



# APC Meeting 08/05/24

Virtual via Microsoft Teams

## Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

**08 May 2024, 10:30-13:00 Remote via Microsoft Teams**

### Agenda

1. Apologies for absence, declarations of interest and welcome
2. Matters arising and minutes of the meeting held on 07 February 2024
3. Presentation and discussion: Use of Content and Trigger Warnings on Learning Materials 10:30am – 10:50am (Annex 2 **Confidential**)
4. Workstream Updates (Annex 1 – **VN Futures Project Initiation Document Confidential**)
5. Discussion: Strategic Plan and Impact
6. Oral Update: UKHACC
7. Discussion: Sustainability – Risk Register, Business Continuity Planning and decision on consensus statement (**Confidential**)
8. AOB
9. Date of next meeting 02 October 2024 online

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	APC
Date	07 February 2024
Title	Advancement of the Professions Committee Report 07 February 2024
Summary	To note the attached minutes of the meeting held on 07 February 2024
Decisions required	None
Attachments	N/A
Author	Stephanie Taylor Advancement of the Professions Administrator s.taylor@rcvs.org.uk

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

<b><sup>1</sup>Classifications explained</b>	
Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant

	committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation, or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

## **2Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ol>

## Minutes of the Advancement of the Professions Committee Meeting Held at Battersea Dogs & Cats Home at 10:30

<b>Members:</b>	Dr L Allum	RCVS Council Member
	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 M Donald (Observer)	Senior Vice-President
	Dr T Gardiner	Diversity and Inclusion Working Group Chair, and Lead for Global Development
	Ms L Lockett	RCVS CEO and Vet Futures Project Board
	Dr S Paterson (Chair)	RCVS President, Council Lead for Environment and Sustainability, Lead for Leadership & Chair of the Advancement of the Professions Committee
	Mr M Rendle	VN Futures Project Board
	Dr K Richards	Chair of Mind Matters Initiative
	Dr Niall Connell	Vice Chair of the Fellowship Board
<b>In attendance:</b>	Mrs A Belcher	Director for Advancement of the Professions
	Mr L Bishop	Media and Publications Manager
	Mrs J Dugmore	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Mr L Emeka	Diversity and Inclusion Senior Officer
	Miss G Gill	Leadership and Inclusion Manager
	Ms Katie Mantell	RCVS Knowledge CEO
	Mrs Rapinder Newton	Mind Matters Initiative Lead
	Mr I Holloway	Director of Communications
	Mr S Hurley	Mind Matters Initiative Senior Officer
	Miss J Macdonald	VN Futures Project Lead
	Mr B Myring	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
	Mr M Sundhu*	Policy and Public Affairs Officer

Mrs Abi Hanson	Media and Publications Officer
Miss S Taylor	AP Administrator
Ms A Youngs*	Fellowship and Leadership Senior Officer

\* apologies

### Welcome and Apologies for Absence

1. The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and introduced new Committee member Niall Connell; standing in for Chris Tufnell as Vice Chair of the Fellowship. Further introductions for new members of the Advancement of the Professions team (AP), and RCVS Knowledge (RCVSK): Rapinder Newton and Katie Mantell.
2. Apologies were received from Chris Tufnell, Amymay Youngs, Mark Sundhu, and Belinda Andrews-Jones.
3. A new Declaration of Interest was reported regarding Amanda Boag's role change to Vice Principle of Clinical Services at the RVC.

### Impact and Evaluation Workshop

4. A presentation on 'Impact and Evaluation' was led by the Insight and Evaluation Lead at Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, and explored topics such as: theory of change, impact measurement, impact toolkits and how to establish an impact framework. The purpose of this session was to gain insight on how Battersea as a charity assess and report impact and see what learning could be applied to APC's work going forward. Broad discussions were had on the ways that impact can be demonstrated, and how to show progress at early project states.

### Discussion: Reporting Into APC Going Forward

5. A Discussion was had on creating a more uniform and structured workstream update form that includes the impact, strategic link, the activities undertaken and the possible risks/challenges. Also touched on adding indicators and RAG ratings to workstream updates, demonstrating the overall progress towards the strategic objectives.
6. Addressed the need for greater workstream collaboration to improve progress towards the ambitions; a discussion was had around scheduling regular collaboration meetings to achieve this.
7. Touched on the possibility of reducing the number of projects carried out within APC, and only focusing on select activities to achieve maximum effectiveness.
8. After the discussion, it was decided that once the new strategic plan had been finalised, the committee would revisit these concepts and see how they might be applied to the reporting structure and oversight work of APC. The committee will revisit the creation of the new

workstream updates in the next APC meeting once Council has discussed the framework of the new strategic plan during their meeting in March.

### **Discussion: Horizon Scanning the Potential Issues for Vets and Nurses in the Coming Year, and How We Can Support Through Our Workstreams**

9. VN Futures are developing a series of in-person events with the purpose of re-engaging with the profession and will be planning discussions around the themes of: education, structure of delivery of care, practise culture, and what nurses do.
10. Touched on the impact of moral stress and injury caused by the XL Bully ban and the potential for education within practices on this topic to encourage support for staff.
11. Discussed the possibility of using ViVet to support a vet-led team case study in preparation for the new legislation. Also touched on the opportunity for APC to support the future workplace transition/culture change through ViVet: establishing innovative business models and team structures, MMI: the new challenges around hierarchy and status, RCVSK: psychological safety and human factors.
12. EDI was discussed and how to make sure that relevance and empathy is showcased, and most importantly that the value behind such training and leadership is recognised by all arms of the professions.
13. It was highlighted that BVEDS are creating a collaborative course for farmers that educates on key EDI issues. It is hoped that this would be a 'green flag' for EMS students to choose farm placements.
14. Public Health and food safety roles are often overlooked and misunderstood, it was agreed to ensure further promotion of these roles. Discussed the possibility of using portfolio career pathways to raise interest and of contacting the VDS to further explore the insurance challenges around this.
15. Discussed the welfare and environmental benefits of contextualised care and the fear of litigation being a possible cause for overdiagnosis and overtreatment. Touched on the possibility of knowledge providing NICE guidelines to assist with treatment plans.

### **Presentation on the Returner Project**

16. Explored the challenges around the legal restrictions of contacting those who have left the practising or non-practising registers. Discussed the differing reasons to leave for vets versus vet nurses and the greater difficulty in contacting vet nurse leavers due to the lack of a non-practising register. Touched on using the avenues of APC, social media, and contacting practising members to persuade and identify those who have left. Using case studies to gain information on how to facilitate and support a successful employee return. Exit surveys to be edited with the goal of providing more robust data on leavers in the future.

17. It was noted that there was a high level of participation on the nurse return academy course that is mandatory for those undergoing their PSP and optional for those returning within five years.
18. Currently awaiting the results of the survey of the professions which will provide further information on the key demographics before going public with the returner project.

### Returner Project

19. VN Futures are currently working on registering vet nurse ambassadors onto STEM and are also working with the Comms Team to adapt the vet nurse STEM resources into vet careers resources. Also discussed RCVS to create its own resources for vet STEM ambassadors.

### AOB

20. Chris Tufnell has stepped down as chair of the Fellowship Board and Niall Connell to act as interim chair until an election is held. An official thank you to Chris for his hard work with the Fellowship was expressed.
21. The date of the next meeting is 08 May and will be a virtual meeting. Times will be confirmed as soon as possible.



## Fellowship Update

### Academy courses

1. Two RCVS Academy courses, created with the Fellowship, Leadership and Inclusion workstreams have been successfully launched. These were *Unconscious Bias* and *Fellowship Credentials Panel Member* and were created with the FRCVS application assessors in mind, although the *Unconscious Bias* course is also suitable for those within the profession.
2. The participants, mostly Fellows, have commented that the Unconscious Bias course content is broad, yet relevant, exploring different types of biases and encourages the learner to effectively self-reflect and apply their knowledge. They were also impressed with the scenarios which were veterinary-specific, covering a good range of roles within the profession. As of writing, the courses have been completed by 22 of the 25 assessors.

### Credentials Panel

3. Since the last update, the Fellowship Team have been able to recruit eight new assessors to the credentials panel, across the three routes, taking our total number of assessors up to 25. This has increased the diversity of knowledge and experiences within the panel and will have a positive contribution to the assessment process, which is currently underway. The panels are due to meet from mid-June to discuss their assessment of the FRCVS applications.

### Fellows of the Future Student Research Competition

4. The Fellows of the Future Student Research Competition (FOF) is due to launch in the first week of May, inviting students and recent graduates to submit their research summaries to a panel of judges, who will decide which three applicants are to present their research at Fellowship Day.
5. Due to the high volume of applications and the calibre of the submissions last year, we have taken steps to continue to promote positive engagement between students and the Fellowship, and we are inviting the ten runners-up (after the three finalists have been selected) will be invited to attend Fellowship Day and to create a poster of their research which will be displayed on screens during the break periods at Fellowship Day, providing them with the opportunity to talk to Fellows about their research.
6. The other entrants will get the opportunity to present their research online to a panel of Fellows during an evening event which will give them the opportunity to gain some valuable feedback on their research.

### Fellowship Board Elections

7. This June, we will be holding an election for two roles within the Fellowship Board; Chair of the Fellowship Board and Chair of the Credentials Panel for the Meritorious Contributions to Clinical Practice (MCCP). The information will be publicised from the end of April and the deadline for voting will be June 21 2024. Candidates will be informed of the results of the election from w/c 24 June, and will formally join the Board at Fellowship Day.
8. There are no budgetary risks or other risks identified at present.

## EDI Update

### Neurodiversity stakeholder event

1. RCVS is collaborating with veterinary school faculty to develop good practice in supporting the well-being and academic success of neurodivergent students in veterinary education. As part of this work, RCVS is holding an event in London on 14 June for students and key stakeholders in the education of veterinary professionals and the provision of student placements and work-based learning. A modified Delphi Study methodology will be conducted to ensure that there is a consensus-based approach during the event. Guidelines will be developed post-event with the aim of optimising the experience of neurodivergent veterinary students and veterinary nursing students.

### Disability and Chronic Illness Report

2. We expect the Disability and Chronic Illness report to be published later this month. At the time of writing, it is in the final review stage before preparation for publication. There are two reports: a detailed technical report containing all of the research data, and a summary report which presents key findings and insights. The data is comprehensive, and the research will have implications for efforts to widen access to the professions. It will also inform other workstream projects such as inclusive recruitment, work to promote understanding of reasonable adjustments, the guidance being developed for neurodivergent students discussed above, and the recommendations being developed for? the LL/FL working group.

### Unconscious Bias RCVS Academy course

3. This course launched at the end of May January? along with the Fellowship credential panellist training (see Fellowship update). The course received very positive feedback from the Fellowship assessors. It has also achieved the highest NPS score on the Academy this quarter, although the course has only been available for a few weeks. So far 55 vets and 20 vet nurses have accessed the course, with 30 completions.
4. Comments so far:
  - a) I liked that the material was presented in small and varied ways. This was much easier and more useful than trying to listen to someone talk for an hour
  - b) This course is very well presented and I enjoyed the different media that you employed to keep us interested. Just the correct balance of videos and animations – and those acted animations, which were fascinating. Area for improvement – a time indicator of (approximate) time to complete.
  - c) No it is a well-structured and well-presented course.
  - d) Really thought provoking and very useful.

### PSS review

5. The review of the Social Sustainability elements in the PSS standards is now underway as part of the five year PSS review cycle. EDI and MMI workstreams are collaborating to update the standards.

### Advance HE EDI conference presentation

6. A presentation on the BAME Student Support Working Group Report was given at the Advance HE conference, on 6 March, detailing the report recommendations and progress since publication.

## Global Update

### **Federation of Veterinarians of Europe**

1. The General Assembly of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe will be held in Heraklion, Crete between 13-15 June 2024. Topics for discussion are expected to include the veterinary workforce shortage and telemedicine.

### **International Veterinary Regulators Network**

2. A meeting of the steering group of the International Veterinary Regulators Network took place in April, and planning is underway for an online event for later in the year.

## MMI Update

### Events

1. Mind Matters delivered two full streams of activity at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress in Manchester on 21 and 22 March. This included one stream focussed on moral stress and injury, and another which explore obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We have received very positive feedback from the two days already and will be taking the work forward via two new projects later this year.
2. The online College of Animal Welfare (CAW) Head Nurse Congress took place on 2 May: Where we supported a session focussed on Thriving as a Veterinary Nurse.
3. Campfire Chat: Movement and Mental Health takes place on 16 May, to coincide with Mental Health Awareness Week 2024.
4. We will be attending Titanic Vet Show in Belfast, Northern Ireland on 24 May, where we are delivering a session focussed on strategic approaches to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the veterinary team.
5. We will be attending the European Congress of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ECVIM) in Lyon France in September, where we will deliver two sessions focussed on compassionate communication and navigating moral stress.
6. We will be attending the Vetnet Conference in Kolding, Denmark in September, where we are delivering a session focussed on Incivility.

### Training

7. Two Roads Charity delivered a pilot 'Mind Yourself' programme over three consecutive Monday afternoons in April, which was oversubscribed. An evaluation of the pilot is currently being conducted before deciding whether to deliver more of this training.
8. A 2-day in person MHFA First Aid course was delivered in Nottingham in March for the professions. We have received really positive feedback from the training already, with an evaluation survey currently underway, and will be looking to deliver more MHFA training later this year.

### Research

9. A SVN Research Webinar took place on 23 April, where the last recipients of the Sarah Brown Grant, highlighted their research to date and identified opportunities for both SVNs, RVNs and Educators to get involved with the next phase of the research. Over 110 individuals registered for the webinar and it was very well received from those who attended.
10. Planning is currently underway to launch a new research grants programme, following the end of the Sarah Brown Research Grant Awards in 2023.

### Other

11. MMI has also worked with the Registration team to incorporate signposting to tax relief for professional fees, to support financial wellbeing.
12. We have been inputting into the review of PSS standards, in particular practice standards, ensuring these are current, and future-proofed, whilst ensuring they are not overly burdensome.

## RCVS Knowledge Update

### New Editor-in-Chief for *Veterinary Evidence*

1. Professor Peter Cockcroft has been appointed as new Editor-in-Chief of *Veterinary Evidence*, the open-access peer-reviewed journal published by RCVS Knowledge. A world-renowned expert in evidence-based veterinary medicine, Peter is currently Professor of Production Animal Medicine and Education at the University of Surrey. He was previously Editor-in-Chief of *Veterinary Evidence* from 2017 to 2020. *Veterinary Evidence* has a global readership of more than 60,000, with an 11% increase in readership and a 39% increase in submissions to the journal in 2023.

### Dog, cat and rabbit neutering outcome data revealed in new benchmarking report

2. Data on the postoperative outcomes of dogs, cats, and rabbits undergoing neutering procedures have been revealed in a new benchmarking report compiled by RCVS Knowledge. The data was submitted by veterinary practices voluntarily to the National Audit for Small Animal Neutering (NASAN). The report, comprising data from 63,276 cats, dogs and rabbits, submitted by 256 independent and corporate veterinary practices across the UK shows post-operative outcomes after routine neutering procedures. The aim is to enable veterinary teams to compare their own neutering outcomes against a national benchmark and to support them to take systematic steps to drive improvements in their outcomes. The NASAN has collected data on post-operative complications rates in neutered dogs and cats since 2005, with rabbits being added in 2018. New for 2024 is the ability to record and audit the breed and weight of the animal, and the type of neuter, including flank, midline, and cryptorchid procedures. Veterinary professionals who want to improve neutering outcomes in their practices can use the free [NASAN Resource Hub](#) on RCVS Knowledge's website. This includes practical information and evidence on how to effectively manage complications and learn from them when they do occur. The NASAN Annual Report is available here: [rcvsknowledge.org/NASAN-Report/](https://rcvsknowledge.org/NASAN-Report/)

### Beef, sheep and dairy vets get tailored support on antimicrobial stewardship to plug data gaps

3. RCVS Knowledge is offering beef, sheep and dairy vets tailored support on antimicrobial stewardship as part of a national initiative to increase data collection on the use of antimicrobials in the ruminant sector. Medicine Hub, developed by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), is an online tool for dairy, beef and sheep producers to compare medicine use and tackle the threat of antibiotic resistance. Currently, reported data on the Medicine Hub represents 28% of dairy and 9% of sheep sectors, respectively. There is wide scope for improved data collection across all ruminant sectors. To this end, RCVS Knowledge, with funding provided by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), is working with individual veterinary professionals in collaboration with the red meat and dairy sectors and AHDB to support veterinary teams to improve their use of Medicine Hub. It is part of the charity's overall ambition to support ongoing improvements in veterinary antimicrobial stewardship.

### Antibiotic Guardian challenge for UK veterinary professionals

4. RCVS Knowledge is urging veterinary professionals to help establish the UK as a world leader in fighting antimicrobial resistance (AMR) by learning practical techniques to foster responsible antibiotic use. We're setting every companion animal and equine veterinary practice in the country a challenge of building a team of Antibiotic Guardians — individuals who have completed CPD courses that teach the skills to encourage responsible antimicrobial use. Any member of the veterinary team can complete CPD modules on the RCVS Knowledge Learn platform and be awarded an Antibiotic Guardian certificate at one of four levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum. The learning materials are suitable for all members of the team, and work towards Antibiotic Guardian status counts towards mandatory annual CPD hours. Our Companion Animal and Equine AMR training is available here: <https://learn.rcvsknowledge.org/course/index.php?categoryid=24>. New users accessing the Companion Animal and Equine Course increased by 168 in the first month of the campaign and continue to grow. Further promotion is planned including a social media campaign to celebrate individuals who have already achieved Gold and Platinum status to encourage other veterinary teams to take part.

### Second 'Quality Improvement in a Day' in-person training

5. Our second 'Quality Improvement in a Day' course was held in Bedford on 18 April, with 30 individuals from a range of roles in veterinary teams joining the day in person. The main aims of the day were to help embed QI skills within the professions and to encourage veterinary individuals to champion QI initiatives in their place of work. Initial feedback has been positive, for example: *"Really excellent course – would have loved all my colleagues to attend"* and *"Really good & enlightening CPD, lovely & engaging speakers. Brought me awareness & interest to an area I did not think was relevant to my practice."*

#### **Upcoming activities in summer 2024**

6. Plowright Prize: Seventeen nominations for the Plowright Prize were received in 2024 – more than four times more nominations than in either of the two previous rounds of the biennial prize. The nominations are currently being assessed by an expert panel, and the winner will be announced in June 2024. The Prize recognises the work of individuals in the Europe and the Commonwealth who have made an impact on the control, management or eradication of infectious diseases of animals. This year's recipient will receive £100,000 to honour 100 years since the birth of Walter Plowright.
7. RCVS Knowledge Awards: Judging is almost complete for the Quality Improvement and Antimicrobial Stewardship awards, and the winners will be announced in June 2024. Twenty-six applications were received this year, a 13% increase in submissions from 2023. The Awards celebrate exemplary practices and highlight inspiring examples with the purpose of motivating others to enhance outcomes and advance the standard of veterinary care.

## VN Futures Update

### VN Vision events

1. The '*VN Vision: The future of team-based veterinary healthcare*' project begins delivery of in-person events on May 8 in Northern Ireland.
2. Opportunities for providing additional 'ad hoc' sessions at conferences and events have arisen, and a shorter session on the same theme will be provided at the Veterinary Management Group (VMG) Congress on 26<sup>th</sup> April.
3. A Project Initiation Document accompanies this report and offers a comprehensive overview of the project.
4. Unfortunately, neither Jules nor Jill can attend APC as they will be delivering the first of the sessions in Northern Ireland, but thought it would be useful for the committee to have sight of the document and plans, and look forward to answering any questions and giving an update on progress at the next meeting.
5. Any interim questions or comments are of course welcome.

### Mentor course

1. Whilst the course content for the 'Nurse Mentor' course was nearing completion, the decision was made that the content would be more effectively utilised as a generic mentor course, aligning with the wider strategic aims of the College. The Academy team are taking forward the course to completion.

## Environment & Sustainability Update

1. 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 professionals across the UK. The College is at present actively a member two policy working groups for 2024, which intend to publish reports later this year:
  - a. **Fossil fuel phase-out and a just energy transition.** The aim of the fossil fuels working group is to produce a policy report and recommendations for UK governments to protect and promote health by ensuring a rapid, just transition away from fossil fuels to clean energy production combined with policies that reduce energy demand.
  - b. **Building a healthy and resilient food system.** The aim of the food systems working group is to produce a policy report and recommendations for the governments of the UK and the NHS to promote and deliver a healthy and sustainable food system with low carbon and environmental impacts.
2. In March the Chief Executive and President attended a dinner hosted by UKHACC, which featured discussions and a presentation on the climate emergency.
3. Veterinary Greener Discussion Forum in June will be attended by the President and DAP, where they will be hosting a 20 minute session on our activities as an organisation, and learning from the other delegates on their plans and current thinking. As part of this we are sponsoring one of the awards to help raise awareness of sustainability within veterinary organisations. More information will be shared at the next APC.