

Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	3 September 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 September 2026

Introduction

1. This report provides information about the activities of the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) since the last report and covers the period 23 May 2026 to 23 August 2026.
2. Since the last Report to Council there have been six Stage two Preliminary Investigation Committee (S2PIC) meetings (3 and 16 June, 8 and 22 July, 5 and 19 August and an extraordinary meeting which took place on 13 August). The extraordinary meeting was set up to consider a case that had an excessively large volume of evidence to consider, meaning it would have been impractical to add it to a normal agenda.

New cases considered by the S2PIC

3. The total number of new cases considered by the S2PIC at the seven meetings referred to above is 15. Of the 15 new cases considered:
 - Six were concluded at first consideration by the Committee;
 - Nine 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 50 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 23 May to 23 August 2026:

- the number of matters registered as Enquiries was 965; and,
- the number of formal Concerns registered in the same period was 211.

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 23 May and 23 August 2026. Council is asked to note that during the reporting period the RCVS has introduced a new CRM system. As some data is still being migrated at the time of writing, the information below may be incomplete or contain some omissions or inaccuracies.

Concerns registered between 23 May and 23 August 2026

Description of Category	Number of Cases
- Advertising and publicity	0
- Certification	3
- Client confidentiality	0
- Clinical and client records	9
- Clinical governance	0
- Communication and consent	14
- Communication between professional colleagues	0
- Consumer rights and freedom of choice	1
- Conviction	2
- CPD compliance	0
- Delegation to veterinary nurses	0
- Equine pre-purchase examinations	3
- Euthanasia of animals	7
- Euthanasia of animals – ‘Tuk’s law’	0
- Fair trading requirements	0
- Giving evidence for court	2
- Health case (<i>potential</i>)	0
- Microchipping	0
- Miscellaneous	1
- Named veterinary surgeons	0
- Practice information, fees & animal insurance	5
- Performance case (<i>potential</i>)	0

- Raising concerns about a colleague	6
- Recognised veterinary practice	0
- Referrals and second opinions	0
- Registration investigation	0
- Restoration application	0
- Social media and networking forums	0
- Treatment of animals by unqualified persons	0
- Use of samples, images, post-mortems and disposal	0
- Veterinary care - general	116
- Veterinary care – surgical errors/complications	1
- Veterinary care – unnecessary treatment/diagnostic work	0
- Veterinary care – unfit discharge/post-op complications	5
- Veterinary care – missed or misdiagnosis	6
- Veterinary medicines	5
- Veterinary medicines – application of factors without physical examination	0
- Veterinary medicines – prescribing CDs/antimicrobials without physical examination	1
- Veterinary medicines – ‘under care’ query, other	0
- Veterinary teams and leaders	0
- 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief	5
- Unassigned	19
Total	211

Data source – Microsoft Dynamics 365 CRM computer system professional conduct concerns data.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

12. In the period 23 May to 23 August 2026, the Committee has referred two cases involving two veterinary surgeons to the DC.

Referral to Charter Case Committee

13. In the period 23 May to 23 August 2026, no cases have been referred to the Charter Case Committee (CCC).

Veterinary Investigators

14. The Chief Investigator and Veterinary Investigators have not undertaken any 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
February 2026	13.9
March 2026	17.7
April 2026	14.9
May 2026	15.6
June 2026	16.9
July 2026	17.9

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%
August 2025	84%
September 2025	88%
October 2025	82%
November 2025	87%
December 2025	89%
January 2026	86%

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. There is no set KPI for complex cases, in view of the specific complexities of each case. Cases are reported in detail to the Professional Conduct Liaison Committee, which is able to discuss and monitor performance accordingly.
19. In the period 23 May to 23 August 2026, the S2PIC reached a decision (to close, refer to the CCC, or refer to DC) within the relevant KPI in four out of nine 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 22 May 2026), 15 new reports of suspected illegal practice have been received. Of these, three have been closed after assessment, two have been sent "cease and desist" letters and three have been sent advisory letters. There is a total of nine ongoing enquiries.