluate effectiveness of RCVS coms and engagement activities, and review vet/VN preferences, to inform new comms strategy.</li> <li>RCVS Academy gaining good engagement.</li> <li>New iteration of Council Culture Working Group continues to recommend how relationship between Council and professions can be improved.</li> <li>Chronic Illness &amp; Disability Survey for all vets, nurses, student vets and SVNs now live, this will be used into inform and create understanding of the current situation for those with physical, chronic, mental ill health or neurodiversity within the veterinary landscape, this is the first of its kind.</li> </ul>
6. Establish clarity around a data-sharing commitment, and ensure that our views, our data & our insights are shared regularly in an easy-to-search way, for example, easy-to-find FAQ on key issues, insights gained from concerns & complaints data, and self-service facts and figures about the professions. Make available accessible & anonymised versions of the data we hold to all stakeholders to enable them to generate value and insights for the sector.	FRC/ Digital/ Policy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop dashboard on key metrics – identifying key areas underway, to be launched for new presidential year.</li> <li>Data management system review under consideration by a project board reporting to Finance and Resources Committee.</li> <li>Additional data being gathered about reasons for leaving the RCVS Registers – reported to Registration Committee.</li> <li>More work needs to be done on the self-service data aspect.</li> </ul>
7. Plan and implement a cycle of review and improvement for our educational standards and processes, to ensure we continue to take a leadership role with our international partners.	Ed Cttee/ VN Ed Cttee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCVS Academy for accreditation panellists launched, initial feedback positive.</li> <li>First accreditation events under new standards have been completed successfully in March 2023 (Liverpool) and April (Aber/RVC). Evaluation being analysed to inform quality improvement to our processes.</li> <li>Review of AP / Specialist status ongoing – clinical careers event 7 December 2022, and report to be published shortly. Initial framework for clinical career pathways agreed at EC in May – allowing project planning and development.</li> <li>Following implementation of the VN support meetings, there have been three successful accreditation events. ENQA re-accreditation w/c 5 June, Self-Evaluation Report submitted.</li> <li>VN Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training review due to commence autumn 2023.</li> </ul>
8. Ensure clarity of appeal across all the areas where we make decisions, modernising where appropriate; where appeal is unavailable, clearly justify.	Legal services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration appeals process to be considered now MRPQ no longer exists.</li> <li>Appeal process for Statutory Membership Examination to be considered.</li> </ul>

## B: Compassion

**Ambition:** to be a compassionate upstream regulator and a supportive Royal College by ensuring that high standards continue to be met while working in an empathetic way that respects all of our stakeholders and service-users as individuals. We will recognise that a compassionate approach involves helping members of the veterinary team build the skills and knowledge they need to meet our standards, which is ultimately in the interests of animal health and welfare.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
1. Endeavour to ensure that the College is seen as approachable, helpful, fair and accessible to all.	All		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full web content review is underway, with consideration being given to information accuracy, content design, language style, accessibility, diversity and inclusion and search engine optimisation (SEO).</li> <li>• See also A5 above ref engagement.</li> <li>• Review of appeals processes ongoing, see A8 above.</li> <li>• Improving the way we communicate Council and committee activities as part of the Council Culture project.</li> </ul>
2. Enable our teams to deliver compassionate regulation by providing structures, training and support to ensure they can help vets and nurses meet the standards required in a compassionate way, and take ownership and communicate clearly when things don't go to plan. Recognising that, in order to achieve this, our team members must also feel well supported and that they are compassionately treated.	People		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peakon data regularly reviewed.</li> <li>• New Staff Network Group set up (to bring together previous LGBTQ+, wellbeing and EDI groups). First meeting took place on 27 April, positive reaction with good conversation.</li> <li>• New staff training priorities fall out of 'My Progress' annual review process; this process now has greater focus on values. What it takes to become a 'learning organisation' will be discussed at forthcoming staff away day.</li> <li>• New online learning hub for staff under consideration, and new intranet.</li> <li>• Thematic review of data from exit interviews now going to Senior Team.</li> <li>• Review of EAP and other support will take place shortly.</li> <li>• Financial planning clinics are supporting colleagues in challenging times.</li> <li>• Dedicated Talent resource appointed and due to start 24 May, full review of career website and assessment material due to take place.</li> <li>• Growth mindset group meeting took place to encourage different thinking and ways of working across the College.</li> <li>• Review of benefits offering underway.</li> </ul>
3. Review our concerns process through the eyes of each of our stakeholder and service-user groups to ensure that it is fair, forward-thinking and compassionate, and set out a programme of quality improvement.	ProfCon MMI		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of ProfCon Investigation Support Service; article May RCVS News.</li> <li>• Registrar took part in 'myth-busting' panel ref complaints at BVA Live.</li> <li>• Public Advisory Group will support us developing more compassionate approach for animal owners.</li> <li>• Academy courses on resolving complaints in practice, and Complaints: communication, confidence and compassion now available.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
4. Help our regulated professionals to meet the standards expected of them by their peers, the public and society at large by launching the RCVS Academy, which will house a range of online educational tools to help veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and other potential associates of the College understand what is expected of them in terms of meeting standards, and to support them acquiring relevant knowledge and staying up to date in a creative, accessible and inspiring way.	Exec ALL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Academy courses being launched regularly, recently including working in the UK and a course for newly-qualified veterinary nurses. Over 8,000 course registrations thus far and positive feedback.</li> <li>• Regular contact with advisory panel of vets and nurses ensures content is relevant.</li> </ul>
5. Continue to support the mental health and wellbeing of members of the veterinary team, and our College staff, through the Mind Matters Initiative under its workstreams of 'prevent, protect and support' (see <a href="http://www.vetmindmatters.org">www.vetmindmatters.org</a> ), and also help veterinary professionals to take account of the mental health of those with whom they come into contact.	APC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MMI Strategy and Evaluation has now been published.</li> <li>• Collaboration with BSAVA on Neurodiversity Day at Congress very well received.</li> <li>• Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grant deadline approaching.</li> <li>• MMI Mental Health Research Symposium tickets on sale, this is the first in-person MMI Symposium since Covid. Being held on World Mental Health Day (10 October).</li> <li>• MM International research event under discussion as possibility.</li> <li>• Social media activities took place to support the Mental Health Foundation's Mental Health Awareness Week – theme was anxiety.</li> </ul>
6. Continue to foster a reflective learning culture amongst members of the veterinary team, so that they can continue to grow and develop in a supportive, no-blame environment.	APC Ed Cttee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective CPD and use of 1CPD app now mandatory – communications and promotion have taken place and will continue.</li> <li>• Evaluation of VetGDP Adviser e-learning highly positive.</li> <li>• Discussions remain ongoing with NHS regarding relaunch of Edward Jenner Leadership MOOC.</li> </ul>

## C: Courage

**Ambition:** we will have the courage to take a leadership role within the professions, to ensure that the pervading culture is healthy, sustainable, inclusive, innovative and respectful; through this, will develop confident veterinary professionals.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
1. Continue to seek culture change within the wider professions around help-seeking behaviour to support both mental and physical health, learning culture, leadership, innovation, sustainability and diversity.	DIG MMI APC Education		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See B5 for MMI and B6 for learning culture.</li> <li>• VN version of religious clothing document under development.</li> <li>• Fellowship Science Advisory Panel project on Net Zero Surgery ongoing.</li> <li>• Sustainability is a key aspect of Hardwick Street refurbishment project.</li> <li>• Co-signatory for Zero Hour UK letter to Dept of Health and Social Care on zero-carbon healthcare.</li> <li>• ViVet strategy under review at present.</li> <li>• Academic paper on learning culture in VetGDP published in <i>Journal of Veterinary Medical Education</i>, and session was accepted at the Advance HE conference on work to support BAME students, however this was postponed until 2024 due to train strikes, in the meantime there will be a poster session at the Association for the Study of Medical Education EDI event in July.</li> <li>• VetGDP for returners now launched to help people to return to veterinary work following a career break.</li> <li>• Chronic illness survey now launched, aim to have results and report in the early autumn; have supported the FVE campaign with videos; inclusive recruitment toolkit now being tackled by Diversity and Inclusion Group.</li> <li>• 'RVN – Starting Out' course, designed to support the transition from student to registered nurse, launched May 2023.</li> <li>• Course under development to support those returning after a career break.</li> </ul>
2. Celebrate the art as well as the science of veterinary medicine and ensure that wider professional skills are properly and credibly supported.	APC RCVSK Education		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed amendments to honours and awards process to be discussed by Council at June meeting.</li> <li>• New building development project will focus on history and development of modern veterinary practice.</li> <li>• Education space for school-age children planned for new building to encourage better understanding of veterinary profession from a younger age and potentially encourage applications to vet school from a wider pool.</li> <li>• The introduction of the new Fellowship categories has brought in a wider diversity of Fellows, whose expertise on the art and science of veterinary medicine needs to be harnessed. Wider skills continue to be championed through the CertAVP and the new vet school standards.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
3. Work with other stakeholders to retain skills and talent within the professions, by developing return-to-work options that build confidence in those who have had a career break, for whatever reason.	<i>Education MMI ViVet Academy Exec</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of Workforce Action Plan outlines range of actions to be taken under this heading. A series of webinars with the wider profession have now taken place – see A2.</li> <li>• VetGDP is available for those returning to the profession. Compulsory for those away from the profession for more than five years, optional for those away for a shorter period. Now covered in VetGDP coms.</li> <li>• Course under development for nurses returning following a five-year absence from the Register.</li> <li>• Work ongoing to understand recruitment, retention and return activities within the government / public health veterinary sector and develop an action plan based on gap analysis.</li> </ul>
4. Ensure a pathway for career progression for vets and nurses via postgraduate/post-qualification accreditations and qualifications – to meet the needs of vets and nurses at all stages of their careers.	<i>Education VN</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fifth provider of CertAVN approved.</li> <li>• Clinical career pathways event took place – report to be published shortly.</li> <li>• Framework for future clinical career pathways approved by Education Committee, enabling project planning and development to proceed.</li> <li>• VN career progression linked to LWP proposals (see A1).</li> <li>• Proposals under development for the Advanced Practitioner role for veterinary nurses.</li> <li>• Actions within Workforce Action Plan also consider fulfilling careers.</li> </ul>
5. Develop extra-mural studies (EMS) and work experience opportunities at the College, together with more opportunities for veterinary professionals and members of the public to become engaged with the work of the regulator at first hand and gain an understanding of its complexities.	<i>Comms APC</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop modules for Academy to better explain our key functions.</li> <li>• Recruitment for next round of EMS placements, jointly with Veterinary Policy Research Foundation, ongoing.</li> <li>• Officers attended a range of freshers' weeks and careers fairs at the vet schools in autumn 2022.</li> <li>• Plan for attending a range of VN schools' induction weeks being developed for autumn 2023.</li> <li>• CEO undertaking talks with practices - including those on new grad schemes – to demystify the work of the College.</li> <li>• RVNs working at the College were recently profiled as part of VN Awareness Month.</li> </ul>
6. Create an innovation funding pot to enable the professions to help solve regulation and professional standards issues that matter to them.	<i>Exec FRC</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch bursary scheme</li> <li>• Consideration of challenge prize on hold due to other priorities. It will also be important to ensure the professions have the right skills and approach to innovation in order to maximise the opportunity.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
<p>7. Continue to develop the Fellowship into a learned society that reflects the varied achievements of the veterinary profession; encourages the advancement of standards; and, develops public awareness of veterinary medicine and science, for example, via the development of a Fellow on the Public Understanding of Veterinary Science.</p>	<p><i>Fellows APC</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Board members are creating the plan for Fellow outreach and interactions over the next few months, for example, Fellows on Tour and wider speaking opportunities.</li> <li>• Plans underway for Fellowship Day 2023, with exciting guest speaker confirmed.</li> <li>• Applications now being assessed for 2023 intake, encouraging GPs and those from non-traditional veterinary roles to apply.</li> <li>• FSAP looking at behaviourism and net zero.</li> </ul>
<p>8. Review new ways of reaching consensus and driving change within our leadership and governance structure.</p>	<p>Exec Officers</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second iteration of Council Culture Working Group ongoing and some decisions to come to Council in June.</li> <li>• New induction process being rolled out with new Council members.</li> <li>• Reflection sessions being trialled after Council meetings to discuss how effectively business was conducted.</li> <li>• Workshop sessions to be planned with external speakers on board effectiveness.</li> <li>• Chairs training being arranged – will be open to all.</li> </ul>
<p>9. Work with the BVA and the BVNA to evaluate the success of the first action plans for Vet Futures and VN Futures respectively, assess whether the ambitions remain relevant, and develop new action plans accordingly. Work with the FVE to support the delivery of Vet Futures Europe.</p>	<p>Exec</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case studies on VF successes need to be refreshed, to form part of VF evaluation document (joint with BVA). Some delays due to resourcing.</li> <li>• VF part two under consideration.</li> <li>• VN Futures evaluation report published in September 2022; animation to outline achievements and future activities launched at BVA Live May 2023.</li> </ul>

## D: Confidence

**Ambition:** in order to deliver our Strategic Plan we must not only have the mandate that is secured by the Veterinary Surgeons Act and our Royal Charter, but also the confidence to succeed that will be brought by the right underpinning – the governance, people, finance, communications and IT structures that are crucial to our success.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
1. Review the bedding-in of the 2018 Legislative Reform Order to ensure that our Council and committee structure is efficient, effective, and transparent, and provides the right level of strategic oversight coupled with skills-based input to allow the College to function to the best of its abilities.	Officers Exec		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scoping for informal review - although this may be superseded by work considering new governance structure as part of legislative changes.</li> <li>Some of these issues under consideration by Council Culture Working Group.</li> <li>Governance Manual in progress.</li> <li>Action plan to resolve gaps vs Charity Code worked through by Senior Team and reviewed by Audit and Risk Committee.</li> </ul>
2. Review the structure of all of our groups operating below committee level, to ensure the right mix of skills are available to tackle the tasks at hand and that each group has clear membership, purpose, principles, time-frame and sense of what success will look like.	FRC Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills being considered as part of Council Culture project.</li> <li>Annual review of delegation scheme now routine and all groups now have ToR and greater clarity.</li> <li>New templates for papers under development, along with training for secretariats.</li> <li>Thought to be given to the number of Council and Committee meetings we have, and proposal to come to September meeting of Council.</li> </ul>
3. Develop and embed a meaningful dashboard to help ensure that appetite for risk is clear, risk is managed and any early warning signs are addressed.	ARC FRC Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk process well embedded and regularly praised by Audit and Risk Committee for its effectiveness.</li> <li>Annual Business Continuity Planning meeting takes place and changes are made to the plan in response.</li> <li>Work ongoing on risk dashboard and assurance map, reviewed by Audit and Risk Committee.</li> <li>Greater visibility of Corporate Risk Register now available to Council.</li> </ul>
4. Collate and review our member and service-user feedback on an ongoing basis, against key performance indicators, and work with RCVS Knowledge to employ a quality improvement and innovation methodology to ensure we are providing services that meet the needs of our audiences and society at large.	Ops Head of I&E		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New KPIs to be rolled out for new presidential year.</li> <li>Process for reviewing / analysing all complaints about RCVS, regardless of area of work, still ongoing.</li> <li>New Customer Services team set up on a trial basis.</li> <li>VN 'leaver survey' under development.</li> <li>Zero tolerance for abuse of our staff statement now on the website.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
5. Put in place a People Strategy that develops our talent, diversity, leadership and culture, across the staff team, Council and committee members, examiners, assessors and all others who work on behalf of the College.	Exec People		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data ref current position on gender and other diversity strands due to be presented to FRC shortly.</li> <li>• Learning management system platform under development.</li> <li>• Change of pension provider has been implemented for staff who were members of the current scheme. A review of the remaining scheme is to take place.</li> <li>• Data dashboard under construction to highlight People data to include diversity and gender information.</li> <li>• First cohort has completed new Guide Your Progress Course for middle managers and been very well received. Work underway to review support to evaluate level 'Lead' and 'Translate'.</li> <li>• New employee network launched.</li> <li>• Update of staff induction and probation processes in progress, majority of the policies are complete with some minor adjustments based on feedback being updated. Induction is now managed monthly, with less requirement of colleagues to support; more enhancements in progress.</li> <li>• Eighteen people clinics for managers have been delivered, providing advice and knowledge around key subject areas including employment law, and bullying and harassment in the workplace. Further clinics will be developed in early 2023. Rotation arrangements for new managers and emerging managers underway.</li> <li>• Review of payroll and people systems underway, to reduce repetition and administration, provide a better service to managers and improve the experience for new recruits. Likely to be completed by end of year.</li> <li>• Greater support for all colleagues impacted by parental leave rules - by means of detailed guidance, simple language and advice - being developed.</li> </ul>
6. Ensure our financial systems are customer-focused, fraud-resistant and efficient, and improve communication and clarity over where money is spent and its impact.	FRC Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure database upgrade includes a flexible customer interface.</li> </ul>
7. Develop and implement a technology strategy that puts digital first, is collaborative, and focuses on simplification and convergence.	Exec Digital FRC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultants contracted to support tender for new CRM system. Project Board in place to give oversight.</li> </ul>



Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
8. Purchase a new property that aims to serve the needs of the College for the next twenty years, while not putting an undue future financial commitment on our members.	Estates Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peldon Rose hired to support commercial strategy and refurbishment approach. Meetings taken place with staff and Council, and staff survey taken place. Feasibility plan has been received. Work reports to HS Refurbishment Group. Update to be given to Council in June.</li> <li>• First set of tenants now exited HS.</li> </ul>
9. Put in place a communications strategy that will focus on clarifying what we are, and what we are not, and be stronger about calling out those who seek to undermine the College; own our shortcomings and be clear about where and how we will change; and be bolder about celebrating our successes and our unique contribution to animal health and welfare, and public health. Empower our wider team to become communications ambassadors for the College.	Comms		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RCVS comms survey of key stakeholders (including professions, public etc) to establish preferences and gain feedback.</li> <li>• Use feedback to devise coms strategy to support strategic ambitions, departmental activities and stakeholder requirements.</li> <li>• Produce social media guidance.</li> <li>• Social media strategy under development as part of broader planning work.</li> <li>• Development of Language/Content Style Guide underway as part of web content review.</li> <li>• Brand development review ongoing, to be aligned with new building presentation.</li> </ul>
10. Develop and implement a corporate social responsibility strategy that befits an organisation that works in the public interest.	FRC Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental impact of any new building under consideration, plus how it can help us integrate into, and support, local community, for example, working with local schools.</li> <li>• Work ongoing with UK Health Alliance on Climate Change (UKHACC).</li> <li>• Regular reviews of investment portfolio to ensure it aligns with our values.</li> <li>• Push to encourage staff to make more use of volunteering days to support social responsibility of the organisation.</li> <li>• Working towards Investors in the Environment (iiE) Silver once in new building (likely to remain at Bronze for 2023).</li> <li>• Consideration of carbon off-setting line in 2025 budget.</li> <li>• Sustainability considered for VN Pre-Registration Examinations with regards to reduction of waste.</li> <li>• Events strategy – eg around merchandise and give-aways – reflects environmental policy.</li> </ul>

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Temporary Registered Novice Official Veterinarian (TRNOV) Scheme
Summary	This paper sets out the background and timeline of the TRNOV scheme and attaches up to date information from the FSA, together with a proposal to extend the scheme for a further three years.
Decisions required	Council is invited to read and consider the information provided by the FSA, and to decide whether to accept the proposal to extend the scheme for a further three years.
Attachments	<p><b>Annex A</b> – Summary of RCVS registration and temporary registration requirements</p> <p><b>Annex B</b> – Extract from Council minutes June 2022</p> <p><b>Annex C</b> – Minutes from December 2022 Standards Committee meeting (<b>confidential</b>)</p> <p><b>Annex D</b> – Standards Committee questions from May 2023 review (<b>confidential</b>)</p> <p><b>Annex E</b> – Financial information provided by the FSA (<b>confidential</b>)</p> <p><b>Annex F</b> – Proposal from the FSA</p> <p><b>Annex G</b> – Annex 2 to FSA paper (<b>confidential</b>)</p>
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<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>

Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a
Annex B	Unclassified	n/a
Annex C	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>3</b>
Annex D	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>3</b>
Annex E	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>3</b>
Annex F	Unclassified	n/a
Annex G	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>3</b>

### **<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

### **<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

## Temporary Registered Novice Official Veterinarian (TRNOV) Scheme

### Introduction

1. Council last considered the TRNOV scheme (the scheme) in June 2022, where a 12-month extension with six-monthly reviews by the Standards Committee was agreed. At the reviews in December 2022 and May 2023, the Standards Committee asked the FSA to provide additional information, including financial information to aid in its understanding of the issues being raised. At the review in May 2023, the FSA outlined some changes to the scheme, which are summarised in this paper.
2. Following these reviews, the FSA now proposes that the scheme should be extended for a further three years with annual updates provided to the RCVS. The rationale for this request, together with an update on the scheme itself is set out in the proposal paper attached at **Annex F**.
3. Council is therefore asked to consider the information provided by the FSA at **Annexes E, F and G**, and to decide whether to accept its proposal.

### Timeline

4. In March 2021, RCVS Council agreed to a 12-month 'time limited' proposal by Defra/FSA to allow for the temporary registration of Official Veterinarians (OVs) providing meat hygiene controls in England and Wales.
5. The FSA 'activated' the scheme in June 2021 and a review was carried out by the RCVS Standards Committee in December of that year. In June 2022, RCVS Council was asked to consider an extension to the application of the scheme, with ongoing six-monthly reviews by the Standards Committee. Council agreed to this request and the Standards Committee carried out reviews in December 2022 and May 2023 as per that decision.
6. The scheme is therefore due to expire in June 2023 and as anticipated, the FSA will attend this meeting of Council with a request for a further extension. The extension period requested is three years.
7. Council should note that the original proposals put forward in March 2021 also covered a contingency for OVs providing export certification services. While this was agreed by Council, it was never 'triggered', and has never been put into operation.

### Overview of the scheme

8. The purpose of the scheme was to address an anticipated severe veterinary resource issue post EU-Exit, specifically around delivery of Official Controls in slaughterhouses. The idea being that overseas veterinary surgeons who are not currently eligible to register as an MRCVS because they do not meet the English language requirements for registration would have a route to do so, after working through the requirements of the scheme.
9. The original proposal as it relates to OVs providing meat hygiene controls was as follows:

*We ask that the RCVS admit to its temporary register, vets who (i) have a contract of employment to work as an OV providing meat hygiene controls in England and Wales; (ii) have the necessary skilled worker visa including IELTS at level 5; and (iii) hold European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) accredited veterinary degrees and iv) have completed and passed the meat OV training course. The FSA would then authorise them as an OV on confirmation of their status as a temporary registrant.*

*This temporary registration would last for 12 months, with the possibility of an extension of six months, during which time the temporary registrant would be expected to pass the IELTS level 7 test. Whilst on the temporary register, the individual's role would be limited in scope and under the supervision of an MRCVS... similar to that of a novice OV. This would fall under the category of "employment", specifically "where vacancies for such roles cannot be filled".*

*We ask that this facility for temporary registration to undertake meat hygiene official controls be open for 12 months, to be reviewed jointly by Defra, the Welsh Government, the FSA and the RCVS after six months of operation.*

10. For ease of reference, a summary of the general position of registration under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (VSA) is attached at **Annex A**.
11. At present, the TRNOVs who are part of the scheme are not directly employed by the FSA, instead the service is outsourced to an external service delivery partner (SDP).

#### **Previous Council discussion**

12. When this matter was last considered by Council in June 2022, concern was expressed about the scheme having no clear end-date. At that time, a key aspect of the exit strategy was for the FSA to directly employ OVs and there was a discussion about how a 'blended' model (i.e. some OVs employed by the FSA and some by SDP) might work.
13. Other issues discussed included:
  - a. Could the FSA give more reassurance around the metrics and/or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) against which the TRNOVs' work was measured? The FSA agreed to be more explicit about KPIs when it submitted reviews.
  - b. Recruitment and retention those in the scheme once full OV status had been achieved.
  - c. Possibility of a graduate programme where one or two days were spent in slaughterhouses, combined with general practice. The FSA confirmed it hoped to develop a graduate programme where work could be undertaken with the FSA, on farms or with other large employers.
  - d. In terms of setting an end-date, the FSA hoped that this could be done in the future but felt further progress needed to be made first to ensure that a 'cliff edge' was avoided.
14. In light of the above, rather than extending the scheme on an open-ended basis, Council asked that the matter be brought back for consideration in 12 months' time and requested that

six-monthly reviews were carried out by the Standards Committee in the meantime. Full details of Council's discussion is included at **Annex B**.

## Standards Committee reviews

### *December 2022*

15. At this review, the Standards Committee was presented with an update on progress in terms of TRNOVs meeting technical and language competencies, attrition and retention and the exit strategy. As Council will recall, the scheme was initially positioned as a temporary measure which although not ideal, would help to plug a gap in the workforce and allow official controls, and therefore exports, to continue without disruption. In light of this, the exit strategy has been a crucial part of the scheme proposal and one which the Committee has been very keen to explore.
16. A key part of the exit strategy when the proposal was first presented was a long-term plan for the FSA to directly employ OVs to deliver these official controls. At the review in December, the Committee was informed that this plan had been put on hold, largely due to the financial implications, i.e. it would cost more than outsourcing the service to an external SDP. It was explained that the FSA was still committed to this project and that it would be picked up again in the future when the financial position was more suitable.
17. The Standards Committee was concerned about this change, not least because a key part of the exit strategy had been removed. As such, it questioned whether this scheme was truly the temporary measure it was being presented as, or whether in the absence of a viable alternative, it is in fact the 'new normal'.
18. In addition, the Standards Committee raised some further questions, and full details of this discussion are set out in the minutes from the review meeting, attached at **Annex C**.

### *May 2023*

19. At this review, the FSA outlined two key changes going forward. The aim of these changes is to better accommodate different levels of English language ability and to only use temporary registration where it is likely to result in attaining the requisite IELTS level 7 within the specified timeframe:
  - a. Temporary registration will only be available to veterinarians from EAEVE accredited universities who already have IELTS level 6 English (as opposed to level 5). It has become clear to the FSA that veterinary surgeons at this level are immediately competent and are effective from the start. In addition, 98% of veterinary surgeons starting at this level go on to become MRCVS and gain level 7 English.
  - b. For those with level 5 English, the FSA plan to re-instate a former route of starting as a Meat Hygiene Inspector (MHI) and progressing to become an Official Veterinarian (OV). Whilst working as MHIs, individuals will receive intensive English language coaching whilst also developing food system knowledge and other required skills to work successfully as an OV. This route typically takes longer however, temporary registration is not required.

20. In addition, the Standards Committee again expressed concerns that the 'temporary solution' was in danger of becoming permanent. It was explained that whilst the scheme remained essential, it was still considered a temporary solution and that the aim of the measures set out in **Annex F** is to ensure that the scheme will not be required in the future, although this was now a more long-term goal.
21. The Standards Committee asked a number of further questions at this review, set out in **Annex D**, and requested that the FSA provide more information to RCVS Council regards the strategic concept and how the wider issues and barriers will be addressed.

### Financial Information

22. Given the direction of some of the Standards Committee's questions and concerns expressed at the review in December 2022, the FSA agreed to provide further information about how the finances had been calculated, as well as information on the tendering process. This information was duly provided and is attached at **Annex E**.

### Current proposal

23. The FSA have provided a paper setting out its proposal for a three-year extension with annual 'check ins' with the RCVS to provide updates on plans and progress together with an update on the scheme itself. This paper is attached at **Annex F**, with a confidential Annex at **Annex G**.
24. Key aspects of the paper at **Annex F** include:
- a. Further details of the two changes to the operation of the scheme outlined at paragraph 17, above (see page 3, section 4 of **Annex F**);
  - b. Details and short, medium and long-term actions to reduce reliance on the temporary registration route (page 5, section 5 of **Annex F**);
  - c. Information about future provision of OVs to deliver official controls and the retendering process (page 7, section 6 of **Annex F**);
  - d. Implications of ending the scheme (page 8, section 7 of **Annex F**);
  - e. Update on progress of the scheme, including numbers and retention (page 9, confidential Annex 2 of **Annex F**).

### Decisions required

25. Council is invited to read and consider the information provided by the FSA and to decide whether to agree a three-year extension to the scheme, in line with its proposal set out in **Annex F**.

## **Annex A**

### **Summary of registration requirements**

#### **Full registration**

The VSA sets out the routes for registration for veterinary surgeons to practice in the UK. These are what you are familiar with, for example, via the UK veterinary schools and the Statutory Examination for Membership and, prior to EU-Exit, also included via The Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (MRPQ) for those graduating from EU veterinary schools. The MRPQ route fell away post-EU-Exit and, as of 1 January 2021, the RCVS has implemented temporary post-Brexit policies on the registration of European-qualified veterinary surgeons as agreed by RCVS Council. European qualifications are now recognised in accordance with the 'interim EAEVE policy', with graduates from veterinary schools with EAEVE accreditation eligible for registration. Such graduates who do not have English as a first language or who did not study in English are required to meet the same English language qualification requirements as other overseas nationals i.e. International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Level 7 or the Occupational English Test (OET) Grade B.

#### **Temporary registration**

Temporary registration is intended for use where all avenues for full registration have been explored and, as the title suggests, are for temporary arrangements. Those coming on to the Temporary Register, while 'on the Register' (and therefore entitled to practice) are not MRCVS and cannot designate themselves as such and they cannot certify documents. Their registration is subject to such restrictions as the RCVS in its discretion decides are appropriate, relating to the length of registration (this is ordinarily a maximum of five years) as well as the place(s) and the "circumstances in which the individual may practice in the UK". The "circumstances" of that role and what it involves need to be clearly defined to ensure that any individual does not undertake work for which they are not authorised. The location from which they will work also needs to be defined. Similarly, supervision which should be real not nominal includes a named supervising veterinary surgeon at each location. Temporary registration has historically been used sparingly in specific situations e.g. short visits by veterinary surgeons accompanying animals competing in the UK; and for postgraduate study, but has also been applied in limited 'employment' situations.



## Annex B

### Extract from unclassified Council minutes June 2022

#### Review of Temporary Registration of Official Veterinarians (TROV)

Declarations of interest were reported by:

**Dr Gardiner – had OV status;**

**Col Smith – as a member of the Government Veterinary Service (GVS) and confirmed that he worked for neither Defra nor the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and had not been lobbied on this matter;**

**Dr Richards – had OV status but was not currently working in that area; she had also resigned as a Council member of the Association of Government Vets (AGV) but remained a member of the association.**

1. The Registrar introduced the papers and the proposal to extend the Scheme in England and Wales for abattoirs. The Scheme had originally been agreed at Council in March 2021 for a time-limited period of 12 months (triggered in June 2021) for members to apply to be on the RCVS' Temporary Register if they had an employment contract; a skilled worker visa; had graduated from a European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) accredited veterinary school; had undertaken an OV course; and, within the 12 months they were expected to have passed the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) to Level 7 (skilled worker visas currently required Level 5 straight away).
2. The Scheme had been reviewed by Standards Committee after six months in December 2021, and the Committee had not raised any specific red flags but had questioned supervision. It had been confirmed that one supervising OV (SOV) was permitted to manage up to three Temporarily Registered OVs (TROVs). It had also agreed to allow SOVs to remotely sign Support Health Attestations (SHAs) based on information supplied by the TROV. However, concern had been raised around the exit strategy as, half-way through the Scheme, there was no indication of a way out of it; the Committee asked for more information that had been received and discussed in March 2022.
3. The Registrar reminded Council that temporary registration was not meant to be a substitute for full registration; it was time-limited, for a defined purpose, and a specific need. In March 2021 there had been a very real concern that this matter would 'drift' into a new 'normal' thus undermining the veterinary school degree and that there were also issues with resourcing.
4. It was noted that there were no other routes for OV status and without the Scheme it would greatly impact the FSA.

#### Food Standards Agency presentation to Council

5. Dr Clark emphasised the vital work undertaken by OVs to protect food safety; animal health and welfare; and the official controls related to the trade of products of animal origin (POAO). It was recognised that the workforce crisis was still ongoing with its subsequent challenges across the veterinary profession. It was considered to be essential for TROVs to work in abattoirs and noted that this was still a temporary position – the maximum time permitted was 18 months (12 months

Temporary Registration initially with the possibility to extend for a further six months if it was needed in order to reach IELTS Level 7). Of the number on the Temporary Register:

- 120 had applied for TR status;
- 90 were employed in abattoirs;
- five had achieved IELTS Level 7 and subsequently full RCVS registration;
- two more expected to achieve IELTS Level 7 in the next few weeks;
- four due to sit the IELTS examination in the next month;
- there was very structured mentoring and development with a robust assurance system with Defra and the Welsh government;
- between June 2021 and May 2022 there was an increase in numbers in abattoirs and this was significantly due to the TR Scheme.

6. An overview was given on other areas of the Scheme:

- SHAs were required to be signed by a veterinary surgeon under the principles of certification; a helpline had been set up to support vets if they felt they were being placed under pressure to sign a SHA;
- recruitment and retention: of the number of OV's, it was expected that 25% would be directly employed by FSA by the end of March 2023;
- flexible working hours e.g. Bristol veterinary school graduates had the opportunity to work one day per week as an OV and four days within practice;
- financial incentives;
- ways of raising the profile of the role, its variations, and potential career progression.

7. It was noted that incentives took time and Dr Clark outlined the progressive reduction in reliance on contingency plans. The FSA asked Council for its agreement to continue to register temporary registrants under the Scheme as outlined in the paper and that they would provide regular updates and report on milestones as they developed. Further, that the SOVs could continue to issue SHAs remotely while the TROV worked in the abattoir.

8. Dr Clark and her team were thanked for their work and presentation, and the paper and its proposals were opened to the floor for discussion. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:

- these were difficult circumstances. Regarding Quality Assurance (QA), could the FSA give more reassurance around the metrics / Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as the paper just covered quality of service by TROVs;
  - o every month the vet and management team worked through the metrics and the levels of performance and addressed any issues. From a governance perspective, consideration was given to language; complexity of product; person skills; TB testing; and there was an action plan to keep in touch. Regarding KPIs, there were penalties for service providers that did not deliver on time;

- Dr Clark suggested that FSA could be explicit re: KPIs when it submitted the reviews, which was agreed would be useful;
- the Scheme had been intended to play a transitional role but had something been created that we would be unable to stop – would people still come to the UK if the TROV role was not there? Also, as the ratio changed, would the QA remain for OVs that were not employed by the FSA?
  - the transitional role had been successful to bring veterinary surgeons into the OV service when capacity was down; the FSA was looking to bring them in different ways in the future – overseas and UK, not just through veterinary schools, but also those wanting to change direction in their careers, those who had changes in circumstances, etc.; the temporary scheme would be 'switched off' and would be replaced by a permanent solution. Re: QA, more and more veterinary surgeons would become full members of the profession and, over time, they in turn would supervise more OVs;
  - for those not directly employed by the FSA, the future for service delivery partners was expected to be a blended model; work was ongoing and there was a lot of investment of time and resources. It was noted that there was currently only one service delivery partner and that a tendering exercise would take place once its contract came to an end – this would follow a rigid government formula and any subsequent contract would be developed for the future;
- what was in place to keep people that moved to full membership of the Register in these roles? There did not appear to be any incentive so it would require a never-ending supply;
  - once a veterinary surgeon reached IELTS Level 7 within 12 months, they would come off the Temporary Register and would no longer be able to work as a TROV; the pathway to full registration should be celebrated – it was always a balance of recruitment and retention, and it would help both;
- reflect upon the current situation: c.50 members per annum came onto the Register as temporary members, who had to be sponsored and supervised and there was a requirement to explain why they were needed, but there was no formal language requirement – the FSA Scheme offered close supervision; it was time-limited; and had a higher language requirement than others who were temporary registrants; it was concerning if this came to an end because it was a good system;
  - numbers were lower than 50. A lot of temporary registrants were related to residencies / internships; some of whom would go into universities so there was a language and visa level requirement. The number of employed vets on the temporary register was very small because they related to very niche categories. The requirements regarding temporary registration were time-limited and the College looked at the required criteria before a member was allowed to be temporary registrants;

- the graduate programme where one or two days were spent in slaughterhouses, combined with general practice – were there financial incentives for the practices, or could that be scaled up?
    - o it was hoped that would become a direction of travel – it was not an FSA graduate programme but rather a small animal graduate programme; the FSA was trying to develop a graduate programme where work was, for instance, undertaken with the FSA, or on farms, and they would also look to work with large employers;
  - it was concerning that FSA seemed to want the College to agree to an open-ended scheme and [I] could not see when the final temporary registrant would exit the system;
    - o there was no clear date yet as FSA was trying to avoid a ‘cliff edge’; they would like to see things come into effect before providing an end date; progress was being made but there was an ongoing need; it was hoped that an end date could be provided in the near future;
  - if Council agreed to extend the Scheme as proposed, was that sufficient, or did it wish for this item to come back in one year’s time?
    - o that would be preferable as Council needed to consider that this was a temporary solution not that it “might finish one day”;
  - were the temporary registrants ‘locked in’ to their contracts once the English language requirements had been received?
    - o there were standard terms and conditions within the contracts, but they were not locked in as that might put people off applying; they also had visa requirement and responsibilities to the employer;
  - Standards Committee had looked at this, was the Committee happy that Council reviewed it?
    - o the Committee looked at it with the view that it would come back to Council; a number of people on the Committee had raised issues; in particular the details about the exit strategy, so the discussion at Council had helped that.
9. The President drew the discussion to a close and thanked the FSA team for their responses. It was noted that there was some concern about the end date and requested that the proposal be amended to include six-monthly reviews and to return to Council in 12 months.
10. It was noted that such an amendment to include the six-monthly reviews would require a vote from Council prior to the vote on the Scheme as detailed in the paper. The Chair, Standards Committee, asked if there was another solution whereby there could be a graduate cap on numbers over a period of years so at least there would be an end point. Dr Clark confirmed that option had not been considered but that if Council agreed to the proposal in the paper, the FSA

could work through and set those milestones and communicate them with Standards Committee if that was what the College required. This was agreed.

11. A vote was taken to decide whether it was appropriate to agree to the FSA request to extend the application of the TROV Scheme, in its current format, to include continuation of the proposal agreed to by Standards Committee in December 2021 to allow SOVs to issue SHAs remotely, based on checks conducted by TRNOVs under their direction. Further that this would return to Council in one year's time:

For:	20
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

12. This was agreed by a unanimous vote.

13. Dr Clark thanked Council for its decision.

**FSA update to the RCVS Council on Reducing Reliance on  
Temporary Registration (TR)**

**8<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

**Summary**

This paper will cover the following:

- 1. Strategic context**
- 2. Our request to RCVS Council**
- 3. TRNOVs progress summary**
- 4. Proposal to reform and reduce reliance on the TR scheme**
- 5. Update on the action plan and wider context**
- 6. Update on the service contract**
- 7. Impact without TR scheme**
  - ***Annex 1 – IELTS Levels***
  - ***Annex 2 – TRNOV Progress, Terms and Conditions and staff retention (Confidential Annex)***

**1. Strategic context**

Workforce shortages are a key challenge facing the whole veterinary profession in the UK and worldwide. While not a new phenomenon, this systemic issue has been exacerbated significantly by recent events, including a Covid-19 backlog of care, the pet boom during the pandemic, and longer-term changes in pay, work-life balance and client expectations, resulting in high rates of dissatisfaction and burnout amongst vets. Another important factor has been the changing situation of the many EU vets who have, in recent years, formed a significant percentage of the UK's veterinary workforce. RCVS data shows that in 2021, 45% of leavers had been in the profession for four years or less, including 21% who had less than one year of experience. Between 2019 and 2021 joiners to the UK veterinary profession fell by 26% (from 2,782 in 2019 to 2,119 in 2021), while [RCVS data](#) shows that 2020 saw the highest number of vets leaving UK practice in 10 years.

The role of vets in Public Health, particularly abattoirs, is important but not seen as attractive within the profession in the UK (over 90% of OV's working in abattoirs are from overseas). Some reported barriers include fixed-term contracts, perception that the role is unpleasant and intimidating (*source is DEFRA commissioned Blue Marble report in 2020*) and salaries. Work is well underway to breakdown these barriers (e.g., salaries have gone up for OV's) but as the whole veterinary sector suffers a recruitment and retention issue, tangible change will take time, irrespective of the business model or contractual terms. A good example of this is when looking at the model in place at the Food Standards Scotland ('FSS') where despite direct employment of OV's in abattoirs, the organisation still uses the Temporary Registration scheme.

OV's are vital in protecting Animal Health and Welfare, assuring Food Safety and underpinning International Trade in meat products and animal by-products and, without them, the £9.1bn meat production sector would rapidly be unable to operate sustainably. The importance of exports to our farmers to the economy and rural communities was highlighted in the [open letter from the Prime Minister](#) on the 16<sup>th</sup> May where he committed to back "...British farming [to] enable the whole world to feast on the very best of British, while creating new jobs, growing our economy, and delivering the food security we need."

We believe that the measures outlined in this paper will start to deliver positive impacts on recruitment and retention of OV's immediately, while recognising that this is a long-term system challenge and the work we are doing together with wider Government and the RCVS should deliver results over the medium to long term. The ongoing economic conditions and the continued shortage of vets are systemic challenges which we think will currently require the continued use of Temporary Registration in ensuring that the UK can continue to deliver statutory OV-led Official controls in abattoirs.

We hope this paper illustrates how we want to reform what we are currently doing as well as move to a position where we no longer rely on Temporary Registration.

## 2. Our request to RCVS Council

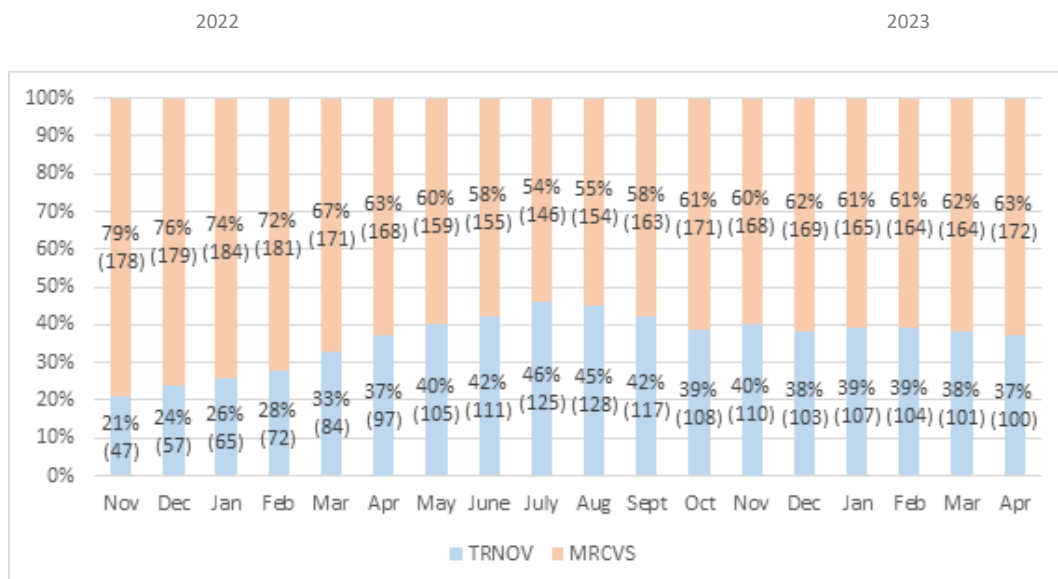
Based on what we have learned over the last 2 years, the ongoing systemic challenges faced by the profession, and our plans to actively reform the approach to the TRNOV approach, the FSA requests a **3-year extension to the use of the reformed Temporary Registration approach** with annual check-ins with the RCVS to update on our plans and progress.

We will, of course, also continue to work closely across the profession, with the RCVS and BVA and as core members of the Government Veterinary Services network, where we will continue to push forward with the wider ideas on recruitment and retention of vets, particularly OV's.

## 3. TRNOVs progress summary

As a quick recap, **between June 2021 and April 2023, 177 vets** have joined the RCVS Temporary Registered Novice Official Veterinarian (TRNOV) scheme. This scheme has enabled us to ensure we have delivered **100% service delivery of official controls in abattoirs in England and Wales**, which otherwise would have been impossible to carry out.

The graph below shows the percentage of TRNOVs versus full MRCVSs in the E&J Official Veterinarian (OV) cohort for each month between September 2021 and April 2023. The proportion of TRNOVs registered and working in abattoirs in England and Wales reached a peak of 46% in July 2022 and has since slowly reduced and stabilised to 37% as of April 2023, as vets have achieved L7 and the TRNOV and OV recruitment pipeline has settled.



As of the **end of April 2023, there are 100 TRNOVs and 172 full MRCVS OVs** employed within E&J and delivering Official Controls in every abattoir in England and Wales on behalf of the FSA.

**Since September 2021 of all the 42 vets who have passed level 7, 98% of these vets started with an overall score of level 6 or above.**

**Case Study:** Two candidates who left the TR scheme as they did not reach the required English language standard in 18 months, have since been able to achieve IELTS level 7 and wish to return and work as NOVs.

Importantly, TRNOVs are also progressing well against their technical competencies. Supervisory visits are being conducted regularly (at least fortnightly) by the SOV, Area Manager, Technical Manager or Regional Manager, to ensure TRNOVs are progressing on their technical NOV programme with supervision and support. FSA is monitoring this through our contract management system.

#### 4. Proposal to reform and reduce reliance on the TR scheme

Using all that we have learnt over the last 2 years of using the TR scheme, we have worked with our contracted Service Delivery Partner (SDP) (given the SDP is currently in place) to develop a proposal which both reforms the approach and delivers a challenging but, under current assumptions, realistic reduction in our reliance on TR. We would expect any future SDP(s) to demonstrate that they were able to deliver a similar outcome through either continuing this approach, or other methods which would continue to reduce reliance on the use of TR. The approach proposed by our current SDP means that:

- a. **Our SDP will from July 2023 start to only recruit OVs from vets who already have level 6 English (Competent User – see Annex 1) as TRNOVs.** Our current SDP is confident that there is a robust pipeline of applicants with Level 6 English to achieve this and data gathered through use of the TR scheme is clear that this group are much more successful at achieving level 7 (98% or 41 of the 42) within 12-18 months.
- b. For vets from EAEVE accredited vet schools with a starting level of English **between level 5 and level 6, the SDP will recruit them as Meat Hygiene Inspectors (vet track) - “MHIs (vet track)”**. These vets will start as MHIs (vet track) on a 2-year MHI visa and will receive structured English tuition, to bring them up to level 7 within that time and while working as MHIs and gaining wider skills and knowledge of the UK industry and delivery of Official Controls. At that point, they will be able to register as MRCVS, and they would become NOVs under a fresh Veterinary Surgeon visa, assuming the ability to change visa once MRCVS is obtained.

This MHI (vet track) recruitment pipeline will effectively move a proportion of our SDP’s current recruitment for MHIs, which includes vets from non-EAEVE vet schools to vets with EAEVE accredited degrees. This MHI (vet track) pool is intended to ultimately feed the majority of the future OV requirement and our SDP will still be pursuing recruitment of full MRCVSs.

We recognise that many vets would prefer not to work in a MHI role for an extended period and will work with the SDP to ensure that when a MHI (vet track) candidate achieves L7, they can move into an OV role quickly. We will monitor cohort numbers and use this learning to refine the approach to reduce reliance on TR.

- c. The SDP has confirmed that given the existing contractual obligation with the FSA, that it will also **continue to actively recruit candidates who are immediately eligible for full MRCVS status**, for example overseas vets who already hold both

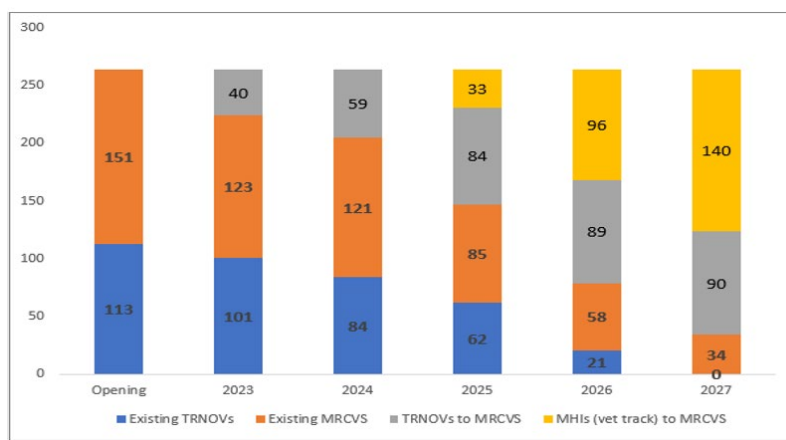


EAEVE accredited degrees and level 7 English, UK-based candidates, and vets who pass the RCVS Statutory Exam. Given the current profession wide recruitment challenges, we recognise this is likely to constitute a small but important number of NOV.s.

### How we expect this reformed approach to impact on TRNOV numbers versus full MRCVSS

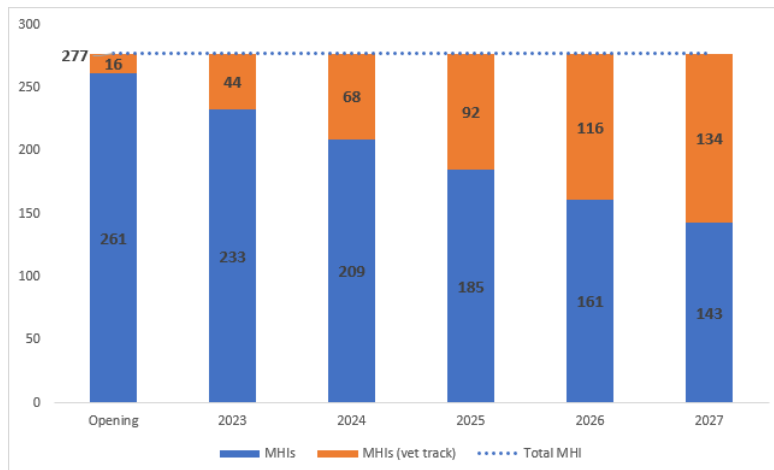
Our SDP has modelled this and below are two high level graphics illustrating how this would develop over time. The proportion of current TRNOVs (blue group) will fall as they become MRCVSSs (grey group). Within two years (2025), those MHIs (vet track) who have achieved level 7 English will also start to join the OV ranks as full MRCVSSs (yellow group), allowing the overall proportion of TRNOVs to reduce. By 2027, all OVs will be full MRCVSSs and there will be no TRNOVs.

### OVs – TRNOVs versus full MRCVSSs



When carrying out this modelling, our SDP has assumed a ‘lag phase’ of 2 years to achieve Level 7 English and full MRCVSS for those coming in as MHIs (vet track) with between Level 5 and Level 6 English and included a realistic dropout rate (as per annex 2 figures) over that period of time. Until that time the reduction in TRNOVs is attributable to a small number of full MRCVSS recruits, and those transitioning from TRNOVs to full MRCVSS.

The forecast of the proportions of MHIs and MHIs (vet track) over the same 3–5-year period (below) also shows that the proportion of MHIs (vet track) will also stabilise to ensure sustainability in the MHI allied professional role:



Our SDP has already started employing a larger proportion of TRNOVs holding Level 6 English and, based on learning gained from the cohort analysis, we expect the reformed approach set out above to rapidly reduce the proportion of TRNOVs with level 5 English, and

increase the proportion of TRNOVs with level 6 English. From the 1-2 years point, the MHIs (vet track) and TRNOVs (Level 6) who achieve level 7 English will start to join the OV ranks in increasing numbers, allowing the proportion of Temporary Registrants to reduce.

## 5. Update on the action plan and wider context

This paper specifically focusses on our approach to reforming and reducing reliance on TR. However, there is a wider acceptance that this sits within the overarching systemic resourcing challenges faced by the veterinary profession. We have therefore split the update on the action plan into short (where the impact of these changes has already worked to stabilise the OV pipeline), medium- and longer-term phases that address recruitment and retention (R&R) of OVs, FSA vets and within the context of wider veterinary public health (VPH).

### Short Term Actions: addressing recruitment and retention of OVs and FSA vets

- **SDP**
  - Implementation of **OV salary/package enhancements**, competitive in the current veterinary salary market. Our SDP has increased their base starting salary to align with similar roles in Government Veterinary Services and introduced a salary enhancement upon achieving English Level 7 and a further enhancement upon completion of the NOV programme.
  - Increased **flexibility, task variation** and broader career progression opportunities for example **new management pathways**.
  - **Recruitment** of UK resident vets, our SDP has formed a partnership with Harper & Keele University and are attending other vet school career fairs throughout the country including the London Vet Show.
- **FSA**
  - **Reviewed the SDP contract** to improve employment conditions, through contract variations.
  - Recognised the value of FSA vets (not in OV roles), for example those working in operations, policy, audit and assurance, by providing a **one-off payment in March 2023 to SEO vets** directly employed by the FSA.

### Medium Term Actions: addressing R&R of OVs, FSA vets and wider VPH roles

Since EU Exit and through the challenges of COVID, we have been working on a number of initiatives with our SDP, other Government departments, the wider profession through the BVA and, of course, with the RCVS. These actions are expected to deliver benefits over the medium- and longer-term timeframes. They will help to address the UK wide systemic veterinary resourcing challenges as well as specifically addressing the challenges around the attractiveness of roles in Veterinary Public Health and the recruitment and retention of OVs.

- **SDP**
  - Developed an OV Training contracts initiative, based on a previously successful strategy, to recruit vets from EAEVE accredited universities to work as **MHIs (vet track)** whilst they work towards obtaining Level 7 English (L7) to enable them to register as NOVs. This initiative has just been launched and we expect to begin to see the impact in 1-2 years.
  - Working extensively on the recruitment programme, maximising the recruitment of UK and overseas **vets who are immediately eligible to register as MRCVS**. They currently have a small number of applicants who hold, or are capable of holding, full RCVS membership from the outset and are awaiting deployment (see annex 2 for details).

- Launched a **work experience project** for vet students (EMS) to increase student access to abattoirs and gain experience of the OV role. 20 are being planned and 3 have already taken place. Student feedback so far has been very positive, with evidence that this work experience allows students to understand better the work of the OV/MHIs in abattoirs.
  - **Working with Universities**: Our SDP continues to develop partnerships with EAEVE accredited overseas universities, focusing on those that teach their degree in English, so vets from those universities can join as MRCVS.
- **FSA**
    - We have started to develop our **pay submission for 2023** and have identified some of our veterinary roles as an area of priority. We will take account of the wider current economic and labour market context in identifying priority areas and will collaborate with Defra and other Government departments (OGDs) to develop a cross-government pay framework to deliver greater pay consistency for the veterinary profession in Government. Implementing a veterinary pay model in the FSA will therefore be included in future pay submission(s), noting that as a government department, we are not able to make independent salary decisions outside of central government parameters.
    - We continue to recognise and build on the **value of FSA vets** through L&D opportunities and career progression. Examples include the annual FSA CPD Days event.
    - Development of an **FSA specific EMS programme**, due to be piloted in Autumn 2023, to complement the existing annual **Defra/APHA led EMS policy week**.
    - Government Veterinary Pathway: working with Defra, FSA led on a **market testing survey**, shared by RCVS with its members. 500 responses were received, 70% of whom expressed interest especially in a 2-year scheme. Undergraduates stated a preference to start such a scheme a few years into their career when they have embedded their clinical practice skills.
    - FSA Chair Susan Jebb met with Harper and Keele vet school in March and has also reached out to **Vet Schools Council** to explore opportunities for engagement with UK veterinary educators.
    - Focused engagement with universities, encouraging future vets to work in VPH, including close collaboration with VPH departments in conjunction with OGDs on the **Defra led Vet Schools tour, Government Veterinary Services (GVS) ambassador** programme, wider Veterinary Public Health Association (VPHA) and Association of Government Vets (AGV) work and through **FSA specific lecturing, career days and joint development of EMS**, designed to raise the profile VPH and specifically OV work to future vets. FSA remains committed to Government Veterinary Services (GVS) University engagement through the team of "GVS Ambassadors," with a focus on increasing awareness of veterinary roles in government and specifically in public health.

### **Long Term Actions: addressing wider VPH attractiveness and OV roles.**

#### **FSA working across the wider profession**

- FSA is an active member of Defra-led **GVS Steering Group** looking at the future of vets in VPH and engagement in the **RCVS led Recruitment and Retention Report**, defining the challenges faced by both the wider profession and the specific challenge recruiting and retaining OVs, where the shortage of vets is acutely felt.
- We have developed a draft plan and approach for the development of a **Government Veterinary Pathway**, to offer a salaried training pathway into

government roles for returners to the profession, vets looking for a change of direction, and recent graduates.

- Working with APHA and Defra to develop and implement communication plans **to raise awareness** with key leaders in Government and industry leaders of the recruitment and retentions challenges VPH and FSA specifically face, **highlight the impacts** and **raise wider support for practical solutions**.
- **FSA is working closely with APHA** in exploring and sharing solutions to the similar issues we face around recruitment and retention. We both contract Service Delivery Partners in our delivery models and while APHA employs more vets for direct delivery of their statutory responsibilities, the FSA directly employs vets in audit and assurance roles and has a contracted model for OV deployment. This is in part because our statutory requirement has developed from a Local Authority and local veterinary approach (before 1995) into the need to deploy OV-teams in every abattoir every day they are operating and to charge for these Official Control services.

## 6. Update on the Service Contract

The current contract with E&J for the Delivery of Official Controls runs until **31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**. It included a final optional one-year extension which, if invoked, would mean the contract would run until March 2025. The FSA is developing a retender strategy and plan to maximise potential interest throughout the tender.

Ahead of the proposed retender the FSA is working with Cabinet Office to complete a market health assessment and conduct early supplier engagement to understand how we can best structure the future contracts to increase their attractiveness.

As part of this work, the FSA will be able to explore other operating model options, including further disaggregating the service into multiple parts, both at a geographical and a service level, and exploring separating OV provision from MHIs. This is with a view to adding additional benchmarking and competition in terms of the provision of a quality service. This will not in itself necessarily improve recruitment or retention as any market entrant will face the same challenges. However, there is potential for OV leavers to move from one SDP to another, so they are not lost to the system and overall retention might benefit. Additionally, we will investigate the benefits of separating ongoing service delivery from support with delivering initiatives aimed at driving innovation in the way in which future services will be delivered. We have had a number of enquiries about the retender from other potential suppliers, which is encouraging.

One key area that will be closely assessed during the retender will be the recruitment pipeline of potential future suppliers and how they will ensure a sustainable supply of veterinary resources to deliver the contracts. While assurances around recruitment pipelines are crucial to mitigating the risk of service failure, current challenges recruiting suitably qualified veterinarians may prove to be a detracting factor, discouraging new entrants from responding to the tender. We are keen to ensure that we avoid an unintended consequence of the ongoing uncertainty around the future availability of a reformed temporary registration scheme as it could well be to discourage new entrants even further.

All bids (including the incumbent provider) will be assessed against FSAs technical and CO procurement guidelines and commercial requirements as part of a robust tender exercise. This will ensure that the preferred bidders represent the most economically advantageous tender response, which means offering the best possible quality of service and value for money for the industry and taxpayer. We would expect the incumbent provider in England and Wales to submit a strong bid for future contracts.

Given the ongoing systemic challenges facing the whole veterinary profession and the limited availability and interest for the OV role in the UK, we expect that the existing model of

bringing qualified veterinarians into the UK from overseas is likely to remain an important recruitment pipeline in the immediate future. This means that a reformed TR scheme will still be important to support this pipeline and ensure that abattoirs can continue to be appropriately resourced, no matter who provides the service. We are therefore keen to ensure that a reformed TR scheme is not considered in the light of who provides the service, or timescales for commercial tender, but rather in light of this systemic challenge.

You will be aware that the FSA recently considered directly employing up to 50% of the OVs needed to deliver Official Controls, however given the financial implications at a time of a cost-of-living crisis, these plans were reluctantly put on hold. We will of course continue to assess this situation, as we still feel strongly that there is a place for directly employed OVs within the FSA noting that the FSA, as with other Government organisations, would also face similar systemic recruitment challenges, and even if FSA directly employs OVs, temporary registration might still be needed as the FSS is experiencing.

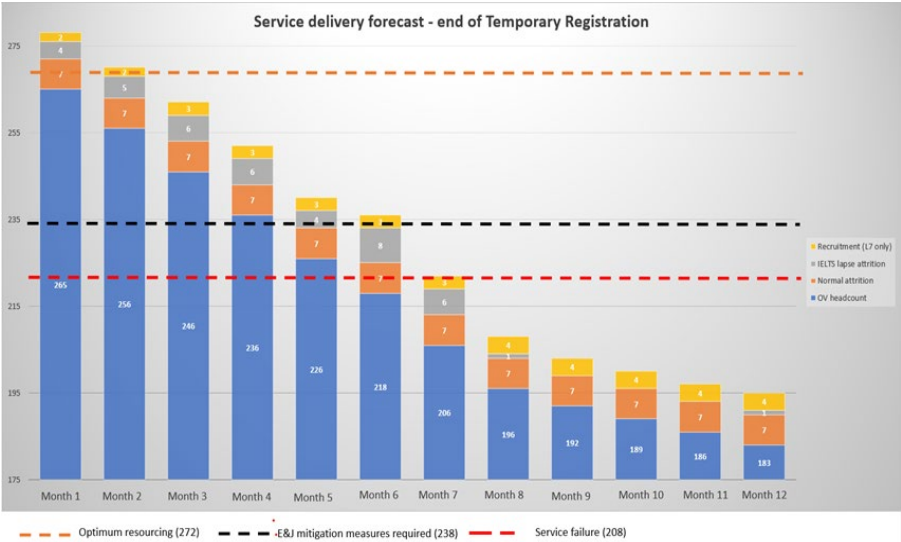
We are also exploring other ways of delivering our statutory requirements. This could include exploring a similar model to APHA TB Service Delivery Partners in Wales (which coordinate local practices to deliver TB testing) or piloting some direct employment of OVs working in abattoirs and delivering other Official Controls such as Animal Health visits to dairy farms.

## 7. Picture without TRNOV

Modelling by our SDP indicates that within **3-6 months of the scheme ending we could have 40-50 fewer OVs**, meaning that we would need to prioritise which meat plants to deliver our Official Control services to. The impact of this would be that they would not be able to legally operate, which will directly impact food supply, export and animal health and welfare, as well as the economic sustainability of wider food supply chain businesses, from farmers to retailers.

1. **1 month after the scheme ends**, staffing challenges will begin to surface (covering absence, ensuring supervision & support etc.)
2. **2-3 months after the scheme ends**, E&J and FSA contingency measures e.g., use of management and back-office staff will need to be introduced and we would need to start to consider prioritising which meat plants to resource.
3. **5-6 months after the scheme ends**, we would anticipate being at a full-service delivery failure point in around 20% of establishments, meaning these abattoirs will have to reduce, or even cease, operations.

The service delivery forecast chart following the end of TR is below. Attrition levels of OVs (full MRCVS and TRNOV) are currently around 7 per calendar month (reasons for leaving are in Annex 2).



**Annex 1:** IELTS levels - <https://ielts.idp.com/results/scores>

**IELTS Level 6: Competent user**

**Description**

Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacy and misunderstandings.

Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.

**IELTS Level 5: Modest user**

**Description**

Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.

<b>Meeting</b>	RCVS Council
<b>Date</b>	8 June 2023
<b>Title</b>	Updated Delegation Scheme
<b>Classification</b>	Unclassified
<b>Summary</b>	<p>This paper recommends changes to the Delegation Scheme to bring it up to date – presented as tracked changes. Please ignore any formatting or numbering issues that have arisen due to the track changes, these will be resolved in the final edit.</p> <p>NB this document does not include anything below committee level, where Terms of Reference are agreed by the sponsoring committee rather than Council. These are available on the RCVS website for reference.</p>
<b>Decisions required</b>	To approve the recommended changes.
<b>Attachments</b>	None
<b>Author</b>	Lizzie Lockett / CEO <a href="mailto:l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk">l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0725



## Scheme of delegation from the RCVS Council to committees – with proposed updates

### Operative date

1. The following delegations shall have effect from ~~xx-8~~ June 2023<sup>2</sup>.

### The vision of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [as agreed in the current strategic plan]

2. Our vision is to be recognised as a trusted, compassionate and proactive regulator, and a supportive and ambitious Royal College, underpinning confident veterinary professionals of whom the UK can be proud.

### Role of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [derived from the Charter]

3. The objects of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, as laid down in the Supplemental Charter granted on 17 February 2015 to the Royal Charter of 1844, ie:

- a. To set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest.
- b. The Charter also recognises those functions provided for in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, in terms of the regulation of the profession, and also recognises other activities not conferred upon the College by the Veterinary Surgeons Act or any other Act, which may be carried out in order to meet its objects, including but not limited to:
  - i. Accrediting veterinary education, training and qualifications, other than as provided for in the Act in relation to veterinary surgeons;
  - ii. Working with others to develop, update and ensure co-ordination of international standards of veterinary education;
  - iii. Administering examinations for the purpose of registration, awarding qualifications and recognising expertise other than as provided for in the Act;
  - iv. Promulgating guidance on post-registration veterinary education and training for those admitted as members and associates of the College;
  - v. Encouraging the continued development and evaluation of new knowledge and skills;
  - vi. Awarding fellowships, honorary fellowships, honorary associateships or other designations to suitable individuals;
  - vii. Keeping lists or registers of veterinary nurses and other classes of associate;
  - viii. Promulgating guidance on professional conduct;
  - ix. Setting standards for and accrediting veterinary practices and other suppliers of veterinary services;
  - x. Facilitating the resolution of disputes between registered persons and their clients;
  - xi. Providing information services and information about the historical development of the veterinary professions;
  - xii. Monitoring developments in the veterinary professions and in the provision of veterinary services;
  - xiii. Providing information about, and promoting fair access to, careers in the veterinary professions.

**Commented [LL1]:** This is the text that was approved by Council in June 2022 and has been added here for completeness.

**The purpose of RCVS Council [derived from the Charter]**

4. It is laid down in the Charter that the affairs of the College shall be managed by the Council as constituted under the Act. The Council shall have the entire management of and superintendence over the affairs, concerns and property of the College (save those powers of directing removal from, suspension from or restoration to the register of veterinary surgeons and supplementary veterinary register reserved to the disciplinary committee established under the Act) and shall have power to act by committees, subcommittees or boards and to delegate such functions as it thinks fit from time to time to such committees, subcommittees or boards and to any of its own number and to the employees and agents of the College.
5. The Council is also responsible for the appointment of the CEO and Registrar, and the ratification of the Assistant Registrars. Appointment of all other staff members is the responsibility of the CEO and relevant members of the Senior Team.
6. A strategic plan is developed and agreed by Council to facilitate the delivery of these activities and to ensure ongoing development and quality improvement.
7. A delegation scheme that outlines how Council's functions are managed via system of committees and other groups is agreed annually by Council.

**How Council members work**

8. In order to enable the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to fulfil its vision, and to discharge its functions under its Royal Charter and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, RCVS Council members will:
  - a. Abide by the Nolan Principles of Public Life
  - b. Work in the best interests of the public, and of animal health and welfare and public health
  - c. Respectfully listen to the voices of the professions, the public and other stakeholders, and reflect them in discussions where appropriate, ensuring they are put into context
  - d. Neither be answerable to, nor represent, any group of individuals
  - e. Support the College's vision and work towards the success of the College and its functions
  - f. Live the College's values
  - g. Act at all times in a constructive, supportive and compassionate manner
  - h. Exercise a duty of care to the staff employed by the College, working through the CEO and Registrar
  - i. Recognise the importance of a collegiate atmosphere where robust discussion is welcomed in the formation of policy and multiple points of view are listened to and respected
  - j. Respect and support the decisions made by Council when communicating externally
  - k. Communicate College activities and positions to relevant stakeholders
  - l. Abide by the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee members

**RCVS Council**

- ~~2.—RCVS Council exists to enable the College to fulfil its objects, as laid down in the Supplemental Charter granted on 17 February 2015 to the Royal Charter of 1844, ie:~~
- ~~a) To set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest.~~
  - ~~b) The Charter also recognises those functions provided for in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, in terms of the regulation of the profession, and also recognises other activities not conferred upon the College by the Veterinary Surgeons Act or any other Act, which may be carried out in order to meet its objects, including but not limited to:~~
    - ~~i. Accrediting veterinary education, training and qualifications, other than as provided for in the Act in relation to veterinary surgeons;~~
    - ~~ii. Working with others to develop, update and ensure co-ordination of international standards of veterinary education;~~
    - ~~iii. Administering examinations for the purpose of registration, awarding qualifications and recognising expertise other than as provided for in the Act;~~
    - ~~iv. Promulgating guidance on post-registration veterinary education and training for those admitted as members and associates of the College;~~
    - ~~v. Encouraging the continued development and evaluation of new knowledge and skills;~~
    - ~~vi. Awarding fellowships, honorary fellowships, honorary associateships or other designations to suitable individuals;~~
    - ~~vii. Keeping lists or registers of veterinary nurses and other classes of associate;~~
    - ~~viii. Promulgating guidance on professional conduct;~~
    - ~~ix. Setting standards for and accrediting veterinary practices and other suppliers of veterinary services;~~
    - ~~x. Facilitating the resolution of disputes between registered persons and their clients;~~
    - ~~xi. Providing information services and information about the historical development of the veterinary professions;~~
    - ~~xii. Monitoring developments in the veterinary professions and in the provision of veterinary services;~~
    - ~~xiii. Providing information about, and promoting fair access to, careers in the veterinary professions.~~
- ~~3.—It is laid down in the Charter that the affairs of the College shall be managed by the Council as constituted under the Act. The Council shall have the entire management of and superintendence over the affairs, concerns and property of the College (save those powers of directing removal from, suspension from or restoration to the register of veterinary surgeons and supplementary veterinary register reserved to the disciplinary committee established under the Act) and shall have power to act by committees, subcommittees or boards and to delegate such functions as it thinks fit from time to time to such committees, subcommittees or boards and to any of its own number and to the employees and agents of the College. The Council is also responsible for the appointment of the CEO and Registrar, and the ratification of the Assistant Registrars.~~

~~Appointment of all other staff members is the responsibility of the CEO and relevant members of the Senior Team.~~

~~4. A strategic plan is developed and agreed by Council to facilitate the delivery of these activities and to ensure ongoing development and quality improvement.~~

~~5. Add here the 'how we work' statement that will be before Council for consideration at its June meeting.~~

6.9 This scheme outlines how Council's functions are currently delegated.

### Committees

7.10 There shall be the following statutory and non-statutory disciplinary and investigation committees, and appeals committees:

- the Accreditation of Veterinary Programme Appeals Committee (appeals ~~committee~~)
- the Charter Case Committee (non-statutory disciplinary committee)
- the Disciplinary Committee (statutory committee);
- the Examination Appeals Committee (appeals committee);
- the Preliminary Investigation Committee (statutory committee);
- the Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee (non-statutory disciplinary committee);
- the Veterinary Nurses Disciplinary Committee (non-statutory disciplinary committee);
- ; and,
- the Specialist and Advanced Practitioner Appeals Committee (appeals committee).

**Commented [LL2]:** Change brings document up to date; name was agreed in 2022

8.11 There shall be the following standing committees:

- the Advancement of the Professions Committee
- the Audit and Risk Committee;
- the Education Committee;
- the Finance and Resources Committee;
- the Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee;
- the Registration Committee
- the Standards Committee; and,
- the Veterinary Nurses' Council.

9.12 The standing committees shall report to Council and shall be constituted and work within the terms of reference set out below. Their Chairs will be elected by Council unless the Chair is role-based (for example, Treasurer for Finance and Resources Committee), with the exception of VN Council, which will elect its own Chair. The Chairs of the standing committees, with the exception of the VN Council, shall be members of RCVS Council. The Chairs of the ~~s~~Statutory and non-statutory disciplinary, investigation and appeals committees shall be non-Council members. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee should be an external ~~member individual~~, independent of Council, but elected by Council. Chairs of subcommittees and other groups do not need to be Council members unless otherwise stated.

**Commented [LL3]:** To avoid confusion that we mean MRCVS

40-13. Chairs of the standing committees will generally hold the office for a three-year period and will be re-elected by Council annually. They will be expected to align with the role specification for a chair.

**Commented [LL4]:** Added following the approval of such a role spec in 2022

44-14. Standing committees will select their own Vice-Chairs, unless otherwise specified. The Vice-Chairs can be any full member of the committee (ie not an observer, but does not have to be a Council member) apart from the Vice-Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, who should be a full member and a Council member. They will be re-elected every year by members of the relevant committee, from among self-nominated candidates, as soon as possible into the new presidential year.

42-15. All the standing committees will generally meet four times a year, either in-person or remotely. If there is no, or not enough, business to justify a meeting, the Chair can cancel a meeting. There may also be occasions when an additional meeting is required if decisions need to be made more quickly. Small amounts of business can also be conducted by email if there is not sufficient time to mount a meeting and full discussion is not required, but this should be the exception. The quorum for standing committees will generally be a simple majority of the total number of full voting members (ie not observers), unless otherwise specified (for example, VN Council, see below). For more detail about the operation of a meeting, see the role specification for an RCVS Committee Chair.

**Commented [LL5]:** The frequency of meetings is subject to review based on a paper due to come to Council in September 2023

43-16. If an item crosses the remit of more than one committee, a joint meeting may be held. If an item starts with one committee but, over time, becomes more relevant for another, it may be cross-referred to the most appropriate by the original Chair, or come back to Council for either a decision on the item itself, or a decision on the delegation route. The guidance of the President on the most appropriate course of action may be sought.

44-17. Where a joint meeting is held of two committees, each committee must be quorate in its own right. Where such joint meetings take place, the Chair of the meeting may be the Chair of either committee, or another member of either committee, at the discretion of the President. The Finance and Resources Committee and Audit and Risk Committee meet formally once per year to discuss the annual report and accounts with the auditors, and the Treasurer shall chair this joint meeting.

**Commented [LL6]:** Added to clear up ambiguity

18. The committees may appoint one or more subcommittees or working parties for such general or special purpose as they may think fit, subject to the approval of the Finance and Resources Committee and/or Council, and, subject to any contrary direction from the Council, may on behalf of the Council delegate to such subcommittees power to act in the name of the College and the Council in relation to the matters set out in their terms of reference.

45-19. The RCVS Officer Team may select one Observer for each of the non-statutory standing committees.

**Commented [LL7]:** This has been custom and practice but not written down

#### **Accreditation of Veterinary Programme Appeals Committee**

46-20. The Accreditation of Veterinary Programme Appeals Committee shall deal with appeals of the outcome of RCVS accreditations of veterinary degrees or VN educational programmes, following

review by the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC)/Education Committee/VN Education Committee (VNEC), as appropriate. The appointment of the panel is coordinated by the Registrar. One member should be appointed from the Council Officer team (for example, current President or Vice-President), one member from Council and one lay member (should be nominated from the list of RCVS accreditation panel members). The meeting will normally be held within two months of receipt of the request by the appellant institution for consideration of the appeal by an appeals panel.

### Advancement of the Professions Committee

17-21. The Advancement of the Professions Committee will oversee work that is non-statutory in nature and contributes broadly to the advancement of the veterinary and/or veterinary nursing professions.

18-22. Such activity includes, but is not limited to, leadership, innovation, mental health (Mind Matters), the Fellowship, international strategy, Vet Futures, VN Futures, diversity and inclusion, sustainability and other workstreams to be defined by Council.

19-23. This will exclude work that is non-statutory but sufficiently covered by existing standing committees, such as postgraduate education.

20-24. The Committee shall comprise the chairs of relevant working parties or taskforces, or appropriate Council member champions, together with at least up to four other members of Council (chair, lay member, veterinary surgeon, veterinary nurse), together with relevant members of the Senior Team. Other Committee members may be co-opted if necessary. RCVS Knowledge, an independent charity, will contribute by means of its Chair of Trustees, who will be an invited observer. Although they each have responsibility for individual projects or areas of work, Committee members will review and input across all areas, with collective responsibility.

**Commented [LL8]:** Revised due to some roles ending up being duplicated

21-25. The Committee shall:

- a) Take regular reports from the leads on these areas of work and consider the ongoing effectiveness of the work against agreed strategy, timing and resourcing, making recommendations for changes, where appropriate. Consider any additional budgetary impact of these workstreams, which would then be escalated via the Financial Controls process;
- b) Ensure that potential synergies between the various projects and initiatives reporting into the Committee are identified and exploited, and that opportunities for working collaboratively to maximise the impact of workstreams is explored;
- c) Provide a forum for in-depth consideration of the issues surrounding or arising from the projects and initiatives that report into the Committee;
- d) Provide a forum for blue-sky thinking to support the identification and development of new non-statutory projects that would serve to advance the professions;

- e) Flag up any issues of concern to the Audit and Risk Committee, via the Risk Register, particularly in terms of financial, reputational or legal risks associated with the project and initiatives reporting to the Committee;
- f) Make recommendations to Council for any new streams of work which may be appropriate under our Royal Charter; and,
- g) Make a report to Council on a regular basis summarising the work that comes under its purview (usually via the minutes of its meetings).

#### **Audit and Risk Committee**

22-26. The Audit and Risk Committee shall support the Council by reviewing the comprehensiveness and reliability of assurances and internal controls in meeting the Council's oversight responsibilities. The Committee is a non-executive committee and has no executive powers except as set out below.

23-27. The Committee has delegated authority to:

- a) monitor the Council's risk management arrangements;
- b) approve the internal audit programme; and,
- c) advise the Council on the comprehensiveness and reliability of assurances and internal controls, including internal and external audit arrangements, and on the implications of assurances provided in respect of risk and control.

24-28. The Committee may request the attendance of any employee or member, as set out in paragraph 29 below, and may incur expenditure for the purpose of obtaining advice in terms of paragraph 31 below.

25-29. The Committee is accountable to the Council. The minutes of each Committee meeting shall be circulated to the Council. The Committee shall report to the Council annually on its work. It may also submit separately to the Council its advice on issues where it considers that the Council should take action. Where the Committee considers there is evidence of *ultra vires* transactions or evidence of improper acts, the Chair of the Committee shall raise the matter at a formal Council meeting.

26-30. The Committee shall have five members, but may operate with fewer while a vacancy exists, provided the quorum is maintained. The members shall include two Council members, of whom one shall be a lay member and one a registrant member. Neither the President, Vice-Presidents, nor the Treasurer shall be members of the Committee. The members of the Committee who are not Council members (the "external members") shall have appropriate audit and risk management experience.

**Commented [LL9]:** ARC will meet to discuss any changes during July so an addendum will come to the September meeting of Council, if required

27-31. The Council will elect one of the external members serving on the Committee as Chair, based on relevant background and skills. The Committee will elect a Vice-Chair and in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will chair the meeting.

28-32. The Committee shall support the Council by reviewing and advising the Council on the operation and effectiveness of the arrangements which are in place across the whole of the Council's activities that support the achievement of the Council's objectives. In particular, the Committee shall review the adequacy of:

- a) all risk and control related disclosure statements, together with any accompanying internal audit statement, where appropriate, external audit opinion or other appropriate independent assurances, prior to endorsement by the Council;
- b) the underlying assurance processes that indicate the degree of the achievement of corporate objectives, the effectiveness of the management of principal risks and the appropriateness of the above disclosure statements;
- c) the policies for ensuring compliance with relevant regulatory, legal, governance and code of conduct requirements; and
- d) the policies and procedures for all work related to fraud and corruption.

29-33. In carrying out this work the Committee will primarily utilise the work of internal audit, where appropriate, external audit and other assurance functions. It will also seek reports and assurances from Department Managers as appropriate, concentrating on the over-arching systems of governance, risk management and internal control together with indicators of their effectiveness.

30-34. In reviewing risk management arrangements, the Committee shall draw attention to areas where:

- a) risk is being appropriately managed and controls are adequate (no action needed);
- b) risk is inadequately controlled (action needed to improve control);
- c) risk is over-controlled (resource being wasted which could be diverted to another use); and,
- d) there is a lack of evidence to support a conclusion (if this concerns areas which are material to the organisation's functions, more audit and/or assurance work will be required).

31-35. In relation to internal audit, where appropriate, the Committee shall:

- a) ensure that there is effective internal audit activity that complies with any applicable standards and provides appropriate independent assurance to the Council, Audit and Risk Committee, Secretary and Registrar;



- b) consider the appointment of advisers, the cost of the service and any questions of resignation or dismissal and make appropriate recommendations to the Council;
- c) ensure that the College makes adequate resource available to internal audit activity, where required;
- d) review the need for an internal audit strategy, operational plan and work programme;
- e) consider the major findings of internal audit work, where carried out, and management's response; and,
- f) annually review the effectiveness of internal audit.

32-36. In relation to external audit, the Committee shall:

- a) consider the appointment and performance of the external auditor, the audit fee and any questions of resignation or dismissal and make appropriate recommendations to the Council;
- b) discuss and agree with the external auditor, before the audit commences, the nature and scope of the audit as set out in the external audit plan and their local evaluation of audit risks;
- c) review the work and findings of the external auditor, consider the implications and management's responses to their work; and,
- d) review all external audit reports, including agreement of the annual audit letter before submission to the Council and any work undertaken outside the annual audit plan, together with the appropriateness of management responses.

33-37. The Committee shall review the annual financial statements, focusing particularly on:

- a) disclosures relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee;
- b) changes in, and compliance with, accounting policies and practices;
- c) unadjusted mis-statements in the financial statements;
- d) major judgmental areas; and,
- e) significant adjustments resulting from the audit.

34-38. The Committee shall ensure that the systems for financial reporting to the Council, including those of budgetary control, are subject to review as to completeness and accuracy of the information provided to the Council.

35-39. The Committee shall meet not less than three times a year. The external auditors may request a meeting if they consider that one is necessary.

36-40. Only Committee members shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Committee. The Treasurer, CEO, Secretary and/or Registrar, and Director of Operations shall normally attend meetings. Representatives from the external auditors shall attend meetings as required for relevant items. The President and other Council members may attend meetings at the invitation of, or with the agreement of, the Chair of the Committee.

37-41. The Committee may request any employee or member to attend a meeting to assist with its discussions on any particular matter or to provide any information it may reasonably require in order to fulfil its remit. All employees and members shall co-operate with any reasonable request made by the Committee.

38-42. The Committee may ask any or all non-members to withdraw for all or part of a meeting if it so decides. In such an instance, the Chair shall ensure that a proper record is made of the meeting.

39-43. The senior representatives of external audit shall have free and confidential access to the Chair of the Committee. At least once a year, the Committee shall provide an opportunity to meet privately with the external auditors.

40-44. The Committee may investigate any activity within its terms of reference. It may seek any information it requires from any employee and all employees shall co-operate with any request made by the Committee.

41-45. The Committee may obtain legal or other independent professional advice and secure the attendance of external advisers with relevant experience and expertise if it considers this necessary, within the budget approved by the Council. The CEO and/or Registrar shall ensure that appropriate secretariat support is provided to the Chair and Committee.

Remit relating to accreditation functions of the College

42-46. The Committee will receive assurances that the quality assurance work undertaken by the College in relation to the accreditation of veterinary degree programmes and veterinary nursing educational institutions is operating in accordance with its published procedures. This process of assurance is also designed to contribute to compliance with the requirements for membership with the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) that 'Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities'. This will be achieved by:

- a) at the beginning of each calendar year, the Committee will be provided with a work plan, detailing the accreditation visitations that are scheduled for the forthcoming year;
- b) brief progress reports against this work plan will be provided as a standing item at each meeting of the Committee. These reports will also highlight any major concerns

or issues that had arisen as a result of quality assurance activities conducted in the period covered by the report;

- c) an annual report will be produced at the end of each calendar year. This will be presented to the Committee together with the work plan for the next calendar year. The annual report would be expected to include:
- o confirmation that quality assurance activities have been completed in line with the work plan, or reasons for any variation;
  - o actions that have been taken or that are planned as a result of discussion by committees;
  - o actions that have been taken or that are planned as a result of feedback from stakeholders (visitors/universities); and,
  - o trends and themes identified in information presented year on year.

43-47. Findings of the Committee arising from assurances received on the quality assurance activities of the College in relation to veterinary degree programmes and veterinary nursing educational institutions shall also be circulated to the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC), Education Committee and the Veterinary Nurses Education Committee.

44-48. The Committee may choose to invite attendance from representatives of Education Committee and VN Education Committee for the purpose of receiving assurances on quality assurance activities undertaken by those Committees.

45-49. Where an appointed member of the Audit and Risk Committee is also involved with the education quality assurance activities of the RCVS, they shall not be permitted voting rights on any issues discussed however they may remain present at the meeting for points of clarification.

#### **Charter Case Committee**

50. The Charter Case Committee shall deal with matters referred to it by the Preliminary Investigation Committee or the Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee and decide whether a warning (confidential or public) would be appropriate.

#### **Disciplinary Committees**

46-51. The Disciplinary Committee shall be constituted in accordance with Schedule 2 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. The Veterinary Nurses Disciplinary Committee shall be constituted in accordance with the Veterinary Nurse Conduct and Disciplinary Rules 2014.

#### **Education Committee**

47-52. The Education Committee shall set the policy for undergraduate and postgraduate education and training of veterinary surgeons and determine the requirements for those seeking registration, for the award of qualifications under the Charter, for continuing professional development, and for recognition as RCVS Advanced Practitioner and RCVS Specialist.

48-53. Under normal circumstances Council members will form the majority on non-statutory committees, but on Education Committee (and the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC)) a minimum of one third and a maximum of one half of members will be co-opted external members with education expertise, for example, Heads of the Veterinary Schools or other veterinary school staff members. Two students will also sit on the Education Committee (and two on PQSC). In addition, the Chairs of the Education Subcommittees and a member of the Officer Team will sit as non-voting observers.

49-54. The Committee shall develop and keep under review education and training requirements for registration, and in particular shall:

- a) define Day-One Competences and advise on the content of the veterinary undergraduate curriculum;
- b) oversee the approval process and ongoing monitoring of veterinary degrees and international recognition agreements, considering subcommittee reports on appointment of ~~visitors~~accreditation panel members, ~~visitation accreditation event reports~~reports (to be changed to 'accreditation panel members' and 'accreditation event reports' effective 1 January 2023), follow-up reports and annual monitoring reports from veterinary schools, subcommittee reports on overseas degrees from other accrediting bodies, and subcommittee reports on operation of the statutory membership examination; and,
- c) make recommendations to Council on any change in approved status concerning registrable degrees, on the regulations governing the statutory membership examination and on the regulations governing practice by students.

50-55. The Committee shall develop and keep under review policy for continuing professional development, revalidation of Advanced Practitioner and Specialist status, and postgraduate training and qualifications, and in particular shall:

- a) define "~~Year One Competences~~Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs)" ~~for~~, and monitor ~~the~~ Professional Development Phase / VetGDP;
- b) set the requirements for and monitor continuing professional development within the profession;
- c) develop and maintain a framework of College postgraduate awards, receiving reports from subcommittees on the standards for College-awarded certificates and fellowships by thesis, examinations and accreditation of other recognised postgraduate qualifications as part of the framework;

- d) define the requirements for RCVS Advanced Practitioner and RCVS Specialist status, receiving reports from subcommittees on the maintenance of lists for Advanced Practitioners and Specialists; and,
- e) recommend to Council amendments to the certificate rules.

~~51-56.~~ The Committee shall recommend fees to the Finance and Resources Committee for all related activities, for example, application and annual fees for Advanced Practitioners and Specialists, together with reviewer remuneration; fees for Statutory Membership exam candidates, and remuneration for; examiners; and visitors; remuneration for accreditation panel members; and reviewers of Advanced Practitioners and Specialist applications.

#### **Examination Appeals Committee**

~~52-57.~~ The Examination Appeals Committee shall deal with appeals relating to the conduct of examinations administered by the College.

#### **Finance and Resources Committee**

~~53-58.~~ The Finance and Resources Committee shall be responsible ensuring the finances, resources and framework of the College governance system is fit for purpose, thus enabling the Council and committees to deliver against the College's objects. It shall comprise the Treasurer (Chair), nominated representatives from Education, Standards, Advancement of the Professions, ~~and Preliminary Investigation Committee/Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committees and Registration Committees~~ and VN Council, together with two lay members of Council and two veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse members of Council (ie two in total). The CEO, Registrar and Director of Operations will be non-voting members.

~~54-59.~~ The representatives from the Committees will be selected by the Committee as soon as possible after RCVS Day and will hold the role for a three-year period or until they come off the Committee that they are representing, or off Council.

~~55-60.~~ It shall make recommendations to Council as appropriate.

~~56-61.~~ It will be chaired by the Treasurer, and its functions will include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- a) Presenting an annual budget to Council for approval and recommending proposed fee changes;
- b) Laying down procedures for budgeting and financial control;
- c) Approving expenditure from the Discretionary Fund;
- d) Seeking the approval of Council for expenditure from the College's reserves;

- e) Managing the assets and investments of the College;
- f) Working with the executive team to ensure management of organisational risks, maintenance of a risk register and delivery of appropriate internal audit reviews, with oversight provided by the Audit and Risk Committee;
- g) Overseeing the appointment of professional advisers to the College, over £50,000;
- h) Acting as Project Board for substantive projects, where applicable under the project protocol, unless another dedicated group exists;
- i) Approving rates of travelling and subsistence expenses, and remuneration for work carried out on the College's behalf;
- j) In consultation with the APC and the Fellowship Board, ~~recommend to FRC deciding~~ fees for application and ongoing membership of the Fellowship;
- k) Advising Council on corporate governance matters, including the terms of reference and composition of committees (but not individual membership);
- l) Approving the setting up of subcommittees, working parties and other such bodies, and determining their composition (but not individual membership), by considering proposals made by sponsoring committees, Officers or senior staff members (Council to ratify members ~~of long-term groups as part of the annual cycle. sponsoring committees to and~~ agree terms of reference);
- m) Approving the disbanding of subcommittees, working parties and other such bodies, as appropriate; and,
- n) Keeping under review the rules and arrangements for Council elections (the operation of the annual elections themselves being overseen by the Registrar, as returning officer).

**Commented [LL10]:** To correct something that did not make sense...

#### **Preliminary Investigation Committees**

~~57-62.~~ The Preliminary Investigation Committee shall be constituted in accordance with Schedule 2 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. The Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee shall be constituted in accordance with the Veterinary Nurse Conduct and Disciplinary Rules 2014.

#### **Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee**

~~58-63.~~ The Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee shall include the chair of the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC), the chair of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC), the chair of the Disciplinary Committee (DC), at least two members of Council one of whom is a member of the Officer Team, the chair of

Standards Committee (SC). The member of the Officer Team to undertake the role of chair of the (liaison) committee for a three-year term, usually incoming Junior Vice-President in the year that the role becomes vacant.

59-64. The Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee shall serve as a channel for communication between the Preliminary Investigation, Charter Case and Disciplinary Committees and Council, discussing policy issues in connection with the supervision of professional conduct. These shall include the following:

- a) The setting and monitoring of key performance indicators and monitoring, including key performance indicators and processes;
- b) working methods;
- c) budgeting and financial control, monitoring costs and resources related to the committees;
- d) arrangements for the recruitment of members of the Committees, including deciding the membership of the independent selection panel and overseeing the process (final decision on successful candidates to be ratified by Council), appraisal of their performance and the process for selection for chairs;
- e) arrangements for the appointment of legal advisors (including legal assessors) in connection with the professional conduct function;
- f) planning for a public review of the implementation of the legislative reform order; and,
- g) facilitating a 'feedback loop' between DC and CCC decisions, outcomes of the PIC and RVN PIC, the SC and the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS).

60-65. The PIC/DC Liaison Committee shall also monitor the 12-month trial of the protocol for private prosecutions against unqualified individuals, which commenced on 1 April 2023.

### Registration Committee

61-66. The Committee shall comprise the President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer of the College, together with two veterinary members of Council, a veterinary nurse member to be appointed by Veterinary Nurse Council (VNC), and a lay member of Council or VNC. The Committee shall be chaired by one of the Officers of the College, who will chair for a three-year term. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Registrar, and Director of Operations shall attend and participate in the meeting but shall be non-voting members.

62-67. The Committee shall be responsible for activities relating to the registration of veterinary and veterinary nurse members of the College (and, in due course, other Associate members of the College), and will provide and make recommendations to Council and/or VNC on matters relating to registration as appropriate.

63-68. Responsibilities will include but are not limited to:

- a) Reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the provisions of the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966 related to the registration of veterinary surgeons; (in conjunction with the Education Committee as appropriate);
- b) Reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the provisions of the Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules related to the registration of veterinary nurses; (in conjunction with VNC);
- c) Reviewing and monitoring the policies and procedures relating to registration and publication of the Register;
- d) Advising in relation to the creation of new categories of Associate members of the RCVS;
- e) Keeping under review data relating to Find-A-Vet;
- f) Monitoring registration activities (including trends in Registration for both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses);
- g) Monitoring reports from relevant Appeal panels, ie
  - i. The Examination Appeals Committee;
- h) Considering applications for Temporary Registration in accordance with the VSA 1966; and,
- i) Reporting to Council on a regular basis summarising the work that comes under its purview (usually via the minutes of its meetings).

#### **Specialist and Advanced Practitioner Appeals Committee**

64-69. The Specialist and Advanced Practitioner Appeals Committee shall determine appeals relating to recognition of Specialists and Advanced Practitioners after reviewing the original papers considered by the first instance panel, subcommittee or committee.

#### **Standards Committee**

65-70. The Standards Committee shall provide advice and guidance on the professional conduct of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, including, but not limited to:

- a) publishing a Code or Codes of Professional Conduct, subject to the approval of the Council;
- b) publishing as necessary advice on professional conduct;



- c) responding to professional conduct issues raised by the RCVS Council, Veterinary Nurses' Council or any committee of the RCVS;
- d) responding to requests for advice from members of the profession and the public, as agreed by the chair; and,
- e) overseeing the development of the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme by the Practice Standards Group, making recommendations to Council as appropriate, and considering appeals from the Practice Standards Scheme Review Group.

**Veterinary Nurses' Council**

**Commented [LL11]:** Includes recommended changes from VNC

66-71. The Veterinary Nurses' Council shall consist of the following members:

- a) six veterinary nurses practising or living wholly or mainly in the United Kingdom, elected by ballot of all veterinary nurses, conducted substantially in accordance with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Council Election Scheme 1967 (as amended), with the necessary adaptations;
- b) two veterinary nurses to be appointed by the Veterinary Nurses' Council;
- c) two veterinary surgeons, to be appointed by the Veterinary Nurses' Council in consultation with RCVS Council;
- d) four lay members to be appointed by the Veterinary Nurses' Council.

67-72. The term of office of elected and appointed members of the Veterinary Nurses' Council shall be three years in each case, and one-third of the elected members shall retire in rotation each year, being eligible for re-election if still qualified to serve. A member elected or appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall serve the unexpired portion of the predecessor's term of office.

68-73. Members of the Veterinary Nurses' Council shall serve a maximum of three successive terms and after which they will be eligible to re-stand for election or be re-appointed after a gap of two years.

69-74. The quorum for meetings of the Veterinary Nurses' Council shall be seven members, which must include four veterinary nurse members, one veterinary surgeon member and one lay member.

70-75. The Chair and up to two Vice-Chairs of the Veterinary Nurses' Council shall be elected by the Veterinary Nurses' Council, by secret ballot. The Chair will be either an elected or appointed veterinary nurse. The election of the Chair shall be confirmed by the RCVS Council.

76. The term of office of the Chair shall usually be three years and Vice-Chair(s) shall serve for either one or three years, with the outgoing Chair normally serving one year as Vice-Chair.

~~71-77. The Veterinary Nurses Council was established in 2002 and the Supplementary Royal Charter confirms its functions shall encompass the regulation of the profession of veterinary nurses.~~

~~72-78. The Veterinary Nurses' Council shall, in addition to those functions specified in the Supplemental Royal Charter:~~

~~a) Set standards for the training and education of persons wishing to be entered into the Register~~

~~b) Set requirements in relation to the registration of veterinary nurses~~

~~c) set standards for the conduct of veterinary nurses~~

~~a)d) maintain the register of veterinary nurses;~~

~~b) ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant regulatory authorities relating to licence to practise qualifications in veterinary nursing;~~

~~e) establish and keep under review schemes for post-qualification training and continuing professional development for veterinary nurses, and the outcomes to be achieved, with a view to recording an additional entry in the register of veterinary nurses;~~

~~d)e) recommend to the Finance and Resources Committee a budget and levels of fees to be charged; and,~~

~~e)f) recommend to the Council amendments to the rules relating to the registration, conduct and discipline of veterinary nurses.~~

~~79. In exercising its functions, the Veterinary Nurses' Council may delegate responsibility for matters related to veterinary nurse education, both licence to practise and post registration awards, to the Veterinary Nurse Education Committee.~~

~~73-80. In exercising its functions, the Veterinary Nurses' Council shall ensure that the welfare of animals and good veterinary practice are central to its work.~~

#### **Other groups with delegated responsibilities**

~~74-81. In addition to the abovementioned Committees, the following groups of individuals are tasked with oversight and/or delivery of specific areas of activity.~~

#### **Chairs of standing committees**

~~75-82. In addition to leading the work of their respective committees, the chairs of the standing committees (excluding the independent Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and the chair of the PIC/DC Liaison Committee, which is a co-ordinating role) will meet with the Officer Team and senior staff members prior to each Council meeting to discuss the running order and presentation~~

of papers. They will also provide advance notice of major decisions likely to be put before Council at future meetings, in order to enable the flow and time management of those meetings.

### Officer Team

[76-83.](#) The Officer Team comprises the President, Junior Vice-President, Senior Vice-President and Treasurer, who are elected by the Council according to the election rules.

[77-84.](#) The Officer Team will meet on a regular basis with senior staff in order to discuss relevant matters, with a focus on external meetings, media management, communications and stakeholder relationships. The Chair of the Veterinary Nurses' Council will be invited to attend meetings of the Officer Team.

[78-85.](#) The Officer Team will also act as the **Nominations Subcommittee**, together with the Chair of VN Council, CEO and Registrar, and one veterinary and one veterinary nurse member of Council, proposing who will be awarded College honours and awards (choices will be ratified by Council and, for the VN Golden Jubilee Award, VN Council).

[79-86.](#) The Officer Team will also act as the **Remuneration Subcommittee**. The Remuneration Subcommittee meets annually to decide a policy on how the budget allocated to staff salaries, as agreed by Council as part of the budget-setting process, should be allocated, for example, what percentage should be allocated to salary increases and what to bonuses. It does not look at individual staff salaries, which is the role of the Senior Team, apart from the remuneration of the CEO, which is considered by the President in line with the aforementioned policy. The Subcommittee consists of the Officer Team, with the Directors of HR and Operations, and the Registrar and CEO attending in a non-voting capacity.

### Senior Team

[80-87.](#) The purpose of the Senior Team is to enable Council to set the strategic direction and oversee governance of the RCVS, and to enable the College staff team to deliver.

[81-88.](#) The Senior Team comprises the RCVS Departmental Directors and is led by the CEO, who takes responsibility for delivery of the RCVS strategic plan, as agreed by Council, and the day-to-day running of the College.

[82-89.](#) The Senior Team meets regularly and ~~the notes of the meetings are available to all staff~~ summary of points raised is communicated to departmental teams, with exemptions for private and confidential matters. The CEO chairs these meetings, and the Executive Director of RCVS Knowledge is invited to sit as observer.

[83-90.](#) The key responsibilities of the Senior Team are as follows:

- a) Support and advise the Officers (President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer), Council and committee members in the development and delivery of the Strategic Plan;

- b) Ensure delivery of the Strategic Plan and keep Council regularly updated on progress against time, budget and intended impact;
- c) Enable understanding of the RCVS purpose and Strategic Plan throughout the organisation and to ensure continual, coherent and consistent communication;
- d) Create an environment in which our people can deliver, learn and thrive;
- e) Ensure the effective and efficient day-to-day direction and management of the organisation in line with key functions as a Royal College and regulator;
- f) Propose and manage the College budget ensuring the most effective use of resources;
- g) Recommend Key Performance Indicators and service standards, and review activities against these, making adjustments to procedures and resources as applicable in association with the relevant Committee Chairs;
- h) Utilise the collective wisdom and expertise of the Senior Team and wider organisation by collaborating to exploit synergies and advance our organisational priorities;
- i) Ensure appropriate mitigations against risk, keeping the organisational and departmental Risk Registers up to date and report regularly to the Audit and Risk Committee;
- j) Horizon-scan for opportunities and threats, building networks to understand, for example, research and best practice from other similar organisations both at home and overseas, and act on this information appropriately; and,
- k) Identify and consider issues and activities for communication to the wider organisation, professions and public.

| [\[Approved by Council in June 2023\]](#)

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Council Culture Working Group (CCWG) update.
Summary	This paper provides an update to Council from the CCWG namely changes to the Election process and Code of Conduct.
Decisions required	To approve, by formal resolution of Council, the amended Election Scheme Rules; and to approve the amended Code of Conduct for Council members.
Attachments	Annex A – Proposed amendments to RCVS Election Scheme as amended 2006;  Annex B – Proposed amendments to RCVS Code of Conduct for Council (and Committee) members.
Author	Lisa Hall People Director <a href="mailto:l.hall@rcvs.org.uk">l.hall@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a
Annex B	Unclassified	n/a

**<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

## Election and Code of Conduct

### Background

1. The CCWG was formed in November 2022 following the coming together of five independent groups exploring Council culture as a result of feedback from Mike Farrar.
2. It was important to bring the original five groups together to be able to continue draw common threads of work under one group rather than separately.
3. Great progress has been made with the actions presented to the group to deliver with the final list of actions and deliverables to be presented to Council in September.
4. The key areas for updating Council are changes to the Election process and Code of Conduct.

### Election scheme discussion and recommendations

5. The original Working Group was keen to review the elections in order to meet a range of purposes, including:
  - a. Making it easier and more appealing for people to stand for nomination.
  - b. Clarifying the role of Council members and the function of the College.
  - c. Ensuring that those standing for election were doing so on a ticket that aligned with the role of Council and what they may be likely to achieve.
6. Those actions were rolled onto the CCWG and considered at a number of meetings. Among the options considered by the CCWG were:
  - a. Subdivision of candidate's statements into specific areas, e.g., why are you standing, what can you bring to Council, what is your relevant experience, etc (currently word count and format is set in the Elections Rules, ideally this not to be set in the SI but College to be able to change from time to time). This is unlikely to be achievable until such time as the amendments to the Election scheme rules have been approved by the Privy Council.
  - b. Make it a requirement that candidates speak to a member of the Officer team before standing? This would involve publication of email addresses/contact numbers as part of the pack.
  - c. Introduce a two-stage process where candidates register an interest before getting the forms so that we can follow up with additional material and/or contact those who did not stand to ask why so we can improve the materials provided.
  - d. Simplify the information on the election pages to reduce some duplication – single downloadable candidate pack?
  - e. Update references in the election pack to the LRO which is now historic.

- f. Query why people's addresses need to be published in full when they are stepping down.
  - g. Include a statement similar to the one signed by JVPs declaring they have nothing that might bring the College into disrepute.
  - h. Consider a shadowing process for those keen to join Council.
7. **Annex A** highlights the suggested changes for approval, it is worth noting the following:
- a. Paragraph 5 – eligible candidates include anyone on the Register. This includes anyone who has been convicted of offences and that has been to a disciplinary hearing at any time, but at the time of nomination is a fully registered member of the College.
  - b. Paragraph 10 – this list what the candidates confirm by accepting the nomination; added now formally is confirmation that they know of nothing in their private or professional life that were it to become known would cause embarrassment to the College.
  - c. Paragraph 11 - as it stands a candidate could stand without completing any information - i.e., just on the basis of being named. This is amended to require information to be completed. Reference to a biography of 200 words and statement of 300 words has been deleted, and replaced with a requirement that information is as required by the Returning Officer. Reference to a photograph as a requirement has been deleted.
  - d. Paragraph 16 - reference to the address of candidates appearing on the voting papers or candidate information has been deleted.
  - e. Paragraph 17 and 18 - reference to postal voting has been removed making the election electronic. In the past three years where this has been permitted on a temporary basis the College gave assurances around contacting any members (an ever-diminishing number) that do not hold email addresses to ensure that any such member is not disenfranchised. It is suggested that this should be continued and confirmed to the Privy Council in applying for formal amendment of the Scheme rules.
  - f. Paragraph 24 - the make-up of any Challenge Panel has been amended to take out with the membership of Council (the current Scheme states that only non-elected members of Council may sit on any such panel) stating that any panel would comprise the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee; a lay; and a professional person; who will not be members of Council. This mirrors the arrangements for a panel in the protocol for Complaints against Council and Committee members.
8. The CCWG were updated on the Election scheme rules versus the Election scheme guidance which is within the Colleges gift to change but should not conflict the rules.
9. The CCWG discussed a number of options for improving the guidance and information available to anyone standing for election to Council or thinking of doing so. Some of these might be contingent upon approved changes to the Election Scheme Rules, see above.



10. The Group agreed it would be useful to produce a unified 'Candidate Pack' for RCVS Council and VN Council candidates respectively, drawing together all available resources into one place. This would be set out as accessible web pages, with a PDF version also available to download. Suggestions for improvements to guidance and information are added at the end of **Annex A**.

#### **Code of Conduct discussion and recommendations**

11. The Code of Conduct was reviewed following updated to the NOLAN principles and updated 'How we work' statement agreed at June 2022 Council. The general guidelines were also updated to reflect the strategic plan and all suggested changes can be found in **Annex B**.

#### **Next steps**

12. Council is asked as per the recommendations from the CCWG to:
  - a. approve, by formal resolution of Council, the amended Election Scheme Rules; and
  - b. approve the amended Code of Conduct for Council members.



*At the Council Chamber, Whitehall*

THE 5th DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2006

BY THE LORDS OF HER MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE  
PRIVY COUNCIL

THE Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons have, in pursuance of paragraph 10 of Schedule 1 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (a), amended the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Council Election Scheme 1967 (b).

BY virtue of that paragraph 10, the amendment shall not have effect unless approved by the Privy Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, Their Lordships, having taken the amendment into consideration, are pleased to approve it, as set out in the Schedule to this Order.

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*SCHEDULE*

AMENDMENT TO THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS  
COUNCIL ELECTION SCHEME 1967

The Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, in exercise of its powers under paragraph 10 of schedule 1 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, hereby makes the following amendment to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Council Election Scheme 1967 (hereinafter referred to as "the Scheme") -

- 
- a) 1966 c.36      (b) Scheduled to an Order of Council dated 5th September 1967

The Scheme shall be amended by the deletion of paragraphs 2-18 and the substitution therefor of the following new paragraphs 2-25 –

**“Interpretation**

2.-(1) In this Scheme –

“the Act” means the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966;

“elector” shall be construed in accordance with paragraph 15;

“Council” means the Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons;

“Independent Scrutineer” means the body appointed in accordance with paragraph 4;

“last date for despatch of voting papers” shall be construed in accordance with paragraph 7 read with paragraphs 12 and 13;

“last date for nominations” shall be construed in accordance with paragraph 6 read with paragraphs 12 and 13;

“last date for return of voting papers” shall be construed in accordance with paragraph 8 read with paragraphs 12 and 13;

“member” means a member of the College in accordance with sections 3(1), 5A(1) and 6(1) of the Act;

“registered address” means the address entered in the register under section 9 of the Act;

“Returning Officer” shall be construed in accordance with paragraph 3;

“ signed’ shall include an electronic signature

“voting papers” means the electronic form used to register a person’s vote;

(2) Any requirement in this Scheme for any nomination, voting paper, vote cast electronically or by means of telecommunications, or other material to be received by the Returning Officer or the Independent Scrutineer by a date fixed by the Returning Officer or calculated in accordance with these Rules shall be construed as a requirement that it shall be received by him not later than 5.00 pm on that date.

**Returning Officer**

3.-(1) The registrar of the College shall act as the Returning Officer for each election to the Council.

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- (2) In the absence or inability of the registrar to act as the Returning Officer, the assistant registrar, or such other employee of the College as shall be appointed by the registrar, shall act in ~~his~~ their place.
- (3) The Returning Officer shall be responsible for the conduct of each election, subject to and in accordance with the provisions of the Act and this Scheme, and shall exercise the functions conferred upon ~~him~~ them by this Scheme.
- (4) The Returning Officer may arrange for the Independent Scrutineer or any other person to carry out on his behalf such administrative functions as ~~he~~ they considers appropriate.

#### **Independent Scrutineer**

- 4.-(1) ~~Electoral Reform Services~~ Civica Election Services (CES), or such other body as shall be appointed by the Council, shall act as Independent Scrutineer for each election to the Council.
- (2) As well as carrying out its other functions set out in this Scheme, and any functions it carries out on behalf of the Returning Officer in accordance with paragraph 3(4), the Independent Scrutineer shall be responsible for –
  - (a) receiving and scrutinising the completed voting papers ~~and the votes~~ cast electronically or by telephone in the ballot;
  - (b) counting the votes cast and determining the votes cast for each candidate; and
  - (c) certifying the result of the ballot in writing to the Returning Officer.

#### **Eligibility to become a candidate in the election**

- 5.-(1) A member may be a candidate for election only if on the last date for nominations –
  - (a) ~~he is~~ they are a member who resides outside the Republic of Ireland; or
  - (b) ~~he is~~ they are a member who resides in the Republic of Ireland and has retained his right to vote under the provisions of the Veterinary Surgeons (Agreement with the Republic of Ireland) Order 1988.
- (2) The Returning Officer shall reject any nomination which appears to ~~him~~ them to be invalid on the ground that the person nominated is not eligible to be a candidate by virtue of this paragraph.

#### **Last date for nominations**

- 6.-(1) Subject to paragraphs 12 and 13, the last date for nominations for each election shall be 31st January.
- (2) Any nomination which is received after the last date for nominations shall be invalid.

**Last date for despatch of voting papers**

7. Subject to paragraphs 12 and 13, the last date for despatch of voting papers for each election shall be 31st March.

**Last date for return of voting papers**

8. The Returning Officer shall determine a last date for the return of voting papers, which shall be not less than 21 days after the last date for despatch of voting papers.

**Notice of election**

- 9.-(1) Subject to paragraphs 12 and 13, at least 21 days before the last date for nominations, the Returning Officer shall give notice of an election.
- (2) The notice of election shall be published on the College's website and in such veterinary professional journals and on such number of occasions as the Returning Officer shall direct.
- (3) The notice of election shall be in such form as the Returning Officer shall determine and shall state –
- (a) the number of vacancies on the Council to be filled;
  - (b) the names of the elected members of the Council who are retiring in rotation;
  - (c) the address of the Returning Officer to which nominations are to be sent, together with such other information as to the mode of delivery of nominations as the Returning Officer thinks fit;
  - (d) ~~the maximum length and acceptable format of election statements which candidates may submit, and the size and acceptable format of photographs of themselves~~[details of the format of candidate information](#) which candidates ~~may~~ must supply, in accordance with paragraph 11 and as specified by the Returning Officer; and
  - (e) the last date for nominations.

**Nominations**

10.-(1) Nominations for election shall –

- (a) be made in writing on a nomination form which is in the form specified by the Returning Officer and obtainable from ~~him~~them;
- (b) be sent to the Returning Officer by postemail or other electronic means specified by the Returning Officer, or handed in at the offices of the College, to be received not later than the last date for nominations.

(2) ~~Each nomination form shall be signed by two members. Candidates must be nominated by two members, each of whom would be eligible to be a candidate in accordance with paragraph 5(1) and who should each complete a nomination form, specifying their full names and registered addresses. –~~

- (a) ~~each of whom would be eligible to be a candidate in accordance with paragraph 5(1); and~~
- (b) ~~whose full names and registered addresses must be given on the form.~~

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(3) No member shall nominate more than one candidate in each election and if ~~he~~they signs more than one nomination form ~~his~~their signature shall be inoperative on all but the first nomination form opened by the Returning Officer.

(4) Each nomination form shall be signed by the candidate to whom it relates, who in doing so ~~shall~~confirms that –

- (a) the information contained in the form is correct;
- (b) that ~~he is~~they are eligible to become a candidate in accordance with paragraph 5(1);
- (c) that ~~he~~they consents to being nominated for election;
- (d) that ~~he is~~they are willing to serve, if elected; and
- (e) that ~~he is~~they are willing, if elected, to comply with any codes of practice or guidance issued by the Council from time to time governing the conduct of members of the Council.

- (e)(f) that there is nothing in their private or professional life which, if it became known, would embarrass the College

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(5) The Returning Officer shall reject any nomination or purported nomination which –

- (a) is received after the last date for nominations;

- (b) is not on a nomination form which is in the form specified under paragraph 10(1)(a);
  - (c) does not bear the signatures of two members qualified to nominate by virtue of paragraph 10(2);
  - (d) does not contain the information required by the nomination form; and
  - (e) which is not signed by the candidate to whom it relates.
- (6) A nomination may be withdrawn at any time until the last date for nominations by a written notification signed by the candidate and addressed to the Returning Officer.

**Election statements by candidates ~~and photographs?~~**

- 11.-(1) A candidate for election ~~may~~must supply with ~~his-their~~ nomination such candidate information and/or statements of such length, and containing such information as required by the Returning Officer.~~—~~
- ~~(a) — an election statement of not more than 300 words in such format as the Returning Officer shall specify;~~
  - ~~(b) — biographical information of up to 200 words, in such format as the Returning Officer shall specify;~~
  - ~~(c) — contact details in such format as the Returning Officer shall specify; and~~
  - ~~(d) — a photograph of that candidate, of such size and in such format as the Returning Officer shall specify.~~
- (2) Subject to the following provisions of this paragraph, any ~~election-candidate information or statements~~ and photograph received under sub-paragraph (1) shall be reproduced and circulated by the Returning Officer as part of the election material circulated in accordance with paragraph [16].
- (3) This paragraph shall not require the Returning Officer to circulate an election statement or other information ~~or biographical information~~ submitted which is greater in length than ~~the~~ maximum number of words specified by the Returning Officer and in the absence of agreement with the candidate the election statement or biographical-other information circulated by the Returning Officer shall end at the last complete sentence within the specified length.
- (4) This paragraph shall not require the Returning Officer to circulate ~~an election statement~~ any candidate information or statement which ~~he-they~~ reasonably considers to be defamatory or otherwise unlawful, or factually misleading, and may in the absence of agreement with the candidate either edit the election information or statement before circulating it or decide not to circulate it.

- (5) Any question as to the format or presentation of ~~an election~~any candidate information or statement, ~~biographical information~~ or contact details shall be decided conclusively by the Returning Officer.
- (6) Every candidate who supplies ~~an election~~any candidate information or statement ~~or biographical information under paragraph (4)~~ shall be deemed to have agreed –
  - (a) that the decision of the Returning Officer not to issue the whole or any part of it is final; and
  - (b) to indemnify the Returning Officer and the College against any liability to any third party this arises by reason of issuing the ~~statement or biographical information~~candidate statement or information.

**Procedure if no candidates nominated**

12. If no candidates have been validly nominated in accordance with paragraph 10 –
  - (a) The Returning Officer shall fix a new last date for nominations to be received for election to fill the vacancies together with a new last date for despatch of voting papers, and give notice in the manner required by paragraph 9 that an election will take place for that purpose; and
  - (b) The provisions of this Scheme shall otherwise apply to any election which is re-started in accordance with this paragraph.

**Procedure if fewer candidates nominated than vacancies**

13. The following provisions shall apply if fewer candidates have been validly nominated in accordance with paragraph 10 than there are vacancies to be filled –
  - (a) those candidates who have been so nominated shall be entitled to be elected and the ~~chairman~~ of the next ensuing annual general meeting of the College shall formally declare elected the members so nominated;
  - (b) the Returning Officer shall fix a new last date for nominations to be received for election to fill the outstanding vacancies together with a new last date for despatch of voting papers, and give notice in the manner required by paragraph 9 that an election will take place for that purpose; and
  - (c) the provisions of this Scheme shall otherwise apply to any election which is re-started in accordance with this paragraph.



**Procedure if no more candidates nominated than vacancies**

14. If no more candidates have been validly nominated in accordance with paragraph 10 than there are vacancies to be filled, no ballot shall take place and the chairman of the next ensuing annual general meeting of the College shall formally declare elected the members so nominated.

**Entitlement to vote in an election**

15. Only those members who would be eligible to become a candidate for election in accordance with paragraph 5 may vote in an election.

**Conduct of the ballot**

- 16.-(1) If more candidates have been nominated in accordance with paragraph 10 than there are vacancies to be filled, the Returning Officer shall not later than the last date for despatch of voting papers send a voting paper and election material to each elector.

- (2) The voting paper and election material shall together include the following –

- (a) the number of vacancies on the Council to be filled in the election;
- (b) the full name ~~and registered address~~ of each candidate;
- (c) instructions on how to complete the voting paper or to vote electronically, through the internet or by telephone;
- (d) the address of the Independent Scrutineer to which a completed voting paper is to be returned;
- (e) the last date for the return of voting papers or, subject to paragraph 18, for electronic, internet or telephone votes to be registered; and
- (f) subject to the provisions of paragraph 11, copies of any ~~election candidate information or statements, biographical information and contact details~~ which were supplied by the candidates in the specified form ~~and any photographs which were supplied by the candidates in the specified size and format.~~

- (3) Subject to paragraph 20, each elector shall be entitled to receive one voting paper only and a voting paper shall not be valid unless –

- (a) it is a voting paper issued to that elector by the Returning Officer or any external body acting on ~~his~~ their behalf; or

- (b) the member has recorded his/their vote or votes in accordance with the instructions on the voting paper.

### Postal voting

~~17. An elector who wishes to vote by post shall –~~

- ~~(a) record his vote on the voting paper circulated in accordance with paragraph 16, in accordance with the instructions on how to complete the voting paper circulated pursuant to that paragraph; and~~
- ~~4 return it to the Independent Scrutineer by the last date for the return of voting papers.~~

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### Voting electronically or by means of telecommunications

~~178.~~(1) The Returning Officer may if he/they thinks fit and in accordance with arrangements approved by the Independent Scrutineer make voting facilities available by any or all of the following –

- (a) use of electronic mail;
- (b) use of the internet; or

~~(b)(c)~~ use of telecommunications. or such other electronic means as designated by the Returning Officer

~~(2) If voting facilities by any or all of the voting methods referred to in sub-paragraph (1) are being made available, a~~Any elector wishing to vote by such a method shall do so –

- (a) in accordance with the instructions given on the voting paper; and
- (b) by the last date for return of voting papers.

(3) The Independent Scrutineer may take such steps as it considers necessary to ascertain that a vote cast by any of the methods referred to in sub-paragraph (1) is valid.

### Double voting

~~189. (a) An elector who has returned a voting paper in an election shall not, if any or all of the voting methods referred to in paragraph XX have been made available, use any of these methods to vote in that election.~~

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~~(b)~~ — An elector who has voted by one of the voting methods referred to in paragraph 17~~8~~ shall not return a voting paper in that election or use any of the other methods referred to in that paragraph.

~~(c)~~ — Where an elector has voted both by returning a voting paper and by one of the voting methods referred to in paragraph 18, account shall be taken by the Independent Scrutineer only of the voting paper.

### Replacement voting papers

19~~20~~. An elector shall be entitled to receive from the Independent Scrutineer not later than the last date for return of voting papers and by such means as the Independent Scrutineer considers appropriate (including facsimile transmission or electronic mail) a replacement voting paper if —

(a) the elector concerned states his~~their~~ full name and registered address; and

~~(b)~~ — ~~the original voting paper has been spoilt and the spoilt voting paper is produced to the Independent Scrutineer; or~~

~~(c)~~(b) the elector declares in writing (including by electronic mail) that ~~he has~~they have not received a voting paper or that, if ~~he~~they haves received one, it has been accidentally lost or destroyed.

### Scrutiny of votes

20~~1~~~~(1)~~ The Independent Scrutineer shall reject any voting paper~~purporting vote~~ which —

~~(a)~~ — is ambiguous;

~~(b)~~ — has not been completed in accordance with the instructions circulated pursuant to paragraph 16;

~~(c)~~ — is spoiled or mutilated in such a manner that no clear voting intention may be discerned; or

~~(d)~~ — has been received by the Independent Scrutineer after the last date for return of voting papers.

(1)~~(2)~~ Where an elector has voted by any of the voting methods referred to in paragraph 18, if such a method has been made available by the Returning Officer, the Independent Scrutineer shall reject any purported vote which —

(a) is ambiguous;

- (b) has not been registered in accordance with the arrangements approved by the Independent Scrutineer for voting by the method concerned; or
- (c) has been received by the Independent Scrutineer after the last date for the return of voting papers.

~~(2)~~(3) The Independent Scrutineer shall certify the result of the ballot to the Returning Officer in writing (which may be by facsimile transmission or electronic mail), giving the following information –

- (a) the total number of ~~voting papers and, if appropriate, votes~~ cast by any of the voting methods referred to in paragraph 17~~8~~;
- (b) the total number of voting papers ~~and, if appropriate, votes cast by any of the voting methods referred to in paragraph 18~~ which were rejected and the grounds for rejection; and
- (c) the number of valid votes cast for each candidate.

~~(3)~~(4) Subject to paragraph [24], the certificate of the Independent Scrutineer shall be conclusive as to the result of the ballot.

~~(4)~~(5) The Independent Scrutineer shall retain ~~the voting papers~~ in secure custody for a period of one month after the annual general meeting of the College at which the results of the election are announced, [any information in printed or electronic form relating to individual votes cast by any of the voting methods referred to in paragraph 17 or information relating to demographic analysis of the votes cast by whatever means](#). Following which, in the absence of any challenge made under paragraph [24], they shall be destroyed, ~~as shall be any information in printed or electronic form relating to individual votes cast by any of the voting methods referred to in paragraph 178 or information relating to demographic analysis of the votes cast by whatever means~~.

#### **Election of successful candidates**

~~212~~-(1) Such number of candidates equal to the number of vacancies to be filled in the election who are certified by the Independent Scrutineer as having received the highest number of valid votes shall be deemed to be elected, and the names of the candidates elected shall be announced by the chair~~man~~ at the annual general meeting of the College at which the vacancies to be filled occur.

(2) If in any ballot two or more candidates receive the same number of valid votes, then for the purpose of determining which of them has the highest number of valid votes –

- (a) if one of the candidates has been registered longer than any of the others ~~he~~ [they](#) shall be deemed to have the highest number of votes; and

- (c) if two candidates have been registered for the same period, the candidate deemed to have the highest number of votes shall be determined by the drawing of lots by the responsible officer of the Independent Scrutineer.

#### Death or disqualification of a candidate

- 223.-(1) If notification of the death or disqualification of a candidate is received by the Returning Officer after the last date for nominations but before any voting papers have been circulated to the electors, the name of the deceased or disqualified candidate shall be removed from the voting paper and the election shall proceed in all respects as if ~~he~~ ~~they~~ had never been nominated, unless the resulting number of candidates is the same as the number of vacancies, in which event the procedure set out in paragraph [4014] shall be followed.
- (2) If notification of the death or disqualification of a candidate is received by the Returning Officer after voting papers have been circulated to the electors, but before the conclusion of the election, the ballot shall proceed but the Independent Scrutineer shall disregard votes cast for the deceased or disqualified candidate.

#### Challenge procedure

- 234.-(1) Any candidate in an election may, within one month after the annual general meeting at which the result of the election was declared, challenge the validity of the election, but only on the grounds that the election was –
  - (a) not in accordance with the provisions of this Scheme; or
  - (b) furthered by conduct which, if the election had been regulated by the Representation of the People Act 1983, would have been a corrupt practice by way of bribery, treating or undue influence under sections 113, 114 or 115 of that Act.
- (2) Any such challenge must be in writing, signed by the candidate making it, and addressed to the Returning Officer, who shall send a copy of it to each of the other candidates in the election.
- (3) The Returning Officer shall refer any such challenge to a Challenge Committee, which shall consist of three members ~~of the Council who are not elected members to include the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, together with a lay person and a professional person neither of whom should be members of Council.~~ nominated by (in order of exercising the power) –
  - (a) the President, unless ~~he was~~ ~~they were~~ a candidate in the election concerned;
  - (b) the Senior Vice-President, unless ~~he was~~ ~~they were~~ a candidate in the election concerned;

(c) the Junior Vice-President, unless ~~he was~~they were a candidate in the election concerned;

~~(c)~~ ~~(d)~~ the most senior Past President of the College still serving on the Council who was not a candidate in the election

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(4) The Challenge Committee shall sit with one of the Legal Assessors appointed under paragraph 6 of schedule 2 to the Act, who shall act in an advisory capacity and have no vote, and who shall be nominated in the same manner as the members of the Challenge Committee.

(5) The Challenge Committee shall determine whether to declare the election void according to such procedure as it thinks fit, subject to the provisions of the Act and this Scheme, but which shall afford all candidates in the election under challenge the right to make written representation on the subject of the challenge.

(6) The determination of the Challenge Committee shall be final and conclusive for all purposes.

(7) The Challenge Committee shall not declare an election void under sub-paragraph (5) unless it is satisfied –

(a) that the irregularity concerned rendered the election substantially not in accordance with this Scheme; or

(b) that the irregularity concerned significantly affected the result of the election.

(8) No election under this Scheme shall be rendered void on the ground of the accidental omission to send a voting paper to any elector or the accidental non-delivery of a voting paper to any elector.

#### **Postal disruption and civil contingencies**

25. In the event of a significant disruption to ~~postal services,~~ the internet, electronic mail, ~~or~~ telephone services, or other electronic means as set out in paragraph 17, or of any other civil contingency arising, the Returning Officer may defer the last dates set out in this Scheme, and otherwise adjust the procedures set out in this Scheme, at ~~his~~their discretion.”

Pursuant to a resolution of the Council of the  
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons on  
~~8<sup>th</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> June 2023~~06, the Common Seal of the said  
Royal College was affixed hereto on the said  
~~4<sup>th</sup> June 2006~~XXXX in the presence of -

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~~Lynne V. Hill~~Melissa A Donald  
President

~~S. M. Crispin~~S Paterson  
~~R. P. Moore~~K A Richards  
Members of Council

L.S.

## Election guidance and information

1. The CCWG discussed a number of options for improving the guidance and information available to anyone standing for election to Council, or thinking of doing so. Some of these might be contingent upon approved changes to the Election Scheme Rules.
2. The Group agreed it would be useful to produce a unified 'Candidate Pack' for RCVS Council and VN Council candidates respectively, drawing together all available resources into one place. This would be set out as accessible web pages, with a PDF version also available to download, and could include:
  - a. Updated guidance on the nomination process to reflect any changes in the Council Election Scheme.
  - b. Clear information about the role and remit of RCVS Council, the responsibilities and expectations of Council members, time commitment and allowances etc.
  - c. Additional informal guidance about what candidates might like to put in their election information, including ensuring any claims or promises remained relevant to the College's remit.
  - d. More imagery of Council members and meetings, to better convey a sense of the variety and diversity of people already on Council.
  - e. Video stories and case studies to provide first-hand accounts of current Council members' experiences and advice.
  - f. All forms that need to be completed and submitted by candidates, including a new one for candidates to state they were not aware of any personal or professional issues that could bring the College into disrepute.
  - g. An invitation for candidates to speak informally to members of the Presidential team and/or RCVS/VN Council members, prior to standing for election. This would not be compulsory.



## Annex B

## Code of conduct for Council (and committee) members

### Role of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)

1. The RCVS has statutory and Royal Charter functions; and, through the RCVS Trust (also known as RCVS Knowledge), charitable functions. These are set out more fully in the Charter; the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966; and the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association. See: <http://www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/royal-charter-and-legislation>

### Purpose of this Code

2. In order for the RCVS to command the confidence of all interested parties, it is necessary for the Council members to observe appropriate standards of conduct. The purpose of this Code is to help to ensure that high standards are met and that those who act in the name of the RCVS are beyond reproach in the way they conduct themselves and the business of the RCVS. The required standards are set out in this Code that applies to all members of Council upon appointment. Its provisions apply generally to those who sit on committees; sub-committees; working parties, etc.

### Principles

3. In performing their duties, Council members should observe the seven principles of public life ('The Nolan Principles'); namely:

**Selflessness:** holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. ~~They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends;~~

**Integrity:** holders of public office should avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefit for themselves, their family or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships;

**Objectivity:** holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias;

**Accountability:** holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to ~~whatever the~~ scrutiny ~~is appropriate to their office~~ necessary to ensure this ;

**Openness:** holders of public office should ~~act and take decisions be as in an~~ open and transparent ~~manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so~~ as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should

give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands;

Honesty: holders of public office should be truthful;

Leadership: holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and not treat others with respect.—They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

### General guidelines

#### 4. Council members are expected to :

1.
  - a. Work in the best interests of the public, and of animal health and welfare and public health
  - b. Respectfully listen to the voices of the professions, the public and other stakeholders, and reflect them in discussions where appropriate, ensuring they are put into context
  - c. Neither be answerable to, nor represent, any group of individuals
  - d. Support the College's vision and work towards the success of the College and its functions
  - e. Live the College's values (diverse and inclusive; compassionate; forward thinking ; straight talking)
  - f. Act at all times in a constructive, supportive and compassionate manner
  - g. Exercise a duty of care to the staff employed by the College, working through the CEO and Registrar
  - h. Recognise the importance of a collegiate atmosphere where robust discussion is welcomed in the formation of policy and multiple points of view are listened to and respected
  - i. Respect and support the decisions made by Council when communicating externally
  - j. Communicate College activities and positions to relevant stakeholders
2. Abide by the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee members

- a.—To act in good faith;
- b.— To treat others fairly, equally and with respect;
- c.— To behave in a business-like and professional manner;
- d.— To work collaboratively with colleagues/staff;
- e.—To listen to and value the views of others.

#### 5.—Members should also lead by example and demonstrate the values that underpin the culture of the RCVS:

- Fairness;
- Openness;
- Understanding;
- Forward thinking;
- Accountability;
- Consistency.

### Specific guidelines

**6-5.** Council members are responsible for ensuring that they have a clear understanding of their role and the role of the RCVS as set out in the VSA 1966, and the Royal Charters. [Council Members are not elected or appointed to represent any constituency and all have a responsibility equivalent to trustees for the governance of the College'. This includes overall fiscal and legal responsibility.](#) Having been elected or appointed, they have a responsibility to make themselves available for meetings of the Council and any committees, sub-committees, working parties, etc., to which they have been appointed (unless they are unable, with good reason, to do so); and to be diligent in reading papers and giving appropriate consideration to issues to ensure that they are making decisions on a fully informed basis.

**7-6.** Council members should follow the principles of mutual respect in all their activities and be prepared to accept that others may have equally strong views in good faith that differ from their own. Council members must uphold high standards of courtesy and respect in all Council debates and meetings. Council members should treat colleagues with respect and not engage in any behaviour towards any colleague or member of staff that might reasonably be interpreted as discriminatory, bullying or harassment.

#### **Collective responsibility**

**8-7.** Council members are collectively responsible for the decisions, even if they have voted against, abstained from voting or were absent when the decision was made, and are expected to respect [and support](#) the collective decision, [when communicating externally](#).

#### **Confidentiality**

**9-8.** Council members must not disclose information that has been shared with them but designated by the RCVS as private or confidential. [If members are in any way unsure if they can disclose information then they should in the first instance seek advice from the President. If members disagree with a classification of private or confidential then members should raise with the relevant Committee Chair / President](#)

#### **Conflicts of interest**

**10-9.** The 'Policy for managing conflicts of interest' (<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/conflicts-of-interest-policy/>) requires all Council members to file a Declaration of Interest; to keep it up to date; and to declare any additional interests as necessary at each meeting and generally to comply with the requirements of the policy.

#### **Communication**

**11-10.** Council members have a role in communicating with the public and the profession about what the RCVS does but should take care to ensure that what they say is accurate and consistent with established policies and procedures – if in doubt, they should consult the Communications Department. Any communication with the media on behalf of the RCVS must be discussed with the Communications Department in advance.

**12-11.** Council members have a responsibility to distinguish clearly when speaking or writing in any public forum, between the views of the RCVS and their personal views, or of any other organisation they may be affiliated with.

3.

### Enforcement

~~13-12.~~ Complaints that an RCVS Council member has breached this Code of Conduct should be made at the earliest opportunity to the RCVS President /Registrar, in accordance with the '*Policy for Dealing with Complaints about Council Members*'.

Agreed by Council ~~September 2017 to come into force when the new (Governance) Legislation Reform Order is passed.~~ [ xxxx ]

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Advancement of the Professions Committee Report 9 May 2023.
Summary	To note the attached minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2023.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	N/A
Author	Aymay Youngs Advancement of the Professions Officer <a href="mailto:a.youngs@rcvs.org.uk">a.youngs@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

<b><sup>1</sup>Classifications explained</b>	
Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant

	committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

## **2Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

Minutes of the Advancement of the Professions Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 09 May 2023 at 2:30pm via Zoom.

<b>Members:</b>	Mrs B Andrews-Jones	VN Council Vice-Chair, Innovation Lead
	Ms A Boag	Chair, Board of Trustees for RCVS Knowledge
	Dr J Dyer	Council member
	Dr M Gardiner	Council Member, Diversity and Inclusion Group Chair, Global Development Lead
	Ms L Lockett	Chief Executive Officer
	Dr S Paterson (Chair)	Junior Vice-President, Environment and Sustainability Lead, Leadership Lead
	Mr M Rendle	VN Council Chair, VN Futures Project Board liaison
	Dr K Richards	Senior Vice-President, Mind Matters Initiative Chair
	Dr C Tufnell*	Chair, RCVS Fellowship Board
	Mr T Walker	Lay Council Member
<b>In attendance:</b>	Mrs A Belcher	Director for Advancement of the Professions
	Dr N Connell	Council member
	Mrs J Dugmore	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Miss G Gill	Leadership and Inclusion Manager
	Mr M Sundhu	Policy and Public Affairs Officer
	Mr C Gush	Executive Director, RCVS Knowledge
	Miss A Hanson	Mind Matters Initiative Officer
	Mr I Holloway	Director of Communications
	Mr Luke Bishop	Media and Publications Manager
	Miss J Macdonald	VN Futures Project Lead
	Mr B Myring	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
	Dr L Prescott-Clements*	Director of Education
	Mrs L Quigley	MMI Manager
	Miss S Rogers	ViVet Manager
	Ms A Youngs	Senior Advancement of the Professions Officer

\* absent

### Welcome and apologies for absence

1. The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting of the APC and noted that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes. The Chair welcomed Mr M Sundhu to the group and gave him the opportunity to introduce himself.
2. Apologies were received from Dr C Tufnell.
3. No new Declarations of Interest were reported.

### Minutes of the meeting held on 07 February 2023

4. No corrections were to be made of the minute from the previous meeting.
5. The panel discussed in more detail the review of the antibiotics amnesty, noting that the scheme could benefit from slight adjustments such as a more structured approach to allow practices more time to prepare and implement as well as ensuring that organisations have information at the appropriate time.
6. The panel were informed that the Fellowship Working Party membership was ongoing, as there were difficulties in finding a large animal vet to join the group to ensure a diversity of opinions can be shared. The panel were encouraged to suggest appropriate individuals for this Working Party.

### Workstream updates

7. The Chair highlighted some key aspects of the workstream updates, starting with the Diversity and Inclusion Group (DIG); the Disability and Chronic Ill Health survey was published after contacting students and members of the profession as well as a social media campaign, which will run until the end of the survey. The panel were encouraged to share the survey with students as they were the hardest audience to reach.
8. The Chair highlighted the interviews and blogs undertaken by Dr M Gardiner for BlackHistoryMonth.org and discussed the inclusive recruitment toolkit being created by DIG members.
9. The Chair was to be informed of the progress on Pride month planning in the next few days.
10. The Chair suggested an update on the formation and work of the new Fellowship Working Party and Fellowship Application Review Working Party would be welcomed at the next meeting. The panel were informed that the Fellowship Science Advisory Panel (FSAP) would be hosting its first roundtable discussion on the topic of Animal Behaviourism later in the month which has great representation and would act as a springboard for the Working Party (to be formed after the roundtable).
11. The panel went on to discuss the unconscious bias training offered to the Credentials Panel. The panel were informed of the plan to ensure mandatory annual training for the next cycle, with the training being targeted specifically for the role undertaken.



12. The panel were informed that some research is being undertaken to look at trends in the application cycle to help identify how more applicants can be reached and how the process can be refined.
13. The Chair moved on to Leadership, and the panel discussed the status of the Edward Jenner Leadership programme. The panel were informed that a discussion had taken place between the College and the NHS Academy, with a further discussion being held in July.
14. The panel were informed that further Leadership Stories were planned for the Leadership Library, but the focus had been on getting the survey out to the profession.
15. The Chair briefly spoke about Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) as an in-depth discussion was to take place later in the meeting, noting the considerable work on the neurodiversity stream. The panel praised Ms L Quigley for the substantial work undertaken.
16. The Chair moved on to Knowledge (RCVSK), acknowledging the data from the Canine Cruciate register being used in research. The panel noted that it was encouraging to be able to showcase how involvement from vets can contribute to evidence gathering.
17. The Chair noted a component on brachycephalic dogs on the e-learning platform and the panel discussed the differences between the RCVSK e-learning platform and that of the RCVS Academy. The panel were informed that each e-learning platform signposted to courses that would be of use/interest across the platforms, and that communication between the two were constant.
18. The panel were informed that Mr C Gush would be leaving RCVSK. The Chair of the Board of Trustees, Ma A Boag, expressed thanks on behalf of RCVSK and the AP committee.
19. The Chair then moved on to VN Futures, where it was noted that an Academy course would be launched in the beginning of May. The panel were reminded that May is Vet Nurse Awareness month, and that there were good numbers engaging with the School Ambassadors programme.
20. The panel were informed that the new VN Futures animation will be showcased at BVA Live.
21. The Panel congratulated Mr M Rendle on his re-election for RCVS VN Council.
22. The Chair moved on to Innovation, where the significant effort that went into the Workforce Action Plan was noted. The panel were informed that all seven online workshops were well attended and that they had reached many people who didn't usually attend such sessions. It was noted that there was good engagement from VNs and that there were lots of positive feedback given.
23. The panel were informed that the Innovation Symposium was on hold as recruitment for the ViVet Manager vacancy had not yet begun.

**ACTION:** Chair of the Fellowship to update APC on progress of new working groups at next meeting  
 Latest information on Fellowship demographic benchmarking to be shared at next meeting

#### Oral update: Global

24. The panel were informed that there will be RCVS representatives at the Federations of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) event being held in June, in the Czech Republic. It was noted that it was beneficial to have communication with the European veterinary associations to keep policies aligned, since there is still significant veterinary movement within Europe and

the UK. It was also noted that the European veterinary statutory bodies were pulling together statistics and were sharing these, which prevents duplication of work.

25. The Chair asked about how information from FVE was reported, and it was suggested that after each assembly, a formal presentation be shared with the Committee.

### Oral update: Sustainability

26. The Chair updated the panel on Sustainability, noting that the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change (UKHACC), noting that they are piloting an impact hub, where selected members can undertake training in media, advocacy and ambassadorial roles to relate information from those in medical/health roles to the public.
27. The panel were informed that UKHACC were also undertaking work looking at environmental impacts of surgical pathways, anaesthesia and single use plastics. The report of this work will be put forward to FSAP for review and to inform activities.
28. The panel were informed that the first draft of the UKHACC report will be reviewed by their Oversight Committee in May 2023, with the second draft being finalised by the Project Team for circulation and open consultation on June 1 2023.

**ACTION:** Policy and Public Affairs Manager to share FVE report for September APC meeting

### Discussion: Terms of Reference

29. The panel were informed that all committees were being asked to look at their Terms of Reference each year, to ensure that the content is current and relevant.
30. It was suggested that for this committee, more discussions than reporting could be useful.
31. The panel had noted that the workstream updates were split, but it did not always take into account the overlap within the workstreams, and questioned if there were better ways of reporting.
32. The panel agreed that reporting was useful as prior to the Advancement of the Professions Committee(APC), there were concerns with the visibility of the activities of some workstreams, which are important for governance.
33. The panel discussed how the reporting template could be altered to allow for greater reflection and that guidance on what needs to be reported would be useful.
34. The panel agreed that focussed/deep dive sessions were helpful as this allowed for a greater level of discussion.
35. It was noted that understanding the benchmark of what is good is not always easy to determine at the committee meetings, therefore reporting against the strategy can help to identify if there is a problem.
36. The panel were informed that a discussion would be taking place at the next Council meeting to determine whether APC needs to meet four times a year since many of the workstreams are working on longer-term projects which might not have much movement over a 3-month period, and possibly scheduling, taking into consideration the possible need for FRC and Council decisions.

### Discussion: Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) deep dive

37. The panel were informed that the strategy was not a standalone document, and that the evaluation was to be part of the document bundle.
38. The strategy and evaluation were informed by data from a variety of sessions held, reflections and consultations with a variety of those within the profession and a survey completed by vets, VNs, students, practice managers etc. It had three main workstreams: Prevent, Protect and Support.
39. It was noted that not all responses to the survey were positive, but it was seen as a success in terms of reaching those who do not usually engage with the MMI workstream.
40. Some of the key areas of focus, based on the findings, were flexibility in the workplace to be able to deal with unexpected situations such as Covid-19; responsiveness to the social/political landscape such as seen with the cost-of-living crisis; having open conversations; good guidelines.
41. The panel had suggested identifying how to track the impact MMI has had; whether veterinary professionals know where to seek support, and were informed that it was easy to track, for example, attendance at a webinar session, but not so easy to measure culture change.
42. The panel were informed that some of the feedback had suggested that not all recognise MMI as being part of RCVS and had suggested actions/ideas which were already in place (such as supporting VetLife, introducing well-being for Practice Standards) which raised the question of whether the workstream or College were talking about the work done through MMI enough.

### Discussion: ViVet future direction

43. The Chair had informed the panel that this discussion would take place in the September meeting when the vacant ViVet manager position was filled.

### AOB

44. There was no other business to discuss.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Meeting Minutes – 11 May 2023
Summary	Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on Thursday, 11 May 2023.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	<b>Confidential Appendix</b>
Author	Huda Haid Governance Officer <a href="mailto:h.haid@rcvs.org.uk">h.haid@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>

<b><sup>1</sup>Classifications explained</b>	
Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation, or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others To maintain the confidence of another organisation To protect commercially sensitive information To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

## Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting held online via Microsoft Teams on 11 May 2023

### Members:

Prof D Bray*	Lay Member of RCVS Council
Dr M M S Gardiner	RCVS Council Member
Mr V Olowe	Lay Member and Vice-Chair
Ms J Shardlow	Lay Member and Chair
Mr M Redford	Lay (Interim) Member

### In attendance:

Ms A Belcher	Director for Advancement of the Professions
Dr N T Connell	Treasurer
Ms H Haid	Secretary to ARC / Governance Officer
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C L McCann	Director of Operations
Mr A Quinn-Byrne	Secretary to ARC / Governance Manager
Mr D Tysoe	Chief Digital Officer
Ms K Williams	Education Quality Improvement Manager
Ms A Youngs	Senior Advancement of the Professions Officer

\*Denotes absence

### Apologies for Absence

1. Apologies were received from Professor D Bray.

### Minutes of the last meeting

2. The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 February 2023.
3. The Committee also reviewed the actions in the minutes from that meeting. It was noted that these had not been set out in a separate table as was usual, and the Committee asked that this form of presentation should be reinstated. Most of the actions had been completed, except those relating to the ARC Self-Assessment Questionnaire and the presentation of the Corporate Risk Register.
4. It was agreed that the Self-Assessment Questionnaire would be circulated to the Committee after the meeting in May.

5. It was confirmed that the Governance team were liaising with the Charity Magique developers about risk register layouts and templates, including the Assurance Map interface. The Governance team aimed to have the new presentation of the risk registers before the Committee in September 2023.
6. In relation to the action on page 7 of the unclassified previous meeting minutes (concerning the circulation of additional departmental risk registers outside of Committee meetings for comments), the Committee requested for comments to be recorded and that any updates are shared with the Committee at formal meetings.

**Actions:**

**ARC Self-Assessment Questionnaire to be circulated to the Committee in June 2023.**

**Improved layout of Corporate Risk Register to be presented to the Committee in September 2023.**

**Comments on departmental risk registers circulated outside of official meetings, to be recorded and shared with the Committee at formal meetings.**

## Declarations of Interest

7. Interim lay member, Mr M Redford, declared a perceived conflict of interest.
8. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 1-2 of the classified appendix.

## CEO Update

9. The CEO provided an oral update on RCVS activities since the last ARC meeting. The following points were highlighted to the Committee:
  - The Council Culture Working Group's key focus concerned the elections process. Work was being done to ensure that candidates were aware of the positions they were standing for. A review of the Conflict of Interest Policy was also to be undertaken to ensure that it was consistent with current practice and that there were clear guidelines.
  - RCVS Council had decided to roll out new under care and out of hours guidance in September 2023.
  - Work relating to the extra mural studies database was ongoing.

- The RCVS was still working with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to secure funding for the direct accreditation of overseas veterinary programmes at EU vet schools.
  - Further confidential information is contained in paragraphs 3-5 of the classified appendix.
10. In relation to the work of the Council Culture Working Group, the Committee queried whether there was a timeline for the completion of the different areas of work. The CEO explained that this was difficult to measure as the priorities of Council changed as council members change.
11. The Committee also queried how changes would be embedded into the College's governance structure. The CEO explained that the option to have culture as a standing item for all committees to look at, was being considered.
12. There was a suggestion from the Committee to conduct a survey, in order to monitor the effectiveness of changes actioned by the Council Culture Working Group.

### Update on Hardwick Street Estate Strategy

13. The Director of Operations updated the Committee on progress with the estate strategy.
14. Confidential information is contained in paragraph 6 of the classified appendix.

### Corporate Risk Register

15. The Governance Manager outlined key updates to the Corporate Risk Register since the last ARC meeting in February 2023.
16. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 7-11 of the classified appendix.

### Charity Governance Code Progress Update

17. The Committee reviewed the RCVS Charity Governance Code document, which had been updated with comments on progress with actions by the Senior Team.
18. It was suggested that the size of the document could be reduced by identifying the College's key actions and priorities for the year and reporting on progress with those rather than the entirety of the code.



19. It was also proposed that areas of action for Senior Team members could be included in their departmental risk registers.

## ENQA Update

20. The Education Quality Improvement Manager updated the Committee on activities relating to the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), since the last ARC meeting. ENQA had provided the final schedule for the visit taking place in June.

## IT Update: Penetration Tests

21. The Chief Digital Officer (CDO) provided a summary of outcomes to the Committee.
22. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 12-15 of the classified appendix.

## Advancement of the Professions Risk Register

23. The Director for Advancement of the Professions outlined the risks in the Advancement of the Professions Risk Register and welcomed comments from the Committee.
24. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 16-18 of the classified appendix.

## Review of Terms of Reference

25. The Committee determined that it would be appropriate to undertake a review of its Terms of Reference. However, due to time constraints, it concluded that there was insufficient time to discuss the topic in detail. It was therefore agreed that the Terms should be considered at an additional meeting where sufficient time could be allocated.
26. It was agreed that no changes needed to be escalated to Council in June. However, the Committee would have the opportunity to discuss this again at an extra meeting to be held on Monday, 3 July 2023. Any substantial changes to the Terms of Reference agreed at this future meeting would be escalated to Council in the interim.

## Confidential Update to ARC

27. It was decided that the Committee would reconvene to discuss this agenda item in detail at an extraordinary meeting to be held on Monday, 3 July 2023.

28. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 19-20 of the classified appendix.

### Any Other Business (AOB)

29. There was no further business to record.

### Date of the next meeting

30. The next meeting would be held on Monday, 3 July 2023 at 14:00 pm, online.

<b>Outstanding actions from the ARC meeting held on 9 February 2023</b>	<b>Date of completion</b>
Circulation of ARC Self-Assessment Questionnaire	June 2023
Improvement to the presentation of risk registers	September 2023

<b>Actions from the ARC meeting held on 11 May 2023</b>	<b>Date of completion</b>
Comments on departmental risk registers circulated outside of official meetings, to be recorded and shared with the Committee at formal meetings.	n/a – this action will be on going as and when risk registers are circulated to the Committee.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Education Committee Minutes 9 May 2023
Summary	Education Committee Minutes 9 May 2023
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	None
Author	Britta Crawford <a href="mailto:b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk">b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk/</a> 020 7202 0777

Classifications		
Document	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationales <sup>2</sup>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1</b>

**Education Committee**
**Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2023**

<b>Members:</b>	Dr Abbie Calow		
	Dr Niall Connell		
	Ms Linda Ford	-	Lay member
	Professor Tim Parkin		
	Mrs Susan Howarth		
	Professor Chris Proudman		
	Professor Stuart Reid		
	Professor Susan Rhind		
	Dr Kate Richards	-	Chair
	Ms Anna Bradbury	-	Student representative
	Ms Kate Dakin	-	Student representative
<b>By invitation:</b>	Dr Melissa Donald	-	CertAVP Subcommittee Chair
	Professor Stephen May	-	Advanced Practitioner Panel Chair
	Dr Joanne Dyer	-	PQSC Chair
	Dr Susan (Sue) Paterson	-	VetGDP subcommittee Chair and Observer
	Professor Nigel Gibbens	-	Chair of Accreditation Review Working Party
<b>In attendance:</b>	Mr Duncan Ash	-	Senior Education Officer
	Dr Linda Prescott-Clements	-	Director of Education
	Mrs Britta Crawford	-	Senior Education Officer
	Ms Laura Hogg	-	Senior Education Officer
	Ms Claire Holliday	-	Senior Education Officer
	Mr Jordan Nicholls	-	Lead for Undergraduate Education

Ms Beckie Smith	-	Senior Education Officer
Ms Jenny Soreskog-Turp	-	Lead for Postgraduate Education
Mrs Kirsty Williams	-	Quality Assurance Manager
Ms Lizzie Lockett	-	CEO
Mr Darren Tysoe	-	Chief Digital Officer (Item 12 only)

### **Apologies for absence and welcome**

1. Apologies were received from Kate Dakin and Anna Bradbury. Darren Tysoe (RCVS CDO) joined the committee for the item relating to EMS, and Claire McLaughlan joined for the item on the Statutory Membership Examination (SME).

### **Declarations of interest**

2. Mrs Howarth declared that she works for Harper Adams and would leave the meeting for item number 12 and Dr Connell is on the Glasgow vet school staff so would leave the meeting for items 13a and 14d.
3. The Committee were informed that a paper is being prepared for the Council Culture Working Group that would consider all aspects of declarations of conflict of interest so that there is consistency across all committees in how these are managed.

### **Minutes**

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2023 were noted. Professor Parkin asked that paragraph 9 be amended to clarify that only Veterinary qualified teaching staff must be MRCVS not all teaching staff. This was agreed.

**ACTION: BC to amend minutes**

### **Matters arising**

5. The Committee heard that the actions had been completed or were included in the forthcoming agenda items. Dr Richards had written to Nigel Gibbens, the Chair of the Accreditation Working Group and the members of that party to thank them for all their work.
6. The Committee heard that the Registrar is looking into the issue regarding clinical teachers being on the RCVS register, as this will have a wider impact on the profession in general and which individuals need to be on the practicing register. A paper will be taken to Education Committee and Registration Committee at the next round of meetings.

7. The Committee was updated regarding the proposal submitted to DEFRA which was discussed at the previous meeting, but the RCVS had only recently heard back with further questions and asked for an updated report. It was indicated that this would then be taken forward. Any further updates would come to this Committee.

### **Education Department update**

8. The Director of Education, Dr Prescott-Clements, gave an oral update on the work of the Education Department. Mr Nichols and his team were congratulated as the accreditation review evidence that informed the change in methodology and the new standards had been published in the Journal of Veterinary Medical Education. The International Accreditors Working Group is taking place this summer in Australia and one of the items on the agenda is with the consideration of training “super visitors” - experienced visitors trained in the standards and methodology of more than one accreditor who will be used to reduce travel time and expense. The post graduate team have been visiting vet schools to talk to final year students about VetGDP so that they know what to expect, what to look for and also busting a few myths which have arisen.

### **Clinical Careers Pathways Proposals**

9. The committee received and noted the paper about the clinical career pathways proposal. Dr Prescott-Clements reminded the committee about the work that had been done over the last few years with the review of the Advanced Practitioner (AP) status and the clinical career pathway event in London last year. Education Committee discussed the report from the event at their last meeting and requested more details and clarifications of roles and statues within clinical practice but also a new career pathway framework for veterinary surgeons working within General Practice that is flexible and inclusive.
10. Dr Prescott-Clements gave an overview of the suggested framework that had four pathways:
  - a) Vet GPs working with primary care.
  - b) New GP specialist training route that would be workplace-based programme of at least five years leading to a similar status as RCVS specialist but within primary care.
  - c) Specific interest route, to include a designated certificate and portfolio demonstrating experience, with additional CPD in the designated area.
  - d) Clinical RCVS specialists, including a flexible modular route.
11. The committee was pleased to see the progress and members were supportive of the proposed pathways. They agreed it is important that the new GP specialist training is equivalent to the training towards becoming an RCVS specialist so that candidates have the similar level of skills and knowledge and that it is viewed as an equivalent achievement.
12. The committee agreed that detailed guidance and careful communication is needed - not just around the new statues and roles but how each career stage is described, so that it is easy to identify each step of the framework and where individuals fit into it. It needs to be clear not only to the profession but the public and there were some suggestions that comparing a veterinary surgeon working in primary care to a human health GP is not helpful as the role includes more breath of expertise such as surgery and laboratory work.

13. There were some suggestions for how to improve the flowchart to ensure that it is easily understood by anyone outside of academia and that the new pathway is truly flexible and accessible for the whole profession.
14. The committee supported the framework, and requested that further detailed plans including details of stakeholder input be developed for them to review, prior to presentation to RCVS Council.

**Action: Detailed project plans to be presented to EC in September**

#### **CPD: Minutes from the meeting held on 13 March 2023**

15. The committee noted the minutes from the meeting of the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee and Ms Ford highlighted some of the discussions at the meeting such as continuing with the comms plan to educate the profession about the CPD requirement and reflection. There were also discussions of how to deal with the large number of veterinary surgeons and nurses that are non-compliant, but it was agreed that the usual referral process would be followed, and the committee would review the numbers at their next meeting in the summer and report back to Education Committee.

#### **Advanced Partitioner Status: Panel Terms of Reference**

16. The terms of reference for Advanced Practitioner (AP) status panel members were reviewed and approved by Education Committee.
17. The committee was presented with three qualifications that had been approved by the Advanced Practitioner panel and Chair as eligible for Advanced Practitioner status. The Chair gave details about the qualifications and how they meet the eligibility requirements for the status. The committee approved the qualifications as a route to applying for Advanced Practitioner status.

**Action: Add approved qualifications to AP Qualification list**

#### **VetGDP: Minutes form the meeting held on 29 March 2023**

18. Dr Paterson, chair of the VetGDP subcommittee presented the minutes to the Committee. Dr Paterson reported that the subcommittee were enthusiastic and engaged with the subject. Much of the discussion involved the EPAs and the subcommittee had received a first draft of a policy-based EPA for addition to the bank.

#### **CertAVP: Minutes form the meeting held on 16 February 2013**

19. Dr Donald presented the minutes to the Committee and thanked Mrs Crawford for her time as secretary to the subcommittee and welcomed Ms Hogg into the role.

#### **Specialist Subcommittee: Recommendation for changes to reapplication criteria and process for European Specialists applications**



20. The committee noted the paper about recommendation for changes to reapplication criteria and process for European Specialist applications. The specialist subcommittee met in March to discuss potential amendments to the criteria for reapplications for RCVS Specialist accreditation as well as potential future processes for new and reapplications for RCVS Specialist status from European Diploma holders. They recommend changes to the re-applications criteria for RCVS accreditation and change the process for European Specialists to an office-based process that would be more efficient. Education Committee agreed with the suggested proposals.

### **Statutory Membership Exam (SME)**

#### **Acceptance of On-line IELTS**

21. SME candidates have enquired if they can complete the online IELTS English language assessment, this is currently not accepted and only in-person assessments are allowed. The SME Board considered information regarding the exam and live proctoring for the online IELTSs and recommended that the online version of the exam is accepted for entry into the SME. The committee agreed this would be a welcomed change and agreed there were no concerns regarding exam security. The examinations manager will update the SME guidance to reflect the changes.

### **Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC)**

#### **Minutes from meeting held on 29 March 2023**

22. The minutes of the PQSC meeting held in January were received. Members heard that three of the items discussed at PQSC would be agenda items at this meeting; Panel member numbers for overseas visits; University of Dublin verification visit; and Glasgow verification visit.
23. Members heard that the Edinburgh Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies report was considered at the last meeting and had been sent back to the School for formal consultation with one amendment.
24. The committee were informed that the annual monitoring report school responses had been discussed at PQSC and as a result letter had been sent to Cambridge requesting additional information regarding progress made with previous recommendations.
25. It was noted that the agenda for that meeting also included a discussion regarding the definition of 'core' sites, however, it had been agreed that further work was needed on this, and more options would be brought back to PQSC at a later date.
26. Members heard that PQSC had looked at updating the fees for overseas accreditation visits and it had been decided that further investigation into RCVS costs was needed before a decision could be made. It had been agreed that this would also be brought back to a future meeting.
27. It was noted that interim reports had been received from both Adelaide and Murdoch vet schools and these had been discussed during the meeting.

28. Finally, members heard that the UCLan progress visit had been discussed and feedback agreed for the School.

### **Panel member numbers for overseas accreditation visits**

29. The Education Committee was reminded that, at the February meeting, members had requested some wording to go into the RCVS methodology regarding the number of RCVS panel members attending joint overseas visits. The aim of this was maintain consistency in the process between Schools.
30. Members heard that this isn't prescribed in the current documentation as numbers were decided on a cas-by-case basis according to the type of visit, taking a holistic view of any previously identified issues, as well as any Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) in place. However, 1 or 2 RCVS representatives were usually sent as full voting members.
31. At their meeting in March, PQSC agreed the following wording to go in the RCVS methodology and apply to future visits:  
 'For joint overseas accreditation visits, RCVS will appoint either 1 or 2 panel members depending on the requirements of the visit and in accordance with any mutual recognition orders in place'.  
 The Education Committee were invited to consider the recommendation from PQSC and agree the wording.
32. Some members asked where the numbers had come from and what would happen if RCVS ever needed to send three people on a visit. It was explained that the numbers were already agreed with other accrediting bodies through the MRA's, however, there was nothing in the methodology to inform people who were not party to this information. It was explained that adding the numbers into the methodology would ensure transparency. It was further explained that there was some flexibility to allow 3 RCVS representatives on a visit if the situation arose, however, the RCVS usually only send 1 or 2 representatives.
33. The Education Committee agreed that the wording was suitable and could be added to the RCVS methodology.

**Action: Add the agreed wording to the RCVS methodology**

### **ENQA Update**

34. Since the last Education Committee meeting, the ENQA panel have provided the schedule for the review visit which will take place from 5th – 7th June 2023.
35. Most meetings will take place on Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th June, with a meeting on 7th June with the CEO (and/or other members of the Presidential Team and/or Senior Staff) to clarify any pending issues. There will be a de-brief by the ENQA panel to share their initial findings at 13.00 on 7th June.

36. The meetings have been at the request of the ENQA panel to review and triangulate the evidence provided in the self-assessment report (SAR). Combined with this, the panel have also requested some additional evidence be provided to clarify some areas. This is normal for the process, and it was expected that they would request further information. The list has been shared with the team working on the review, and the information will be ready to send to the ENQA panel by the deadline of 15th May.
37. The ENQA panel have also requested to meet with key senior personnel on 15 May. This meeting is for the panel to ensure that they have a sound understanding of the specific national and legal context in which the RCVS operates; to understand the specific quality assurance system to which the RCVS belongs; and to establish a solid understanding of the key characteristics of the RCVS' external QA activities. This meeting will take place online with Linda Prescott-Clements (Director of Education), Julie Dugmore (Director of VN) and Eleanor Ferguson (Registrar). This meeting will take less than an hour and is for background context only.
38. Invitations have been sent to all participants, with the preference being for in-person meetings. This will have an associated cost of travel and loss of earnings (LOE) for participants, to be borne by the RCVS. The meetings will take place at the Royal College of Nursing in Cavendish Square, and 2 meeting rooms have been booked – for the ENQA panel and for the RCVS team to brief and de-brief participants.
39. Participants have been asked to confirm their attendance by 5th May and after this date, they will be sent a copy of the SAR and briefing notes specific to their meeting. The logistics of having meetings during the week beginning 29th May to have briefings with participants is being explored – these will be online.

### **Risk Register**

40. The risk register was received and noted. The committee asked the Education Department to review the wording and controls in regard to Advanced Practitioner (AP) status and the statutory membership exam.

**Action: Education Department to review wording and controls for risks relating to AP/SME**

### **Date of Next Meeting**

41. The date of the next meeting is 12 September 2023 and will be in person. Venue TBC.

Britta Crawford  
May 2023

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) Meeting Minutes – 11 May 2023
Summary	Minutes of the FRC meeting held on Thursday, 11 May 2023.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	<b>Confidential Appendix</b>
Author	Huda Haid Governance Officer <a href="mailto:h.haid@rcvs.org.uk">h.haid@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
Document	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationales <sup>2</sup>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>

### **<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

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Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

<b><sup>2</sup>Classification rationales</b>	
Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

## Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) meeting held online via Microsoft Teams on 11 May 2023

### Members:

Ms B Andrews-Jones*	Representative from Veterinary Nurses' Council
Dr N T Connell	Chair / RCVS Treasurer
Ms L Ford	Lay Member of RCVS Council
Ms S Howarth	Representative from Education Committee
Ms C-L McLaughlan	Representative from Standards Committee
Professor S A May	Elected member of RCVS Council
Dr S Paterson*	Representative from Advancement of Professions Committee
Mr M E Rendle*	RCVS Council / Veterinary Nurses Council Chair
Dr K Richards	Representative from PIC/DC Liaison Committee
Ms J S M Worthington	Lay Member of RCVS Council
Mr T J Walker	Lay Member of RCVS Council

\*Denotes absence

### In attendance:

Ms J Delaloye	Head of Finance
Ms H Haid	Governance Officer
Ms C Hobson	Examinations Manager
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C McCann	Director of Operations
Mr A Quinn-Byrne	Secretary / Governance Manager
Dr L Prescott-Clements	Director of Education
Mr D Tysoe	Chief Digital Officer
Mr M Turner	Senior Investment Director (Investec)
Ms R Walton	Investment Director (Investec)

### Apologies For Absence

1. Apologies were received from Ms B Andrews-Jones, Dr S Paterson and Mr M Rendle.
2. Ms J S M Worthington and Ms L Ford left the meeting early.

### Declarations of Interest

3. There were no declarations of interest to record.

## Minutes of the last meeting

4. The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 February 2023.

## Update from the Director of Operations

5. Confidential information is contained in paragraph 1 of the classified appendix.

## Reports on Committees

6. The representative from the Education Committee provided an update on the clinical career pathways development project. Further information is contained in paragraph 2 of the classified appendix.
7. Additional confidential information is contained in paragraph 3 of the classified appendix.

## Corporate Risk Register

8. The Governance Manager outlined key updates to the Corporate Risk Register since the last FRC meeting in February 2023.
9. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 4-7 of the classified appendix.

## Management Accounts

10. Confidential information is contained in paragraph 8 of the classified appendix.

## RCVS Investment Portfolio Update

11. The Investment Portfolio Managers delivered a presentation on the RCVS Investment Portfolio to the Committee.
12. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 9-13 of the classified appendix.

## Fee Increase for 2024

13. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 14-16 of the classified appendix.

### Change of Bank Signatories

14. It was difficult to change bank signatories due to the money laundering checks banks were required to carry out. The Director of Operations proposed to add the incoming Junior Vice-President as a signatory for the entire presidential cycle of the President, Junior Vice-President, and Senior Vice-President, so that changes would only need to be made every three years.

15. The Committee approved this change. Additionally, it was agreed to add the new Treasurer, Dr M S Gardiner, and to remove the current Treasurer, Dr N Connell, as authorised signatories. All changes were to be affected from RCVS DAY on 7 July 2023.

### Review of Terms of Reference

16. The Committee was given the opportunity to review its Terms of Reference.

17. It was agreed that no changes needed to be escalated to Council in June.

### CRM Tender Update

18. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 17-20 of the classified appendix.

### Skillwise Update

19. Confidential information is contained in paragraph 21 of the classified appendix.

### Tender for the delivery of the Statutory Membership Exam

20. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 22-24 of the classified appendix.

### Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS) Funding Proposal



21. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 25-28 of the classified appendix.

### RCVS Academy Update

22. The Committee was unable to consider this agenda item due to time constraints.

23. It was agreed that this agenda item would be held over to the next FRC meeting in September 2023.

### Any Other Business (AOB)

24. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 29-35 of the classified appendix.

### Date of the next meeting

25. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 14 September 2023 at 14:00 pm, in person.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Joint Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) and Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Minutes – 11 May 2023
Summary	Minutes of the joint FRC and ARC meeting held on Thursday, 11 May 2023.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	<b>Confidential Appendix</b>
Author	Huda Haid Governance Officer <a href="mailto:h.haid@rcvs.org.uk">h.haid@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
Document	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationales <sup>2</sup>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>

<b><sup>1</sup>Classifications explained</b>	
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	general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.
<b><sup>2</sup>Classification rationales</b>	
Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

## Minutes of the joint Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) and Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting held online via Microsoft Teams on 11 May 2023

### Members:

Ms B Andrews-Jones*	Representative from Veterinary Nurses' Council
Dr N T Connell	Chair / RCVS Treasurer
Ms L Ford	Lay Member of RCVS Council
Ms S Howarth	Representative from Education Committee
Ms C-L McLaughlan	Representative from Standards Committee
Professor S A May	Elected member of RCVS Council
Dr S Paterson*	Representative from Advancement of Professions Committee
Mr M E Rendle*	RCVS Council / Veterinary Nurses Council Chair
Dr K Richards	Representative from PIC/DC Liaison Committee
Ms J S M Worthington	Lay Member of RCVS Council
Mr T J Walker	Lay Member of RCVS Council
Prof D Bray*	Lay Member of RCVS Council
Dr M M S Gardiner	RCVS Council Member
Mr V Olowe	Lay Member and Vice Chair
Ms J Shardlow	Lay Member and Chair
Mr M Redford	Lay (Interim) Member

\*Denotes absence

### In attendance:

Mr L Bishop	Media and Publications Manager
Ms J Delaloye	Head of Finance
Ms H Haid	Governance Officer
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C McCann	Director of Operations
Mr A Quinn-Byrne	Secretary / Governance Manager
Mr D Chhatralia	Audit Director (Crowe UK LLP)
Mr M Catolico	Audit Manager (Crowe UK LLP)

### Apologies For Absence

1. Apologies were received from Professor D Bray, Mr M Rendle, Dr S Paterson and Ms B Andrews-Jones.

### Declarations of Interest

2. There were no declarations of interest to record.

### Audit Findings Report

3. The Committees were presented with the RCVS Audit Findings Report for 2022.
4. Confidential information is contained in paragraph 1-2 of the classified appendix.

### Annual Report

5. The Director of Operations welcomed comments from the Committees on the draft RCVS Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2022.
6. The Committees praised the presentation and the graphics on the report.
7. It was noted that a note for readers detailing what is included and is not included should be added for the income figure graphs on page 9 of the report.
8. Aside from the rounding up of pounds for the figures on the report, it was agreed that no further changes needed to be made.

**Actions: Note for readers to be added to figure graphs on page 9 of the annual report as per suggestion in paragraph 7.**

### Any Other Business (AOB)

9. There was no further business to record.

### Date of the next meeting

10. The next meeting would be held in May 2024. The exact date is to be confirmed.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Registration Committee Meeting Minutes – 15 May 2023
Summary	Minutes of the Registration Committee meeting held on Monday, 15 May 2023.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	<b>Confidential Appendix</b>
Author	Huda Haid Governance Officer <a href="mailto:h.haid@rcvs.org.uk">h.haid@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>

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**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>



## Minutes of the Registration Committee meeting held online via Microsoft Teams on 15 May 2023

### Members:

Mrs B S Andrews-Jones	
Dr N T Connell	Treasurer
Dr D S Chambers*	
Dr A Calow	
Dr M A Donald	Chair / President
Ms L Ford	
Professor C J Proudman*	
Dr S Paterson	Junior Vice-President
Dr K A Richards	Senior Vice-President

\*Denotes absence

### In attendance:

Ms N Bance	Registration Administrator
Ms H Haid	Secretary to Registration Committee / Governance Officer
Mr R Hewes	Head of Customer Service
Ms J Harris	Statutory and Eligibility Specialist Manager
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C L McCann	Director of Operations
Mr A Quinn-Byrne	Secretary to Registration Committee / Governance Manager

### Apologies For Absence

1. Apologies were received from Professor C Proudman and Dr D Chambers.

### Declarations of Interest

2. There were no declarations of interest to record.

### Minutes of the last meeting



3. A Committee member requested an amendment to paragraph 13 of the confidential appendix. This request was sent by email prior to the meeting, and was acknowledged as an action accordingly.

**Action: Amendment to paragraph 13 of the confidential previous meeting minutes to be made in line with Committee's request.**

### Registration Statistics Report

4. The Head of Customer Services presented the Registration Statistics Report to the Committee.
5. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 1-4 of the classified appendix.

### Temporary Registration Application

6. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 5-7 of the classified appendix.

### Review of Terms of Reference

7. The Committee was given the opportunity to review its Terms of Reference.
8. It was agreed that no changes needed to be escalated to Council in June.

### Any Other Business (AOB)

9. The Committee discussed the frequency of its meetings.
10. It was agreed that shorter virtual meetings should be held on an ad-hoc basis to facilitate discussions regarding complex temporary registration applications, if required.
11. Further confidential information is contained in paragraphs 8-11 of the classified appendix.

### Date of the next meeting

12. The next meeting will be held on Monday, 11 September 2023 at 15:00 pm, in person.

<p><b>Action from the Resgrtation Committee meeting held on 15 May 2023</b></p>	<p><b>Date of completion</b></p>
<p>Amendment to paragraph 13 of the confidential previous meeting minutes to be made in line with Committee's request.</p>	<p>May 2023  <b>Status: Complete</b></p>

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Standards Committee
Date	21 February 2023
Title	Standards Committee Minutes
Summary	<p>Minutes of Standards Committee held remotely on Tuesday, 21 February 2023, at 4pm</p> <p>The Committee's attention is drawn to paragraphs 1-5 of the classified appendix.</p>
Attachments	<b>Classified appendix</b>
Author	<p>Vicki Price</p> <p>Senior Standards and Advice Officer</p> <p><a href="mailto:v.price@rcvs.org.uk">v.price@rcvs.org.uk</a></p>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3</b>

## 1 Classifications explained

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## 2 Classification rationales

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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

Minutes of the Standards Committee held remotely on Tuesday, 21 February 2023,  
at 4 pm

Members:

L Allum	
B Andrews-Jones	
L Belton	Chair
M Castle	
D Chambers	
O Cook	
M Gardiner	
C-L McLaughlan	Vice Chair
C Roberts	
W Wilkinson	

In attendance:

RCVS	E C Ferguson	Registrar
	M Donald	President
	G Kingswell	Head of Legal Services (Standards)
	B Jinks	Standards and Advisory Lead
	V Price	Senior Standards and Advice Officer
	K Richardson	Senior Standards and Advice Officer

## AI 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

1. Apologies were received from M Castle, D Chambers, M Gardiner and C Roberts.
2. No new declarations of interest were received.

## Matters for decision

### AI 2(a) UCOOH case studies and other matters - confidential

3. See paragraphs 1-5 of the classified appendix.

## AI 3 Any other business and date of next meeting

4. The date of the next meeting is 15 May 2023.

### Table of actions – confidential

5. Please see confidential appendix.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Veterinary Nurses Council Report to Council
Summary	To note the minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 10 May 2023
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix ( <b>Confidential</b> )
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1,2,3,4</b>
Annex A	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1</b>

## **<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

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## **<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

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## Veterinary Nurses Council

Minutes of the meeting held online via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 10 May 2023

<b>Members:</b>	*	Mrs Belinda Andrews-Jones	-	Vice-Chair
		Miss Jessica Beckett		
		Miss Alison Carr		
		Dr Niall Connell	-	Officer Team observer (non-voting)
		Mr Dominic Dyer		
	*	Ms Sarah Fox		Chairing this meeting
		Mrs Susan Howarth		
		Mrs Katherine Kissick		
	*	Mrs Donna Lewis		
	*	Dr Susan Paterson		
	*	Mr Matthew Rendle	-	Chair
		Dr Katherine Richards		
		Ms Stephanie Richardson		
		Mrs Claire Roberts		
		Miss Holly Witchell		

\*Denotes absent

<b>In attendance:</b>		Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
		Mr Luke Bishop	-	Media and Publications Manager
		Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
		Ms Eleanor Ferguson	-	Registrar
		Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	Examinations Quality Lead
		Ms Lizzie Lockett	-	Chief Executive
		Mr Ben Myring	-	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
		Mrs Jenny Soreskog-Turp	-	Lead for Postgraduate Education

<b>Guests:</b>		<i>Ms Rachael Buzzel</i>	-	<i>VN Times</i>
		<i>Mr Josh Loeb</i>	-	<i>BVA Journals</i>
		<i>Ms Kelly Nickalls</i>	-	<i>The Veterinary Nurse</i>

### Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Belinda Andrews-Jones, Sarah Fox, Donna Lewis, Susan Paterson and Matthew Rendle. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate. In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the meeting was chaired by Susan Howarth, Chair of the Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC).

## Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

## Obituaries

3. No written obituaries had been received. Council observed a minute's silence for all members of the professions who had passed away since the last meeting.

## Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023 were approved as a correct record.

## Matters arising

5. There were no matters arising on the previous Minutes.

## CEO update

6. The CEO provided an oral update on a few operational matters and recent activities since the previous meeting.
7. A group had been set up of the veterinary nurses who were now employees of the College. There were now many veterinary nurses employed in several teams within the College. The group would work together to provide support and maintain their professional identity within the College. This also would provide an excellent opportunity to work as ambassadors for the profession, and to act as role models.
8. The RCVS Academy had launched a course the previous week designed to support newly registered veterinary nurses, to coincide with Veterinary Nursing Awareness Month. The Academy was working very well and its courses to support vets and veterinary nurses had already been accessed over 8,000 times.
9. The RCVS, through its Mind Matters Initiative and Diversity and Inclusion Group, together with the British Veterinary Chronic Illness Society (BVCIS) had launched a survey aimed to provide a better understanding of the views, experiences and challenges faced by disabled and chronically ill people within the professions, and to provide insight into how the veterinary professions and educational institutions could be more inclusive. The survey was open to all veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and students, both those with illness and disability and their potential allies and supporters.
10. The College was continuing with moves to set up a Public Advisory Group (PAG) aiming to have more public input, to better understand the issues currently affecting the public, to consult with on the development of policy, to help develop and improve services for the public, and to test messaging and communications to ensure they were clear and understandable. The aim was to recruit thirty animal owners and keepers, including small animal, large animal and equine, to join

the group, which would be chaired by RCVS Council member Louise Allum, and to be operational by September.

11. Consideration of plans drawn up by the consultants for the College's new headquarters building was continuing, including senior staff input and consideration of costs. The building should be available for the refurbishment process to start from the end of the summer.
12. An all Staff Awayday would be held in June, and would cover a variety of issues around culture, including communications across the organisation and hybrid working, and development of a learning culture within the College.
13. The CEO, Registrar and Policy and Public Affairs Manager had attended two conferences held in Dublin the previous week on regulation – the International Veterinary Regulators Network, and a Global Regulators Conference (CLEAR). These had been very useful and interesting and provided a good opportunity to share knowledge and best practice.
14. RCVS Council had agreed to review the Committee meeting structure, including the frequency and timings of the meetings of its standing committees. It would be useful for VN Council to also give consideration to this issue for its own meetings, so that proposals could be made, to take effect in 2024. The Director of Veterinary Nursing confirmed that the VNC Terms of Reference were due to be discussed later in the meeting and this could be included in the discussion.

#### Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC)

15. **Meeting held on 21 February 2023.** Susan Howarth presented the minutes of the meeting, which had been chaired by the Deputy Chair, Sarah Reynolds-Golding, and highlighted the following decisions:
  - The re-accreditation of the BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing and Companion Animal Behaviour awarded by the University of Bristol.
  - The change of status from provisional to full accreditation of the Vetskill Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Equine).
  - The alignment of the accreditation periods for the Royal Veterinary College's suite of Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing programmes.
16. The pre-accreditation support visits to Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) continued to be well received.
17. The Committee had been provided with many reports on action plan monitoring and quality assurance activities, both for the Licence to Practise and Post-registration qualifications.
18. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) was in the process of updating its veterinary nursing subject benchmarks, and the VNEC Chair and the Director of Veterinary Nursing were both involved in the working group.

19. **Meeting held on 18 April 2023.** A brief oral report was provided on the meeting held on 18 April 2023. The minutes would be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting of Council.
20. The Committee had discussed the standard classifications used in accreditation visit reports, where currently a standard is noted as either being “met” or “not met”, and had agreed to re-introduce a third category, previously used, of “partially met”.
21. The Committee had approved a number of new accreditation visitors, for both the Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) panels.
22. As always, many quality monitoring reports had been presented to the Committee.

### Report on registrations and enrolments from overseas

23. **Annual update report.** The Examinations Quality Lead presented the report summarising the applications for registration and assessment of qualifications from nurses educated outside the UK, covering the period between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, with figures for the previous year shown for comparison. Following low numbers of applicants in the recent previous years, there had been a significant upward trend.
24. Council was reminded that there were two categories of applicants. Those educated in an ACOVENE (Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education) accredited school, if accepted, were permitted to register without completing any additional examinations. Other applicants, if it was clear that they had covered the majority of the Day One Competences (DOC) and Day One Skills (DOS) within their education, were then permitted to proceed to the Pre-registration examination.
25. In the reporting year, there had been 27 applications accepted from veterinary nurses educated in an ACOVENE-accredited school, the great majority of these being from the Republic of Ireland. 70 applicants educated at non-ACOVENE-accredited schools had been accepted to proceed to the examinations, with a significant area of growth being nurses educated in Hong Kong (21 applications as compared with nine in total over all previous periods combined).
26. In total, 78 VNs educated outside the UK had entered the Register during the reporting period. As of 31 March there were 513 nurses educated outside the UK on the Register - approximately 2.3% of all RVNs on that date.
27. **Submission of syllabus.** It was confirmed that non-ACOVENE applicants were normally required to provide their syllabus, mapped to the RCVS DOC DOS, to be checked by the Qualifications Assessor for advice on whether the qualification had met the majority of the DOC and DOS. When a number of applications had been received from a particular country or school with the same syllabus, permission had been sought from Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) to accept these qualifications in future without the applicant needing to submit the syllabus. It was clarified that each individual application would still go through a rigorous process. It was also noted that where this occurred there was not a contract with the school, and it was neither an accreditation nor

- endorsement, but an acceptance of the qualification without each applicant submitting the syllabus cross mapped to the DOC and DOS.
28. Council was provided with a table showing the qualifications that were currently accepted without further submission of syllabus, and those for which VNC was asked to consider removing the syllabus requirement. It was agreed to remove the syllabus submission requirement for applicants with the following qualifications:
- Cert IV in Veterinary Nursing ACM40418 – Australia.
  - Bachelor of Veterinary Technology / BSc Science with extended Major in Veterinary Technology awarded by the University of Queensland before 2022 (including 2022) – Australia.
  - Advanced Diploma in Veterinary Nursing awarded by SCOPE between 2016 and 2022 – New Zealand.
  - National Diploma in Veterinary Nursing NCF 2491 – Australia.
  - Diploma in Veterinary Nursing awarded by the University of Zimbabwe between 2006 and 2022 – Zimbabwe.
29. It was confirmed that these applicants would still need to submit an application and to pass the pre-registration examination. It was also confirmed that where an applicant has been out of veterinary nursing for five years, they were asked to provide evidence of recent practical experience, either within or outside the UK, before being permitted to submit an examination entry.
30. **Other activities.** A course had been developed within the Academy aimed at veterinary nurses educated outside the UK, taking them through the journey from initial application through to registration. This would be developed further in the future. The information on the Code of Professional Conduct had also been incorporated within the course.
31. There had been a slight change in the registration process in respect of acceptable confirmation of qualifications from education providers, bringing the process in line with that for veterinary surgeon applicants.
32. Council thanked the Examinations Quality Lead for the very clear report and explanation of the process. It was also commented that the increase in the number of applications was pleasing to see. It was confirmed that this seemed to be an upward trend. The number of applications in the first quarter of the year had been high, and there had also been the highest ever number of applicants for the forthcoming pre-registration examinations.
33. In response to a query regarding the use of translation platforms on the internet, it was noted that these had been used on three occasions. In these particular instances, the applicants had not been accepted as it was clear that the DOS/DOC requirements had not been met within the syllabus. The Examinations Quality Lead was commended on the rigour of the process.
34. **Report on temporary student enrolments.** Council noted a paper setting out information on the number of temporary enrolments from student nurses educated outside the UK, working or on placement for a short period in the UK as part of their training, for a maximum of twelve weeks.

The numbers applying during the current year had been slightly lower than those in the previous year.

## Reports from RCVS Committees

### Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

35. Council noted the annual report of the RVN PIC Committee that had been circulated with the agenda. Unfortunately, neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair of the Committee were available to present the report, but any questions would be relayed back to the Chair.
36. It was noted from the report that both the Chair, Suzanne Edwards and Vice-Chair, Susan Little were coming to the end of their terms on the Committee, and VNC wished to express its thanks to them both for their work over the past years.

### Standards Committee

37. The next meeting of the Standards Committee was due to take place the following week, so there was no report to provide.

### Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

38. The Acting Chair read out a report which had been provided by the Chair of the APC, who was unable to attend the meeting. This included the following:
  - As referred to earlier by the CEO, the disability and chronic illness survey had been launched.
  - A meeting was planned to take place in June with the NHS on the progress of the Edward Jenner Leadership programme.
  - Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) – there had been a successful stream at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress on neurodiversity, as well as MMI-supported sessions on wellbeing. The MMI mental health symposium would take place in Manchester on 10 October 2023.
  - RCVS Knowledge had introduced new quality improvement tools on patient safety. In April a new e-learning platform had been launched, with 30 hours of free CPD.
  - As well as the launch of the Academy course for newly registered veterinary nurses, a follow-up course was planned for returners. A VN Futures animation was due to be released in collaboration with the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA). More than 270 RVNs had signed up as VN Futures schools ambassadors.
39. Kate Richards added that as Chair of the MMI, she had attended a recent mental health wellbeing conference in Belfast. A great proportion of the delegates had been veterinary nurses and practice managers, and it had been good to make contacts, with many potential opportunities for future collaboration.

## RVN Disciplinary Committee

40. The report from the Disciplinary hearing in April 2023 was noted.

## Communications report

41. The Media and Publications Manager provided an overview of recent VN-related activities in the Comms Department.
42. There had been a slightly increased turnout for this year's VN Council elections - 8.8% of those eligible to vote, compared to 8.4% in 2022. However, there had been a downward trend since the high point of over 17% in 2020. It had been noted that voting spikes had occurred after each reminder, and the number of reminders had been increased. The RCVS had been reassured by Civica, the company which conducts the elections, that the percentage turnout was generally in line with other similar organisations. The Council Culture Working Group would be looking into how the election could be improved.
43. It was commented that it would be useful to manage the expectations of potential candidates as to what they could achieve as member of Council. Other suggestions were made in the meeting which would be taken on board, including encouraging those attending post-registration qualifications, whilst at college, to vote. It was not known what had been the cause of the high turnout in 2020, which was also high for the veterinary elections in that year.
44. A number of activities were being arranged to coincide with VN Awareness Month, including VN Futures-related activities on the stand at BVA Live, and presentations on the VN Futures project at the learning zone. An animated video had also been produced.
45. There would also be a campaign highlighting the more than 20 RVNs who worked at the RCVS in various teams, with Q&A and short videos on the website and social media channels, for the latter part of VN Awareness Month.
46. The next Veterinary Nurses Day to celebrate newly qualified veterinary nurses and those achieving advanced qualifications, would take place in Central Hall Westminster on Friday 16 June.
47. The College was also carrying out a web content review to see where improvements in accessibility and quality of content could be made.

## VN Council membership

48. **VN Council election 2023.** Council was pleased to note that Matthew Rendle had been re-elected, and Simon Williams had been elected, both for a three-year term, and looked forward to welcoming Simon at the AGM in July.
49. **Farewells.** This would be the last Council meeting for Dominic Dyer, Claire Roberts and Niall Connell.



50. Dominic Dyer had served as a lay member of VN Council for ten years, and had brought to the table and Council's various discussions - his invaluable experience as an animal rights campaigner, policy advisor and charity worker. Throughout his time, Dominic had been extremely supportive and had helped spread the word about the value of veterinary nurses and the important role they play in UK animal health and welfare through various platforms.
51. Claire had served three years as an elected member. During that time, she had represented VN Council on the Standards Committee for her full three-year term, and had also been a valued member of the CPD Policy and Compliance sub-committee, additionally having helped considerably in promoting CPD, and reflections, in the CPD webinars.
52. Niall Connell had been involved with VN Council since his election to RCVS Council in 2013, serving as a VN Council member for many years, Vice-Chair in 2015-2016 and latterly as an officer observer. He had been hugely supportive of the veterinary nursing profession throughout and a most valued member of VNC, and would be much missed.
53. Council expressed its thanks to all three, and a formal farewell would be made at the Annual General Meeting in July.
54. **Lay member appointments.** The Acting Chair was delighted to confirm that both Sarah Fox and Stephanie Richardson had been re-appointed to VNC for a further three years.

#### **Any other business (unclassified)**

55. There was no other business.

#### **Date of next meeting**

56. The next meeting would be held in person, on Wednesday 13 September 2023, at a venue to be confirmed.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	May 2023 PIC / DC Liaison Committee minutes
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 18 May 2023
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	Confidential appendix Confidential appendix Annex A
Author	Hannah Alderton Committee Liaison Officer h.alderon@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7856 1033

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 4</b>
Classified annex (to appendix)	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 4</b>

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## Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held by MS Teams on Thursday, 18 May 2023 at 10:00 am

### Members:

Dr K A Richards (Chair)	Senior Vice-President
*Dr L Belton	Chair, Standards Committee
Dr N T Connell	Treasurer
*Mrs O Cook	Council member
Mrs S K Edwards	Chair, RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)
Dr B P Viner	Chair, Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
Mrs J Way	Chair, Disciplinary Committee (DC)
Mr W Wilkinson	Council member
Ms J S M Worthington	Council member

### In attendance:

Miss H Alderton	Committee Liaison Officer
Ms G Crossley	Head of Professional Conduct (HoPC)
Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar
*Ms L Lockett	CEO
*Ms Y Yusuph	DC Clerk

\*Denotes absent

### Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Dr L Belton, Mrs O Cook and Ms L Lockett.

### Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest to record.

## Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 16 February 2023

3. There were no comments, and the minutes were agreed.

### Updates – general

4. The Registrar updated the Committee on the following matters:
  - Recruitment for PIC and DC members was well under way and the advertisement around the roles had been very successful and saw a huge increase in the number of applicants. The long list of applicants had recently been finalised and the process was proceeding within the planned time period;
  - DC chair and vice chair recruitment was underway with the closing for applications at the end of the month;
  - PIC vice chair and RVN PIC chair recruitment was also underway with those currently in the positions terms coming to an end in the summer;
  - The current PIC chair, Bradley Viner, had been reappointed as chair for another term.
5. It was commented that succession planning may need to be looked into and the Registrar explained that unfortunately on this occasion it just so happened that all those in the chair positions' terms came to an end in the same year.

### Monitoring / performance / working methods / outcomes / dashboard / KPIs

6. The Head of Professional Conduct reported that while the number of enquiries had been relatively consistent, the number of concerns raised had been low for the last few months, and this was also reflected in the numbers that the VCMS were seeing come in. The current case managers have manageable caseloads with two going on maternity leave. One's maternity cover has already started, and the other's is due to start in June, both new recruits having considerable regulatory experience. The progress of cases at Stage two was reported on, with one being highlighted as a learning exercise in the importance of restricting the scope of enquiries where necessary.
7. The Committee had a discussion around a regulated professional's responsibility to respond to their regulator. The 'nuclear' option for those that do not engage with their regulator was for them to be referred to DC with a charge in regard to this, although it was commented that the College regards this very much as a last resort. The team will pursue a number of different methods of contact, including in person, before this is considered. It was also noted that there can be many reasons for Registrants to be reluctant to cooperate with the investigation of concerns, including a reluctance to "turn on" a colleague, or mental health concerns on the part of either Respondent or witness. Each case was considered individually and often the scenarios which caused the most problems and delays involved intermittent contact from individuals, rather than no contact at all.
8. After some discussion on the topic the Committee were informed that ultimately witnesses could be compelled to attend hearings via witness summons, Once a matter reached the Disciplinary

Committee. They are issued as a matter of course to ensure the attendance of witnesses. Calling witnesses was only a productive use of everyone's time when you know what they are going to say and so the College always took the time before hearings to try and ensure productive cooperation.

## Review of process change and KPIs

9. This information can be found at paragraphs 1 – 4 of the confidential appendix.

## Terms of reference

10. The Chair walked through the sections of the terms of reference that potentially needed to be changed. This included the addition of private prosecution, the Charter Case Committee and looking at amending the wording around monitoring the KPIs.

11. The Committee agreed to amend paragraph two to include the private prosecution trial and amend paragraph three to include the Charter Case Committee.

ACTION: REGISTRAR

12. A discussion took place on whether the Committee should set the new KPIs or whether they should simply make a recommendation to Council who would make the final decision. After some discussion it was decided the Council's governance model delegated the setting of KPIs to the Committee which had access to detailed information and the time to have full discussions. The track changes send to Council would change to wording to 'setting KPIs' rather than 'monitoring'.

13. It was questioned whether the section in regard to budgeting and financial control was still within the committee remit or if this was now the role of FRC. The role had changed slightly and so the new proposal was for the wording to be changed to 'monitoring costs and resources related to the committees'; this was agreed by all.

ACTION: REGISTRAR

## Disciplinary Committee report

14. The report was noted and there were no comments.

## VCMS Annual report

15. The Registrar presented the report and informed the Committee that for the first time since the VCMS was set up the number of annual inquiries had gone down. Discussions with them had concluded that the numbers were unlikely to go back up to covid figures but that there may now be a stabilisation. Positive comments were made by the Committee regarding the service Nockolds delivered and their engagement with the professions was noted.

16. This information can be found at paragraph 5 of the confidential appendix.

### Feedback to Standards Committee v.v. PIC / DC Liaison Committee

17. The Registrar outlined a recent point that was raised at standards as a result of a recent DC decision. It was centred around whether certificate holders should be held to a higher standard than 'normal' vets, and more specifically how they communicate and advertise themselves to the public. A discussion had taken place and the conclusion was that the existing guidance did not need to be changed.

### Risk Register, equality and diversity

18. The Committee had nothing to raise.

### Any other business

19. Judith Way, Suzanne Edwards and Niall Connell who would all be leaving the Committee were thanked for their contributions, along with Kate Richards who was thanked for chairing the Committee for the past three years.

20. Austin Kirwan the DC Vice-Chair had sadly passed away since the last meeting and the Committee thanked him for all of his many contributions to the College over the years.

### Date of next meeting

21. The date of the next meeting would be Thursday, 21 September 2023, at 10:00 am. It was agreed that the meetings continue to be virtual.

22. The Chair brought the meeting to a close.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report describes the work of the Preliminary Investigation Committee since RCVS Council's last meeting, including by reference to key stage indicators, and provides information about the nature of concerns being considered by the RCVS.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Chris Murdoch Senior Case Manager <a href="mailto:c.murdoch@rcvs.org.uk">c.murdoch@rcvs.org.uk</a></p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct <a href="mailto:g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk">g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk</a></p>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a



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## Preliminary Investigation Committee

### Report to Council June 2023

#### Introduction

1. This report provides information about the activities of the Preliminary Investigation Committee in March, April and part of May 2023 (26 May 2023 being the date of writing the report).
2. Since the last Report to Council (which gave information to 3 March 2023), there have been 6 Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) meetings (8 March, 22 March, 12 April, 26 April, 10 May and 24 May 2023).

#### New cases considered by the PIC

3. The total number of new cases considered by the Committee at the 6 meetings referred to above is 10. Of the 10 new cases considered:
  - 4 were concluded at first consideration by the Committee. Of these:
    - 2 cases were closed with no further action, and
    - 1 case was closed with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon.
    - 1 case was held open with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon.
  - 6 cases were referred for further investigation, that is, further enquiries, visits and/or preliminary expert reports.
4. No cases have been referred to the RCVS Health or Performance Protocols in the reporting period.

#### Ongoing Investigations

5. The PI Committee is currently investigating 49 ongoing cases where the Committee has requested statements, visits or preliminary expert reports (for example). This figure does not include cases on the Health and Performance Protocols.

#### Health Protocol

6. There are no veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Health Protocol. The two veterinary surgeons who had been subject to the protocol were discharged in April after having been subject to the protocol for some time without any relevant issues coming to light.

#### Performance Protocol

7. There are no veterinary surgeons currently on the RCVS Performance Protocol.

#### Professional Conduct Department - Enquiries and concerns

8. Before registering a concern with the RCVS, potential complainants must make an Enquiry (either in writing or by telephone), so that Case Managers can consider with the enquirer whether they

should raise a formal concern or whether the matter would be more appropriately dealt with through the Veterinary Client Mediation Service.

9. In the period 4 March to 26 May 2023,

- the number of matters registered as Enquiries was 748, and
- the number of formal Concerns registered in the same period was 121.

10. The table below shows the categories of matters registered as Concerns between 4 March and 26 May 2023.

**Concerns registered between 4 March and 26 May 2023**

<b>Description of Category</b>	<b>Number of Cases</b>
- Advertising and publicity	1
- Appeal against DC decision	0
- Certification	3
- Client confidentiality	0
- Clinical and client records	5
- Clinical governance	0
- Communication and consent	3
- Communication between professional colleagues	0
- Conviction	2
- CPD compliance	0
- Delegation to veterinary nurses	2
- Equine pre-purchase examinations	1
- Euthanasia of animals	1
- Giving evidence for court	1
- Health case ( <i>potential</i> )	2
- Illegal practice	1
- Microchipping	0
- Miscellaneous	1
- Practice information, fees & animal insurance	1
- Performance case ( <i>potential</i> )	1
- Recognised veterinary practice	0
- Referrals and second opinions	0
- Registration investigation	1
- Restoration application	0
- Social media and networking forums	1
- Treatment of animals by unqualified persons	0
- Use of samples, images, post-mortems and disposal	0

- Veterinary care	86
- Veterinary medicines	1
- Veterinary teams and leaders	0
- Whistle-blowing	2
- 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief	5
- Unassigned	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>

Data source – Profcon computer system concerns data.

### Referral to Disciplinary Committee

11. In the period 4 March to 26 May 2023, the Committee has referred 4 cases involving 4 veterinary surgeons to the Disciplinary Committee.

### Veterinary Investigators

12. The Chief Investigator and veterinary investigators have undertaken six visits since the last report. The first was at the request of the police to assist them, Defra Investigation Services and the VMD to execute search warrants on AI businesses. The second was a visit to locate an individual purporting to be a veterinary surgeon. The third was an unannounced visit to a veterinary surgeon to serve disciplinary documents. The fourth was a joint unannounced visit with the VMD to a veterinary practice to check its administration and monitoring of prescriptions, as requested by PIC. The fifth was at the request of Sussex Police to assist in executing search warrants and the sixth was an unannounced visit to a veterinary surgeon to serve disciplinary bundles.

### Concerns procedure

13. As Council is aware, the process for the consideration of concerns changed at the beginning of October 2022. Previously, Stage 1 of the process, involved a Case Examiner Group (CEG), which aimed to decide 90% of cases within four months of registration of the complaint (the Stage 1 KPI). In January 2023, that KPI was met in 92% of the cases considered. Since October when the process changed, concerns cases have been considered by a Stage 1 PIC, which is larger than a CEG and considers matters to the realistic prospect test (rather than the lower threshold of “arguable case”).

14. A detailed report was provided to PIC/DC Liaison Committee in May explaining how the new process is progressing and analysing the factors relevant to the timescales involved. An audit of the cases that closed in February and March showed that of the 55 cases that closed, 10 would have progressed to Stage two under the old Case Examiner Group threshold of presenting an “arguable case”. Clearly, it is early to be making predictions, but that representative sample would suggest that around 20% fewer cases will progress to Stage two than under the previous process. Council will be aware that this was one of the principle aims of revising the process, in view of the additional strain that can be caused to Respondents when matters progress to Stage two, along with the difficulties inherent in managing the expectations of Complainants.

15. Having considered the detailed report provided, PIC/DC Liaison Committee considered that it is too early in the life of the new process to set a new KPI, and that it would be appropriate to defer

doing so until it has had chance to "bed in" further. The Committee will continue to monitor the progress of cases and make a decision in due course.

16. In the meantime, it was agreed that it would be useful to report the median number of weeks taken for cases to conclude at Stage one under the new process. So far, the median number of weeks taken for February, March and April have been 13, 13.3, and 14.9 respectively.
17. The Stage 2 KPI is now for the PIC to reach a decision on simple cases before it within seven months, and on complex cases within 12 months. A case is deemed to be complex where the PIC requests that witness statements and/or expert evidence be obtained.
18. In the period 4 March 2023 to 26 May 2023, the PIC reached a decision (to close, hold open or refer to DC) within the relevant KPI in 2 out of 5 simple cases.
19. 10 complex cases were decided, of which 3 met the 12-month KPI. In accordance with normal practice, these cases (and KPI's in general) are reported and discussed in detail at the PIC/DC Liaison Committee meeting.

#### **Operational matters**

20. As above, the new process is progressing well, with all those involved working hard to ensure its smooth running. Cases are being monitored carefully to ensure consistency and timely progression.
21. The training for the PIC in relation to the new Charter Case Committee was postponed and will take place shortly, with a date to be confirmed. A full day's general training was held for PIC and VNPIC members, along with members of the Professional Conduct department, with talks on relevant issues and case law, and case studies for discussion.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report sets out the work of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Sandra Neary Secretary to the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee <a href="mailto:s.neary@rcvs.org.uk">s.neary@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0730</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct <a href="mailto:g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk">g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0740</p>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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## Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

### Report to Council

#### Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Council, there has been two meetings of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee, which took place on 4 April and 16 May 2023.

#### RVN Concerns received / registered

2. In the period 4 March to 26 May 2023, there were 10 new Concerns relating to RVNs. Of these 10 new Concerns:
  - One case closed at Stage 1 PIC.
  - Eight are currently under investigation by a Case Manager, Veterinary Nurse, Veterinary surgeon, and a lay member (Stage 1 Preliminary Investigation Committee)
  - One case was referred to Stage 2 PIC.

#### RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. Two new cases have been considered by the RVN PIC between 4 March to 26 May 2023. Both cases were referred to external solicitors for formal statements to be taken. At the meeting on 16 May, the Committee considered an ongoing case and decided to refer it to the RVN Disciplinary Committee for a formal hearing.

#### Ongoing Investigations

4. Three concerns are currently under investigation and will be returned to the RVN PIC for a decision in due course.

#### Health Concerns

5. At the meeting on 4 April 2023, the Committee considered a case where the Respondent RVN has been subject to undertakings given under the RCVS Health Protocol for a number of years. The Committee agreed that the case should be closed, and the Respondent released from their undertakings. There are no other RVNs on the health protocol.

#### Performance Concerns

6. There are currently no RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Performance Protocol.

#### Referral to Disciplinary Committee

7. Since the last report, one case has been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee. This will be listed for a hearing in due course.

#### Disciplinary Hearings

8. A disciplinary hearing took place between 27 and 31 March 2023 in relation to Libby Morris. The Disciplinary Committee found all the allegations proved and decided that the RVN's name should be suspended from the Register for a period of six months.



### Operational matters

9. The training for PIC members in relation to the new Charter Case Committee was postponed and will take place shortly, with a date to be confirmed. A full day's general training was held in person on 15 May 2023 for PIC and VNPIC members, along with members of the Professional Conduct department, with talks on relevant issues and case law, and case studies for discussion.
  
10. The RVN PIC has recently welcomed Susan Holt RVN whose term began in March 2023. At the end of June 2023, we will say goodbye to our Chair and Vice-Chair (Suzanne Edwards RVN and Susan Little MRCVS) who have served on the Committee for 8 years. We are very grateful for the contributions they have made to the Committee, and we will miss their vast experience and knowledge.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Disciplinary Committee Report
Summary	Update of Disciplinary Committee since the last Council meeting on 16 March 2023
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Yemisi Yusuph Disciplinary Committee Clerk Tel: 020 7202 0729 Email: <a href="mailto:y.yusuph@rcvs.org.uk">y.yusuph@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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## Report of Disciplinary Committee hearings since the last Council meeting on 16 March 2023

### Hearings

#### Nicola Burrows

1. Dr Nicola Jade Burrows MRCVS was removed from the Register on 11 May 2021 for creating an inaccurate clinical history for her own horse and then dishonestly attempting to make an insurance claim for the treatment of her horse.
2. Dr Burrows' adjourned application for restoration to the Register was heard by the Committee on Thursday 9 March to Friday 10 March 2023. In her restoration application, Dr Burrows included continuing professional development (CPD) certificates covering the courses she had completed during the period since her removal from the Register.
3. Also included were letters/informal witness statements from the veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses she had worked with since her removal from the Register and who expressed a willingness to employ her again were the Committee to permit her name to be restored to the Register, as well as character references and reflection statements.
4. At the hearing, the Disciplinary Committee considered whether she had accepted the findings of the Committee at the original inquiry hearing, the seriousness of those findings, whether she had demonstrated insight into her past conduct, and the protection of the public and the public interest.
5. In addition to the documentation provided to the Committee, Dr Burrows also made a detailed opening statement in support of her application.
6. Within this, she said that the period since her name was removed from the Register was extremely difficult and also emphasised that she now fully and unconditionally accepted all the Committee's original findings in May 2021, some of which she had previously denied and had failed to acknowledge.
7. Dr Burrows went on to state that she only had herself to blame for her actions and that she now understood and accepted that the original sanction of removal from the register had needed to be severe given the serious breach of trust to the public, to the veterinary profession and the insurance industry that was a direct consequence of her dishonest actions.
8. Since removal from the Register, Dr Burrows had taken on the role of receptionist in a Vets4Pets practice in Cardiff, which required her to deal directly with the public and their insurance requests and entitlements. She stated that as a result of her involvement over the past 18 months in processing insurance claims, she acknowledges the "delicate" relationship between veterinary surgeons, clients and insurers.
9. Additionally, working as a receptionist, had allowed her to recognise the need for contemporaneous and clear clinical notes. She also highlighted her CPD, which was relevant to insurance, as well as the fact she'd undertaken a professional ethics course to assist her rehabilitation, reflection, and insight.
10. In support of Dr Burrows' restoration to the Register, the Committee took into account three witness accounts from people who work at the Vets4Pets branch where Dr Burrows works as a receptionist. All witnesses gave positive reflections on Dr Burrows' character and assured the Committee that they would provide the correct level of support to allow her to return to work safely and that they would have all the necessary safeguarding measures in place to ensure that the public's and the profession's interest is always at the forefront.

11. Judith Way, chairing the Disciplinary Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: “The Committee was impressed by the fact that busy professionals chose to give up their time to provide witness statements and give evidence in support of Dr Burrows’ application. All witnesses were clearly supportive of Dr Burrows’ request for restoration to the Register.
12. “The Committee found Dr Burrows to show remorse and she does now accept the findings of dishonesty that were made against her in the original enquiry hearing and stated that her conduct was dishonest. In the Committee’s view, the evidence given by Dr Burrows on affirmation was very believable and she now accepts her dishonesty together with the gravity of her dishonesty.
13. “The Committee also formed the view that the steps she has taken to address her dishonesty serve to confirm that she is passionate about the prospect that she be allowed to return to practise. The Committee was impressed by Dr Burrows and the evidence given and is now satisfied that she will ensure the highest standards of probity and honesty in the future.

#### Katherine Power

14. The Committee first met to hear the Inquiry into Katharine Power MRCVS in November 2022 with subsequent hearings taking place in both February and March 2023. The charges against Dr Power related to alleged clinical and communications failings in respect of surgery carried out on two separate dogs on two separate occasions. The first concerned laryngeal tieback surgery carried out on, Harvey, a Tibetan Terrier in March 2018, and the second concerned oesophageal surgery carried out on a boxer dog, Boss, in October 2018.
15. [The full charges can be found here: Power, Katharine February 2023 Charges - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
16. at the outset of the hearing in November 2022, the College asked to withdraw a number of the charges, with further charges also being withdrawn during the course of the hearing after hearing from relevant witnesses.
17. In respect of the laryngeal surgery, Dr Power made admissions that she had failed to undertake pre-operative radiographs before proceeding with the surgery, had failed to perform the surgery appropriately (in that she dissected excessive tissue and had inappropriately placed sutures), and had undertaken the surgery when it was outside her area of competence. In relation to Boss, Dr Power also admitted to failing to provide a referral report and/or clinical records to the veterinary practice he was referred from, despite requests from the practice.
18. The Committee, on cross-examining witnesses and hearing the evidence, including that provided by expert witnesses, found the majority of those charges that had not been withdrawn by the College or admitted by Dr Power, not proven. However, in addition to the admitted charges, in respect of the oesophageal surgery, the Committee found that, with a total of 9.5 hours, Dr Power had subjected Boss to an excessive period of anaesthesia.
19. The Committee’s decision on finding of facts can be found here: [Power, Katharine February 2023 Decision of the Disciplinary Committee on Findings of Fact - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
20. The Committee then went on to consider whether the proven charges amounted to serious professional conduct. Counsel for the College submitted that Dr Power’s conduct breached the part of the *Code of Professional Conduct* relating to veterinary surgeons keeping within their area of competence and referring responsibly; and providing veterinary care that is appropriate and adequate. In terms of aggravating factors, the College submitted that there was both actual injury to the animal, as well as actions that posed a risk of injury, that Dr Power financially benefitted from the alleged misconduct as she was paid to perform a procedure outside her competence, and that she occupied a position of increased trust and

responsibility as she advertised and held herself out as a practitioner who accepted referrals and was competent to perform soft tissue surgery.

21. Dr Power's counsel submitted that the charges that had been found proven amounted to clinical and administrative failings and that this was not a case of a veterinary surgeon deliberately or recklessly acting outside of their capabilities, but rather a case where a diligent and responsible veterinary surgeon had fallen short in discrete areas of her clinical practice and had reasonably believed at the time that she was competent to perform the surgery.
22. Noting that not every breach of the *Code of Professional Conduct* will necessarily amount to serious professional misconduct, the Committee itself found that, although the conduct within the proven charges fell short of what would be reasonably expected of a veterinary surgeon, it did not fall so far short that her conduct constituted serious professional misconduct.
23. The full decision on disgraceful conduct can be found here: [Morris, Libby March 2023 Decision of the Disciplinary Committee on Disgraceful Conduct in a Professional Respect - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
24. The Chair of the Disciplinary Committee stated that: "The Committee understood that it had a responsibility to consider the wider public interest, taking into account the view of a reasonable member of the public in possession of all the relevant facts and information.
25. "The Committee considered that such a member of the public would understand that veterinary surgery is a challenging profession. It was of the view that such a member of the public would not expect perfection, but understand that any professional practitioner may make mistakes in the course of their practice."It is the judgement of this Committee that the respondent's conduct does not constitute disgraceful conduct in a professional respect."
26. The full decision on sanction can be found here: [Morris, Libby March 2023 Decision of the Disciplinary Committee on Sanction - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

#### Libby Morris RVN

27. Between Monday 27 March to Friday 31 March 2023, the RVN Committee met to hear the Inquiry into Miss Libby Morris.
28. The Inquiry was in relation to three charges that were brought against her. All three charges involved concerns about her care for a post-operative German Shepherd dog at a Devon veterinary practice on 25 December 2020.
29. The first charge was that she left the dog unattended between 12.15pm and 2.30pm, made clinical records entries before leaving the practice indicating she'd made these entries at 2pm when she had not, and at 1.41pm sent a message to a veterinary surgeon colleague in which she purported to be providing contemporaneous updates about the dog's condition and circumstances when she was not, in fact, with the animal. The second charge alleged that her conduct from the first charge was potentially detrimental to the dog's welfare, while the third charge alleged that the same conduct was dishonest and/or misleading.
30. At the outset of the hearing Miss Morris admitted the majority of the charges, although she denied that she had made the clinical record dishonestly on the basis that she had innocently

omitted to correct a time entry she had earlier made in the records as a “prompt”. After considering evidence from the College’s and Miss Morris’s witnesses, the Committee found that she had been dishonest as she knowingly pre-entered the incorrect time in order to cover up for a period of absence from the practice.

31. With all the charges having been admitted or found proven, the Committee then went on to consider whether the charges amounted to serious professional misconduct. In making this decision, the Committee considered the aggravating and mitigating factors in Miss Morris’s conduct. In terms of aggravating factors, the Committee found that there was: a real risk of injury to the animal having left it unattended for more than two hours while it was recovering from a serious emergency procedure; dishonesty; recklessness regarding the dog’s welfare; pre-meditated misconduct as she had knowingly made the false clinical record in advance; breach of client trust; and, breach of the position of trust and responsibility placed in her as she was on-call that day and had the sole responsibility for the dog.
32. In terms of mitigation, the Committee considered that this was a single isolated incident, albeit involving a series of misconduct, in respect of one animal, and that, although there was a risk of harm in leaving a vulnerable animal unattended, her actions did not directly lead to any harm coming to the animal, which did, however, subsequently die from post-operative complications.
33. Overall, the Committee found that Miss Morris’s conduct would undermine the public trust and confidence placed in the veterinary nursing profession as a whole as well as bring the profession into disrepute and so found that her actions amounted to serious professional misconduct.
34. In deciding the most appropriate sanction for Miss Morris, the Committee took into account the previously mentioned aggravating and mitigating factors, but also considered a number of further pertinent mitigating factors. These were: Miss Morris’s youth and inexperience at the time of the misconduct; her previously unblemished career; her open and frank admissions to the majority of the charges; her efforts to avoid repeating such behaviours; efforts to remediate past misconduct; the significant lapse of time between the incident and the disciplinary hearing; demonstration of insight into her misconduct; and positive personal character references and testimonials.
35. Mrs Judith Way, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: “In deciding the proportionate sanction the Committee considered the nature and extent of the dishonesty it had found proved. When considering where the dishonesty fell on a scale of dishonesty, it noted that the respondent had acted dishonestly within her practice as a veterinary nurse, on three clinical records, but that the dishonesty related to a single incident and one patient with the aim of extending her time away from the practice on Christmas Day. It therefore concluded that this could be described as middle ranging dishonesty (not the most or least serious type of dishonesty).
36. Overall, having considered all the matters above, the Committee concluded that Miss Morris should receive a suspension of 6 months.
37. The full decision can be found here: [Burrows, Nicola March 2023 Decision of the Disciplinary Committee on Application for Restoration - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

Upcoming DC cases

1. There are currently 3 listed hearings:
  - 19-27 June 2023
  - 3-14 July 2023
  - 31 July – 8 August 2023
  
2. There are currently three referred cases, which will be listed shortly.