

Minutes of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday, 25 April 2018
at 10 am at Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P
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Members:	Mrs E Acaster	
	Dr M A Donald	
	Mrs J M Dyer	
	Dr M O Greene	
	Professor R A Hammond*	
	Mr D C Hutchison	
	Miss R M Marshall	
	Dr K A Richards	Chair
In attendance:	Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar
	Mr N Oldham	Standards and Advisory Manager
	Ms B Jinks	Senior Standards and Advisory Officer
	Mrs V Price	Senior Standards and Advisory Officer
	Professor S A May	President
	Dr N Connell	Council member
	Ms A Boag	Junior Vice-President
	Dr C Scudamore	Council member
	Ms L Grannell	Senior Manager, Practice Standards Scheme (Present for agenda item 05(c))
	Mr A Roberts	Director of Leadership and Innovation (Present for agenda item 04(a))
	Mr J Moodie	Representative from VetFone (Present for agenda item 04(a))

*absent

Apologies for absence and welcome

1. The Chair welcomed Professor May, Ms Boag, Dr Connell, and Dr Scudamore to the meeting as observers.

Declarations of interest

2. Declarations of interest were received from:

Ms Boag: In relation to AI 04(a), telemedicine, it was stated that Vets Now are currently trialling a free “web chat” service.

Minutes of last meetings held on 24 January 2018

3. The minutes were noted and the following amendment was agreed:
 - Regarding paragraph 7 it was agreed that the sentence: “*The Committee agreed that there was no evidence of any issue/trends*” should be changed to: “*Given the current information, the Committee agreed that there was no evidence of any issue/trends*”

Action: Standards and Advice Team

Standards and Advice Update

4. The Chair thanked the Standards and Advice Team for their work.
5. The Committee noted the report and the Standards and Advisory Manager highlighted the following aspects:
 - Three new members of the team recruited since the last meeting.
 - Complementary Alternatives Medicines enquiries continue following a recent march.
 - The issue of lay darters which may come before the Committee for consideration.

Matters for decision

Informed consent (case studies)

6. The Standards and Advisory Manager introduced the paper and highlighted the background: at its meeting in September 2017 the Standards Committee noted a number of recurring consent-related themes giving rise to concerns being raised about veterinary professionals which were reaching the Preliminary Investigation Committee.
7. In addition to updating Chapter 11 of the Supporting Guidance to the Code, the Committee requested that a number of case studies were prepared which could be disseminated to the profession in order to further explain and contextualise the need to obtain and record informed consent from a client.
8. The Standards and Advisory Manager also reported that the RCVS Knowledge have expressed an interest in working with the Standards and Advice team in order to disseminate guidance on informed consent. The Knowledge are currently testing a new website feature which may assist such dissemination.

9. Regarding the amended informed consent guidance (Supporting Guidance Chapter 11), which went live on the RCVS website in March, the following amendments were suggested:

- At paragraph 11.11: “**A copy of the form should be provided to the person signing the form**” should be bolded.
- At paragraph 11.14: “**sufficient time**” should be bolded.

Action: Standards and Advice Team

10. The Committee suggested that it would be useful if consent forms included a tick box prompt for veterinary surgeons relating to paragraph 11.2(e), such as “have I explained the tentative diagnosis to the client?”

11. There was discussion about paragraph 11.16. It was raised that when a client comes into practice in an emergency they may be in distress with the circumstances undermining their ability to take in what is being said. It was pointed out that veterinary surgeons are not qualified to determine mental capacity. It was suggested that in order to help the profession to deal with situations such as these, this and the broader topic of mental capacity would make an interesting case study.

Action: Standards and Advice Team

12. It was raised that there is lack of continuity relating to the need for consent forms; paragraph 11.6 suggests that consent forms are optional, however, within chapter 4, paragraph 4.17 it is stated that “*consent should be obtained in writing*” for use of veterinary medicines in accordance with the prescribing cascade. The Committee questioned whether the inconsistency relates to a Practice Standards Scheme requirement for consent forms, or whether it was a requirement of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013. The Registrar agreed to research the answer to these questions and feedback to the Committee.

Action: Registrar

13. The Committee was content with the range of case studies and suggested the following amendments:

- Regarding case study 1, the phrase “*damage and cavities*” would not be typical language for practice. It was suggested that this phrase be removed.
- Regarding case study 2, it was suggested that the GDV be replaced with a bladder stone as this would make more clinical sense.
- Regarding case study 6, the advice states “*destroyed without delay*”, it was suggested that this is old language and should be replaced with more contemporary phrasing.

Action: Standards and Advice team

- All case studies require further veterinary review to ensure the language used is appropriate. As the Committee are largely practising veterinary surgeons they are willing to review the case studies from a clinical standpoint via email.

Action: Practising members of the Standards Committee

14. The Committee asked whether there had been consultation with the VCMS or VDS about the case studies. The Registrar reported that this has not been considered at this stage as the focus is internally within the College currently. However, we are open to this in the future and will notify them of the proposed studies before publishing.

GDPR

15. The Standards and Advisory Manager introduced the paper, and informed the Committee that since the information sheet and FAQs were added to the RCVS website there has been a reduction in advice queries relating to GDPR.

16. It was also reported that the supporting guidance has been reviewed externally. The proposed amendments to the supporting guidance with 'tracked changes' will be published on the RCVS website as soon as possible in order for the profession to clearly see the changes. When the GDPR comes into force on May 25 2018 the supporting guidance will be amended accordingly.

17. The following amendment to the guidance was highlighted in particular:

- Chapter 5, paragraph 5: The last sentence of this paragraph relates to transfer animal data with redacted client details, therefore outside the scope of the GDPR. The Committee were asked whether this was considered feasible in practice. It was discussed that this could be feasible as the superseding practice would be likely to know the client details already, and can therefore request the records for a specific animal, for example, a 2 year old boxer dog. The superseding practice can then match these to the client via the microchip number.

18. There was a discussion around the current system of implied consent, and it was clarified that under the GDPR implied consent is not sufficient and the transferring vet has to reassure themselves that there is explicit client consent.

19. The Committee asked whether explicit consent can be obtained from the terms and conditions that a client agrees to when registered at a practice? The Registrar stated that this would be sufficient, as long as there was positive consent and it was specific. The RCVS could provide wording for this.

20. The Committee requested that advice queries be monitored for GDPR themes in order to have further discussion on guidance needed in 6 months.

Action: Standards and Advice team

Confidential matters for decision

Telemedicine

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Matters for report

DC report

34. The Committee noted that a variety of sanctions had been used in recent cases. It was suggested that this approach appeared sensible and proportionate decisions had been made. There was a request for clarification of why the decision to sanction one veterinary surgeon had been postponed for 6 months. The Registrar explained that this was in order for the veterinary surgeon in question to be able to demonstrate her compliance with voluntary undertakings.

Riding Establishments Sub-committee Report

35. There were no comments and the report was noted.

Practice Standards Scheme Report

36. Ms Grannell provided an on oral update to the Committee. She confirmed that there are 3,332 practice premises now part of the PSS Scheme. Small Animal still represents the biggest category, followed by farm, and then equine, in total representing just over 61.5% of all eligible practice premises. The most frequently achieved awards are Client Service, followed by Emergency and Critical Care and In-patient service. The next awards will be held in November at the London Vet Show.

37. Regional Question Time was held in Bristol on 19 April with 45 minutes surgeries by a PSS Assessor. These informal events provide an opportunity for members of the veterinary team to talk with senior PSS and RCVS staff about issues in the Scheme. It was noted that this event was so popular that a further day had to be added to accommodate those wishing an appointment.

38. The annual update to all modules has been carried out based on the changes agreed by the PSG. The updated guidance include GDPR, ionising regulation requirements, and employee rest and food prep areas.

39. At the end of February, the Lead Assessor and Senior Manager of PSS had a teleconference with an external provider of courses on the possibility of establishing a 'qualification' for PSS Assessors. Work is continuing on the feasibility of this.

40. The Committee asked whether further consideration has been given to making the scheme compulsory. It was noted that this would require legislation to provide for a right of entry to premises. The College's messaging to date has been neutral re PSS and non-PSS practices. It

was noted that changing this messaging to encourage further participation could be considered first but only once a critical mass of practice premises were members of the scheme.

41. The next PSG meeting will be May 15 2018. Matters to be considered include the addition a new Mental Health and Wellbeing award and new Veterinary Specialist Hospital award. The British College of Veterinary Specialists will present a paper to aid discussions on establishing a Veterinary Specialist Hospital award, and the Education team will present a paper on accreditation of training practices.

Confidential matters for report

Certification Sub-committee Report

42.

Recognised Veterinary Practice Sub-committee Report

43.

Ethics Review Panel Report

44.

Any other business

45. It was noted that the makeup of the Committee would be impacted by the upcoming enactment of the Legislative Reform Order and current review of RCVS governance and committee structures.

Date of next meeting

46. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday, 26 September 2018 at 10am.