

Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	12 March 2026
Title	Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report describes the work of the Preliminary Investigation Committee since RCVS Council's last meeting, including by reference to key stage indicators, and provides information about the nature of concerns being considered by the RCVS.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
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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.
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

Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to Council March 2026

Introduction

1. This report provides information about the activities of the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) since the last report and covers the period 10 January to 27 February 2026.
2. Since the last Report to Council there have been three Stage two Preliminary Investigation Committee (S2PIC) meetings (21 January, 4 and 18 February).

New cases considered by the S2PIC

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

Ongoing Investigations

5. The S2PIC is currently investigating 44 ongoing cases where the Committee has requested statements, visits or preliminary expert reports (for example).

Health Protocol

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

Performance Protocol

7. There is one veterinary surgeon currently on the RCVS Performance Protocol.

Professional Conduct Department - Enquiries and concerns

8. Before registering a concern with the RCVS, potential complainants must make an Enquiry (either in writing or by telephone), so that Case Managers can consider 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 (VCMS).
9. In the period 10 January to 27 February 2026:
 - the number of matters registered as Enquiries was 449; and,
 - the number of formal Concerns registered in the same period was 119.

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

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

11. The table below shows the categories of matters registered as Concerns between 10 January and 27 February 2026.

Concerns registered between 10 January and 27 February 2026

Description of Category	Number of Cases
- Advertising and publicity	0
- Certification	2
- Client confidentiality	3
- Clinical and client records	7
- Clinical governance	0
- Communication and consent	6
- Communication between professional colleagues	1
- Conviction	0
- CPD compliance	0
- Delegation to veterinary nurses	0
- Equine pre-purchase examinations	0
- Euthanasia of animals	4
- Euthanasia of animals – ‘Tuk’s law’	1
- Fair trading requirements	0
- Giving evidence for court	0
- Health case (<i>potential</i>)	1
- Illegal practice (<i>potential</i>)	0
- Microchipping	2
- Miscellaneous	0
- Named veterinary surgeons	0
- Practice information, fees & animal insurance	1
- Performance case (<i>potential</i>)	0
- Recognised veterinary practice	0
- Referrals and second opinions	0
- Registration investigation	0
- Restoration application	0

- Social media and networking forums	1
- Treatment of animals by unqualified persons	0
- Use of samples, images, post-mortems and disposal	0
- Veterinary care - general	49
- Veterinary care – surgical errors/complications	4
- Veterinary care – unnecessary treatment/diagnostic work	1
- Veterinary care – unfit discharge/post-op complications	3
- Veterinary care – missed or misdiagnosis	13
- Veterinary medicines	6
- Veterinary medicines – application of factors without physical examination	0
- Veterinary medicines – prescribing CDs/antimicrobials without physical examination	0
- Veterinary medicines – ‘under care’ query, other	2
- Veterinary teams and leaders	0
- Whistle-blowing	2
- 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief	2
- Unassigned	8
Total	119

Data source – Profcon computer system concerns data.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

12. In the period 10 January to 27 February 2026, the Committee has referred two cases involving two veterinary surgeons to the DC.

Referral to Charter Case Committee

13. In the period 10 January to 27 February 2026, no cases have been referred to the Charter Case Committee (CCC).

Veterinary Investigators

14. The Chief Investigator and Veterinary Investigators have undertaken two visits since the last report.

Concerns procedure

15. The median number of weeks in which cases concluded at Stage one can be seen below.

Month in which case concluded	Median number of weeks taken
January 2024	16
February 2024	15
March 2024	17.6
April 2024	15
May 2024	12.9
June 2024	19.9
July 2024	11.9
August 2024	15.2

September 2024	13.9
October 2024	12
November 2024	14.4
December 2024	15.9
January 2025	17.4
February 2025	13.4
March 2025	14.3
April 2025	10.1
May 2025	14.7
June 2025	15
July 2025	18.9
August 2025	17.1
September 2025	18
October 2025	14
November 2025	16.2
December 2025	19.1
January 2026	19.1

16. The KPI for cases at Stage one is six months. As well as reporting those that meet/don't meet that KPI, we provide median times taken, as this is a good indicator of the most likely duration of matters for those involved in the process.

17. The percentage of cases that met the six-month KPI is below.

Month case started	Cases that met KPI
January 2024	86%
February 2024	93%
March 2024	87%
April 2024	90%
May 2024	85%
June 2024	75%
July 2024	97%
August 2024	91%
September 2024	91%
October 2024	91%
November 2024	94%
December 2024	86%
January 2025	94%
February 2025	79%
March 2025	90%
April 2025	85%
May 2025	89%
June 2025	84%
July 2025	88%

18. The Stage 2 KPI is currently for the PIC to reach a decision on simple cases before it within seven months. A case is deemed to be complex where the PIC requests that witness statements

and/or expert evidence be obtained. At its meeting in May 2024, Professional Conduct Liaison Committee (PCLC), having undertaken a full review of the Stage 2 KPI, concluded that it was not appropriate to have a KPI for complex cases, in view of the specific complexities of each case. Cases are reported in detail to that Committee, which is able to discuss and monitor performance accordingly.

19. In the period 10 January to 27 February 2026, the S2PIC reached a decision (to close, refer to the CCC, or refer to DC) within the relevant KPI in two out of two simple cases.
20. Three complex cases were decided. In accordance with the above, these cases (and the work of the department in general) are reported and discussed in detail at the Professional Conduct Liaison Committee meeting.

Illegal practice

21. Since the last Report to Council (which gave information to 10 November 2025), four new reports of suspected illegal practice have been received. Of these, one has been closed after issuing an advice letter and three are subject to ongoing enquiries. There is a total of 11 ongoing enquiries.

Operational matters

22. An in-person training day for members of the Professional Conduct Department and Committee members took place on 10 February 2026. The topics included contextualised care, Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) and delegation to RVNs, a case law update and Referrals to the CCC.