

**Standards Committee**
**Agenda for the meeting to be held on 11 September 2023 at 10.00am**

1.	Apologies for absence, declarations of interest.	
2.	Matters for decision	
	a. GEFS ( <b>confidential</b> )	Paper attached
	b. PSS Assessor structure ( <b>confidential</b> )	Paper attached
	c. Review of under care and OOH ( <b>confidential</b> )	Oral update
3.	Matters for report	
	a. Riding Establishments Subcommittee Report	Paper attached
	b. PSS update	Paper attached
4.	<b>Confidential</b> matters for report	
	a. Routine Veterinary Practice Subcommittee Report	Paper attached
	b. Ethics Review Panel Report	Paper attached
	c. Certification Subcommittee Report	Paper attached
5.	Risk and equality	Oral update
6.	Any other business and date of next meeting on 13 November 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vet attestation Q&amp;A</li> </ul>	Oral update

**Standards Committee 2023/2024****Chair:**

Miss Linda Belton BVSc MRCVS

**Members:**

Dr Louise Allum MRCVS

Dr Danny Chambers MRCVS

Dr Olivia Cook MRCVS

Professor Derek Bray

Dr Melissa Donald MRCVS

Ms Claire-Louise McLaughlan

Dr Alice McLeish MRCVS

Dr Sue Paterson FRCVS

Mr Matthew Rendle RVN

Mr Tim Walker

Mr Will Wilkinson MRCVS

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Standards Committee
Date	11 September 2023
Title	Riding Establishments Subcommittee report
Summary	Standards Committee is asked to note this brief update on the work and considerations of the Riding Establishments Subcommittee. The topics discussed are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023 Inspector Training and Induction Course;</li> <li>• Scottish Government consultation on proposed new Licensing of Activities Involving Animals regulations; and</li> <li>• Advice queries.</li> </ul>
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Vicki Price Senior Standards and Advice Officer v.price@rcvs.org.uk

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

<b>1Classifications 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

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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>

## 2023 Inspector Training and Induction Course

1. The 2023 Inspector Training and Induction course took place in-person and remotely throughout May-July.
2. The course format consisted of compulsory completion of the new Riding Establishment Training Academy course, which includes a series of compulsory webinars and knowledge check questions, and one optional webinar recorded by the Donkey Sanctuary. The webinar topics included the legislation governing the licensing of riding establishments, inspecting the horses, inspecting the premises, inspecting the saddlery, trekking and trail riding establishments, and the inspector's conclusion. The online Academy course was required to be completed over a 4-week period from 15 May-12 June. For new applicants seeking to join the Inspectorate, this was followed by compulsory attendance at the in-person training day held on 20 June 2023. For inspectors completing five-yearly refresher training, the Academy course was followed by a 1.5-hour online Q&A session. One group online Q&A session was held on 28 June, and one was held on 5 July.
3. The in-person training day for new applicants was held at the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) National Training Centre in Warwickshire on Tuesday 20 June 2023. The course itinerary included information sessions, shadowing of an inspection, a saddlery demonstration and a quiz with members of the Subcommittee. Nine new applicants attended the training and have subsequently been added to the Inspectorate List.
4. Delegates were invited to provide feedback through Academy and SurveyMonkey following the course. Of 26 delegates, 11 provided feedback on the Academy course, six responded to the SurveyMonkey survey, and two provided feedback by phone and email. The feedback can be summarised as follows:
  - a. The majority of respondents agreed the Academy course had improved their knowledge and understanding, was useful and applicable to their role, and that the learning materials were engaging and interactive. One respondent commented that the webinars on the legislation and inspecting the premises in England had dealt well with complex material, and the history of the Riding Establishment Acts was particularly interesting and valuable.
  - b. All respondents agreed that the Q&A sessions allowed for sufficient discussion of inspectors' questions and current issues.
  - c. Respondents found all of the in-person training day sessions to be valuable.
  - d. All respondents were happy with the course dates and the location of the in-person day, and agreed that the information leading up to the training was sufficient.
  - e. Suggestions for improvement included simplifying and shortening the webinars (they currently take around four hours to complete), and including direct links to legislation and documents where relevant, e.g. Animal Welfare Act and British Horse Society documents.

5. The RESC plans to hold further online Q&A sessions in November 2023 which will be open to all inspectors on a voluntary basis, so as to provide the whole inspectorate with an opportunity to ask questions on current issues and interact with the Subcommittee.

### Scottish Government consultation on proposed new Licensing of Activities Involving Animals regulations

6. The Subcommittee has prepared a response to the consultation launched by the Scottish Government in July 2023 seeking views on proposals to replace existing legislation covering riding establishments with updated licensing requirements, and introduce licensing for livery yards. Meetings were held with the BVA, BEVA, British Horse Society (BHS) and British Horse Council (BHC) in the course of preparing the response.
7. The following key issues are noted in the consultation response:
  - The proposal to introduce updated licensing requirements for riding establishments and to extend licensing to other equine activities in Scotland is strongly supported
  - Inspections of riding establishments should be carried out by those with relevant training or experience in horse welfare to ensure high standards, and as under the current legislation, the RCVS Inspectorate is well placed to advise local authorities on this
  - It is important for there to be consistency in enforcement across local authorities, and local authorities will need adequate training and resources to facilitate this
  - Care should be taken to ensure that the minimum age for horses to be ridden is 3 years, rather than 'under 3 years' as per the current England regulations
  - Standards and conditions we would hope to see in riding establishments (e.g. records of farriery, restrictions upon use based on age, weight, type and veterinary advice, safe, suitable and adequate pasture, storage and teaching areas, a biosecurity plan, etc).
  - The proposal to introduce licensing for livery yards is strongly supported in the interests of horse welfare. If a full inspection process is not chosen, a registration scheme could be a useful alternative to enable resources to be focused on establishments more likely to have issues/concerns.
8. There was broad agreement between the BVA, BEVA, BHS, BHC and the Subcommittee that the above issues should be highlighted to the Scottish Government. We agreed to share our draft submission with the BVA and vice versa. The submission is currently with the RCVS policy team for review and submission by the closing date of 26 September 2023.

### Advice queries

9. The Standards and Advice Team continue to receive a steady number of enquiries from local authorities, veterinary surgeon inspectors and the owners of riding establishments.

10. Recent queries have related to the following topics:

- a. Eligibility requirements for veterinary surgeons who wish to become a riding establishment inspector, and for existing members of the Inspectorate who wish to remain on the Inspectorate List;
- b. Reporting suspected illegal medicines;
- c. Whether a new horse can be added to a licence based on a recent vetting report;
- d. Training and experience requirements for and suitability of riding establishment licence holders/owners;
- e. Signing a horse back into work;
- f. Queries regarding the annual Training and Induction Course.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Standards Committee
Date	11 September 2023
Title	Practice Standards Scheme Update
Summary	An update on the Practice Standards Scheme (“PSS”)
Decisions required	No decisions required – For information only.
Attachments	PSG Minutes 25 <sup>th</sup> August 2022 PSG Minutes 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
Authors	Sarah Iddon Head of Legal Services- PSS <a href="mailto:s.iddon@rcvs.org.uk">s.iddon@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 - PSG Minutes 25 <sup>th</sup> August 2022	Unclassified	n/a
Annex B - PSG Minutes 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2023	Unclassified	n/a

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## **2Classification rationales**

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## **An Update on the Practice Standards Scheme**

### **PSG Meetings**

1. PSG last met on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2023. The minutes from this meeting are yet to be ratified. However, the main discussions and decisions are presented here:

### **PSS Update**

2. Further operation changes are on the horizon. We launched an internal Assessor consultation on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023 to reconsider the current assessor operating model to ensure it is fit for purpose and fit for the future delivery of the scheme. Recommendations are being considered by the Director of Legal Services and appropriate committees.
3. Anne Lawson was appointed the part time Lead Assessor support role to support to the Lead Assessor 4 days per month.

### **Update from Lead Assessor (LA)**

4. The climate in the industry continues to feel uncertain. The recruitment/retention crisis is still problematic for many. This does impact the preparation for PSS assessments, but our team is continuing to provide support through the PSS process.
5. The assessor team is at a reduced capacity as we have had one assessor leave, one returning from maternity leave and two currently on long term sick. The newest cohort of assessors (started in October 2022) are thriving and assessing confidently whilst undergoing continued

training and development.

6. The LA is working on updating and streamlining all parts of the core induction training for new assessors. Academy have been helping to scope and develop an internal training course for assessors.
7. The assessor team will be welcomed by the VMD at their head office in Surrey for a full day's training in October. The focus will be ongoing medicines training/ consistency.
8. The first two Environmental Sustainability Awards were successfully assessed in May 2023. The Lead Assessor was joined by three assessors for training purposes. The two Paragon Veterinary Group premises are independent mixed practices based in Cumbria, and both achieved 'Outstanding'. Sue Patterson presented their certificates and was assisted with planting a tree to celebrate their achievement. We have a further two practices scheduled for assessment for the remainder of 2023.
9. The implementation of the new Environmental Sustainability standards went well, and no issues have been raised. Assessment of the new module has started, and the team are confidently assessing sustainability. There has been some feedback from practices that it has added to the size of standards again.

### Scheme figures

10. Scheme membership– shows overall membership has remained stable overall at 69% of all UK eligible practice premises although there has been a slight increase in the number of members which is now 3,905.
11. Performance –while the number of assessments has increased compared to quarter one and quarter two last year, we are still delivering an average of 250 assessments per quarter. There has been a decline in the number of accreditations and awards held which is relative of the volume of practice premises with outstanding evidence due post assessment and those that are focusing their recourses on their routine assessments rather than awards this year.
12. The data pulled on the top deficiencies medicines and non-medicines is again stable and has been for the last few years, although progress has been made to reduce the number of practices premises with those deficiencies. PSS will focus on delivering a plan on how to tackle these, which will be presented at the next PSG meeting.
13. PSS Feedback survey results – are at an all-time high with 364 responses for 2023 to date (1st January – 1st August 2023) compared to just 29 in total for 2022. This increase is mainly due to encouraging the completion of the survey to comply with Rule 91, before accreditation is granted. The feedback was generally positive towards the PSS standards, the service provided by the PSS team, the helpfulness of the Assessors and the Scheme in general but there are some negative comments particularly with the online system.

### Assessment forecast schedule for 2024 and 2025

14. The assessment forecasting schedule for 2024 and 2025 was discussed PSG. The years, 2024 and 2025 are four years on in the PSS assessment cycle since covid times had an impact on the ability to carry out in person assessments. There is now a disparity in the scheduling of assessments for these years and PSG agreed that some assessment dates would need to be moved forwards to be assessed sooner than their assessment due date and some moved back, to be assessed later than their expected assessment date. This will affect approximately 1,080 practice premises. The PSS team will provide advance notice in September of all those affected.

#### **The five yearly review of Standards**

15. The five yearly review of Standards was discussed as a confidential discussion to understand what the future of the standards may look like for 2025. PSS will develop and present a plan and framework at the next PSG meeting in October to agree how to tackle the task ahead.

End of paper

Summary	
Meeting	Practice Standards Group
Date	25 August 2022
Title	Minutes of meeting
Summary	Minutes of the Practice Standards Group meeting held on Thursday 25 August 2022
Attachments	Classified appendix Annex A – PSG 13042022 Actions progress update Annex B – PSG 25082022 Actions table
Author	Laurence Clegg PSS Lead / PSG Secretary <a href="mailto:l.clegg@rcvs.org.uk">l.clegg@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 0207 202 0778  Sarah Iddon Head of Legal Services PSS <a href="mailto:S.iddon@rcvs.org.uk">S.iddon@rcvs.org.uk</a> / +442081485561

Classifications		
Document	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationales <sup>2</sup>
Minutes	Unclassified	N/A
Classified appendix	Classified	1, 3
Annex A	Unclassified	N/A
Annex B	Unclassified	N/A

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## PRACTICE STANDARDS GROUP

### Members

Mandisa Greene	Chair & RCVS Council
Belinda Andrews-Jones	Vice Chair & VN Council
Adam Mugford	BAVECC
Andrew Parker	SPVS
Kathy Kissick*	VN Council
Lyndsay Hughes*	BVNA
Tim Mair	BEVA
Mark McLaren*	Lay member
Krista Arnold	BSAVA
James Russell	BVA
Martin Smith	BVHA
Stuart Saunders*	VMG
Robert Howe*	BCVA

### In attendance

Eleanor Ferguson	RCVS Registrar / Director of Legal
Sarah Iddon	RCVS Head of Legal Services – PSS (Maternity cover)
Alice Duvernois	PSS Lead Assessor
Laurence Clegg	RCVS PSS Lead
Hannah Perrin	VMG (stand-in representative)
Jo Oakden	BVNA (stand-in representative)
Bob Lehner	PSS Assessor and Review Group member

\*Denotes absence

## **Welcome and introductions**

1. The Chair welcomed Belinda Andrews-Jones as the new Vice Chair of the Group. The Chair also welcomed Hannah Perrin (VMG) and Jo Oakden (BVNA) as stand-in representatives for their respective organisations.
2. The Group were advised that the Chair would be continuing in their position for a further year, as a handover period with the Vice Chair who would take on the position thereafter.

## **Apologies for absence**

3. Apologies were received from Stuart Saunders (VMG) and Mark McLaren (Lay member).

## **Declarations of interest**

4. There were no declarations of interest.

## **Minutes and Actions of previous meeting**

5. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
6. The Group was updated on the progress with the actions from the previous meeting (see Annex A of these minutes).
7. In relation to the action for the PSS Team to contact RCVS Knowledge / BVDA to review the evidence base for the use of a CT scanner as a replacement for dedicated dental radiography, the Group was provided with the advice received from BVDA: BVDA do not see a CT scanner as being a suitable replacement for dedicated dental radiography at Veterinary Hospital level, partly because it would not be used consistently. It was clarified with the Group that this advice only applied to Small Animal. The Group was advised that there was no comprehensive evidence available through RCVS Knowledge. The Group therefore agreed to accept the recommendation from Review Group, presented at the April 2022 meeting, to add to the guidance notes for Small Animal 4.3.1: "CT provision on site does not exclude the need for a dedicated dental radiography machine."

## **PSS Update**

### **a. Scheme figures update**

8. The Group discussed the Scheme figures update paper which presented data on the membership and composition of the Scheme, and its performance in terms of delivery of the service and assessments, practice's abilities to meet the requirements and achieve accreditation, and the service provided by the PSS team.
9. The Group was advised that the format of the Scheme figures update paper had been further refined to provide more useful and accurate information, however the PSS team were still planning further improvements to it, including presenting data on a quarterly basis to show a clearer comparison between reporting periods.
10. It was commented that there had been no change in the common deficiencies in nearly two years since the data had first been presented to the Group, and it was suggested that more creative and innovative actions needed to be taken to address the deficiencies and support practices with meeting the requirements. The Group was advised that BSAVA had produced some resources to highlight the deficiencies, and it was suggested that more resources such as practice posters could be produced by the RCVS.

11. The Group was informed that the RCVS / PSS team was already taking some approaches to reduce the common deficiencies, including publishing FAQs on common medicines pitfalls, and working closely with the VMD to monitor and respond to deficiencies. However, it was acknowledged that more could be done, and it was confirmed that the PSS team would explore options with the RCVS Communications department.

**Action: PSS Lead to contact RCVS Communications department and other key stakeholders such as the VMD to explore options for producing resources or information to support PSS practices with meeting the commonly deficient requirements.**

12. In relation to the data on non-PSS practices and encouraging more applications to the Scheme, it was suggested that a survey / market research be carried out to understand the reasons for practices not being part of the Scheme. The Group was informed that the PSS team were already producing a marketing plan that would in part be aimed at understanding the reasons for practices not joining, alongside promoting the Scheme to non-PSS practices and more crucially the public so that PSS practices would see the value in being in the Scheme.
13. The Group was reminded that an extensive, public focussed marketing campaign was carried out at the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020, which had been well received but the long-term benefits had been disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
14. The Group was also advised that a survey / market research on non-PSS practices had previously been carried out, and it was suggested that the results would be unlikely to change much and that there are some reasons for practices not joining that are out of the PSS team's control, such as negative views of the RCVS. It was also suggested that it would be unlikely that a voluntary scheme would ever achieve 100% membership. Additionally, it was discussed that some of the benefits of the Scheme to practices, such as increasing client numbers, would currently be less attractive due to the pressures that practices are facing.
15. It was suggested that the non-PSS data may have been distorted due to it including non-PSS-eligible premises that were not of the category 'veterinary practice premises'. However, it was clarified that the data only included PSS-eligible 'veterinary practice premises', although this did still include large groups of premises such as charities that have historically not been in a position to join PSS, that would not in reality be eligible.
16. It was commented that there were more independent, new build practices being opened and it was suggested that these practices could be targeted with marketing of the Scheme. It was also suggested that there still was not wide awareness of the RCVS 'Find a Vet' service for searching for PSS practices.
17. It was suggested that the percentage change in deficiency should be presented in future data. The Group was advised that this would be explored for the next meeting.

#### **b. Scheme updates**

18. The Group discussed the Scheme updates paper which presented a general update on the Scheme from the Lead Assessor and Head of Legal Services for PSS.
19. The Group was reminded of the pressures that practices were experiencing, which were still evident throughout the PSS assessment process.
20. It was queried whether feedback on RVNs as PSS assessors had been received. The Group was advised that the newly recruited RVN assessors had been well received by PSS practices.



21. The Group was updated that following the Group's decision at the April 2022 meeting, and subsequent ratification by RCVS Standards Committee and Council, the new Environmental Sustainability Award had been launched in July 2022. The PSS team were advertising that the Award would be available from January 2023, and were planning training for PSS Assessors in line with this timeframe, although they would need to consider PSS Assessor capacity when scheduling assessments of the Award. The PSS team had already received some interest in the new Award, including from the Major Employer's Group (MEG) organisations, and they were also planning a communications campaign with the RCVS Communications department to further promote it. The Group were asked to raise awareness of the new Environmental Sustainability Award within their organisations and memberships.

## **Matters for decision**

### **a. Exemptions for animal Veterinary Hospitals**

22. The Group discussed the Veterinary Hospital exemptions paper, which presented a proposal to carry out a wider piece of research into the need for particular exemptions on endoscopy and tonometry equipment, to be continued in Autumn 2023.
23. A concern was raised that the two exemptions proposed in the paper could dilute the Veterinary Hospital accreditation, particularly in the eyes of the public who would expect consistent standards at that level.
24. It was commented that the vast majority of Veterinary Hospitals are still 'general practice' based and hubs for other practices, including within large organisations. It was therefore suggested that Veterinary Hospitals would still be expected to deal with 'general practice' cases to a higher standard, and therefore the equipment requirements for which the two exemptions were being proposed would still be essential at that level. It was suggested that this could change over time as different types of services at Veterinary Hospital level became popularised, and that a review of exemptions should be revisited then.

**Decision: The Group agreed to revisit the proposal on Veterinary Hospital exemptions in Autumn 2023.**

**Action: PSS team to revisit the proposal on Veterinary Hospital exemptions in Autumn 2023.**

### **b. Review Group recruitment and Terms of Reference**

29. The Group discussed the proposal to introduce a formal internal process for recruitment of members to the PSS Review Group, and to set out Terms of Reference for the group.
30. It was queried whether the proposal was a step to change to the role and remit of the Review Group as outlined in the PSS Rules. It was clarified that this was not the proposal; the items being presented would add clarity to the existing Rules, which would not be changed.
31. In relation to paragraph 67 of the PSS Rules which states that "The Review Group may recommend to the Standards Committee possible changes to the Scheme." it was commented that, in reality, Review Group recommendations are presented to PSG for decision initially before being referred on to Standards Committee, and it was suggested that this should be reflected in the new Terms of Reference.
32. It was clarified that the PSS Rules state that recommendations are made to Standards Committee because that is the official RCVS committee with ultimate responsibility for PSS, but it was confirmed that the route through PSG could be added to the Terms of Reference. It was further clarified that this would only be for decisions relating to the standards themselves.

**Decision: The Group agreed to introduce a formal internal process for recruitment of members to the PSS Review Group, and to accept the Terms of Reference for the group**

**with the amended wording outlining the route through PSG for Review Group recommendations on the standards.**

**Action: PSS Lead Assessor and Head of Legal Services – PSS to finalise the formal internal process for recruitment of members to the PSS Review Group, and the Terms of Reference for the group, and to communicate these to the PSS team.**

**c. Schedule 2 Controlled Drugs security: Quinalbarbitone**

33. The Group discussed the paper presenting a proposal to amend the Core Standards requirement for storage of Schedule 2 Controlled Drugs to include quinalbarbitone as a drug that must be securely locked away.
34. Concerns were raised about the practicalities of requiring secure storage of quinalbarbitone, particularly for ambulatory Equine and Farm Animal veterinary surgeons who routinely carry this drug in vehicles, mainly for immediate access in emergencies. It was suggested that there could be animal welfare implications if access to this drug was restricted, although it was also commented that there is not a significant impact on the response time when locking drugs away, including in vehicles.
35. It was clarified that the guidance on secure storage of Schedule 2 Controlled Drugs, including Ketamine as another example, allows for these drugs to be transported in locked glove compartments of vehicles, or in locked containers chained inside the vehicle, and that this guidance would also apply to quinalbarbitone. It was suggested that specific advice on this should be stated in the guidance notes for the updated Core Standards requirement to give practical support with meeting the requirement.
36. It was queried why quinalbarbitone was not already required to be stored securely. It was clarified that this was because it was not viewed by the Home Office as a “drug of addiction”, which was the Home Office’s criteria when deciding the schedules.
37. It was suggested that the messaging on requiring secure storage of quinalbarbitone should be from the point of view of it being a Schedule 2 Controlled Drug rather than in response to it being used in a fatal incident, as there are other veterinary medicines that can be misused in the same way.
38. It was suggested that there should be guidance for quinalbarbitone to be returned to secure storage in the veterinary practice as soon as possible after being transported in vehicles, to minimise the amount of time that it is more freely accessible in transit.
39. It was suggested that a two-way system for access to securely stored quinalbarbitone could also be an option to provide a further barrier to access in Small Animal practice, but it was acknowledged that this would be less practical in Equine and Farm Animal practice and could lead to different systems between species.
40. The Group was advised that the solution being proposed would not necessarily be a comprehensive solution, but that the intention was to introduce additional barriers to quinalbarbitone being misused. The Group was asked to provide suggestions from their organisations for other practical ways to put barriers in place to quinalbarbitone being misused.

**Action: PSG members to send the RCVS Registrar suggestions from their organisations for other practical ways to put barriers in place to quinalbarbitone being misused.**

41. It was suggested that BCVA be contacted for their comments on the proposal from the Farm Animal perspective given the potential implications for Farm Animal veterinary surgeons. However, it was also commented from an experienced PSS Assessor’s perspective that Farm Animal veterinary surgeons do not commonly use quinalbarbitone for purposes such as euthanasia, and instead have a preference for other drugs, including pentobarbitone.

**Decision: The Group agreed to recommend to Standards Committee that an amendment be made to the Core Standards requiring that quinalbarbitone be securely locked away, with the inclusion of guidance notes wording advising on acceptable storage in vehicles.**

**Action: Head of Legal Services – Standards to present a proposal to Standards Committee that an amendment be made to the Core Standards requiring that quinalbarbitone be securely locked away, with the inclusion of guidance notes wording advising on acceptable storage in vehicles. PSS Lead to contact BCVA for their comment in advance of the proposal being presented to Standards Committee.**

### **Matters Arising**

42. There were no matters arising.

### **Risk and Equality**

43. The Group was asked if there was anything that had been presented at the meeting that should be added to the PSS risk register, in terms of risk and equality.
44. The Group agreed that there were no updates required to the register.

### **Dates of next meetings**

45. The Group was reminded that the next meeting that had previously been scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022 would be reviewed in light of it falling in a school holiday. The Group was advised that the meeting would be held in-person in a central London location, with remote attendance still available as needed.

### **Any other business**

46. The Group was updated that the action from the April 2022 meeting for the PSS team to review whether a requirement for gram stains could be re-introduced at Awards level was still in progress, with a proposal due to be brought to the next meeting. The Group was invited to contribute to the proposed wording by sending recommendations to the PSS team.

**Action: The Group to send their suggestions for an Awards requirement for gram stain to the PSS Lead.**

**Meeting closed.**

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Practice Standards Group
Date	14 March 2023
Title	Minutes of meeting
Summary	Minutes of the Practice Standards Group meeting held on 14 March 2023
Attachments	<b>Classified appendix</b> Annex A – PSG 140323 Actions progress update Annex B – PSG 140323 Actions table
Author	Sarah Iddon Head of Legal Services PSS <a href="mailto:S.iddon@rcvs.org.uk">S.iddon@rcvs.org.uk</a> / +442081485561

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Minutes	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 3</b>
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>
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## Practice Standards Group

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Tuesday, 14 March 2023 via MS Teams

### Members:

Mandisa Greene	Chair & RCVS Council
Belinda Andrews-Jones	Vice Chair & VN Council
Adam Mugford	BAVECC
Andrew Parker	SPVS
Kathy Kissick*	VN Council
Lyndsay Hughes*	BVNA
Tim Mair	BEVA
Mark McLaren	Lay member
Krista Arnold*	BSAVA
James Russell	BVA
Martin Smith	BVHA
Stuart Saunders	VMG
Sally Wilson	BCVA
Sara Pedersen	BCVA

### In attendance

Eleanor Ferguson	RCVS Registrar / Director of Legal Services
Sarah Iddon	RCVS Head of Legal Services – Practice Standards Scheme (HoLS – PSS)
Alice Duvernois	PSS Lead Assessor
Adam Swift	RCVS PSS Lead Officer
Jim Hughes	BSAVA (stand in Representative)
Anne Lawson	PSS Assessor and Review Group member
Charles Thursby-Pelham	PSS Assessor and Review Group Member

\*Denotes absence

### Welcome and introductions

1. The Chair welcomed everyone and introduced the new members to the Group: Adam Swift, (PSS Lead Officer), Jim Hughes (BSAVA) who would replace Krista Arnold (BSAVA) in June 2023, and Sally Wilson (BCVA), who would replace Nicky Bowden (BCVA).

2. Members individually introduced themselves as it had been some time since the last meeting was held in August 2022.

### Apologies for absence

3. There had been no apologies for absence received.

### Declarations of interest

4. There were no declarations of interest.

### Minutes and actions of previous meeting

5. The minutes of the previous meeting in August 2022 remained outstanding and would be finalised and circulated for approval with the minutes of this (March 2023) meeting.
6. The Group would be updated on the progress with actions to date at the next meeting.

### Matters for Information – updated guidance

7. The Group noted and agreed:
  - a. RCVS Knowledge: free course '[Managing Veterinary Medicines: Staying Legal and Promoting Safety](#)' RCVS Knowledge had launched a new free course which was also being promoted and encouraged to practice premises, and PSS Assessors. Details and links had been provided both on our internet pages and on our resource pages:  
<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/practice-standards-scheme/additional-training-and-resources/>
  - b. Farm vet Champions: a collaborative project, spearheaded by RCVS Knowledge and funded by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), to empower the veterinary community in a united front to tackle antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Links to the course would be provided from the Medicines Farm Core Standards 8.1.28 and 8.1.30 – to the resources section where there would be a FVC link <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/practice-standards-scheme/additional-training-and-resources/>
  - c. Carrying firearms: additional guidance relating to the transportation and storage of firearms would be added at 16.1.35 to reference the Firearms Security Handbook 2020 and Section 5 guidance that specifically related to carrying firearms for professional use e.g vets.

- d. Delivery of oxygen therapy: clarification was to be added at SA 14.1.5 that the ambubag must be connected to an oxygen source.
  - e. Destruction of Controlled Drugs (CDs) 'independent witness': provide a link at SA 10.1.11 to the updated VMD guidance on what constituted an 'independent witness' for the purposes of destruction of CDs.
8. The Group noted that VMD's guidance made it clear that an 'independent veterinary surgeon' included one who *'may work for the same franchise or corporate group provided the practices have a different owner and are separate legal entities'*. Generally, the Group felt that whilst this had eased the issue of build-up of CDs to some extent there remained ongoing problems particularly in relation to the examples given in the VMD guidance.
  9. RCVS had raised the issue with the VMD prior to this meeting and was awaiting a response.

**Action:** HoLS – PSS to chase VMD for further clarity in the language of examples used in the VMD guidance.

## Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) Update

### General items

10. The HoLS – PSS outlined the PSS update paper and summarised the achievement total figures for 2022. It was noted that the figures represented the expectation of similar figures pre-Covid years, with the total number of assessments at 1016. There had been an increase in delay requests as a result of the challenges faced by practice premises, but this figure was likely to decrease in 2023. The number of accreditations had decreased due to the increase in practice premises with outstanding evidence.
11. The tremendous achievement of reaching a total PSS membership representative of 73% of all UK eligible practice premises in the Scheme was discussed. For many years the Scheme had remained in the mid to high sixty percent figure. Despite the challenges for practice premises, it was extremely encouraging to have that number of practices 'volunteering' to be part of the Scheme.
12. It was acknowledged that the top ten deficiencies had remained consistent for many years. It was questioned if those non-compliant practice premises were typically linked to a large organisation or independent, main or branch sites. It was confirmed that the figures related to a variety of practice premises. Typically, if a main premises was compliant, then the behaviours and practices carried out were carried through to all premises.
13. It was questioned if the 'all in rule' (PSS Rule 12), influenced the numbers of joiners and leavers within the Scheme and, if that was removed, would it eradicate the non-engagement issues. It was considered that to remove the 'all in rule' would be detrimental to the profession as there was no comparable Scheme that covered the breadth of areas assessed by PSS.



14. It was requested that more detailed data of results be presented to the Group at future meetings that included:

- i. By species and accreditation
- ii. By corporate
- iii. By independents
- iv. Displaying yearly figures to see trends
- v. 10 x deficiencies for medical, and none-medical separately.

**Action:** HoLS – PSS to provide detailed data to the Group for each meeting.

### Matters for decision

15. This information is available in the classified appendix.

### Matters for discussion

16. This information is available in the classified appendix.

### Matters arising

17. The Group was reminded that PSS was in the process of looking at the forecasting of assessments for the years 2024 and 2025, four years on from Covid times when assessments were paused or carried out as remote assessments. It was advised that there were high peaks and troughs that would need to be levelled. The solution would be communicated at the next meeting.

**Action:** HoLS – PSS to update the Group on its solution for assessment numbers and forecasting for the years 2024 and 2025.

### Risk Register and equality

18. There were no new items to add to the PSG Risk Register.

### Date of next meeting

19. It was agreed that the next meeting should ideally be held in June 2023 and would be a remote meeting.

**Action:** HoLS – PSS to circulate dates and schedule the next remote meeting.

### Any other business

20. The Chair thanked Krista Arnold (BSAVA) and Nicky Bowden (BCVA) for their contributions to PSS throughout their term.

21. The meeting was drawn to a close.