



Advancement of the Professions Committee Meeting

6 May 2026

Advancement of the Professions Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 06 May 2026 at 10am, to be held online

Agenda Item	Classification	Rationale
1. Welcome, apologies for absence and declarations of interest (10.00 – 10.05)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2. Matters arising and minutes of the meeting held on 04 Feb 2026 (10.05 – 10.10)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2a. Unclassified Minutes	Unclassified	n/a
2b. Classified Minutes	Classified	1, 2, 3, 4
3. Workstream Updates (10.10 – 10.25)	Unclassified	n/a
4. Fellowship Comms (10.25 – 10.30)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
5. Careers engagement & impact (10.30 – 10.50)	Presentation Unclassified	n/a
6. Climate Fresk Reflections / UKHACC Food Paper Update (10.50 – 11:05)	Discussion Classified	1, 2, 3, 4
7. Break		
8. Event attendance / promotional support (11.15 – 11.25)	Discussion Unclassified	n/a
9. Veterinary AI Transparency Alliance Update (11.25 – 11:35)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
10. PSS Toolkit (11.35 – 12.05)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
11. Review of Terms of Reference – Annex A (12.05 – 12:15)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
12. Any other business (AOB)		

(12.15 – 12:20)		
13. Date of next meeting Tuesday, 6 October 2026 (in person)		

Advancement of the Professions Committee – Terms of Reference

The Advancement of the Professions Committee will oversee work that is non-statutory in nature and contributes broadly to the advancement of the veterinary and/or veterinary nursing professions.

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

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

The Committee shall comprise the chairs of relevant working parties or taskforces, or appropriate Council member champions, together with up to four other members of Council (chair, lay member, veterinary surgeon, veterinary nurse), together with relevant members of the Senior Team. Other Committee members may be co-opted if necessary. RCVS Knowledge, an independent charity, will contribute by means of its Chair of Trustees, who will be an invited observer. Although they each have responsibility for individual projects or areas of work, Committee members will review and input across all areas, with collective responsibility.

The Committee shall:

- a. Take regular reports from the leads on these areas of work and consider the ongoing effectiveness of the work against agreed strategy, timing and resourcing, making recommendations for changes, where appropriate. Consider any additional budgetary impact of these workstreams, which would then be escalated via the Financial Controls process;
- b. Ensure that potential synergies between the various projects and initiatives reporting into the Committee are identified and exploited, and that opportunities for working collaboratively to maximise the impact of workstreams is explored;
- c. Provide a forum for in-depth consideration of the issues surrounding or arising from the projects and initiatives that report into the Committee;
- d. Provide a forum for blue-sky thinking to support the identification and development of new non-statutory projects that would serve to advance the professions;
- e. Flag up any issues of concern to the Audit and Risk Committee, via the Risk Register, particularly in terms of financial, reputational or legal risks associated with the project and initiatives reporting to the Committee;
- f. Make recommendations to Council for any new streams of work which may be appropriate under our Royal Charter; and,
- g. Make a report to Council on a regular basis summarising the work that comes under its purview (usually via the minutes of its meetings).
- h. Set aside time at one meeting per year to discuss the ongoing environment and sustainability work at the College, and to consider potential new initiatives in this area.

Summary

Meeting	Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)
Date	6 May 2026
Title	APC meeting minutes – 4 February 2026
Summary	Minutes of the APC meeting held in-person at the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons on Wednesday, 4 February 2026
Decisions required	The committee is asked to approve the unclassified minutes and confidential appendix.
Attachments	Classified appendix (confidential)
Author	Charlie Coaker Secretary to Advancement of the Professions Committee c.coaker@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications

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

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	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	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 (APC) meeting held in person at the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, 1 Hardwick Street, EC1R 4RB on 4 February 2026

Members:

Dr Z Kennedy (Chair)	Chair of the Advancement of the Professions Committee & Chair of Mind Matters Initiative
Mrs. B Andrews-Jones	VN Council Chair, Chair of Innovation
Ms. A Boag (Observer) *	Chair of Board of Trustees for RCVS Knowledge
Mr. J M Castle	RCVS Lay Council Member
Dr. T Gardiner	Lead for EDI
Prof. M Jones	Lead for Environment & Sustainability
Ms. L Lockett	RCVS CEO
Prof. C Loughrey	Lead for Global Development
Dr. S Paterson	Lead for Leadership
Mr. S Williams	VN Futures Project Board
Dr Niall Connell	Chair of the Fellowship Board

In attendance:

Mrs. A Belcher	Director for Advancement of the Professions
Mrs. G Gill *	Leadership and Inclusion Manager
Mrs. R Newton	Mind Matters Initiative Lead
Mr. S Hurley	Mind Matters Initiative Senior Officer
Mr. L Emeka	Diversity and Inclusion Senior Officer
Ms. A Youngs	Fellowship and Leadership Senior Officer
Mrs. T Goodwin Roberts	Projects Implementation Manager
Ms. C Coaker	AP Officer / Secretary to the Committee

Mrs. J Dugmore *	Director of Veterinary Nursing
Miss J Macdonald	Veterinary Nursing Progression and Development Lead
Ms. Katie Mantell	RCVS Knowledge CEO
Mr. I Holloway	Director of Communications
Mr. L Bishop	Media and Publications Manager
Mrs. Abi Hanson	Media and Publications Officer
Mr. B Myring	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
Mr. M Sundhu	Policy and Public Affairs Officer

* apologies

Welcome, apologies for absence and declarations of interest

1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.
2. No new declarations of interest were made.
3. Apologies were received from Amanda Boag, Julie Dugmore, Gurpreet Gill.

Matters arising and minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2025

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 07 October 2025 were approved.

Workstream Updates

5. The Committee received written updates from the APC workstreams. No comments were raised.

Presentation: 'AP Wrapped'

6. A presentation highlighted key outputs and reported impact across the department workstreams and projects over the previous year.
7. Positive delegate feedback from the MMI Research Symposium, held in October 2025, was shared. The event also marked 10 years since the launch of MMI. Feedback highlighted the welcoming and supportive atmosphere, as well as a strong commitment to accessibility and inclusion. It was noted that pre-event information continues to be improved to help reduce barriers

to attendance. Tentative dates for the sixth MMI Research Symposium in 2027 are currently being considered.

8. The first event delivered through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion network was reported to have achieved strong attendance and broad representation; the events team's work to strengthen accessibility information was highlighted, including clearer travel and venue guidance using videos and photos.
9. Attendees of the 'Reasonable adjustments in veterinary workplaces – looking back and moving forwards' webinar event reported to have valued the range of expertise represented on the panel and felt better informed and more confident in approaching conversations about reasonable adjustments. This event followed findings from earlier work and subsequent engagement activity arising from the 'Disability and chronic illness' survey.
10. Reported satisfaction ratings for the workforce webinar series indicated that 90% of respondents rated the sessions as good, very good or excellent. The committee noted the events as a useful source of evidence and praised the project as a strong example of professionals' concerns being heard.
11. A welcome was extended to Catherine Hemingway who has recently joined the Fellowship Workstream within Advancement of the Professions. Positive feedback from the 2025 annual Fellowship Day event was shared. The committee discussed the importance of communicating Fellowship activity and outputs to all Fellows and those who did not attend Fellowship Day, including follow-up reporting and opportunities for involvement. A 'Fellowship Day Planning' Task and Finish Group has been created to support this. The need for joined-up communications between the Fellowship Board and College Communications was noted.

Action: Communications team to provide a Fellowship communications update to APC by the next meeting (06 May 2026).

Presentation: MMI funded research project

12. A presentation was given by Olivia Cormier, (from Oxford Brookes), recipient of the first MMI funded Impact research grant of £15,000, in 2024. The presentation set out findings from research on alcohol harm, mental health and opportunities for change in UK veterinary practice, drawing on a survey and follow-up qualitative work.
13. It was reported that the survey sample included a range of practice roles (62% veterinary surgeons, 30% veterinary nurses, and 8% other roles), with at least 40% of respondents identified as being at some level of alcohol risk. Discussion reflected on age-related patterns of alcohol use and the potential relationship between self-stigma, self-compassion and perfectionism.
14. Discussion covered how workplace policies could balance compassionate support with safeguarding requirements. Perceived regulatory consequences and stigma were noted as

potential barriers to help-seeking, notwithstanding that the reported concern related to perception rather than direct experience of regulatory processes.

Discussion: Contextualised Care

15. The published contextualised care roadmap and the associated research programme were outlined, including survey and qualitative work delivered with independent research partners and supported by external funding from Battersea Dogs & Cats Home research grants.
16. Key stakeholder groups engaged included veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses, pet owners, animal charities and other relevant organisations. The research indicated widespread support for contextualised care as an approach that could deliver a range of benefits to animal care and strengthen relationships between veterinary professionals and pet owners.
17. Reported barriers and enablers were discussed, including perceptions of regulatory risk, education and culture, continuity of care, communication about costs, and the role of practice pressures. Survey findings were referenced indicating that 45% of veterinary professionals reported facing very few barriers to providing personalised care, with a comparable figure reported by pet owners.
18. Opportunities for collaboration to support implementation were discussed, including alignment with Mind Matters Initiative work on workplace stress and psychological safety, engagement of specialists and the Fellowship, and strengthening veterinary nursing capability in client-facing contexts.
19. 78% of veterinary professionals surveyed reported that changes to veterinary education were needed to support contextualised care. More training and support on communication about costs was highlighted as a priority area for change.

Action: Academy team to convene an operational meeting to map contextualised care recommendations to current Academy activity.

Action: Fellowship Board to continue discussions on how Fellowship activity can support contextualised care and challenge assumptions about 'gold standard' care.

Action: Academy team to review planned project refresh activity to ensure contextualised care is made explicit where relevant.

Action: Committee Secretary to schedule a further update on contextualised care progress for a future APC meeting.

Any other business (AOB)

20. Members discussed the value of impact measurement across Advancement of Professions and noted ongoing work to embed theory of change approaches, recognising that implementation

would be incremental across workstreams; it was reported that four staff had received training to support this work.

21. Confidential information is contained in paragraph 1 of the classified appendix.
22. Members discussed demand for increased access for managers to training related to mental health in the workplace and noted that initial sessions were being delivered as pilots, with refinement informed by feedback.
23. A brief update was provided by Head of Communications on careers engagement activity and planned public outreach through events, with a view to improving the visibility of careers information through the new website and aligning activity with wider workforce communications.

Action: Committee members to read the consultation papers and provide responses as appropriate.

Action: Communications team to review and correct the Fellowship application deadline displayed on the website. (No Friday 3 March)

Action: Communications team to provide APC with updates on careers outreach attendance, engagement and impact that are shared with Officers.

Action: Engagement officer to present an update on careers outreach activity at a future APC meeting.

Workshop: Environment & Sustainability (confidential appendix)

24. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 2 - 4 of the classified appendix.

Date of next meeting

25. The next meeting will be held in person on 06 May 2026.



Summary

Meeting	Advancement of the Professions Committee
Date	06.05.2026
Title	Updates from APC Workstreams
Summary	Provided below is an update on the outputs and outcomes of APC workstreams since the last Committee meeting in addition to looking forward to planned work for the next. Where relevant, also highlighted are matters arising as a result of these activities that would benefit from further APC scrutiny presently or in due course. The Summary is ordered as follows. i. Diversity Inclusion ii. Environment and Sustainability iii. Fellowship of the RCVS iv. Leadership v. Mind matters Initiative vi. RCVS Knowledge vii. VN Vision viii. Workforce
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Charlie Coaker AP Officer / Secretary to the Committee c.coaker@rcvs.org.uk 020 8148 2577

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

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Diversity & Inclusion Update

Events, Outreach and Engagement (heading)

Workforce events next-step events

1. A short session on reasonable adjustments and the RCVS TAP (Tailored Adjustments Passport) Toolkit will be delivered at the next steps sessions, 'Returning after a career break', 21 May and 'Moving into management', 18 June 2026.

Campaigns and Activities

Pride Month

2. RCVS will be launching a Pride Month campaign in June 2026. The campaign will celebrate history and achievements within the veterinary LGBTQ+ community. Campaign planning is currently in progress and will likely be focused on social media activity, videos/blog articles with people from the veterinary LGBTQ+ community and a co-created infographic on allyship.

Black History Month

3. RCVS will continue to support Black History Month with a campaign in October 2026. This year's theme is 'Honouring our communities' which is focused on the individuals whose contributions are part of everyday life but often go unseen. The theme invites us to consider whose work we value, whose stories we tell, and whose contributions have been overlooked. Campaign planning will commence in Summer 2026 and an update will be provided at the Autumn APC meeting.

'Let's Talk Adjustments' campaign evaluation and follow-up

4. RCVS circulated a short campaign evaluation survey in January 2026. This was conducted with 214 veterinary professionals who had participated in the '*Disability and Chronic Illness in Veterinary Work and Education*' Survey and provided consent to be contacted. 60 veterinary professionals completed the survey (28% response rate). Preliminary findings from this group suggest that the campaign helped to increase knowledge and understanding of reasonable adjustments, and most respondents would recommend the campaign content to a colleague. The D & I team is currently working with the research team to explore design and distribution of a second survey to other groups within the professions.

Since the last APC update in February, the 'Let's Talk Adjustments' campaign web pages continue to be accessed, with sustained engagement across all web pages. In particular, the 'Guide to discussing reasonable adjustments at work', has received a good level of downloads which is a positive outcome. The campaign is now a resources hub and is also being used by RCVS staff to signpost to resources and information.

Web page stats (27 February 2025 -13 April 2026)

Web page views/downloads	Sept '25	Feb'26	Apr '26
Reasonable Adjustments campaign - Professionals	9,105	12,283	12,837
Reasonable adjustments: a legal duty - Professionals	2,506	4,687	4,851
Disability inclusion - Professionals	634	2,434	2,498
Equality Act guidance - Professionals	626	2,578	2,650
Real stories and insights - Professionals	1,914	4,153	4,281
Understanding occupational therapy in the workplace - Professionals	431	3,626	4,136
Let's Talks Adjustments: a guide to discussing reasonable adjustments at work	281/533	794/1,631	818/1,688

Courses, Content and Publications**Health passport project (Tailored Adjustment Passport or TAP)**

5. The RCVS TAP toolkit is designed to support people with disabilities and chronic conditions in the veterinary sector. It can be used and adapted by students, employees, workplaces and educational institutions. It includes a passport document template, information and guidance sections for individuals and organisations, examples and links to resources and tools, and an FAQs section.

In March, the current draft of the toolkit was externally reviewed by potential users - students, educators, employees and line managers. The feedback was positive, with reviewers stating that they liked the detailed guidance and summary sections, the simple, portable template, the emphasis on adjustments rather than conditions, the practical tone and supportive framing, the focus on communication and collaboration, and the normalisation of conversations around adjustments and disability.

Recommendations for changes are mainly concerned with reducing the length of the toolkit and improving navigation - adding a 'quick start' guide, restructuring and moving summaries to the start of sections, signposting to more detailed information, and providing more examples and infographics to break up text heavy sections. Students also requested further clarity on use of the TAP template in different settings.

Feedback has been shared with the task and finish group and amendments to the toolkit are currently underway. A series of videos summarising the key sections of the TAP is being developed alongside the written content which will also help to enhance usability.

Inclusive language guide

6. The inclusive language guide is currently being prepared for release and will be accessed from the new RCVS D & I web pages. The guide will explain some of the key terminologies across race and ethnicity, age, gender diversity and sexual orientation, disability, neurodiversity and mental health, and showcase language that is widely considered as inclusive. It is intended that the guide will be a resource that can help improve knowledge and inform daily interactions within veterinary workplaces. At the time of writing, the guide is in the design process.

EDI Fundamentals Academy course

7. This course is due to be launched in October/November 2026 on the RCVS Academy portal. It will consist of three modules and provides learners with an introduction to key concepts and topics related to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The content writing stage for module 1 'Understanding EDI' is nearing completion. The module will take around 45 minutes and covers foundational knowledge, exploring the concept of EDI, the benefits of inclusion for organisations, and the Equality Act 2010.

Other

2026 Memcom Excellence Awards

8. The Diversity & Inclusion, Education, and VN teams have entered a joint submission in the 'Best Inclusion Initiative' category for the Memcom 2026 Awards. This was for the recent work on reasonable adjustments, covering the 'Let's Talk Adjustments' campaign and the recently published student guidance on reasonable adjustments. The shortlisted entrants will be announced in July.



Environment & Sustainability (E&S) Update

1. Following the climate 'fresk' workshop in February, work has been progressing on the College environment & sustainability plan, using the UKHACC commitments as a framework. An updated plan with a progress update, and (where appropriate) options for how each outstanding commitment could be met, will be brought to APC's October meeting.
2. In line with the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change (UKHACC) commitment to *publish a plan for the RCVS to meet Net Zero*, and *'develop and implement a travel policy for members and staff'* the Green Team are commencing work on seeking RCVS accreditation by Investors in the Environment (iIE) and will meet with them on 19 May to discuss the accreditation criteria.
3. In order to meet the UKHACC *'Sustainability plan for the veterinary professions'* commitment, work is under way on a series of papers that will be brought to the October meeting of APC:
 - i. A paper summarising existing environment and sustainability initiatives in the veterinary profession, including the work of Vet Sustain, the British Veterinary Association (BVA), and major employers.
 - ii. A paper setting out how the RCVS may best add value, including exploring the possibility of calculating the carbon emissions of the entire veterinary sector, and setting a sector-wide Net Zero target date.
 - iii. The Policy & Public Affairs team is developing a paper on carbon offsetting schemes, with an overview detailing their merits including sectoral co-benefits, to assist in deciding which scheme(s) the College should choose should it include carbon offsetting as part of a future net zero plan for the RCVS itself and/or the professions.
4. On 22 April Officers will consider a paper setting out how the RCVS might best meet the UKHACC commitment to *declare that the climate emergency is a health emergency*, possibly alongside publication of the wider environment and sustainability plan.
5. In March the RCVS met with Professor Michael R F Lee from Harper Adams University to discuss evidence of sustainability in the food sector. A paper will be brought to October APC setting out and evidencing a range of catering options for the College in order to meet the UKHACC commitment to *'prioritise plant-based and sustainably sourced food'*. The paper (with any amendments suggested by APC) will then be taken to November Council.



Fellowship Update

Events, Outreach and Engagement

Fellowship Day 2026

1. It has been agreed that Fellows and Board members will be actively involved in the planning of Fellowship Day 2026. To support this collaborative approach, a Task and Finish Group (TAFG) has been established to facilitate engagement and planning activities. The group is scheduled to hold its first meeting on 30 April 2026.
2. The Fellowship Board has also agreed to separate the Fellows of the Future Student Competition from Fellowship Day, with the intention of developing a dedicated event specifically for students. This will enable participants to gain greater value from the competition and associated activities. A separate TAFG has been convened to explore how best to design and deliver this standalone student-focused event and are due to meet in early May.
3. In addition, a further TAFG is being established to focus on Early Careers Researchers. The purpose of this group is to explore the development of a new project aligned with the Fellowship, with the aim of launching activity from 2027. The proposed initiative is intended to support individuals at an early stage in their research careers, while also promoting research as a valuable and accessible career pathway within the veterinary professions. The TAFG will consider how the Fellowship can best engage, support, and showcase early career researchers, and identify opportunities to align this work with existing Fellowship priorities and future strategic objectives.

Communications

4. Members of the Fellowship were recently contacted via an email poll to determine their communication preferences. The results indicated support for the reintroduction of the Fellowship newsletter. The first edition is scheduled to be published in mid-May 2026.
5. The same communication included a request for support from the Outreach and Engagement Team, which received 24 responses from Fellows. The Chair of the Fellowship Board provided support for the RCVS stand at the Glasgow Careers Fair, and a fellow has submitted a talk proposal for *New Scientist Live* titled "All Vets are Problem Solvers!"

Campaigns and Activities

Contagion and Control TAFGs

6. Two Task and Finish Groups arising from Fellowship Day 2025 workshops have been established: *The Vet as a Trusted Translator* and *Making Early Warning Normal*.
7. Progress in initiating these groups has been subject to some delay due to panel member availability. Katherine Bowen has agreed to Chair *The Vet as a Trusted Translator* TAFG and is currently developing plans to utilise the expertise of panel members effectively and to produce meaningful outputs. Confirmation of the Chair for the *Making Early Warning Normal* TAFG is currently pending.

Courses, Content and Publications

Working with emergency responders at incidents involving animals

8. The Fellowship are working in collaboration with BARTA (British Animal Rescue and Trauma Care Association) and the Trimble Group to develop and produce a course aimed at small animal vets, veterinary nurses and practices. The course will raise awareness of, and confidence in, attendance at events that involve the emergency services and small animals. The course will also include content about treatment of animals who are suffering from the effects of smoke inhalation. The project is currently at the script writing stage with filming dates planned in June and July. The course is anticipated to launch in September.

Small Animal First Responder Guide

9. As part of the collaboration between the Fellowship and BARTA, two Fellows with expertise in anaesthesia have volunteered their time to adapt BARTA's existing Large Animal First Responder Guide for application to small animal practice.
10. This work has involved translating the guidance to reflect the practical realities of small animal emergency response, including consideration that large animal veterinary surgeons are more likely to carry dedicated emergency kit bags for field situations. The Fellows have reviewed and adapted drug protocols, focusing on medications that may be carried for large animal emergencies but are not routinely used in small animal practice, and have developed a clear reference chart outlining appropriate drug options, dosages, and indications for use in emergency scenarios
11. At the time of writing, the Small Animal First Responder Guide has been finalised and is currently with the printers. A printed copy is expected to be available in early May 2026, at which point it will be shared with the Fellowship by the BARTA team.

Other

12. A total of 51 Fellowship applications were received across the following routes: ~~five~~5 applicants for the MCK route, 25 applicants for the MCP route and 21 applicants for the MCCP route.
13. Applications are currently undergoing assessment. Candidates can expect to be notified of outcomes between late July and early August 2026.
14. Additionally, RCVS Knowledge has submitted a proposal outlining potential opportunities for collaboration between RCVS Knowledge and the Fellowship. This proposal is scheduled to be considered by the Fellowship Board at the May 2026 Board meeting.



Leadership Update

Research

Veterinary Leadership Development Project

1. The Leadership & Inclusion Manager is working with the RCVS research team on a project aimed at understanding the leadership competencies and development needs of veterinary professionals at different stages of their career. The project also has input from MMI and the VN team. The study aims to inform efforts to build leadership capacity in the profession, through producing an evidence-based leadership framework which will highlight best practice, for use by the RCVS and to be disseminated more widely for use by other organisations.

The project involves three phases:

- i. Phase 1: Focus groups research to gather views from vets and vet nurses on the leadership competencies (skills, experience, knowledge and behaviours) required at different career stages, learning preferences, current provision, and the impact of leadership on culture and well-being. Information gathered from the focus groups will be used to inform the development of a leadership framework.
- ii. Phase 2: Drawing on the leadership framework and data from phase one, a leadership survey will baseline the current level of skills and knowledge within the professions to guide future leadership development provision.

The focus group research is now complete. Review and planning for development of the leadership framework, will commence in Summer 2026 with preparation for phase 3 starting in the Autumn.



Mind Matters Update

Events, Outreach and Engagement

Association of Veterinary Students (AVS) Congress 2026

1. The MMI Team attended the Association of Veterinary Students Congress at Harper-Keele Vet School on Saturday 7 February 2026 to speak to current students about the role of the RCVS and to raise awareness of current activities and resources.

British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) CPD Webinar 2026

2. On Monday 23 February, the MMI Team presented at a special BVNA webinar, with the theme of 'Let's talk human stress in practice'. The webinar was part of a three-part series, looking at stress in cats, dogs and humans. 24 of 55 registrants attended on the day.

Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS) Congress 2026

3. In February, the MMI Team attended the 2026 SPVS Congress, to deliver business networking sessions on 'Managing Mental Health in the Veterinary Workplace: an introduction to practical steps for managers', as well as supporting activities on the RCVS exhibition stand. A total of 41 attendees joined the speed networking sessions on the day.

Veterinary Management Group (VMG) Congress 2026

4. The MMI Team also attended the 2026 VMG Congress from 23 to 24 April, where they supported engagement activity on the RCVS exhibition stand, as well as facilitating a session titled: 'Managing mental health in the workplace - A manager's guide to having those difficult conversations'.

Mind Matters International CPD Webinar

5. On Tuesday 10 February 2026, the RCVS and American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) facilitated a 2-hour international webinar for MMI International signatories and wider sector partners focussed on 'mental health, addiction and substance misuse', which included speakers from the UK, USA and Australia. 24 individuals attended to represent their respective organisations.

Research

Research Grant Applications 2026

6. Applications for round three of the research grants programme closed on Sunday 22 March 2026. The applications are currently going through the assessment process, with successful recipients due to be announced in early Summer 2026.

Courses, Content and Publications

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) courses

7. MHFA courses continue to be popular with both the January and February 2026 courses being fully booked. The next courses are due to take place in May and June 2026 (one in-person at Keele University, and one online). Two further courses will take place in September and November 2026.

Managing Mental Health for Everyday Veterinary Leaders CPD Sessions

8. Following the launch of the RCVS Academy course last year on Managing mental health in the workplace, MMI launched a series of five in-person workshops, for designated groups. Despite engaging in a range of communications across multiple channels, take-up has been low. Having removed the designated groups, and moved four of the sessions online, MMI had to cancel the first two sessions as minimum numbers were not achieved. The MMI Team is working closely with the Communications Team to ensure that information about these events is cascaded as far as possible and reviewing our approach to meet our strategic objective to train 500 managers.

Applied Mental Health Science series

9. A new 'Let's talk bipolar' guide was launched on Monday 30 March, to coincide with World Bipolar Day. In addition, MMI facilitated a webinar on 'Work, mental health and mood' and published two lived experience blogs on depression, and PMDD. The guide and webinar were supported by clinical psychologist Dr Marco Vivolo. Engagement has been high – 52 attendees joined the webinar live, with just over 200 registrants set to receive the recording. Further guides are currently being planned for late 2026/early 2027.

PSS Suicide Prevention Resources

10. The MMI Team alongside the PSS Team have worked with an external expert to develop a number of free and practical resources, to support practices in meeting the new PSS suicide prevention standard that came into effect on 1 April 2026. The resources, aligned with the new British Standard (BS) 30480 Suicide and the Workplace (2025), include a practical checklist, a comprehensive toolkit and guide, as well as resources for PSS assessors to support them in their roles. Further resources including a webinar and podcast are due to be launched shortly.

Federation of Independent Veterinary Practices (FIVP) Podcast

11. The MMI Team alongside 2025 research grant recipient Professor Elinor O'Connor from Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, were invited to contribute to the April edition of the FIVP's 'Practice Matters Podcast'. The discussion focussed on the breadth of MMI CPD and resources, including the new RCVS Academy courses and the applied mental health science series. The podcast also focussed on the current funded research being undertaken by Professor O'Connor alongside co-researcher Dr Kevin Teoh (Birkbeck, University of London) into Organisational Wellbeing Interventions.

Other

New RCVS Mind Matters Branding

12. Following the launch of the updated RCVS branding and website, the RCVS Mind Matters Initiative branding has also been updated and was formally launched at VMG Congress 2026. The 'Understanding and managing stress in the veterinary workplace' guide was updated with the new branding and printed as a resource to give out at VMG. Other guides and resources are currently in the process of being updated with the new branding.



RCVS Knowledge Update for Advancement of the Professions Committee, 6 May 2026

Developments and activities since February 2026:

Contextualised care

1. Following publication of our contextualised care research and roadmap at the end of last year, the work continues to generate interest, with several new requests to speak at conferences and submit articles. This includes speaking at the Shelter & Charity Vets Association Conference in February, and planned speaking slots at the RCVS VN Education conference in June, the VetEd conference in July and the British Veterinary Nursing Association conference in October. We've had further international interest in the work with articles due to be published soon in the Dutch Veterinary Journal and in the magazine of the American Animal Hospital Association.
2. We are in the planning phase for the next stage of our contextualised care work, which will seek to support implementation of the roadmap recommendations and to develop decision-making tools for animal owners and veterinary teams.

Antimicrobial stewardship: Ruminant roadmap

3. Work continues on our collaboration with the UKRI-funded AMR in Agrifood Systems Transdisciplinary Network (AMAST). The initiative aims to develop a coordinated, credible and practical approach to the way that medicine data is gathered, interpreted and used across the dairy, beef and sheep industries.
4. The research phase of the work is progressing well. We received 370 responses to our survey seeking views from across the ruminant sector including farmers, veterinary professionals and people from industry. Focus groups with veterinary professionals from different practice types, farmers and other stakeholders will take place from April to May to generate further qualitative insights.
5. The key findings from the research will be shared at the Ruminant Roadmap Summit that we are holding in London on 30 June. The summit will bring together more than 60 senior stakeholders from across the veterinary, farming and food industries to identify what is currently working well, what is challenging, and what is needed to support a united and practical approach across all ruminant sectors and considering all areas of the UK.

Plowright Prize

6. The Plowright Prize is awarded by RCVS Knowledge every two years to recognise an individual from Europe or the Commonwealth who has made an outstanding contribution to the control, eradication or management of infectious diseases of animals. The Prize is made possible as the result of a generous legacy left by the estate of Walter Plowright, the eminent veterinary virologist.
7. This year, we received 16 nominations, with one third from UK nominees and the rest from other parts of Europe and the Commonwealth. The quality of nominations was exceptionally high. The selection panel, with representatives from RCVS Fellowship, Pirbright Society,

Royal Society, WOAHA, FAO and this year including the Commonwealth Veterinary Society, met online in late March to make a decision on this year's winner.

8. The winner will be announced in May and will formally be awarded the prize at RCVS Day on 3 July.

Quality Improvement training and awards

9. We hosted our first Quality Improvement in a Day event for 2026 at Hardwick Street in March, focusing on promoting and embedding QI in practice with more than 50 delegates attending. Delegate feedback indicated that the event supported engagement with quality improvement and was valued for its use of evidence-based clinical examples.
10. Applications for our 2026 Quality Improvement awards are currently being considered by reviewers. The awards recognise veterinary teams who have used quality improvement techniques to drive improvements. There are categories for antimicrobial stewardship, leading organisational change, and implementing quality improvement in practice. Overall winners will be determined within the next month, with award winners to be announced just ahead of RCVS Day.

Library and archive

11. We have launched a new marketing campaign for the library which looks to emphasise the benefits for busy veterinary professionals of access to full-text online veterinary literature via the library service.
12. We have generated increased interest in the RCVS historical collections through a number of social media posts and emails highlighting the stories of key members of the profession as well as sharing some of the beautiful illustrations of animals and veterinary practice held within the RCVS archives and historical collections.

Upcoming activities

13. National Audit for Small Animal Neutering (NASAN): Work is underway to launch our next NASAN annual report in the summer. The report will mark the 20th anniversary of the national audit, which now includes data from more than 90,000 neutering procedures in dogs, cats and rabbits.
14. Quality improvement: We will be running two more Quality Improvement in a Day events, one in Bristol (15 July) and one in Newcastle (14 October).
15. Contextualised care: We will be initiating the next stage of work to support the implementation of roadmap recommendations
16. Historical collections: We are exploring and developing new ways of driving engagement in the historical collections (creation of picture library)

VN Vision Update

Events, Outreach and Engagement

VN Vision events

1. 'A vision or a necessity? Strengthening the role of veterinary nurses in team-based veterinary healthcare' concluded with an event in Leeds on 10 March.
2. Data has reached saturation, with similar ideas, concepts and themes emerging.
3. Data has been collated by Chloe in the Events Team, and attendance data is included below.

Event location	Venue	Date	Total reg	Final reg	Attended	% rate attended
South Wales	Coleg Gwent	05/08/2025	27	22	20	90%
Belfast	Ulster University	13/08/2025	27	17	12	71%
Scotland	SRUC Oatridge	26/08/2025	26	24	18	75%
London (AM)	Hardwick St	10/09/2025	15	10	9	90%
London (PM)	Hardwick St	10/09/2025	12	12	8	67%
Dorset	Lynwood	24/09/2025	33	25	17	68%
Birmingham	Blaise Referral Hospital	12/11/2025	27	19	13	68%
Northampton	Vets4Pets	11/12/2025	25	24	20	83%
Wiltshire	The George Vet Group	14/01/2026	25	24	24	100%
Huntingdon	VetSkill	10/02/2026	22	18	14	78%
Leeds	CAW Leeds	10/03/2026	22	16	11	69%

				Average:	
Total figures:	261	211	166	78%	

4. Attendance at external events has included:

- i. SPVS Congress, Birmingham, February 2026 (well attended 1-hour interactive session, vets, nurses, practice support staff)

- ii. Year 3 student veterinary nurses, RVC, 18 March 2026 (online) 1-hour interactive session
- iii. AVSPNI Spring Conference, Belfast, 17-18 April 2026, 1-hour interactive session across all streams, approximately 180 attendees.

5. Upcoming events include:

- i. VMG, Stratford-Upon-Avon, 23-24 April, participation in the community room. This is 'a relaxed, free-flowing conversation designed to encourage open discussion and networking'
- ii. European Specialist Nurses Organisation (ESNO) Congress, 4-5 June, Rome, oral presentation
- iii. BVA Live, Birmingham, 12 June 2026, TBC
- iv. Vet Ed Conference, Harper-Keele, 8-10 July 2026, oral presentation.
- v. *An abstract for AAVMC Conference in Wisconsin was accepted; however, it was decided that the logistics were too challenging and costly, so the opportunity was declined.*

Research

ERP approval

- 6. ERP approval was gained in September 2025 for the in-person events.
- 7. Approval for online events was gained in December 2025
- 8. ERP approval is ongoing to include research activity incorporating:
 - i. Advisory panel
 - ii. Consultation
 - iii. Focus group workshops

Data

- 9. Data analysis using the Quirkos software is ongoing.
- 10. The draft theory of change will be created once the data analysis is completed.

Campaigns and Activities

Recruitment

- 11. A Project Officer has been recruited and will join the team in July 2026

Comms and social media presence

- 12. We are aware that there have been missed opportunities with communication activities due to lack of (human) resource. The Project Officer's role will include input to comms, and creation of social media content.

Advisory panel

- 13. The terms of reference for the advisory panel have been created, and the panel's creation was approved by the FRC on 26 February 2026.

14. Creation of the advisory panel will be actioned within the next two months.

VNC

15. A project update was provided to RCVS VNC on 25 February 2026.

Consultation

16. Preliminary discussions have been held regarding the consultation and how the process can be managed with the support of the research team or an external body.

Courses, Content and Publications**VNE**

17. A piece was provided for VNE in April 2026.
https://www.rcvs.org.uk/sites/default/files/2026-04/News%20update%20April%202026%20pages_0.pdf

Podcast

18. A section on the VN Vision work was included in a recent RCVS veterinary nursing podcast.
<https://rcvs.podbean.com/e/legislative-reform-a-veterinary-nursing-perspective/>
19. A more in-depth podcast on the project is planned for the summer and will include guests.



Workforce Update

Campaigns and Activities

'Next steps' project

1. Bookings have now opened for the *Next Steps* programme of events, which are designed to support veterinary professionals at key career transition points: returning from parental leave, returning after a career break, and moving into management for the first time.
2. In response to feedback gathered during early engagement activity, the first two events (returning parents and career-break returners) have been moved online. This adjustment is intended to improve accessibility by reducing travel/time barriers, supporting those balancing caring responsibilities, and widening participation beyond London-based delegates.
3. The third event, for those moving into management is still planned to be held in person.
4. Feedback and engagement from these initial events will continue to inform the format and delivery of future sessions and wider workforce activities.

Courses, Content and Publications

'Welcoming a returner' RCVS Academy course

5. The Projects Implementation Manager has attended an initial scoping meeting and planning session for the new '*Welcoming a returner*' RCVS Academy course.
6. This course is being developed to support practice teams and employers to effectively, safely and inclusively welcome colleagues returning from a career break.
7. Course content is now being written and structured, drawing on existing evidence, learner feedback from previous RCVS Academy courses, and wider workforce insights.
8. A provisional launch date of September 2026 has been set, with further updates to be shared as development progresses.

Workforce update animation

9. The workforce animation has now been released and has achieved positive engagement online, including across RCVS social media channels.
10. The animation provides a clear and accessible overview of activity aligned to the Workforce Action Plan and highlights practical examples of delivery across the College.
11. Early engagement data and feedback suggest the asset has been effective in supporting awareness and understanding of ongoing workforce initiatives.

Podcast content

12. In support of the *Next Steps* project, two further RCVS Podcast features have been recorded.
13. These episodes focus on:

- i. returning to clinical practice following time away, and
 - ii. transitioning into management roles within the veterinary professions.
14. The features are intended to complement existing resources by sharing lived experience, practical insight and reflective discussion.
15. Release details will be confirmed via RCVS communication channels in due course.

Summary

Meeting	Advancement of the Professions Committee
Date	6 May 2026
Title	APC Terms of Reference
Summary	APC Terms of Reference
Decisions required	Committee to review and update current terms of reference as required
Attachments	Annex A – APC Terms of Reference
Author	Charlie Coaker Officer / Secretary to Advancement of the Professions Committee c.coaker@rcvs.org.uk / 020 8148 2577

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

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

²Classification rationales

Confidential	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	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

Advancement of the Professions Committee – Terms of Reference

The Advancement of the Professions Committee will oversee work that is non-statutory in nature and contributes broadly to the advancement of the veterinary and/or veterinary nursing professions.

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

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

The Committee shall comprise the chairs of relevant working parties or taskforces, or appropriate Council member champions, together with up to four other members of Council (chair, lay member, veterinary surgeon, veterinary nurse), together with relevant members of the Senior Team. Other Committee members may be co-opted if necessary. RCVS Knowledge, an independent charity, will contribute by means of its Chair of Trustees, who will be an invited observer. Although they each have responsibility for individual projects or areas of work, Committee members will review and input across all areas, with collective responsibility.

The Committee shall:

- a. Take regular reports from the leads on these areas of work and consider the ongoing effectiveness of the work against agreed strategy, timing and resourcing, making recommendations for changes, where appropriate. Consider any additional budgetary impact of these workstreams, which would then be escalated via the Financial Controls process;
- b. Ensure that potential synergies between the various projects and initiatives reporting into the Committee are identified and exploited, and that opportunities for working collaboratively to maximise the impact of workstreams is explored;
- c. Provide a forum for in-depth consideration of the issues surrounding or arising from the projects and initiatives that report into the Committee;
- d. Provide a forum for blue-sky thinking to support the identification and development of new non-statutory projects that would serve to advance the professions;

- e. Flag up any issues of concern to the Audit and Risk Committee, via the Risk Register, particularly in terms of financial, reputational or legal risks associated with the project and initiatives reporting to the Committee;
- f. Make recommendations to Council for any new streams of work which may be appropriate under our Royal Charter; and,
- g. Make a report to Council on a regular basis summarising the work that comes under its purview (usually via the minutes of its meetings).
- h. Set aside time at one meeting per year to discuss the ongoing environment and sustainability work at the College, and to consider potential new initiatives in this area.