



The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Advancement of the Professions Committee Meeting

May 9 2023

Zoom

Meeting Book - The Advancement of the Professions Committee Meeting

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AOB



Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

09 May 2023, 14:30

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, London, via Zoom

Agenda

- 1. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**
- 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 07 February 2023**
- 3. Workstream updates**
- 4. Oral update: Global**
- 5. Discussion: Terms of Reference (annex 1)**
- 6. Discussion: Mind Matters Initiative- Deep dive (annex 2)**
- 7. Discussion: ViVet/Innovation- Future direction (annex 3)**
- 8. AOB**

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	07 February 2023
Title	Advancement of the Professions Committee Report 07 February 2023.
Summary	To note the attached minutes of the meeting held on 07 February 2023.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	N/A
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Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

¹Classifications 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.

²Classification rationales

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

Minutes of the Advancement of the Professions Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 07 February 2023 at 2:30pm at the Royal College of Nursing, London.

Members:	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

In attendance:	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
	Miss R Greaves	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	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.
2. Apologies were received from Dr L Prescott-Clements and Ms A Boag.

Declarations of interest

3. No new declarations of interest were received.

Minutes of the last meeting held on 15 November 2022

4. The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Updates from APC workstreams

5. The workstream updates were presented as a written report and the Chair offered the opportunity to orally inform the committee of any updates occurring since the report was written.

RCVS Knowledge

6. The committee were informed that the Antibiotic Amnesty had concluded successfully and was planned to be repeated next year. BSAVA had sent a survey to participants, and once RCVSK receive the results from this, it will be shared with the committee.
7. Further discussions were held later in the meeting.

Diversity and Inclusion

8. Dr M Gardiner gave further details on the videos created as part of Black History Month. These were of practicing vets from ethnic minority backgrounds and explored their journey into the profession. The committee were informed that they were in the process of being edited and will be shared on the blackhistorymonth.org site as well as YouTube, which can be signposted on the RCVS Diversity and inclusion webpages.

Fellowship

9. It was proposed that the Fellowship Board would like to create a new voluntary group to look at developing a greater understanding behind the motivations of applying for Fellowship and barriers that might prevent people, especially from less represented groups such as general practitioners. The Development of the Fellowship Working Party will be self-funded and will not incur any additional budgetary requirements. It was suggested that to

ensure diversity is increased within the Fellowship, that input is drawn from as diverse a range of interest within the Fellowship as possible. It was noted that FRC need to be informed of this group as part of the overall governance process, even though there are no costs involved.

10. The Fellowship Application Review Working Party will require some support and the extent of this will be discussed with the Advancement of the Professions team to determine if further support from FRC is required.

Innovation

11. Mrs B Andrews-Jones updated the committee on the Student Innovation Competition which is open to vets and vet nurses. It was noted that there is increased support to assist with the process in the form of podcasts and an accessible webpage guide.
12. Alterations to the process this year will be that all student applicants have the option to also be presented as a poster campaign which can be used at the Innovation Symposium later in the year. A venue had not yet been confirmed for the symposium.
13. Student outreach would happen through Student Unions and by connecting with people within colleges and universities as well as the usual marketing.
14. It was noted that the team overseeing EMS should be contacted for advice regarding if the competition could be allocated as EMS.
15. Mrs B Andrews-Jones informed the committee that herself, Mrs A Belcher and Ms S Rogers will be attending the Animal Nutrition and Technology Innovation Europe conference in March to learn about new innovations and trends in the veterinary health sector.

Leadership

16. It was noted that communication with the NHS Academy was still proving difficult, with no responses to emails and voicemails. It was suggested that alternative ideas should be considered.
17. The ownership of the content of the Edward Jenner course was discussed.

RCVS Knowledge (Cont)

18. The Chair congratulated RCVSK on recent awards and invited further comment. Mr C Gush explained that one award from the Commonwealth Pharmacist Association and the International Pharmaceutical Federation was in relation to the work undertaken on Antimicrobial Stewardship with farming and livestock vets – Farm Vet Champions.
19. It was noted that 30% of UK farm vets had completed the Farm Vets Champions Program since its launch.

20. It was noted that RCVSK had been shortlisted for an Antibiotic Guardian and Shared Learning award from the UK Health Security Agency (Department of Health).
21. It was noted that the new RCVSK course on Managing Veterinary Medicines had been very popular and that a collaboration with Practice Standards could be beneficial.

VN Futures

22. It was noted that there were over 100 respondents to the survey sent out to newly registered VNs and post PSP RVNs and this data will be used to develop the course.

Mind Matters Initiative

23. It was noted that the applications for the Sarah Brown Grant were now open.
24. MMI have supported the creation of a Neurodiversity Stream at BSAVA Congress this year, and the new MMI strategy and evaluation will be launched at BSAVA.
25. It was noted that the application process for the Sarah Brown Grant had been altered to ensure that ethics and participant safety were mandatory requirements, as well as encouraging those at different stages of their career to apply.
26. Dr K Richards reflected on the Campfire sessions, noting that the sign-up numbers were higher than attended, and the committee discussed how often reminders for events should be sent and the time of sessions.

Oral Update: Global

27. The committee were reminded about the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) requesting a twinning program with Botswana, pre-Covid. It was noted that during the pandemic, activities were paused and that David Sherman of WOAH had been in contact to resume the program.
28. It was noted that a meeting was being scheduled to discuss the details of the proposal and plan achievable, measurable outputs.

Oral Update: The Disability and Chronic Illness Survey

29. The committee was informed on the purpose of the survey, led by RCVS in collaboration with BVCIS, explaining that there currently is no rich data on this topic to inform actions. The Institute of Employment Studies have been commissioned to design, administer, and analyse the data for the survey, proposed to commence in March. It was explained that the raw data will not be accessible by RCVS or BVCIS and that participant confidentiality was of utmost importance to the research.

30. It was noted that the findings from the survey will inform the work of the LLWP.
31. The committee were asked to assist with sharing the survey with students, as there were no available distribution lists for students. The importance of communicating to participants that the survey was confidential was noted.
32. A discussion took place around the proposals to allow students to sign up to a 'My Account' area within the Academy, which could be a useful portal for sharing information such as a survey.

Oral Update: UK HACC Case Study

33. It was noted that monthly meetings are held as part of the UK HACC membership, who are now inviting guest speakers to attend these sessions. It was suggested that a speaker from the veterinary professions should be invited to speak at a session and the committee were asked to suggest some candidates.
34. The committee were informed that UK HACC are building a network of members who, after media and communications training, could be called upon for comment by media outlets on current affairs relating to sustainability issues.
35. It was also noted that a bank of case studies was being created to add to their website, and it had been suggested that the College could note their work with the Green Team regarding the move to the new building and fossil fuel divestment.
36. The Chair informed the committee that Ms R Greaves was leaving the College and thanked her for her hard work as Policy and Public Affairs Officer.

Oral Update: Planned Workforce webinar series and further activities

37. It was noted that the Workforce Action and Ambitions Explored sessions were now live on Eventbrite, with the ability to sign up for all sessions if desired.
38. APC members who had agreed to Chair the sessions were thanked and it was noted that Shirley Gibbins, RCVS Qualifications Manager, will be chairing Ambition 3 and Dr Chris Tufnell will be Chairing Ambition 5.
39. It was noted that BVA, BSAVA, BVNA, SPVS and VMG were some of organisations who had confirmed representation on the panels already, and that the promotion of the events was planned to use a variety of communication outlets.
40. The committee were informed that different ways of presenting the Workforce Action Plan were being planned, as well as looking at ways of increasing engagement with the Ambitions Explored series noting that recordings of insight sessions will be available to view online.

41. The committee were asked to share the sessions on social media, and it was noted that the sessions will be brought to the attention of the VN Council.

Discussion: How can we promote Fellowship to General Practitioners?

42. The Fellowship are keen to encourage more GP vets to apply, and the Fellowship Chair explained that the Application Review Working Party would be looking at this as part of their remit.
43. The committee discussed the possible reasons for a reduced number of GP vets applying for Fellowship and noted that as well as a difficulty in defining a 'General Practitioner', there was the view that the Fellowship is for academics, with many vets not knowing that the routes to Fellowship had been changed.
44. It was agreed that case studies would be beneficial in helping to explain how a General Practitioners could positively impact the Fellowship and what the criteria they need to fulfil in order to achieve Fellowship. Also noted was a need to increase the engagement of the Fellowship, in terms of promoting activities and being more publicly visible.
45. It was noted that during Fellowship Day 2022, interviews of a selection of Fellows from the last three years were filmed. The videos included comments around the increase in diversity within the Fellowship and the opportunities to reach out to more people as a Fellow, which could be used to highlight how GP vets are awarded Fellowship.
46. It was noted that there were a few activities planned for Fellowship that will increase public visibility, referencing the Quality-of-Life discussion at Fellowship Day that highlighted the eagerness for discussion and would be continued.

AOB

47. The Chair noted that the next meeting will be held remotely on 09 May 2023.

The Advancement of the Professions Committee Meeting

Workstream Updates

Area of work
Diversity and Inclusion

Activities carried out since the last meeting of the APC. N.B. Information explaining how these activities contribute to the delivery of the workstream's agreed plan must be clearly stated.

Disability and Chronic illness survey

The survey has been the main focus of work over the last two months. We've experienced significant delays to the project because of extensive changes to the contract with IES, and the project timetable has had to be revised accordingly. At the time of writing, beta testing of the survey has been completed. This has gone well. Final modifications are currently being made to some of the survey questions based on the feedback, and communications and publicity is being prepared. Subject to the contract sign off, the intention is to launch the survey at the end of April when students return from the Easter break. It will remain open until end of the end of term. IES will complete analysis and present their findings in August/September.

FVE DEI campaign

The RCVS has contributed to the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe campaign aiming to highlight the importance of diversity, equity and inclusivity (DEI) within the veterinary professions. The RCVS video is now available to view on the FVE's United Together campaign website: [FVE Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness \(DEI\) campaign – FVE – Federation of Veterinarians of Europe](#)

BHM.org

The Chair of DIG conducted three interviews with BAME veterinary professionals for the RCVS profile page [The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons \(RCVS\) - Black History Month 2023](#). Two of these are now available to view and a further interview will be released as a blog in May. Black History month video interviews can also be viewed here: [Black History Month - YouTube](#).

Proposed activities and issues to be managed before the next APC meeting. N.B. Information explaining how these activities contribute to the delivery of the workstream's agreed plan must be clearly stated.

LGBTQ+ Pride Month

Planning with the Communications Teams has started for LGBTQ+ Pride month 2023 which commences on the 1 June.

BAME Student Support Working Group Conference Presentations

Because of travel disruption due to industrial action, we were unable to present our work on the BAME Student Support Working Group at the Advance HE EDI Conference in March as planned. Advance HE have confirmed that they have transferred our presentation to the 2024 conference.

This will allow us time to gather further information on how the recommendations in the report have been received and what changes have been implemented as a result, including specific examples/case studies that we can highlight in our presentation.

In the mean time the Leadership and Inclusion Manager has submitted a proposal to present an e-poster on the Working Group Report at the [Association for the Study of Medical Education Conference 2023: Developing a Diverse Workforce](#) in July which has been accepted.

Details of any budgetary or risk related issues that should be brought to the Committee's attention.

Synergies with other workstreams that your current activities may introduce?

There are synergies between MMI, the Focused Licensure Working Group and Disability and Chronic Illness Survey.

Areas of your work that you would like to highlight for discussion by the Committee?

Any other matters arising from your work that you wish to bring to the Committee's attention?

Area of work
Fellowship

Activities carried out since the last meeting of the APC. N.B. Information explaining how these activities contribute to the delivery of the workstream's agreed plan must be clearly stated.

Terms of Reference

The Fellowship Board Terms of Reference is awaiting final approval ahead of signing off from the Board.

Fellowship Applications

Applications for award in 2023 are now closed, with a total of 39 applicants.

This round has seen unusually high conflicts of interest declared and a decline in the number of assessors.

Assessors were welcomed to participate in a training session on unconscious bias last month and the applications have been allocated and sent to the assessors.

Meetings of the Chairs and assessors have been arranged to take place in April to reiterate best practice and to allow the assessors to share any concerns ahead of scoring.

Similarly, a meeting is to be arranged for the Chairs and assessors after the scores have been submitted, to allow assessors and Chairs to review any borderline scores.

Communications

Discussions are taking place between the Fellowship team and the RCVS Communications team to determine appropriate methods of communication for both the Chair of the Fellowship Board and the Projects and Engagement Officer so that they can communicate with Fellows following the appropriate governance guidelines.

Fellows Science Advisory Panel

The Animal Behaviourist Working Party roundtable discussion has been set for 17 May, and a venue in London has been confirmed. The Committee will be updated on the outcome.

A date for May has been scheduled for the main FSAP group to meet, where the group can be informed of the discussions held at the roundtable and discuss what they would like to set as new topics for discussion for the group.

Proposed activities and issues to be managed before the next APC meeting. N.B. Information explaining how these activities contribute to the delivery of the workstream's agreed plan must be clearly stated.

Credentials Panel Recruitment and Training

Current members of the panels, along with the Fellowship Board, were offered Unconscious Bias training.

Members of the panel have been asked to encourage individuals who they believe would be valuable members of the panel to apply to become a credentials panel member.

A recruitment campaign plan will be discussed with the Board to recruit new members of the Fellowship Credentials panels with the aim of attracting panellists from a broad spectrum of the profession.

Details of any budgetary or risk related issues that should be brought to the Committee's attention.**Synergies with other workstreams that your current activities may introduce?**

The SAP are due to start work on Animal Behaviourism WP in May. There is an opportunity to collaborate with the ProfCon and Policy and Public Affairs teams as part of the work on Animal Behaviourism, to provide some insight which may influence changes to legislation.

Areas of your work that you would like to highlight for discussion by the Committee?**Any other matters arising from your work that you wish to bring to the Committee's attention?**



Area of work
Leadership
Activities carried out since the last meeting of the APC. N.B. Information explaining how these activities contribute to the delivery of the workstream's agreed plan must be clearly stated.
<p>Edward Jenner Leadership programme</p> <p>A meeting with the Head of NHS Leadership Programmes and the NHS Lead for Edward Jenner has been held to discuss the future of the programme. Over the past year, a restructure has taken place and Health Education England, NHS Digital and NHS England (of which the NHS Leadership Academy is part) have merged. This has recently been completed. It has left the NHS Leadership Academy with significantly reduced resourcing and staffing and will affect their ability to support the veterinary version of the Edward Jenner programme in the way that they have done in the past. However, they are open to the possibility of a licensing arrangement with the College which would involve the transfer of the programme content on to the RCVS Academy's Moodle platform.</p> <p>They are unable to make any firm commitments at the present time but have existing precedents in place for such arrangements and will investigate this possibility with their procurement and contracts team. We have agreed to meet again in June to discuss progress.</p>
Proposed activities and issues to be managed before the next APC meeting. N.B. Information explaining how these activities contribute to the delivery of the workstream's agreed plan must be clearly stated.
<p>Leadership Library</p> <p>The curation of new resources for the Library will resume in the Summer, once key diversity and inclusion project work has concluded.</p> <p>Leadership Stories</p> <p>A video interview with Kismet Joshi, under the theme of 'student leadership' will be released in May. Filming of a further two contributors, a vet surgeon and an RVN, in their place of work is also being planned.</p>
Details of any budgetary or risk related issues that should be brought to the Committee's attention.
Synergies with other workstreams that your current activities may introduce?

Synergy with Diversity and Inclusion in the development of the new Leadership Stories.

Areas of your work that you would like to highlight for discussion by the Committee?

Any other matters arising from your work that you wish to bring to the Committee's attention?

Area of work
Mind Matters Initiative (MMI)

Activities carried out since the last meeting of the APC. N.B. Information explaining how these activities contribute to the delivery of the workstream's agreed plan must be clearly stated.

BSAVA Congress 2023

The Mind Matters team attended BSAVA Congress in Manchester. MMI involvement included a full day [neurodiversity stream](#) featuring a number of sessions including:

Exploring neurodiversity

Different not less

Neurodiversity – the challenges of diagnosis

Neurodiversity in veterinary teams – the importance of allyship

Communication considerations

Supporting neurodivergent clients

Supporting neurodivergent vet and vet nursing students

Moving forward – how can we cultivate more inclusive working?

These were well attended and feedback has been positive following the event.

MMI also supported sessions as part of the Wellbeing Stream, including talks on hormonal health and grief. These were also well received, with standing room only for some sessions.

MMI evaluation and five-year strategy

Work on these documents is almost complete, with launch anticipated in the coming weeks. These will be discussed in more detail in the meeting.

Sarah Brown Grants

To date we have received a number of expressions of interest, but no submissions. This is not unusual, with the majority of submissions in previous years coming close to the deadline. The deadline for grant submissions has been extended to Monday 15 June, with the potential for a further extension if necessary. Social media promotion is ongoing, and the grants will feature in a MMI Connect in the coming weeks.

Proposed activities and issues to be managed before the next APC meeting. N.B. Information explaining how these activities contribute to the delivery of the workstream's agreed plan must be clearly stated.

Mental Health Research Symposium 2023

Work is underway for the MMI Mental Health Research Symposium, with support from the events team and Dr Rosie Allister. The symposium will take place on 10 October in Manchester. [Dr Leah Quinlivan](#) has been selected as the plenary speaker. Dr Quinlivan is a Chartered Psychologist at the NIHR Greater Manchester Patient Safety Translational Research Centre. There, she leads research and involvement and engagement work for self-harm and suicide prevention.

Abstract submissions are being reviewed and the full programme will be announced in due course.

Training

The MMI team is reviewing the training that will be on offer for 2023/24. While feedback from delegates is extremely positive, there have been instances where delegate numbers have remained low despite PR and social media support from the communications team.

Resourcing

Recruitment is underway for a number of positions within the AP department. MMI is currently looking at resourcing, following the promotion of the MMI Officer, and the end of the MMI Senior Officer's fixed term contract.

Details of any budgetary or risk related issues that should be brought to the Committee's attention.

None at this time

Synergies with other workstreams that your current activities may introduce?

None at this time

Areas of your work that you would like to highlight for discussion by the Committee?

None at this time

Any other matters arising from your work that you wish to bring to the Committee's attention?

None at this time

Advancement of the Professions Committee reporting Framework

Area of work
RCVS Knowledge
Activities carried out since the last meeting of the APC. N.B. Information explaining how these activities contribute to the delivery of the workstream’s agreed plan must be clearly stated.
<p>RCVS Knowledge’s Canine Cruciate Registry is used in veterinary medical research for the first time</p> <p>New research published on the open access scientific platform PLOS ONE has become the first academic paper to use data from RCVS Knowledge’s Canine Cruciate Registry (CCR) to determine its findings. The research provides estimates on the minimal clinically-important differences (MCIDs) for the two validated outcomes measures that are used by the CCR.</p> <p>Based on a year of accumulated data, the research demonstrates the CCR’s utility and impact on the profession, and how it fills a crucial knowledge gap.</p> <p>The new paper, titled ‘<i>Minimal clinically-important differences for the “Liverpool Osteoarthritis in Dogs” (LOAD) and the “Canine Orthopaedic Index” (COI) client-reported outcomes measures</i>’, looks at important statistical parameters of the outcome measures that are used in the CCR.</p> <p>LOAD, developed at the University of Liverpool and licensed to Elanco, and COI, developed by the American College of Veterinary Surgeons, are a series of pre- and post-operative questionnaires, answered by owners, which give a numerical score to track recovery.</p> <p>The research includes a combination of anchor-based and distribution-based methods to provide MCID estimates.</p> <p>MCID is defined as ‘the smallest change in the score of an outcome measure that a client would identify as important’.</p> <p>The research team were, for the first time, able to provide estimates of MCID for LOAD and COI. This is useful for the purposes of study design and sample-size estimates in research and clinical trials. In addition, regulators may use the MCID to define the threshold between ‘responder’ and ‘non-responder’ in regulatory clinical trials. The MCID is also useful in the context of monitoring patients’ responses to interventions, and in clinical-decision-making.</p> <p>Professor John Innes, a director of Movement Referrals, an independent veterinary referrals provider in UK, and Honorary Professor at University of Liverpool, led the research study. He said: “I’ve been interested in canine orthopaedics outcomes for most of my career. As an academic, I developed LOAD with the vision that it would help to standardise outcomes and facilitate projects such as the RCVS Knowledge Canine Cruciate Registry. Both LOAD and COI are used internationally</p>

now and having estimates of the MCID for these clinical tools will be useful step forward for researchers, regulators, clinicians and clients.”

Mark Morton, clinical lead of the CCR and also an author on the study, commented: “It’s fantastic to see the data from the RCVS Knowledge CCR being used for the first time in a peer-reviewed publication. The automated registry makes it easy to collect this data; previously this was challenging and time-consuming. We’re very grateful to all the veterinary surgeons and owners who have participated so far, and hope this will encourage others to do so too. This study demonstrates that not only does the CCR mean we can track the progress of individual patients after cruciate surgery, but it also shows how the data can benefit all canine orthopaedic patients going forward.”

The CCR, launched in July 2021, addresses a crucial knowledge gap in cruciate ligament surgery by gathering data on techniques and their impact on large populations of dogs. Using free, anonymised data collection and an audit tool to build case data to guide decision-making, it provides information including rates of success and potential complications with different techniques. It relies on the involvement of both surgeons and dog owners.

The CCR is continuously accepting new registrants, and RCVS Knowledge encourages veterinary surgeons and clients to join and help grow the evidence base on cruciate ligament surgery. Veterinary surgeons must be registered before owners of their patients can participate.

The research is co-authored by John Innes, Mark Morton and Duncan Lascelles.

Our latest free course QI tools for patient safety is available now on Learn

The fifth series of our free educational QI Boxset is now available, focusing on the importance of embedding Quality Improvement tools within your practice and how they can help improve communication and teamwork, clinical outcomes and avoid errors to increase patient safety.

Series five of our QI Boxset, Using QI tools for patient safety – checklists and more, focuses on the importance of patient safety tools, such as checklists, and how implementing them into your practice can improve communication and teamwork for better patient outcomes.

Incorporating checklists into your practice helps team members to remember critical steps, benefitting clinical and non-clinical workflow.

Pam Mosedale, RCVS Knowledge’s QI Clinical Lead, said: ‘I am really excited about the launch of the patient safety tools series of the QI boxset.

Users can access a whole range of free resources to help with improving patient safety - a Checklist CPD course, templates and examples, a Surgical Safety Checklist Manual, podcasts on care bundles, real stories about implementing and using checklists and information about checklists as a communication tool. These resources are there to help teams reduce errors and improve the safety of their patients.

Quality Improvement (QI) is designed to improve care and outcomes for our patients and increase learning for the practice team. It improves safety, effectiveness, efficiency, and the experience of working in the veterinary profession for team members.

Our QI Boxset offers a bitesize, free and easily accessible resource to embed QI into your practice and provide CPD for all team members. The multimedia course includes podcasts, webinars, reading material, templates and walkthroughs.

Previous QI Boxsets have covered guidelines, clinical audits, benchmarking and putting a Quality Improvement structure into practice.

Available to the whole veterinary practice team, the QI Boxset is completely free and is accessible on RCVS Knowledge Learn

For the Record podcast: Neurodiversity in the veterinary professions

For The Record is a series featuring conversations between current and former members of the veterinary professions, highlighting voices and experiences usually absent from our official archive.

In the latest episode of For the Record, we hear a discussion between Lacey Pitcher, Emily Craven, Daniel Denness and Kirstie Pickles. Together they discuss what neurodiversity means, the similarities and differences in their experiences, and how they would like to see understanding and awareness of neurodiversity change in the future.

<https://rcvsknowledge.podbean.com/e/for-the-record-podcast-neurodiversity-in-the-veterinary-professions/>

In the Spotlight - Health and welfare of Brachycephalic dogs

'In the Spotlight' features bring together collections of published papers on topics of interest and importance to the veterinary professions. Our latest in In The Spotlight feature has been looking at the health and welfare of Brachycephalic dogs.

The health and welfare of brachycephalic breeds is an ongoing cause for concern. Despite this, they continue to enjoy high popularity as pets, leading to increasing number of these animals being presented to veterinary practice. Their popularity is also compounding the issues, due to the increase in breeding to meet demand.

The first sections of the spotlight feature provide an introduction to the health status of brachycephalic dogs, providing links to published research on the prevalence of various disorders in the three main breeds (Pug, French bulldog and Bulldog) as well as some papers that provide comparisons to the prevalence of disorders in other dogs. This is followed by a section which looks at research relating to understanding the appeal of brachycephalic dogs to their owners.

As with our other collections, papers are chosen for relevance and accessibility, with the full text of articles either being available through the RCVS Knowledge Library or from other publications

to which a significant number of veterinary professionals are likely to have access to, for example through the membership of the BVA or BVNA.

<https://www.infocusvj.org/hwbd-spotlight-on-the-health-and-welfare-of-brachycephalic-dogs/>

Our new and improved e-learning platform Learn offers free and flexible courses for veterinary teams

In April 23 we launched our new and improved e-learning platform, Learn, making online learning even more accessible for busy veterinary teams.

The content includes material for the entire veterinary team, treating any species, and has been created by veterinary professionals who are experts in their field.

The platform, which is completely free to use, includes courses on Evidence-based Veterinary Medicine (EBVM), Quality Improvement (QI), medication safety and stewardship, and more.

We are proud to have been providing free online Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses since 2013, and our recent and comprehensive review of Learn has improved the platform's user experience and its technology.

Learn now includes more than 30 hours of free CPD and has courses suitable for every member of the practice team. Learning materials comply with the Code of Professional Conduct, RCVS Practice Standards and veterinary legislation, and are updated on a regular basis. The platform will continue to feature new courses including further content on QI and a collection on antibiotic stewardship for equine and companion animal veterinary teams.

Evangeline Morrison, Pharmacovigilance and Biosecurity Officer at the Scottish SPCA recently completed Managing Veterinary Medicines on Learn and said, "This course is a fantastic resource to guide you through improving medication safety amongst your veterinary team.

"I love that this course is delivered through podcasts too, it's perfect for those long commutes - and it's free!"

Access the free learning at www.learn.rcvsknowledge.org

Proposed activities and issues to be managed before the next APC meeting. N.B. Information explaining how these activities contribute to the delivery of the workstream's agreed plan must be clearly stated.

Details of any budgetary or risk related issues that should be brought to the Committee's attention.

Synergies with other workstreams that your current activities may introduce.

Any other matters arising from your work that you wish to bring to the Committee's attention.

Area of work



Activities carried out since the last meeting of the APC. N.B. Information explaining how these activities contribute to the delivery of the workstream's agreed plan must be clearly stated.

RVN Starting Out

Content for the RCVS Academy course to support newly Registered Veterinary Nurses has been developed over the past few weeks, and this is in the process of being adapted to learning content for the platform.

This course has been developed by RCVS team/staff, funded by (through RCVS) and branded as VN Futures/RCVS Academy.

The course consists of eight modules:

- What it means to be an RVN
- Workplace culture
- Team-based working
- Confidence and communication
- Wellbeing
- Professional development

The content is a blend of text, interactive text elements, video, video presentations, diagrams and flowcharts, references, quizzes and many reflective and practical exercises for nurses to apply learning to practice. We have commissioned internal and external contributors to create up-to-date and engaging information.

The aim is to launch the course at the beginning of VN Awareness Month (May), and we will have comms and SM activity to support launch of the course.

The pre-development survey requested permission to contact respondents who were happy to provide further feedback – and we will utilise these respondents for feedback within the first month of the course being live.

We are planning comms for launch of the course, and aim to create an ongoing comms strategy to ensure the resource is highlighted to all newly registered nurses.

VN Futures strategy animation

The final draft of the animation is due to be circulated over the next few days (at time of writing this update). This is a three minute animation that highlights activities of the VN Futures Project (and associated projects such as the Workforce work), and is a positive piece of work that aims to provide inspiration to RVNs for the future of the profession.

This is a joint piece of work between RCVS and BVNA for VN Futures, and has been jointly funded.

We have planned comms activities around release of the animation including sessions to air the animation and offer the chance for discussion at BVA Live in May. We will also run a SM campaign around 'what makes you proud to be a RVN' and 'What excites you about the future of veterinary nursing', which align with some of the content of the animation.

School Ambassadors

Working with the web team and Andrew Grainger, we have developed a system whereby veterinary nurses can sign up to be a VN School Ambassador via their *My Account*. This will negate the need for ambassadors to be manually processed.

The system will generate the necessary introductory information for ambassadors and provide them with contact details for support.

A progress survey and e-newsletter will be distributed over the next few weeks, tying in with the one-year anniversary of the scheme being launched.

There are currently 270+ veterinary nurse registrants to the scheme.

Proposed activities and issues to be managed before the next APC meeting. N.B. Information explaining how these activities contribute to the delivery of the workstream's agreed plan must be clearly stated.

Following the QA and Pilot process for the RVN Starting Out course, we will begin development of a course offering support to RVNs who are completing a Period of Supervised Practice following time (more than five years) off the Register.

We aim to integrate the PSS process into the course and provide additional material to help nurses transition back into practice, utilising some of the content from the RVN Starting Out course.

Details of any budgetary or risk related issues that should be brought to the Committee's attention.

Synergies with other workstreams that your current activities may introduce?

The learning content we are developing aims to have a positive impact on both newly Registered Veterinary Nurses, and nurses returning to practice, and therefore has synergy with activities supporting workforce issues.

Areas of your work that you would like to highlight for discussion by the Committee?

Any other matters arising from your work that you wish to bring to the Committee's attention?

Advancement of the Professions Committee reporting Framework

Area of work
Innovation
Key activities and issues managed in the last quarter that the APC should be aware of.
<p>Preparing the Profession – On hold Continue to scope out a framework for an Innovation MOOC/ online course that will be made available to the whole profession. A proposal has been received that is in line with expectations and budget from an e-learning platform provider, this will be reviewed as to how this course can fit in with the RCVS Academy developments.</p> <p>Further research into format and delivery of content is being explored, this is in line with the ViVet project aim to ensure veterinary professionals are equipped with innovation capabilities, and have the opportunities to learn at their own pace.</p> <p>Workforce Action Plan – Ambition explored Series – Completed To help provide clarity, create collaborations, and support the delivery of the action plan. We hosted a series of live interactive webinars that explored the insights, progress and commitment that has been established or identified when producing the action plan/ambitions.</p> <p>Page views Eventbrite - 2198 Registrations for the session – 760 (with some people signing up for more than one, or all) Note – lots of people we don't normally engage with.</p> <p>16 February 2023 - Ambition one: To shape leaders at all levels Chair - Amanda Boag FRCVS, Past-president of the RCVS and Chair of the RCVS Knowledge Board of Trustees</p> <p>22 February 2023 - Ambition two: Confidence, culture and recognition Chair - Jill Macdonald RVN, Lead for the VN Futures project</p> <p>28 February 2023 - Ambition three: Greater responsibility for veterinary nurses Chair – Shirley Gibbins, RCVS Qualifications Manager, Veterinary Nurses</p> <p>9 March 2023 - Ambition four: Welcoming a modern way of working Chair - Susan Patterson FRCVS, RCVS Junior Vice President, and Chair of the Advancement of the Professions Committee</p> <p>30 March 2023 - Ambition five: General practice – a chosen pathway Chair - Chris Tufnell FRCVS, RCVS Past President, and Chair of the RCVS Fellowship Board</p>

5 April 2023 - Ambition six: **An attractive career for everyone, including those who have left**
Chair - Dr Kate Richards MRCVS, RCVS Senior Vice-President and Chair of the Mind Matters Initiative

12 April 2023 - Ambition seven: **Improving client interaction and communication**
Chair - RCVS President Dr Melissa Donald MRCVS

Each panel was chaired by an RCVS colleague or representative and is joined by a panel 3-4 people from the professions. Interactive chat function, where we asked for questions, provided links and sign posed to resources.

Recording, with closed captions will be made available on the website, as well as being hosted as an audio version, on Podbean.

Positive Feedback –

- Just want to say a huge thank you to the RCVS and all those involved in curating these events. They have been a fascinating and uplifting deep dive into what makes us tick as veterinary professionals and as human beings.
- Very positive and practical webinar - left it feeling far more optimistic about the profession than when I went in.

FAQ's and Future Session –

Two further activities for the workforce project. This will include a additional panel discussion with the Session Chairs to answer any outstanding question or go in to detail on any themes we missed.

A promotional video for the action plan that highlights the seven ambitions.

Next steps to prioritise –

- Getting the Action Plan uploaded on to the website in a more accessible format.
- Having an audio recording of the action plan, and having an audio version of the ambitions explored edited so it can be hosted on PodBean (RCVS podcast site).
- Potentially an FAQ's for any misunderstandings or questions aimed at the RCVS but not our remit.

Kisaco Research Animal Health, Nutrition & Technology Europe 2023

Attended, 2 day conference.

Proposed activities and issues to be managed in the next quarter that the APC should be aware of.

Student Innovation Competition – On Hold

A student competition aimed at encouraging UK Veterinary student and student vet nurses to problem solve and develop ideas that can be applied to the veterinary profession or wider 'one health' initiative, a collaboration between human and animal health.

Following on from the discussions in the November, Advancements of the Profession Committee meeting, we have added an additional sustainability focused suggestions for the idea options (students will be able to take part with any idea) –

- Innovations regarding reducing plastic waste from practices.
- Sustainability of the Veterinary offering (*for example energy efficiency, carbon reduction, recycling, reducing or re-using, and measuring waste to provide a benchmark for awareness*).
- Innovations within veterinary education
- Innovations to improve veterinary-public communication
- Innovations to aid prospective veterinary students that could contribute to increasing diversity and outreach.

Five learning sessions, recorded as podcasts between 4 – 10 minutes long with a supporting booklet have been created, to guide students through the innovation process and develop skills that will be useful throughout their career. The sessions cover:

- Idea Generation and Problem spotting
- Business Model Canvas and Value proposition
- Mentor session (a session with a chosen industry professional to guide them on their project)
- Testing and Validating
- Stakeholders and Pitching

This competition will be open to all UK-based undergraduate veterinary students and offers them the opportunity to work as a team to brainstorm, develop and present an innovative idea to a board of industry professionals.

Innovation Assessment – On Hold

On January 12, the kick-off meeting for the Innovation Assessment Tool was held to discuss the project plan, objectives, outstanding questions, working methods, and key milestones.

To achieve this goal, a combination of surveys, interviews, and document/system inspections will be carried out. The data collected from these sources will be analysed to develop a comprehensive report on the current state of play across processes, resources, and systems. The report will include prioritised recommendations for improvement.

The surveys will be distributed to veterinary professionals, including a variety of segments such as corporate and independent vets, practice owners, veterinary nurses, non-vet practice owners, and others. Interviews will also be held to gather a broad knowledge base.

The report will be developed through a combination of surveys, interviews, and document inspections. A draft report will be shared with key stakeholders for feedback before finalising it.

We will the move towards the creation of the dynamic self-assessment form, that will allow practices of all types to learn what they can do to improve innovation, productivity, business, and customer satisfaction. The assessment will focus on specific areas and provide additional resources for participants to take action. This work is tailored for the veterinary profession.

Website Content – a selection of six short blogs created as an ‘Innovation Explained’ style document that educates the reader on a selection of topics. The blogs, will explain what the topic is, the benefits it brings to the user, how it might be already implemented in society, human health or the profession and how it could benefit the veterinary profession.

The first set of topics will include: Automation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning, Big Data, Genomic Sequencing and Business model Innovation.

Details of any budgetary or risk related issues that should be brought to the Committee's attention.

N/A

Synergies with other workstreams that your current activities may introduce?

Ongoing - The Action Plan following the RCVS Workforce Summit, will see some task and actions being allocated to or supported by, AP workstreams and projects across the college.

Areas of your work that you would like to highlight for discussion by the Committee?

N/A

Any other matters arising from your work that you wish to bring to the Committee's attention?

N/A

Annex 1

Full terms of reference

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.

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

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

The Committee will comprise the chairs of relevant working parties or taskforces, or appropriate Council member champions, together with 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, they will review and input across all areas, with collective responsibility.

The Committee will usually meet four times per annum.

The Committee will:

- 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 which 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.

Annex 2



The RCVS Mind Matters Initiative:
the next five years



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Introduction from the chair

While we can take a moment to pause and look back over more than eight years of success, impact and learning through the Mind Matters Initiative, we are more than aware that there is always more work that the project can do. We can always reach more people, cover more ground, impart more information, but we can only do this well if we have a sense of overall purpose, combined with a clear plan on how we will deliver for the veterinary professions.

This Strategy aims to fulfil this by presenting an overview of what we have planned for the next five years, taking stock of all our achievements so far, and looking ahead to how we can build upon the successes while learning from the challenges. It is an ambitious document that takes into account the evolving – and widening – conversations around mental health, research and development around prevention and treatment, and our own learning earned through experience.

This Strategy outlines the core objectives that act as our guiding star, and the underpinning principles that shape how we work and deliver for the professions. This reflects the ongoing commitment of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) to support the mental health and wellbeing of the veterinary professions via MMI, and the other organisations it helps to fund such as Vetlife and Vet Support.

We are grateful to all of those who responded to our various surveys about veterinary mental health and wellbeing over recent years, to those who help guide and advise the initiative via the MMI Taskforce, to those who have shared their lived experience with us so that we could work collaboratively to build an accessible plan for the benefit of our diverse audience and to all those researchers who are bettering our understanding of veterinary mental health. We are particularly grateful to those who responded constructively to our Strategy consultation and whose invaluable feedback has shaped the document you're reading.

Best wishes



Kate Richards
RCVS Junior Vice-President and MMI Chair



“This Strategy outlines the core objectives that act as our guiding star, and the underpinning principles that shape how we work and deliver for the professions.”



5 The next five years: Our objectives

All of our work to date, and all of our plans for the future, have been shaped by our specific aims and objectives in relation to veterinary mental health.

MMI's core objectives are:

- a. To raise awareness of mental health and mental illness within the veterinary professions;
- b. To name, challenge and take steps to address mental health stigma and discrimination in all its forms, wherever it occurs;
- c. To support employers and leaders in creating supportive and healthy workplace culture, where help-seeking is normalised, encouraged, and safe;
- d. To encourage discussion and collaboration between key stakeholders – both within and outside of the veterinary sector – on topics relating to workplace mental health;
- e. To champion and promote awareness of other organisations doing good work in this field, and to support providers of direct, accessible help for members of the professions and,
- f. To provide accurate and evidence-based information about mental health and mental illness.

When deciding on future activities, projects or budget allocation, these objectives are what guide us, ensuring we stay aligned to our goals, and focus our impact where it is most needed.

5 The next five years: Our workstreams and areas of focus

Since its launch, we have delivered our work through three workstreams; Prevent, Protect and Support. Our workstreams have played a key role in helping us to communicate the scope and breadth of our work. They reflect our commitment to a multidimensional approach that is responsive to the complex and multifaceted reasons why people within the veterinary professions are at risk of poor mental health, including an elevated risk of suicide.

Informed by our ongoing interactions with the professions, what we know from research, and our recent strategy consultation, we have gone

through a process of defining and refining our workstreams. Each of our existing workstreams has now been allocated an overarching theme that reflects one of our strategic priorities for the future. Within each workstream, we have identified core areas where we will focus our activities. While not exhaustive, the examples given in this plan give a taste of some of our planned activities for the years ahead, and how we will be measuring progress. Some of these were chosen because they are areas of specific challenge for the veterinary professions, while others reflect some of the approaches and interventions we will employ in responding to these challenges.

“Each of our existing workstreams has now been allocated an overarching theme that reflects one of our strategic priorities for the future.”



Prevent:

Systemic and organisational approaches to mental health

Our wide range of projects and interventions aimed at individuals - like resilience training and campaigns to encourage seeking help for mental ill-health – have played a crucial part in equipping people with the mental health awareness, skills and knowledge they need to remain well at work.

These activities have allowed us to start important conversations, raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing in the professions, and begin to break down some of the barriers and stigma to seeking help and talking openly about tough times. However, we recognise that the biggest changes can be made by addressing the reasons people are becoming unwell in the first place.

We know that intersecting systemic issues – whether within or outside the workplace - play a major role in poor wellbeing and mental ill-health. It is these factors that we must begin to address if we are to have real impact. For this reason, MMI's prevent stream will be focussed on 'systemic and organisational approaches to mental health'.

Within this wider workstream, we have identified three core areas of focus that reflect our commitment to developing our understanding of, and responses to, the organisational, systemic and societal contributors to mental ill-health in the professions.

Leadership

Leaders and managers play a vital role in supporting, shaping and protecting workplace mental health. They define workplace culture and serve as role models for the kinds of behaviours that impact on others' wellbeing – for better or worse. We want to ensure veterinary leaders are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to have conversations about mental health and wellbeing, and to support their teams to do the same. Equally, we need to support those in leadership to look after themselves, so that they can lead effectively while remaining well.

Many of the people who filled in our consultation survey told us that there was a need for mental health training aimed at line managers. In response to this we will be continuing our mental health for line manager training, building this into other workstreams so that we can support leaders and managers at all stages of their careers to understand their roles and responsibility with regard to the mental health of their teams.



What will we do?

Mental health for line managers to be incorporated into our core training programme ready for 2024.

Our new veterinary mental health grant programme will support researchers at all stages of their career to make a tangible impact with research that makes a difference in practice as well as theory.

What will 'good' look like?

We want at least 500 people with line management responsibilities to receive our training over the next five years.

Of those who receive our training, we hope more than 90% will rate the training 'good' or 'excellent'.

We want 100% of delegates to report increased understanding of the Equality Act 2010, as it relates to mental health in the workplace.

By the end of 2023 we will have launched a new grant programme to build upon the work of our Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grants.

At the launch, we will announce ambitious targets, not only for number of grants awarded, but for how impact is delivered, measured and communicated by our grant recipients.

Award recipients will be required to demonstrate a plan for impact measurement and knowledge sharing, both at the point of application and at regular intervals throughout the project.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Civility

Inequality, discrimination, workplace bullying, and incivility all contribute to mental ill-health. Likewise, people suffering from mental ill-health are disproportionately likely to face these types of injustices. With these key themes being so inextricably linked, it is appropriate and important for MMI to make it an explicit priority to fully engage in these issues, and to be a vocal champion for equity, diversity, inclusion, and civility. This needs to start with our own behaviours and we are committed to making sure all our events are fully inclusive. This reflects the wider RCVS commitment to inclusion and diversity and the work carried out by the Diversity and Inclusion Group.

We have already started embedding these principles across our events, launching our first series of training on Inclusive Leadership, Confronting Incivility, and Inclusion in spring 2022. Moving forward, we will expand and build upon this foundation, introducing Active Bystander Training and developing resources on mental health and the Equality Act.



Widening the conversation

Raising mental health awareness has been vital in allowing us to challenge stigma, encourage individuals to seek help for mental ill-health and increase understanding of mental health within the professions. However, we recognise the need to go further, to have wider conversations, and challenge ourselves to have an even greater impact.

Many of those who completed our consultation survey told us they would like us to do more to raise awareness of issues like climate anxiety, the continuing impact of Covid-19, the menopause and neurodiversity, and to talk more about how they interact with mental health. Some requested we provide more support and guidance around wellbeing at key life stages and events including retirement, infertility, and bereavement. In the coming years we will be creating more resources for some of these issues.

What will we do?

While continuing to raise awareness, we will challenge ourselves and our audiences to have more nuanced conversations around mental health, and mental ill-health.

We will continue to collaborate with other professions, to facilitate transfer of knowledge and best practice.

We will continue to deliver relevant, timely, and high-quality training on a range of topics.

What will 'good' look like?

We will develop a suite of recorded webinars on a full range of mental health conditions, including those that are severe and enduring.

Our Campfire Chats will continue to run, covering a wide range of topics with a target of welcoming at least 200 people to these each year.

Our MMI symposia will platform contributors from other sectors, as well as leading voices with in the veterinary professions.

While platforming veterinary voices and experiences, we will aim to include contributors from a wide range of sectors as well as veterinary (eg for our Campfire Chats and congress events). Where we are addressing clinical topics, we will ensure there is somebody present with relevant professional expertise.

We will aim for all our training to be fully booked, with minimal drop-out rates.

Delegates will be issued with pre-, immediately post- and three-month post-training questionnaires.

We will aim for at least 90% of delegates rating training as 'good' or 'excellent'.

We will aim for at least 90% of delegates to be able to articulate one thing they will change, implement or introduce following attendance at our training.

We will aim for at least 75% of delegates reporting that the things they learned in our training continue to be relevant and useful, three months later.

What will we do?

We will seek out input from and collaboration with lesser heard voices- both in society and in the professions.

All of our training and events – by default – will be for all members of the professions, including students and those from non-clinical backgrounds.

We will actively seek out and represent the voices and knowledge of people with lived experience of mental ill-health – and will expect the same of subject matter experts who work with us.

We will carry out an audit of existing training providers and collaborators to ensure they are learning from those who are experts by lived experience.

We will continue to develop our suite of online resources on these topics, to include written booklets, 'hubs' and webinars.

What will 'good' look like?

Attendance at our events and training will be monitored, with the aim of seeing an increase in the number of veterinary nurses, student and non-clinical team members attending our events. Where we fall short of this, we will undertake targeted outreach.

We aim to exemplify true diversity in the panels, speakers, event Chairs and those with whom we collaborate. This will be actively monitored and considered for every MMI event.

By 2025, we will make it a formal requirement for anyone delivering training on behalf of MMI to provide us with a statement on how they incorporate lived experience into their training.

From 2024, we will release at least two new online resources each year, for example recorded webinars, booklets, guides and hubs.

We will publish a guide on reasonable adjustments for mental health in the workplace.



Protect: Increasing our reach

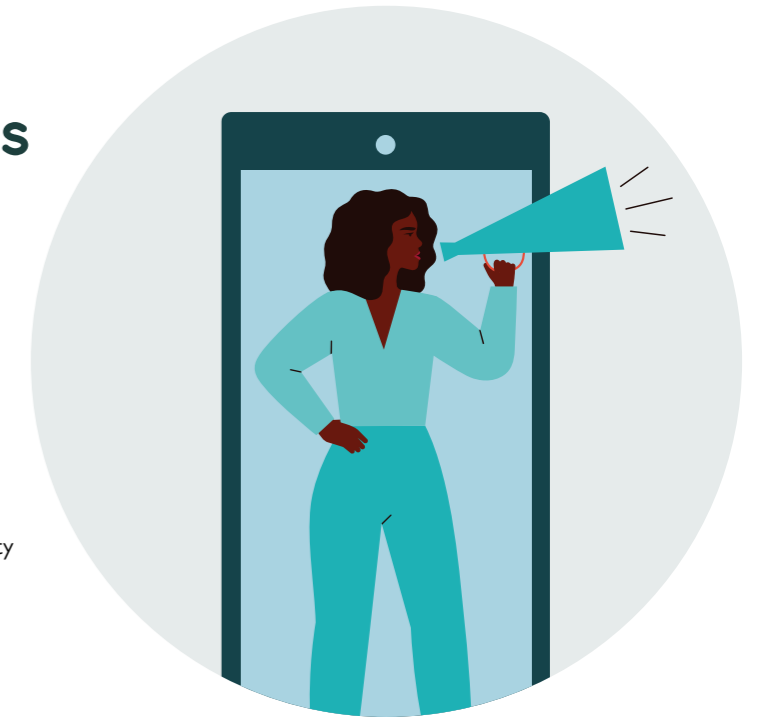
Through our protect stream, we deliver a varied programme of training, resources, collaborations and events designed to equip the veterinary professions with the tools and knowledge to stay well, even in challenging circumstances. MMI exists for anyone working or studying in the veterinary professions, and our wide range of activities, projects and training have always been aimed at individuals from all parts of the community. However, we know from our consultation process, that MMI is not recognised as widely as we would like. Nor is everyone aware that we support all members of the veterinary team, not just veterinary surgeons. While many issues around mental health and wellbeing apply universally both within and outside the veterinary professions, we know that, for some groups (for example, locums, or those working in rural or equine practice) there are specific stressors, factors and concerns that require a more tailored approach that is sensitive and responsive to these nuances.

We have listened to this feedback and are working to address these differing needs to be inclusive and accessible to all.

We have already made strides towards more targeted outreach and projects aimed at specific sectors of the professions – for example, working with the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) to develop an animation on mental health for equine vets, and our joint research with student veterinary nurses with the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA). However, we are aware there is more to be done. Our protect stream has been allocated the overarching theme of 'Increasing our reach'. While continuing to strive for widespread engagement both in the UK and internationally, we are also committed to further developing our focused, targeted projects for groups whose voices are often less heard, and whose specific needs can sometimes go unmet by whole-profession approaches.

Lesser heard voices

MMI is for all members of the veterinary professions, but we are mindful that some may think we are only here for vets, or those working in small animal general practice. We have worked hard to increase engagement with veterinary nurses, and veterinary and vet nursing students, by holding events, supporting student activities, and delivering research and projects tailored to veterinary nurses and students. Moving forward, we are keen to do more to support the wellbeing of rural, farm and equine vets, who often face specific challenges. We will continue to listen to the professions, maintaining the flexibility to develop and grow our projects to meet emerging needs.



What will we do?

We will continue to provide targeted projects for veterinary nurses, in collaboration with other initiatives such as VN Futures.

We will continue our work with rural veterinary teams, who often experience specific challenges.

We will build relationships with non-clinical members of the veterinary team, for example, receptionists, animal care assistants and practice managers.

What will 'good' look like?

We will release at least one project each year that is specifically aimed at veterinary nurses.

We are aiming for a diverse audience at all of our events and training.

We will ensure there are voices from the veterinary nursing community in all of our panels, group sessions and events.

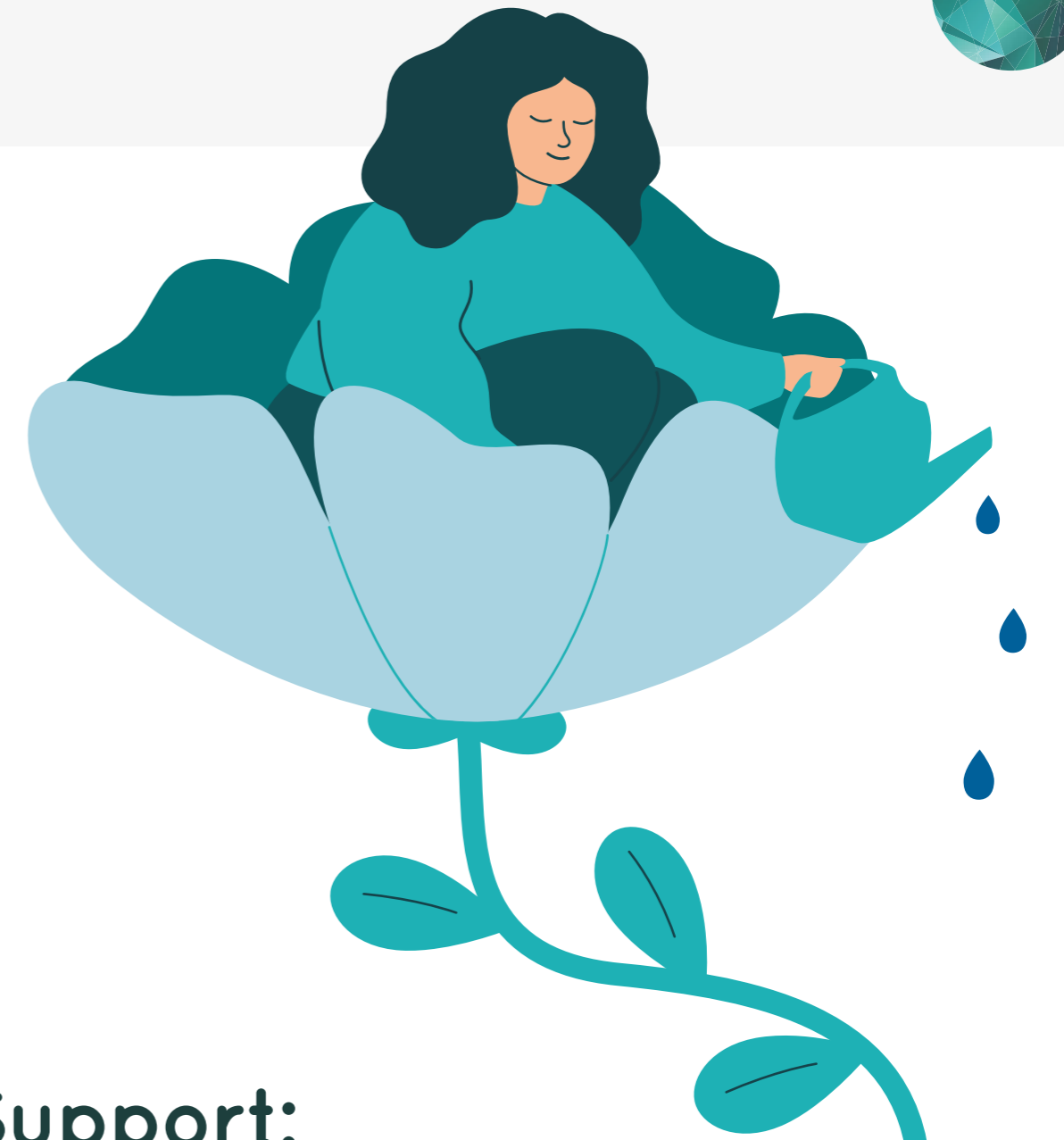
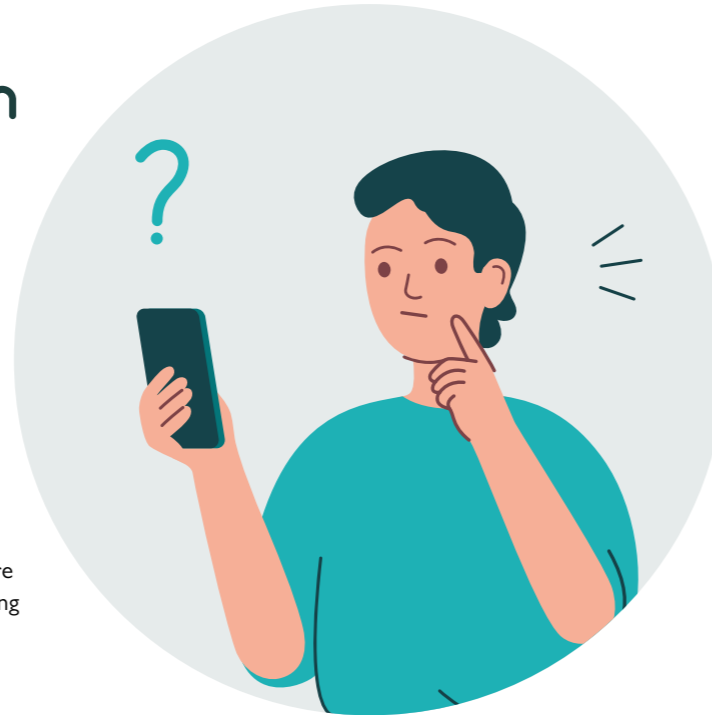
We will build our rural network of mental health first aiders to 250 vets, vet nurses and support staff by 2025.

We will commit to communicating with those in roles we don't regulate, for example, practice managers, receptionists, and the wider practice team.

We will carry out targeted research with non-clinical staff to better understand the issues they face. Following this, and in consultation from those who work in these roles, we will develop a programme of support, resources and/or training for this group.

A trusted source of accessible information

Training remains an integral part of MMI's activities. Since our launch, we have been committed to delivering a varied training programme, alongside resources and information on a wide range of topics. Feedback from the professions tells us that the veterinary community value these, and trust us to deliver in a safe, evidence-based and accessible way. Our audience has welcomed online training, the development of new online hubs and the introduction of new engagement activities (e.g. Campfires), but there are those who we are still not reaching – and these are often the groups who need us the most. As we move into the next phase of MMI we will build upon the work we have done so far, and look at ways to ensure our content, resources, training and events are accessible, welcoming and inclusive for all.



What will we do?

We will continue to deliver training on a range of topics relating to mental health and wellbeing.

We will continue to prioritise accessibility in everything we do. This includes carrying out an audit of our existing content - for example to ensure online written resources are compatible with screen readers.

Moving forward, we will specifically consider accessibility implications for all future MMI resources, events and training, and take steps to improve wherever possible.

What will 'good' look like?

We aim to deliver training to at least 150 people each year, across all our courses.

We will continue to conduct pre-training, immediately post-training and 3 month post-training surveys. We will assess success based on pre-define and clearly stated learning objectives for each course, as well as collecting qualitative feedback from delegates.

All MMI training will remain heavily subsidised, to ensure cost is not a barrier for attendance.

Each of our training courses will have at least one online version.

We will continue to work with other experts – e.g. our web team regarding online accessibility, specialist organisations, and experts by lived experience – to ensure our work remains accessible and that our approach to inclusion and accessibility continues to evolve, based on the needs of our audience.

Support:

Innovation and the evidence base

MMI does not itself offer direct mental health support, instead supporting a range of organisations, including Vetlife, ProfCon Investigation Support and Vet Support, who are best placed to provide this kind of specialist help directly to the veterinary community, alongside national charities and services, such as the Samaritans. When planning our own projects, campaigns and interventions, we aim to make sure that they will have the greatest possible impact on the professions, addressing the issues that affect them most, and supporting them in ways that meet their varied needs. We aim to not replicate, but to signpost, disseminating knowledge of existing resources.

Through our support workstream, we will combine our commitment to learning from the existing evidence base, with our drive to innovate and further our understanding of what the problems are, what helps mitigate them, and what barriers are preventing change. In this way, we will continue to address some of the most complex and difficult issues around veterinary mental health. We will also continue to be mindful of the impact our concerns process can have on veterinary mental health, and take steps towards continual improvement.



Research

Our support of, and engagement with, mental health research – both within and outside of the veterinary sector – will enable us to make sure our work and guidance remains high-quality and evidence-based. In order to make a positive difference, we need to have a firm grasp on where the problems lie, what interventions and approaches work, and what the barriers are. It is only through engaging with timely, high-quality and relevant research that we can achieve this. Until now, our research work has sat within our Prevent stream, allowing us to build on our understanding of what the challenges and risk factors are within the veterinary professions. Our next step is to build on that understanding of the problems and look towards solutions and approaches that can begin to address them.

Launched in 2019, our Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grants have enabled research to further our understanding of veterinary mental health through looking at specific groups of people including rural, neurodiverse, and racial and ethnic discrimination in the professions. We are committed to continuing our support for veterinary mental health researchers, including the development of a research hub on our website to feature guidance on methodology and ethics. We will continue the work we do to share learning at our biennial Veterinary Mental Health Research Symposium, providing a supportive space for vet mental health researchers to talk about their work.



Hope for tomorrow; somewhere to turn right now

We know that, sadly, veterinary professionals are at increased risk of mental ill health and suicide compared to the general population. We all have a role to play in addressing this. We will continue our support of specialist organisations providing direct help for people in crisis. The causes of veterinary suicide are multifaceted and there is no one solution, but working in collaboration with others, we will dedicate resources to exploring innovative and evidence-based interventions that will help us to better understand the risks, so that we might support more people to be safe.



What will we do?

We will continue to deliver a Veterinary Mental Health Research Symposium every other year.

We will develop a 'hub' of resources for those interested in veterinary mental health research.

What will 'good' look like?

We aim to deliver an event with true diversity (of all kinds) in terms of delegates, speakers, chair people and topics.

We aim for the Symposia to be recognised as a supportive and welcoming space for students and early career researchers to share their ideas.

We will seek post-event feedback and aim for at least 90% rating the event as 'good' or 'excellent', and at least 90% reporting they had learned something of value.

MMI aims to be recognised as a source of accurate, encouraging, and accessible information and guidance for aspiring veterinary mental health researchers.

What will we do?

We are committed to continuing our support for Vetlife, allowing it to continue to deliver its vital services for the professions.

We will continue to work with organisations, both within and outside the veterinary professions, to identify and address issues that contribute to veterinary suicide.

We will work to better understand settings and circumstances that increase risk of heightened distress, self-harm, or suicidality. We will collaborate with experts to develop guidance around these.

What will 'good' look like?

Vetlife continues to be there, 24/7, for anyone in the profession who needs to talk.

All MMI merchandise, events and publications to clearly signpost to Vetlife.

As understanding develops, we will work alongside other expert organisations to deliver interventions aimed at reducing suicide, for example, developing drugs cabinet stickers and resources for those in crisis.

Guidance on creating psychologically safe events and congresses will be released in 2024.

We will produce resources on specific key 'life stages' where stress can be heightened – for example, exams, menopause, retirement, returning from parental leave.

5 The next five years: Our values

Focusing on our objectives helps us to decide what we do, while our core values are integral in shaping how we do it.

Some of the values and principles that guide our activities and behaviours are:

Collaboration. This means we...

- Work with other veterinary organisations and regulators, both in the UK and internationally;
- Learn from other professions and their insight into mental health;
- Function as part of the wider Advancement of the Professions Department, which includes workstreams on leadership, inclusion, innovation and sustainability; and
- Don't try to do it all ourselves. We get further, together.

Innovation. This means we...

- Are open to new ideas and new ways of doing things;
- Will learn from our experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic, making use of technology to keep our content and training accessible online;
- Continue to stay abreast of new developments, research and innovation in mental health; and,
- Challenge ourselves to come up with new solutions and approaches, while celebrating what already works.

Inclusion and accessibility. This means we...

- Are unapologetic about our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion;
- Ensure our resources, events and training are accessible to all sectors of the veterinary community
- Value, and actively seek, input and participation from lesser-heard voices;
- Talk about mental illness, as well as mental health and wellbeing;
- Remain sensitive to power imbalances in our interactions with the professions, and particularly with those who are from marginalised groups; and,
- Don't shy away from important topics just because they might be difficult.

Innovation. This means we...

- Are open to new ideas and new ways of doing things;
- Will learn from our experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic, making use of technology to keep our content and training accessible online;
- Continue to stay abreast of new developments, research and innovation in mental health; and,
- Challenge ourselves to come up with new solutions and approaches, while celebrating what already works.

Conclusions from the CEO

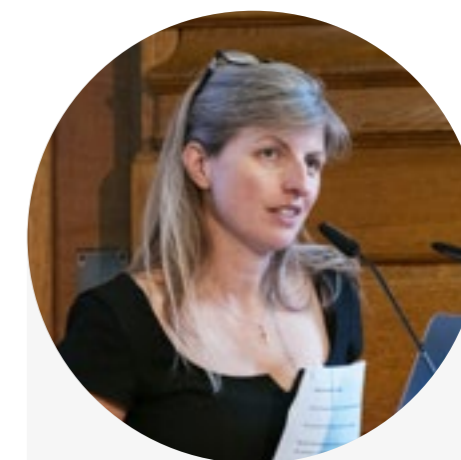
Since its launch by the RCVS in 2014, MMI has played a leading role in starting conversations about mental health within the veterinary professions. What was once rarely spoken about is now more widely acknowledged, with mental health and wellbeing streams featuring at all major congresses and increasing numbers of individuals speaking openly about their own experiences – some of them for the first time.

We are proud of all that the RCVS has achieved through its founding and continued funding of MMI, while still recognising there is still more to be done. Covid-19, the rising cost of living, Brexit and workforce challenges have all had an enormous impact on the professions, animal owners and keepers, as well as wider society. We are heartened to know that more people than ever are taking the important step of seeking help, but we recognise that NHS mental health services are stretched and often inconsistent in terms of accessibility, and that the right help is not always easy or timely to come by. This makes voluntary services such as Vetlife, Vet Support and others all the more vital, and we remain committed to supporting their excellent work.

This plan has outlined MMI's key priorities for the coming years, the groups we need to hear more from, some key areas that we will be addressing, and how it aligns with the overall RCVS strategy to become a compassionate regulator. We recognise that the statutory role of the RCVS in investigating complaints made about veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses can be a contributing factor to stress and anxiety in the professions, and through both MMI and the core remit of the RCVS we will continue to work towards mitigating this impact.

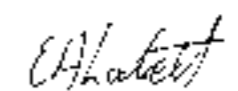
The Strategy also sets out ambitious targets for what we hope to achieve and for how we will be measuring and reporting on our impact. We will continue to be here for every member of the veterinary community, and will keep listening when people tell us what they need, which will feed into future activities. While being clear on our proposed direction of travel, we know that MMI must also remain flexible and responsive to new challenges that arise for the veterinary professions.

We would ask that you, your organisation and the wider veterinary community consider how you can get involved with the work of the RCVS through MMI. Whether that is through



“The Strategy sets out ambitious targets for what we hope to achieve and for how we will be measuring and reporting on our impact”

attending our training, sharing our resources, applying for our research grants or displaying a poster signposting to Vetlife. All of our progress to date has been made through collaboration with the community we are here to serve. We look forward to working with you and supporting your teams in the coming years, as we continue to develop responsive, accessible and inclusive content for the benefit of the professions.



Lizzie Lockett
RCVS CEO



mind matters

The Mind Matters Initiative is run by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
www.vetmindmatters.org
[@vetmindmatters](https://twitter.com/vetmindmatters)
info@vetmindmatters.org

Annex 3

Meeting	APC
Date	7 May 2019
Title	Innovation (ViVet) Strategy
Classification	Unclassified
Summary	This paper provides background to the RCVS innovation programme (ViVet) and
Decisions required	To give consideration to the future RCVS innovation strategy, in particular in relation how the RCVS seeks to support current innovators in the sector and to the future work the RCVS may undertake 'accelerate' veterinary innovation
Attachments	Annex A: ViVet Three-Year Plan
Author	Anthony Roberts Director of Leadership and Innovation a.roberts@rcvs.org.uk

Innovation (ViVet) Strategy

Background

1. Following the recommendation and actions that emerged from the Vet Futures project (see Annex A), one of the five ambitions in the RCVS Strategic Plan 2017-2019 was *'to become a Royal College with leadership and innovation at its heart, and support this creatively and with determination.'*
2. The RCVS 2017-19 Strategic Plan outlined three key areas work which will help to deliver this ambition (outlined below):
 1. Develop a biennial Innovation Symposium, to showcase new technologies, educational and business models etc from within veterinary and related fields, and encourage a culture of innovation.
 2. Review the regulatory framework surrounding new technologies, to ensure it is proportionate, enforceable and encourages innovation, while maintaining high standards of animal health and welfare
 3. Collaborate with other competent authorities, associations, educational bodies and the commercial sector to establish a framework for the management of the impact of new technologies, such that animal health and welfare remains centre stage, regardless of from where veterinary services are being delivered into the UK and beyond.
3. On 20 September 2018 the RCVS held the inaugural Innovation Symposium at the Warwick Business School Campus in the Shard, London. At this event the College launched ViVet (www.vivet.org.uk) a wide-ranging programme designed to make veterinary professionals the driving force behind innovation in animal health sector.
4. ViVet was inspired by the Vet Futures project research which highlighted concerns that 'vets could miss out on developments in technology, such as genomic sequencing, if they fail to be proactive about grasping the opportunities' and identified a pressing need for the veterinary professions to be proactive and demonstrate they 'not only welcome, but are driving, innovation in animal health'.
5. ViVet's mission is: 'enabling creative veterinary solutions for the good of animal health and welfare'. The name ViVet is derived from the latin 'vivet' meaning it will thrive/live. The idea being that the programmes will support the veterinary profession to embrace innovation so that it remains at the centre the delivery of animal health and welfare, as opposed to veterinary professionals being 'replaced' of 'disintermediated' by technological or business model innovation.
6. Technologies such as telehealth, wearable or implantable devices, fast and low-cost genomic sequencing, big data and artificial intelligence present veterinary practices with huge opportunities for improving the provision of veterinary services and facilitating access to veterinary care, but they also come with challenges in terms of how they are regulated and the impact they could have on existing models for the delivery of veterinary care.

7. A three-year plan was developed which outlined the aims and objectives of the ViVet programme and how these support the delivery of the RCVS Strategic Plan and Vet Futures Recommendations, and provides details of the ViVet workstreams and projects over the next three years. A copy of the plan can be found at Annex A.

ViVet update

8.

Areas for discussion

- Meeting with innovators
- Accelerating Innovation
- Name and arms length nature

Branding

9. The ViVet name and branding was designed to ensure the programme

The only thing that, on reflection, we felt was disappointing was that through designing our branding to distance the initiative from the College the RCVS wasn't obviously taking the credit for such a progressive and forward thinking initiative. Something we should maybe think about.

ViVet Three-Year Plan

Mission and Aims

ViVet's mission is: *'Enabling creative veterinary solutions for the good of animal health and welfare'*.

The main aims of ViVet are to:

1. Foster innovation in the sector and encourage innovators to think about the veterinary profession, so as to put vets and vet nurses at the centre of innovations in animal health.
2. Help incumbents and new-entrants navigate the regulatory landscape, ensuring high standard of animal health and welfare continue to be maintained.
3. Showcase innovative products and business models to the profession, thus helping the profession to better serve existing clients and access new ones.
4. Provide market intelligence and prepare the profession for the impact of innovation whilst at the same time allowing the College to reflect on the future relevance of its regulations

Premises and Principles

The ViVet was designed on the basis of the following premises:

1. Innovation and exponential technological progress will lead to disruption in the veterinary market.
2. Without revisions current regulations will increasingly become less relevant as new technology and business models emerge.
3. Regulation should support and foster innovation not discourage it.
4. Innovation is an irresistible force – the only choice is whether to engage with it.

The following guiding principles have been developed to ensure the programme achieves its mission and aims, and to provide a yardstick against which to assess the appropriateness of projects and interventions:

1. As the mission suggests animal health and welfare must always be paramount and the innovation ViVet seeks to support and foster should serve to improve the quality, efficiency or accessibility of veterinary services. Equally, however, the RCVS must not be or perceived to

be protectionist of traditional models for the delivery of veterinary care and should always work in the public interest.

2. As a regulatory body the RCVS must ensure that its neutrality and impartiality is not compromised. To this end it is not considered appropriate for the RCVS to directly invest the innovations that ViVet showcases or supports.
3. Innovation is a wide ranging term and is not exclusive to technology, the programme will cover innovation in all its forms including, but not limited to product, service, business model, marketing, process, supply chain, customer experience and technological innovation.
4. ViVet should seek to provide support and resources to as wide an audience as possible and therefore the focus of activities should be the development of resources, materials and educational programmes that can be widely accessed. Where the programme does seek to directly support small groups or individuals the focus should be on earliest stages and when they may be exploring the viability of turning an idea into an innovation or their futures as entrepreneurs. This support the aims of the VetFutures programme, helping veterinary professions embrace innovation, explore diverse career paths, take control of their own futures and to improve retention in the professions.
5. Innovation brings opportunities to improve animal health and welfare, however, new technologies and novel approaches also bring potential risks. In order to mitigate risk Standards Committee and the Ethics Review Panel should be closely involved in the ViVet programme.

Resourcing

Chris Tufnell is the Council sponsor for the RCVS Leadership Programme and Anthony Roberts is the staff lead. A new role of 'Innovation Executive' was also created in Summer 2018 to support the delivery of the following workstreams.

Workstreams

Over three years (2018-2020) the Programme will comprise three workstreams:

1. Showcasing Innovation

Delivering ViVet Aims: 1 and 3

This workstream focusses on showcasing innovation to the veterinary professions to help busy veterinary professionals to horizon scan, understand the impact of innovation, how the market is evolving and the opportunities innovation could provide to improve the care they provide, meet better the needs of their existing clients or to adapt and expand their services to access new markets, animals and clients.

There is also an externally facing element to this workstream designed to position the veterinary professions as being open and welcoming to innovations and innovators from outwith the professions and thereby to encourage innovators to engage with the veterinary professions when launching new products or services.

The website provides the key resource to deliver this workstream. Already the website www.vivet.org.uk has a number of case studies and blogs from innovators and thought leaders to showcase new and emerging innovation, resources useful to veterinary professionals engaging with innovation or seeking to launch new products or services, and links to events and sources of advice. It is critical, however, that the website remains up-to-date, relevant and vibrant, which will demand significant resources in terms of staff time.

The website will also be supported by a quarterly ViVet newsletter which will provide a round-up of ViVet activities and signpost individuals to latest website content and upcoming activities.

Events will provide another medium through which to showcase innovation and the work of ViVet. The biennial Innovation Symposium will be the flagship event, but in order to ensure the programme does not lose momentum consideration will be given to hosting or collaborating to host additional events which support the programme's aims or address issues of importance. One such event currently under consideration is a collaboration with the Royal Veterinary College to curate a conference on innovation in translational medicine.

2. Accelerating Innovation

Delivering ViVet Aims: 1 and 3

The workstream builds on workstream one and seeks to accelerate innovation in the veterinary space by identifying and addressing any obstacles to innovation or to veterinary professionals launching new products or services.

Research will be undertaken to identify the road-blocks to veterinary innovation and online resources will be developed to provide practical advice on launching new products and services. Consideration will be given to the demands and need for more in-depth innovation education resources such as a dedicated Massive Open Online Course (MooC).

Events can provide another tool to accelerate innovation with hackathons and MBA style case-competitions providing a model which could be adapted for the veterinary context. The VetFutures Student Ambassadors have presented proposals for a dragon's den style innovation competition which will bring together the UK veterinary schools and other university departments to come up with innovative solutions to a pre-defined challenge. The ViVet programme has already committed its support to this initiative. Innovation is best fostered in context such as this, when a diverse range of people are brought together from different fields to share, discuss and refine their ideas. The ViVet programme could have a key role to play in providing a platform for such interaction to occur and to facilitate interactions between veterinary professionals, innovators and professionals from other fields.

The veterinary professions are full of individuals wanting to make a difference and with ideas as to how the delivery of veterinary services could be improved. It is not always apparent, however, how to turn such ideas into innovations, to scale-them and to develop sustainable business models for their delivery. As a part of this workstream ViVet will seek to pilot supporting groups of veterinary professionals on a number of early stage accelerator programmes. The viability of supporting veterinary professionals on the Founders Institute (<https://fi.co/>) and / or the NHS Accelerator (<https://nhsaccelerator.com/>) is currently being explored.

3. Regulation and Innovation

Delivering ViVet Aims: 2 and 4

This workstream focusses on the provision of regulatory advice and guidance to help veterinary professionals working at the forefront of innovation or those from outside the profession seeking to bring new products or services to the veterinary or animal health market. This will provide veterinary professionals and innovators with the confidence to launch new products and services, whilst at the same protecting animal health and welfare. Moreover, the workstream will also assist the RCVS to gain insights into the market and how it is evolving, allowing the College to develop a regulatory framework that is adaptable to 21st century technology.

In 2017 the RCVS launched the first initiative to review our regulatory frameworks in the light of new technology in the form of our consultation on 'The use of telemedicine within veterinary practice', the results of which are under-review by Standards Committee and Council. The market intelligence provided by the ViVet programme will help to identify the need for similar exercises in relation to other emergent technologies or models for the delivery of veterinary services.

Over the next three years the RCVS will seek to form collaborations with regulators and competent authorities globally to develop a joined-up approach to the how new technologies can be regulated. As a first stage the RCVS is already participating on the global Innovation and Technology Advisory Group set up by The College of Veterinarians of Ontario.

Through ViVet the RCVS will continue to explore best practice in terms of regulatory involvement in supporting innovation and will monitor existing programmes such as the Financial Conduct Authority's 'Innovate' programme.

A priority action in this workstream will be the development of a formalised system for dealing with those contacting the College through ViVet seeking regulatory advice and guidance on innovative products, services or approaches.

Key projects and campaigns

The following table outlines the key projects and campaigns in each of the three workstreams during this initial three-year period. It also includes an estimate of the likely costs incurred by the various projects, it is important to note, however, that these estimates do not take account of staff time or where existing budgets may be accessed. Where costs have already been included in the leadership budget for 2018 this is indicated within the plan.

Workstream 1:			
Project	Work packages	Year	Milestones / Key Events
Blogs and case studies	Develop a rolling six month programme of potential blog contributors and case studies to showcase innovation on the ViVet website	2018-2020	Ongoing
ViVet newsletter	Develop a template for the ViVet newsletter and produce the first issue Agree a regular schedule for the newsletter and initiatives to ensure maximum reach.	2018	First issue (Q1/Q2 2018) Q2 2018
Event programme	Develop a one-year rolling programme of events to ensure the continued momentum of the programme in showcasing innovation – identifying key events to attend and potential collaborations.	2018-20	First iteration (Q1/Q2 2018), then ongoing
	Innovation in Translational Medicine Conference	2018 <i>[2019 event under consideration]</i>	Investigate the potential for collaborate with RVC on an Innovation in Translational Medicine Conference (Q1/Q2 2018)
	Biennial Innovation Symposium	2019	Secure venue and draft agenda (late 2018/early 2019) Symposium (Autumn 2019)

Workstream 2:

Project	Work packages	Year	Milestones
Identifying roadblocks to innovation	Develop and undertaken research to understand the roadblocks to innovation in the veterinary sector.	2018	Q4 2018
	Develop and cost evidence based initiatives to address obstacles to innovation	2019	Q1 2019
Innovation Accelerator	Pilot the use of innovation accelerator programmes	2018/9	<p>Investigate the potential for veterinary professions to join the Founders Institute and/or NHS Accelerator Programmes (Q2 2018)</p> <p>Investigate the cost of support vets to attend such programme (Q2 2018)</p> <p>Promote the opportunity (TBC 18/19)</p> <p>Monitor group and seek feedback on impact (TBC 18/19)</p>
Events programme	Hackathon	2018/9	<p>Develop proposals for a hackathon around the use of the RCVS Find-a-Vet API (Q2/Q3 2018) <i>[delayed to 2019]</i></p> <p>Seek collaborators (TBC)</p> <p>Run Hackathon (TBC)</p>

	Support Vet Futures Student Ambassadors Innovation Competition	2018	<p>Scope project and gather support (Q1/Q2 2018)</p> <p>Agree industry challenge (Q3/Q4 2018)</p> <p>Promote competition (Ongoing)</p> <p>Dragons Den event (June 2019)</p>
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Workstream 3:

Project	Work packages	Year	Milestones
Regulatory Advice and Guidance	Develop formal protocols for providing advice and guidance on innovation and the scope of support that can be offered.	2018	<p>Agreed scope of support provided (Q2 2018)</p> <p>Develop protocols and provide necessary staff support (Ongoing)</p> <p>Clarify offering (Ongoing)</p> <p>Gather feedback and monitor advice requests (ongoing)</p>
	Online resources	2018-20	Formulate an advisory group to help develop practical online content on innovation and entrepreneurship (Q3 2018) <i>[postponed]</i>
	Examine potential for innovation MooC	2020	<p>Scope demand and potential for MooC (Q4 2019)</p> <p>Seek collaborators, secure funding and formulate working party (2020)</p>

Review of telemedicine in veterinary practice	Complete review and disseminate results	2018	Publish consultation summary (Q2 2018) Further review by Standards Committee and Council (Q2 2018 onwards) Disseminate results
Global collaboration	Identify global innovation initiatives from veterinary regulators and associations and seek to collaborate.	2018-20	Identify key organisations and working parties at a global level and position RCVS as supportive party (ongoing)

Measuring success

Strategic plans need metrics against which success can be measured and programmes refined to meet better their aims and objectives. Such metrics are difficult to develop in relation to projects that seek to bring about cultural or attitudinal change. The following, however, are proposed as acceptable proxies that could be used to assess the impact of the programme over the next three years. More detailed measures will be developed in relation to individual projects.

- Newsletter subscribers / click rate
- Website analytics / social media impressions
- Events attendance and feedback
- Feedback from innovation accelerator initiatives / businesses launched
- Engagement with consultations
- Appropriateness of subsequent regulatory guidance when dealing with 'real-life' scenarios – to be measured via RCVS Advice team and RCVS concerns process.

Vet Futures Report: summary of innovation ambitions and recommendations

- Review the regulatory framework for veterinary businesses to ensure a level playing field, enable a range of business models to coexist, ensure professionalism in commercial settings, and explore the implications for regulation of new technologies (eg telemedicine).
- Establish a business and innovation hub to showcase new technologies, services and business models, celebrate the innovators and ensure appropriate regulatory underpinnings are in place.

Vet Futures Action Plan

Innovation Programme

Innovation symposium

Organise a biennial symposium to showcase new technologies from within veterinary and related fields.

Rationale

The digital veterinary market is nascent, however, the innovation 'revolution' is on the horizon for the profession. It is important to showcase innovation at an early stage that can be adopted by the profession, and new technologies which are nearer to market, in order both to enable the profession to become comfortable with them, and to inspire members of the profession to pursue day-to-day clinical innovation.

In order to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, and to ensure the profession becomes comfortable taking advantage of opportunities presented by digital developments, it is essential that leadership is shown. The profession must move away from conservatism and embrace change and, if those organisations in leadership positions, including RCVS and BVA, are able to demonstrate this it will help to engender a positive culture across the profession

The Action Group recommends that a biennial symposium, supported and promoted by key organisations within the veterinary profession and the fields of human medicine/technology, will provide opportunities to showcase innovation, celebrate the innovators and inspire the profession.

Next steps

- Confirm scope/structure of innovation symposium/summit
- Consider working with existing events, such as the Royal Society of Medicine (RSM) Medical Innovations Summit and SPVS Technology Day Timeframe Planning for the first symposium during 2017, with a view to holding it in 2018.

Who?

The RCVS to jointly lead on developing the scope for the symposium, working alongside suitable partners, such as BVA and other veterinary associations, the RCVS Fellowship, RCVS Knowledge, universities (veterinary and non-veterinary), relevant start-ups and blue-chip companies, industry, relevant human medical organisations (for example, healthcare accelerators, start-up hubs and communities of practice, such as Health 2.0).

Evaluation

- Event attracts appropriate speakers and support
- Number of, and feedback from, delegates

Review regulation of new veterinary technologies

Undertake a review of the regulatory issues relating to new technologies with a view to establishing a framework to encompass future innovations.

Rationale

The Vet Futures report highlighted that there is “no limit to the impact that technological advances may have on the veterinary profession”, from genomic sequencing and Big Data, to new diagnostic tools, including those for remote diagnosis, and genetically modified organisms. New technology brings a new set of questions for veterinary ethics and regulation, and the profession has recently debated issues such as ‘treating as far as we should, not as far as we can’.

It has been recognised by the RCVS for some time that innovations in delivering healthcare in the veterinary sector will require changes to the regulatory framework to ensure animal health and welfare remain front and centre. It is also essential that new technology that may improve access to veterinary care (for example, financially or geographically) is not stifled, and that a positive and creative environment for the development of new technology is developed.

Work in this area has already been started by RCVS Standards Committee and an evidence-gathering exercise will commence towards the end of 2016.

Next steps

- RCVS Standards Committee to develop a timetable for the review, to ensure maximum consultation with stakeholders

Timeframe

Consultation to run from the end of 2016.

Who?

RCVS Standards Committee to lead the review, working with RCVS Science Advisory Panel, RCVS Knowledge, the RCVS Fellowship and VSC, in consultation with industry and the wider profession.

Evaluation

- Engagement with consultation
- Appropriateness of subsequent regulatory guidance when dealing with ‘real-life’ scenarios – to be measured via RCVS Advice team and RCVS concerns process