

Council Meeting

Thursday, 18 March 2021 at 10:00 am to be held remotely by Microsoft Teams

Agenda	Classification ¹	Rationale ²
1. President's introduction	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2. Apologies for absence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3. Declaration of interests	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
4. Minutes of the meeting held 21 January 2021		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Private / Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5. Matters arising		
a. Obituaries	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Council correspondence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. CEO update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
6. Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)		
a. EU-exit – temporary registration	Unclassified	n/a
b. Covid-19 Taskforce	Unclassified	n/a
c. Veterinary Graduate Development Programme – changes to Code of Professional Conduct	Unclassified	n/a
7. Reports of standing committees – to note		
a. Advancement of the Professions Committee	Unclassified	n/a
b. Audit and Risk Committee		
i. Meeting held 12 November 2020 – Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Meeting held 12 November 2020 – Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

iii. Meeting held 11 February 2021 – Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
iv. Meeting held 11 February 2021 – Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
c. Education Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1
d. Finance and Resources Committee		
ii. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
iii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4
e. Standards Committee		
i. Meeting held 12 January 2021 – Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Meeting held 12 January 2021 – Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3
iii. Meeting held 8 February 2021 – Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
iv. Meeting held 8 February 2021 – Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3
f. Veterinary Nurses Council		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4
g. PIC / DC Liaison Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	4
8. Reports of statutory committees – to note		
a. Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
b. RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
c. Disciplinary Committee and RVN Disciplinary Committee	Unclassified	n/a
9. Notices of motion	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
10. Questions	Oral report Unclassified	n/a

11. Recommendation for the appointment of Officers – President and Vice-President (Senior) respectively, for confirmation at the AGM on 9 July 2021	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
12. Election of Vice-President (Junior) – recommendation for confirmation at the AGM on 9 July 2021	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
13. Election of Treasurer – recommendation for confirmation at the AGM on 9 July 2021	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
14. Other elections		
a. Chair, Advancement of the Professions Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Chair, Education Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. Chair, Standards Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
15. Any other College business (unclassified)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
16. Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
17. Date of next meeting Thursday, 10 June 2021 at 10:00 am (reconvening in the afternoon)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
18. Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)		
a. Veterinary Medicines Directorate discussion	Private / Confidential	1, 2, 3, 5
b. Estates Strategy - update	Confidential	# TBC
c. Draft accounts 2020	Confidential	1
d. RCVS Honours and Awards	Private / Confidential	1, 5
19. Any other College business (confidential items)	Oral report Confidential	# TBC
20. Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)	Oral report Confidential	# TBC

Dawn Wiggins Secretary, RCVS Council 020 7202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk		
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¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
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²Classification rationales

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

Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	January 2021 Council minutes
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 21 January 2021
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0737

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

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Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 21 January 2021

Members:

Dr M O Greene (President in the Chair)	
Dr C J Allen	Mrs C-L McLaughlan
Mrs B S Andrews-Jones	Dr S Paterson
Miss L Belton	Mr M L Peaty
Professor D Bray	Mr M E Rendle
Mr J M Castle	Dr K A Richards
Dr D S Chambers	Dr C L Scudamore
Dr N T Connell	Dr N C Smith
Professor S Dawson	Dr R S Stephenson
Dr M A Donald	Dr C W Tufnell
Dr J M Dyer	Mr T J Walker
Ms L Ford	Professor J L N Wood
Mr D J Leicester	Ms J S M Worthington

*Absent

In attendance:

Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C McCann	Assistant Registrar / Director of Operations (DoO)
Miss C H Middlemiss	(UK) Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) (Observer) (Agenda item 14a only)

Guests:

Ms C Ashcroft	<i>Visionline</i> (mrcvs.co.uk)
Mr J Bourne	Defra (Agenda Item 14a only)
Ms E Butler	Chair, Audit and Risk Committee
Mr J H Davies	
Ms A De Banks	<i>Visionline</i> (mrcvs.co.uk)
Miss S Grimley	
Mr P Imrie	<i>Veterinary Times</i>
Dr P J Lhermette	
Ms C Newton-Ransom	<i>Visionline</i> (mrcvs.co.uk)
Mr J S Russell	President, British Veterinary Association
Mr J Westgate	<i>Veterinary Times</i>

President's introduction

1. The President extended a warm welcome to guests and outlined the order of the meeting.

Apologies for absence

2. There were no apologies for absence received.

Declarations of interest

3. New declarations of interest were received from:
 - Dr Paterson: was now a Trustee of Battersea Dogs and Cats Home;
 - Dr Richards: had undertaken government-funded Official Veterinarian (OV) training;
 - Dr Tufnell: had undertaken government-funded OV training.

Minutes

(Remote) Decisions taken by email and / or Boardpacks between 22 – 28 October 2020

4. Council had had the opportunity to comment on the unclassified minutes and classified appendix electronically.

Minutes of the meeting held 5 November 2020

5. Council had had the opportunity to comment on the unclassified minutes and classified appendix electronically.

(Remote) Decisions taken by email and / or Boardpacks between 3 November – 14 December 2020

6. Council had had the opportunity to comment on the unclassified minutes and classified appendix electronically.

Classified appendix of the confidential meeting held 22 December 2020

7. Council had had the opportunity to comment on the classified appendix electronically.
8. A vote was taken to approve the above four sets of minutes and classified appendices:

For:	25
Against:	0
Abstentions:	0
Did not vote:	0

9. Dr Tufnell submitted an oral vote, and Ms Worthington submitted a vote by email, as they experienced technical difficulties.
10. The minutes and classified appendices were accepted as true records of the meetings, and decisions taken by email and / or Boardpacks, by a unanimous vote.

Matters arising

Obituaries

11. No written obituaries had been received. Council was encouraged to have a moment of quiet reflection following the meeting for all members who had passed since the last meeting, and for the on-going difficulties resulting from the current pandemic.

Council correspondence

12. The President reported:

RCVS Council Election 2021

13. A reminder that the deadline for submissions for the forthcoming RCVS Council election was 5:00 pm on 31 January 2021. Current Council members were not permitted to nominate anyone to stand for Council and if retiring members intended to re-stand, registered addresses were to be used on the Nomination Form.

Elections for: Vice-President (Junior), Treasurer, Chairs of Advancement of the Professions, Education, and Standards, Committees for the College year July 2021 – July 2022

14. A further reminder that any member of Council could apply for those roles; the deadline for submissions was 5:00 pm on Tuesday, 16 February 2021; nominations would be a matter for election at the scheduled March 2021 Council meeting. Whilst convention was that a Chair was in place for three years, this was subject to election annually. It was noted that Professor Dawson was stepping down from the role of Treasurer, and from Council as a Veterinary Schools Council representative, from RCVS Day in July so convention would not apply.

External Recruitment for Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC), Disciplinary Committee (DC), Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)

15. Recruitment for members of statutory committees, and for a member of Audit and Risk Committee, would commence shortly. Members of those committees were on staggered terms and the College had a rolling recruitment process; selected candidates would be put before Council for ratification at a later date.

CEO update

16. The CEO introduced the paper before Council that provided an update on the range of work undertaken within the Strategic Plan, and highlighted:
 - a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy would be published shortly that would include activities from student recruitment through to retention of veterinary professionals;

- work was still ongoing with the Council Culture plan: an updated Role of Council Members had been prepared in time to go live for the forthcoming RCVS Council election; and a workshop was planned for March 2021 Council;
- the Covid-19 Taskforce continued to deal with matters raised by the pandemic: virtual Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) assessments were taking place; vet schools provided regular updates; multiple amendments had been made to the Covid flowcharts and Frequently-Asked Questions (FAQs);
- there were increasing amounts of queries from both the veterinary profession and the public around EU-exit and thanks given to the teams handling those.

17. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:

- it was good to see a written update of the work undertaken around the College's Strategic Plan and requested more of them throughout the year;
 - o Officers had agreed that a written report should go to Council in January, June, and September annually, and an oral report at all other times. However, if that was not enough, this could be increased, just inform the CEO accordingly;
- the *Veterinary Record* had submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the College asking for the amount it had cost to investigate leaks of confidential information in 2020; this had been provided and thus reported to the profession – however, the figure had not been brought to Council's attention prior to it being published;
 - o the College received a lot of FOIA requests, not all of which were reported to Council, however, the point was noted;
 - o the President pointed out that, whilst it was not an inconsiderable sum, it was worthwhile remembering there would not have been a cost at all, if confidentiality had been maintained;
- there was a theme of references to 'end users' of veterinary services and public engagement throughout the report; there were logical challenges because of the pandemic but more focus would be welcomed around what actions were underway to take this forward;
 - o there was a new Head of Insight and Engagement at the College who would report to the CEO. They would be working on public and professions engagement, as well as the structure and processes around 'patient' groups that would filter through College committees in the next few months. There would also be more done to better support teams, in particular, those working with members of the professions and the public who were struggling in difficult circumstances, which had an emotional impact on staff, and more training for staff to ensure they were better able to cope. Council was reminded it was a five-year plan;

- so much had been achieved over a difficult period; ordinarily, a lot of management was done in person when walking around a building, but that was impossible with Covid restrictions, so it was appreciated that managing a term under these circumstances was difficult. The CEO and her team were thanked for their work;
- was it possible to update Council on staff morale and how they were coping, and whether any staff members had Covid?
 - o as a whole, staff were resilient and optimistic; there was a regular Peakon survey completed by staff about general matters; support provided for staff that were struggling with home-schooling, with the option of being furloughed if matters could be suitably rearranged within the team; flexible working hours; fundraising activities encouraged to bring people together e.g. Blooming Monday, where money was raised for mental health with people wearing their brightest clothes to counterbalance what was traditionally known as the 'bluest' (most depressive) day of the year, and so on. The office would not re-open until it was safe to do so;
 - o there were some members self-isolating after being contacted through the NHS Test and Trace system, and a handful of actual cases of Covid.

18. The report was noted.

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

Covid-19 Taskforce

19. This item had no papers and was a standing item for decision on Taskforce continuance as agreed at the October 2020 Council meeting:

For:	25
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	0

20. Mrs Andrews-Jones and Mr Rendle experienced technical difficulties and submitted email votes.

21. The continuance of the Covid-19 Taskforce was agreed by a unanimous vote.

Discretionary Fund

22. The DoO informed Council that one application had been made to the Discretionary Fund for the amount of £23,433 for work on the e-learning module of the Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP); this work would be completed by May 2021 and would come out of the 2020 Fund.

23. The update was noted.

Education update

24. Dr Paterson provided an update on educational matters, highlighting:

- veterinary schools: Education Committee received quarterly updates from veterinary schools and reassured Council that standards were being maintained; there had been some real innovations put into place due to the pandemic;
- extra-mural studies (EMS): this continued to be monitored with feedback received from EMS co-ordinators based at veterinary schools; this would be kept under review;
- VetGDP: this had been developed after consultation with the profession following the Graduate Outcome consultation; the Professional Development Phase (PDP) was no longer fit for purpose, and the profession had asked the College to 'be brave' and make a difference to veterinary graduates with consistent support. There had been overwhelming support from the profession:
 - o 832 members had registered their interest in becoming a VetGDP Advisor to date, and that number was rising;
 - o the average number of years registered was 15 (in practice), from every region of the UK including the Channel Islands;
 - o the areas currently without any members having registered interest were the Isle of Wight, Isle of Mann, and Shetland Isles;
 - o zoom workshops had been arranged with final-year students and were ongoing;
 - o updates on the programme would be made at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) student conference due to take place at the weekend;
 - o the Major Employers Group (MEG) had sought clarification on some areas but supported the programme.

The difficulties experienced by the profession at this time were recognised and reassurance given that the immediate focus was on engaging with the programme and registering interest, rather than meeting a deadline to complete training.

25. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:

- this was great work. In January 2020, it was thought that there would be a pilot programme, was that still going to happen?
 - o no, it was felt to be more important to go live with the programme as soon as possible and it was scheduled for June 2021 in order to support this year's new graduates;
- as a non-practising veterinarian it was not possible to register for the e-learning to become a VetGDP Advisor and it was important to highlight that there was a pool of people interested in giving back to the profession who were currently unable to do so;

- there was some anxiety amongst students about not being able to get a job and the programme not being rolled out in time. More information should be provided to students that it was about engagement not completion of the programme;
- o a list of FAQs was being compiled for the College website along with a helpline number; presentations were being recorded and would be made available to students; training would be available hopefully from April, whilst recognising that everyone was under pressure and there would be no fixed deadline to complete the training.

26. The update was noted.

Practice Standard Scheme (PSS) – updates

Dr Chambers declared an interest as he worked for one of the only equine practices that currently offered out-of-hours work.

27. The Registrar outlined the paper, highlighting:

- historically it had been veterinary surgeons as assessors; amendments would allow veterinary nurses to undertake the massively important role in the practice;
- the timeframe of assessments would be amended so that should a practice move from one group to another it would prevent them from 'falling through the cracks' and remain compliant with Veterinary Medicine Regulations (VMR) four-yearly checks;
- the introduction of a new ambulatory provision of emergency service clinics (ESCs) in the equine sphere – this had been in place for a number of years for small animal services and was now expanding for equine services; it was emphasised that it was not stating that ESCs were better but more about how the veterinary practice operated on a daily basis, with assessments and accreditation by PSS;
- the specifics of the proposed changes had been approved by Practice Standards Group (PSG) and Standards Committee (SC), however, if Council had any specific points they wished to raise, they could be fed back.

28. It was commented that the proposal for RVNs to become assessors was really pleasing and a great step forward.

29. Council was asked to vote on the proposals detailed in the paper as a whole package:

- a. approve the new Practice Standards Scheme Equine Emergency Services Clinic accreditation, for publication and assessment in line with the launch of the new version of the Practice Standards;
- b. agree to the following:
 - i. the inclusion of RVNs as PSS Assessors and;

- ii. to change the wording in the PSS Rules to read: *'To be at least five years qualified as an MRCVS or RVN'*
- c. approve the amendment to the Practice Standards Scheme Rules wording relating to timeframes for assessment of practices acquired by an existing PSS practice group.

For:	25
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	0

30. The amendments were agreed by a unanimous vote.

Reports of standing committees – to note

31. The President reported that there was no report from Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) before Council as its meeting in November 2020 had been cancelled due to lack of business to discuss.

Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

32. The Vice-Chair thanked staff for their hard work and ongoing successes, in particular for: the Mind Matters Initiative; the Edward Jenner Leadership Programme; innovation podcasts by ViVet; and the Fellowship, that was currently seeking applications. He also welcomed the new Environment and Sustainability Working Group that would explore strategic and innovative areas.

33. It was questioned who the target audience was with regards to the Edward Jenner programme – was it for veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses, or the whole team? It could be used to improve training across the board. Furthermore, was it possible to link mentors in with those on the VetGDP to prevent duplication? It was noted that the programme did not link very well to ambulatory work and confirmed that it was relevant to all staff of the vet-led team and to extend it to lay staff would be positively received.

34. The report was noted.

Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)

35. The Chair outlined the reports before Council and drew attention to the forthcoming audit. It was confirmed the audit would still take place even when staff continued to work remotely; the focus would be on the impact of Covid-19 on the organisation and, whilst the Committee did not have an immediate worry, the College was still required to demonstrate it was a 'going concern' and consideration would be given to how decisions had been made during the pandemic. The Estates Strategy would be a second area of particular focus.

36. As requested by Council, the Committee had considered lobbying and how it could be recorded. Most public bodies were subject to lobbying. The College had good policies regarding declaration of interests; hospitality; talking to the media; and professional conduct and it was more about defining 'good' or 'bad' lobbying – talking to people about the profession and issues that impacted

upon it was a good thing and promoted transparency, and it would not be proportionate to record every conversation. She did not recommend a formal lobbying register.

37. As the current Chair was due to step down from the Committee in July, recruitment for a new member of the Committee would commence shortly and it was strongly recommended that the College seek someone with an accountancy qualification. Furthermore, the other two external members of the Committee's terms were also due to end in July, but it was possible to extend their membership by a further term of four years; it was recommended this was done. Both were valuable members of the Committee and it was hoped – subject to term extensions – that one of them would stand as Chair of the Committee going forward.
38. The Committee was in awe of the amount of governance work the team had done during this difficult time particularly around the Corporate Risk Register and assurance mapping.
39. It was questioned what a 'going concern' was and confirmed that it was the basis on which accounts were prepared i.e. on the basis that the organisation could continue to operate. To make such an assumption, cashflow and future intentions would be considered; the College's income was relatively stable, but the auditor would look at the sustainability of the organisation as a whole.
40. The CEO confirmed that membership of the Committee would come before Council at a future meeting for ratification.
41. The reports and classified appendices were noted.

Education Committee (EC)

42. Council had received an update from the Chair on work undertaken by the Committee and the Education Department earlier in the meeting.
43. There were no comments or questions, and the report and classified appendix were noted.

Finance and Resources Committee (FRC)

44. The Chair outlined the report from the meeting held in November 2020. It was noted that the activities of other standing committees provided the basis of the Committee's work, and that two new Working Parties had been approved: Registration Committee now had a Veterinary Technicians Working Party to investigate a proposal for regulation of veterinary technicians; and the Advancement of the Professions Committee now had an Environmental and Sustainability Working Party to consider and create a formal environment and sustainability policy for the RCVS.
45. There were no comments or questions, and the report and classified appendix were noted.

Registration Committee (RC)

46. The Chair reported that there had been a short meeting in October 2020 when the Terms of Reference for the Veterinary Technicians Working Party had been agreed. Ms Ford had been confirmed as Chair of the Working Party.

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

Standards Committee (SC)

48. The Chair stated that the Committee had met three times since November; the minutes from the last meeting were not yet available as the meeting had been held after the papers for the Council meeting were sent out.

49. The Standards and Advice Team continued to field an enormous number of calls and emails, 50% of which were currently Covid-related. Other work of the Team and Committee included: the Registered Veterinary Practice (RVP) framework was being amended to become more user-friendly; PSS virtual assessments continued; a pragmatic approach to certification was being considered regarding EU-exit; and a remote prescribing survey under the Under Care / Out of Hours consultation 'umbrella' was being developed.

50. There were no comments or questions, and the reports and classified appendices were noted.

Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee (PIC/DC LC)

51. In the absence of the Vice-Chair the Registrar introduced the report. There were no comments or questions, the report and classified appendix were noted.

Reports of statutory committees – to note

Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)

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

Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

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

Disciplinary Committee (DC)

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

Notices of Motion

55. There were no notices of motion received.

Questions

56. There were no questions received.

Any other College business (unclassified)

57. There was no other College business identified from the public session of the meeting.

Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified)

58. There were no unclassified items identified from the public session of the meeting.

Date of next meeting

59. The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, 18 March 2021 commencing at 10:00 am (reconvening in the afternoon).

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

Certification

60. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 – 10.

Estates Strategy – update

61. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 11 – 13.

Annual retention fee payment arrangements for veterinary surgeons 2021 – 2022

62. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 14 – 19.

Diploma of Fellowship – ratification

63. The Chair, EC, reported that the Thesis had already been considered by the Fellowship Sub-Committee, and Education Committee, and was now before Council for ratification.

64. The award of Diploma of Fellowship to Mr Michael Glover MRCVS by Thesis entitled: *“An 11-year study of factors associated with the reproductive performance of 11,493 ewes inseminated laparoscopically”* was ratified by Council.

65. Mr Glover would be congratulated for submitting a very detailed study.

66. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 20 – 21.

VetGDP – updates to Code of Professional Conduct

67. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 22 – 27.

RCVS Council lay membership – term extension

68. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 28 – 35.

Any other College business (confidential items)

69. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 36 – 47.

Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)

70. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 48 – 49.

71. The meeting was brought to a close.

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Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	Proposal to RCVS for Temporary Registration of Official Veterinarians (OVs)
Summary	This paper outlines relevant matters in the consideration of the proposal from Defra as set out in Annex B that suitably qualified and supervised non-UK qualified vets be permitted to register on the RCVS Temporary Register and undertake certain specific functions as official veterinarians (OVs).
Decisions required	Council is asked to consider the Defra proposals and to decide if, in principle, it agrees to the temporary registration of suitably qualified and supervised non-UK qualified vets to undertake certain specific functions as official veterinarians (OVs).
Attachments	Annex A – Extract of Council meeting of 21 January 2021 (Confidential) ; Annex B – Defra proposal; Annex C – Guidelines for Temporary Registration / application form.
Author	Eleanor Ferguson Registrar e.ferguson@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0718

Classifications

Document	Classification	Rationales
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4.
Annex B	Unclassified	n/a
Annex C	Unclassified	n/a

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Background

1. Council will recall that at its meeting in January, the CVO outlined veterinary resource issues post-EU – Exit around OVs – both those working directly in official controls / abattoirs and those carrying out export certification. By way of a reminder, the classified minutes of that discussion are set out in **Annex A**.
2. Defra has now come back with concrete proposals for consideration by Council – these are set out in full in the Defra paper in **Annex B**.

The position under the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966 – ‘full’ registration

3. The VSA sets out the routes for registration for veterinary surgeons to practice in the UK. These are what you are familiar with, for example, via the UK veterinary schools and the Statutory Examination for Membership and, prior to EU-Exit, also included via The Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (MRPQ) for those graduating from EU veterinary schools. The MRPQ route has fallen away post-EU-Exit and, as of 1 January 2021, the RCVS has implemented new post-Brexit policies on the registration of European-qualified veterinary surgeons as agreed by RCVS Council. European qualifications are now recognised in accordance with the ‘interim EAEVE policy’, with graduates from veterinary schools without EAEVE approval or accreditation (approximately 15% on recent trends) being required to sit the Statutory Examination for Membership. European graduates who do not have English as a first language or who did not study in English are required to meet the same English language qualification requirements as other overseas nationals, i.e. IELTS Level 7 or the OET Grade B, regardless of whether or not they have a degree from an EAEVE-accredited school. This is effectively an increase in standards assurance compared to when the MRPQ Directive applied, and this was seen as the key benefit to veterinary regulation of the UK’s withdrawal from the UK, notwithstanding the potential negative impact on the veterinary workforce as prior to this there was no ability to require specific levels of English.

The position under the VSA – temporary registration

4. Temporary registration is intended for use where all avenues for full registration have been explored and, as the title suggests, for temporary arrangements. Those coming on to the Temporary Register, while ‘on the Register’ (and therefore entitled to practice), are not MRCVS and cannot designate themselves as such. Their registration is subject to such restrictions as the RCVS in its discretion decides are appropriate, relating to the length of registration as well as the place(s) and the “circumstances in which the individual may practice in the UK”.
5. Temporary registration has been used sparingly in specific situations e.g. short visits by veterinary surgeons accompanying animals competing in the UK; and for postgraduate study. It may also apply in limited ‘employment’ situations (see guidelines for temporary registration / application form as set out in **Annex C**).
6. In the employment context, applications have been accepted for those with specific expertise where there is evidence that ‘the market’ is not operating to fill such roles in the usual way. There are currently nine individuals in total in the employed category of the Temporary Register.

Current situation

7. At the same time as implementation of the processes indicated in paragraph 3 above, veterinary surgeons were included on the Shortage Occupation List. While positive, this means that non-UK national veterinary surgeons are now subject to UK work visa requirements. This has created a new administrative burden for the EU-qualified applicants and their prospective employers. So that despite their inclusion, and taking all together (with the added complication of Covid restrictions) there is likely to be a significant impact on the number of EU-qualified graduates registering in the UK. In 2020, overseas registrations were already down by c.50%, with the Covid pandemic likely the main contributing factor. It is recognised that the majority of those working in the Official Controls sector are currently from the EU.
8. Longer-term trends in the production of UK graduates are positive, with the addition of Nottingham and Harper-Keele veterinary schools playing a significant role. However, it is likely to be many years before the UK is self-sufficient in veterinary surgeons.

OV workforce issues

9. Defra in its proposal had indicated that they “anticipate a severe shortage of OV capacity in England and Wales over the next six to twelve months”. Numbers have not been quantified in the proposal (though we understand it is in the 10’s not 100’s (potentially @100). As regards OVs to carry out export certification, Defra in its proposals refers to the “significant expansion of the need for Export Health Certificates (EHCs) post-EU-Exit and that despite the steps taken to mitigate the problem there is “still a risk that export certification capacity will be insufficient to meet demand to the extent that exports of UK products of animals origin are constrained for a period while the market for export certification services adjusts”. It is currently unclear the actual numbers of individuals they might seek to register temporarily to meet these needs.

Proposals

10. For ease of reference these are set out in full below:

OVs providing official meat hygiene controls

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

This temporary registration would last for 12 months, with the possibility of an extension of six months, during which time the temporary registrant would be expected to pass the IELTS level 7 test. Whilst on the temporary register, the individual’s role would be limited in scope and under the supervision of an MRCVS as set out in Annex A (to Defra’s proposal), similar to that of a novice OV. This would fall under the category of “employment”, specifically “where vacancies for such roles cannot be filled”.

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

OVs providing export certification services

If evidence emerges that exports of products of animal origin are being constrained by insufficient veterinary capacity, we would ask that the RCVS admit to its temporary register, vets who (i) have a contract of employment to work as an OV providing export certification services; (ii) have the necessary skilled worker visa including IELTS at level 5; (iii) hold EAEVE accredited veterinary degrees; and iv) have completed and passed the Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary) in respect of product exports. APHA would then authorise them as an OV on confirmation of their status as a temporary registrant.

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

We would only seek to trigger this facility for the temporary registration of export health certification OVs if we determined that there was a significant risk that exports requiring EHCs or trade to NI requiring EHCs would be at significant risk within the following three months. In making this determination, evidence of shortages of certifying capacity would come from feedback from the main certifying businesses and from exporters.

In the event that we formally request the RCVS to admit vets to the temporary register for export certification roles, we will set out at the time the duration of the facility and the timing of any review, along with a description of the scope of the role.

Matters for consideration

a. English language requirements

11. One of the principle issues necessitating temporary as distinct from 'full' registration is around language requirements. Were the RCVS to lower the requirements for one group to allow full registration this would be at odds with the requirements for all others, and clearly the RCVS could not take steps that would be seen as discriminatory. While there is an element of discretion for the RCVS in its temporary registration requirements, where there are particular needs, it does potentially set up two tiers of vets. In terms of the roles themselves, Council may also wish to consider if the argument is made that the lower level of IELTS Level 5 would be sufficient and / or that the steps indicated in the proposal where it is stated that the Delivery Partner "is committed to provide the individual with an English language tutor to support on-line learning and virtual face-to-face tutorials to get the individual up to IELTS Level and is sufficient / appropriate.

b. Defining the role / location / supervision

12. As with any Temporary Register role the "circumstances" of that role and what it involves need to

be clearly defined to ensure that any individual does not undertake work for which they are not authorised. The location from which they will work also needs to be defined. Similarly, supervision which should be real not nominal including a named supervising veterinary surgeon at each location should be designated.

13. The proposal sets out further detail of how Defra sees how these issues would be addressed. Council may wish to consider whether these measures are appropriate.

c. **Assurances that there is a specific need to be met and that any proposals would be temporary / time limited**

14. In its proposal Defra refers to a particular need at this time arising from EU-Exit / Covid-related issues. It would seem hard to argue that any EU-Exit issues arising now are in any way unexpected and questions might be asked as to why steps were not taken much sooner to alleviate a predictable situation. Council may feel that more information is required of the steps being taken to fill these roles from the 27,000 or so vets already on the full UK-practicing register and for details of any significant 'call to arms'. However, irrespective of how the situation came about, the proposal highlights issues over the next 6-12 months. Defra's proposal envisages a period of temporary registration of 12 months with the potential to extend for a further 6 months. Council is asked to consider if it feels such a time limit is appropriate.

d. **Other issues**

15. Were the proposal to be accepted it would mean that temporary OVs would (amongst other roles) be carrying out certification. This would be a change to the current position where only a MRCVS may certify anything. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) would need to (and appear to be willing to) amend their interpretation of the Official Controls Regulations to allow people other than full MsRCVS to be classed as suitable / competent for this purpose. This would unpick the RCVS's long-standing position that certification is a core veterinary responsibility that should be reserved for those with full MRCVS status and all the assurance that comes with it.
16. There is also the potential (without strict application of the temporary principles) that it could lead to calls for any other 'shortage' situation to be met by overseas recruitment in a temporary way with lower requirements with a risk of unplanned limited licensure through the 'back door', potentially devaluing the veterinary qualification. Tying any arrangement to a defined and exceptional national need would therefore also seem important. There is also the risk that without specific defined parameters that a 'temporary' situation becomes the "new normal" so evidence not only of a strict time limit but also of a deliverable exit strategy would also be important.

Decision

17. Council is asked to consider the issues and points outlined above, and the full details set out in the Defra proposal in Annex B and to decide if, in principle, it agrees to the temporary registration of suitably qualified and supervised non-UK qualified vets to undertake certain specific functions as official veterinarians (OVs) as outlined in that proposal.

Temporary Registration of Official Veterinarians

Introduction

Defra requests the RCVS to allow the temporary registration of suitably qualified and supervised non-UK qualified vets to undertake certain narrow and specific functions as official veterinarians (OVs). We seek agreement in principle as soon as possible so that the recruitment pipeline can open.

Background

The government has had long-standing concerns about the recruitment and retention of OVs providing meat hygiene official controls and more generally about the broader market for vets providing essential public good functions. These concerns have fed into the work of the Government Veterinary Service (GVS) under its Future Veterinary Capacity and Capability Project looking at wider demographic challenges. The end of the Transition Period following the UK's exit from the EU and the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic have exacerbated these recruitment and retention difficulties.

The end of the Transition Period means that the UK is now outside the EU single market - there is no longer freedom of movement of labour between the EU27 and the UK. In particular, the mutual recognition of professional qualifications no longer applies. Non-UK EU nationals have for many years made up the majority of vets providing meat hygiene official controls. A particular consequence is that the RCVS English language requirement now applies to EU vets wishing to practise in the UK. The standard required by the RCVS is International English Language Testing System (IELTS) level 7. This is a higher requirement than the IELTS Level 5 qualification required under the skilled worker visa application process.

The coronavirus pandemic has also disrupted international recruitment, affecting not just the GVS. The impact of the pandemic on the willingness/desire of vets to move to the UK for employment will have been compounded by travel bans, quarantine requirements and the nature of the UK's domestic restrictions.

The FSA has plans to strengthen the framework for abattoir supervision to ensure the medium to long term continuity of meat hygiene official controls. Including veterinary oversight. Whilst this is still under commercial discussion with the FSA's service delivery partner, measures are likely to include financial incentives to improve the recruitment and retention of OVs; renewed efforts to recruit from within the pool of UK registered vets; and the development and incentivisation of a veterinary pathway for official auxiliaries/trainee OVs to progress from Level 5 IELTS to Level 7 whilst working in a trainee OV role. Nevertheless, we currently anticipate a severe shortage of OV capacity in abattoirs in England and Wales over the next 6-12 months.

Another consequence of the end of the Transition Period is a significant expansion of the requirement for export health certificates (EHCs), most of which must be signed by a suitably trained OV. The government has put in place a number of mitigating measures in response to the anticipated increase in export certification in order to help the market for this work to adjust, including: free training for vets; logistics hubs to consolidate export consignments; adopting a risk-based approach to reduce the frequency of premises inspections; a time-limited scheme to facilitate certification of composite products; using other food professionals to work with OVs to free up their time; and establishing a surge capacity of government vets able to respond to localised OV shortages. The market does appear to be responding. We have seen good uptake of our free training. We have anecdotal evidence of increases in salaries for vets providing export certification services and an active recruitment market, both of which threaten

to attract vets away from abattoir work. However there is still a risk that export certification capacity will be insufficient to meet demand to the extent that exports of UK products of animal origin are constrained for a period whilst the market for export certification services adjusts.

Proposals

OVs providing official meat hygiene controls

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

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

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

OVs providing export certification services

If evidence emerges that exports of products of animal origin are being constrained by insufficient veterinary capacity, we would ask that the RCVS admit to its temporary register, vets who (i) have a contract of employment to work as an OV providing export certification services; (ii) have the necessary skilled worker visa including IELTS at level 5; (iii) hold EAEVE accredited veterinary degrees; and iv) have completed and passed the Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary) in respect of product exports. APHA would then authorise them as an OV on confirmation of their status as a temporary registrant.

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

We would only seek to trigger this facility for the temporary registration of export health certification OVs if we determined that there was a significant risk that exports requiring EHCs or trade to NI requiring EHCs would be at significant risk within the following three months. In making this determination, evidence of shortages of certifying capacity would come from feedback from the main certifying businesses and from exporters.

In the event that we formally request the RCVS to admit vets to the temporary register for export certification roles, we will set out at the time the duration of the facility and the timing of any review, along with a description of the scope of the role.

Annex A: OV tasks completed by Full OV, Novice OV and Temporary Registered Novice OV (TRNOV)

The Temporary Registered, Novice OV (TRNOV) would deliver official controls in approved establishments, under the supervision of a MRCVS OV (SOV). This supervision would consist of remote and physical checks. The Area Veterinary Manager (AVM), who forms part of the TRNOV management hierarchy and is also MRCVS will have regular communication with the TRNOV.

The AVM, SOV or other suitably qualified veterinarian would conduct regular physical visits, with the frequency determined by an initial assessment from the SOV and then move to a frequency of at least every two weeks once satisfied with TRNOV competence. The supporting veterinarian would also be available to provide reactive support as and when required

The TRNOV would be allocated to a particular work placement which is defined using a matrix to assess both plant complexity and OV competence. This maps the two variables and defines suitable deployment which matches individual competence.

The TRNOV would then embark on a structured period of mentoring and development up to the point of OV assessment. The FSA Service Delivery Partner (SDP) have a documented procedure in place to define this process and assign roles and responsibilities.

The TRNOV would require a minimum standard of English equivalent to Level 5 IELTS. The SDP is committed to provide each TRNOV with an English tutor to support online learning and virtual face to face tutorials. This would provide intensive English language tutoring to get the TRNOV up to IELTS Level 7 English as required by RCVS.

Task	OV	NOV	TRNOV
1. Undertake Audits <i>The TRNOV must not personally conduct audits but may assist with the audit process (e.g. by providing evidence collected by ongoing supervision of FBO's own procedures in slaughterhouses) to develop their auditing skills and gain an understanding of the auditing procedures</i>	Yes	No	No
2. Inspection and Verification Tasks (i) Assessment of food chain information. (ii) Conducting ante-mortem inspection of animals for slaughter. (iii) Verification of animal welfare compliance: including assessment of the suitability and competence of persons applying for a temporary Certificate of Competence (TCoC), and verification of Certificates of Competence (CoCs) for staff working at the premises	Yes	Yes	Yes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (iv) Conducting post mortem inspection: if this task is delegated to Official Auxiliaries, the post holder must regularly check the work of the OAs and in the case of animals having undergone emergency slaughter outside the slaughterhouse, carry out the inspection personally. (v) Verification of compliance with Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy and Animal By-Products requirements (vi) Health marking (vii) Verification of slaughter hygiene standards (viii) Verification of FBO compliance the microbiological criteria (ix) Verification of FBO traceability systems (x) Verification of food safety management systems 			
<p>3. Action following Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Collection and communication of inspection results (ii) Assessment of and decision making in relation to food chain information, live animals, animal welfare and meat 	Yes	Yes	With engagement from SOV/AVM
<p>4. Evidence gathering for Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Gather evidence to support targeted enforcement for the FSA and other enforcement agencies as required. (ii) Gathering and secure storage of evidence (iii) Act as a witness of fact and professional witness in legal cases as required including producing a witness statement to the required standard. 	Yes	Yes	Yes
<p>5. Enforcement Taking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Verify that the FBO complies with legislative requirements through their 	Yes	Yes	Only with direct support from SOV/AVM

own food safety management procedures.			
(ii) Follow risk based procedures to take fair and proportionate enforcement actions to ensure compliance is achieved working with FBOs to create action plans to achieve compliance.			
(iii) Understanding of all areas of non-compliance, the stage of escalation and active monitoring through to compliance or with a view to taking further action to control the risks at the establishment			
(iv) Responsibility for all timely enforcement and it's escalation			
(v) Completion and collation of paperwork and electronic enforcement systems			
(vi) Delivery and recording of informal enforcement activity			
(vii) Drafting, service and recording of formal enforcement after consultation and direction from the FSA FVC			
(viii) Verify continued compliance with public health, animal health and animal welfare			
(ix) Collection of evidence of repetitive non-compliance or serious deficiency with public health, animal health and welfare			
(x) To liaise and provide evidence to FVC in regard to all formal enforcement action;			
(xi) Carry out formal enforcement action under direction of FVC			
(xii) To proactively liaise with other enforcement bodies as required			
6. Verification of compliance with Third Country requirements (as/when required)	Yes	Yes	Yes
(i) Carry out veterinarian activities in line with specific Third Country requirements and as requested by the FSA			
7. Certification of Third Country Exports and EU Exports	PX OV	PX OV	Under discussion.

8. Technical leadership of the plant inspection team	Yes	Yes	With engagement from SOV/AVM
9. Health and Safety Management	Yes	Yes	With engagement from SOV/AVM
10. FSA Service Level Agreements (SLAs) (i) Ensure FSA services at the plant are delivered in line with SLA targets and MOC instructions	Yes	Yes	Yes
11. Stakeholder management: (i) Establish and maintain productive working relationships with the FSA, plant FBOs and other stake holders (Other Government Departments, Local Authorities, etc). (ii) Raise any changes to the FBO operating patterns in relation to the Statement of Resources with the FSA manager in charge of this work. (iii) Inform FBOs of any legislative changes that have an impact on their operation.	Yes	Yes	With engagement from SOV/AVM

Once minimum levels of competence and experience are demonstrated, the SOV may allow additional tasks to be performed in a phased manner and under their supervision.

Application for Temporary Registration Form

Employed position

This form is for veterinary surgeons not eligible for full registration under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 who seek **Temporary Registration with the intention of practising, or carrying out a specific procedure or operation**, in the UK under the direction of a fully registered veterinary surgeon. The Veterinary Surgeons Act protects animal welfare and the public interest by ensuring that, normally, a person is only entitled to be registered as a veterinary surgeon if they hold accredited qualifications. If, however, an overseas qualification is not accredited for the purpose of full registration, the RCVS has discretion to grant Temporary Registration to people who hold that qualification. This will only be done for good reasons, which should be set out in a supporting document.

Please note the maximum period granted to one individual for Temporary Registration status would not ordinarily be expected to exceed 5 years on the Register (whether granted by one application for 5 years or a number of shorter applications altogether totalling 5 years). During such a 5-year period, the expectation is that the Temporary Registrant would undertake the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination and by that route gain eligibility for Full Registration if any longer period of registration is sought.

Applicants are asked to their application and supporting documents at least 8 weeks ahead of the proposed start date as these applications are considered by the Registration Committee of the College.

Please be advised that we can only process your application once we have received the following information:-

- Completed Temporary Registration Form
- Checklist with complete list of documentation (Please refer to the checklist)
- Payment in full

We will acknowledge your application within 3 working days of receiving your completed application form and you will be notified of the outcome within 5 working days of the Committee making its decision. If your application is approved, you will be sent your certificate ten working days before your registration commences.

Please complete all sections of the form.

Details of the applicant	
Title
All Surnames:
All Forenames:
Correspondence address:
Email:
Contact number:
Date of Birth:	Day..... / Month..... / Year.....
Nationality

Title of Primary Veterinary Degree: University Awarding: Date conferred/ awarded: Day / Month / Year
1st Postgraduate qualification: (Continue on an additional sheet of paper if needed) Awarding body Date conferred/ awarded: Day / Month / Year
Name of proposed employer during the period of registration: Address of employer: Your job title: Department: Type of Work/Business: (Continue on an additional sheet of paper if needed)	<i>(Subject to Temporary Registration being granted)</i>
Cautions / criminal convictions / findings against the applicant	<p>Veterinary surgeons, and those applying to be registered as veterinary surgeons, must disclose to the RCVS any caution or conviction, including absolute and conditional discharges, or adverse finding (including by another regulator or professional disciplinary proceedings) which may affect registration, whether in the UK or overseas (except for minor offences excluded from disclosure by the RCVS). For more information, please see www.rcvs.org.uk/convictions</p> <p>Please tick (✓) one of the following:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have no caution or conviction, including absolute and conditional discharges, or adverse finding (including by another regulator or professional disciplinary proceedings) in the UK or overseas.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I wish to declare the following caution or conviction, including absolute and conditional discharges, or adverse finding.</p> <p>If you have something to declare, please give details below:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	
<input type="checkbox"/> I understand the required minimum CPD Code requirement for veterinary surgeons on the practising Register is 35 hours a year, and in order to remain on the practising Register I must meet this requirement.	

If Temporary Registration is granted, it will be subject to certain restrictions, which will be published in the Register. The restrictions may relate to the period for which the registrant may practise; the place or places at which the registrant will practise; and the circumstances in which the registrant may practise.

Restrictions as to circumstances will always include the restriction that the registrant may only work under the direction of a specified veterinary surgeon who is fully registered (the supervising MRCVS or FRCVS). There may also be a restriction that the registrant is only to practise during the currency of a specified contract of employment.

Please indicate below what restrictions are envisaged:

The registrant will only practise until **[enter date]**

At **[enter place or places]**

.....

.....

Under the direction of **[enter name of supervising MRCVS or FRCVS]**:

.....

.....

Other proposed restrictions as to circumstances **[employment restrictions]**:

.....

.....

.....

Temporary Registration will only be granted if the supervising MRCVS or FRCVS undertakes to make sure that the registrant practises veterinary surgery only within specified limits. Please say below which aspects of veterinary surgery the Temporary Registrant will carry out if registration is granted, giving details of clinical procedures and any other elements of veterinary practice. (Continue on an additional sheet of paper if needed)

.....

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Declaration by applicant

Temporary Registrants must observe the *Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons* and are subject to the jurisdiction of the Disciplinary Committee of the College. Registrants are also asked to undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

I declare that the information I have provided is, to the best of my knowledge, true and complete, and I authorise the RCVS to contact the relevant authorities to obtain further information as necessary.

I understand that, if granted, Temporary Registration will not permit me to style myself MRCVS.

Signature

Date

Declaration by Supervising MRCVS or FRCVS

I will ensure that, if Temporary Registration is granted, the registrant will only practise veterinary surgery within the limits described above.

Full name

Register number

Position

Signature

Date

Third party use of Register* data

Please note the RCVS must publish your Register* data and does so in hard copy form and the data is made available in response to enquiries. A shortened version of your Register* data (without your full address) is available on the RCVS website. Your other personal data on this form is not published and used only for our regulatory and related purposes.

Documents/ information for submitting		Document attached (Please ✓)
1	Completed Application Form for Temporary Registration.	
2	A photocopy of the identifying page and front cover of the temporary registrant's valid passport.	
3	<p>A recent passport photo of the temporary registrant, please include the following details on the reverse of the photo:-</p> <p>1. Name in full</p> <p>2. Date of birth</p> <p>3. Signature.</p> <p>Both sides of the photo can be photocopied and sent electronically with your other documents.</p>	
4	Proof of temporary applicant's primary veterinary degree (normally a copy of the degree certificate), accompanied by a certified English translation where necessary.	
5	Letter or certificate confirming registration/licensure and good professional standing from the regulatory authority of the country in which the applicant is currently practising including, where relevant, details of any cautions or criminal convictions, including absolute and conditional discharges, or any adverse findings, including professional disciplinary proceedings; accompanied by a certified English translation where necessary. Please note letters of good standing are valid for three months from date of issue.	
6	Payment of the fee (this is refundable if the application is unsuccessful).	
7	Explanation, including evidence, as to why Temporary Registration is thought to be justified. Please include the period Temporary Registration is required (please note Temporary Registration can only be granted for a maximum of five years per application).	

If your application is approved, you may be asked to make an appointment at the RCVS offices so your original documents can be checked and verified.

The Fee

Your fee will cover your temporary registration with the RCVS for 12 months from the day you are admitted to the Register.

Please note if you are choosing to register for 6 months or less then the fee due is reduced by half.

To view our fees table please visit www.rcvs.org.uk/how-we-work/fees/

Payment details

Paying by bank transfer

You will be sent our bank details once your documentation has been received.

Paying by Cheque or Postal Order

Please make cheques and Postal Orders payable to the 'Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' and note your Register number and full name on the reverse of the cheque postal order.

Please select your payment method:

- ☐ I enclose a cheque
- ☐ I will pay via bank transfer (You will be sent our bank details once your application has been received.)

Please return your completed form using one of the following methods:

Registration Department

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

Belgravia House

62-64 Horseferry Road

London, SW1P 2AF

Email: registration@rcvs.org.uk

If you are sending your documents by email please do not exceed 8MG or your email may not be received. We recommend you send large attachments over several emails.

We will send you a confirmation email within 3 working days of receiving your application to confirm it has been successfully received. If you are sending your documents by email, due to the large size of some attachments, please ensure you receive a confirmation email, as this guarantees your application has been successfully received.

Summary

Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	Reviewing temporary decisions made during the pandemic
Summary	This paper asks Council to consider a plan for handling the review of temporary policy decisions that have been made during the pandemic
Decisions required	Council is invited to discuss and approve the proposal
Attachments	Annex one – list of temporary decisions made and recommendation for which group takes over responsibility
Author	Lizzie Lockett CEO l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk 0207 202 0725

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

Reviewing temporary decisions made during the pandemic

Background

1. Now that the governments in all four UK nations are starting to publish their 'roadmaps' for exiting lockdown, it is important that plans are laid for how temporary decisions made by the College during the pandemic will be reviewed.
2. The Covid-19 Taskforce was set up on 26 March 2020 to make temporary decisions on policy in relation to the pandemic – those decisions relating to fees and other major issues stayed with RCVS Council. It has made decisions in approximately 30 areas over this period (please see annex one), many of them requiring multiple iterations. In addition, many reactive decisions have been made that do not affect College policy, largely by Officers and Senior Staff (usually addressed via FAQ on the website). The Taskforce has been extremely useful in terms of being able to make decisions quickly and to take a broad view of changes right across the organisation to ensure consistency.

Movement of decisions back to 'parent' committee

3. Although it could be some time before we return to any semblance of normality – and the much-touted 'new normal' means we may never return to pre-Covid circumstances – we are moving out of a period of 'emergency standards' into a period of 'recovery standards', and we need to manage this carefully.
4. We also need to think carefully about what 'next' might look like, as there may be some temporary changes that have worked well, for example, in terms of cost-savings, efficiency, environmental impact etc. It may be desirable to keep these on a more permanent basis – or move to some half-way house between old and new.
5. It is recommended that, over the next few months, all of the temporary decisions are reviewed, to consider which might be kept, which reversed and which adapted for the future. It is proposed that this task is carried out by the 'parent committee' in line with the current [delegation scheme](#), as the subject experts, because some of the changes may have longer-term effects. The Taskforce can make recommendations where appropriate, given its oversight of the decisions made so far and knowledge of their impact, and the holistic view it has been able to take across the organisation.
6. There are some decisions that will need to be kept under very constant review – for example, the flowcharts and FAQ (what vets can do) and extra-mural studies. It may be more practical to keep these with the Taskforce in the short to medium term. As all standing committee chairs sit on the Taskforce, the group is well-placed to make considered decisions about when it might be appropriate to move items back to the 'routine' agenda of those committees and when to keep them within the purview of the Taskforce. Annex one itemises each decision and which group might be responsible for it.

Continuation of the Taskforce

7. In October 2020, Council agreed to decide on the continuance of the Taskforce at each subsequent Council meeting, and also that it would have a two-day review window for any decisions made. Although it is therefore in Council's gift to decide if the Taskforce continues, the Taskforce recommends that it is kept in place until the end of the summer at the earliest, even if

meetings become rather ad hoc and infrequent. Given that changes can happen quickly – for example, the last lockdown was put in place at very short notice – it is important to have a very flexible and quick-to-mount mechanism to make appropriate decisions.

8. Although both language and data around recovery is starting to sound more positive, especially in light of the roll-out of the UK vaccination programme, there remain many potential hurdles to a return to normality.

Return to Belgravia House

9. The government roadmap guidance is largely silent on the issue of when office workers should return, but given that the vast majority of our staff team at Belgravia House commute via public transport, we will proceed with caution and are not likely to open up to any great extent until May or June. Even then, pending rules on social distancing, we may not be able to open up to full capacity and there will need to be a booking system, as was used in autumn 2020.
10. In addition, many staff feel they have benefitted from working at home and would prefer to do this on a more formal basis post-pandemic. The current (pre-Covid) remote working policy allows for people to work from home for up to two days per week without a variation to their formal place of work. This will be reviewed. A survey will be carried out amongst staff members, together with more detailed conversations at departmental level, to understand preferences, so that these can be balanced with business needs going forward. This will not only affect how and when we return to Belgravia House but also future building requirements.
11. It is unlikely that Council and Committee meetings will take place in person until the next presidential year (ie from mid-July 2021) and this will also need to take into account social distancing rules as the Council Chamber cannot accommodate more than 15 people within the current rules. External room hire will be considered where appropriate (as has been done already for disciplinary hearings). In addition, it is recommended that remote meetings are considered by committee chairs (and groups below committee level) for all but one or two of the meetings per year. This would have benefits in terms of reducing travel time, cost and environmental impact and making the meetings more inclusive for those with busy day-jobs or other responsibilities.
12. Upgrading our IT solutions will be a key part in the success of such changes, as we will need to accommodate a more hybrid model, although we will also be careful not to invest disproportionately in kit that could not be moved to a new office.
13. Whether Council continues to meet remotely or in-person, or a mix of the two, is a question it may wish to consider once government guidelines in the summer are more clear. Whether masks need to be worn indoors in a work setting may be important here, as although there are benefits to meeting in person, a mask-free virtual meeting may be preferable to a masked-up in-person meeting, from a communication perspective.

Decisions required

14. Council is asked to discuss the proposals and agree:
 - a. The direction of travel towards parent committees retaking ownership of relevant decisions
 - b. That the Taskforce continues at this point (to be reviewed again in June)

Annex one – list of temporary decisions made during the pandemic

NB this list refers only to temporary decisions to change RCVS policies and procedures that have been made by the Taskforce. Our FAQs include a broad range of guidance and advice for the professions on other issues relating to the pandemic, which are reviewed on a regular basis.

Topic	Temporary change	Proposed move
Remote prescribing	Allow without physical examination under certain circumstances	Currently with Standards and remain there
Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) assessments	Currently virtual	Practice Standards Group/Standards Committee, with input from Veterinary Medicines Directorate
Extra-mural studies	Has been reviewed many times during the pandemic, current minimum amounts here	Recommend to keep with Taskforce as changes rapidly (NB wider review of EMS ongoing with Education Committee)
Internal rotations	Practices not currently required to be PSS accredited – other QA processes in place	Education Committee
Ambulatory practice (University of Edinburgh)	Alternative arrangements in place for farm animal practice	Recommend to keep with Taskforce – isolated decision
VN clinical placements/teaching and assessments	Different agreements in place with different providers	VN Education Committee
VN education accreditation and quality monitoring	Temporarily virtual	VN Education Committee
Vet final exams and assessments	Different agreements in place with different schools	Educations Committee
Overseas vet registrations	Moved to online process	Registration Committee
Overseas VN registrations	Moved to online process	Registration Committee
UK vet graduations	More flexibility than usual process – ie can be registered in bloc or individually	No policy change, just operational – Senior Team
Student VN enrolment period	Extended free of charge to some students	VN Education Committee
Vet retention fees	Allowing paying by instalments	Finance and Resources Committee (ultimately Privy Council)
VN retention fees	Extend payment window	Finance and Resources Committee
Advanced Practitioner/ Specialist Fees	Extend payment window	Finance and Resources Committee

Topic	Temporary change	Reverts to...[providing timely meetings]
PSS Fees	Pay by instalments	Finance and Resources Committee
Vet school visitations	Allowing online	Education Committee
Statutory Membership Examination	Various decisions ref how exam held, English language testing (timing and format) and evidence of good standing	Education Committee / possibly to Registration Committee also
Disciplinary Hearings	Allowing some online	Disciplinary Committee
What work can be done	Various iterations	Keep with Taskforce, changes rapidly
How RCVS meetings are held	Various changes	Stays with Officers
Return to Belgravia House	Various changes	Stays with Senior Team
Covid Taskforce	That we have one	Stays with Council
Council elections	Nominations submitted electronically; votes electronically	Stays with Council (ultimately Privy Council)
Council internal elections (eg Officers, Cttee Chairs)	Votes gathered electronically	Stays with Council
Covid surveys	Frequency, content	Officers
Abattoir experience	Currently virtual experience allowed for students	Education Committee
VN patient-based assessment	Virtual assessment replaces OSCE	VN Education Committee/ VN Council
CPD policy	Currently no change but had been reduced during 2020	CPD policy subcommittee/ Education Committee
Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice	Virtual synoptic exam allowed	Education Committee

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	VetGDP
Summary	This paper proposes additions to the Code of Professional Conduct and Supporting Guidance following the introduction of the VetGDP.
Decisions required	Council is asked to: Review and approve the amendments to the Code of Professional Conduct in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this paper.
Attachments	Annex A – the paper submitted to Standards Committee on 4 March 2021 (Confidential) Annex A (i) – extracts of classified appendix from Council meeting on 21 January 2021 (Confidential)
Author	Beth Jinks Senior Standards and Advisory Officer b.jinks@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Confidential	1
Annex A (i)	Confidential	1

¹Classifications explained

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

²Classification rationales

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

Background

1. Council will recall from its January meeting that the VetGDP (Graduate Development Programme) is being introduced from summer 2021 to support graduates in the transition from vet school to their first job. VetGDP will replace the current Professional Development Phase (PDP). However, PDP will remain an obligation for those who graduated before June 2021.
2. The VetGDP necessitates new Code of Professional Conduct ("Code") obligations. For more information on the background to the proposed new obligations, Council is directed to **Annex A**. Minutes from the classified appendix of the January Council meeting can be found at **Annex A(i)**.

Code of Conduct and Supporting Guidance

3. At its meeting on 4 March 2021, Standards Committee agreed to put forward the following new wording of the Code to Council for approval.
4. The following paragraphs have "VetGDP" added:

3.3 Veterinary surgeons must maintain and develop the knowledge and skills relevant to their professional practice and competence, and comply with RCVS requirements of the VetGDP/PDP and continuing professional development (CPD)

and

5.2 Veterinary surgeons must provide the RCVS with their VetGDP/PDP and CPD records when requested to do so.

5. The following is a proposed new obligation:

4.6 The appointed senior veterinary surgeon must ensure that the training provided to graduates meets the requirements of the VetGDP.

[\[17. Veterinary team and leaders\]](#)

6. The following addition to the Supporting Guidance to the Code was also approved. This is included below for context only, as this does not require ratification by Council:

17.16 Where the senior veterinary surgeon works at a RCVS-Approved Graduate Development Practice/Workplace, the senior veterinary surgeon must:*

- a. Sign a declaration agreeing that the practice will provide any graduate employed at the practice with regular support as defined by the [VetGDP guidance](#).*
- b. Engage positively with the VetGDP quality assurance process.*

**Please refer to the [VetGDP guidance](#) for timescales and deadlines for becoming an RCVS-Approved Graduate Development Practice/Workplace.*

Decision

7. Council is asked to:
 - a. Review and approve the amendments to the Code of Professional Conduct in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this paper.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	Advancement of the Professions Committee Report 9 February 2021.
Summary	<p>To note the attached minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021.</p> <p>In particular, to note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee approved a proposed new open-forum platform for the RCVS Fellowship, called "Discourse".
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	<p>Ceri Chick</p> <p>Secretary APC</p> <p>c.chick@rcvs.org.uk / 0207 856 1034</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

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

Minutes of the Advancement of the Professions Committee held on Tuesday,
9 February 2021 at 2pm via Teleconference by Microsoft Teams.

Members:

Dr C J Allen	Council Member
Professor D Argyle (Chair)*	Council Member
Professor J Innes*	Chair, RCVS Fellowship Board
Ms A Boag	Chair, Board of Trustees for RCVS Knowledge, and Leadership lead
Dr N Connell	Senior Vice-President, and Chair, Diversity and Inclusion Group
Professor S Dawson	Chair, Mind Matters Initiative
Ms L Lockett	Chief Executive Officer
Mr M Rendle	Vet Nurse Futures Project Board liaison point
Dr C Tufnell (Vice-Chair)	Innovation and Global lead
Mr T Walker	Lay Council Member
Dr S Paterson	Lead for Environment and Sustainability
In attendance: Miss C Chick	Senior Leadership Officer
Mrs A Belcher	Director for Advancement of the Profession
Miss S Rogers	ViVet Manager
Mr I Holloway	Director of Communications
Mr C Gush	Executive Director, RCVS Knowledge
Mrs L Quigley	Mind Matters Initiative Manager
Miss J Macdonald	Vet Nursing Futures Project Manager
Mr B Myring	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
Ms E Taylor	Research Officer
Miss R Greaves	Policy and Public Affairs Officer

*absent

Welcome and apologies for absence

1. The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting of the APC and noted that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes.
2. The Chair welcomed Angharad Belcher, the new Director for the Advancement of the Professions Department, to the meeting and to the College. The Chair also welcomed Eleanor Taylor, the College's new Research Officer, and Rosie Greaves, the new Policy and Public Affairs Officer.
3. Apologies were received from:
 - Prof. John Innes

Declarations of Interest

4. Amanda Boag declared that she was due to apply for the 2021 Fellowship round.

Minutes of the last meeting, held on 10 November 2021

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

Matters Arising

6. There were no new matters arising.

Updates from APC workstreams

7. The responsible Committee members or the relevant staff lead provided an update on each of the eight workstreams within the scope of the APC; this reflected the contents of the paper (APC Feb 21 AI01).
8. The Committee considered these updates, as well as other specific matters raised that were brought to it for discussion and, in some cases, decision. These are highlighted below, in addition to the main questions and comments prompted by each update.
9. The Chair reminded the Committee that at the last meeting he encouraged synergy between workstreams. The Chair noted that he was delighted to see synergies forming between APC workstreams.

Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

10. It was noted that the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy had been approved by the Committee via email and would be launched in the following weeks.

11. It was noted that the new joint RCVS and Veterinary Schools Council (VSC) Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) Student Support Working Group was in the final stages of setup. This group would be looking at issues raised during the student roundtable in autumn 2020 and one agenda item already confirmed was developing guidance on the wearing of religious clothing for students.. This group would be chaired by Rob Pettit from the VSC and include representatives from the student body as well as the College.
12. It was also noted that one winner from the Sarah Brown Research Grant was looking at the effect of racial harassment on mental health. Work on this project started in January 2021.
13. It was highlighted that there were two separate bodies of work around student diversity and inclusion for the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions. These two workstreams were separate as each presented their own challenges and dynamics.

Fellowship

14. It was noted that at the last APC meeting it was highlighted that there is an issue with diversity within the Fellowship which the Fellowship Chair emphasised his determination to address.
15. It was noted that since that Committee meeting a Fellowship Board meeting had been held in December 2020. During this meeting it had been decided that the Board would meet more frequently and in closer collaboration with other working groups (such as RCVS Knowledge and the Environment and Sustainability Working Group (ESWG) which would encourage a more rapid workflow and increase activity from Board outcomes.
16. It was noted that a review of the application process for Fellowship was underway. This review would be considering the application process from a diversity and inclusion perspective to highlight any issues that could affect individuals' ability to apply. It was noted that this conversation was ongoing, and no changes would come into effect before the 2021 to 2022 round of Fellowship applications. One change that had been agreed was that applicants would no longer be required to produce three full references, and instead be required to produce a signed form where the referee would sign to agree that they had read the application, and that it was true and complete to the best of their knowledge. This would also ease the burden on applicants and referees, which may be an unnecessary hurdle. Any guidance material available to applicants would also be reviewed from a diversity and inclusion perspective.
17. It was noted that a recruitment campaign for Fellowship Credentials Panellists was ongoing with the deadline being set as 15 February 2021. The aim of this campaign was to encourage a diverse range of panellists to assess Fellowship applications so that the Fellowship application assessors would more accurately reflect the demographic of the profession. It was noted that a large percentage of applicants for this role were women which was encouraging.
18. It was noted that new Credential Panel members, current members and members of the Fellowship Board would receive training before assessments begin for the 2021 Fellowship round. This training would include how to assess Fellowship applications fairly and accurately, as well as unconscious bias training.

19. It was noted that the Fellowship Board had also begun to review the Fellowship appeals process as well as the strategy and vision for the Fellowship. This matter would be discussed further in agenda item 5 (APC Feb 21 AI05).
20. It was noted that one major body of work needed to reinvigorate the Fellowship was to improve its communication channels. This work had been made a priority. A new communications channel was proposed and discussed further in agenda item 6 (APC Feb 21 AI06).
21. It was noted that the Fellows Science Advisory Panel (FSAP) was making headway. Members of the Fellowship had put themselves forward to be on the panel and its expert contributors. A first meeting of this new panel would be organised before the next APC meeting.
22. The Committee noted that to drive applications and engagement, the Fellowship must be clear about its purpose, aims and objectives. It was noted that once more activities were planned and delivered, the purpose of the Fellowship would become clearer to the profession and public.
23. It was noted that research and activities delivered by the Fellowship should not only encompass high-end academic questions put forward by the profession, but also highlight the realities of all aspects of the profession and be relevant to all veterinary professionals.
24. The Committee was urged to encourage and support the Fellowship in its strategic aims and proposed activities, and also to suggest any relevant workstreams that the Fellowship could facilitate.
25. It was also noted that a more well-defined mentoring scheme should be provided for those applying for Fellowship. It should also be made clear that applicants were not required to provide a photo for the application process but rather to be provided for the Fellows Directory. It was noted that this process should be altered slightly so as not to discourage applicants, should they believe that they were required to provide a photograph for the application.

Global Strategy

26. It was noted that the addition of Eleanor Taylor and Rosie Greaves to the staff team was a valuable asset to drive this workstream forward.

Innovation

27. It was noted that an interactive Design-Thinking webinar had been hosted in December 2020. This event received a large amount of interest with around 155 people registering for the event and 45 attending on the day. The registration process for this event aimed to capture what attendees wanted to achieve from the session. These included ways to solve problems with clients or processes, while others were looking for ways to solve problems within their team communications. It was noted that this activity gave a good insight into problems that veterinary

professionals were facing during the pandemic as well as possible topics for future sessions or workshops hosted by ViVet. A recording of the event was available on the ViVet website.

28. It was reported that an Innovation Mindset podcast series had been launched, which had so far been listened to over 400 times. It was noted that ViVet would continue to work on this “Bitesize” learning format and focus on providing more resources later in the year.
29. It was noted that ViVet had reached out to the profession to report ways that they had been innovative over the last 10 months. It was reported that although a few interesting comments had been received, this highlighted the fact that it can be difficult to identify what counts as innovation. It was noted that ViVet was looking into ways of facilitating group discussion around these challenges and possibly guide some of the ways of identifying and labelling some of the changes made and outcomes from those. It was noted that this would likely be in the format of a Schwartz Round later on in the year.
30. It was reported that ViVet was looking to encourage the profession to talk about innovation. To do this ViVet proposed to facilitate “Ted-style” talks and facilitated discussions, webinars and lunch and learns around the subject.
31. It was noted that in the RCVS strategy for 2020 to 2024, under its pillar of “Courage”, there was the aim to create an innovation funding pot to help solve regulation and professional standard issues that matter to the profession. It was noted that to facilitate this, it would be important to determine what training and resources the profession required to be able to take part in this type of project. It was noted that research had begun for a potential innovation MOOC/ online course that would be made available to the professions. This would support the ViVet project aim to ensure veterinary professionals were equipped with innovation capabilities.

Leadership

32. It was noted that the next step for Leadership was to develop a Leadership Framework for the profession. It was suggested that the workstream could take inspiration from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society’s work to adapt the NHS Leadership Framework.
33. It was noted that discussion was ongoing with the NHS Leadership Academy with regards to updates proposed for the Edward Jenner Leadership course. The proposed changes consisted of moving the course to a new platform. The benefits of this would be that the course would be available to access constantly, so users would not have to wait for a specific course start date. The course would also offer rapid peer assessment. The downside to this change would be that users would be required to pay for the course, where it was free to use previously. It was noted that discussion was ongoing with the NHS Leadership Academy to determine the full extent of costings and longer term agreements.
34. It was noted that the Committee would be informed of any final details of these proposed changes via email before any decisions were made.

Mind Matters Initiative

35. It was noted that work was continuing under the three pillars of “Prevent, Protect, Support”.
36. It was noted that the third research symposium had been organised for November 2021, which would be held virtually.
37. It was noted that applications for the Sarah Brown Research Grant 2021 round were open, with assessments planned for May 2021.
38. It was noted that educational resources for the public and profession continued to be developed thanks to the hard work of the MMI manager, Lisa Quigley. It was noted that MMI had sponsored the Vet Kind student initiative for the third time in November 2020. This was open to veterinary nursing students as well as veterinary students for the first time.
39. It was noted that MMI had also been involved with the vet student Welfare Week and a specific Glasgow vet school initiative called “Feel Good February”.
40. It was noted that an MMI workstream looking at recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic was underway, looking at what the College could do to support individuals during that time period. It was also noted that Campfire Chats would be organised along with a roundtable to discuss the impact of the pandemic on the professions.

RCVS Knowledge

41. It was noted that a collaborative project with vet farming organisations had been launched looking at building Farm Vet Champions. This would be used to encourage antimicrobial stewardship in the farming community. The content of this was being drafted to be published online. Over 100 farm vets had so far signed up to this project, which would be rolled out once the main e-learning component went live.
42. It was noted that work had been completed to assess the impact of the Veterinary Evidence Journal on Clinical Practice. It was noted that encouraging figures suggested that this work was having a positive effect on improving clinical practice.
43. It was noted that due to the pandemic the Veterinary History project had taken a slightly different track, as most of the archives in Belgravia house which was shut due to the pandemic. It was noted that work was still ongoing to record and preserve the history of the veterinary profession. This work included releasing podcasts around veterinary history on the RCVS Knowledge website. It was noted that these podcasts included an episode on diversity in the history of the profession, and an episode featuring students from the British Veterinary Ethnicity and Diversity Society (BVEDS) describing their experience of being part of those communities within veterinary education and going into the profession. It was noted that these received a hugely positive response from listeners.

44. It was noted that RCVS Knowledge communications continued to grow, with podcasts receiving over 50,000 downloads.
45. It was noted that RCVS Knowledge could give a good contribution to the APC Primary Care project, which could in turn be a valuable resource for students.
46. The Committee gave their thanks and appreciation to RCVS Knowledge for their rapid development and impressive work output.

VN Futures

47. It was noted that the VN Futures project aimed to deliver short surveys to the veterinary nursing profession to get an idea of what individuals perceived as the main challenges facing the profession, along with where opportunities for growth lie. This aimed to be a conduit too allow the VN Futures team to recognise where to focus their main work efforts.
48. It was noted that a series of online discussions and Lunch and Learn sessions were in the pipeline. These aimed to educate the profession on the VN Futures project as well as to hear the opinions of vet nursing professionals on key topics.
49. It was noted that eight ambassadors had been recruited to pilot the School Ambassador scheme. This scheme aimed to provide online talks to school children regarding careers in veterinary nursing.
50. It was noted that an internal focus group of three RCVS staff had been developed to evaluate diversity within veterinary nursing education.
51. The Chair encouraged all workstreams to think about how their work could involve and assist the veterinary nursing profession.

APC Primary Care Update

52. The Committee was reminded that when this project was in its early stages its purpose was to celebrate general practice, with the underlying theme of recruitment and retention. It was noted that the overarching theme continued however this developed into supporting general practitioners through the impacts of Covid-19 and recovery post-pandemic.
53. It was noted that activity on this project had been paused due to resources being shifted at the start of the pandemic, however work was being reinvigorated for this project within the staff team. It was noted that representatives from most RCVS staff departments would be collaborating on this project. It was noted that this project's aim and objectives ran through most RCVS workstreams and therefore the project should take a collaborative approach.
54. It was noted that the original idea for the output of this project was to organise a symposium to collate all the resources developed, however due to safety concerns associated with the

pandemic, a face-to-face symposium would not be appropriate. It was suggested that this could instead take the form of a calendar of events, online resources, and events. The Committee was encouraged to offer its opinions and suggestions on how the outcomes of this project could be delivered to the profession and public effectively.

55. It was noted that this project aimed to educate and involve the public as well as the profession on the work of general practitioners.
56. It was noted that during the pandemic, there was an appetite for online learning resources aimed at children. It was suggested that a series of events or resources could be developed that could feed into opportunities to educate young children to help support the project.
57. It was also suggested that the Primary Care Project could fit in with the One Health Lesson Leaders initiative and identify individuals who could deliver an online lesson around general practice.
58. It was suggested that some of these activities could take place once there was some degree of normality, as there was a great deal of webinar fatigue happening as the pandemic continued. It was highlighted that there was a concern around the impact of this project being dampened by the number of webinars developed during the pandemic.
59. It was noted that the Fellowship should encourage general practitioners into Fellowship and showcasing Fellows with a variety of career types.

Fellowship Strategy Update

60. The Committee was presented with a paper that outlined the Fellowship's strategic vision and highlighted key areas of improvement.
61. It was noted that the frequency of Fellowship Board meetings would increase, starting at every two months, and adjusting where necessary. The aim of this change was to encourage a steadier workflow output and to push the Fellowship Board's main objectives into reality.
62. It was noted that there was an issue regarding gender diversity within the Fellowship, which the Fellowship Board made a priority to address. It was noted that the Fellowship Board recognised that there was a need to encourage diversity within all areas of the Fellowship, and that this issue could be addressed and affected by a range of Fellowship activities.
63. It was noted that the Fellowship Board was reviewing all processes related to the Fellowship from a diversity and inclusion perspective. It was noted that current Credential Panellists were contacted for their opinions on how to improve the Fellowship applications process in this way.
64. It was noted that the College produced a press release on behalf of the Fellowship Board which encouraged applications from female professionals. This seemed to have had a positive effect.

65. It was noted that there was a recruitment campaign to employ more members onto the Credentials Panels to assess Fellowship applications. The aim of that campaign was to create panels that more accurately reflected the demographic of the profession, and to allow any members who had been on the panels since 2016 to step down. It was noted that there was the option to run another campaign later on in the year if a desired number of applicants was not achieved.
66. It was noted that the Chair of the Meritorious Contributions to Clinical Practice Credentials Panel was due to step down in 2021. It was reported that there was an aim for his successor to be a female member of the profession from the Credentials Panel recruitment, to increase female representation in the Fellowship leadership positions.
67. It was noted that the Fellowship Board had agreed that Credentials Panel members may be non-MsRCVS, which could decrease instances of unconscious bias where assessors knew the applicants.
68. It was noted that all Credential Panel members and Fellowship Board members would receive training before each round of applications, starting in 2021. This training would include some form of equality, diversity, and inclusion training alongside guidance on how to assess applications effectively and consistently.
69. It was noted that the Board understood the need to update the Fellowship communication strategy to increase communications between them the Fellowship, along with the profession at large. It was noted that the Fellowship did not have a two-way communication system between the College and the Fellowship. A new communications platform, "Discourse", had been proposed to facilitate this. This would be discussed further in agenda item 4 (APC Feb 21, AI 04).
70. It was noted that there was an intended synergy between the Fellows Science Advisory Panel, RCVS Knowledge, and the ViVet initiative, to present and highlight the innovative initiatives that Fellows implemented during their distinguished careers. It was highlighted that the research carried out by the Fellows Science Advisory Panel would aid vets in practice with their work, which may fit in well with the Advancement of the Professions Committee's Primary Care Project.
71. It was reported that members of the Fellowship Board had been encouraged to work together in pairs before the February Board meeting, to suggest updates to the Fellowship strategic plan. Members were encouraged to come up with divisional strategic projects and key performance indicators for these projects to drive forward the Fellowship strategic aims.
72. It was suggested that the Fellowship could implement a survey as a method to measure the impact the Fellowship has on the profession.

Fellowship Communications Platform Proposal

73. The Committee was presented with a proposal to introduce the platform “Discourse”, an open-source discussion forum, to the Fellowship section of the RCVS website. It was proposed that this forum would be used as a two-way communications platform for Fellows to interact with each other, the Fellowship Board, and the College.
74. It was noted that this platform would be paid for on a monthly basis, therefore if time proved that it was not appropriate or useful, it would be simple to remove.
75. It was noted that members of the Fellowship Board would be encouraged to monitor the platform for possible research areas to expand on, to participate in structured conversation, and to provide content on the platform. It was noted that selected RCVS staff members would also monitor the platform for this purpose. It was emphasised that any content of this kind would not be shared without the consent of the author from the Fellowship platform.
76. The Committee approved the proposal for discourse to be implemented and was keen to see what outputs it would bring.

Sustainability Update

77. It was noted that the new Environment and Sustainability Working Group had held its first meeting in January. It was reported that this meeting was successful and included interesting presentations from a number of organisations, such as Vet Sustain. It was noted that there was an appetite within the profession to engage with and champion this theme of debate.
78. It was noted that one major aim of the ESWG was to create an internal policy on sustainability within the RCVS, with the first step to be clear about the group’s values and objectives before implementing a more detailed plan.

Any other business

79. The Chair reminded the Committee to update the APC risk register with any relevant changes.
80. The Chair also reminded the Committee of the workload this Committee's outputs puts on the RCVS Communications Department, and thus to be clear in the project briefing and expected deliverables to ensure agreed outcomes could be met.

Date of next meeting

81. The Chair closed the meeting noting the next meeting would be in the afternoon of 11 May 2021.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	Audit and Risk Minutes 12 November 2020 & Audit and Risk Minutes 12 November 2020 Classified Appendix
Summary	A meeting of the RCVS Audit and Risk Committee Minutes and Classified appendix
Decisions required	N/A
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Alan Quinn-Byrne Governance Officer/Secretary a.quinn-byrne@rcvs.org.uk / T 020 7227 3505

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

¹Classifications explained

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

²Classification rationales

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



Minutes of a meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) held remotely via Microsoft Teams on 12 November 2020

Members:

Ms E Butler	Lay member, Chair
Professor D Bray	Lay member of RCVS Council
Mr V Olowe	Lay member
Ms J Shardlow	Lay member, Vice-Chair
Mr D J Leicester	Veterinary member of RCVS Council

In attendance:

Prof S Dawson	Treasurer
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C McCann	Director of Operations (DoO)
Mr Martyn Webster	Facilities Manager
Ms Emma Hawkins	Facilities Coordinator
Mr A Quinn-Byrne	Secretary to ARC / Governance Officer

Apologies for absence

1. There were no apologies for absence.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest noted.

Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting held on 1 October 2020

3. The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting held on 1 October 2020.

Audit Planning Report

4. Ms Nicola May from Crowe LLP presented this year's Audit Planning Report to the Committee.
5. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1-12.

Lobbying discussion

6. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 13-16.
7. The Chair, ARC, will inform Council of this recommendation at the scheduled January Council meeting

CEO Update

8. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 17 and the subsequent bullet points that follow.

Recruitment of the ARC Chair

9. A discussion took place regarding the recruitment of a new Chair for ARC who would take up the role officially at RCVS Day in July 2021.
10. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 18-20.

Assurance map

11. The DoO presented the revised assurance map to the Committee, which acknowledged its positive development over the past year.
12. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 21-24.

Facilities Departmental Risk Register

13. The Facilities Department presented their risk register to the Committee.
14. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 25-28.

Corporate Risk Register

15. The Corporate Risk Register was discussed, and the following points noted:

16. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 29-34.

Council culture

17. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 35-40.

Any other business

18. There was no other business.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	Minutes of the Audit and Risk meeting held 11 February 2021.
Summary	A meeting of the RCVS Audit and Risk Committee
Decisions required	To note the minutes
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Alan Quinn-Byrne Governance Officer/Secretary a.quinn-byrne@rcvs.org.uk / T 020 7227 3505

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Private & Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

¹Classifications explained

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²Classification rationales

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

Minutes of a meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) held remotely via Microsoft Teams on 11 February 2021

Members:

Ms E Butler	Lay member, Chair
*Prof D Bray	Lay member of RCVS Council
Mr V Olowe	Lay member
Ms J Shardlow	Lay member, Vice-Chair
Mr D J Leicester	Veterinary member of RCVS Council

In attendance:

Prof S Dawson	Treasurer
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C McCann	Director of Operations (DoO)
Ms E Ferguson	Registrar/Director of Legal Services
Ms G Crossley	Head of Professional Conduct
Mr A Quinn-Byrne	Secretary to ARC / Governance Officer

*Apologies received.

Apologies for absence

1. Professor Derek Bray sent his apologies.

Declarations of interest

2. Ms Shardlow confirmed that she has been appointed Chair and Board member to the Audit and Compliance Committee of the International Equestrian Federation (IEF).

Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 20 November 2020.

3. The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

CEO Update

4. The CEO provided an update to the Committee, the following points were noted:

- The RCVS throughout COVID-19 had implemented a series of changes to many operational and policy aspects of its workings. A lot of these decisions had been taken by the Covid-19 Taskforce. Minutes of the meetings were sent to Council and there was a two-day period during which they could question a decision before it was implemented.
- It was noted that a comprehensive record of all decisions and policy changes made by the College throughout the pandemic had been made and analysis would be carried out post-pandemic to decide whether to keep some of those changes in place.
- Staff wellbeing remained high on the agenda throughout the pandemic. Currently three members of staff were on furlough for childcare needs, further Government announcements on furlough were being monitored. There continued to be some virtual all-staff events such as a bake-off, and lunchtime talks, the most recent talk featured Professor Stuart Reid, Principal of the Royal Veterinary College, who was also an epidemiologist, to discuss the pandemic, which proved to be very informative.
- As staff continued to work from home it was important that it was recognised that temporarily working from home was different than working from home post-pandemic, a distinction must be made as to what was expected both from a staff resource, and staff health and safety point of view; Senior Team would keep this under review.
- Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1-5
- There was good progress on the RCVS Strategic Plan. Some new appointments had been made:
 - Ms Angharad Belcher had taken over from Mr Anthony Roberts, Director of Leadership and Innovation. The role had expanded and now had diversity and inclusion, environmental sustainability and mental health under its remit, and was now Director of Advancement of the Professions.
 - A new role had been created entitled Head of Insight and Engagement; Mr Robert Hewes had been appointed to this role.
 - There had also been recruitment in roles reporting to the Policy and Public Affairs Officer – a replacement Policy Officer and a new Research Officer role.
 - There was ongoing recruitment for an Interim Finance Manager.
- Regarding the pandemic and returning to the office, it was discussed that this was not likely to happen for at least another couple of months. Meetings had been discussed and it was felt that, going forward, fewer meetings would be held at Belgravia House.

ESPB Update

5. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 6.

Assurance Map Review

6. The Director of Operations (DoO) presented the updated assurance map to the Committee. It was noted that the assurance map was now a live document and that work was ongoing to enhance the presentation of the broad assurance framework, to combine both the Corporate Risk Register and the assurance map into the one document.
7. It was noted that where there were internal assurance gaps it was important to think about more external assurances that may bridge them and further thought could be given to some of the external assurances.
8. The Committee provided positive feedback on the work of the assurance map; the live document will come back to ARC in May again for discussion.

Corporate Risk Register

9. The Corporate Risk Register was presented to the Committee for consideration. Updates to that Register since the last meeting in November 2020 had been provided in the Boardpack.
10. The Committee was asked to comment on the risk register and advice was also sought from the Committee on risks that were raised at the RCVS Council Risk session in November 2020.
11. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 7-14
12. The Committee had high praise for the development of the risk register over the last number of months and noted huge improvements had been made. The DoO, Governance Officer, and wider team was thanked for all their hard work on this.

Professional Conduct Risk Register

13. The Head of Professional Conduct (HoPC) and the Registrar presented the Professional Conduct departmental risk register to the Committee.
14. The HoPC discussed an overview of the department and the composition of the team as outlined in the paper.
15. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 15-24
16. The Committee was pleased with how the register had developed and noted how important it was to keep this register as a live document and ensure it was being updated. The HoPC and Registrar were thanked for the presentation and work on the risk register.

Charity Governance Code Review

17. The DoO presented the Charity Governance Code to the Committee.
18. The Committee was satisfied with the comprehensiveness of this document, it was noted that it was a key document in terms of mapping governance throughout the organisation and was a very worthwhile piece of work.

19. The Governance Officer noted he was aiding the drafting of a Governance Handbook for the RCVS.
20. The Chair suggested that it would be useful if Ms Shardlow and Mr Olowe could attend an RCVS Council meeting as observers - the Governance Officer agreed to liaise with the Council Secretary on this. **(Action)**

ENQA

21. The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) report will be discussed at the next Audit and Risk Meeting **(Add to next Agenda)**

Contract Register

22. The Governance Officer had been working on the creation of an RCVS-wide Contract Register for the last year. Contracts had been gathered and reviewed across the College for every team and he had worked with Heads of Department reviewing all contracts. Over one hundred contracts had emerged.
23. It was confirmed that all contracts had been checked for data protection compliance as part of College's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) obligations.
24. This piece of work had proved instrumental during the pandemic as the College had had to cancel events and reassess facilities contracts. This register had made items more accessible by having all relevant information readily available.
25. The Governance Officer had built up levels of assurance with the contract management process from engaging with all Team Managers, to the Registrar and had the ability to contact external solicitors if required.
26. The next steps in the process were confirmed as linking the Contract Register to the RCVS Purchase Ledger and Finance Team.
27. The Committee advised that it was important to have an emergency process within the contract framework for contracts that required a quick turnaround.
28. It was also advised that training must be conducted with all management who dealt with contracts and that they must be made aware of the 'pitfalls' of entering into agreements that they might not necessarily realise they were entering. This was to reduce the risk of employees of forming contracts over wording used in emails, for example.
29. The Committee noted that this was a key piece of work that had been carried out and would provide a range of benefits to the operation of the College going forward. The Committee was supportive of the work that had been carried out.

AOB

30. There was no other business to report.

Date of Next Meeting

31. 13 May 2021, there will also be a joint meeting of FRC and ARC on the same day.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021
Summary	Council to note Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021
Decisions required	Council to note
Attachments	Classified Appendix
Author	Britta Crawford Education Manager b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0777

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1

Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2021

Members:	Professor Ewan Cameron	
	Mr Danny Chambers	- Also Adv Practitioner Panel Chair
	Ms Linda Ford	- Lay member
	*Professor Tim Parkin	
	*Mrs Susan Howarth	
	Dr Susan (Sue) Paterson	- Chair
	Dr Cheryl Scudamore	
	Dr Kate Richards	
	Professor James Wood	
	Ms Katie Fox	- Student representative
	Mr Tobias Hunter	- Student representative
By invitation:	Dr Melissa Donald	- CertAVP Sub-Committee Chair
	*Mr John Fishwick	- Chair of Specialist Sub-Committee
	Dr Joanne Dyer	- EMS Co-ordinators Liaison Group and PQSC Chair
	*Professor Nigel Gibbens	- Chair of Accreditation Review Group
In attendance:	Mr Duncan Ash	- Senior Education Officer
	Mrs Britta Crawford	- Committee Secretary
	Mr Jordan Nichols	- Lead for Undergraduate Education
	Dr Linda Prescott-Clements	- Director of Education
	Mr Jonathan Reid	- Examinations Manager
	Ms Jenny Soreskog-Turp	- Lead for Postgraduate Education
	Ms Laura Hogg	- Senior Education Officer
	Mr Kieran Thakrar	- Education Assistant
	Ms Beckie Smith	- Education Assistant
	Mrs Kirsty Williams	- Quality Assurance Manager
	Mr Alal Uddin	- VetGDP e-learning content Manager
	Ms Joanne Stetzl	- Marketing Communications Manager
	Ms Lizzie Lockett	- CEO
	Dr Niall Connell	- Officer Team Observer

*absent

Apologies for absence and welcome

1. Apologies were received from Tim Parkin, Susan Howarth, Nigel Gibbens and John Fishwick

2. The meeting was held remotely via “Teams” due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. Tobias Hunter and Katie Fox were thanked for their valuable contributions to the committee over their two-year term as the first student members.
4. The Committee were reminded that observers were encouraged to participate in discussions but were not voting members.
5. The meeting papers reference the RCVS Council Covid-19 Taskforce. The Chair explained that this group was brought together on March 6th, 2020 to make key decisions on temporary policy changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The need for the Taskforce is under constant review as the pandemic continues and Council has agreed to its continuance until March 2021 at the earliest.
6. The Chair thanked the Education Department for their hard work, which was reflected in the volume and depth of papers prepared for the meeting. Her thanks were appreciated.

Declarations of interest

7. Cheryl Scudamore declared that she is advising Harper and Keele on their pathology content. Kate Richards declared that she had been made a member of the Association of Government Vets.

Minutes

8. The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters arising

9. The Committee understood from the meeting in November that EAEVE had questioned why there was no longer a Day One Competence (D1C) relating to food safety standards. Nigel Gibbens had drafted these words to be brought to Education Committee: Understand the principles and practice of the application of veterinary science to ensure food safety standards throughout the production chain, including performance of post-mortem inspection of food producing animals. Education Committee were happy to accept this as an addition to the recently agreed DICs.
10. The RCVS is waiting for the final approval from the South African Veterinary Council for the Mutual recognition Agreement but is being held up by the pandemic. As soon as we receive confirmation it will signed and formalised by the President of the RCVS.

Education Department update

11. The Director of Education, Dr Linda Prescott-Clements, gave an oral update on the work of the Education Department. The Committee heard that Linda Prescott-Clements had supported Sue Paterson at the BSAVA student conference at the end of January to present progress on VetGDP

and would also be presenting a pre-recorded webinar with live Q&A session at BSAVA conference. The World Veterinary Association (WVA) had invited the RCVS as the current host of IAWG to join the steering group for project around global quality assurance. Other members may be interested in joining and Linda would bring back information to this Committee.

12. The Worshipful Company of Farriers have approached the RCVS to quality assure their assessment processes. It is understood that the department is very busy but will make time for this by the end of the year.
13. Linda attended a joint meeting of PSRB, which was also attended by the Education minister, they discussed issues across all professions in dealing with attending work experience during the Covid-19 pandemic, which was useful. Kirsty Williams had attended an ENQA conference which was also useful.
14. Alal Uddin was welcomed to the Education Department on a temporary basis to manage the content upload of the VetGDP Adviser training package.

RCVS Covid-19 Taskforce update

15. The committee received and noted three papers and decisions which had been made by the RCVS Covid-19 Taskforce. The papers gave details of the two reviews of the temporary EMS policy; the review of CPD policy and approval of the SME temporary removal of the need for a letter of good standing for entry into the 2021 exam and recognising the IELTS indicator results.

Continuing professional Development (CPD)

Update from the CPD Compliance panel

16. The committee received the minutes from the CPD Compliance Panel's meeting on the 14th January 2020.
17. Ms Ford gave an overview of the main outcomes of the meeting and informed the committee that two veterinary surgeons had been referred to the Professional Conduct Department. The Panel also reviewed the CPD pauses for 2020, 111 applications had been approved, 32 from Veterinary nurses and 79 from Veterinary surgeons. More than 80% of all applications were related to parental leave.

Responsibilities of the CPD committees

18. The CPD Compliance Panel and the CPD Policy Working Party had a joint meeting on the 14th January 2020 to discuss the workload and responsibilities of each committee.
19. During the meeting, there were discussions about whether the RCVS should have two CPD committees; one responsible for the policy and another for enforcing the policy. It was decided that the purpose and terms of reference of the CPD committees should be discussed by

Education Committee and VN Council so that they could consider the process and how the responsibilities should be divided.

20. Education Committee felt that it would be better to have one CPD Committee that is responsible for RCVS CPD policy as well as enforcing it, but to make sure to structure the meetings so that there is a clear delineation between the non-compliance case discussion and the items which are about encouraging and supporting the policy. The Committee will continue to report to Education Committee and VN Council, who will be ultimately responsible for the policy.
21. It was agreed that the CPD Policy Working Party will be disband from December 2021 as planned, but the chair of the group will be asked to join the CPD Compliance Panel from 2022 to ensure consistency.

Action: Education Department to invite the chair of the CPD Policy WP to join the CPD Panel

22. The Committee suggested that the name of the CPD Panel should be reviewed to make sure it reflects its purpose and responsibilities. Education Department will review the terms of reference for the Panel and the name and report back to Education Committee.

Action: Education Department to review Terms of Reference and name by December 2021

23. It has been beneficial to have external stakeholders involved in developing the outcomes-based model and 1CPD so Education Committee thought it would be useful to explore options for how an external CPD group could be established. The group would involve stakeholders from within the UK and overseas which will enable a wider CPD discussion, encourage innovation and development of best practice.

Action: Education Department to explore option for setting up external CPD group and report back to the committee by November 2021

Graduate Outcomes

Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) Update

Changes to the Code

24. Eleanor Ferguson joined the meeting to inform the Committee on the proposed changes to the RCVS code of professional conduct relating to the VetGDP. It is proposed that the Code will be updated to include VetGDP in the same areas as CPD and PDP with the same stipulation that those involved will be required to produce their records on request from the RCVS. The code will also need to be amended to clarify the relationship with the appointed senior veterinary surgeon for each workplace. The Committee asked that the wording was not restricted to “practices” but included all workplaces and organisations.
25. The change has already been agreed in principle by the RCVS standards Committee and RCVS Council, but the exact wording will need to be approved again by Standards Committee and get the final sign off from Council.

VetGDP Adviser Training

26. The Committee heard an update on the VetGDP adviser training and acknowledged that there is now a detailed content map for the 6 modules, which have already been approved by the Committee. The training is designed to be flexible, with each module delivered in bite sized standalone pieces. The training will be delivered using a variety of educational methods and will involve international experts at the forefront of educational research. The training will be specific to the VetGDP, drawing on current best practice applicable to the new graduates.

Communications Update

27. Joanne Stetzel joined the meeting to give a comprehensive update of the communications strategy for the VetGDP. The Committee heard about the success of the campaign to recruit 1000 VetGDP advisers and the strategy to maintain on-going interest. The Committee understood that there had been presentations to the final year students at each of the veterinary schools, with additional presentations to student conferences and employers. One interactive workshop had already been held, aimed at all employers and had been very successful, with two further workshops planned.
28. There are a range of resources on the RCVS website which are both student and profession facing, answering questions that we received during the question-and-answer sessions of the presentations. Once the guidance is published, there will be further workshops tied in with this so that the profession can have any questions answered in real time.
29. The profession has engaged strongly and positively with the new programme.

Overseas Graduates

30. For graduates going to work overseas, the Committee agreed that they would not be expected to complete VetGDP whilst abroad, as this would not be practical. The graduates could enrol, if and when they come back on the UK register, or could apply for an exemption if the programme would no longer be beneficial to them, due to their experience overseas. Non-completion of VetGDP under these circumstances would not affect the individual's MRCVS status.
31. The Committee agreed that veterinary surgeons who qualify overseas and join the register with less than a year's experience will need to enrol with VetGDP. All overseas registrants will have the option of enrolling as it would provide excellent support.
32. The Committee were happy for those with experience overseas but who had not been on the register for three years to apply directly to the RCVS if they wished to sign up to be an adviser.

Exemptions

33. The Committee understood that the VetGDP had been designed to be sufficiently flexible to work with almost any veterinary role, with the potential to add further work-based activities using the template provided. However, there are some instances where it may not be the best option, for

those with very little or no clinical element to their roles. For example, those studying for a Master's degree or PhD may find it more appropriate to postpone the VetGDP.

34. The Committee discussed those going into the pharmaceutical industry and/or research and offered assistance in creating guidance for these individuals.

PDP

35. The Committee agreed to the proposed date of the 1st June as the final date for those eligible to sign up for the PDP. All those on the programme would be supported for three years from this date, where necessary. All graduates after this date would need to sign up for the VetGDP.

VetGDP Sub-committee

36. The Committee agreed to recommend establishing a VetGDP sub-committee (which would report into Education Committee) to the Finance and Resource committee. Education committee suggested that application for membership should be advertised widely with an outline of skills needed to be an effective committee member.

VetGDP locum advisers

37. The committee received and noted the paper about locum VetGDP advisers.
38. The committee felt that in exceptional circumstances such as a VetGDP adviser leaving unexpectedly and as a result recruiting a new VetGDP adviser is problematic, it would be beneficial for practices be able to apply for a locum VetGDP adviser to support their graduate. It is important that the time-period is clearly indicated in the application so that it does not become a permanent solution.
39. The committee agreed that the practice or workplace should pay the locum adviser directly as is normal practice when hiring a locum veterinary surgeon.
40. The committee also discussed if new graduates that are self-employed can register for the VetGDP. They felt it would be difficult for one practice to offer genuine support in circumstances where the graduate only stayed for a short time-period. The committee acknowledge that they might not be able to stop it happening, but they do not recommend it and would encourage graduates to seek opportunities where they can get support in their first role.

EMS/Clinical Education Update

Graduate Outcomes EMS & Clinical Education Sub-Group

41. The minutes from the sub-group's recent meeting on 12 December 2020 were received and noted.

New EMS Policy

42. As part of both the Accreditation Review and also the Graduate Outcomes project work, a new EMS Policy had been drafted, and the EMS & Clinical Education Sub-Group presented the update for approval from Education Committee.
43. However, although the updated policy had been drafted based on earlier input from the EMS Coordinators Liaison Group, and some Heads of Schools were members of the subgroup responsible for drafting it, not all of heads of schools has seen the draft. Therefore, before it could be approved it was agreed to be shared to Vet Schools Council for feedback before coming back to Education Committee at a later date.

Action: Education Department to get feedback from Vet Schools Council and report back to EC

44. Further to this, there were some suggested amendments around the changes to say that EMS would only be allowed to take place completely outside of the university environment. It was argued that although the EMS would be taking place in a familiar surrounding, the experience would be different to that of IMR placements, and research placements within universities were also seen to be of value despite being in the same setting. EMS that was more local to students would also help in keeping their costs down. These suggestions were noted, and the wording would be reviewed so that the requirements around this would be softened.

EMS Database

45. Education Committee had been asked to give approval for RCVS to fund and develop a new EMS database of practices in-house. However, following on from the discussions around VSC involvement in the new EMS Policy, it was also agreed to delay this until all vet school heads had the opportunity to provide feedback.

Accreditation Review

Minutes from the meeting held on 6 January 2021

46. The minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2021 were received and noted. It was reported that the working party had considered the new EMS standards (to be presented later in the agenda), and the new RCVS accreditation methodology, which required some additional revision before being presented to both PQSC and Education Committee at their next meetings.

New EMS Standards

47. The committee was presented with the new EMS standards for consideration, which had been produced through the Graduate Outcomes sub-group tasked with taking forward recommendations from the consultation relating to clinical education and EMS. Members were presented with the proposed EMS standards, including guidance notes underpinning the standards, as well as statements on how they related to programme quality, and suggestions for the types of evidence that might support each standard and be collected during accreditation activities to demonstrate achievement. The committee had requested a number of amendments

to help with clarity before recommending to PQSC and Education Committee that they be finalised.

48. There were no further additions or amendments suggested by Education Committee, and the standards were approved as final. The next steps were to present the full set of new standards to RCVS Council, alongside the new methodology once finalised.

Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee

Minutes of the sub-committee held 15th January 2021

49. The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January were received and noted. Most of the discussions formed separate agenda items at this Education Committee meeting, however it was noted that the main focus of the PQSC meeting had been to consider the annual monitoring reports from the UK veterinary schools. Feedback on the reports was currently being collated and would be fed back to the schools shortly.

Statutory Membership Exam (SME)

2020 OSCE results

50. The Committee heard a verbal update on the results of the OSCE component of the 2020 statutory membership examination. All 6 candidates passed the examination and were subsequently invited to register with the College.

Remote Based Testing

51. Education Committee had previously decided to extend remote-based test delivery to the 2021 examination, in light of the ongoing COVID situation. Given the advantages of running this component remotely rather than at a physical test centre, the Committee were asked to determine whether remote-based testing should become a permanent feature of the statutory membership examination.
52. The Committee agreed that this temporary change should be made permanent.

Minutes of the SME board held on 8 January 2021

53. The minutes of the meeting on 8 January 2021 were presented to the Committee for their information.

RCVS Review of Vet School plans

54. The Education Department are keeping up to date with the Vet School contingency plans, and we are now asking for the next iteration, using the prescribed templates.

Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP)

Minutes of the meeting held 4 November 2020

55. The minutes had been reported orally at the previous Education Committee meeting in November. The minutes were noted.

CertAVP review

56. The Committee heard an overview of results for the CertAVP review including figures from of the RCVS held desktop research and also the results of the questionnaire. The CertAVP sub-committee held an extraordinary meeting where they had pulled out the main themes for further investigation at focus groups and suggested data to be gathered from the assessment providers. The sub-committee suggested a focus group made up of employers to look at the currency of a postgraduate certificate and whether they are encouraged within practice. They also asked to look at potential barriers for those completing a CertAVP; the most valued subject stream and the potential for more digital delivery. There was more work to be done on looking at the weaknesses and threats to the certificate, such as one of the major assessment providers pulling out and the sustainability of less popular modules and subjects.

Specialist Sub-Committee

57. The minutes from the Specialist Sub-Committee (SSC) held on 7 January 2021 were received and noted.
58. The Committee approved the additions and re-additions to the List of Specialists, as recommended by SSC.
59. The current Chair of SSC had been nominated to step down from the committee as they had served 5 years. This was approved by Education Committee, and the change would be made in July.
60. It was reported that RCVS were developing a College wide process for appointing new committee members, and a replacement would be sought once that had been further developed.
61. The SSC were also currently reviewing the criteria for eligibility, as well as the application forms themselves. It was noted that any recommended changes to this would be put to Education Committee at its next meeting in May.

Qualifications approved for inclusion on the Registers

62. The Committee noted the additions.

Student Representatives for Education Committee and PQSC.

63. It was reported that the two-year term for the student representatives on both Education Committee and PQSC had come to an end, and that RCVS needed to advertise for four new

representatives to take up the role from May. The Committee was presented with a draft advertisement describing the role and inviting application.

64. Members commented that it would be useful to try to stagger the two appointments on each committee, so that there would be some overlap and consistency between terms, and it was agreed that this would be implemented. There were also discussions about whether the time spent preparing for and attending committee meetings could be counted as part of EMS. Whilst it was accepted that students could record this professional activity as part of their EMS, it would be difficult for a student to count single days. One suggestion was that the student could count the time cumulatively as meeting one weeks EMS requirement. The committee approved the advert for publication, subject to some further clarity around the time commitment required for the role.

Action: RCVS to update advert and publish via the VSC

Risk Register

65. The committee received and noted the risk register for the Education department. There were no additional risks identified, but committee members were encouraged to contact the Education Department if any further risks should be added to the register.

Action: Committee members to review risks and send additions to Education Department

Any other business

66. In accordance with the CPD policy veterinary surgeons can pause their CPD for up to six months and the Education Department had received a query about how that would affect advanced practitioner applications. The AP guidance states that applicants must undertake a minimum of 250 hours of CPD over five years, whilst also complying with the formal RCVS requirement. It was agreed that since the pause reduce their CPD requirement for one year they would meet the criteria of being compliant with the formal RCVS requirement, but they would still need to undertake 250 hours over 5 year period.

Date of Next Meeting

67. 11 May 2021

Britta Crawford

February 2021

b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held 11 February 2021.
Summary	A meeting of the RCVS Finance and Resources Committee Minutes
Decisions required	To note the minutes
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Alan Quinn-Byrne Governance Officer/Secretary a.quinn-byrne@rcvs.org.uk / T 020 7227 3505

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4.

¹Classifications explained

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²Classification rationales

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

Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 11 February 2021.

Members:

Professor S Dawson
Dr C L Scudamore
Dr C W Tufnell*

Ms J S M Worthington*
Mr M L Peaty
Mr M E Rendle
Dr M A Donald
Mr T J Walker
Ms J Davidson
Dr R S Stephenson*

Chair / RCVS Treasurer
Representative from Education Committee
Representative from Advancement of Professions Committee
Lay Member RCVS Council
Representative from Standards Committee
RCVS Council / Veterinary Nurse Chair
Representative from PIC/DC Liaison Committee
Lay Member RCVS Council
Representative from Veterinary Nurses' Council
Elected member RCVS Council

*Denotes absent.

In attendance:

Ms L Lockett
Ms E Ferguson
Ms C McCann
Mr A Quinn-Byrne

CEO
Registrar / Director of Legal Services
Director of Operations (DoO)
Secretary FRC/Governance Officer

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies had been received from Ms Worthington, Dr Tufnell, and Dr Stephenson.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2020

3. There were no comments / amendments to add to the November 2020 minutes, and it was agreed they were a true reflection of the meeting.

Standing Items

Update from the Director of Operations (DoO)

4. The RCVS Audit was starting at the end of February and being conducted by our Auditors Crowe LLP. Crowe LLP had reported there would be a new international auditing standard around Fraud and irregularities, which would apply to the RCVS year end accounts. The auditors needed to have a good understanding of management's assessment of fraud. A new paragraph about this would be included in the audit report.

5. It was confirmed that since the last FRC Meeting in November 2020, there had been three new starters and one individual had left the RCVS. Recruitment was underway for a new Finance Manager.
6. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1-4

Appeals Committee

7. Two appeals against Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP) General Small Animal Surgery Synoptic examinations had been considered by the Examinations Appeals Committee in January 2021. Both appeals had been dismissed.

Items to Note

Reports of Committees

8. The newly formed Environmental and Sustainability Working Group, which reports into the Advancement of the Profession Committee, had now been set up and there may be future papers on funding and resources to come before FRC.
9. Education Committee would be proposing the creation of a Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) Subcommittee; costs and proposal would come before FRC for review and approval shortly.
10. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 5-6.

Corporate Risk Register

11. The Corporate Risk Register was presented to the Committee.
12. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 7-8.
13. The Committee praised the work that has gone into the risk register and thanked the Governance Officer, DoO and wider RCVS team for their work on this.

Management Accounts

Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 9-17.

Investment update

14. The Committee considered the investment update from Investec.

15. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 18.

Matter for decision and discussion

RVPP

16. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 19-24

Data Sharing Paper

17. The paper and accompanying slides were presented to the Committee.

18. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 25-36.

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Working Group

19. It was proposed to set up a new RCVS/Veterinary Schools Council (VSC) Working Group to take forward actions from the roundtable on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) student support.

20. The issues had been raised by the joint RCVS Diversity and Inclusion Group (DIG) / VSC roundtable, which took place in September and October of 2020.

21. This proposal had been approved by the DIG at its meeting on 18 January 2021 and later by the Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC) (by email w/c 25 January 2021). FRC was asked to formally approve the formation of the new Working Group.

22. This Working Group was approved by FRC by a unanimous vote of members present.

Decision: BAME Working Group Approved

Date of Next Meeting

23. The date of the next meeting would be Thursday, 13 May 2021 (with a joint meeting of ARC and FRC to be held before FRC).

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	Standards Committee Minutes
Summary	<p>Minutes of Standards Committee held remotely on Tuesday, 12 January 2021, at 10.00am.</p> <p>Please note that all agenda items for this meeting contained confidential information, therefore the Committee's attention is drawn to paragraphs 1 – 7 in the classified appendix.</p>
Decisions required	n/a
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	<p>Beth Jinks</p> <p>Senior Standards and Advisory Officer</p> <p>b.jinks@rcvs.org.uk</p>

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

1Classifications explained

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2Classification rationales

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

Minutes of the Standards Committee held remotely on Tuesday, 12 January 2021 at 10:00 am

Members: Mr M Castle
Mrs C Roberts
Dr M A Donald Chair
Mr D Leicester
Ms C-L McLaughlan
Mr M Peaty
Ms B Andrews-Jones
Miss L Belton
Dr C Allen
Prof J Wood

In attendance: Ms E C Ferguson Registrar
Mrs L Price Head of Standards
Ms B Jinks Senior Standards and Advice Officer
Mrs S Bruce-Smith Standards and Advice Officer
Dr M Greene President (observer)
Dr L Prescott-Clements Director of Education
VetGDP agenda item only
Dr S Paterson Chair RCVS Education Committee
VetGDP agenda item only

Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

1. The Chair welcomed the President to the meeting as an observer. Apologies were received from Mr Mark Castle and Ms Belinda Andrews-Jones. Professor James Wood joined the meeting at 10:25.
2. Mrs Claire Roberts declared that she works for Linnaeus who have a Graduate programme. There were no other new declarations of interest.
3. The minutes of the meeting from 8 December were noted and agreed accurate.

VetGDP (Graduate Development Programme) - Confidential

4. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1-3.

Under care - Confidential

5. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 4-5.

AOB - Confidential

6. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 6-7.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	Standards Committee Minutes
Summary	<p>Minutes of Standards Committee held remotely on Monday, 8 February 2021, at 10am. In particular, the Committee is to note:</p> <p>a. Common medicines pitfalls</p> <p>The Committee were asked to note a list of common pitfalls collated by the Standards and Advice team, and to consider the best way disseminate the information to the profession. It was agreed that the list as drafted would be useful for inclusion in various sections of the RCVS website, including in the PSS and Advice and Guidance areas.</p> <p>b. Microchipping of wild horses</p> <p>The Committee were asked to consider the proposal from the Dartmoor Commoner's Council and the Verderers of the New Forest, who have requested the consideration of an exemption order for lay microchipping of equines. The Committee were of the view that the case for an exemption has not been made this time.</p> <p>a. Compulsory microchipping consultation</p> <p>The Committee were informed that Defra have launched a consultation on compulsory microchipping of cats, and mandatory scanning of animals presented to veterinary practices. The Committee were asked to consider if the previous opinion on mandatory scanning, that is, that they are opposed to this, still stands. The Committee were also of the opinion that issues such as those with the microchip databases should be resolved before compulsory microchipping of cats goes forward.</p> <p>The Committee's attention is drawn to paragraphs 1 – 17 in the classified appendix.</p>

Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	<p>Kimberley Richardson</p> <p>Senior Standards and Advice Officer/Solicitor</p> <p>k.richardson@rcvs.org.uk / 0207 202 0757</p>

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3

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Minutes of the Standards Committee held remotely on Monday, 8 February 2021, at 10 am

Members: Mr M Castle
Mrs C Roberts
Dr M A Donald Chair
Mr D Leicester
Ms C-L McLaughlan
Mr M Peaty
Ms B Andrews-Jones
Miss L Belton
Dr C Allen
Prof J Wood

In attendance: Ms E C Ferguson Registrar
Mrs L Price Head of Standards
Ms B Jinks Senior Standards and Advice Officer
Mx K Richardson Senior Standards and Advice Officer/Solicitor
Mrs S Bruce-Smith Standards and Advice Officer
Ms L Lockett CEO
Dr M Greene President
Mr B Myring Policy and Public Affairs Manager
Present for AI 3(d) and (e) only
Ms R Greaves Policy and Public Affairs Officer
Present for AI 3(d) and (e) only

AI 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

1. The Chair welcomed the President and CEO to the meeting as observers.
2. Apologies were received from James Wood who will be present until 10.50am, and Claire Roberts.
3. Martin Peaty declared an interest in that he carries out work in the New Forest, including the implanting of microchips into horses and ponies. There were no other declarations of interest.

AI 1 Minutes of the meetings held on 9 November 2020, 15 December 2020, and 12 January 2021

4. It was agreed that the minutes of the previous meetings are accurate.

5. It was reported that every action item has either been actioned or appears on the agenda for this meeting.

AI 2 Standards and Advice Update

6. The Senior Standards and Advice Officer provided an update to the Committee on the Standard and Advice Team's work since November's meeting. The Committee thanked the team for all of their efforts, and in particular, for their management of the increased volume in advice queries relating to the temporary guidance changes as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
7. It was suggested that the next update would include any constructive feedback as well as positive feedback, to provide balance, and to be considered from a learning and development perspective.
8. The Committee asked whether consideration should be given to greater publicisation of the services provided by the Standards and Advice Team, in order to further increase good relations with stakeholders and the profession. It was noted that this has been done from time to time and is beneficial.
9. It was agreed that in any new publicisation of the service, care would need to be taken not to create an expectation that the Standards and Advice Team could authorise certain practice and that available advice is largely around helping the profession to exercise their professional judgement by aiding their understanding and application of the Code and supporting guidance.
10. It was agreed that consideration should be given to available resources prior to greater publicisation of the service.

Matters for decision

AI 3(a) Covid-19 temporary guidance on remote prescribing – Confidential

11. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 to 3.

AI 3(b) Common medicines pitfalls

12. The paper was introduced, and it was explained that both the RCVS and the VMD repeatedly find the same medicines errors, particularly in relation to controlled drugs, during PSS assessments and VMD inspections of practices. Previous guidance on issues such as storage and broach dates has been well received by the profession.
13. It was agreed that this information is very useful and consideration should be given to the best way of disseminating it within the profession, to maximise the likelihood of it being utilised.

14. It was agreed that the FAQs as drafted would be useful for inclusion in various sections of the RCVS website, including in the PSS and Advice and Guidance areas.
15. It was suggested that a common medicines pitfalls document could be circulated when a PSS assessment is scheduled, in order to assist practices in ensuring compliance in the lead up to their assessments, as well as to help make the assessments easier for assessors.

Action: Head of Standards

16. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 4.

AI 3(c) Weatherbys App - Confidential

17. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 5 to 12.

AI 3(d) Microchipping consultation

Mr Myring and Ms Greaves joined the meeting.

18. The paper was introduced, and it was explained that it pertains to a Government consultation on compulsory microchipping of cats, and mandatory scanning of animals presented to veterinary practices.
19. It was agreed that the Committee remain opposed to the imposition of mandatory scanning of microchips, both for practical reasons, and because of the consequences that follow, i.e. it may be a deterrent to owners obtaining veterinary care, i.e. in situations of domestic abuse and jointly-owned animals etc.
20. It was agreed that this was an opportunity to highlight the current problems faced with the microchip databases, including long wait times, which must be resolved before this can go ahead.
21. The Committee asked whether there was any available data on the recording of incorrect data for dogs and questioned the value of introducing this for a different species when it may not currently work as intended for dogs.

Action: Policy and Public Affairs Team

AI 3(e) Exemption orders

22. The paper was introduced, and it was explained that it pertains to a proposal from Dartmoor Commoner's Council and the Verderers of the New Forest who have requested the consideration of an exemption order for lay microchipping of equines.

23. There was discussion around why microchipping of equines is limited to veterinary surgeons, when lay people are permitted to microchip other species. It was agreed that this is because the microchip is implanted into the nuchal ligament, and horses are typically needle-shy, making the procedure dangerous, as well as potentially requiring sedation or restraint.
24. It was explained that for expediency, an equine owner would typically fill in the ID certificates, then at the time of implantation of the microchip, the veterinary surgeon has an opportunity, with the animal restrained, to check the ID certificate and certify it on behalf of the owner, if, of course, it is correctly filled in. There is some concern that if veterinary surgeons are no longer implanting the microchip, and therefore checking and certifying the ID certificate at the same time, that they will be asked to sign the ID certificates, without being able to physically identify the animal, which would not be compliant with Principle 1 of the 10 Principles of Certification, and the opportunity to check identification will become much fewer and far between.
25. It was agreed that if a case was made for an exemption for the most difficult scenarios/horses, it would open up a case for all horses, which is not supported. This is due to a veterinary surgeon being required as there is a genuine and real risk of infection due to the placement of the microchip and the fact that equines tend not to be as hygienic as small animals.
26. The Committee are of the view that a case for an exemption has not been made.

Action: Policy and Public Affairs Team

Mr Myring and Ms Greaves left the meeting.

AI 4(a) Equine ID

27. The paper was introduced, and it was explained that whilst no substantive changes were being proposed, BEVA had proposed some additional wording regarding ownership disputes. It was confirmed that this was likely to be the final addition to the guidance relating to compulsory microchipping of equines at this time.
28. The Committee unanimously approved the proposed wording.

Action: Standards and Advice Team.

AI 4(b) Under care – Confidential

29. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 13 to 15.

AI 5(a) DC report

30. The report was noted.

AI 5(b) Riding Establishments Subcommittee report

31. The report was noted and the background explained.

32. The Committee asked whether riding establishments were struggling in relation to the pandemic and whether this has impacted animal welfare. It was noted that a lot of Local Authorities have stopped inspecting and so there is no access to data in this regard.

33. The Committee requested that course dates are published on the website as soon as possible so that veterinary surgeons are able to diarise accordingly. It was confirmed that an update on course dates will be circulated in the next week or so, and published on the website.

Action: Standards and Advice Team

34. It was noted that remote webinars are in the process of being made and delegates will have 4 weeks to watch them in advance of attending a Q&A session in July 2021, in order to become re-certified.

AI 5(c) PSS report

35. The report was noted.

36. It was highlighted that all high risk face-to-face assessments have been suspended in light of the national lockdown restrictions and remote assessments are ongoing.

37. It was noted that the VMD are continuing with remote medicines inspections.

AI 6(a) RVP Subcommittee report – Confidential

38. Confidential information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 16 to 17.

AI 6(b) ERP report – Confidential

39. The report was noted.

AI 6(c) Certification subcommittee report – Confidential

40. The report was noted.

Risk and equality

41. It was agreed that this will be moved to the next Committee meeting.

Any other business

42. The Registrar noted that post-Brexit, fan stamping of Export Health Certificates is proving a challenge on the basis that the EU Commission do not support it. It has been agreed with APHA that instead of fan stamping, a stamp and signature on each page of the document will be recommended for EU Export Health Certificates, and a change to Chapter 21 of the guidance is proposed in this regard. The Committee approved this change.

Action: Head of Standards

43. The Head of Standards proposed revisiting the guidance at Chapter 23, in relation to veterinary surgeons endorsing their own products and services, and it was agreed that a report will be prepared for discussion at the next Committee meeting.

Action: Head of Standards

Date of next meeting

44. The date of the next meeting is 4 March 2021.

Table of actions

Paragraph(s)	Action	Assigned to
15	Liaise with PSS and Comms regarding the dissemination of the Common Medicines Pitfalls document.	Head of Standards
21	Provide Committee feedback via the consultation process.	Policy and Public Affairs Team
27	Provide Committee feedback to Dartmoor Commoner's Council and the Verderers of the New Forest.	Policy and Public Affairs Team
29	Publish amendments to Chapter 29 and new Chapter 30 of the supporting guidance.	Standards and Advice Team
34	Publish course dates for Riding Establishment Inspector training 2021.	Standards and Advice Team
43	Publish amendments to Chapter 21 of the supporting guidance.	Head of Standards
44	Prepare a discussion paper for the next Standards Committee meeting.	Head of Standards

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	Veterinary Nurses Council Report to Council
Summary	<p>To note the minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 10 February 2021.</p> <p>In particular, to note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VNC had noted that only one nomination had been received for VN Council by the closing date. The nominee (Susan Howarth) would remain on Council for a further three year term, and the nomination period had been extended until 28 February for the remaining place. VNC had received updates on the measures which had been put in place to provide guidance and support to training providers during the Covid pandemic. Additionally, the enrolment period for students whose final assessments or placement periods had been delayed had been extended, without further fees. VNC had welcomed the news that RCVS Council had approved a pathway for RVNs to become Practice Standards Assessors.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	<p>Annette Amato</p> <p>Committee Secretary</p> <p>a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1,2,3,4

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

Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 10 February 2021

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

1. There were no apologies for absence.

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

Council Mar 21 AI 07f (i)

3. No written obituaries had been received. Council was encouraged to have a moment of reflection after the meeting, for all members of the professions who had passed since the last meeting, and for the on-going difficulties resulting from the current pandemic.

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020 were accepted as a correct record.

Matters arising

5. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

CEO update

6. The CEO presented her update report, which provided a summary of activity against the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and which had been submitted to RCVS Council in January.
7. The College was starting to make progress with some of the strategic projects within the plan, including the Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (Vet GDP) project and some of the work being developed on diversity and inclusion.
8. The Covid Taskforce continued to meet on a regular basis, usually twice a month, and the VNC Chair was a member of the Taskforce. She confirmed that any decisions made were ratified by RCVS Council, and Council was given a two-day window in which to make any objections. There had been a number of recent decisions affecting veterinary nurses, including the extension of the annual fee payment window, and an extension of the enrolment period without charge for VN students who had been unable to complete their practical training and assessments.
9. The RCVS premises have been closed in the main since March last year, with the exception of some staff visits in the autumn between lockdown periods. Support had been put in place to address staff wellbeing and mental health, as well as virtual social and other staff engagement events.
10. As reported in the veterinary press, only one nomination (Susan Howarth) had been received for VN Council by the deadline of 31 January. Susan would therefore remain on VN Council for a further three-year term, and the nomination period had been extended until 28 February for the remaining place. There have been 14 nominations received for RCVS Council.
11. Some work had been carried out around College Council culture, aiming to provide increased clarity on the role of Council members and the behaviours expected of them. The CEO suggested that it would be useful to discuss with VN Council which of the aspects or the workshops being carried out with RCVS Council it would find useful.
12. The RCVS was about to launch its Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which had involved input from various staff members including members of the VN team. An action plan was being developed

around student veterinary nurse diversity.

13. In response to a question on the Legislation Working Party consultation document and whether only certain aspects, if favoured in the responses, might be included in the final recommendations, the CEO confirmed that some areas may be contingent on others in order to work as a package, and on balance all views would be taken into account. It was a consultation, not a referendum, and it should always be front of mind that the RCVS was acting primarily in the public interest.
14. It was confirmed that the RCVS would continue to work with ACOVENE (Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education) from a European perspective.
15. It was commented that the work taking place on RCVS Council culture would be a useful aspect for VN Council to discuss. VNC inclusion on work on the Risk Registers would also be welcomed. It was also suggested that a survey on the impact of Covid-19 on VNs would be useful.
16. The CEO was praised by Council for her dedication and diligence, and for support provided for the staff.

VN Education Committee (VNEC)

17. Susan Howarth, Chair of the VNEC, presented the report of the two meetings of the VNEC had held since the previous meeting of Council, and highlighted the following points:
18. **Minutes of meeting held on 13 October 2020.** The minutes of the meeting on 13 October had been circulated for approval in November, together with a summary of the key points for Council's attention.
19. **Minutes of meeting held on 13 January 2021.**
20. A new FE student representative had been welcomed to the Committee. The Committee now had a full complement of members representing all areas.
21. In response to the Covid situation, as noted by the CEO, student enrolments had been extended without a further fee for those whose final assessments had been delayed. Temporary guidance had been provided to universities and colleges on how the Day One Skills could be achieved or partially achieved in situations other than in practice. This had been found to be very helpful.
22. The VN team had requested regular updates from providers to identify areas where support may be needed. This would feed back into the monitoring activity.
23. A review had been carried out of the number of Training Practice (TP) placements required and the number of TPs, which had indicated that there were sufficient training practices in the UK for the number of students, although there were a few providers that did not have sufficient affiliated practices to support the number of students on their programme. The guidance was being strengthened to address this issue, as well as inclusion in the revised accreditation standards.

23. It was confirmed the design of the programme was taken into account when assessing the required TP numbers. The number of TPs had been taken from the RCVS database and was not double counted; a TP could only have one primary centre, even though it may take students from other institutions. In such cases there was a Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions.
24. The final sessions of the VN Patient-Based Assessment (VN-PBA) had been delivered by City & Guilds in December. It was confirmed that currently there were no universities planning to run the PBA, nor were any of the other awarding organisations.
25. The Committee had decided to increase the number of meetings to six each year in order to allow for timely consideration of accreditation reports and decision making. There would therefore be occasions where two meetings report to one VNC meeting.

Continuing Professional Development

26. Alison Carr presented the minutes from the meeting of the CPD Compliance Panel held on 14 January 2021 and drew attention to two points of specific interest.
27. The Committee had reviewed twenty cases of veterinary nurses who had been non-compliant, having fallen short of the number of required CPD hours by a considerable amount. By the time the meeting took place, six nurses had met the requirement and the others had been sent emails to confirm the steps that they should take to address the shortfall. The other cases of non-compliance reviewed by the Committee were veterinary surgeons.
28. The Committee had looked for the first time at the CPD pause requests report, and this would be reviewed at each meeting in the future. 129 requests had been received, of which 111 had been approved and 18 had been declined as the individuals had not provided a return-to-work plan despite several requests. Of the applications that had been approved, 32 were from veterinary nurses and 79 were from veterinary surgeons. Parental leave was the most common reason for a CPD pause request (approximately 83%). The system seemed to be working well.

Reports from RCVS Committees

Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

29. The report from the RVN PIC of activities since the previous meeting of Council was noted. It was commented that it would be helpful to see a comparison of the number of concerns raised on an annual basis, and the Registrar suggested that this could be included in the annual VN PIC Chair's report to VN Council. The Registrar also commented that the number of concerns raised against veterinary nurses was consistently low and had been over a period of time.

RVN Disciplinary Committee

30. The report of two disciplinary hearings which had taken place since the previous meeting of Council was noted. In response to a query as to whether there had been any impact on the

disciplinary hearings during the Covid pandemic, it was noted that one hearing had taken place in-house, due to the smaller size of the RVN panel. Other hearings had taken place remotely. Respondents were offered the opportunity to have remote hearings and these were generally accepted. It was necessary to strike a balance and to be able to hold hearings in a timely manner.

Standards Committee

31. Claire Roberts provided a brief update from the Standards Committee meeting held on 8 February.
32. **Common medicine pitfalls.** The Standards and Advice team had collated common medicines issues and queries that were regularly identified through Practice Standards assessments, advice queries, concerns and also discussed at the RCVS and VMD bi-annual meetings. A list of FAQs had been drafted and agreed by the Committee, to be linked to the supporting guidance and published within a Standards and Advice update.
33. **Microchipping consultation.** The Committee was made aware of the DEFRA consultation on proposals to introduce mandatory microchipping of cats, and the RCVS would respond in due course.
34. **Equine ID.** The Committee approved further minor updates to Chapter 30 of the supporting guidance following input from the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) regarding ownership disputes.

Practice Standards

35. Andrea Jeffery reported the very good news that at its January meeting, RCVS Council had approved a pathway for RVNs to apply to become Practice Standards Assessors. The concerns which had been raised in the past regarding veterinary nurses having the authority to go into practices as assessors had been allayed. A fuller report from the recent meeting of the Practice Standards Group would be made at the next meeting,
36. Council agreed that this was a very positive and welcome step. It was felt that this would lead to a great deal of interest within the profession and would also be a positive enhancement to career pathways, as part of the strategic plan.

Policy and Public Affairs update

37. The Policy and Public Affairs Manager provided a brief update.
38. There continued to be a good response to the Legislation Working Party consultation, for which the deadline had been extended due to Covid. Over 800 responses had already been received, of which 30% were from veterinary nurses.
39. The VN research would be resumed this year.
40. The new Environment and Sustainability Working Party recently held its first meeting, which had

been very successful with presentations from a range of groups including the British Veterinary Association (BVA), corporate practices and Vet Sustain. The next step would be to scope out the vision and principles for the group.

- 41. The first scoping meeting of the Vet Tech Working Party had taken place. Both Working Parties were in the early stages, but Council would be kept informed and a series of blogs would be published.
- 42. It was commented that it was good to see these initiatives being advanced, despite the current situation.

VN Register report

- 43. Council noted a report showing statistics on the total number of registered veterinary nurses, including the number of new registrations, removals and restorations annually for the calendar years 2015 – 2020. Figures were also provided for the number of student enrolments for the past six academic years. The number of admissions to the Register for 2020 was lower than previous years, due to the delay in final assessments for many students caused by the Covid pandemic, but it was anticipated that the numbers would increase in 2021 due to many students having completed the VN-PBA towards the end of the 2020.
- 44. The Director of Veterinary Nursing added that it seemed likely, from College feedback, that the number of student enrolments for 2020/21 would be on a par with the numbers for the previous year.
- 45. The number of nurses currently undertaking the Period of Supervised Practice, required for those returning to the Register after an absence of five years or more, was lower than in previous years.
- 46. It was commented that the number of nurses removed from the Register following non-payment of the annual fee had been lower in 2021. This was a positive point to feed back to the Registration Department, who had made considerable efforts in the communications around this area.

Communications report

- 47. The Media and Publications Manager provided an overview of recent activities in the Comms Department.
- 48. The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy was due to be published next week, and the College was looking to include this in a wider variety of publications than usual, including HR and Education.
- 49. Practice Standards Scheme eNews would be issued later that week and would include items on RVNs as Practice Standards Assessors, a guide to how the remote assessment process works and the forthcoming update to Core Standards.
- 50. The February edition of RCVS eNews was in the planning stage, and any suggestions for content would be welcome.

51. A key area of work had been the publicity around the Vet GDP programme, which would replace the Professional Development Phase (PDP) programme for newly qualified veterinary surgeons in the summer. There had been a considerable amount of interest, and already over a thousand veterinary surgeons had signed up to act as mentors in this programme.
52. The events team had been working on input into the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) virtual congress, which would include a section of the stand on VN Futures, as well as a session delivered by the VN Futures Coordinator on this area.
53. All VNs had been notified by email of the extension of the VN Council election period. The Chair confirmed that he had already received many expressions of interest as a result of the email.
54. A virtual veterinary nurses evening was being planned for 27 May, and speakers were currently being sought. It was confirmed that this was an open event and all VN Council members were very welcome to attend. Details would be confirmed nearer the time.
55. Emma Lockley in the Comms team had been appointed as Student Graduate and Engagement Manager for both veterinary and veterinary nursing students, and would work with the VN Team on outreach.
56. The website and online platforms were currently being updated in line with the new government rules on accessibility.

Any other business

57. The was no other business raised.

Date of next meeting

58. Wednesday, 12 May 2021 at 10.30am.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	Minutes from Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee Report of Thursday, 18 February 2021
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Hannah Alderton Secretary, PIC DC LC 020 7856 1033 h.alderon@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	4

¹Classifications explained

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²Classification rationales

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Minutes of the Preliminary Investigation Committee / Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee meeting held on Thursday, 18 February 2021

Members:	Dr D J Argyle*	Member of Council / Junior Vice-President (Chair)
	Mr I Arundale	Chair, Disciplinary Committee (DC)
	Dr S Dawson	Member of Council / Treasurer
	Dr M A Donald	Chair, Standards Committee (SC)
	Mrs S K Edwards*	Chair, RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVNPIC)
	Dr N C Smith	Member of Council
	Dr C W Tufnell	Member of Council
	Dr B P Viner	Chair, Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) (Vice- Chair)
	Ms J S M Worthington	Member of Council

In attendance:	Miss H Alderton	Secretary
	Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar / Director of Legal Services
	Ms L Lockett	CEO
	Ms G Crossley	Head of Professional Conduct
	Miss Y Yusuph	DC Clerk
	Mr A Ghoorbin	DC Solicitor

*Denotes absent

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs S K Edwards.

Declarations of interest

2. It was stated that there were no new declarations of interest.

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 19 November 2020

3. The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Updates – general

4. This information can be found at paragraph 1 of the confidential appendix.

5. The recruitment process for PIC, DC and RVN DC was about to commence. The recruitment was for nine new members who would come on the Committees in the summer of 2021 and 2022. The process was quite expensive so the number of people hired would meet the needs for the next two years. It was stated that the reserves from the previous recruitment process would be coming on the Committees that summer and all, but one had accepted the positions. That individual's circumstances had changed since originally accepting the job. The recruitment process would be done through Thewlis Graham and the interview panel would have regulatory, lay, and veterinary input. The Committee asked whether it would be appropriate to notify individuals who they thought would be suitable for the job that the recruitment process was open, and it was agreed that that was allowed and a good way to spread the word.
6. Disciplinary hearings were continuing to take place and the Committee was informed that they were being held remotely where possible. An RVN hearing had been held in person at Belgravia House, the smaller panel of three on RVN cases meant that social distancing had been possible, panels of five or seven on veterinary surgeon cases meant that they could not be held there with those same measures in place. Virtual hearings were held with the consent of all parties involved which was in-line with other regulators, but the College was finding that respondents' Counsel were refusing remote hearings in cases relating to honesty and integrity, they believed that it was in their client's interest to have a face-to-face hearing. The College was having to balance the rights and wishes of the respondent while upholding public interest. The current position was that if a remote hearing were rejected a large venue was booked with the caveat that if circumstances were to change it may be held remotely, the RCVS may ultimately get to a point where it could insist on a virtual hearing, but the final decision would be made by the DC.
7. An observation that the DC had seen recently was that more individuals were voluntarily removing their names from the Register with undertakings at this time. This would be discussed at the next training session on how to balance public interest in these scenarios.
8. The Committee was informed that the Buddying system with Vet NI had been slightly delayed. It was confirmed that the initial training had been completed and the branding had been produced, but that the website and protocols were still being finalised. It was hoped that it would be up and running soon, particularly to support those going through the PIC stage.

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

9. The Stage 1 KPIs had dropped in the last month from the positive numbers that had been seen at the previous meeting. Another case manager had handed in their notice and another had been partially furloughed to help with their home-schooling pressures. The team was trying to mitigate the effects of this, and many members of the Professional Conduct department, including the DC solicitors and the Chief Investigator, were helping with the case managers' workloads. The individual leaving – and others in the past - had confirmed that the public-facing nature of the job and handling unpleasant phone calls had been a contributing factor to leaving. It was hoped that upcoming training on how to handle calls and support the development of resilience would improve this.

10. The Head of the Professional Conduct department explained the reasoning behind the colour-coding on the Stage 2 complex KPIs. One of the cases had additional respondents come to light part-way through the process meaning that it would never have concluded within the 12-month period. A case in yellow, which had been referred to the DC, involved over 40 people, meaning that delays were pretty much unavoidable. The nature of the case was investigative which meant it was a prolonged process. It was commented that the mechanics of remote working posed challenges to the team. Four new case managers had been hired during lockdown and training was much harder and it took a greater length of time to get them up and running alone, as they did not have the ability to ask their colleagues quick questions and have support and supervision in the same way.
11. The Committee thanked the department for their transparency on the issues and it was asked whether, if the department knew early on in a case that the 12-month target would not be reached, there was much point to the KPI: was an additional KPI needed for such cases? The Registrar mentioned that on a recent external audit by individuals who looked across the board at all regulators, the challenging nature of the KPIs that the College set for itself was commented on. The Committee agreed that it always felt satisfied with the explanations from the department on the reason for failing to meet the KPI on any individual case but these reasonings were not being communicated to the public. It was agreed that if a package was put together that contained more information than just the percentages for the KPIs then individuals may have more of an understanding as to why they may be low. Comments and queries in relation to this included but were not limited to;
 - The KPIs were an easy target for individuals who wanted to paint the RCVS in a negative light and more information may help in reducing the negativity.
 - KPIs would always struggle with the consistent turnover that the department experienced, hiring additional case managers may mitigate this.
 - If the KPIs were potentially unattainable in some cases should they be reviewed?
 - The current KPIs assumed that nothing in a case goes wrong and do not allow for any kind of delays - on either the College or the respondent's part. They are based on an ideal case where everything happened as it should without any "bumps in the road".
 - Many vets were asking for additional time throughout the complaint procedure due to COVID-19 pressures and it was asked if this could also be communicated.
 - Could the Professional Conduct department do a review of cases to see the average time spent on each type of case with the potential to look at changing the KPIs.
 - Changing the KPIs would be likely to be seen negatively by the profession and the public as an exercise in "moving the goalposts".
 - Reviewing the KPIs would take a large amount of time that the department did not necessarily have presently but could be done in the future.
 - The Committee was not against having more information on the KPIs, but some members expressed concerns about changing them.
 - Communicating the percentages was often not helpful especially when the number of cases they related to were so low.

12. The Committee agreed that the way in which KPIs were communicated would be addressed with the potential to look at what other regulators did as well. A plan going forward would be brought to the Committee. ACTION: ProfCon
13. It was asked what it meant on page 3 of the report when it said, 'people sign over their pets if they cannot pay' The explanation was given that if a client could not pay for an emergency procedure many practices gave the option to sign over their pets (for rehoming) as an alternative to euthanasia. A lot of people chose to sign them over, but some then later regretted this decision and called the RCVS. It was recognised that this was legally correct but was a difficult and emotive area for clients- It was agreed that this was a topic that Standards Committee could look at in terms of communication.

Disciplinary Committee Report

14. The Disciplinary Report was felt to be self-explanatory. It was commented that DC members were nervous about travel particularly in London but would be happier once vaccinated. Zoom had worked very successfully in some cases but that issues could arise, particularly in cases where the respondent was unrepresented. The RCVS had gone the extra mile to try to assist in helping such respondents e.g., taking laptops and equipment / booking meeting rooms and clerks attending to assist in practicalities.
15. There were no further questions.

Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS) feedback

16. It was explained that the Committee had been given two documents, the Annual Report for 2019-2020 and the quarter one report for 2020-2021. The Annual Report was a draft document, and the Committee was asked to give feedback or any amendments it wished to request. It was noted that from the VCMS perspective the document fulfilled two roles – that of their “showcase” to the world and that of a purely factual annual report. The Registrar commented that there was a huge amount of positive content in the report as well as it being clear that there was a large increase in the number of complaints throughout that year, and was keen for the Committee to remember that, without the VCMS, these cases would end up going through the Profession Conduct department. It was noted that there were some areas where it was felt that amendments were necessary to assist in clarity - for example around practice engagement where it was felt that the way the data was presented was unhelpful would lead to confusion.
17. Some members felt that the document's focus on pictorial representations detracted from its primary function as an audit and report to the RCVS, although agreed that presentation type was down to preference. The Committee confirmed that it was happy with the contents of the report and the work that the VCMS was doing.
18. It was noted that the contract for the VCMS was due to end in October 2021 and therefore in due course the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) would be considering the VCMS proposals

for any future contract. at any proposals going forward this Committee's focus would be looking at the service which they provide and whether they were happy with it.

19. The Committee agreed that it may be useful to give a list to the VCMS of specific information that they wished to see in future reports.

Feedback to Standards Committee v.v. Liaison Committee

20. It was confirmed that there were no additional points other than those previously discussed.

Risk Register, equality, and diversity

21. It was confirmed there was nothing to add.

Any other business

22. It was confirmed that there was no other business.

Date of next meeting

23. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday, 20 May 2021 at 10:00 am.

Hannah Alderton
Secretary, PIC / DC Liaison Committee
020 7856 1033
h.alderon@rcvs.org.uk

Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report describes the work of the Preliminary Investigation Committee since RCVS Council's last meeting, including by reference to key stage indicators, and provides information about the nature of concerns being considered by the RCVS.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Chris Murdoch Senior Case Manager c.murdoch@rcvs.org.uk</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk</p>

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to Council March 2021

Introduction

1. This report provides information about the activities of the Preliminary Investigation Committee from January 2021 to March 2021 (5 March being the date of writing the report).
2. Since the last Report to Council (which gave information to 7 January 2021), there have been three Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) meetings: 20 January, 3 February and 17 February.

New cases considered by the PIC

3. The total number of new cases considered by the Committee at the three meetings referred to above is 13. Of the 13 new cases considered:
 - 6 were concluded at first consideration by the Committee. Of these:
 - 2 cases were closed with no further action, and
 - 3 cases were closed with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon.
 - 1 case was held open for a period of 12 months with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon.
 - 7 were referred for further investigation, that is, further enquiries, visits and/or preliminary expert reports, and
 - No cases were referred to DC.
4. No cases have been referred to the RCVS Health or Performance Protocols in the reporting period.

Ongoing Investigations

5. The PI Committee is currently investigating 29 ongoing cases where the Committee has requested statements, visits or preliminary expert reports (for example). This figure does not include cases on the Health and Performance Protocols.

Health Protocol

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

Performance Protocol

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

Professional Conduct Department - Enquiries and concerns

8. Before registering a concern with the RCVS, potential complainants must make an Enquiry (either in writing or by telephone), so that Case Managers can consider with the enquirer whether they should raise a formal concern or whether the matter would be more appropriately dealt with through the Veterinary Client Mediation Service.
9. In the period 8 January 2021 to 5 March 2021,
- the number of matters registered as Enquiries was 586, and
 - the number of formal Concerns registered in the same period was 123.
10. The table below shows the categories of matters registered as Concerns between 8 January and 5 March 2021.

Concerns registered between 8 January and 5 March 2021

Description of Category	Number of Cases
- Advertising and publicity	0
- Certification	2
- Client confidentiality	0
- Clinical and client records	2
- Communication and consent	4
- Communication between professional colleagues	0
- Conviction/notifiable occupation notification	4
- Delegation to veterinary nurses	0
- Equine pre-purchase examinations	0
- Euthanasia of animals	3
- Giving evidence for court	0
- Health case (<i>potential</i>)	1
- Microchipping	1
- Miscellaneous	7
- Practice information, fees & animal insurance	3
- Referrals and second opinions	1
- Registration investigation	1
- 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	89
- Veterinary medicines	3
- Veterinary teams and leaders	0
- Whistle-blowing	0

- 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief	1
- Unassigned	1
Total	123

Data source – Profcon computer system concerns data.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

11. In the period 8 January 2021 to 5 March 2021, the Committee has referred two cases involving one veterinary surgeon to the Disciplinary Committee.

Veterinary Investigators

12. The Veterinary Investigators have not carried out any visits during the reporting period, due to the current lockdown restrictions.

Concerns procedure

13. At Stage 1 of the process, the aim is for the Case Examiner Group to decide 90% of cases within four months of registration of complaint (the Stage 1 KPI). For January 2021 and February 2021 (the last complete month) the number of cases concluded and achieving the KPI is 76% and 70% respectively. This represents a disappointing dip in compliance since the end of last year, caused in part by one Case Manager leaving and another being placed on flexible furlough (so working half their ordinary hours). This is in addition to the difficulties encountered by respondents who have been furloughed, or whose working arrangements have been affected by the pandemic, which cause delays in the provision of responses or information. Urgent efforts are being made to replace the team member who has left, although the ongoing pandemic also poses challenges for recruitment. Other members of the team are working to help alleviate the burden on Case Managers by assisting with casework and handling enquiries. We are doing all that we can to ensure that this is a temporary dip, and that compliance improves as quickly as possible.
14. The Stage 2 KPI is now for the PIC to reach a decision on simple cases before it within seven months, and on complex cases within 12 months. A case is deemed to be complex where the PIC requests that witness statements and/or expert evidence be obtained.
15. In the period 8 January 2021 to 5 March 2021, the PIC reached a decision (to close, hold open or refer to DC) within the relevant KPI:
- in 5 out of 6 simple cases (83%).
16. The case that did not meet the KPI took eight months and was delayed because the Respondent initially failed to respond and then required further time due to the pandemic.
17. 3 complex cases were decided, of which 1 met the 12-month KPI. In accordance with normal practice, cases and KPI compliance in general have been reported and discussed in more detail at the PIC/DC Liaison Committee meeting. To provide a little more information, when matters are reported to PIC/DC Liaison Committee, a “traffic light” colour coding system is used to indicate whether the delays were avoidable (red), unavoidable (green) or a combination of the two (yellow). The two cases referred to above (which were linked and related to one practitioner) were coded as yellow, and an explanation provided to the Committee.

Operational matters

18. The Committee continues to meet remotely and Committee members in general feel that the virtual meetings are working well. As explained above, recruitment is ongoing to try to bring the Case Manager team back up to its full strength so that compliance with KPIs will improve.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report sets out the work of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Sandra Neary Professional Conduct Officer s.neary@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0730</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0740</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to Council

Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Council, there have been two meetings of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee, which took place on 12 January and 23 February 2021.

RVN Concerns received / registered

2. In the period 8 January 2021 to 8 March 2021, there were nine new Concerns received against RVNs. Of these nine new Concerns:
 - All are currently under investigation by the Case Examiner Group (a veterinary nurse and lay member on RVN PIC and a Case Manager).

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. There has been one new case considered by the RVN PIC between 8 January 2021 and 8 March 2021. This case was closed with advice issued to the RVN.

Ongoing Investigations

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

Health Concerns

5. One RVN is currently 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, the RVN PIC has referred two cases to the RVN Disciplinary Committee (involving the same Respondent). These related to a conviction. The matter was heard on 3 and 4 March and has been reported on the RCVS website. The Disciplinary Committee directed the Registrar to remove the Respondent's name from the Register.

A disciplinary hearing took place between 18 and 21 January 2021 in respect of Karen Tracey Hancock. The Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee found all the charges against Mrs Hancock proven and directed the Registrar to remove her name from the Register. Mrs Hancock did not appeal the Committee's decision and her name was removed from the register on 22 February 2021.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	18 March 2021
Title	Disciplinary Committee Report
Summary	Update of Disciplinary Committee since the last Council meeting held on 21 January 2021
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
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Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
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²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
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Report of Disciplinary Committee hearings since the last Council meeting on 21 January 2021

Background

1. Since the last update to Council on 21 January 2021, the Disciplinary Committee ('the Committee') have met on two occasions. The RVN Disciplinary Committee have met twice.
2. The recruitment process for new Disciplinary Committee members is now underway.

Hearings

Karen Tracey Hancock RVN

3. Between Monday 18 January 2021 and Thursday 21 January 2021, the RVN Disciplinary Committee met to hear the inquiry into Mrs Karen Hancock. This hearing was held remotely via Zoom.
4. The first two charges against Mrs Hancock were in relation to an injury she falsely claimed she sustained to her knee while moving a euthanised dog on 13 August 2015, that was then exacerbated while moving another dog on 29 August.
5. The third charge was in relation to the proceedings which were brought against Mrs Hancock in the County Court for damages in respect of the alleged injury referred to in charge 1:
 - (a) issued a claim notification form dated 22 January 2016 stating that you had sustained a knee injury caused by your work at the practice in August 2015;
 - (b) signed a statement dated 30 June 2017 stating that you had sustained a knee injury at work on 13 August 2015 which had then been aggravated at work on the 29 August 2015;
 - (c) issued Particulars of Claim dated 13 July 2018 stating that you had sustained a knee injury caused by your work at the Practice on 13 August 2015.
6. The full charges can be found here: [Hancock, Karen Tracey, Charges - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://rcvs.org.uk/Hancock,KarenTracey,Charges-Professionals)
7. Mrs Hancock was not legally represented in this matter, nor was she present for the for the proceedings. Prior to the hearing, she had indicated via email, that she would not be attending and was content for the inquiry to be conducted in her absence. She maintained communication with the Clerk throughout and submitted some evidence that she requested that the Committee considered.
8. The Committee first had to establish whether the facts of the charges could be proved. In determining this, the Committee took into account the fact that the County Court claim which had

been made by Mrs Hancock was listed for a trial and concluded with a consent order dated 21 June 2019 which stated that the claim had been dismissed.

9. The Committee heard evidence from two eyewitnesses regarding the two alleged events that led to and exacerbated her knee injury in August 2015. After hearing from both eyewitnesses, the Committee determined that although Mrs Hancock did have an injury to her right knee, this was due to a horse-riding incident a number of years earlier and that her account of the incidents on 13 and 29 August 2015, and therefore her claims to have been caused injury by them, were false and that her conduct had been dishonest.
10. The Committee therefore found all charges against Mrs Hancock proven.
11. The decision on the finding of facts can be found here: [Hancock, Karen Tracey, Decision on Findings of Fact - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://rcvs.org.uk/decisions/Hancock-Karen-Tracey-Decision-on-Findings-of-Fact-Professionals)
12. The Committee then went on to determine whether the charges proven amounted to serious professional misconduct. The Committee listened to submissions by Counsel for the RCVS, which suggested that there were a number of aggravating factors in Mrs Hancock's conduct. This included the fact that the misconduct was sustained over a long period of time, was premeditated, and involved lying for financial gain.
13. *"The Committee found all of the aggravating factors set out... in this case applied to its decision on whether or not the conduct amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect. Such conduct would bring the profession of veterinary nurses into disrepute and would undermine public confidence in the profession because the dishonesty was directly concerned with the respondent's work as a veterinary nurse in the veterinary practice."*
14. *"The Committee concluded that the dishonest behaviour was serious misconduct, particularly so because it took place at the respondent's workplace. It considered that honesty and trust between veterinary nurses and their employers is essential to the profession and that such conduct as set out in the charges would be considered deplorable by other members of the profession."*
15. The Committee was therefore satisfied that all four charges individually and cumulatively amounted to serious professional misconduct.
16. The full decision on disgraceful conduct can be found here: [Hancock, Karen Tracey, Decision on Disgraceful Conduct in a Professional Respect - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://rcvs.org.uk/decisions/Hancock-Karen-Tracey-Decision-on-Disgraceful-Conduct-in-a-Professional-Respect-Professionals)
17. After finding that Mrs Hancock's actions amounted to serious professional misconduct, the Committee went on to consider the appropriate sanction to impose. They took into account the aggravating factors, including a lack of insight in that, in correspondence before the hearing, she continued to deny the charges. In mitigation, the Committee noted that there had been a significant lapse of time and that she had a long and hitherto unblemished career.

18. In conclusion, the Committee decided that removal from the Register was the appropriate and proportionate sanction and requested Mrs Hancock be removed from the Register, particularly as dishonesty is considered 'in the top spectrum of gravity' for misconduct.
19. The full decision on sanction can be found here: [Hancock, Karen Tracey, Decision on Sanction - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://www.rcvs.org.uk/decisions/2021/02/hancock-karen-tracey-decision-on-sanction-professionals/)

Mr Robert Crawford

20. On Thursday 25 February 2021, the Committee met remotely to consider Mr Crawford's application for voluntary removal from the Register.
21. The application came after charges were brought against Mr Crawford in relation to; failing to provide adequate and appropriate care; failing to provide adequate clinical histories to another practice in respect of several animals; failing to treat fellow veterinary professionals and other members of staff from another practice with courtesy and respect; failing to maintain adequate clinical records; failing to have in place Professional Indemnity Insurance or equivalent arrangements; and, failing to respond to reasonable requests from the RCVS.
22. On 31 January 2021, Mr Crawford submitted his application for voluntary removal, along with signed undertakings, which stated that if the application were to be successful, he would undertake to come off the Register with immediate effect and never to apply for restoration.
23. Mr Crawford, who is 71 years old, attended the hearing. Although he was not legally represented, he did have a McKenzie friend, from the VDS who assisted and supported him throughout the hearing.
24. Submissions in relation to the application were made on behalf of Mr Crawford. The Committee were directed to look at various factors were considering the application. These included his age; the fact that he had no previous disciplinary findings against him and had now ceased practising, including closing his practice premises and notifying his previous clients of the closure. It was also confirmed that Mr Crawford was fully aware that if his application were accepted, he would no longer be able to practise as a veterinary surgeon or identify as a veterinary surgeon. The Committee also noted that the RCVS had consulted with the complainants who were satisfied with the case being disposed of in this way.
25. The Committee considered the full circumstances of the case, including personal ones, as well as all supporting evidence. The Committee also considered the public interest identified in maintaining the public's confidence and upholding proper standards of conduct and behaviour in the profession.
26. The Chair stated that, *"Having weighed the public interest in a hearing with the registrant's interests, the Committee determined that this is not a case in which the public interest required there to be a full hearing. Protection of the welfare of animals would also not be further served by a full hearing. The Committee decided to accede to the respondent's application"*.

27. The Committee considered that the adjournment on undertakings served to protect the public interest, confidence in the profession and the welfare of animals.
28. The Committee carefully considered the detail of the undertakings. It decided, after due consideration that it would accept the respondent's undertakings in the terms offered and signed.
29. The full decision can be found here: [Crawford, Robert Andrew, Decision of the Disciplinary Committee on the Respondent's Application to Dispose of the Case by Adjournment of the Inquiry and Undertakings - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

Dr Vanja Fures

30. On Monday 1 March and Tuesday 2 March 2021, the Committee met remotely to hear the Inquiry into Dr Fures. Dr Fures attended the hearing but was unrepresented.
31. The Inquiry was in relation to Dr Fures providing the RCVS with false information about his conviction for driving while over the limit.
32. Dr Vanja Fures MRCVS was convicted in the Dublin Criminal Courts of Justice in the Republic of Ireland on 20 December 2018 of driving with excess alcohol and the Disciplinary Committee heard that, on or about 14 April 2020 while renewing his UK RCVS registration, he had given the RCVS false details about the facts relating to the circumstances that led to his conviction.
33. Following Dr Fures declaring his conviction to the RCVS, the RCVS Chief Investigator requested that he provide a summary of the circumstances of the offence. Dr Fures responded by confirming that his flight from Frankfurt to Dublin on 11 December 2017 had suffered engine failure and the pilot had been forced to land in Amsterdam where the plane had been swapped for an airworthy one onto which the passengers, including Dr Fures, had transferred. As a result of the incident and the emergency landing, Dr Fures' arrival in Dublin had been delayed and that this led him to be stressed and to have several alcoholic drinks during the flight.
34. The RCVS Chief Investigator undertook an investigation into Dr Fures explanation, including liaising with the airline Lufthansa. As a result of the inquiries and research it became clear that whilst Dr Fures' flight had suffered a delay in its initial departure time causing it to arrive 1 hour and 9 minutes late it had not, as stated by Dr Fures in his written response, suffered engine failure requiring an emergency landing in Amsterdam with the transfer of passengers. On the contrary it had been a direct and uninterrupted flight.
35. In May and July 2020, the RCVS Chief Investigator wrote to Dr Fures setting out the result of his investigations and research. In his response's Dr Fures accepted that his memory of the incident was wrong.
36. The full charges can be found here: [Fures, Vanja, Charges - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
37. Prior to the commencement of the hearing, Dr Fures submitted an application to have his name voluntarily removed from the register and to undertake never to apply for restoration. On the first day of the hearing, the Committee considered Dr Fures application. The Committee listened to Ms

Curtis (Counsel for College) submission. In her submissions she indicated that the College opposed the application as they did not consider it appropriate or proportionate in this case.

38. Having considered both the application and the College submissions, the Committee decided not to accept the application and undertakings in part on the bases that he was not of retirement age and intended to continue to practice in Ireland. The Committee concluded that this was a case which the public interest, confidence in the profession, and potentially the welfare of animals demanded that there be a full hearing.
39. The Committee's full decision on the application can be found here: [Fures, Vanja, Decision of the Disciplinary Committee on the Respondent's Application to Dispose of the Case by Adjournment of the Inquiry and Undertakings - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
40. The Committee went on to consider the facts of the case. Dr Fures admitted that he had supplied the RCVS with false information about his conviction for drink driving but denied that this was dishonest at the time that he supplied the information. He accepted that the information he provided was wrong, in that his flight between Frankfurt and Dublin, while delayed by just over an hour, did not have to land in Amsterdam as he had previously claimed. He said that his false statement was based on misremembering the circumstances and that he had genuinely believed his statement was true at the time it was made to the RCVS. He said that, due to shame over his conviction and the negative impact it had on the life of him and his family, he had created a false memory of the circumstances.
41. The Committee concluded that Dr Fures gave false information to the RCVS. And as such all the facts were proved.
42. The full decision on facts can be found here: [Fures, Vanja, Decision on Findings of Fact - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
43. They were satisfied that his actions were dishonest and had made an attempt to paint a picture of a fact more difficult and stressful journey than had actually occurred and was trying to excuse and mitigate his behaviour at the time. The Committee concluded that his actions amounted to serious professional misconduct.
44. The Committee stated that "*Dr Fures' action in dishonestly giving false information to his regulator struck at the heart of his obligation, as a registered professional, to be open and honest with his regulator. This obligation is necessary to allow the College, as regulator, to carry out its crucial and statutory functions in ensuring that it investigates concerns properly.*"
45. The full decision on disgraceful conduct can be found here: [Fures, Vanja, Decision of the Disgraceful Conduct in a Professional Respect - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
46. In considering what sanction to impose on Dr Fures the Committee took into account the mitigating factors, including the fact that there were no previous regulatory findings against Dr Fures or any previous conviction for dishonesty, that he had demonstrated remorse for his actions, that there was no actual harm or risk of harm to any animal, that no concerns raised

about Dr Fures' practice, that there was no repetition of the dishonest conduct and that he had demonstrated some insight.

47. In terms of aggravating factors, it considered that there was deliberate and sustained dishonesty and that he had sought personal gain as a result of his actions.
48. After careful consideration, the Committee concluded that the appropriate sanction to impose on Dr Fures was reprimand and warning as to his future conduct.
49. The full decision on sanction can be found here: [Fures, Vanja, Decision on Sanction - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://rcvs.org.uk/Fures-Vanja-Decision-on-Sanction-Professionals)

X Registered Nurse

50. On Wednesday 3 and Thursday 4 March, the RVN Committee met to hear an inquiry into a registered veterinary nurse.
51. At the outset of the inquiry, the respondent made an application for anonymity.
52. The Committee granted the application as they believed that there was sufficient evidence of a real and immediate threat to the respondent if proceedings were to be heard in public and their name was disclosed.
53. Throughout the hearing, the respondent was referred to as X to protect their safety.
54. The Committee first considered the facts of the case. They heard that in 2020, X had pleaded guilty to intentionally and knowingly attempting to communicate with a person under the age of 16 for their own sexual gratification. The Committee also heard that X was sentenced to a two-year probation order, ordered to register on the Sexual Offence Register for five years and the fact that they were also made subject to a Sexual Prevention Order for a period of five years.
55. From the outset of the hearing, X admitted all the charges against him. The Committee were presented with a certified copy of the conviction.
56. The Committee found the facts proven.
57. The Committee went on to consider whether the conviction amounted to serious professional misconduct. In doing so, they considered the aggravating factors surrounding the case. The first was that there was risk of actual harm to a minor. The second was that the misconduct was premeditated as X had been in contact with who they believed was a 15-year-old via a number of different platforms. The third was that X had displayed predatory behaviour, including sending pictures and making comments of a sexual nature. The last aggravating factor that was considered by the Committee was that it involved what X believed to be a vulnerable individual.
58. In mitigation, the Committee considered the fact there was no actual harm caused to a human or animal. It also took into account that the conduct related to a single isolated incident and that X had made open admissions earlier on.

59. The Committee concluded that the conviction amounted to serious professional misconduct and were satisfied that the sentence imposed on X, which included X being subject to a Sexual Harm Prevention Order until 2025, resulted in the profession of veterinary nurses being brought into disrepute and, in the Committee's judgement, public confidence in the profession would be undermined if the Committee did not find that the conviction rendered X unfit to practise as a veterinary nurse."
60. In considering what sanction to impose on X, the Committee heard from a character witness, who was also anonymous as revealing their identity could inadvertently lead to the identification of the respondent. The character witness stated that the respondent's actions were out of character, that they had a previously long and unblemished career, that they had made full admissions and demonstrated insight, and that they had a low risk of reoffending in the future.
61. *"The Committee accepted that X had been an excellent veterinary nurse and that X's criminal conduct did not relate to X's practice as a veterinary nurse. However, in the Committee's judgement the aggravating factors outweighed the considerable mitigating factors in this case."*
62. The Committee decided that a suspension order would not reflect the seriousness of the offence. As such, the Committee concluded that in order to maintain the reputation on the profession and the College as a regulator, the appropriate sanction was for X's name to be removed from the registered.
63. The full decision can be found here: [X Registered Nurse, Decision - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://rcvs.org.uk/decisions/X-Registered-Nurse-Decision-Professionals)

Upcoming DC's

64. There are 3 Inquiry's that have been listed to take place in May:
- 4-12 May 2021
 - 10-21 May 2021
 - 26 & 27 May 2021
65. The resumed Dyson Inquiry has been listed to take place in late June.