

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	19 January 2023
Title	Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report describes the work of the Preliminary Investigation Committee since RCVS Council's last meeting, including by reference to key stage indicators, and provides information about the nature of concerns being considered by the RCVS.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
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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

Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to Council January 2023

Introduction

1. This report provides information about the activities of the Preliminary Investigation Committee in November and December 2022 (6 January 2023 being the date of writing the report).
2. Since the last Report to Council (which gave information to 31 October 2022), there have been 4 Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) meetings (including one on 4 January 2023).

New cases considered by the PIC

3. The total number of new cases considered by the Committee at the 4 meetings referred to above is 14. Of the 14 new cases considered:
 - 8 were concluded at first consideration by the Committee. Of these:
 - 4 cases were closed with no further action, and
 - 3 cases were closed with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon.
 - 1 case was referred to DC.
 - 6 cases were referred for further investigation, that is, further enquiries, visits and/or preliminary expert reports.
4. No cases have been referred to the RCVS Health or Performance Protocols in the reporting period.

Ongoing Investigations

5. The PI Committee is currently investigating 55 ongoing cases where the Committee has requested statements, visits or preliminary expert reports (for example). This figure does not include cases on the Health and Performance Protocols.

Health Protocol

6. There are two veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Health Protocol.

Performance Protocol

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

Professional Conduct Department - Enquiries and concerns

8. Before registering a concern with the RCVS, potential complainants must make an Enquiry (either in writing or by telephone), so that Case Managers can consider with the enquirer whether they should raise a formal concern or whether the matter would be more appropriately dealt with through the Veterinary Client Mediation Service.

9. In the period 31 October 2022 to 6 January 2023,

- the number of matters registered as Enquiries was 510, and
- the number of formal Concerns registered in the same period was 81.

10. The table below shows the categories of matters registered as Concerns between 31 October 2022 and 6 January 2023.

Concerns registered between 31 October 2022 and 6 January 2023

Description of Category	Number of Cases
- Advertising and publicity	0
- Appeal against DC decision	1
- Certification	1
- Client confidentiality	0
- Clinical and client records	0
- Clinical governance	1
- Communication and consent	2
- Communication between professional colleagues	0
- Conviction/notifiable occupation notification	1
- CPD compliance	0
- Delegation to veterinary nurses	0
- Equine pre-purchase examinations	0
- Euthanasia of animals	2
- Giving evidence for court	0
- Health case (<i>potential</i>)	0
- Microchipping	0
- Miscellaneous	2
- Practice information, fees & animal insurance	1
- Performance case (<i>potential</i>)	0
- Recognised veterinary practice	0
- Referrals and second opinions	0
- Registration investigation	0
- Restoration application	0
- Social media and networking forums	0
- Treatment of animals by unqualified persons	0
- Use of samples, images, post-mortems and disposal	0
- Veterinary care	68
- Veterinary medicines	2
- Veterinary teams and leaders	0
- Whistle-blowing	0

- 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief	0
- Unassigned	0
Total	81

Data source – Profcon computer system concerns data.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

11. In the period 31 October 2022 to 6 January 2023, the Committee has referred 2 cases involving 2 veterinary surgeons to the Disciplinary Committee.

Veterinary Investigators

12. The Chief Investigator has undertaken 1 visit since the last report. This was an unannounced visit carried out jointly with the VMD to investigate concerns raised about a veterinary practice.

Concerns procedure

13. At Stage 1 of the process, the aim is for the Case Examiner Group to decide 90% of cases within four months of registration of complaint (the Stage 1 KPI). In the two months since the last Report to Council the KPI has been met in 94% and 90% of cases respectively. As explained in previous reports, an expanded team has made a significant difference to the number of cases that can be resolved within the four-month period, and we are really pleased with the progress made.

14. The Stage 2 KPI is now for the PIC to reach a decision on simple cases before it within seven months, and on complex cases within 12 months. A case is deemed to be complex where the PIC requests that witness statements and/or expert evidence be obtained.

15. In the period 31 October 2022 to 6 January 2023, the PIC reached a decision (to close, hold open or refer to DC) within the relevant KPI in 7 out of 8 simple cases.

16. Two complex cases were decided, of which none met the 12-month KPI. In accordance with normal practice, these cases (and KPI's in general) have been reported and discussed in detail at the PIC/DC Liaison Committee meeting.

Operational matters

17. The new process commenced on 1 October 2022 and is now bedding in. Stage one PIC meetings are taking place on a regular basis as arranged to close those cases that do not present a realistic prospect of serious professional misconduct. Both Case Managers and PIC members have worked hard to ensure that the new process is running smoothly and to address any initial issues that have arisen.

18. Stage two PIC meetings continue to be held alternately in person or online, albeit that recent rail strikes have led to some rearrangement. A further training session to address the impending Charter Case Committee and to reflect on the new process will be arranged in the next couple of months.