The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Advancement of the Professions Committee Meeting

Tuesday 6 October 2026

Advancement of the Professions Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 06 October 2026 at 10am, to be held online

Agenda Item	Classification	Rationale
1. Welcome, apologies for absence and declarations of interest (5 mins)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2. Matters arising and minutes of the meeting held on 06 May 2026 (5 mins)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2a. Unclassified Minutes	Unclassified	n/a
2b. Confidential Appendix	Confidential	1,2,3,4
3. Environment & Sustainability Policy (60 mins) Policy & Operational Plan Travel Policy Confidential	Discussion/written report Unclassified Unclassified Confidential	n/a 1,2,3,4
4. Workstream Updates (15 mins)	Unclassified	n/a
5. MMI International – Vital Transitions (15 mins)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
6. Workforce – Neurodiversity First Responder Training (5 mins)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
7. Fellowship – BARTA (5 mins)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
8. VN Vision – Theory of Change (40 mins)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
9. Any other business (5 mins)	Oral report	
10. Date of next meeting Wednesday, 6 May 2026 (remote)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a

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).

Summary

Meeting	Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)
Date	6 May 2026
Title	APC meeting minutes – 6 May 2026
Summary	Minutes of the APC meeting held in-person at the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons on Wednesday, 6 May 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
Appendix	**Confidential**	**1, 2, 3, 4**

[1]Classifications 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.
[2]Classification 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 remotely via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 6 May 2026

Members (2025/26 College Year):

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 all present to the meeting.

2. No new declarations of interest were made.

3. Apologies were received from Chris Loughrey, Belinda Andrews-Jones, Simon Williams, Jill MacDonald, and Julie Dugmore.

Matters Arising and Minutes of the Meeting Held on 04 February 2026

4. The Committee approved the minutes of the last meeting, held on 04 February 2026, as an accurate record.

Workstream Updates

Diversity & Inclusion

5. The tailored adjustment passport toolkit received positive feedback from potential users. Revisions were being made to improve structure, navigation, and accessibility, with launch planned for June 2026.

6. The Inclusive Language Guide was in final design and remained on track for publication. Planning was also progressing for a Pride Month campaign focused on allyship, while Black History Month planning was at an early stage.

7. The first module of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Academy course was nearing completion in draft. Wider input would be sought at the review stage through the Academy panel. The Academy team continues recruitment to the panel, with a particular focus on increasing diversity,

including representation from minority groups, and helping to ensure good representation of the wider veterinary community.

Action: The Leadership and Inclusion Manager to follow up with the Academy about recruitment to the external panel to review the EDI course.

RCVS Knowledge

8. Work on contextualised care continued through links with the Academy, Fellowship and specialist community. The importance of involving specialists and primary care perspectives was discussed.

9. The role of specialists was recognised as nuanced compared with general practice. The newly established European College of Primary Care Practice was identified as a relevant development for future contextualised care discussions.

Action: The Fellowship to be considered for collaborations on future activities.

Oral Update: Fellowship Comms

10. The Fellowship had been asked about communication preferences and a quarterly newsletter had been developed in response. The first edition was expected to be issued shortly, with further editions planned for later in the year.

11. Fellowship projects and task and finish groups were reported to be progressing positively. Members were encouraged to share ideas for potential activity in 2027.

Presentation: Careers Engagement & Impact

12. The Outreach and Engagement Manager joined the meeting to give an update on careers outreach activities as requested by the Committee in the February 2026 meeting.

13. Careers outreach activity included National Careers Week, Science Week, the forthcoming Royal Norfolk Show and New Scientist Live. Activity focused on both schools and teachers, with practical engagement designed to promote understanding of the veterinary professions.

14. Student engagement included attendance at veterinary school careers fairs, support for the Association of Veterinary Students, and work with student-led outreach activity. The challenge of measuring long-term impact was recognised, particularly where outreach effects may take several years to become visible.

Discussion: Climate Fresk Reflections / UKHACC Food Paper Update (confidential appendix)

15. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 1-10 of the classified appendix.

Discussion: Event Attendance / Promotional Support

16. The Committee discussed low engagement with recent Mind Matters Initiative and Workforce events, despite most sessions being moved online and the price point being kept low. Possible barriers included timing, a saturated market due to corporate in-house training, and the difficulty of securing time for non-clinical continuing professional development.

17. There remained evidence of need among practice leaders, particularly around difficult workplace conversations and wellbeing concerns. Suggestions included rebranding the offer, using conferences as delivery routes, and framing non-clinical skills within clinical contexts.

Oral Update: Veterinary AI Transparency Alliance

18. The Veterinary AI Transparency Alliance had been established to develop practical guidance for veterinary teams using artificial intelligence systems. A stakeholder workshop involving AI developers, veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses, practice groups, educators and veterinary associations discussed a draft framework of best practice, setting out the information providers should make available.

19. A further event was planned to gather feedback from a wider group of stakeholders on whether the draft framework was clear, useful and practical. Potential implementation options included a central register, comparison tool or voluntary certification model.

Oral Update: PSS Toolkit

20. New resources have been developed to support practices with the requirement for a practice-specific suicide prevention plan. The resources are aligned with the new British Standard, ‘Suicide prevention in the workplace’, and include guidance for responsible persons, a practice checklist, staff guidance, an assessor checklist and supporting implementation resources for practices.

21. The Committee commended the clarity of the resources. Further communication, training and evaluation activity was planned to support implementation and ongoing improvement.

22. The suicide prevention toolkit will be promoted during Mental Health Awareness Week by both the Mind Matters Initiative and Practice Standards Scheme teams. A series of podcasts are due to be recorded with experts about the new suicide prevention resources, alongside a webinar with the external consultant on how to use the resources. A research-based webinar with Euthasafe is also planned, and case studies with practices on implementation of suicide prevention plans are due to be developed.

Action: Mind Matters Initiative and Practice Standards Scheme teams to establish an ongoing feedback loop with Practice Standards Scheme assessors on suicide prevention plans.

Review of Terms of Reference - Annex A

23. Members were asked to review the Committee's terms of reference and provide any feedback following the meeting. The recent addition relating to environment and sustainability was highlighted.

24. The Committee discussed whether workforce planning sat within its remit. Workforce modelling, education standards, registration, standards and wider workforce-related projects were identified as relevant parts of a broader organisational picture.

25. Recent indications suggested that the workforce position may have changed, with some graduates reporting difficulty finding work. It was agreed that further verification would be useful.

Action: Committee members to email feedback on the terms of reference to the Director for Advancement of the Professions by 11 May 2026.

AOB

26. Thanks were recorded for the outgoing Lead for Leadership, Sue Paterson, recognising their contribution to the Committee in the current role and previously as Chair.

27. A suggestion was raised to add a filter to Find a Vet for practices offering work experience to school pupils. The potential widening participation benefits were recognised, alongside legal, safeguarding and liability considerations.

Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is 06 October 2026. This will be held in-person at Hardwick Street.

Summary

Meeting	Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)
Date	6 October 2026
Title	RCVS environment and sustainability policy and operational plan
Summary	This covering paper introduces the draft environment and sustainability (E&S) policy and operational plan, building on papers considered by APC in 2025. The paper highlights some changes to the UKHACC commitments, which provide one part of the E&S policy framework.
Decisions required	To approve the draft plan, for consideration by RCVS Council in November 2026. To approve the plan to endorse the Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative
Attachments	Annex A - Draft E&S policy statement Annex B - Draft E&S operational plan
Author	Ben Myring Head of Policy Insight & Public Affairs b.myring@rcvs.org.uk Mark Sundhu Policy and Public Affairs Officer m.sundhu@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications

Document	Classification[1]	Rationales[2]
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a
Annex B	Unclassified	n/a

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) environment and sustainability policy and operational plan

Introduction

1. This paper presents the draft RCVS environment and sustainability (E&S) policy statement (Annex A) and operational plan (Annex B). The policy statement builds on the work of the RCVS Environment & Sustainability Working Party (2021), previous papers brought to APC (where the outline policy was approved) and RCVS Council in 2025, and subsequent discussions with stakeholders.

2. The RCVS is a member of the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change (UKHACC), which has produced a set of guiding principles for health organisations to demonstrate leadership and take steps to mitigate and adapt to climate change. These commitments provide a list of actions that organisations can take, adapting them as required to suit individual circumstances and these form a key framework for the RCVS E&S policy. Since APC approved the draft policy approach, UKHACC have updated and stream-lined the member commitments. This paper sets out the changes from the previous commitments. Details of progress towards accreditation can be found in the E&S operational plan (Annex B).

3. The RCVS also has Bronze accreditation with Investors in the Environment (iiE), and meeting their criteria for the higher Silver, and in time Green accreditation levels also form a key framework for the policy. Details of progress towards accreditation can be found in the E&S operational plan

4. The draft E&S policy statement proposes two ambitions via which the College can strive to meet the Strategic Plan objective to *take a leadership role on environmental sustainability and biodiversity*, above and beyond the criteria set out by UKHACC and iiE.

Net zero ambition

5. This ambition would underpin plans for the College to calculate its carbon footprint and set out a plan to reach net zero through reductions and emissions ahead of the UK target of 2050.

6. Under this ambition the College would also seek to calculate the carbon footprint of the veterinary sector, and develop a plan to use our regulatory and thought-leadership tools to steer the veterinary professions towards net zero by 2050. Preliminary conversations have been carried out with some key stakeholders, including iiE who have a carbon calculator and hold data from their many veterinary practices, and early conclusions suggest that this is an achievable aim, and one in which the footprint calculation and plan to address it could be improved iteratively over time.

Biodiversity ambition

7. The draft policy suggests a second core ambition in which the College would seek to better understand the impact of the professions on biodiversity (for instance through use of antiparasitic medication), support the professions' ability to address biodiversity collapse, and seek biodiversity co-benefits when developing actions to meet its net-zero ambition.

UKHACC – revised commitments

8. The revised UKHACC commitments are as follows:

Declare that the climate emergency is a health emergency

9. *"Make a public declaration that your organisation agrees that the climate emergency is a health emergency that requires urgent action."*

10. The key change is that UKHACC have decided that the commitment to declaring a climate emergency, will now be a mandatory commitment for members, with a deadline set for **31 December 2026.**

11. This deadline should not present any difficulties. The commitment was introduced in the previous APC papers, was taken to Council and then later presented by the Chief Executive Officer to the Officer Team on 22 April 2026, setting out the argument for the RCVS to support the UKHACC commitment via a public statement.

12. The Policy Insight and Public Affairs Team will work with the Communications Department to draft the declaration, and it is proposed that the declaration is made as part of the publication of the E&S policy statement. In addition to the public health impact (recently stressed by the World Health organisation[1]), the statement will draw attention to the impact on animals, including pets. Using the five domains model of animal welfare, which is used to examine the physiological and behavioural responses of animals to environmental stressors, climate change can be shown to harm both wild and domesticated animals across all five welfare domains, which include nutrition, environment, physical health, behaviour, and mental state.

Greener banking and investment

13. *"Stop your money being used to increase climate change"*.

14. Two of the previous commitments have been streamlined: *switch to a green bank and encourage members to switch,* and *disinvest from fossil fuels and sign the fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty*.

1) Banking

[1] https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/17-05-2026-climate-change-is-a-health-crisis---and-fixing-it-is-a-health-opportunity

15. Prior to the recent update and before endorsing the previous commitments, the College had already divested from all fossil fuel businesses (it retains a small indirect exposure via pooled investments). However, we have yet to explore whether it may be possible to switch to a greener bank without disproportionate risks.

16. UKHACC advocate moving money away from banks that support fossil-fuel developments, reducing their ability to lend to large oil, coal and gas producers, thereby reducing their ability to contribute to climate change. They further advocate switching to banks who actively invest in green policies such as developing renewable energy sources, contributing towards mitigation against climate change, and encouraging banks to reconsider their investment strategies.

17. As noted in a previous paper, RCVS currently banks with Lloyds. Lloyds have halted direct project finance of fossil fuels, but according to a 2025 study by climate thinktank Leave It in the Ground Initiative (LINGO)[2] were among UK banks who had funnelled over £75 billion into companies developing major fossil fuel projects. The credibility of criticism regarding Lloyds' public image is reinforced by regulatory findings. The UK's Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) banned a Lloyds Bank low-carbon LinkedIn advertisement for giving a misleading impression about the scale of its clean investments while omitting its ongoing links to high-emission industries.[3]

18. If the College was to consider switching banks it would require careful consideration by creating a task and finish working party to oversee the project and make recommendations to the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC). The process would involve identifying banks that could meet the needs of RCVS and that have a good credit rating. It is proposed that this work be carried out in 2027; a paper will be prepared for FRC setting out the costs and proposed timeframe of the working party.

2) The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative

19. UKHACC no longer require members to endorse the fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty. However, the RCVS should consider doing so as part of showing leadership on this issue, and to help fulfil the separate UKHACC commitment to use our voice to support action on climate change.

20. The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative is a global campaign urging governments to manage a fair, fast, and funded end to coal, oil, and gas production. It complements the Paris Agreement by tackling the root source of emissions through a binding international plan. It is built on the principles of non-discrimination, participation, transparency, intergenerational equity and

[2] https://knowesg.com/investors/uk-banks-linked-to-gbp75bn-in-fossil-fuel-projects-abroad-05052025
[3] https://www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/lloyds-bank-advert-banned-over-misleading-low-carbon-claims-b1200614.html

accountability[4], aligning with the International Court of Justice's (ICJ's) Advisory Opinion on legal duties of states to protect the climate for people's rights to be realised.

21. The treaty has been backed by a growing global network of governments, cities (including London), civil society organisations, faith institutions, and over a million individuals including academics, scientists, youth activists, health professionals.

22. Royal Colleges who have signed the treaty include Royal College of Occupational Therapists, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, the Royal College of Pathologists, the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. Additional Royal Colleges who UKHACC will expect to sign the treaty as part of their UKHACC commitments include the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Nursing, and the Royal College of General Practitioners,

23. If agreed, the College could move forward on this by completing a form on the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative website, which would list RCVS as having endorsed the Fossil Fuel Treaty proposal https://fossilfueltreaty.org/.

24. It is proposed that the College's signing of the treaty be timed so as to be publicised alongside the publication of the college E&S policy and climate health declaration.

Move to 100% renewable power and heating, where possible

25. *Reduce your organisation's carbon footprint and scope 1 emissions.*

26. Past APC papers have highlighted how a plan for the RCVS to reach Net Zero will involve several stages. First the College's carbon output must be measured, and then reduced as much as possible. This can be achieved via our work with Investors in the Environment (iiE), using their carbon calculator. In order to reach Net Zero, any remaining carbon footprint could be offset via a formal scheme.

27. Work is currently progressing with iiE, and the Facilities Team are preparing to review new energy provider options. A carbon offsetting paper setting potential criteria and options can be found in this bundle.

Make Catering Sustainable

28. *Reduce the carbon footprint of food for all meetings and conferences.*

[4] https://icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/187/187-20250723-sum-01-00-en.pdf

29. A paper exploring sustainable food production is in development, to be brought to APC and Council in early 2027, and this paper will make recommendations on RCVS catering policy following Council's discussion of this topic at its November 2025 meeting.

Change Transport

30. *Reduce the carbon footprint of travel undertaken on your organisation's behalf and improve public health.*

31. A travel policy paper has been produced alongside this paper, setting out how RCVS can take multiple steps to reduce its contribution to carbon emissions, while also promoting and facilitating healthier ways to travel for staff and visitors. This is an operational matter, but as it is relevant to both the UKHACC commitments and the iiE criteria it is included in this set of papers for information

Support all individuals to take the same action, and **Use the professional, political and public voice to support action on climate change**

32. The above are two separate UKHACC commitments seeking to influence individual action by UKHACC organisations' members, and influence policy makers to encourage urgent action on climate change.

33. These commitments are streamlined from three previous commitments to *educate members on the links between climate and health, develop guidance for sustainability in your specialist area* and *campaign on mitigating and adapting to the planetary crisis.* Similarly to the commitments for greener banking and disinvestment, the RCVS had already planned to address these commitments together. For example, the PIPA team have already started to engage with iiE on calculating carbon emissions for the sector, so that the veterinary professions can be empowered to work towards net zero. A discussion paper summarising existing initiatives (e.g. Vet Sustain) and identifying where RCVS can add value is in development.

Decisions

34. The committee is asked to decide on the following:

    a. Whether to approve the draft E&S plan, for consideration by RCVS Council in November 2026.

    b. Whether to approve the plan to endorse the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Environment & Sustainability Policy

Introduction

1. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is committed to demonstrating high standards on environment and sustainability (E&S) issues within our own organisation, and to fostering them among professionals, practices, and businesses across the veterinary sector. Both RCVS Council and the executive Senior Team have demonstrated this commitment through the high sustainability standards adhered to during the redevelopment of our new HQ at 1 Hardwick Street.

2. Additionally, the RCVS emphasises the importance of a One Health approach: recognising the synergies between animal health and human health, and promoting the interconnection between people, animals and ecosystems. It is therefore essential that the RCVS recognises its own environmental impact as an organisation, and encourages those on our registers and practices accredited under the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) to do the same.

3. Underpinning this policy is the College's stated ambition in Section C of the RCVS Strategic Plan (2025 to 2029) – *'Stronger together with society at large'*, and the objective *"To champion the role that veterinary professionals play in One Health and public health, take a leadership role on environmental sustainability and biodiversity, and continue to look beyond our domestic horizons to have a positive impact upon the world around us"*.

Net zero ambition

4. The RCVS recognises that the climate crisis is a health crisis, both for humans and other species. As a Royal College that regulates, through our E&S policy we will take a leadership role in ensuring that both the RCVS and the veterinary sector play their part in meeting the UK's legally binding commitment to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. By 2029, the RCVS will have estimated the veterinary sector's existing carbon footprint, set out a plan for the sector to reduce this, and, where necessary, for it to offset any irreducible emissions by 2050 at the latest – though a more ambitious net zero target date will be considered. The RCVS will also calculate its own carbon footprint, and take measures to reach net zero by the same target date or earlier.

Biodiversity ambition

5. The climate emergency is one of two linked existential crises facing humanity; the other is biodiversity collapse. The veterinary professions' understanding of animal health and welfare puts them in a unique position to understand how this is linked to the health of ecosystems, and the interaction between wild animals, companion animals, and livestock. The RCVS will seek to better understand how the veterinary professions impact on biodiversity, and how the professions can be supported to address biodiversity collapse, and will seek biodiversity co-benefits when

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considering actions on climate; for instance, offsetting schemes that are focused on ecosystem recovery in addition to carbon storage and sequestration.

6. Our E&S policy is shaped and/or benchmarked with reference to external environment and sustainability organisations. These include:

The UK Health Alliance on Climate Change (UKHACC)

7. The RCVS is a member of the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change (UKHACC), which coordinates action, provides leadership, and amplifies the voice of health professions to advocate for just responses to the climate and ecological crises, and promotes the health benefits that flow from those responses.

8. UKHACC has produced a set of guiding principles for health organisations to demonstrate leadership and take steps to mitigate and adapt to climate change. These commitments provide a list of actions that organisations can take, adapting them as required to suit individual circumstances and recognising that different organisations are on different stages of the journey, each with their own individual priorities. The RCVS will seek to meet all of UKHACC's commitments by 2029.

Investors in the Environment (iiE)

Investors in the Environment (iiE) is an environmental accreditation scheme designed to help businesses reduce their environmental impact, raise awareness amongst colleagues, and save businesses money on their energy costs where possible.

Internal policy: leading by example

9. The RCVS recognises that it cannot expect the veterinary professions to engage with the transition to net zero if it cannot show that it is doing so itself. In 2022, the RCVS achieved Bronze level iiE accreditation, which is recognition that the College has successfully introduced a robust environmental policy and established processes to measure the organisation's use of resources. We will continue to work with iiE with the ambitious aim of achieving Green accreditation, their highest level, by 2029.

10. To move from Bronze up to Silver and Green accreditation the College will need to build upon existing actions across a range of accreditation criteria. Having first evaluated staff needs and restrictions, the College will be expected to introduce guidance, support and incentives that make the process of change easier for staff or those making travel decisions.

11. In 2025, the RCVS moved into its new headquarters at Hardwick Street. In addition to making the space fit-for-purpose in line with the College's strategic ambitions, the building has also been designed to reflect our commitment to sustainability, with features such as recycled materials,

repurposed fittings, a revised procurement policy, removal of the gas supply and adoption of solar panels. From the outset of the project, the development criteria required that full use should be made of all opportunities to reduce or minimise the impact that the redevelopment imposed on the environment, as far as was reasonably practicable.

The staff Green Team

12. The Green Team is a voluntary staff group which exists to promote, coordinate and champion environmental sustainability across the organisation, and is responsible for driving forward the practical work related to iiE accreditation. The Green team engages staff about environmental activities through the digital Greenzine, short videos, and other internal communications. The Green Team's ambition is to not only achieve accreditation, but to create a lasting behavioural and organisational change.

13. We are committed to taking steps in a number of areas to continue reducing our negative impact on the environment, including:

Procurement and waste

a. Following the principles of 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' where possible.
b. Regular review of our procurement of equipment and supplies, actively encouraging a reduction in the use of staple items such as paper for printing and merchandise for events and marketing opportunities.
c. Implementing sustainable waste management practices, with a goal that no waste is sent to landfill.
d. Selecting contractors, including catering providers, who can demonstrate alignment with our own environmental policy[1].
e. Reviewing our banking and investment arrangements to ensure that they properly balance sustainability with risk (e.g. not investing in fossil fuels, and investing in renewables and mitigation).

Building Management

f. Ensuring that our RCVS headquarters reflect our ongoing commitment to sustainable practices by taking into account both the environmental impact of the building itself and the activities of our workforce.
g. Consider sustainability in all modifications and upgrades to our headquarters, prioritising environmentally responsible materials and practices wherever possible.

[1] This will help to address Scope 3 emissions, which are all indirect greenhouse gas emissions that occur in a company's value chain, including both upstream and downstream activities

h. Reducing our Scope 2 emissions[2] by improving energy efficiency, minimising consumption of electricity, and moving to 100% renewable power and heating, where possible.
i. Reducing water consumption by promoting efficient use through monitoring demand and implementing conservation measures where feasible.

Environmental awareness

j. Providing an environmental induction for all new staff members, outlining how to adopt more sustainable practices both in the office and when working from home.
k. Engaging our staff to embed sustainable practices across the organisation, using the Green Team, surveys, newsletters and presentations to encourage sustainable behaviour.

Business Travel

l. Developing and maintaining a travel policy, encouraging staff to carefully consider business travel and make environmentally responsible choices as far as is reasonably practicable.
m. Retaining flexible working arrangements, including home working and remote committee meetings where feasible, in order to support business needs whilst reducing travel related emissions.
n. Promoting the use of sustainable modes of transport, including retaining the RCVS cycle-to-work scheme.

External policy: supporting the veterinary sector to transition to net zero

14. Centred on the College's net zero ambition, our external-facing policy aims to support veterinary professionals and practices to reduce their carbon omissions while seeking co-benefits for biodiversity. By 2029, in addition to estimating the veterinary sector's carbon footprint, the RCVS will have developed a strategy to eliminate that footprint by no later than 2050. It will explore how to do this via its full range of regulatory and Royal College functions, including standard setting, education, Practice Standard Scheme (PSS) accreditation and PSS Green Award, thought leadership via the Fellowship, and collaboration with RCVS Knowledge.

Legal compliance

15. The College will comply with all applicable standards, laws, requirements, regulations and public/customer expectations. Legal compliance, including keeping abreast of relevant legislative changes, will be the responsibility of the Registrar and Head of Legal services. Broader cultural compliance will be the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

[2] Scope 2 emissions are indirect greenhouse gas emissions caused by an organisation consuming purchased electricity, steam, heating, or cooling.

E&S operational plan & review

16. The Policy, Insight, and Public Affairs (PIPA) team will be responsible for developing and maintaining an operational plan for delivery of this policy, which will be reviewed by the Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC) at each meeting, and other committees will be engaged in the work where appropriate. PIPA will also review the policy annually to ensure it remains current.

17. Delivery of internal policy, including iiE accreditation, will be delegated to the College's staff Green Team, with support from PIPA. APC will review the overall E&S policy on an annual basis to ensure that it remains current and ambitious. Six-monthly progress reports against the iiE criteria will be given to the Senior Team, and an annual update will be presented to staff, and a summary of progress will be reported annually on the E&S policy page. Overall responsibility for upholding this policy lies with the Chief Executive Officer.

Signed:

Lizzie Lockett, Chief Executive Officer

DRAFT

RCVS Environment & sustainability operational plan - table

Introduction

1. This table sets out the UKHACC commitments and the iiE criteria, and progress towards them.

Sections

1.	**The UKHACC commitments**
2.	**Investors in the Environment criteria**

The UKHACC commitments						
	Commitment	**Teams**	**Due date**	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
1)	**Declare that the climate emergency is a health emergency**	PIPA, Coms	31 December 2026	Final stages	Paper seeking approval of E&S policy by APC, October 2026 Paper seeking approval by RCVS Council, November 2026 Publication & declaration before 31 December 2026	Now a mandatory commitment with a deadline set for 31 December 2026. PIPA working with Coms on a communications plan for this, linked with publication of our E&S policy following Council approval in November.
2)	**Greener banking and investment**	Finance, PIPA	December 2029	Early stages	Paper on banking and investment to APC November 2026 Possible 2027 working party to consider options for decision by the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC)	The RCVS divested from fossil fuel investments following the 2021 E&S working party recommendations, but retains a small indirect exposure via pooled investments. Need to identify banks that could meet the needs of RCVS and that have a good credit rating

The UKHACC commitments						
	Commitment	**Teams**	**Due date**	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
3)	**Move to 100% renewable power and heating, where possible** (see also iiE criteria – 4.13)	Green Team, Facilities, PIPA	December 2029	In progress	Carbon offsetting paper (tied to broader net zero ambition) Green Team work with iiE Facilities are in the process of reviewing our energy providers. Consider signing the Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative – decision to APC in Oct 26, and? Council in November 26.	Work is currently progressing with iiE, and PIPA have already worked on a carbon offsetting paper which will be incorporated into a further paper reflecting the updated commitment.
4)	**Make Catering Sustainable** (see also iiE criteria 1.5 on sustainable procurement)	PIPA, Facilities	December 2029	In progress	RCVS sustainable food policy paper to APC & Council? early 2027. Decision needed on what further approval might be necessary, if any (may be operational only, but we did take this to Council once already)	APC already adopted meat-free catering from 2025
5)	**Support all individuals to take the same action**	RCVS Fellowship, RCVS Knowledge, APC, PIPA	December 2029	Early stages	Consultation with relevant teams & stakeholders Development of a strategy making use of RCVS Upstream and Royal College functions.	Linked to Commitment 6, may be delivered together Includes net zero work e.g. carbon calculation.

The UKHACC commitments						
	Commitment	**Teams**	**Due date**	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
6)	**Use the professional, political and public voice to support action on climate change**	RCVS Fellowship, RCVS Knowledge, APC, PIPA	December 2029	Early stages	Consultation with relevant teams & stakeholders Development of a strategy making use of RCVS Upstream and Royal College functions.	Linked to Commitment 6, may be delivered together. Signing the Fossil Fuel Treaty, and declaring a climate health emergency (commitment 1) will help to meet this commitment.
7)	**Change Transport** (see also iiE criteria Section 4 – travel plan)	PIPA, Green Team	December 2029	Final stages	Internal approval of new travel policy outline, followed by development of detailed plan. iiE to assess the travel policy against their accreditation criteria.	

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
Section 1	**Environmental Policy**					
1.1	**Is there an environmental policy in place?**	Environment policy document available	n/a	Final stages	Paper seeking approval of E&S policy by APC, October 2026 Paper seeking approval by RCVS Council, November 2026	
1.2	**Has it been signed by senior management?**	Senior management/board approval	Senior management are more involved, with evidence to support. This can be sign off of actions. Minutes from end of year review meeting. Evidence of communication from senior management including additional ideas, actions, etc.	Final stages	To be signed once approved as per 1.1. Annual PIPA review built into the policy, for sign-off by CEO.	

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
1.3	**Is it up to date?**	Either signed annually, or evidence that policy has been reviewed annually. Where applicable, longer review periods are possible if that is process within the organisation.		Final stages	E&S Policy includes annual review by PIPA and APC.	
1.4	**Is it relevant to the current business practices?**	Environmental impacts of business activity listed.	The business context including stakeholder/interested parties has been reviewed and where necessary taken into account (evidence required). If applicable; Life cycle consideration for product or impact of the value chain has been reviewed and potential impact has been taken into account.	In progress	Consultation with BVA/BVNA and Vet Sustain ahead of November Council. Consider wider consultation.	

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
1.5	**Does it commit to reducing the environmental impact of the business?**	Generic statement listing commitment / listing impacts with commitments to reduce.	Commitment is demonstrated further by developing and working to a sustainability strategy that includes the direct impacts of the organisation as well as the impact of its value chain. The strategy should include all areas of impact and what actions and targets the organisation has, over and above the general actions on resource use.** Sustainability procurement / purchasing policy in place, with weighting around how sustainability is to be assessed when purchasing goods / services that is	In progress	The Net Zero commitment for the College and ambition for the wider profession should make us compliant. Consider whether we can reach outstanding through a sufficiently granular understanding of our impact.	

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
			reviewed over time.			
1.6	**Does it commit to legal compliance?**	Generic statement of legal compliance. Someone in the organisation must be aware of and kept up to date with compliance.	Able to demonstrate knowledge of legal commitment or evidence further actions taken by registering with legal website, body, etc.	Early stages	Discuss with Registrar. Discuss website options with iiE.	iiE policy template suggests including “Compliance with all applicable standards, laws, requirements, regulations and public/customer expectations” as an action within the policy.
1.7	**Does it identify an environmental champion responsible for implementing policy?**	Individual, team or department listed.		Final stages	Sign-off policy	PIPA have overall policy responsibility, Green Team responsible for iiE accreditation.

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
1.8	**Is it available to all staff -e.g. displayed on a notice board, accessible via intranet, part of staff handbook?**	Policy on noticeboard, on intranet / shared drive.	Policy built into website with outline of sustainability commitment and actions. Integrated induction with policy and/or education for new starters including actions on resource management. Annual test/review for all staff to be kept up to date with environmental actions and strategy of organisation. This could be role specific.	In progress	Sign-off policy. Agree website publication with Coms. Agree integration with new-starter inductions with People Team. Agree to integrate an annual E&S update into the all-staff meetings with Senior Team.	

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
Section 2	**Measure Resource Use**					
2.1	**Have the resources used and measurement technique been explained?**	A document that outlines the use of each resource within the organisation and how the data is collected must be produced. Explanation available from review on resources. Green Champion understands uses.	Further impact assessment carried out to understand how resources are used within processes of the organisation and where heavy use of each resource exists. Include understanding of areas where physical changes can be made (control) or only behavioural changes can be made (manage).	In progress		Resources are: Electricity, water consumption, onsite printing, event printing and recycling rates.
2.2	**Is there 12 months of robust baseline data for all nominated resources?**	Either 12 individual months, or 12-month total (one year) of data available		Final stages	12 months almost complete for all resources. Collate data into suitable format.	

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
2.3	**Do you record all nominated resources?**	**Bronze** / **Silver**: Quarterly **Green**: Monthly	**Bronze** / **Silver**: Monthly, or better **Green**: Weekly / half hourly / live data	Complete		
2.4	**How frequently do you monitor your nominated resources?**	All: Minimum of half yearly	**Bronze** / **Silver**: Quarterly, or better **Green**: Monthly, or better	Complete		Electricity, Water: **Twice weekly** Recycling rates, Internal printing, Event printing: **Monthly**
2.5	**Are readings taken directly from the meter?**	**Bronze** / **Silver**: Data is recorded from invoices. **Green**: Where possible, meter readings are taken.	**Bronze** / **Silver** only: Readings are taken directly from the meter	Complete		Water and Electricity are taken from the meter in kWh and m3
2.6	**What is your baseline use for:**	Total value for baseline year per resource.		In progress	Record baseline at end of baseline year.	2026 (calendar year) is our baseline year
2.7	**What is your previous year's use for:**	Total value for previous year per resource (if different to baseline)		In progress	Calculate at end of baseline year.	

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
2.8	**What is your current use for:**	Total value for current year per resource.		In progress	Calculate at end of year 2.	
Section 3	**Set targets and performance**					
3.1	**What were your 'current year' targets for:**	Target set per resource for current year performance.		Baseline year - Not applicable		
3.2	**What progress have you made against baseline:**	**Bronze**: Percentage calculated with understanding of performance. **Silver**/**Green**: Percentage improvement calculated. Evaluation and analysis provided to support.	Sum of, 5% reduction or more per year, from baseline to current year	Baseline year - Not applicable		

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
3.3	**What progress have you made towards current year targets:**	**Bronze**: Percentage calculated with understanding of performance. **Silver**/**Green**: Percentage improvement calculated. Evaluation and analysis provided to support.	5% reduction or more	Baseline year - Not applicable		3.1 – 3.9: Consulting with Dani Paterson from iiE in regard to this section. This year is our baseline year and we have not completed 3.1 as this new building and way of working are new to the RCVS. We cannot predict how much resource we would use in order to set SMART targets for current year.
Step 4	**Action plan**					

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
4.1	**Do you have an action plan for each resource?**	Action plan in place, covering each measured resource.	Has action plans in place for more than just the measured resources. For example, this could be Gas, water, electric in serviced office. Management of external actions which include projects, staff engagement, community activities, staff commuting or actions from the travel plan, etc. Any action plan that supports the efforts of the organisation in its full context.	In progress		
4.2	**Does this set out actions to achieve your targets for each resource?**	Adequate level of actions in place to support achievement of target.		Early stages	We need to set SMART targets for next year's resources in order to create targets.	

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
4.3	**Are actions assigned a completion date?**	Dates set for completion / review.				
4.4	**Are actions assigned a member of staff responsible for ensuring they are completed?**	Responsible person named against action.				
4.5	**Can you demonstrate progress through the action plans?**	Actions are in place and evidence available.				

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
4.6	**Have you documented all actions planned / undertaken, and are the results of these actions documented?**	All actions have been documented and comments attached to each action.	Clear and precise explanation of outcome or action requirement on all relevant actions, with updates to demonstrate action plan is regularly being reviewed and along with performance. Good link between analysis and new actions introduced for specific resources, where applicable.			
Step 4	**Additional Actions**					

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
4.7	**Do you have a waste management plan in place?**	Waste is being separated into recycling and general, as a minimum. Signs and education in place with draft management plan detailing how waste is managed. **Silver/Green:** Waste management starts to include inputs to business and how they are managed.	Strong structure of recycling with various streams of segregation (where possible), including clear signs on bins, robust education and good levels of communication. Clear understanding of waste process within premises. This includes an understanding of inputs, management of waste within the organisation and outputs, with improvements made where possible to any of these areas. Waste audits carried out where applicable, with actions taken to reduce waste input, improve management	Complete		Waste streams include: general, recycling, food waste, batteries. Signs are on bins

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
			and output.			
4.8	**Is this adhered to?**	Adherence checks are done regularly and reported on. Evidence of communication is available.				

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
4.9	**Have you adopted a travel plan?**	Travel plan is in place and is reviewed annually. Strong plan with clear understanding of travel requirements. Actions in place or implemented regularly and can be demonstrated. Plan may include: objectives and policy for business-required travel that falls within the scope of management control (e.g. fleet management, policy for booking travel).	Policy includes support and initiatives for travel that falls outside of management control, but can be influenced by it. Such as, practices introduced to guide staff towards active or sustainable travel for meetings or other work related travel (e.g incentives for rail journeys, car sharing, availability of secure cycle storage, pool cars, EVs, car park management, etc) Support and communication for staff commuting or travel for other site users (e.g. Cycle to Work Scheme, route maps published on website, travelcards, etc).	In progress	Seeking Senior Team approval for outline travel policy, which will aim to meet the iiE outstanding criteria ahead of October APC. Once approved, detailed travel policy to drafted and approved ahead of iiE paperwork submission 17 November/audit 21 December 2026.	

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
4.10	**Has there been an increase in sustainable travel this year?**	Annual survey / monitoring is carried out with all staff.	Improvement can be demonstrated.	Not applicable/In progress	Develop plan to record travel by type for the purposes of carbon calculation. Previous travel expenses audit? Benchmark survey for staff commuter travel?	
4.11	**Does the plan/policy include all significant environmental impacts of business transport?**	Relevant to business. Plan to include commuting and/or business travel.	Stand alone travel document in place for staff, highlighting opportunities available to them for alternative travel. Available options for alternative business travel including a guide on efficient travel and road safety.	Early stages	Once plan approved, develop suitable staff resources.	

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
4.12	**Have you calculated your carbon footprint and set targets to reduce it?**	Carbon calculation done with target set to match resource target. Bronze: Resource data from buildings (Scope 1 & 2) Silver: Resource data from buildings, travel, or other Resources measured, where possible (Scope 1 & 2; some Scope 3 if possible). Green: Resource data from buildings, travel, or other resources measured, where possible (Scope 1, 2, and 3).	They should also include significant Scope 3 emissions that can be influenced by management control, such as: • Business car mileage • Waste • Flights (recorded as domestic/ international + short haul/long haul)	In progress	Facilities/Green team to use iiE carbon calculator. Before 17 November iiE submission. Establish targets (*see 4.13-14 for 4%/5%+ target*). Ensure presidential flat is included.	

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
4.13	**Does the carbon Footprint include all significant environmental impacts of business?**	See above guidance in 4.12. All levels: Scope 1 and 2 reporting. Bronze & Silver: Scope 3 optional. Silver level should include grey fleet in footprint, as this links to the travel plan. Green: Some Scope 3 impacts included. The criteria will give credit to organisations on a sliding scale for carbon emissions performance based on achievement of the 2% improvement and the quality/robustness of the footprint.	All aspects of business performance have been included and carbon associated has been calculated. Net-zero performance (which includes offsetting); and science-based target setting (generally 4% reduction or more).			

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
4.14	**What carbon savings have you made this year?**	Carbon savings calculated.	Better than 5% improvement. This can be considered for individual scopes, should you make significant savings in energy but not travel - as an example.	Not applicable/ Early stages	Establish benchmark. Track progress.	
Step 4	**Projects**					
4.15	**Have you included other environmental/staff projects as part of your plan?**	**Bronze:** 1 project undertaken with significant impact. **Silver:** 2-3 actions undertaken with significant impact. **Green:** 3-4 actions undertaken with significant impact.	**Bronze:** More than 1 project undertaken with significant impact. **Silver:** More than 3 projects undertaken with significant impact. **Green:** More than 4 actions undertaken with significant impact.			See offsetting paper – some options may result in volunteering projects that can be counted against this criteria.
4.16	**What are they?**	List all projects / activities.				
Step 5	**Progress reporting and communication**					

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
5.1	**Do you present progress to senior management and staff?**	**Bronze**/**Silver**: Annual report or statement sent to management and staff with evidence (see Guidance related to business size and scale of communication). **Green**: Half yearly reports to management and staff with evidence. Demonstrate that SMT have carried out a review of annual performance.	Regular reporting; anything more frequent than the minimum requirement along with an end of year report. Senior management review carried out with input into target setting and future targets/goals. Sustainability report or statement is published publicly. This could be publishing the executive summary of the iiE audit report or publishing a sustainability section within their annual report.	In progress	iiE/Green Team progress has been added to future ST agendas	

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria						
	Criteria	*Compliant*	*Outstanding*	**Status**	**Next steps**	**Notes**
5.2	**Do you regularly communicate/ engage with staff?**	Regular communication with staff, meetings, posters, etc. Some engagement where possible.	Regular and consistent communication with staff. Regular engagement, with numerous staff activities, staff ownership of actions, activity weeks, etc.	In progress	Green team have a schedule for engagement for the rest of the year including monthly loo news supplements, a ‘greenzine’ and other activities and initiatives	

Summary	
Meeting	Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)
Date	6 October 2026
Title	Developing a travel policy for staff and Council/committee members
Summary	To set out how the RCVS can take multiple steps to reduce its transport-related carbon emissions, while also promoting and facilitating healthier ways to travel for staff and visitors.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Ben Myring Head of Policy Insight & Public Affairs b.myring@rcvs.org.uk Mark Sundhu Policy and Public Affairs Officer m.sundhu@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications

Document	Classification[1]	Rationales[2]
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

Developing a travel policy for staff and Council/committee members

Introduction

1. The RCVS is committed to not only supporting and demonstrating environmental sustainability within our own workforce, but also within the professions and veterinary practices. Section C of the RCVS Strategic Plan 2025 to 2029 – 'Stronger together with society at large' – includes the objective: "To champion the role that veterinary professionals play in One Health and public health, take a leadership role on environmental sustainability and biodiversity, and continue to look beyond our domestic horizons to have a positive impact upon the world around us".

2. Domestic transport is the largest emitting sector of greenhouse gas emissions, contributing[1] 30% of the UK's total emissions in 2024. Furthermore, cars and vans are the biggest source of nitrogen oxides (NOx) in our air – harmful gases mainly formed during the combustion of fossil fuels. This contributes to climate change as burning fossil fuels for transport produces a variety of emissions that damage the planet, our health, or both.

3. The RCVS Environment and Sustainability Policy requires the development of a Sustainable Transport Policy, as this is both a requirement of the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change (UKHACC) commitments, and a requirement for higher-level accreditation with Investors in the Environment (iiE).

4. At present the College has a travel policy that encourages public transport use and provides the following employee benefits for staff:

    a) Cycle to Work Scheme – this Scheme enables staff to buy a bike and pay in 12 monthly instalments directly through a deduction from the gross salary, saving tax and NI contributions on the payment, making buying a bike more affordable.

    b) Season Ticket Loans – Provide an interest-free loan to an employee for the purpose of purchasing an annual season ticket to facilitate travel between home and work by public transport.

5. However, this falls short of what is required by UKHACC and iiE. This paper sets out the details of UKHACC and iiE requirements, and outlines for consideration some ways in which they could be met in advance of a detailed policy being drafted. As noted under Section C of the RCVS Strategic Plan 2025 to 2029, the College must *take a leadership role on* environmental sustainability, and the suggestions outlined below go beyond an exercise to meet set criteria.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-and-environment-statistics-2024--2/greenhouse-gas-emissions-from-transport-in-2024

6. The RCVS is also behind the curve compared to other professional regulators such as the General Medical Council (GMC), and sectoral comparators such as the British Veterinary Association (BVA) in not having a detailed sustainable travel policy

UKHACC commitment – 'Change transport'

7. The RCVS is a member of the UKHACC, which has produced a set of guiding principles for health organisations to demonstrate leadership and take steps to mitigate and adapt to climate change. One of these commitments is to *'Reduce the carbon footprint of travel undertaken on your organisation's behalf and improve public health'*. As with the other commitments, the RCVS will consider the impact on animal health and welfare in addition to public health.

8. UKHACC lists useful examples for organisations to help achieve this, which include:

    a) Providing information and guidance on the environmental impacts of travel

    b) Providing bike storage and facilities for staff and visitors that encourage active travel

    c) Encouraging staff and visitors to use public transport, and signposting to local network links

    d) Only flying when there is no other alternative

    e) Holding meetings online when possible

Investors in the Environment (iiE) criteria

9. The RCVS also has Bronze accreditation with Investors in the Environment (iiE), an environmental accreditation scheme designed to help businesses reduce their environmental impact, raise awareness amongst colleagues and save businesses money on their energy costs where possible. In order to meet iiE's criteria for the higher Silver and/or Green accreditation levels (which require a significant proportion of criteria to be at 'outstanding' rather than 'compliant'), the RCVS will need to develop a Sustainable Travel Policy, which sets reduction targets against a calculated carbon footprint.

10. There are three iiE criteria related to sustainable travel (more detail on these, and how we plan to meet them, can be found in the E&S operational plan):

    a) **4.9 – 'Have you adopted a travel plan'?** – The plan must be created and regularly reviewed, set out travel requirements and restrictions, inform how data will be measured, set objectives, set out communication measures including incentives and encouragements, and set out planned improvement actions (for instance, new policies for booking travel). To reach 'outstanding' will require support and initiatives for travel that falls outside of management control, but can be influenced by it, such as practices, support and communication introduced to guide staff towards active or sustainable travel

for meetings or other work-related travel (e.g. incentives for traveling by rail, car sharing, secure cycle storage, cycle to work schemes, travelcards, etc.).

b) **4.10 – 'Has there been an increase in sustainable travel this year?** – Requirements include regular monitoring or annual surveys to identify any changes in travel patterns, staff requirements or potential restrictions. To reach 'outstanding', improvement will need to be demonstrated.

c) **4.11 – Does the plan/policy include all significant impacts of business transport?** - The plan should (where possible) include commuting and business travel. To reach 'outstanding', there must be a stand-alone travel document in place for staff, highlighting opportunities available to them for alternative travel, and setting out the most efficient options for business travel.

11. In addition, criteria 4.12 & 4.13 set out the requirements to calculate the College's carbon footprint and set reduction targets, and these criteria link to the three travel criteria above.

Towards an RCVS sustainable travel policy

Communication

12. It is clear that communication to RCVS staff and Council/committee members will be key. This should involve clear and succinct information on the damage caused by carbon-inefficient travel, and the substantial benefits to public and animal health and welfare, and to the economy, of sustainable travel[2].

Adopting and Adapting the Climate Conscious Travel Approach

13. Edinburgh University have developed a travel policy that includes an approach known as 'Climate Conscious Travel'. This is defined as:

a) Choosing not to travel when virtual collaboration tools will adequately fulfil the purpose of travel (e.g. for meetings where a video link would suffice)

b) Ensuring unnecessary travel is not undertaken (e.g. sending the minimum number of individuals required to fulfil the purpose of travel)

c) Being aware of the environmental impacts of travel and choosing a method of travel that reduces these (e.g. by train rather than plane or not upgrading to a higher flight class)

14. It is suggested that these principles could be adopted by the RCVS, adapted to suit College requirements, for example, choosing not to travel when virtual online options are available should be balanced with the need to strengthen teams and organisational culture

[2] https://www.sustrans.org.uk/the-walking-and-cycling-index/scotland-walking-and-cycling-index

15. Where emissions from travel cannot be removed, the University has committed to sequestering carbon in order to reach their goal to be net zero by 2040 (10 years before the UK target date). The RCVS will need to employ a similar policy to offset any irreducible emissions; options for this are set out in a separate paper.

Specific policy options

16. **Local travel -** The College supports walking and cycling to the office. It currently offers a cycle to work scheme – this scheme enables staff to buy a bike and pay for it in 12 monthly instalments directly through a deduction from the gross salary, saving tax and NI contributions on payment and making buying a bike more affordable.

17. **Utilising a Travel Management Company (TMC) -** The climate conscious travel approach should be strengthened by looking into the feasibility of partnering with a Travel Management Company (TMC). These provide a one-stop-shop, covering accommodation, rail, flights, and group bookings.

18. The typical responsibilities of a TMC include:

    a) Visa services and overseas vehicle hire to support with full itinerary planning.

    b) Cost savings and flexibility with itinerary changes and cancellations.

    c) Monitoring travel risks and implementing measures to ensure the safety and well-being of travellers, including real-time alerts and support during emergencies.

    d) Ensuring the safety of staff by maintaining the ability to trace and repatriate colleagues during emergencies, with a 24/7 UK-based emergency support line.

    e) Providing ongoing support to travellers, including itinerary management (changes/refunds), emergency assistance and addressing any complaints or escalations raised.

    f) Negotiating rates with airlines to secure favourable terms and rates.

19. In addition, they can contribute to a sustainable travel policy by

    a) Promoting sustainable travel practices.

    b) Sustainability Tracking: Providing real-time CO_2 emission data to help RCVS meet future net-zero targets.

20. **Encourage Virtual Meetings -** Implementing a policy that prioritises virtual meetings where possible to reduce the need for air travel and lower the carbon footprint, and to assess whether a meeting can be conducted remotely before booking travel.

21. The policy would be at the discretion of the RCVS employee responsible for the meeting to use their own judgment and decide whether the benefits of travelling to the in-person meeting would be in the interests of the College. For example, the face-to-face meeting may be essential to improve engagement and meaningful collaboration through highly focused in-person discussions.

22. **Promoting Sustainable Modes of Transport -** For travel that does occur, it's important the College promotes the prioritisation of greener transportation options for staff.

    a) **Flights:** Flying should be the choice of last resort for destinations within England, Wales and Scotland.[3] Many organisations have placed strong restrictions on domestic flights, and in 2023, France became the first EU Member State to restrict certain short domestic flights where a viable high-speed rail option exists. The key principle is if a rail alternative of X hours or less is available and sufficiently frequent, flights on that route are to be suspended. This rail journey time varies between countries and organisations, for example:

Enacted by	**Train travel time**
Austria	3hrs
France	2.5hrs
Greater London Authority	6hrs
UK Environment Agency	7hrs
BBC	3hrs

    b) A more common approach by organisations similar to the RCVS, such as the General Medical Council (GMC), the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), both NHS England and Public Health Wales, the Professional Standards Authority (PSA), the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), and by numerous medical Royal Colleges, is a 'rail by default' policy. Expenses are only claimable for rail travel, and where necessary car mileage. In some cases expenses are only payable for domestic flights if they have been scrutinised and pre-approved by a manager, which must be convinced that alternatives would result in severe scheduling failure, multi-day delays, or unmanageable accommodation costs. This approach led to an 80% fall in the use of domestic flights by NHS England.

    c) UK organisations' policies usually have a travel hierarchy or decision tree, which contains exemptions (e.g. for the Highlands and Islands), or exceptional adjustments (such as disability, or for when strikes paralyse the network. The College would also need to factor in staff safety from people using public transport late at night.

    d) If flying is necessary, staff should be encouraged to fly direct, as layovers and connecting flights often increase emissions, and to choose airlines with strong sustainability programmes that use fuel-efficient aircrafts or offset carbon emissions.

[3] https://ieep.uk/news/insight-window-on-europe-the-french-ban-on-short-domestic-flights-symbolic-gesture-or-meaningful-climate-policy/

e) **Rail:** Promote train travel over short-distance flights. Rail is usually a much more eco-friendly option, emitting fewer carbon emissions per passenger. According to National Rail, when compared to cars and planes, train travel reduces carbon emissions by two thirds.

f) **Public transport:** Whenever possible, recommend using public transport, as more people using public transport decreases the amount of greenhouse gas emissions entering the atmosphere. The UK Government is injecting billions into greener public transport, for example, the full transition to zero-emission buses (ZEBs) is a vital part of the government's plan to deliver net zero.

g) **Car sharing:** Where car journeys are necessary, encourage car sharing to reduce the emissions per person.

h) Supporting staff to make sustainable choices by making it clear that **business travel time = working time**, with TOIL claimable. This would not apply to commuting, and the impact of extending it to Council Members through loss of earnings would need to be assessed.

23. **Sustainable Travel Leave -** Sustainable Travel Leave (STL) is a low-cost, high-impact workplace policy from the UK based charity *Possible*. Employers support staff to choose low-carbon travel for their holidays - such as train, coach or ferry - by offering a small amount of paid travel time to cover the extra time often required to travel by land or sea compared to flying.

24. Over 200 workplaces have implemented a Sustainable Travel Leave policy already, from small charities to major brands. The principle is straightforward according to *Possible*, a London–Berlin rail journey cuts emissions by roughly 92 percent but takes seven hours longer than flying. Through Sustainable Travel Leave, the additional travel time is covered by a modest leave allowance.

25. Employers opt-in because they want to lower their carbon footprint and encourage sustainable travel across their workforce. Employees get the freedom to travel by rail, road or ferry without sacrificing their time off, because the extra travel time is covered by a modest additional leave allowance, meaning climate-conscious choices don't come at the cost of personal downtime for staff.

26. **Choose Eco-Friendly Accommodation -** Choosing eco-friendly accommodations is a simple yet impactful way to reduce your businesses travel-related carbon footprint. From heating and cooling systems to waste, water usage and food production, accommodation forms a critical proportion of a trip's carbon footprint. Search for hotels that have earned certifications from organisations such as EarthCheck and Green Key. These certifications indicate that the hotels adhere to rigorous sustainability standards.

Recommendations

27. The contours of a new sustainable travel policy might already be seen:

a) Adopting ‘Climate Conscious Travel’ as a central principle, and communicating the reasons clearly to staff and Council/committee members.

b) A ‘virtual first’ approach, ensuring that remote attendance is standard and hybrid always an option for routine committee meetings, hearings, and working groups to minimize unnecessary commuting, while balancing this with the importance of occasional in-person meetings for culture-building and focused collaboration.

c) Retain and explore building upon the College’s existing local travel polices such as the Cycle to Work Scheme.

d) Utilising a Travel Management Company (TMC) would have a myriad of benefits, including ease of tracking carbon omissions caused by business travel as required by iiE.

e) Implementing a ‘rail by default’ policy. It is clear that the RCVS has fallen behind best practice when it comes to the use of domestic flights, and flights to neighbouring countries accessible via Eurostar, in its business travel. A domestic ‘rail by default’ policy, with panel scrutiny on any exceptions, should be part of any new policy, and this could be coupled with a train travel time threshold for international journeys that can be made via Eurostar.

f) Further exploration of ‘sustainable travel leave’ options to address the impact on College activities.

g) Continuous improvement targets, regularly reviewed, for increasing sustainable travel.

Summary

Meeting	Advancement of the Professions Committee
Date	06.10.2026
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 panned 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 and Inclusion ii. Fellowship iii. Global Development iv. Mind Matters Initiative v. RCVS Knowledge vi. VN Vision vii. Workforce
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Charlie Coaker Secretary to Advancement of the Professions Committee c.coaker@rcvs.org.uk 020 8148 2577

Classifications

Document	**Classification[1]**	**Rationales[2]**
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

[1]Classifications 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.

[2]Classification 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

RCVS

Diversity & Inclusion Update

Campaigns and Activities

Pride Month

1. The Pride Month campaign celebrated history and achievements within the veterinary LGBTQ+ community with 3 social media posts on LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook respectively. The campaign performed well with 17,000 impressions, 14 shares, 227 reactions in total and 9.4% engagement rate per post (on average). The social media posts on Instagram consistently generated the highest level of reactions which suggest that the content particularly resonated with the audience on this platform.

Black History Month

2. The D & I team is currently planning the Black History Month 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. The campaign will be an opportunity to showcase and celebrate the achievements of Black veterinary professionals who are working in less typical roles than veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse. The campaign will be focussed on social media activity predominantly.

'Let's Talk Adjustments' campaign evaluation

3. A short campaign evaluation survey was circulated 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). 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.

   A second campaign evaluation survey was developed in collaboration with the Research team for wider circulation to a larger number of veterinary professionals. The survey was circulated to 5,600 veterinary professionals in June 2026. 119 veterinary professionals completed the survey (2% response rate). 52% of survey respondents had heard about the campaign, and a small proportion of these respondents (12 veterinary professionals) had engaged with the content. Findings from this group suggest that real life stories & insights, and the guide to discussing reasonable adjustments in the workplace were the most frequently engaged types of content.

   Engaging with the content prompted respondents to adopt various practices which included discussing reasonable adjustments with their peers, developing their knowledge through training/CPD, and proactively requesting reasonable adjustments. Veterinary professionals were also asked within the survey to share their thoughts on reasonable adjustments support or information that would be useful for employers. Some common themes were:

   i. the need for employers to understand legal requirements
   ii. evidence of how reasonable adjustments can benefit the business,
   iii. and access to information about different disabilities and how adjustments can be tailored accordingly.

These areas are currently being addressed through on-going work by D & I and other AP workstreams to varying degrees.

The D & I team will use learning from this process to inform how we evaluate future campaigns, in particular, planning in terms of methods and timing.

Courses, Content and Publications

Health passport project (Tailored Adjustment Passport or TAP)

4. 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.

   The toolkit was externally reviewed by potential users - students, educators, employees and line managers. The feedback was positive, with recommendations for changes mainly concerned with reducing the length and restructuring the sections to improve navigation. There were also suggestions around ensuring accessibility and requests for further clarity on use of the TAP template in different settings for students.

   To address these issues, the toolkit has been extensively restructured with topics broken down into sub sections. A quick start user guide has been added, and summary sections are now included throughout with hyperlinks to in-depth information. Content has been rewritten to make it clearer for students and animated student case studies are being planned. The Task and Finish Group has reviewed and approved the updated toolkit.

   Work continues on resource development, including process maps and examples. A series of short animations for each section has been scripted and designed. The legal content in the toolkit is currently being checked. Once this is complete, any amendments will be made and work on the animations can be finalised.

   The toolkit will be presented in HTML format on the D & I web pages, with information for each section provided in short form, long form and video to maximise accessibility. Some of the content and resources will be downloadable.

   It has been agreed to pilot the toolkit, rather than releasing it for general use. The Task and Finish Group is meeting on 16 October to review progress and discuss plans for the pilot.

Inclusive language guide

5. The inclusive language guide has completed reviews by the legal and comms teams and is currently being prepared for publication in Autumn 2026. It will be available in HTML format and 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 final review process.

Guidance for supporting Neurodivergent students on placements

6. This guidance will build on stakeholder consultations with educators, placement providers and students, exploring how support for neurodivergent veterinary students and student veterinary nurses on placements and in work-based learning can be improved. Stakeholder discussions identified a strong need for greater consistency, clarity and accessibility in placement support. Recurring priorities included:

i. clear information before placements;
ii. early communication about support needs;
iii. safe and appropriate approaches to disclosure;
iv. individualised reasonable adjustments;
v. named points of contact, consistent induction;
vi. constructive feedback;
vii. psychological safety;
viii. supporting student to self-advocate;
ix. better communication between students, education providers and placement providers.

There is currently a lack of consolidated, veterinary-specific guidance that translates these principles into practical action across the different environments in which students undertake placements and work-based learning.

To address this gap, an external provider will be commissioned through a tender process to develop evidence-based guidance. The guidance will establish a consistent framework for good practice that supports positive and inclusive experiences for neurodivergent students during placements. The project will led by AP but have input from the Education and Vet Nursing teams.

An invitation to tender is currently being developed, with publication planned for early 2026.

EDI Fundamental Academy course

7. This course is due to be launched in March 2027 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 3 ‘Putting EDI into practice’ is in progress. The writing stage for module 1 ‘Understanding EDI’ and module 2 'Unacceptable behaviour in the workplace' has been completed. Both modules are currently undergoing a check of legal content and internal review. The modules will take around 45 and 60 minutes respectively and covering foundational knowledge. Key topics in these modules include:

i. exploring the concept of EDI;
ii. the benefits of inclusion for organisations;
iii. an overview of the Equality Act 2010;
iv. an introduction to harassment and bullying;
v. the implications of unacceptable behaviour in the workplace;
vi. practical strategies for preventing and addressing discriminatory behaviour.

Other

2026 Memcom Excellence Awards

8. The Diversity & Inclusion, Education, and VN teams entered a joint submission in the Memcom 2026 Awards ‘Best Inclusion Initiative’ category for their recent work on reasonable adjustments. The submission covered the ‘Let’s Talk Adjustments’ campaign and the guidance on reasonable adjustments for veterinary students and student veterinary nurses.

The Award ceremony will be held in London on 24 September, when the winners and highly commended entrants will be announced.

RCVS

Fellowship Update

Events, Outreach and Engagement (heading)

Fellowship Day

1. The format and programme for Fellowship Day 2026 have now been confirmed, following collaborative planning by the TAFG and approval of the Fellowship Board. Professor Sarah Cleaveland has been confirmed as the keynote speaker and will deliver a keynote entitled *'One Health: Pragmatic Actions for Better Health'*.

2. This year's programme will also feature two debate sessions, providing an opportunity for Fellows to explore and discuss topical and potentially challenging issues affecting the veterinary professions. The debates will consider *'Should we be using animals in sport and entertainment in the 21st century?'* and *'Do or Die? Treating inherited conformational disorders or tackling their causes?'*

3. A number of panellists have been confirmed for the two debate sessions, with work ongoing to finalise the full panel line-up. Further details will be shared once all participants have been confirmed.

Fellowship Newsletter

4. The first edition of the reintroduced Fellowship newsletter was well received and was delivered to 532 Fellows, achieving an open rate of 69% with 90 unique clicks (16%). The newsletter provides an opportunity to share updates with Fellows on current Fellowship activities, highlight wider College activities and opportunities that may be of interest to the Fellowship community, and promote Fellowship Day 2026.

5. The second edition of the Fellowship newsletter is currently in development and is scheduled to be distributed during the week commencing 14 September 2026.

Campaigns and Activities

The Vet as a Trusted Translator TAFG

6. The *Vet as a Trusted Translator* TAFG has continued to progress its work, with the group identifying some areas of overlap with the themes explored through the *Making Early Warning Normal* TAFG, particularly in relation to the communication and understanding of information concerning notifiable diseases.

7. As a next step, the group is ready to launch a survey for distribution to a sample group of veterinary professionals. The survey will explore how veterinary professionals in practice understand and interpret scientific information relating to notifiable diseases that is shared by, for example, government and research organisations, as well as their confidence in discussing this information with clients and members of the public. It will also seek to understand whether, and in what circumstances, these conversations currently take place and identify potential barriers to effective communication.

8. The findings will provide the TAFG with baseline information to better understand the needs and experiences of veterinary professionals in practice. This evidence will be used to inform the

group's next steps and help identify where the TAFG can most usefully focus its activity and develop practical outputs to support the profession.

Making Early Warning Normal TAFG

9. Following initial scoping work and discussions with colleagues working across different areas of the veterinary professions, the *Making Early Warning Normal* TAFG has identified that the issues encompassed by this topic are considerably broader and more complex than originally anticipated. It has therefore been recognised that the subject cannot be meaningfully addressed within the scope and capacity of a TAFG of this size.

10. Rather than seeking to duplicate work already taking place across the professions, the group will focus its efforts on bringing together relevant existing information and resources identified through the scoping process. These will be collated and made more easily accessible, providing veterinary professionals with a useful point of reference and signposting to relevant guidance, information and resources.

11. This approach will enable the TAFG to deliver a practical and proportionate output from the work undertaken to date, while recognising the wider scale of the subject and the activity already taking place across the veterinary professions.

Fellowship Board Elections

12. The recent Fellowship Board elections have now concluded, following a vote by members of the Fellowship. Professor Anna Meredith OBE FRCVS has been re-elected for a second term as Chair of the Fellowship Science Advisory Panel, while Dr Emma Milne has been re-elected as Projects and Engagement Officer.

13. Both will continue in their respective roles on the Fellowship Board, contributing their experience and expertise to support the Fellowship's scientific activity, engagement and wider impact across the veterinary professions.

Fellows of the Future Student Competition

14. The TAFG concluded that by showcasing the competition at the Association of Veterinary Students (AVS) Congress, the competition would have greater exposure and reach a number of students (who will be attending the conference) who would perhaps not have otherwise engaged with the competition. AVS have welcome this support from the Fellowship.

15. The competition will offer the three finalists a free ticket each to the AVS conference and up to the standard costs to cover travel expenses; a free ticket to RCVS Fellowship Day 2027; a chance to win a prize of £200 National Book tokens (runners up get £100 National Book Tokens each).

16. The competition will follow a similar format to previous years with abstracts being submitted and reviewed by the TAFG to create a shortlist of three. These three students will deliver a short presentation in the opening session at AVS, and a winner will be chosen by the judges during the day. Prizes will be awarded during the black-tie event on the Saturday evening.

17. In addition to the competition the TAFG suggested a new initiative: 'Meet a Fellow'. This will give students the opportunity to explore various career routes and ask for advice. This will be accommodated either at the RCVS stand or in a separate room during the congress.

18. The TAFG will, if space is available at the congress, select the runners-up (up to six) who will create a poster of their research to showcase.

19. AVS are also seeking speakers for the congress streams: small animal, large animal, equine and exotics, and are keen for Fellows to speak.

20. There will be a call-out to Fellows in the September newsletter, asking for support with either speaking at the event and/or participating in ‘Meet a Fellow’. Contact details will be passed onto AVS for speaker coordination.

Early Career Researcher TAFG

21. The TAFG have made good progress about a ECR conference. A draft agenda has been drawn up, and enquiries have been made into possible venues. Costings and budget allocation are also being explored.

22. The TAFG are now in a position to start exploring a ECR mentoring scheme.

Courses, Content and Publications

British Animal Rescue and Trauma Care Association (BARTA)

23. The Fellowship and BARTA are collaborating to develop two online courses for small animal veterinary professionals. These courses are due to launch in November.

24. BARTA have requested support from the Fellowship for two new projects: developing their equine focussed vet responder course into a large animal focussed course and development of ‘pre-veterinary immediate emergency care’ cards for the fire service.

25. Further details of these initiatives will be provided in an oral update.

Other

Fellowship Applications

26. Following completion of the 2026 Fellowship application and assessment process, 39 veterinary surgeons have been welcomed as new RCVS Fellows in recognition of their outstanding contributions to veterinary science and practice.

27. Of the 39 new Fellows, 18 were recognised for meritorious contributions to clinical practice, 19 for meritorious contributions to the profession, and two for meritorious contributions to veterinary knowledge. The new Fellows will be formally welcomed to the Fellowship as part of Fellowship Day 2026.

Global Update

Federation of Veterinarians of Europe

1. The General Assembly of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe was held in Rovaniemi, Finland on 11-13 June 2026. Sessions were held on biological threats, the results of the 4th FVE VetSurvey, and career choices by veterinary students.

   The FVE Statutory Bodies Working Group, including UK representative Dr Sue Paterson, has continued its work on the revision of the FVE template code of conduct, which is expected to be voted on at the next General Assembly.

   The next FVE General Assembly will be held in Brussels, Belgium, on 12-13 November 2026. Speakers will include:

   i. Koen van Dyck, European Commission, who will speak about ante- and post-mortem inspection and the illegal trade in pets; and

   ii. Ron Berevoet, who will present on the evaluation of the EU Animal Health Law.

The General Assembly will be preceded by a Mind Matters International (MMI) regional meeting at the FVE headquarters on 11 November.

International Veterinary Regulators Network (IVRN)

2. Lizzie Lockett attended an online meeting of IVRN, where discussion focused on a potential future CPD workshop focusing on leadership in an environment of governance changes and uncertainty. The RCVS is expected to take over the IVRN secretariat later in 2026.

American Veterinary Medical Association Annual congress

3. The President, Tim Hutchinson, attended this event in California in July. Topics on the agenda included workforce, mid-tier veterinary practitioners and corporatisation.

American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB)

4. Lizzie Lockett is due to attend the annual meeting of the AAVSB in Providence, Rhode Island, on 24-26 September. Items on the agenda include the use of AI in complaints triage, workforce, specialist status for vet techs, and agriculture sector threats.

Mind Matters International

5. Please see ‘Mind Matters International Vital Transitions Plenary Event 2026’ in the MMI workstream update

RCVS

RCVS Mind Matters Update

Events, Outreach and Engagement

VMG Microburst Webinar

1. On Tuesday 26 August 2026, VMG invited RCVS to deliver a 30-minute 'Microburst' webinar on Suicide Prevention: RCVS standards and support for practice leaders. Lead PSS Assessor Dr Alice Duvernois MRCVS presented. Around 90 registered for the webinar and 25 attended on the day.

World Suicide Prevention Day 2026 Research Webinar

2. On Thursday 10 September 2026, RCVS Mind Matters hosted a free 1-hour research webinar to coincide with World Suicide Prevention Day 2026. MMI were joined by international vets and suicide prevention researchers Helene Seljenes Dalum DVM PhD from Norway, and Dr Alena Gadoury BVSc BScN from Australia. 370 registered for the webinar, with 168 requesting to attend live, and 202 to receive the recording only. 101 people attended live on the day, with excellent feedback received so far.

Mind Matters International Vital Transitions Plenary Event 2026

3. On Wednesday 30 September 2026, the RCVS and American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) facilitated a 3.5-hour online international plenary event for MMI International signatories and wider sector partners, focussed on the 'vital transition' from veterinary education/training into practice. The event included speakers from the UK, USA, Canada, Spain and New Zealand. Further events are planned both regionally and internationally to take this work forward. A verbal update will also be provided.

European Veterinary Board Specialists (EVBS) Congress 2026

4. On Wednesday 8 October, RCVS Mind Matters has been invited to attend the European Veterinary Board Specialists (EVBS) Congress 2026 in Krakow, Poland. The presentation will focus on the new PSS suicide prevention requirement, alongside the approach taken to support practices.

Vet Schools Council (VSC) Conference 2026

5. MMI has been invited to attend the VSC conference at Keele University on 22 and 23 October to present the latest updates from MMI that are relevant to the veterinary education environment.

Euthasafe Research Webinar 2026

6. On Monday 2 November, RCVS Mind Matters will be facilitating a 1-hour research webinar looking at the development of Euthasafe, a portable, app-controlled solution for safe drug handling, as part of its suicide prevention activity.

Worshipful Company of Farmers Health and Wellbeing Forum 2026

7. On Thursday 19 November, RCVS Mind Matters has been invited to attend the Worshipful Company of Farmers Health and Wellbeing Forum to present on its suicide prevention work.

London Vet Show (LVS) 2026

8. On Friday 20 November, RCVS Mind Matters will be taking part in a panel session, alongside Vetlife, at LVS Congress 2026 titled 'Protecting our profession: Implementing suicide prevention with confidence and care'.

Change Mental Health (Scotland) National Rural and Islands Mental Health Forum 2027

9. On Wednesday 27 January 2027, RCVS Mind Matters will also be presenting at the National Rural and Islands Mental Health Forum on their suicide prevention activity.

Research

Research Grant Recipients 2024

10. The RCVS funded 'Mental health, Alcohol use and Barriers to help seeking in UK veterinary practice' (MAB-Vet) research project, undertaken by researchers at Oxford Brookes University, has recently published their peer-reviewed study open access in Vet Record.

Research Grant Recipients 2026

11. Following the completion of the 2026 research application cycle, a £15,000 Impact grant was awarded to Dr John Tulloch FRCVS and Dr Tamzin Furtado from the University of Liverpool for their project titled 'Healing the Healers: A Qualitative Study of Mental Health and Trauma Support After Severe Occupational Veterinary Injury Workplaces'. No Discovery Grant was awarded in this cycle. The final round of grants in this series will be awarded in 2027.

Campaigns and Activities

Suicide Prevention Standard Endorsement

12. To demonstrate the RCVS commitment to suicide prevention, RCVS Mind Matters has officially endorsed the new British Standard (BS30480) Suicide and the Workplace in 2025.

British Veterinary Receptionists Association (BVRA) Survey 2026

13. As part of the MMI strategy, we have committed to carry out targeted research of non-clinical staff to better understand the issues they face, with a view to develop a programme of support, resources and/or training to enhance knowledge, skills and/or behaviours. To support this commitment, research questions have been added to the BVRA annual survey, to understand areas of concern. Results will be made available in the autumn, and we will look to develop resources/training in 2027/28

MHFA Insights Survey 2026

14. As part of our approach to supporting Mental Health First Aiders, we will also shortly be launching a short MHFA Insights Survey to those who have completed training with us. The insights gained will be used to plan future training and activity.

Courses, Content and Publications

Supportive spaces guide

15. The supportive spaces guide, a collaborative effort by MMI Taskforce members, is currently undergoing design and will be published by the end of the year.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) courses

16. MHFA courses continue to be popular, and both the May and June 2026 courses were fully booked. The next course is due to take place online in November 2026. The September course has been cancelled due to low numbers.

Talking about Suicide: Ten Tools (TAS:10) courses

17. In September 2026, two 'Talking about Suicide: Ten Tools' (TAS:10) courses were piloted, as part of RCVS Mind Matters suicide prevention activity, and to support practices in meeting the new PSS standard requirement. Feedback from courses is currently being analysed.

PSS Suicide Prevention Resources

18. Further to the launch of the resources to support veterinary practices to meet the new PSS suicide prevention standard (practical checklist, a comprehensive toolkit and guide) in April 2026, we have now added additional resources, including a recorded webinar and podcast episode.

RCVS Podcasts

RCVS Mind Matters has featured in three Podcasts so far this year, in June, July and September.

19. **Supporting suicide prevention in the veterinary professions episode (June 2026).** Veterinary suicide researchers Dr Rosie Allister FRCVS and James Glass MRCVS, expert Peter Kelly and PSS Lead Assessor Dr Alice Duvernois MRCVS supported the podcast. There have been 276 downloads so far, with 88 listeners on Podbean who have engaged.

20. **VN visionaries: shaping the future of veterinary nursing episode (July 2026).** MMI funded researchers Dr Jackie Hargreaves and Dr Faye Didymus discussed their work on integrating mental health training into veterinary nursing education, what inspired their research, and their vision for the future of veterinary nursing. There have been 184 downloads so far, with 43 listeners on Podbean who have engaged.

21. **Psychologically-informed workplaces episode (September 2026).** MMI funded researchers from 2025, Professor Elinor O'Connor, and Dr Kevin Teoh alongside Professor Jason Spendelow from Harper-Keele Veterinary School discussed their current organisational wellbeing related projects. Our newest funded researchers Dr John Tulloch FRCVS and Dr Tamzin Furtado also discussed their upcoming project which is focussed on mental health and trauma support after severe veterinary occupational injury.

    A further Podcast incorporating a sub-feature on Mind Matters International work, is due to launch in October 2026.

RCVS Academy

22. The three MMI RCVS Academy courses continue to receive good engagement. Since launch in 2025, 'Suicide awareness fundamentals' has had 252 completions, whilst 'Managing mental health in the workplace' has had 133 completions and 'Civility fundamentals' which launched in October 2024, has had 261 completions.

Other

N/A

RCVS Knowledge Update

Developments and activities since May 2026:

Contextualised care

1. In June, we published a peer-reviewed paper in *Veterinary Evidence* journal, co-authored by RCVS Knowledge team members Sally Everitt, Ashley Doorly and Katie Mantell, on the barriers to contextualised care in small animal practice in the UK. The paper provided further analysis of the research published last year that led to the Contextualised Care Roadmap.

2. The next step in our work in this area is to bring together leaders from organisations with a key role in veterinary care delivery, policy or education in the UK to:

   i. provide visible leadership for and support for a contextualised care approach
   ii. drive adoption of roadmap actions in their organisations, and
   iii. contribute to and shape practical resources to support veterinary teams and animal owners to achieve contextualised care.

   This group met virtually in September, alongside animal owner representatives and other stakeholders, to discuss next steps for this work and the implementation of the roadmap. An in-person contextualised care summit is planned for end of 2027.

3. There continues to be considerable interest in our 2025 research from within the UK and abroad. We have been invited to speak on contextualised care at:

   i. Vet Edge Congress, September 2026
   ii. British Veterinary Nursing Association Congress, October 2026
   iii. EBVS Congress in Krakow, October 2026
   iv. Animal Health Nutrition Technology and Innovation Congress in Boston, October 2026
   v. London Vet Show, November 2026
   vi. SPVS Congress, February 2027

4. The first in a series of podcasts on contextualised care was launched in September. This series of podcasts is supported by a grant from the SPVS Educational Trust.

5. We have begun work on the creation of a decision-making aid on gastric dilatation and volvulus (GDV) in dogs. The aim is to develop this aid with veterinary professionals and animal owners to create a resource that is useful in practice, while providing a proof of concept for the development of future decision-making aids. This work is made possible by a legacy gift left to RCVS Knowledge specifically for work to prevent and improve treatment of GDV in dogs.

Antimicrobial stewardship: Ruminant roadmap

6. Work has continued on this initiative in collaboration with UKRI-funded AMR in Agrifood Systems Transdisciplinary Network (AMAST), bringing together stakeholders from across the veterinary, farming and food industry to set a way forward for how to prove and improve antibiotic stewardship in the sheep, cattle and dairy sectors.

7. More than 80 leaders from the dairy, beef and sheep sectors, together with government representatives from the devolved nations, attended a summit at Hardwick Street in June 2026 for focused discussions on how to tackle the challenge of proving and improving responsible antibiotic stewardship. Hosted by RCVS Knowledge and opened by Lord Trees, discussions focused on shared challenges and opportunities, informed by mixed methods research carried out by Royal Veterinary College (RVC) as part of the AMAST partnership.

8. Following detailed analysis of the recommendations emerging from the summit, the steering group is developing a roadmap that reflects the priorities identified by participants and contains actionable strategies. The resulting Ruminant Roadmap will be launched at the British Cattle Veterinary Association conference in October 2026.

Quality Improvement training and awards

9. The 2026 Knowledge Award champions were recognised at RCVS Day in July:
    i. Antimicrobial stewardship champion: Gower Veterinary Surgery, who audited their use of cefovecin. After introducing prescribing guidance, overall use fell by 83%.
    ii. Quality improvement to lead organisational change champion: Vets Now audited its emergency practices and found that the monitoring of fluid therapy for dogs with acute haemorrhagic diarrhoea syndrome (AHDS) was inconsistent. They introduced new guidelines which saw the recording of fluid calculations increase from 8.7% to 40%, with a decrease in fluid-related complications and antibiotic use.
    iii. Quality Improvement (QI) in practice champion: Medivet carried out a baseline audit that revealed high wastage of propofol caused by over-preparation for anaesthetic induction. The introduction of standardised, evidence-based changes caused the overall propofol wastage to drop by 15.6% demonstrating a clear improvement in sustainability and anaesthetic efficiency.

10. We have opened our 2027 awards with new award categories: improving patient outcomes, improving veterinary teamwork, improving service delivery and improving antimicrobial stewardship. While the awards previously focused on clinical audit, the entry criteria have been expanded to include other approaches to QI.

11. We hosted our second Quality Improvement in a Day CPD event in Bristol in July. Delegate feedback indicated increased confidence in applying clinical governance and quality improvement approaches in practice. We will host one more QI in a Day event this year, in Newcastle on 14 October.

Library and archive

12. We have been enhancing our Discovery search tool, which enables library users to search the digital journals and resources available to them through library membership.

13. As part of the library support we provide to asylum seekers and refugees who are candidates for the RCVS Statutory exam, we have added more statutory exam textbooks to our collection and refreshed the information on RCVS Knowledge library membership on the RCVS website.

14. This autumn we will be launching an online picture library sharing 50 beautiful illustrations and anatomical drawings from the RCVS archives and historical book collection. As well as increasing access to these previously unseen images from veterinary history, the images in the picture library will be available for purchase of framed prints and other items featuring the historical images.

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VN Vision Update

Events, Outreach and Engagement

Vision or Necessity events

1. *'A vision or a necessity? Strengthening the role of veterinary nurses in team-based veterinary healthcare'* data gathering workshops concluded with an event in Leeds on 10 March 2026

2. **Attendance at external events has included:**
    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, and attendance at the Hackathon.
    iii. BVA Live, Birmingham, 12 June 2026, oral presentation
    iv. Vet Ed Conference, Harper-Keele, 8-10 July 2026, oral presentation.
    v. BEVA Congress, Birmingham, 11 September 2026, oral presentation
    vi. VN Spark 2026, 12 September 2026, panel discussion

3. **Upcoming events include:**
    i. A short workshop will be held with the RCVS Public Advisory Group (PAG) on 20 September 2026
    ii. A session will be delivered at the Mind Matters International Event on 30 September 2026
    iii. An Academy Live session is booked for 9 December 2026. (This is focussed on RVN confidence and building professional identity but will provide opportunity to share information about project work).
    iv. An abstract has been accepted for SPVS Congress, February 2027.

4. A meeting has been arranged with the Association of Veterinary Animal Care Assistants (AVACA) on 23 September 2026.

5. Planning for a VN Vision conference has begun.

Research

RCVS Ethics Review Panel (ERP) approval

6. An ERP application is being prepared for the Scope of Practice work.

Data

7. Data analysis using the Quirkos software has now been completed

8. The theory of change is currently being drafted from the analysed data

Campaigns and Activities

Recruitment

9. Leigh Hinsley RVN, Veterinary Nursing Project Officer was onboarded in July 2025

Comms and social media presence

10. A comms plan has been drafted with a minimum of two social media posts per month

11. A VN Vision landing page has been created on the RCVS website. This area of the site will contain information on projects which sit under the VN Vision umbrella. The projects include:
    i. A vision or a necessity? Strengthening the role of veterinary nurses in team-based veterinary healthcare
    ii. Scope of Practice (a research project to undertake a comprehensive review of the Day One Skills and Competencies required for veterinary nursing)
    iii. The PAVE (Practical Assessment in Veterinary (Nurse) Education) project

12. The area of the site has been constructed with a separate page for the Vision or Necessity Project (other project pages to follow) to create clarity between the overarching and sub-projects and will provide a hub for up-to-date information
    Please visit: VN Vision | Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

Advisory Panel

13. The Advisory Panel has been recruited and are due to meet for the first time in late October 2026 to discuss the first draft of the theory of change

Stakeholder Workshops

14. Stakeholder group workshops are scheduled for November-December 2026 to brief them on the project and its aims as well as exploring how they could support the project to ensure maximum benefit for the profession

Baseline Survey

15. A baseline survey is being drafted with the support of the research team. This will be put out to the profession in Spring 2027 – this data will give us a benchmark against which we can measure the success of the theory of change outputs.

16. Data from the 2024 Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession and the 2025 NHS Staff Survey are also being used for benchmark comparison data

Consultation

17. 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.

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VNC

18. A project update was provided to RCVS VNC on 8 September 2026.

Courses, Content and Publications

Veterinary Nurse Education (VNE) (publication)

19. 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

20. A piece is scheduled for the October edition of VNE.

Podcast

21. A podcast was recorded and published in June/July 2026, with guest speakers Carly Blann and Lauren Hargrave.
You can listen to the podcast here: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/news-and-views/podcast/podcast-vn-visionaries-shaping-the-future-of-veterinary-nursing

RCVS

Workforce Update

Events, Outreach and Engagement

Next Steps project

1. The *Next Steps* programme is now complete, following the initial activity reported to the Committee earlier this year. The project was designed to support veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses at key career transition points, including returning from parental leave, returning after a career break, and moving into management for the first time.

2. Following feedback and lower-than-expected initial sign-up numbers, the delivery plan was reviewed and adjusted. The decision was taken to cancel the event focused on returning after a career break, while the remaining events were moved online to improve accessibility and reduce travel and time barriers for delegates.

3. The low engagement with the career-break returners event highlighted an important challenge: individuals who have removed themselves from the Register no longer receive RCVS emails and may also be less likely to engage with RCVS social media channels. Further consideration is therefore being given to how the College can better reach and support this audience in future.

4. Two online events were delivered successfully, with positive delegate feedback and attendees indicating that they would recommend the events to others.

5. Learning from the programme is being used to inform future workforce activity, including how the College can provide targeted, practical support for veterinary professionals navigating career transitions.

British Veterinary Receptionists Association Congress

6. The Projects Implementation Manager will attend the British Veterinary Receptionists Association Congress in September 2026 to engage with colleagues working in client-facing and practice support roles across the wider veterinary team.

7. Attendance will provide an opportunity to explore the challenges, pressures, positive experiences, and support needs of veterinary receptionists, with a view to building a stronger understanding of team-based working and broader workplace culture within veterinary practice.

8. Insights gathered will help inform future Workforce activity by supporting a more rounded understanding of how different roles contribute to effective, inclusive and sustainable veterinary teams.

Campaigns and Activities

MMI x Workforce 2027 campaign planning

9. Early planning is underway for a collaborative 2027 campaign between the Mind Matters Initiative and Workforce, exploring how the two workstreams can jointly support people in the veterinary professions through life and workplace transitions.

10. The work is currently at scoping stage, with initial discussions focused on strategic alignment, potential audiences, delivery routes, resource requirements, evaluation, and how the campaign could build on existing support without duplicating current activity.

11. A Project Initiation Document is being developed to set out the proposed rationale, aims, benefits, risks, stakeholders and evaluation approach. Specific campaign themes and outputs will be confirmed once scope, ownership and delivery capacity have been agreed.

12. The campaign is intended to support shared AP priorities around wellbeing, retention, inclusive workplace culture, connection and sustainable participation in the veterinary professions.

Courses, Content and Publications

Welcoming returners RCVS Academy course

13. The RCVS Academy *Welcoming returners* course has now launched. The course has been developed to support practice teams and employers to welcome veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses returning to clinical practice after a break.

14. The course complements the existing *Vet return* and *Nurse return* courses by focusing on the role of the workplace, managers and wider team in supporting a confident, safe and sustainable return.

15. Course content includes practical guidance on planning for a return, supporting confidence, communication, reasonable adjustments, wellbeing, supervision, risk assessment and signposting to relevant support.

16. To support the launch, two Academy Live sessions are being delivered in September:

    i. A session focused on the returner, for both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, on 17 September 2026.

    ii. A session focused on welcoming returners, aimed at those supporting colleagues back into clinical practice, on 28 September 2026.

17. These sessions are intended to complement the Academy courses by providing opportunities for further discussion, practical reflection, and signposting around return-to-practice support.

Returner courses paid advertising campaign

18. The Communications Team is trialling a paid advertising campaign to promote all three RCVS Academy returner courses: *Vet return*, *Nurse return* and *Welcoming returners*.

19. The campaign is intended to increase visibility and engagement with the courses, supporting both individuals returning to clinical practice and the teams and workplaces welcoming them back.

20. Feedback on campaign performance is expected at the end of September 2026. This will help inform future promotion of the returner courses and any wider communications activity around return-to-practice support.

Other

Neurodiversity First Responder training exploration

21. Initial exploration is taking place into whether *Neurodiversity First Responder* training could be suitable as a future subsidised training offer for the veterinary professions, similar in principle to the way Mind Matters offers *Mental Health First Aid* training.

22. The training is designed to help participants provide calm, dignified and practical support when a neurodivergent colleague or client is experiencing overwhelm or distress. It also covers broader neuroinclusive practice, including communication, sensory needs, reasonable adjustments, management approaches and inclusive workplace culture.

23. Two colleagues have attended an initial session and found it engaging and insightful. Three clinical colleagues, including two members of the Advancement of the Professions Committee, will also attend training on 10 November 2026 and provide feedback on its relevance, proportionality, potential veterinary-specific tailoring, and suitability for practice leaders, managers or wider team members.

24. Feedback from this exploration will inform whether the training should be developed further as a possible offer for the veterinary professions. It will also support consideration of the crossover between workstreams, including Workforce, MMI and EDI, alongside the RCVS Academy, and how this activity might be developed and delivered collaboratively.