

## Council Meeting

Remote meeting to be held on Thursday, 22 January 2026 at 10:00 am by MS Teams

Agenda	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationale <sup>2</sup>
<b>1. President's introduction</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>2. Apologies for absence</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>3. Declaration of interests</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>4. Minutes of previous meetings</b>		
i. 20 November 2025 – unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. 20 November 2025 – classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
iii. 23 December 2025 – 5 January 2026 – Remote decision classified appendix	Confidential	1
<b>5. Matters arising</b>		
a. Obituaries	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Council correspondence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. CEO update	Unclassified	n/a
<b>6. Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)</b>		
a. European veterinary school accreditation	Unclassified	n/a
<b>7. Reports of standing committees – to note</b>		
a. Advancement of the Professions Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a

b. Audit and Risk Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. Education Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
d. Finance and Resources Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
e. Registration Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
f. Standards Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
g. Veterinary Nurses Council	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
h. Professional Conduct Liaison Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>8. Public Advisory Group – report</b>	Unclassified	n/a
<b>9. Reports of statutory committees – to note</b>		
a. Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
b. RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
c. Disciplinary Committee and VN Disciplinary Committee  <u>Please note:</u> details of disciplinary cases are found on the website, see: <a href="#">Disciplinary Committee hearings - Professionals</a> and navigate to the individual cases from there.	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>10. Notices of motion</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>11. Questions</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>12. Any other College business (unclassified items)</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>13. Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified items)</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a

14. <b>Date of next meeting</b>  Thursday, 12 March 2026 10:00 am (reconvening in the afternoon) to be held in person at 1-2 Hardwick Street, London EC1R 4RB.	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
15. <b>Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)</b>		
a. Major projects – update	Oral report <b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
b. Competition and Markets Authority – update	Oral report <b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 3, 4</b>
c. Legislative reform and governance	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1</b>
16. <b>Any other College business (confidential items)</b>		
a. Comments on classified appendices	Oral report <b>Confidential</b>	<b># TBC</b>
b. Other business	Oral report <b>Confidential</b>	<b># TBC</b>
17. <b>Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)</b>	Oral report <b>Confidential</b>	<b># TBC</b>
18. <b>Training session</b>	<b>Confidential</b>	<b># TBC</b>
Dawn Wiggins Secretary, RCVS Council 020 7202 0737 / <a href="mailto:d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk">d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk</a>		

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

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

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

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## **Terms of Reference**

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

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

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

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

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

3. It is laid down in the Charter that the affairs of the College shall be managed by the Council as constituted under the Act. The Council shall have the entire management of and superintendence over the affairs, concerns and property of the College (save those powers of directing removal from, suspension from or restoration to the register of veterinary surgeons and supplementary veterinary register reserved to the disciplinary committee established under the Act) and shall have power to act by committees, subcommittees or boards and to delegate such functions as it thinks fit from time to time to such committees, subcommittees or boards and to any of its own number and to the employees and agents of the College.

4. The Council is also responsible for the appointment of the CEO and Registrar, and the ratification of the Assistant Registrars. Appointment of all other staff members is the responsibility of the CEO and relevant members of the Senior Team.
5. A strategic plan is developed and agreed by Council to facilitate the delivery of these activities and to ensure ongoing development and quality improvement.
6. A delegation scheme that outlines how Council's functions are managed via system of committees and other groups is agreed annually by Council.

#### **How Council members work**

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

## Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	22 January 2026
Title	Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2025
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2025
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix.
Attachments	Classified appendix ( <b>confidential</b> )
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council 020 7202 0737 / <a href="mailto:d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk">d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk</a>

## Classifications

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

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## Council

Meeting held on Thursday, 20 November 2025 at 10:00 am in Rooms 4a and 4b at  
1 – 2 Hardwick Street, London EC1R 4RB

Professor T D H Parkin (in the Chair)

Mrs B S Andrews-Jones	Mr P J Gordon
Professor D C Barrett	Dr D L Greenberg
Miss L S Belton	Mr T M Hutchinson
*Dr S E Bennett	Professor M D Jones
Dr S R Bescoby	Dr Z J Kennedy
Mr D Bray	Professor C M Loughrey
Dr A L Calow	Mrs C-L McLaughlan
*Mr J M Castle	*Dr A J McLeish
Ms J Clift	Dr S Paterson
Mrs O D R Cook	Mr T J Walker
*Ms L Ford	Mrs K Young
Dr M M S Gardiner	

\*Denotes absent

### In attendance:

Ms H Haid	Governance Officer (open session only)
Mr I A Holloway	Director of Communications (DoComms)
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C L McCann	Director of Operations (DoOps)
Mr B Myring	Head of Policy, Insight, and Public Affairs (HPIPA)
Ms C L Paget	Registrar
Mr A Quinn-Byrne	Governance Manager (GM)
Mr D Tysoe	Chief Digital Officer (CDO)

### Guests:

Ms E Brown	Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer (DCVO), Defra
Ms M Knowles-Bacon	Head of Policy and Public Affairs, British Veterinary Association (BVA) (open session only)
Mr J Loeb	<i>Veterinary Record</i> (open session only)
Mr V Olowe	Chair, RCVS Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)
Mr J Westgate	<i>Veterinary Times</i> (open session only)

## President's introduction

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

## Apologies for absence

2. Apologies for absence were received from:

- Dr Bennett
- Mr Castle
- Ms Ford
- Dr Middlemiss (Observer)

3. Dr McLeish was not in attendance.

4. Miss Brown, DCVO, attended the meeting as Observer in Dr Middlemiss' absence.

## Declaration of interest

5. Dr Paterson declared that she was now Vice-Chair of Trustees of Battersea Cats and Dogs Home.

## Minutes of previous meetings

6. Council had had the opportunity to comment electronically on the classified appendix of the meeting held on 22 September 2025, and the unclassified minutes and classified appendix of the meeting held on 2 October 2025, and they were before Council for approval.

7. There were no comments or questions. Council voted by a show of hands:

For:	18
Against:	0
Abstain:	1

8. The unclassified minutes and classified appendices for the meetings were approved by a majority vote.

## Dr Greenberg joined the meeting

## Matters arising

### Obituaries

9. The Council noted the passing of the following members:
  - Dr Elizabeth (Liz) Leece MRCVS – past-President of the Association of Veterinary Anaesthetists;
  - Dr Donald Rutty – HonFRCVS.
10. Council and guests stood for a minute silence for all members of the professions who had passed since the last meeting.

### Council correspondence

11. The President reported the following:

#### Council 1-2-1 meetings

12. Council members were reminded to select an appropriate date for their individual annual meetings with the President by close of play on Friday, 21 November 2025. The Committee Liaison Officer had forwarded the options available.

### Fellowship Day

13. There was a further reminder that Fellowship Day was due to be held on Thursday, 27 November 2025, at One Great George Street, Westminster; registration for the event was on the event page of the RCVS website.

### RCVS Honours and Awards

14. The nomination period for RCVS Honours and Awards to be presented at RCVS Day in 2026 had opened recently; details were on the website and the deadline for submissions was Wednesday, 7 January 2026.

### RCVS Council and VN Council elections 2026

15. The nomination period for the RCVS Council election 2026 had opened the day prior to the Council meeting. For members standing there was a downloadable pack on the RCVS website, which outlined the information to be included in nominations in order to stand for election. The deadline for submissions was 5:00 pm on Saturday, 31 January 2026. It was confirmed that whilst the deadline fell on the weekend, it was dictated by legislation; emails would be monitored that day up to the deadline.
16. Council members were reminded that they were not permitted to nominate anyone for standing for Council and that, subject to eligibility, if a current member intended to re-stand then Registered Addresses were to be used for the Nomination Form. These would be used to confirm the identity of the member standing.

**CEO update**

17. The CEO reported that it had been a busy period for the College since the last Council meeting and that staff continued to work on day-to-day business ensuring that the College's statutory obligations were met on time and within budget. In addition, she highlighted:

- on World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2025, the Mind Matters Initiative celebrated 10 years since its launch with a symposium held in Birmingham, at which research grants were given for: reasonable adjustments for mental health; neurodiversity for student veterinary nurses; and organisational interventions in support of veterinary wellbeing in the workplace;
- new guidance had been launched to reduce the misuse of lethal medicines, catalysed in part by Coroner 'Prevention of Future Deaths' reports where the College had been named when two individuals had sadly taken their own lives using veterinary drugs: a veterinary surgeon and a lay person;
- in addition, all practices within the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) now had to have a suicide prevention plan as a requirement at Core Level; within the Codes of Professional Conduct (CoPC) all veterinary practitioners – veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons – had to work within a practice that met core standards so, essentially, all veterinary workplaces should be covered;
- an RCVS podcast was launched in October – there had been a new episode loaded around research being carried out by the College;
- an RCVS WhatsApp one-way communications channel had been launched, where people were able to sign up to receive headlines and links to stories on the website as a way of receiving news quicker than the monthly e-newsletter;
- the 2026 Honours and Awards period had launched, which included the new Collaboration Award that Council had agreed earlier in the year and reflected the focus of the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan;
- the College had attended the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) Congress where there had been focus on the VN Visions project and clinical supervisor training;
- the College had attended the Veterinary Schools' Council Conference and had taken part in a panel on legislation;
- a reception had been held to officially open the new building; there had been positive comments received about the space;
- there had been an equality, diversity and inclusion event the day after the reception and there had been some particularly positive remarks in relation to the efforts that had gone in to making sure the building was accessible;

- the day prior to the Council meeting had seen a lunch attended by former RCVS Presidents, a group of whom toured the building and had also been very positive. Thanks in particular were given to the DoOps and her team by Dr Johnson, who had chaired the working group that focussed on moving the College into the new building – he had also been instrumental in moving the College into new premises on two other previous occasions – and had been very positive about the future of the College in the building;
- there had been a series of joint officer meetings with various associations to talk about topics of interest; these were held on a regular basis as part of stakeholder engagement:
  - o British Equine Veterinary Association (forthcoming) (BEVA);
  - o British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA);
  - o British Veterinary Association (BVA);
  - o British Veterinary Union (BVU);
  - o Pig Veterinary Society (PVS);
  - o Veterinary Defence Society (VDS);
- a group attended the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) event held in Cyprus and, whilst there, had held a joint presentation with the BVA about the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) investigation into household pets. It was interesting to learn that similar competition and corporatisation inquiries were also happening in France, Germany, and the Netherlands and it was somewhat reassuring when there was some implication through the CMA documentation that UK legislative framework had let the profession down in particular. There were some differences in terms of the remedies being put forward, which could be the topic of future discussions with other FVE members;
- a delegation from a Japanese Veterinary School – Rakuno Gakuen University – visited the College to discuss the College's work from a legal perspective; education; and registration; and an online meeting had taken place along similar lines with the Ghanaian veterinary regulator;
- a forthcoming International Veterinary Regulators Network (IVRN) meeting would see regulators from the United States (US), Canada, Australia, New Zealand (NZ), Singapore, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the UK discussing areas of common interest in veterinary regulation – topics on the agenda included artificial intelligence (AI); governance; 'light touch' regulation; compassionate regulation; as well as lots of outreach work and engagement. It was important as regulation had to be 'joined up' given how the veterinary degree was very portable;
- other events included:
  - o Postgraduate Veterinary Education Symposium with international speakers, the first of its kind; spearheaded by the Director of Education (DoEd). It was a welcoming and constructive event and there would be a full report in due course;
  - o the nominations period for RCVS and VN Council elections had just opened;

- London Vet Show was being held over two days at ExCel, where the College had presentations and panel sessions on: exit interview data; myth busting; and, legislation;
- Fellowship Day to be held the following week that would include the 'Fellows of the Future' student competition and panel discussions on disease preparedness, and accident and emergency situations involving veterinary surgeons;
- Veterinary Nursing Day;
- Statutory Membership Examination graduation: thanks to the work carried out by the Education Team and Assistant Registrar for obtaining the new Statutory Instrument (SI) that had made it more accessible for candidates to apply – this year saw candidates sitting from 26 countries. There had also been a visitor from the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) observing the process, as they were interested in how the College ran the examination;
- work was being planned for quarter 1 of 2026 that included items contained within the new Strategic Plan; CMA changes; the new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) (database) system; the Content Management System (CMS) (website); and the continued push for new legislation. It was expected that the College would be in a very different place by the end of 2026 and that colleagues across the organisation were committed to supporting the veterinary professions, improving animal health and welfare and public health, and enabling veterinary professionals to do the best job that they could do.

18. Comments and questions included:

- the work of the DoComms and his team at the New Scientist Live! exhibition held in October should be acknowledged; it was a tremendous event put on by the Outreach and Engagement Manager;
  - it was the second time that the College had attended the event and had been an even better experience now for youngsters – it targeted children between the ages of 10 to 15 years old over the course of a three-day event – two family days and then a third day, which was the school day where there are no parents around, just teachers. There were all sorts of interactions on the stand; talks arranged from the floor; lots of questions; and, overall, had received a lot of really positive feedback – conversations were counted in the 100s daily and it was believed there had been over 1,000 by the time the event came to a close;
- it was interesting to see the output from the exit survey published the day prior, what were the next steps using that information and was there an action plan?
  - the information had already been to Registration Committee; there was an ongoing stream of work around workforce that flowed from the Workforce Action Plan, as put together in 2022, that fed into the work of the Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC) and the AP Team; a key part was the message that came through in the press

release was that, although the College was looking at exit issues, it also needed to put numbers leaving the professions into perspective and to remember that there was not a massive outflow – some of the issues had to be addressed, particularly those related to stress and support, and the Mind Matters work would assist this;

- what was staff morale like at the moment, with all of the potential of changes coming forward?
  - o a staff survey had been undertaken that was generally positive; the area where the College always struggled – as it was a relatively small organisation – was career progression and it was one downside of having really good retention within the organisation with many people having been employed for decades; to counter-balance that, the College was looking at how it could develop subject matter expert roles rather than moving people into management.

From a more recent perspective, the CMA investigation and report had been challenging to staff morale because it appeared to generate a shortcut for people to say that the College was not fit for purpose when in fact the investigation stated the *regulatory structure* was not fit for purpose, not the College itself, and certainly not the staff who worked there. There had been an uptick in people when sending in a complaint who stated “you know you are not fit for the job” which had been difficult. Furthermore, the comments in the CMA report around whether or not the College should continue to serve its regulatory function had been somewhat challenging – the College had expected some comments but not to the very detailed extent that had been provided. A result of which meant that an urgent staff meeting had been called the same afternoon that detail was received so that staff could be reassured that the CMA was not able to make those changes itself and that they would have to be proposed through Defra, which could take years.

It was not an easy time to be in the regulatory space at all and there was a lot of change happening across the piece as regulators realigned themselves to the government’s growth agenda and what that meant from a regulation perspective; it generated a period of uncertainty. The College had set up an email for CMA queries from staff that could be dealt with confidentially. Nevertheless, there were good lines of communication; staff liked the new office and were generally satisfied.

19. The update was noted.

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

#### **PIC / DC Liaison Committee – updates to Terms of Reference (ToR) and proposed change of committee name**

20. The CEO reminded Council that it was not possible for Council to undertake every item of work and that the committees had delegated authority as outlined in the Delegation Scheme. Most committees had undertaken the annual exercise to consider their ToR over the summer, and PIC / DC Liaison Committee had been outstanding because of how the committee schedule fell. The

Committee had since considered its ToR and had proposed amendments as outlined in Annex A to the paper. There was also a suggested committee name change because it was felt that the current name no longer reflected the work of what that committee did. It was acknowledged that this was likely to be a temporary situation and that when there was new legislation, matters would change. In addition, it was noted that there might be a requirement for an additional committee to look at oversight of the CMA monitoring once the investigation concluded, so further updates were likely.

21. There were no comments or questions raised.

22. Council was asked to approve:

- a. the recommended changes to the Delegation Scheme; and
- b. the name change to 'Professional Conduct Liaison Committee'.

23. An electronic vote was taken:

For:	19
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	1

24. Mr Bray experienced technical difficulties and submitted a verbal vote, which was included in the figures.

25. The recommended ToR changes and name change were approved by a majority vote.

#### **The UK Health Alliance on Climate Change (UKHACC) commitments**

26. The Chair, Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC) introduced the paper, indicating that it had had considerable consideration by APC before it was agreed to refer it to Council as it was recognised that some of the proposals might be considered controversial.

27. It was explained that the RCVS Strategic Plan had an objective to champion the role that veterinary professionals played in one health and public health and to take a leadership role on environmental sustainability and biodiversity and continue to look beyond domestic horizons to have a positive impact upon the world; the paper set out how the College could address aspects of that objective. It was noted that the RCVS was a long-standing member of UKHACC, and that the Alliance had a series of commitments that could provide a framework to develop an environment and sustainability plan that met RCVS ambitions. The paper set out what those commitments were and outlined where the College could easily meet certain commitments – of which there were four; APC sought Council's input in order to adopt them, and also to note where additional work was required.

28. The Head of Policy, Insight and Public Affairs (HPIPA) continued. There were 11 commitments set out in the paper that were UKHACC commitments, to which each member was expected to sign up and attempt to deliver. There was some concern from other members that, otherwise,

UKHACC was 'greenwashing' where an organisation could sign up to say it was a member, without actually fulfilling the commitments. It was acknowledged that, whilst the commitments outlined in the paper provided a useful framework for the College's environment and sustainability work, many of the commitments would take time to meet, as and when resources allowed.

29. The four commitments that the College could meet straight away were:

- declare the climate change was a health emergency: there was a formal way that could be done via a particular website;
- campaign and mitigate to adapt to the planetary crisis: that was already being undertaken by the College, arguably via UKHACC by working on their papers, which received a reasonable amount of publicity;
- disinvest from fossil fuels: already completed and, in addition, the College could support the fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty again by signing up to an appropriate website;
- prioritise plant-based and sustainably sourced food.

30. Page 16 of the paper showed the next steps the College could take on each of the 11 different commitments. It was intended to re-work that into a formal environment sustainability plan for approval and then for ongoing monitoring by APC, which had given its broad support whilst disagreeing over some of the detail and best ways forward.

31. In relation to the fourth option identified as possible to meet straight away – plant-based and sustainable source food – UKHACC asked for prioritisation of plant-based foods; increasing plant-based proteins (beans, nuts, tofu); and making sure that food waste was minimised. It had a climate and health scorecard which helped to measure those things. For example, targeting increased proportion of plant-based by always having plant-based options – something the College already did – and have carbon and environment impact labels. It was suggested that discussions could be undertaken with the existing catering company; that already had a very high standard when it comes to sourcing its ingredients.

32. APC had suggested that meat as part of lunch be discontinued and then further reduced if catering for an evening event; albeit not necessarily every day if an event covered multiple days – UKHACC had a 22-page guide where different options had been set out. If Council agreed, more detailed options could be brought forward for discussion.

33. Comments and questions included, but were not limited to:

- whilst being in favour of plant-based foods and food choice [I] would be much more comfortable if we were to follow the BVA position; [I] watched it progress and am in favour of it. To opt for plant-based options only or meat-free is overly simplistic and it reinforced the idea that 'meat was bad' and not sustainable. For example, look at the breakfast options offered today, there was soya yoghurt – where did the soya come from? It could be guessed that it was no more sustainable than milk would have been. The College had to be very

careful to look at the broader picture; it was not just about greenhouse gases, but around environment, biodiversity, and the benefits of supporting local agriculture; furthermore, there should be seasonal, locally produced, healthy food;

- [I] support my colleague's comments, especially given that this week avian flu had devastated poultry farms in East Anglia in the run up to Christmas, which was going to bankrupt some farmers. Farmers had also been protesting in London over the family farm tax, which was going to devastate their businesses and, in turn, that of a large section of the College's membership who were farm and public health vets. It was possible that there were more important things that the College could be doing to improve its carbon footprint and its respect for the climate than to provide food that only contained plant-based ingredients. Follow the BVA position of 'less and better' and think very hard about where meat proteins and similar were sourced from rather than making a gesture of going to plant-based proteins only; [I] would support a plant-based protein option, but not as the only option;
- the strive towards becoming as least impactful on the climate as possible was welcomed but [I] disagree with plant-based only as a food choice. The College was a regulator of veterinary surgeons that played a massive role in UK livestock production; irrespective of the health benefits, etc., Council had to look at how it would reflect upon the RCVS; farm vets; and that side of the industry – it made it seem like the College disagreed with their role and their use and it had to be very careful to be seen as a public backer of plant-based over meat;
- when reading the paper, there was no reference to sourcing from the UK and there was only one mention of animal welfare when clearly livestock vets were working hard with UK farmers around that issue; there should be emphasis on those two aspects as well as following the 'less was better' model;
- the other area that should be considered was offsetting options and an understanding of the arrangements to do so – it was a paper still to be brought forward and [I] would be interested in finding out more detail;
- whilst agreeing with the direction of travel, emphasis should be given to sourcing sustainable produce; an avocado growing halfway across the world was definitely not more sustainable than a steak that had come from 20 minutes away;
- be really mindful of people's dietary requirements; anybody with any endocrinological condition would know that a high protein source for breakfast was necessary in order to sustain throughout the day – if the College moved away from meat-based sources there had to be an alternative viable option available. More sustainable options would be welcome, however, plant-based was not always better and the College should be mindful to support farming, farmers, and farm vets, and subsequent relative organisational matters;
- monitor food waste and portion size: when attending RCVS events there were often, for example, three different lunch options, one of which might be more popular than another, and therefore it generated food waste;

- Council appeared to underestimate the work of the College's Green Team that was incredibly active and would have carefully sourced local and sustainable items. Another consideration was international travel, FVE being a recent example. All aspects of travel were due to be considered but was anything being done to offset it?
  - o offsetting was done on an individual basis, often through the airline systems. Discussions had taken place regarding creating a policy but it would require a budget line that was not currently in place. Further investigation was required to find the best system / way of doing it;
- it was great to see the College setting some targets towards net zero; should it be ambitious and set targets for the professions as well?
  - o veterinary schools did set targets; for cross-profession targets it was difficult to envision how it would affect the veterinary profession but it could be introduced via the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS);
- whilst difficult, the College should show leadership, and it was something it should be promoting; targets had to be realistic and achievable. Could the Green Team bring a paper to Council to find out about its work?
- take control and say to the caterers that there should only be local / UK-produced food; and less of it;
- as outlined at paragraph 80 of the paper, the College did not currently have a policy in that area – in terms of sequencing, would it be better to have a policy first because it looked like matters had not been properly thought through? There was an opportunity to feed in expertise Council member networks so decisions could be made at a much more informed level, otherwise it looked simplistic;
  - o UKHACC was already putting pressure on organisations to actually demonstrate that they were truly signed up and not just in name, perhaps it could be worked up at the same time as a policy to inform how the College then took other actions forward?
- if the College was looking to support British farmers, could it consider Oxbury Bank?
  - o noted.

34. The President drew the conversation to a close. The detail of the vote was discussed as it was felt that more detailed papers were required on various items within the paper. It was noted that APC had requested approval for the general approach as set out in the paper rather than on the specifics from discussions of the four items that had been identified. Any vote taken would be on the understanding that more detailed papers would come back to Council at a later date, as well as an update from the College's Green Team.

35. The value of taking a vote was further questioned as the Chair, APC, was present at the meeting and could feed back to APC on the discussion.

36. It was agreed that no formal vote would be taken, and the comments and questions were noted.

### **Draft Risk Appetite Statement (RAS)**

37. The Chair, Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) introduced the paper and highlighted the key considerations that had been taken into account before ARC had endorsed the recommendation:

- had an appropriate approach been adopted to develop the statement in terms of robustness?
- whether the statement as drafted provided sufficient clarity to guide decision-making across the organisation?
- was it tailored to the context and proportionate to the organisation, particularly in terms of its risk, capability and management, a critical consideration?
- the extent of how the statement had been drafted – could it be properly implemented effectively with no specification on risk tolerances? When risk appetite and risk tolerance were used interchangeably, problems arose at the point of implementation – the RAS did not need to specify risk tolerance;
- the approach for monitoring and governance; did what had been proposed seem to enable the College to evolve in maturity?

38. The RAS was not expected to be perfect but was instead to be used to enable the commencement of the journey with regards risk appetite. As noted, one of the biggest difficulties was using appetite and tolerance interchangeably and that created problems. The best way to describe the difference was that many regulators supported innovation by using something called a regulatory ‘sandbox’. A sandbox allowed people to test ideas in terms of regulation, whereas risk appetite was the willingness to use a sandbox. To try to combine both at an early stage would be difficult for staff to embed, and it was appropriate and proportionate to do what was in the policy. However, progressively in, say, c.18-months’ time, it could be possible to identify the levels the College wanted.

39. Comments and questions included:

- it was surprising that the appetite level around the financial category was risk open. There were two aspects: one was how you used your money, and then how you looked after your money – personally [I] am very averse to *losing* my money, but quite happy to *spend* my money – how were those issues reconciled, and how was the classification reached?
  - o the classification was informed by the workshop that Council took part in at its June 2025 meeting – ARC calibrated feedback from Council and then positioned it into the category. Whether or not it was considered correct was a debate for Council;

- [in response] when there were discussions about risk, was it possible to take note of things that might have concerned people from time to time and feed that back into the review of the RAS in due course? For instance, the previous comment did not mean the RAS had to change now but it could be logged for future consideration.

One of the levels not specified in the framework, which was robust, was the RCVS' Risk Assurance Map (RAM); it effectively linked the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) with the RAS and the RAM. The financial category should calibrate properly in terms of the level of assurance to match that appetite;

- o thank you, noted;
- there was an inconsistency in the Draft RAS Policy at Annex A to the paper – 4.1 indicated financial as 'risk open', whereas the 4.2 italicised statement stated 'risk cautious';
  - o the table at 4.1 was correct, and the statement at 4.2 included a typo – it would be corrected before the policy was finalised;
- in the financial category, was there a difference between cash flow and losing money and the RAS compared to an investment RAS; should that be split down?
  - o as long as the assurance framework was right, splitting it down was not necessary.

40. Council was asked to approve the RAS as presented (with the typo corrected). An electronic vote was taken:

For:	19
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	1

41. Mr Bray experienced technical difficulties and submitted a verbal vote, which was included in the figures.

42. The draft RAS (as amended) was approved by a majority vote.

## Reports of standing committees – to note

### **Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)**

43. There were no comments or questions raised.

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

44. There were no comments or questions raised.

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

45. There were no comments or questions raised.

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

46. There were no comments or questions raised.

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

47. There were no comments or questions raised.

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

48. There were no comments or questions raised.

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

49. There were no comments or questions raised.

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

50. There were no comments or questions raised.

## **Reports of statutory committees – to note**

### **Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)**

51. Comments and questions on the paper included, but were not limited to:

- it was appreciated that the data was not new, but the data levels related to euthanasia of animals stood out as being very high. When considering the report from RCVS Knowledge around contextualised care, one of the things that was highlighted was the lack of confidence amongst new graduates for having conversations related to euthanasia. It was currently included under the Veterinary Graduate Programme (VetGDP) as an Entrustable Professional Activity (EPA) for treatment; there had been long discussions at VetGDP meetings about whether that should be separated or not, and thoughts from Council would be welcomed, particularly around whether euthanasia should be a separate EPA for new graduates, because it was very different when they were actually doing it 'hands on';
- from a Bristol Veterinary School perspective, the value of the VetGDP information received from the RCVS was enormous and had helped the school to inform its curriculum; it surpassed anything previously gleaned from voluntary correspondence and survey responses. Whilst acknowledging it would be great to have euthanasia on there, were there any plans to review all of the EPAs rather than consider individual items?
  - o yes, a review was planned – the College was approximately halfway through its review of the Day One Competencies (D1C), which would also include EPAs for the undergraduate programme. VetGDP EPAs would be considered in the future. The VetGDP data received from graduates and advisors that was compiled upon commencing the role included a lot of detailed questions that had yet to be published; it might be possible to

extract data of how well the veterinary schools were preparing graduates, specifically in relation to euthanasia; a lot of the data was very positive;

- it was agreed that schools did a great job, but when graduates went into practice, the ability to have a mentor available to talk them through the whole process was important, particularly when data was considered – it was a consistent complaint and perhaps the College could do more to support its new graduates around challenges associated with euthanasia cases;
- was there any way of understanding what was ‘driving’ the complaints because it might be that a person could complain because somebody discussed euthanasia when they did not want to discuss it; or there could be technical issues during euthanasia procedures;
  - o there was no immediate reason that came to mind, however, the College did have regular conversations with the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS), who took many of the complaints, so it could potentially dig deeper to try to identify reasons to go forward for VetGDP / Education Committee consideration;
- [I] taught communication skills, and one scenario was around euthanasia – a lot of time could be spent on that matter, but, equally, if a veterinary surgeon had a bad experience when euthanising a pet in front of a client and received a complaint, it was often about intravenous (IV) injection technique rather than the discussion of euthanasia; it would also be useful to know which species were involved – it was suspected it would be predominantly small animals as the common skills requirements around euthanasia had a small animal focus, although it was noted that there was one around equine euthanasia;
- it was an area to which schools put a lot of resource, including the hiring of actors in simulated environments; the problem was that, for senior clinical students, the opportunity to undertake those procedures in reality were incredibly limited, so there was a disconnection. Increased awareness of resources and training being used across the schools and the approaches being taken in the VetGDP space allowed for that continuum of building good practice around communications;
  - o more information would be helpful, as it had been one of the top ten areas of complaint for quite some time – past investigation had indicated that, often, it was an issue about the expectation of the client; some of the language around being ‘put to sleep’ implied that it would be a very simple process where the animal drifted gently away and, sadly, that was not always the case and people had not been prepared for that. The process could be very upsetting and perhaps some professionals did not necessarily recognise how to guide the person to know whether they should be in the room or not; all of which could be an issue. Another aspect to remember was that euthanasia meant somebody had lost an animal and there was grief attached to that, which could precipitate a complaint of some kind, because it was an unhappy situation. It might not be the euthanasia that was the issue but rather the loss of the pet; euthanasia became the ‘thing’ to hang that on. [I] am not trying to undermine the importance of those complaints, but it was hoped that when there were more details, there could be more understanding;

- working in first opinion practice, where there were case discussion meetings every other month, it never appeared on the agenda specifically, but euthanasia consultations were always something that cropped up; whether somebody had an experience; or an idea; or just a new phrase or terminology; or something that had helped them, so it was possible to pass that on. It was an area where, if the College could provide extra support to a new graduate via implementing a specific EPA, it would be really beneficial. As euthanasia was currently within the treatment EPA, there was no guarantee that they were specifically getting support with it;
- thank you to the team for breaking down the veterinary care category – it provided a lot more detail about what actually was going on as some were big categories;
- under the current treatment EPA, it was concerning that a new graduate could complete it without actually having done euthanasia. There was an opportunity for mentorship to take them through a relatively straightforward one – although euthanasia was never really straightforward – and then build their confidence so they would feel able to cope with, for example, a collapsed cat in renal failure, which was a much more challenging one. The building of confidence would enormous and would fall under the banner of a compassionate Royal College. It was important to have the conversation about separating it out for as an EPA;
  - o agreed that the issue could be explored;
- most, if not all, of Council had lost animals and it was a really horrible time; it was one thing to do with an actor, but it would be completely different if you were a young vet within practice when an individual's emotions had been tested. [I] would support it being a separate EPA. Furthermore, a lot of the problems would likely be caused by a breakdown of communication;
- 150 veterinary care cases made up c. 40% of the total number of cases and [I] believed that the majority of which would be owner complaints around adequacy of veterinary care. Did the figure include under care and vet-on-vet concerns raised, because within the farm animal sector animals under care, and nominally under care as a basis for dispensing medicines, was an emerging issue?
  - o that was unknown, and would be followed up;
- whilst supporting the idea of a separate EPA for euthanasia, could it be broadened from just the euthanasia consultation? It was the process of handling a case over a number of days, weeks, etc., and taking it to the stage where it was ready for euthanasia and having those discussions with clients that took it into a contextual arena; every client, and case, was different;
- what was the role of the Veterinary Defence Society (VDS)? Graduate reunions could focus effectively on some of those things;

- it was unknown to what extent that VetGDP advisors engaged with the VDS, however, graduate reunions could focus effectively on some of those matters, such as sharing data and insights into complaints and the work that VDS did; the College had engaged with those lectures in the past but it was acknowledged that post-pandemic arrangements had changed; it could be looked into.

52. The President drew the discussion on euthanasia to a close, stating that the timeline for developing new EPAs and what that looked like within VetGDP and the overall review would be drafted and taken to the VetGDP Subcommittee for consideration.

53. Other comments or questions on the statutory committee reports included:

- were the items below veterinary care subdivisions of the 150 veterinary care total, or were they in addition to that number? If they were subdivisions, then the overall total of 380 cases was incorrect;
  - they were not subdivisions, they were additional cases, so the overall total was correct;
- how were the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for PIC and Disciplinary Committee (DC) viewed by the Public Advisory Group (PAG), and by the public generally, in terms of the resolutions and the time taken? Did they agree with the targets?
  - it was a timely question as there was a forthcoming PAG meeting in December and there was a gap on the agenda that that discussion could fill – was it the question about compliance with the KPI or the KPI itself?

[The KPI itself]

Noted. The College published the KPIs that it strived to meet, but it was unknown how they were viewed from the outside, or as a regulator. In addition, there was no comparison with other organisations; work could be undertaken to provide a quick, albeit informal, comparison to take forward.

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

#### **RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)**

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

#### **Disciplinary Committee and RVN Disciplinary Committee (DC)**

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

#### **Notices of motion**

57. There had been no notices of motion received.

## Questions

58. There had been no questions received.

## Any other College business (unclassified items)

59. There was no other College business to report.

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

60. There were no items raised to add to the College's Risk Register from the open session of the meeting.

## Dates of next meeting

61. The next scheduled meeting of Council was Thursday, 22 January 2026 commencing at 10:00 am with a scheduled end time of 4:00 pm. The meeting would be held remotely by MS Teams.

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

### Major projects – update

62. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 – 8.

### Legislative reform

63. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 9 – 17.

### Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)

64. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 18 – 32.

### Budget 2026

65. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 33 – 43.

### Recruitment of Legal Assessors

66. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 44 – 50.

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

**Comments on classified appendices from Council or committee meetings**

67. There were no comments or questions raised.

**Other business**

68. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 51 – 52.

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

69. There were no items raised to add to the College's Risk Register from the closed session of the meeting.

**Training session (confidential item)**

70. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 53.

71. The meeting was drawn to a close.

## Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	22 January 2026
Title	CEO operational update
Classification	Unclassified
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Annex A – activity against operational plan 2025-27
Author	Lizzie Lockett, CEO

## Classifications

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

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

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

## CEO update

### Format of this update

1. This update falls into two parts:
  - a. A summary of recent activities that have been publicised by the College (section below, NB this excludes Disciplinary Hearings)
  - b. A summary of more 'behind-the-scenes' activity against the Operational Plan 2025-2027 that was approved by Council in October 2025. This Operational Plan works to meet the ambitions of the RCVS Strategic Plan for 2025-2029: 'Stronger together' (**Annex A**)
2. The table at Annex A is only a summary of the ongoing workstreams. Detailed plans are in place, or under development, for any that require such detail. These are overseen by the relevant committee or working party (or Senior Team, if appropriate). If they reach the project threshold, boards will be put in place to oversee them. In some cases, budget has already been allocated, in others, the Discretionary Fund will be used once scoping has taken place.
3. When the plan was approved in autumn 2025, it was agreed that RAG-rating would be incorporated into the status column. However, at this stage it is too soon for much progress, so it is not yet a useful rating to add. This will be added once more projects are underway and it's clearer which are going well and which need attention. At present there are just two items to draw Council's attention to: the extra-mural studies database, which Education Committee voted to close; and 'Consideration of how tech can be better utilised in practice, for example, through provision of kennel feeds, updates via WhatsApp or portal etc', which was a tentative project to come out of the VN Visions project, and, following exploration, will not be continued. These will both stay on the plan for the sake of completeness, but will not be reported against in the future.
4. Although this plan appears in the annex as a PDF, it has been moved from Word into Excel and reformatted so it can be sorted by department, to make it easier for relevant committees to see what work falls under their purview. Huge thanks to the EA to the CEO for this migration.
5. As with previous strategy plan updates, it is proposed that Council receives a report three times a year, in the January, June and September meetings.

### Summary of recent activities

6. Since the November 2025 Council meeting, we have:
  - a. Hosted a myth-busting session at the London Vet Show
  - b. Updated the 1CPD app to improve it for users
  - c. Held a successful Fellowship Day, with topics including emergency response and disease control
  - d. Discontinued the EMS National Booking Database
  - e. Responded to the news that the University of Cambridge School of Biological Sciences recommended that the University cease veterinary education
  - f. Welcomed a record number of overseas veterinary surgeons to the Register after passing the Statutory Membership Examination (53 out of 80 who passed attended)
  - g. Made our Christmas donation to World Horse Welfare
  - h. Announced Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) funding for mental health in VN education

- i. Opened ticketing for a webinar on MMI-funded research into alcohol use
- j. Celebrated new veterinary nurses joining the Register at one of our biannual VN Days
- k. Published a response to the Panorama documentary on veterinary costs

**Decisions required**

- 6. No decisions are required, but feedback is always welcomed, both on content and format of this report.

Annex A – activity against agreed Operational Plan 2025-2027



Targeted research of non-clinical staff to better understand the issues they face	Develop a programme of support, resources and/or training to enhance knowledge, skills and/or behaviours.	To be determined	MMI	Advancement of the Professions	2027 Q3	Not started	This is listed for 2027 with the aim to develop resources and/or training for 2028
Publish anonymised UK VetGDP survey data (graduate outcomes)	Demonstrate to the profession (and public) the quality of graduates from RCVS-accredited programmes	Longitudinal survey data from 2020 onwards	Dir Ed	Education	2027 Q1	Ongoing	No additional budget needed
Review the effectiveness of the outcomes-based CPD policy through the analysis of 1CPD and VetGDP portfolio data on reflection	Vets and nurses are supported to be competent, reflective practitioners	Data analysis of CPD reflections using a quality framework	Dir Ed/Postgrad Lead	Education	2027 Q1	Not started	CPD / VetGDP compliance also monitored – see 'BAU' below.
Review and enhance information and data provided to public on Practice Standards Scheme (PSS)	Public and practices are better informed about practices and what is good practice	Information is provided regularly Feedback suggests public are better informed	Registrar/Head of PSS	Legal	2025 Q4	Not started	
Review the way data is used to enhance effectiveness to identify themes that emerge from concerns and complaints	RCVS work is better targeted to address areas of concern	Effective process for data collection, cascading information and policy measures introduced	Registrar/DoLS	Legal	2026 Q2	Early stages	IT assistance may be required; also working with Research Team (PP&I)
Implementing user journeys and task-based communications across MyRCVS and other RCVS digital platforms, eg 1CPD, VetGDP etc once integrated into CRM (Phase 2)	Comprehensive oversight of all additional direct communications to vets/VNs. Targeting vets/VNs with information that is relevant/useful to them at any given moment, to help drive compliance with professional obligations	Evaluation through metrics available via new CRM.	Marketing Campaigns Manager	Comms	2026 Q4	To start, as part of CRM Phase 2	

### 3. Reviewing the Codes of Professional Conduct and supporting guidance, and how they are understood, complied with and enforced

Schedule 3 and delegation resource pack	To ensure all vet professionals have a clear / shared understanding of what can be legally / safely delegated and how to apply it consistently in team-based practice	Pre/post surveys, feedback forms, focus groups. Quick reference guides, decision flowcharts, case studies and scenarios, training pack, checklists and templates along with FAQs.	VNC/VN Team (& Standards and Advice team)	Veterinary Nursing	2026 Q3	Early stages	This will be a by-product of the first VN Vision project. Currently co-designing resources using theory of change
Continue the review of "Under Care"	Finalised code/guidance for "Under Care"	Production of final guidance/code	Registrar/Head of S&A	Legal	2026 Q3	Early stages	Research has been budgeted
Finalised Code and guidance following review	Production of final guidance/code, including website functionality and/or other comms platforms	Feedback in consultation. Website metrics, user feedback, online language tools, AI tools Improved content, content design and functionality to increased accessibility and discoverability for users.	Registrar/Head of S&A Comms Director	Legal	2027 Q4	Not started	

Full review of the Charter Case Committee	Finalised CCC review and any updated guidance documents (if req)	Production of final review paper for Council and updated documents etc	Head of ProfCon/Registrar	Legal	2025 Q4	Final stages	
Vets and VNs are CPD (or VetGDP) compliant	Increase CPD (and VetGDP) compliance to ensure that vets and VNs on the practising category of the Register are up to date & able to provide the best service and care possible.	Increased CPD and VetGDP compliance of the profession	Dir of Ed with input from Dir of VN	Education	2026 Q4	Ongoing	Aim to increase within the constraints of current Act (see also Aim 1 above for new legislation). Current KPI 80% - not yet met for vets.
Establishing strategy for VS and VNs who are non-CPD-compliant	CPD requirements are adhered to by professionals (as far as possible)	Fewer breaches of CPD	Registrar/Head of Legal – Ed and Reg	Education	2026 Q3	Ongoing	
Review of VN Registration Rules	To ensure the rules remain fit for purpose and align with education, regulation, and clinical practice requirements	Registration data and trends	VNC/ Dir of VN	Veterinary Nursing	2026 Q4	Not started	The Registration Rules have not been reviewed since 2017. This will involve working with legal on drafting the rules

**4. Working through Mind Matters and other initiatives, to achieve a veterinary workforce that meets demand, and an inclusive culture in which professionals can thrive, without fear of discrimination or harassment**

Develop a revised definition of veterinary nursing	Elevate the profession's status, clarify the unique and critical role and foster a stronger professional identity. Aid employers and policy makers in making informed decisions around responsibilities.	Various team surveys, pre/post implementation focus groups, exit interviews and turnover/retention rates. Better retention, job satisfaction and workforce planning.	VNC/Dir of VN	Veterinary Nursing	2026 Q4	Early stages	Compiling paper for FRC to set up a small task and finish group.
Strengthening the role of RVNs in team-based veterinary healthcare	Improved patient outcomes, increased job satisfaction and retention along with better team collaboration and efficiency of workflows.	Logic model to guide measurement. Surveys and focus groups. Better use of nursing skills, clearer delegation and improved team collaboration.	VNC/Dir of VN	Veterinary Nursing	2027 Q4	Ongoing	Funding via the VN team budget. Resource materials developed and in-person events commenced.
Publish guide on creating safe events and congresses	Develop guidance for event organisers on how to create events that keep people psychologically safe.	Feedback, surveys	MMI	Advancement of the Professions	2025 Q2	Final stages	Collaborative effort with MMI Taskforce members. Early stage of guide is drafted. Slightly delayed due to changes in Taskforce members and other competing priorities during 2025
Tailored Adjustment Passport (TAP) Toolkit (previously Health Passport toolkit) and template for use by employees, students and organisations (workplaces/placement providers and educational institutions)	Better individualised support for people with disabilities and chronic conditions in the workplace or in education and training	Adoption of TAPs by organisations, feedback from VSC and employers, and DCIS survey respondents	D&I in collaboration with Ed & VN teams, & external educators	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q2	Final stages	Draft content almost complete and ready for initial feedback from key users. The T&F agreed that a set of videos should be developed to ensure the toolkit is accessible. Funded through 2025, and allocated promotion funding in '26. May need further promotion and funding in '27 depending on feedback.
Development of EDI Fundamentals course on RCVS Academy	Increased knowledge and awareness of equality legislation, key concepts and good practice	RCVS Academy data – NPS scores, evaluation survey feedback etc.	D&I	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q2	Early Stages	A programme of EDI courses will be planned once this foundation level course is established.

Development of inclusive language document	Updated knowledge of EDI language & terminology (to complement the above)	Number of downloads (baseline) but will be more specific once the document is finalised.	D&I	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q1	Final Stages	Currently being reviewed. Included in 2026 resourcing and budget. May require further promotion or support during 2027 depending on uptake, feedback and understanding.
Inclusive recruitment toolkit	Greater awareness of inclusive Recruitment practices to increase diversity within the vet workforce	Social media & web stats. Implementation of guidance by organisations, stakeholder feedback	D&I	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q4	Not started	Inc in 2026 budget
Guidance for supporting neurodivergent students on placements	Improved experience and better support in place for neurodivergent students on placements/work-based learning	Implementation of guidance & feedback from VSC, employers & DCIS survey student respondents. Survey of attendees & DCIS to look at impact/use	D&I	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q3	Not started	There will be input from the VN and Education teams but writing will likely be outsourced to an external expert. Included in 2026 budget.
Veterinary Leadership Development project: Leadership Framework and research project	Support building leadership capacity & healthy organisational cultures by ensuring leaders at all levels are equipped with necessary skills and competencies	Adoption of framework. Other measures will depend on what emerges from the research to allow us to measure impact	Leadership	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q4	In progress	Future leadership development provision will be informed by evidence from the research. After delays with focus group recruitment, Phase 1 has now been completed. Included in budget 2026 submitted, but depending on research results this may have to be reviewed.

#### 5. Supporting veterinary professionals' appropriate use of artificial intelligence and other new technologies, to optimise positive impact, support growth and mitigate any risks

Consideration of how tech can be better utilised in practice eg, through provision of kennel feeds, updates via WhatsApp or portal etc	Developing animal-owner-vet relationship, increasing trust between vet practices/profession and animal-owning public	To be developed once project more advanced	VN Futures	Veterinary Nursing	TBC		Idea came out of VN Vision project. Was decided to not progress this any further. No further reporting. Keeping on this table for completeness.
Development of a set of standards by the AI industry that vet professionals can use to help inform decision making	Enabling intelligence-led, risk-based judgements to be made, reducing risk to animal health and welfare (AH&W)	Number of developers to engage	CEO/Head of S&A/ CDO	Executive	TBC	Early stages	
RCVS guidance on how veterinary professionals should engage with AI and other new tech	Enabling intelligence-led, risk-based judgements to be made, reducing risk to AH&W	Engagement with AI and low levels of complaints/ concerns about veterinary professional judgement	Head of S&A	Legal	TBC	Early stage	
Development of an Academy Course to upskill veterinary professionals to understand AI principles and what to look for in a service they may look to use	Enabling intelligence-led, risk-based judgements to be made, reducing risk to AH&W	Engagement with course, engagement with AI and low levels of complaints/ concerns about veterinary professional judgement	Academy	Academy	TBC	Not yet started	Decision to be made on future of VIVet brand. No major budget for 2026 included currently. This will need to be added in if we go along this route. Or consider a DF if it's a one off.

#### 6. Ensuring our educational standards and career pathways meet the diverse needs of society and the professions

Set and maintain robust standards of vet education (accreditation standards and 'day one competences')	Vets entering the profession are equipped with the knowledge and skills to practise safely and effectively from day one	VetGDP surveys (graduate outcomes data) Vet programmes meet accred stds / longer accreditation periods.	Dir of Ed and U/G Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q4	Early stages	
Review scope of practice for veterinary nurses	Veterinary nurses entering the profession are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills to practise safely from day one.	Curriculum reviews and self-evaluation report analysis. Quality monitoring reports.	VNEC/Dir of VN	Veterinary Nursing	2027 Q4	Not started	This work will align with the review of the RCVS VN Registration Rules.
Review Specialist application policy from EU/US	To ensure all specialists on the register meet the standard required of UK specialists	Review report to demonstrate level 8 FHEQ criteria met	Dir of Ed	Education	2026 Q3	Ongoing	
Implement a framework for the QA of postgraduate certificate modules delivered both through RCVS (CertAVP) and other providers	Ensure all routes to RCVS Advanced Practitioner status are equitable and set at the appropriate standard	QA outcomes of modules and certificates	Dir of Ed and P/G Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q1	Final stages	
Development of clear guidance for all roles and statuses both for the profession and the public	Increase understanding of the clinical career pathways and the roles within the veterinary team	Research data, following implementation (with profession and public)	Dir of Ed and P/G Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q4	Ongoing	In budget
Development of a new specialty training programme in Veterinary Primary Care/General Practice	Improve engagement, retention and job satisfaction within veterinary General Practice Improve dissemination of best practice through primary care clinical research	Proposal to RCVS Council Consultation with the profession	Dir of Ed	Education	2026 Q4	Ongoing	In budget for 2025
Develop and improve accessible routes to specialist training	To support a wider demographic to enter the profession at this level, in particular those with caring responsibilities or financial limitations. Increase accessibility of specialty training while maintaining high quality outcomes	Proposal to RCVS Council Consultation with the profession	Dir of Ed and P/G Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q4	Ongoing	In budget for 2025
Review the Statutory Membership Exam to ensure it remains reliable and sustainable in light of increasing candidate numbers	To maintain a valid, reliable and fair approach that is accessible to increasing numbers of overseas vets.	Psychometric evaluation of the exam components. Accommodation of increasing candidate numbers	Dir of Ed	Education	2026 Q3	Ongoing	Implementation required one-year lead-in time
Development of a veterinary nursing advanced practitioner role/status and prescriber role	To raise clinical standards, enhance career progression, contribute to improved workforce sustainability, and ultimately improve patient outcomes and client experience.	Consultation with the profession	Dir of VN	Veterinary Nursing	2027 Q4	Ongoing	
A valid, reliable and authentic practical assessment method for the RCVS Day One Skills in Veterinary Nursing which predicts future performance	Improved confidence of newly registered veterinary nurses in clinical settings. Potential reduction in stress amongst students and educators. Confidence in the outcome of assessments.	Outcome of quality monitoring reports. Stakeholder feedback. Qualification success and retention rates.	VNEC, VN Exam team	Veterinary Nursing	2029 Q4	Early stages	Project will feed into the update of the RCVS Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training along with RCVS Day One Skills & Professional Behaviours.

The provision of a National EMS booking database to support students to secure appropriate placements	UK vet students able to find, book and communicate with EMS placement providers relevant to their personal needs (including WP students)	All students registered and using the EMS database	U/G Ed Lead	Education	2026	Discontinued	Update November 2025, Education Committee agreed to disband the database due to lack of engagement from Schools. No further reporting. Will stay on plan for completeness.
Foster a positive relationship between vet and VN students and the RCVS	Links a name with a physical presence, strengthening the RCVS/ student relationship, reducing fear factor, increasing engagement	TBC	Outreach & Engagement Manager	Comms	Ongoing	Ongoing	Will involve many depts
Raise awareness of, and engagement with, VetGDP	Ensure that graduates are aware of VetGDP when they join the register and start their first role	Engagement data	Dir of Ed and P/G Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q4	Ongoing	
Reviewing the Registration Service Standards	Improved service to registrants and clearer information	Reduction in queries timeframes	Head of Reg & Head of Customer Services	Operations	2026 Q3	Not started	

### B: Stronger together with animal owners and keepers

**Ambition:** we will support animal health and welfare and public health by enabling access to veterinary care that is informed by the needs of consumers and service users.

#### 1. Achieving new legislation that enables us to better meet the needs of users of veterinary services

Mini review of PSS – taking into account Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) preliminary findings	Introduce some targeted standards for practices to enhance transparency for animal owners to protect animal health and welfare	Standards are amended to introduce targeted measures	Registrar/Head of PSS	Legal	2026 Q1/Q2	Not started	
Full review of PSS	PSS reviewed to ensure it is effective and proportionate	Reviewed standards consulted on and implemented	Registrar/Head of PSS	Legal	2027 Q3	Early stages	Absorbed by legal team
Development of Quality Improvement Model in PSS	Ensure practices can demonstrate high quality in key areas & animal owners understand framework	Development and finalisation of model	Registrar/ Head of PSS	Legal	2027 Q2	Not started	Budget for external consultant may be required

Review/introduction of processes in ProfCon that provide support to witnesses/registrants pre-Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) including sexual misconduct guidance	Witnesses are supported to provide their best evidence. Registrants are appropriately supported through the DC process.	Output – relevant guidance and information available. Feedback from witnesses and registrants	Registrar/Head of ProfCon	Legal	2026 Q3	Not started	Comms assistance required
Review of materials and processes in Disciplinary Committee (DC) to ensure witnesses/registrants are supported.	Witnesses are supported to provide their best evidence. Registrants are appropriately supported through the DC process	Output – relevant guidance and information available. Feedback from witnesses and registrants	Registrar/Head of Legal – Ed & Reg	Legal	2026 Q3	Not started	Comms assistance required
Working towards potential RCVS involvement with any CMA remedies	RCVS interests are represented, and RCVS legal obligations and limitations are clearly understood	RCVS support CMA in a proportionate way that does not adversely impact other objectives.	Registrar/Head of Legal – legal support/Head of Legal PSS	Legal	ongoing	Ongoing	Ensuring that RCVS is prepared to support remedies RCVS-wide. Funding/income streams under consideration.
<b>2. Forging trust between the veterinary professions, the College and animal owners and keepers, and supporting their needs</b>							
Ensure members of the public understand the role of veterinary nurses.	The public see veterinary nurses as trusted, skilled professionals who play a crucial role in animal health and welfare, leading to stronger collaboration, better care, and improved patient outcomes	Surveys and questionnaires, client feedback and recognition levels.	VNC/Dir of VN/Dir Comms	Veterinary Nursing	2027 Q4	Early stages	Need to develop clear, consistent communication strategies and key messaging. Visible campaigns and real-life stories
Modern D1C & accreditation standards that ensure undergrad vet programmes are informed by stakeholder feedback & best pedagogical practice	Graduates are equipped with the relevant skills to practise and meet clients' needs	Accreditation data Stakeholder Feedback	Dir of Ed and U/G Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q4	Ongoing	
Ensure that postgraduate education supports vets in developing professional skills, meeting clients' needs	Addresses CMA report Updates VetGDP framework, CertAVP modules and CPD	Stakeholder feedback Updated educational content	Dir of Ed	Education	2026 Q4	Not started	To include transparency & pricing, contextualised care etc
<b>3. Supporting and informing service users in order to get the best from veterinary professionals, with increased transparency, agency and choice</b>							
Development of clear guidance for all roles and statuses (GP vet, Advanced Practitioner, Specialist) both for the profession and the public	Increase understanding of the clinical career pathways and the roles within the veterinary team	Research data, following implementation (with profession and public)	Dir of Ed and PG Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q4	Ongoing	In budget 2025



<p><b>1. Collaborating and holding space for conversation on challenging issues, such as the role of animals in society, the responsibilities of animal owners/keepers, and the cost of veterinary care</b></p>							
Collaborating with Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) regarding Pharmaceuticals in the Environment (PIE)	Ensure that the outcome of the VMD work takes into account RCVS insight and data	At this stage – constructive collaboration	Registrar/ Head of S&A	Legal	TBC	Started Q3 2025	VMD scoping the work presently
Seeking to address current knowledge gaps within the professions	Being a trusted source of information to the profession and wider healthcare professions	Number of visits to page, its practical use and referencing	Fellowship with potential collaboration with RCVSK	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q4	Not started	Planning is due to start Q1 based off feedback from Fellowship Day and other feedback.
Series of RCVS debates at Hardwick Street – using Fellowship where appropriate	An opportunity for the professions to have a space to discuss and debate issues that matter to them	Attendance and output of any resources (and their utilisation)	Fellowship, Exec and Policy	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q2	Not started	Wide variety of topics being looked at from role of the professionals, to specific welfare issues across the species, sustainability and environment. May need DF application depending on uptake
<p><b>2. Articulating the contribution of veterinary professionals, and interrogating the evolving rights and responsibilities of professionals in today's society</b></p>							
Disaster Response resources	Highlighting how blue light services, human health etc need to work together for animal welfare	Acceptance and use of guidelines by blue light services and vet professionals where appropriate. ideally official endorsement by professional bodies	Fellowship in collab with BARTA	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q4	In progress	Pain relief guide (translation of BARTA Large Animal into SA) launched Q4 2025, new T&F group established and starting work Q1 2026 with final resources due Q4
<p><b>3. Championing the veterinary role in One Health, by ensuring the veterinary voice is heard and that the next generation of veterinary professionals are equipped to contribute</b></p>							
Development of Environment and Sustainability plan to include sustainability plan for the professions, educational resources, alongside internal policies and processes eg new travel plan, food procurement policy etc	College has confidence that it is doing all that it can to reduce environmental footprint and support veterinary professionals to do the same	Metrics to be developed out of new plan	E&S team (across AP and PIPA)	Advancement of the Professions / PIPA	2027 Q4	Early stage	Green team in conjunction with facilities are reviewing current policies and will be proposing updates shortly for internal planning and approval.
Fellowship Science Advisory Panel (FSAP) Sustainability Task and Finish Group (TAFG)	To encourage veterinary professionals to consider more sustainable options in everyday practice	For each resource or activity, use and engagement will be measured, feedback will be collected and then reflected in future iterations to ensure content is useful and meeting needs	Fellowship / PIPA	Advancement of the Professions	2027 Q1	Early stage	Workshop planned for February APC following UKHACC discussion in Nov Council. T&F will then be formed to look at next steps

<p><b>4. Ensuring that veterinary professionals specifically responsible for public health are well supported with robust standards and safeguards</b></p>							
Academy Farm to Fork course	Better inform Council and committees on public health issues	Engagement with course and feedback	Head of Academy	Academy	2025 Q3	Completed	
Limited licensure within new Act	Increase number of public health professionals on the Register	Number able via limited licensure route	Head of PIPA	PIPA	TBC	Ongoing	
<p><b>5. Lighting a fire of enthusiasm for veterinary work in the minds of the next generation of potential professionals, so we continue to better reflect the society that we serve</b></p>							
Programme of outreach at events, and speaking opportunities at schools delivered by RCVS personnel and Outreach Ambassadors	Engagement with school-age children, particularly those from backgrounds where veterinary may not be an obvious career choice	Numbers with whom we have engaged, feedback from events, trackable website activity,	Outreach & Engagement Manager	Comms	2026 Q4	Ongoing	
Educational resources for use at Hardwick Street and external events, including collaborations with existing producers/suppliers.	Engagement with school-age children, particularly those from backgrounds where veterinary may not be an obvious career choice	Numbers with whom we have engaged, feedback from events, trackable website activity, distribution of materials	Outreach & Engagement Manager	Comms	2026 Q4	Ongoing	Some resources exist but need refresh and use within Hardwick Street to be considered
Re-introduce attendance at public-facing events, such as country shows, science festivals etc	To raise awareness of the RCVS, its role/remit, and the responsibilities of vets/owners Also, raise awareness of veterinary careers amongst parents, carers, teachers etc	Attendance figures, engagement metrics, giveaways, trackable website activity	Events Manager	Comms	2026 Q4	Ongoing	
<p><b>6. Building the College's reputation overseas and investigating opportunities to scale and supply relevant initiatives and services, in the interests of animal health and welfare</b></p>							
Continue to engage with International Accreditors Working Group, to deliver accreditation with global partners more sustainably	Learning from and influencing international best practice	IAWG meeting actions 'Sustainable accreditation' pilot	Dir of Ed	Education	2026 Q4	Ongoing	
Accreditation of more overseas programmes	Increased number of overseas vet grads eligible to register	Number of international accredited programmes	Dir of Ed and U/G Ed Lead	Education	2028 Q1	Ongoing	Estimates put in budget each year

Continued engagement with EU through ENQA	Learning from & contributing to international best practice	ENQA accreditation	Ed QI Manager	Education	2027 Q1	Ongoing	
Develop an international community of practice for postgraduate vet education (PGVE) inc. annual symposium	Learning from and influencing international best practice. Increased focus on PGVE may benefit professional career dev, trust & satisfaction	Stakeholder feedback following 2025 symposium Proposal for COP	Dir of Ed	Education	2027 Q4	Early stages	Aim to develop a longer-term network with continued engagement from RCVS
Continue to engage with bodies such as World Veterinary Association, Commonwealth Veterinary Association, International Veterinary Regulators Network etc	Positive network to learn from, to influence and to call on for support on cross-cutting issues where required	Interaction and engagement	CEO, Head of PIPA, Officers	Executive	Ongoing	Ongoing	Budgeted as part of Exec Office. Recently attended IVRN and CLEAR events in New Zealand. .
MMI International work	Joint collaboration with American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and other signatories to share research and best practice, advocacy for mental health	TBC	MMI	Advancement of the Professions	2026 A4	Early stages	Scoping work has started on MMI Vital Transitions events to take place in 2026. Events will focus on the transitions from student to professionals. DF will be needed, this is not included in 2026 budget currently

#### 7. Engaging with the local community around Hardwick Street

Engaging with the local community around Hardwick Street eg open day, school visits, supporting local charities, understanding local issues	Build relationships with our neighbours and improve environmental sustainability in the area	Positive communication with our neighbours and introducing environmental improvement	Facilities Team/ Student Engagement Manager	Operations	Ongoing	Not started	Relationships take time to build up, this is not a start and finish deliverable, but a longer-term objective. Plan needs development
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#### D: Stronger together with our staff team and governance

**Ambition:** we will attract and retain the diversity of talent and skills to deliver what's needed now and anticipate what might be next, building a culture that allows people to thrive, whether staff, Council or other contributors to our purpose.

##### 1. Achieving new legislation that allows for the right skills and structure for effective governance

New legislation that allows for best practice in regulatory governance	Trust, effectiveness, good decision making	Board effectiveness review; public and professional trust (surveys)	Head of PIPA	PIPA	TBC	Ongoing	Working with Registrar and CEO
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2. Developing an infrastructure for success, including our new headquarters, and underpinning structures for finance, communications and digital							
Continuous improvement of customer relationship management system (CRM)	Streamlined and enhanced process for portal and CRM users	User satisfaction/Self-service/fewer enquiries	CDO and Project Office	IT	2026 TBC	Final stages	CRM is expected to go live in first half of 2026. Following launch and remediation of any teething issues, further improvements will be made
Design, build and implementation of new RCVS website, with improved CRM integration for MyRCVS.	Online content that is discoverable, accessible, relevant, useful and informative. Good practice information architecture, functionality and integrations	Website traffic metrics, user feedback, online polls	Head of Marcoms	IT	2026 Q4	Currently on track and on budget	FAV website ready to launch pending CRM outcomes. Any appropriate CMA recommendations to be considered/worked on in 2026.
Roll-out of new brand and visual identity	To help make the RCVS more understandable and recognisable for all stakeholders across all activities and communications channels, and to provide flexibility for the future	Measurement of stakeholder awareness through surveys, polls, feedback etc	Head of Marcoms	IT	2026 Q1	Launched Q3 2025	Phased approach necessary due to extent of branding across multiple channels, plus competing major projects. Phase 1 – Q3 2025 Phase 2 Q4 2025 Phase 3 Q1 2026
Developing and implementing our next communication strategy to align with the new Strategic Plan	To support greater stakeholder understanding of our role and remit, greater awareness of our services and activities, and to build on levels of engagement and trust in what we do	Specific evaluation methods to be included in strategy as appropriate, but may include direct feedback, surveys, focus groups, media monitoring, digital metrics etc	Comms Director	Comms	2026 Q2	Planning underway, and comms audit in process	Will seek feedback from Senior Team and have oversight by Officer Team.
Consider and launch new RCVS communications channels	Help to inform and engage harder-to-reach stakeholder groups, and provide additional ways for them to receive our content	Subscription levels, user uptake and engagement metrics	Head of Media & Content	Comms	2025 Q4	Comms team recommendations approved by Officers and programme planning underway	
Design, develop and build new intranet for staff team	To keep all teams up to date with internal/external activities, staff initiatives and policies, and to help build staff engagement	Staff feedback, surveys, questions, team meetings etc	People Director & Comms Director	People	2026 Q3	Ongoing	Data gathering and conversations are taking place
Suite of AI assistants delivered and in use	Time saved, greater efficiency	Adoption, estimate of time saved	CDO	IT	2026 Q4	Early stages	Pilot due to report back to ST end of January 2026 to discuss next steps
New HR Management system (HRM)/Payroll	Integrated services, greater efficiency and reliability. Production of relevant and timely information for Staff team, RCVS Council and committees. To reduce payroll processing time and staff able to access relevant information and documents	Time saved, greater efficiency. Managements accounts produced on time and annual accounts before the audit. Payroll has fewer queries and less manual input.	CDO, Dir Ops, Dir People	People	2026 Q4	Early stages	Expect to set-up PRB in Q4 2025 and appoint firm to create specification and mini-tender in Q2 2026. Review of accounts system after that
Continuous improvement of apps (1CPD, VetGDP etc)	Ongoing enhancement	Phased software releases	CDO	IT	2026 Q4	Ongoing	Ongoing enhancements have been regularly delivered throughout 2025 and will continue in 2026 and beyond
Continuous assessment of the skills and competencies required to deliver College strategy	Employees doing great work, which is appropriately challenging	External view of deliverables, feedback from Council and committees and delivery of the People/payroll budget	People Director with support from CEO and Senior Team	People	2026 Q3	Ongoing	

Managing financial resources appropriately	Planning the use of financial resources for activities agreed by the organisation	Planned activities carried out when expected, and not delayed due to lack of finances	FRC – Dir Ops	Operations	Ongoing		First report to FRC Nov 25
Review of legal advice team and framework at RCVS. Implement clear framework for delivery of legal support to RCVS	Clarity around the framework for the provision of legal advice. QA processes.	Processes are clear and defined. Legal advice is provided in a proportionate and cost-effective way and used effectively	Registrar/ Dir LS	Legal	Early stages	Have started evidence gathering	
Governance review/production of governance handbook	Clarity for RCVS around governance and policies of the college – transparency for public	Produce a governance manual setting out	Council Secretary/Governance Manager	Operations	2025 Q4	Just started the work, a little behind.	Will link in with new website/work with comms.
<b>3. Planning for success and for succession, including a workplace review</b>							
Organisational redesign fit to deliver five-year plan, with the appropriate team structures and future proof skills. Team structures in place with manageable reporting lines and competent leaders	Low attrition and absence rates – work delivered on time with agreed quality	Employee survey results and positive feedback to ST	CEO / People Director / People Manager	People	2026 Q4	Early stages	
Operational Plans prepared	Planning for success	Business as usual plus any planned projects carried out efficiently-less fire fighting	Dir Ops	Operations	2025 Q3	Plans prepared, progress monitoring to be started	Internal Ops plans prepared
Working towards E&S accreditation for the RCVS and Hardwick St	Doing our bit to support sustainability; engaging staff team with this important work	Certification achieved; staff engagement	Facilities Manager	Operations		In discussion with Investors in Environment ref ongoing sustainability; decision to be made regarding priority of certification for building work	TBC
<b>4. Empowering our staff team confidently to deliver on the College's purpose, via competency frameworks and clarity of expectation</b>							
Team members develop through CPD opportunities	Teams develop knowledge, confidence and capability	Completion of CPD; promotion / new roles	People Team	People	2026 Q4	Not started	
As part of the organisational review to change the way decisions are made at staff level, and by whom, and to promote the use of the values in everyday work	Prompt decision making, clarity of accountability and deadlines met	Feedback from Council and delivery of tasks/actions	People Director, supported by People manager with ST consulted	People	2026 Q4	Not started	

Review the RCVS Service Charter	Ensures it meets current expectations	Staff delivering services in line with the charter	Head of Customer Services	Operations	2026 Q4	To be started	Last updated 10 years ago, needs review in light of CMA work
<b>5. Creating a working culture with sound values and supportive management, and enabling and supporting our teams to live up to those values</b>							
Implementing the Employment Rights Bill and continuing to ensure the College is up to date with legislation which impacts employees and protects both the College and its workforce	All managers are competent in all new areas. New policies and procedures in place to align with legal changes	No legal challenges and limited employee relations issues	People Manager with People Director in support	People	2026 Q4	Early stages	Bill passed in Dec 2025, now legislation. Awaiting more details from Government. People team preparing behind the scenes as much as possible.
All teams have an action plan from the Gallup survey and new performance documentation in place. Policies and procedures in good order with clarity for all about how and when to use. Fair and transparent opportunities for learning and progressing within the organisation should be clear	Improved Gallup feedback and positive conversations about the way employees work and feedback on policies and procedures	Low attrition and absence rates and evidence of positive conversations between manager and employee about performance. Minimal questions to People team.	People Director / People Manager with support from ST	People	2026 Q2	Ongoing	Team and organisation actions circulated to employees and preparation will start for the 2026 survey around February
Addressing emerging themes such as the role of the middle manager, hybrid working, employee rights, the role of the employer, the use of technology and conflicting opinions	A satisfied workforce who can deliver on organisational objectives	Employee survey. Low ER cases	People Director and People team	People	2026 Q4	Not started	This work is linked to the organisational design work
<b>6. Providing a working environment that is inclusive, supportive and respectful, to develop everyone's unique strengths, and with zero tolerance for harassment and abuse</b>							
All employees can use Hardwick Street and have clear information to navigate the building. Updated hybrid 'where we work' policy to be written	Good building use and feedback about positive interactions with colleagues whilst using the building	Building usage and improve Gallup scores especially around 'best friend' question (misunderstood)	People and Operations Director with support from CEO	People	2026 Q4	Ongoing	The 'way we work' document for employees is regularly updated and feedback about building use continues to be gathered

To provide an inclusive and accessible workspace	No staff or visitors feel excluded from accessing H Street	Very few complaints	Facilities Team	Operations	Ongoing		
Internal design and branding of Hardwick Street in line with our new visual identity	To illustrate our role, our impact in society and our heritage; to reflect and include those with and for whom we work; and to make the office an engaging, inspiring and rewarding place to work	Completion of each floor, followed by feedback from visitors and staff team		Operations	2026 Q2	Ongoing and on track	Flexibility has been built into these plans to allow for changes to be made over subsequent years. Phase 1 – Q4 2025 Phase 2 - Q2 2026
<b>7. Horizon scanning, and bringing the outside in, via research, collaboration and experience</b>							
Publication of education proposals, developments and impact data	Showcase the work carried out by the department	Relevant reports, academic papers	Dir of Ed	Education	2027 Q4	Early stages	
Monitoring for external risks that may have an impact on RCVS and considering how to mitigate them	Minimise surprises	Being prepared in the event of an external risk occurring	Governance Manager	Operations	Ongoing	Ongoing	
Ongoing research projects including longitudinal study	Gather data to inform policy making	Response rates to data, usable data	Head of PP&I & Research Manager	Executive	Ongoing	Ongoing	Some budget included, but may require DF; research planning day due 23 January
Review and enhance process for legal horizon scanning / cascading	Ensure no surprises ref new legal requirements	Process is implemented	Registrar/DoLS	Legal	2026 Q2	Starting	
<b>8. Taking regular feedback across all our areas of work to ensure ongoing quality improvement</b>							
Taking feedback across all areas of work	Improvement in processes and delivery of services	Regular review of feedback and action plan prepared	Head of Cust Services (& Research Manager)	Operations	2025 Q4	To be started	DF requests or in budget depending on nature of work
Feedback protocol in place for all ST members along with standardised formats for colleagues giving feedback both internally and in recruitment activity New My Progress process rolled out to give quicker feedback	ST understand impact in teams and have plan to address development. Employees feel comfortable to provide feedback, unsuccessful candidates tell positive stories	Reduced developmental areas for ST Reduced internal conflict between employees Positive feedback through external sites such as Glassdoor	People Director and Talent Acquisition Manager	People	2026 Q4	Early stages	Any feedback will be a cultural change for RCVS and will need careful communications, training and ST support

## Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	22 January 2026
Title	European vet school accreditation
Summary	<p>In January 2024, RCVS Council carried out its annual review of the temporary policy in place to recognise graduates from Schools accredited by the European Association for Establishments in Veterinary Education (EAIVE). As in previous years, it was agreed that the policy should remain in place, but for a maximum of five years. The policy should end on 31 January 2029 at the latest and will continue to be reviewed annually until that time. The rationale for the decision was recognition that the accreditation processes of EAIVE were somewhat different to those of RCVS and that new registrants from the EU had been increasing again since the low numbers seen around the time the UK left the EU and the Covid-19 pandemic).</p> <p>Council was also keen to see proposals for a longer-term solution to the temporary policy, specifically plans for the direct accreditation of European Schools by the RCVS. In March 2024 an approach was agreed whereby European veterinary schools would be targeted to offer RCVS accreditation, using criteria for targeting / prioritising schools according to the estimated impact on the UK veterinary workforce and the likelihood of the school successfully achieving RCVS accreditation status. At this time, the proposal to fund such accreditations to make the offer more attractive was not agreed.</p> <p>Annex A details the workforce data up to 2025, and Annex B provides an overview of work to date in offering direct RCVS accreditation to EU programmes.</p> <p>This paper provides an update on progress with seeking more overseas programmes to accredit directly. A history of the previous discussions held by Council can be found in Annex C.</p>
Decisions required	Council to note update and agree on any additional steps to be taken.
Attachments	<p>Annex A: Registration data from EU schools up to 2025</p> <p>Annex B: Schools approached for direct accreditation</p> <p>Annex C: Council minutes extracts regarding temporary decision 2019-2025</p>
Author	<p>Linda Prescott-Clements          Director of Education  <a href="mailto:l.prescott-clements@rcvs.org.uk">l.prescott-clements@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0732</p>

## Classifications

Document	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationales <sup>2</sup>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>2, 3</b>
Annex B	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>2, 3</b>
Annex C	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1</b>

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

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

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

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

## Background

1. Following the departure of the UK from the European Union (EU) in 2020, veterinary graduates from EU schools were no longer eligible to register to work in the UK automatically under the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (MRPQ) legislation.
2. At that time, as approximately half of new RCVS registrants each year were graduates from the EU, this had the potential to have a significant impact on the veterinary workforce in the UK. This was especially concerning given the wider context of capacity shortages within the UK veterinary profession, with challenges in recruitment and retention across all roles. This is particularly true for Official Veterinarian (OV) roles in abattoirs, where the majority of positions are currently filled by EU-qualified veterinarians. OVs play a crucial role in assuring food safety in the UK. There has also been a significant growth in demand for veterinary certification linked to the export of animal products due to EU exit, which has further exacerbated the shortage of veterinary surgeons.
3. Consequently, RCVS Council made a temporary policy decision in 2019 to continue to recognise graduates from schools with programmes approved / accredited by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), to mitigate the impact on the workforce.
4. It was also agreed that this decision should be reviewed annually, as concerns had been raised around EAEVE standards and processes being somewhat different to those in the UK, particularly since the RCVS carried out a comprehensive review and implemented new standards and methodology, focusing more on outcomes, in 2023<sup>1</sup>. A more permanent solution to addressing the shortfall in graduates from the EU registering to work in the UK was requested.
5. An increasing number of schools in the EU are choosing to deliver veterinary programmes in English. This provides them with a 'competitive edge' as it may attract more international students (paying higher fees) and students are often seen to have more opportunities to work globally, including in the UK, when graduating from such programmes. Furthermore, some UK students who are unsuccessful in securing a place at a UK veterinary school are known to apply to EU schools delivering veterinary degrees in English, hoping to return to the UK and work following graduation.
6. Since the temporary policy to recognise graduates from EAEVE-accredited schools was introduced in 2019, it had been reviewed annually in January each year. This review considered a number of factors, including workforce data and RCVS registrations from European graduates, as well as the degree of harmonisation of accreditation standards and processes.
7. Initially, although the number of registrants from European schools had been increasing steadily since the UK left the EU and the pandemic measures were lifted, concerns about workforce numbers remained and a decision to continue with the policy had been made by Council each year, despite concerns around decreasing harmonisation of accreditation standards and different approaches to accreditation. However, in January 2024, Council agreed that a longer-term

<sup>1</sup> The notable differences appear to remain, as RCVS have observed EAEVE visits over recent years (feedback reports previously seen by Council and available on request).

solution should be developed as a priority and a time limit was set for the temporary recognition policy to come to an end in five years' time – aligning with the time taken for a typical cohort to run through a veterinary programme.

8. Establishing multiple, individual recognition agreements with regulatory bodies in European countries and / or their jurisdictions lacks feasibility due to the complex and varied nature of higher education and professional education regulation across Europe. As such, the direct accreditation of targeted veterinary programmes was proposed as a longer-term solution to increasing the accessibility of RCVS registration to European graduates.
9. The direct accreditation of the degree programmes of vet schools in Europe by RCVS would ensure their graduates become (or remain, in the case where EAEVE accreditation is currently in place) eligible to register to work in the UK in the future. This would be pending graduates passing the English language test (if the programme is not taught in English and/or they are not an English national) and securing a visa.
10. In order to maximise the potential positive impact of this option on the UK veterinary workforce, a strategy had been developed to target and prioritise schools according to three criteria:
  - a. Veterinary programmes that are delivered in the English language.
  - b. Veterinary programmes that already have EAEVE accreditation in place (and therefore more likely to be successful obtaining RCVS accreditation).
  - c. Veterinary schools whose graduates have previously shown a tendency to register to work in the UK.
11. Currently, there are a number of perceived barriers for European schools to seek direct RCVS accreditation:
  - a. The temporary policy to recognise graduates from EAEVE-accredited programmes remains in place, therefore their graduates are already recognised for RCVS registration purposes. Despite communication that the policy is 'temporary', schools may feel that this is likely to remain in the longer term<sup>2</sup>.
  - b. The costs involved for overseas accreditations (RCVS charges an accreditation fee of £17,000 + panel travel / subsistence / daily rate costs (which total approximately £52k) for a full RCVS panel).
  - c. The inconvenience and time / staff resources required for an institution to host an accreditation visit.
12. The RCVS developed a proposal for additional funding to mitigate the cost barrier and make RCVS accreditation more attractive to EU vet schools and submitted this to Defra for consideration. However, funding was not approved.

## 2025 update

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<sup>2</sup> Following the Council decision to set a time limit to the policy in January 2024, this has been communicated by EAEVE to members.

13. In March 2024 the proposal previously submitted to Defra to offer a financial incentive for schools wishing to gain RCVS accreditation through the one-off funding of their first accreditation event, was updated and considered by RCVS Council. However, the proposal was not accepted, and the decision was made to not fund direct accreditation at that time, with the Education Department being tasked with inviting EU schools to take up RCVS accreditation at full cost.
14. Since offering a reduction in costs was not an option, the Education Department negotiated with EAEVE to be able to include RCVS representation on a school's next EAEVE accreditation visit, to mitigate against the inconvenience and time/staff resources required for an institution to host an accreditation panel. This would also significantly reduce the costs of the accreditation, as fewer RCVS panel members could be used.
15. Since this agreement has been in place, however, it has not been possible to put into practice. EAEVE processes only allow for an extra two spaces on their accreditation panels, which are to be shared amongst all other interested parties. This includes the RCVS, other overseas accreditors (e.g. the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC)), and any national QA agencies that wish to join<sup>3</sup>. The RCVS requires two representatives, to manage the iterative process of gathering outcomes-based evidence for RCVS standards and recording it that is different to the approach used by EAEVE, as well as the triangulation of evidence review. Without two representatives it would not be possible for the RCVS individual to be able to undertake a thorough assessment against the RCVS standards, and therefore has not, to date, proven to be a viable alternative.
16. Annex B shows the schools that have been approached up until December 2025, and the level of interest shown in direct accreditation. Where schools have responded, initial interest quickly dissipates, despite best efforts, once the costs involved are communicated. There appears to be more interest in a joint visit with EAEVE, but this has not yet been possible as highlighted above.
17. The issue of funding to support this has also been discussed with the Department of Business and Trade (DBT) recently.
18. Since this work began, the registration data continues to be positive with the number of RCVS registrants from schools in Portugal, Spain and Turkey also having increased significantly (Annex A), so it is proposed that schools in these regions should also be targeted for direct accreditation, despite not all of their programmes being taught in English. As EAEVE requires all schools to translate documents into English, and for accreditation visits to be conducted in English, it is also felt that this would not be a barrier to carrying out accreditation activities with these programmes. However, without financial incentives in place, it may also prove to be challenging in attracting interest.

## Decisions

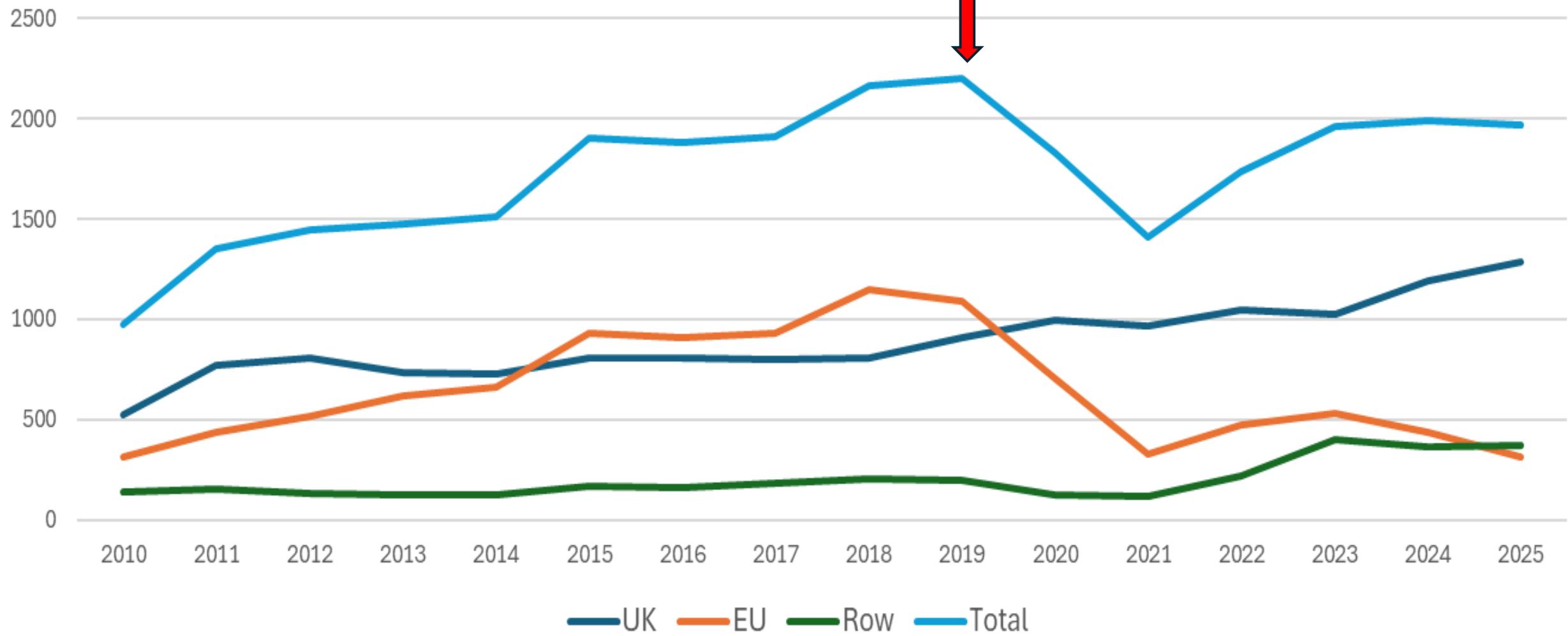
Council is asked to consider this update and decide on the following:

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<sup>3</sup> Part of the EAEVE strategy is to seek national QA agencies to recognise EAEVE accreditation as a policy, therefore such observers are prioritised.

- A. Does the Council wish to maintain the original decision to end the temporary recognition of EAEVE accredited status on 31 January 2029?
- B. Given the challenges around gaining interest from EU schools shown to date, does the Council wish to reconsider the decision to not fund accreditation activity related to EU veterinary programmes?
- C. Whether there are any additional steps the Council wish to see taken to attract more direct accreditation, either with EU schools or wider afield.

## New RCVS Vet Surgeon Registrants per year (practicing)



- Total numbers of new vet registrants each year has almost recovered, following a slump in 2020 (EU exit + Pandemic)
- EU registrants have remained relatively stable since 2020, but registrants from 'Rest of World' are increasing (inc. from Stat Exam).
- Registrants from UK continue to rise steadily, due to increasing cohort numbers at established UK vet schools and graduates beginning to emerge from new vet schools. This will continue as students at Uni Lancashire, SRUC and Aberystwyth graduate in coming years

<b>Meeting</b>	RCVS Council
<b>Date</b>	22 January 2026
<b>Title</b>	Annual report from Public Advisory Group
<b>Classification</b>	Unclassified
<b>Summary</b>	This paper summarises the activity of the Public Advisory Group (PAG) since September 2024. Council is invited to comment on the work that has taken place, and suggest topics for future engagement.
<b>Decisions required</b>	No decision. To discuss the proposed topics for PAG during 2026.
<b>Attachments</b>	Annex A – Terms of Reference for the Public Advisory Group
<b>Author</b>	Kieran Thakrar / EA to CEO and Secretary to PAG <a href="mailto:k.thakrar@rcvs.org.uk">k.thakrar@rcvs.org.uk</a>

## Report from Public Advisory Group

### Background

1. RCVS Council agreed to the setting up of a Public Advisory Group (PAG) in September 2022, and its first meeting took place in September 2023.
2. The purpose of the PAG is to:
  - a. To enable the RCVS to better understand issues affecting the public, so that this can inform future strategy, policy and consultation.
  - b. To act as a sounding board with whom the RCVS can confidentially consult on draft policy whilst under development.
  - c. To support the development and improvement of RCVS services for the public, for example, Find a Vet, Check the Registers and the concerns process.
  - d. To help to pilot and test messages and communications to ensure they are clear and understandable.
3. More recently it has also assisted the RCVS as a public viewpoint on external consultations such as the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).
4. The full terms of reference can be found in **Annex A**.
5. Recruitment of PAG members was carried out by means of a press release to animal owner publications and websites, via social media, and via veterinary practices. A second round of recruitment is scheduled to take place in Q1 2026 to replenish lost members in line with the discussions held at the Council Meeting in March 2025.
6. Although the PAG reports to the Officer Team, it was felt that an annual report to Council would be useful. The last annual report was September 2024 although the discussion regarding the future of the group in March 2025 gave a more recent insight into its work. This report covers the period from September 2024.

### Meetings

7. A meeting took place on 4 September 2024, at which content for the animal owners' section of the website was reviewed, and the Group heard from the CEO of RCVS Knowledge (RCVSK) about the resources available and planned future projects. Updates from the CMA were also included in this meeting.
8. During this meeting, the Group discussed with Knowledge:
  - a. What was important to them in veterinary care.

- b. What information they would like to have to support decisions about diagnosis or treatment options.
- 9. The Group feedback to Knowledge the key areas of concerns from an animal owner perspective to allow RCVSK to focus on producing key documents to assist owners. Content of the animal owners' section was updated accordingly to the feedback provided by PAG.
- 10. At the 27 November 2024 meeting, the content of the animal owners' section was reviewed and finalised. With changes to be the website being made: <https://animalowners.rcvs.org.uk/help-and-advice/whos-who-in-your-veterinary-practice/>
- 11. Further updates of the CMA project were provided by the CEO. Finally, the Director of Education proposed the new Veterinary Clinical Career Pathways (VCCP) to the Group, allowing a public view for the new workstream. The aim of the VCCP was to allow new career opportunities for the Veterinary Profession, and the PAG group discussed the following to provide the RCVS with animal owner insight on the current opinions and views of the different veterinary qualifications and job roles:
  - a. What veterinary roles exist and what they meant in terms of the service they provided.
  - b. What information animal owners felt was important to know when choosing a vet to treat their animal.
  - c. The difference between a vet working within a general practice and a referral practice.
  - d. How information about the clinical team and their qualifications could be better communicated.
- 12. At the 14 February 2025 meeting, the RCVS discussed the initial CMA assumptions and opinions with PAG, to establish how they were viewed from the public's perspective. The key three assumptions that were discussed:
  - a. The CMA was surprised at the minimal emphasis on pricing as a factor, noting that location and word-of-mouth recommendations held greater influence. They suggested this might be due to animal owners lacking sufficient pricing information to make informed decisions and/or perceiving insufficient variation in pricing across practices to justify changing providers.
  - b. Consumers would not switch practice due to insufficient choices.
  - c. The CMA observed a high level of trust between veterinary surgeons and pet owners, which they believed was discouraging clients from asking relevant questions. This, in turn, was perceived to be limiting competition and hindering the effective functioning of the marketplace.
- 13. The Group provided feedback on these assumptions in break-out rooms, which enabled the RCVS to gather feedback and develop an appropriate response to the CMA.

14. The Group also discussed the RCVS Strategic Plan, which would shape the organisation for the next five years. The perception of the plan was positive overall and the Group provided feedback to ensure that greater clarity of the plan for the wider public.
15. A meeting on 6 June 2025, included an update on CMA progress and the RCVS Strategic Plan. The Group provided a public opinion on the proposed changes by the CMA, including what they thought the RCVS could realistically implement and the effect it would have on the public.
16. The Group also discussed the role of veterinary nurses in the veterinary team with the Director of Veterinary Nursing, with key takeaways including:
  - a. A lack of awareness on what vet nurses were allowed to do and what training / qualifications they had.
  - b. Animal owners were keen for nurses to be more involved and be front-facing.
  - c. Clarity would be beneficial on who ran the practice and what each staff member could provide in terms of care (via a staff board or organisational chart).
17. The 6 October 2025 meeting included the VCCP project team providing proposed definitions of clinical roles, and asked the Group to provide feedback on the following questions:
  - a. How clear and easy to understand are the descriptions of each role (Vet GP, Advanced Practitioner, Specialist)? Do they match what you would expect from those roles?
  - b. Do these descriptions help you, as a member of the public, understand who does what in the veterinary team? Is there anything missing that would make them more helpful?
  - c. What do you think is the best way to share these role definitions with the public so that people know who to turn to for animal care?
18. The Group also reviewed the proposed consumer-facing standards in the Practice Standards Scheme and provided feedback to the RCVS on their thoughts.
19. The most recent meeting was held on 17 December 2025. Some members did not claim a fee for their participation in these meetings, so it was decided from these fees that £1,500 would be donated to two charities (PDSA and Horse Trust), for a combined RCVS PAG donation of £3,000. The Group discussed the new Veterinary Surgeons Act, the CMA and Find-A-Vet. It was agreed that user testing for Find-A-Vet would occur shortly, in Q1 2026.

#### **Review**

20. As can be seen from the ToR (Annex A) the PAG was originally to be active for one year and reviewed their after. In September 2024, Council agreed to continue PAG until the completion of the first workstream, with a further review of the Group upon completion of this project. In June 2025, Council agreed for PAG to be a permanent group.

21. The work of the Group has been very useful, has helped across multiple departments within the RCVS, and has provided the College with a confidential group of public members for opinions, user-testing and veterinary regulator advancements before publishing our work to the wider public. The Group has been cited in communication with the CMA and seen as a positive development. Feedback from members of the group was sought via a survey in 2025 (discussed at the March 2025 Council meeting) and was also very positive, with many citing that the structure, governance and culture of the group is much more conducive to successful outcomes and inclusion than other groups that some members sit on in different contexts. Successes of the Group, has led to a real world impact on improving our relations with the public, examples can be found on our website: <https://animalowners.rcvs.org.uk/help-and-advice/whos-who-in-your-veterinary-practice/>

#### **The future**

22. The future topics for the Group in 2026 include but are not limited to: Find a Vet User Testing, CMA, Veterinary Surgeons Act, Under Care review, Veterinary Clinical Career Pathways.
23. Meetings are generally held quarterly, although there is scope for them to be held on an ad-hoc basis if the Officer Team or Executive Team feel there is a legitimate business need to consult the group, or for discussion/input to be received via email. We will continue to report to Council on a roughly annual basis.
24. Comments from Council on the report, and the future topics, are welcome.

## Annex A – About the Public Advisory Group

1. The Public Advisory Group (PAG) exists to support the activities of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, which are to set, uphold and advance the educational, ethical and clinical standards of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, in the interests of animal health and welfare and public health. The RCVS works in the public interest and the PAG will help to ensure that this objective is met.
2. Its members will comprise users of veterinary services and will include, but not be limited to, owners/keepers of companion animals, and equine and production animals. A pool of members will be selected, from whom smaller groups will be drawn to focus on specific tasks.
3. The PAG will be chaired by a member of RCVS Council, decided by the Officer team based on applications.
4. Terms of reference are as follows:
  - a. To enable the RCVS to better understand issues affecting the public, so that this can inform future strategy, policy and consultation
  - b. To act as a sounding board with whom the RCVS can confidentially consult on draft policy whilst under development
  - c. To support the development and improvement of RCVS services for the public, for example, Find a Vet, Check the Registers and the concerns process
  - d. To help to pilot and test messages and communications to ensure they are clear and understandable
5. The PAG will report to the Officer Team. Members will be regularly rotated and are likely to serve for between two and four years.
6. The PAG will not decide on College policy or strategy.
7. Members of the PAG will be compensated for attending meetings at the same rate as RCVS Council members. Where possible, meetings will be held online, to improve access, diversity and inclusion, and reduce the environmental impact.
8. The Group will initially be set up for a 12-month pilot and reviewed thereafter.

## Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	22 January 2026
Title	Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report describes the work of the Preliminary Investigation Committee since RCVS Council's last meeting, including by reference to key stage indicators, and provides information about the nature of concerns being considered by the RCVS.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	Chris Murdoch Senior Case Manager <a href="mailto:c.murdoch@rcvs.org.uk">c.murdoch@rcvs.org.uk</a>  Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct <a href="mailto:g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk">g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk</a>

## Classifications

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

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

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

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

## Preliminary Investigation Committee

### Report to Council January 2026

#### Introduction

1. This report provides information about the activities of the Preliminary Investigation Committee since the last report and covers the period 8 November 2025 to 9 January 2026.
2. Since the last Report to Council there have been four Stage two Preliminary Investigation Committee (S2PIC) meetings (19 November, 3 December, 17 December and 7 January).

#### New cases considered by the S2PIC

3. The total number of new cases considered by the S2PIC at the four meetings referred to above is 18. Of the 18 new cases considered:
  - 3 were concluded at first consideration by the Committee.
  - 15 were referred for further investigation, that is, further enquiries, visits and/or preliminary expert reports.
  - No cases were referred to the Disciplinary Committee.
4. No cases have been referred to the RCVS Performance or Health Protocols in the reporting period.

#### Ongoing Investigations

5. The S2PIC is currently investigating 39 ongoing cases where the Committee has requested statements, visits or preliminary expert reports (for example).

#### Health Protocol

6. There are no veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Health Protocol.

#### Performance Protocol

7. There is one veterinary surgeon 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 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 8 November 2025 to 9 January 2026:
  - the number of matters registered as Enquiries was 529; and,
  - the number of formal Concerns registered in the same period was 118.

10. In order to demonstrate the trend in case numbers, the number of concerns registered per calendar year for the last six years is below:

- 12 months to end of December 2025 759
- 12 months to end of December 2024 667
- 12 months to end of December 2023 614
- 12 months to end of December 2022 544
- 12 months to end of December 2021 683
- 12 months to end of December 2020 509

11. The table below shows the categories of matters registered as Concerns between 8 November 2025 and 9 January 2026.

***Concerns registered between 8 November 2025 and 9 January 2026***

Description of Category	Number of Cases
- Advertising and publicity	0
- Certification	1
- Client confidentiality	0
- Clinical and client records	2
- Clinical governance	0
- Communication and consent	4
- Communication between professional colleagues	1
- Conviction	0
- CPD compliance	0
- Delegation to veterinary nurses	2
- Equine pre-purchase examinations	1
- Euthanasia of animals	5
- Euthanasia of animals – 'Tuk's law'	1
- Fair trading requirements	0
- Giving evidence for court	0
- Health case ( <i>potential</i> )	0
- Illegal practice ( <i>potential</i> )	0
- Microchipping	1
- Miscellaneous	0
- Named veterinary surgeons	0
- Practice information, fees & animal insurance	1
- Performance case ( <i>potential</i> )	0
- Recognised veterinary practice	0
- Referrals and second opinions	1

- 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 - general	49
- Veterinary care – surgical errors/complications	5
- Veterinary care – unnecessary treatment/diagnostic work	4
- Veterinary care – unfit discharge/post-op complications	8
- Veterinary care – missed or misdiagnosis	10
- Veterinary medicines	6
- Veterinary medicines – application of factors without physical examination	0
- Veterinary medicines – prescribing CDs/antimicrobials without physical examination	1
- Veterinary medicines – ‘under care’ query, other	1
- Veterinary teams and leaders	0
- Whistle-blowing	2
- 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief	3
- Unassigned	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>

*Data source – Profcon computer system concerns data.*

#### **Referral to Disciplinary Committee**

12. In the period 8 November 2025 to 9 January 2026, the Committee has referred two cases involving two veterinary surgeons to the Disciplinary Committee (DC).

#### **Referral to Charter Case Committee**

13. In the period 8 November 2025 to 9 January 2026, two cases have been referred to the Charter Case Committee.

#### **Veterinary Investigators**

14. The Chief Investigator and Veterinary Investigators have not undertaken any visits since the last report.

#### **Concerns procedure**

15. As Council is aware, the process for the consideration of concerns at Stage one changed at the beginning of October 2022. The median number of weeks in which cases concluded at Stage one can be seen below.

<b>Month in which case concluded</b>	<b>Median number of weeks taken</b>
February 2023	13
March 2023	13.3

April 2023	14.9
May 2023	14.3
June 2023	14.4
July 2023	15
August 2023	15.9
September 2023	13.4
October 2023	12.6
November 2023	18.3
December 2023	11.5
January 2024	16
February 2024	15
March 2024	17.6
April 2024	15
May 2024	12.9
June 2024	19.9
July 2024	11.9
August 2024	15.2
September 2024	13.9
October 2024	12
November 2024	14.4
December 2024	15.9
January 2025	17.4
February 2025	13.4
March 2025	14.3
April 2025	10.1
May 2025	14.7
June 2025	15
July 2025	18.9
August 2025	17.1
September 2025	18
October 2025	14
November 2025	16.2
December 2025	19.1

16. PIC/DC Liaison Committee considered detailed information on the time taken by cases at Stage one at its meeting in October and discussed a new KPI timeframe in light of the data provided and the steps involved in the process. The Liaison Committee concluded that six months was an appropriate timeframe. It also concluded that it would still be helpful to provide median times taken, as this is a good indicator of the most likely duration of matters for those involved in the process.

17. In line with the above KPI, cases that commenced in September and October 2023 have been assessed retrospectively to determine what percentage of them met the six-month KPI. These can be seen below, and we continue to report on this percentage in the future.

18.

Month case started	Cases that met KPI
October 2023	94%
November 2023	87%

December 2023	84%
January 2024	86%
February 2024	93%
March 2024	87%
April 2024	90%
May 2024	85%
June 2024	75%
July 2024	97%
August 2024	91%
September 2024	91%
October 2024	91%
November 2024	94%
December 2024	86%
January 2025	94%
February 2025	79%
March 2025	90%
April 2025	85%
May 2025	89%
June 2025	84%

19. The Stage 2 KPI is currently for the PIC to reach a decision on simple cases before it within seven months. A case is deemed to be complex where the PIC requests that witness statements and/or expert evidence be obtained. At its meeting in May 2024, PIC/DC Liaison Committee, having undertaken a full review of the Stage 2 KPI, concluded that it was not appropriate to have a KPI for complex cases, in view of the specific complexities of each case. Cases are reported in detail to that Committee, which is able to discuss and monitor performance accordingly.
20. In the period 8 November 2025 to 12 January 2026, the S2PIC reached a decision (to close, refer to the Charter Case Committee, or refer to DC) within the relevant KPI in two out of three simple cases.
21. Eight complex cases were decided. In accordance with the above, these cases (and the work of the department in general) are reported and discussed in detail at the PIC/DC Liaison Committee meeting.

#### **Illegal practice**

22. The Chief Investigator is currently on leave, so an update on the illegal practice matters will be provided to Council on the next occasion, with apologies for the inconvenience.

## Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	22 January 2026
Title	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report sets out the work of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
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## Classifications

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

## 1 Classifications explained

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

## 2 Classification rationales

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

## Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

### Report to Council

#### Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Council, there has been one meeting of the Stage 2 VN PIC, which took place on 16 December 2025.

#### RVN Concerns received / registered

2. In the period 8 November 2025 and 12 January 2026, there were 12 new Concerns registered relating to RVNs. Of these 12 new Concerns:
  - All cases are currently under investigation by a Case Manager, Veterinary Nurse, Veterinary surgeon, and a lay member (Stage 1 VNPIC).

#### RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. No new cases have been considered by the Stage 2 VNPIC between 8 November 2025 and 12 January 2026. At the meeting on 16 December 2025, one ongoing case was decided. The case was closed with no further action.

#### Ongoing Investigations

4. Five concerns are currently under investigation by the Stage 2 VN PIC, and these will be returned to the Committee for a decision in due course.

#### Health Concerns

5. There are currently no RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Health Protocol.

#### Performance Concerns

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

#### Referral to Disciplinary Committee

7. Since the last report, no cases have been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

#### Referral to Charter Case Committee

8. Since the last report, no cases have been referred to the Charter Case Committee.

#### Disciplinary Hearings

9. Since the last report, one disciplinary hearing has taken place in relation to two veterinary nurses. The hearing took place between 15 and 18 December 2025. The charges in relation to the first Respondent related to anaesthetising and/or monitoring the anaesthetic of a dog (Nessa), belonging to the second Respondent, without direction of and/or supervision by a registered veterinary surgeon. Prescribing and/or dispensing meloxicam (Metacam oral suspension), a prescription only medicine, to Nessa without the direction of or supervision by a registered veterinary surgeon; and/or making entries in the clinical records for their own dog, when those entries related to a procedure and/or medication given to Nessa. The Disciplinary Committee

found the first Respondent guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect and decided to issue a reprimand.

10. The charges in relation to the second Respondent related to allowing their dog, Nessa, to be anaesthetised and/or undergo monitoring of anaesthesia by the first Respondent, without the direction of and/or supervision by a registered veterinary surgeon; and/or placing a cannula in Nessa without the direction of and/or supervision by a registered veterinary surgeon; and/or performed a descale and polish dental procedure on Nessa without the direction of and/or supervision by a registered veterinary surgeon. The second Respondent was found not guilty of disgraceful conduct.