

Council Meeting

Remote meeting to be held by Zoom on Thursday, 16 January 2025 at 10:00 am

Agenda	Classification ¹	Rationale ²
1. President's introduction	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2. Apologies for absence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3. Declaration of interests	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
4. Minutes of meeting held on 7 November and remote decisions made 17-19 November 2024 and 5 – 9 December 2024		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3 4
5. Matters arising		
a. Obituaries	Unclassified	n/a
b. Council correspondence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. CEO update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
6. Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)		
a. Discretionary Fund	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Eligibility of veterinary graduates from EAEVE approved / accredited schools for RCVS registration	Unclassified	n/a
c. Council culture	Unclassified	n/a

<p>7. Reports of standing committees – to note</p> <p><u>Please note:</u> all unclassified minutes from standing committee meetings will be found as part of the <i>following</i> meeting's papers for the respective committees, see: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/who-we-are/committees/ and navigate to the specific committee from there.</p>		
a. Advancement of the Professions Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Audit and Risk Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. Education Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
d. Finance and Resources Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
e. Registration Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
f. Standards Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
g. Veterinary Nurses Council	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
h. PIC/DC Liaison Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<p>8. Reports of statutory committees – to note</p>		
a. Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
b. RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
c. Disciplinary Committee and RVN Disciplinary Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<p>9. Notices of motion</p>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<p>10. Questions</p>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<p>11. Any other College business (unclassified)</p>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<p>12. Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified)</p>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a

13. Date of next meeting Thursday, 13 March 2025 at 10:00 am (reconvening in the afternoon)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
14. Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)		
a. Update on major projects	Oral report Confidential	1, 3, 4
b. CMS project plan – update	Oral report Confidential	1, 3, 4
c. Annual retention fee payment arrangements for veterinary surgeons 2025-26	Oral report Confidential	1, 3
d. Legislative change	Oral report Confidential	1
e. CMA update	Confidential	2
f. RCVS brand review – update	Confidential	1
g. RCVS Strategic Plan 2025 – 2029	Confidential	1
15. Any other College business (confidential items)		
a. Comments on classified appendices	Oral report Confidential	# TBC
b. Other business	Oral report Confidential	# TBC
16. Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)	Oral report Confidential	# TBC
17. Council member training session	Confidential	1, 4
Dawn Wiggins Secretary, RCVS Council 020 7202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk		

¹Classifications explained

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

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Terms of Reference

The vision of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [as agreed in the current strategic plan]

1. Our vision is to be recognised as a trusted, compassionate and proactive regulator, and a supportive and ambitious Royal College, underpinning confident veterinary professionals of whom the UK can be proud.

Role of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [derived from the Charter]

2. The objects of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, as laid down in the Supplemental Charter granted on 17 February 2015 to the Royal Charter of 1844, ie:
 - a. To set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest.
 - b. The Charter also recognises those functions provided for in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, in terms of the regulation of the profession, and also recognises other activities not conferred upon the College by the Veterinary Surgeons Act or any other Act, which may be carried out in order to meet its objects, including but not limited to:
 - i. Accrediting veterinary education, training and qualifications, other than as provided for in the Act in relation to veterinary surgeons;
 - ii. Working with others to develop, update and ensure co-ordination of international standards of veterinary education;
 - iii. Administering examinations for the purpose of registration, awarding qualifications and recognising expertise other than as provided for in the Act;
 - iv. Promulgating guidance on post-registration veterinary education and training for those admitted as members and associates of the College;
 - v. Encouraging the continued development and evaluation of new knowledge and skills;
 - vi. Awarding fellowships, honorary fellowships, honorary associateships or other designations to suitable individuals;
 - vii. Keeping lists or registers of veterinary nurses and other classes of associate;
 - viii. Promulgating guidance on professional conduct;
 - ix. Setting standards for and accrediting veterinary practices and other suppliers of veterinary services;
 - x. Facilitating the resolution of disputes between registered persons and their clients;
 - xi. Providing information services and information about the historical development of the veterinary professions;
 - xii. Monitoring developments in the veterinary professions and in the provision of veterinary services;
 - xiii. Providing information about, and promoting fair access to, careers in the veterinary professions.

The purpose of RCVS Council [derived from the Charter]

3. It is laid down in the Charter that the affairs of the College shall be managed by the Council as constituted under the Act. The Council shall have the entire management of and superintendence over the affairs, concerns and property of the College (save those powers of directing removal from, suspension from or restoration to the register of veterinary surgeons and supplementary veterinary register reserved to the disciplinary committee established under the Act) and shall have power to act by committees, subcommittees or boards and to delegate such functions as it thinks fit from time to time to such committees, subcommittees or boards and to any of its own number and to the employees and agents of the College.
4. The Council is also responsible for the appointment of the CEO and Registrar, and the ratification of the Assistant Registrars. Appointment of all other staff members is the responsibility of the CEO and relevant members of the Senior Team.
5. A strategic plan is developed and agreed by Council to facilitate the delivery of these activities and to ensure ongoing development and quality improvement.
6. A delegation scheme that outlines how Council's functions are managed via system of committees and other groups is agreed annually by Council.

How Council members work

7. In order to enable the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to fulfil its vision, and to discharge its functions under its Royal Charter and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, RCVS Council members will:
 - a. Abide by the Nolan Principles of Public Life;
 - b. Work in the best interests of the public, and of animal health and welfare and public health;
 - c. Respectfully listen to the voices of the professions, the public and other stakeholders, and reflect them in discussions where appropriate, ensuring they are put into context;
 - d. Neither be answerable to, nor represent, any group of individuals;
 - e. Support the College's vision and work towards the success of the College and its functions;
 - f. Live the College's values;
 - g. Act at all times in a constructive, supportive and compassionate manner;
 - h. Exercise a duty of care to the staff employed by the College, working through the CEO and Registrar;
 - i. Recognise the importance of a collegiate atmosphere where robust discussion is welcomed in the formation of policy and multiple points of view are listened to and respected;
 - j. Respect and support the decisions made by Council when communicating externally;
 - k. Communicate College activities and positions to relevant stakeholders;
 - l. Abide by the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee members.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	16 January 2025
Title	Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2024 and remote decisions held 17-19 November and 5 – 9 December 2024
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2024 and remote decisions held 17-19 November and 5 – 9 December 2024
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix.
Attachments	Classified appendix (confidential)
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council 020 7202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4

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Council

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2024 at 10:00 am in the Rosalind Paget Room, Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN and remote decisions held 17-19 November and 5 – 9 December 2024

Members:

Miss L S Belton (in the Chair)

Dr L H Allum

Mrs B S Andrews-Jones

Professor D C Barrett

Dr S E Bennett

*Mr D Bray

Dr A L Calow

Mr J M Castle

Dr D S Chambers

Mrs O D R Cook

Ms L Ford

Dr M M S Gardiner

Mrs S D Howarth

Mr T M Hutchinson

Professor M D Jones

Dr Z J Kennedy

Professor C M Loughrey

Mrs C-L McLaughlan

Dr A J McLeish

Professor T D H Parkin

Dr S Paterson

Mr T J Walker

Mr W A S Wilkinson

Ms J S M Worthington

*Denotes absent

In attendance:

Miss H Alderton

Dr Z Bhayla

Ms A Alexandre

Mr L Bishop

Ms J Clark

Ms A Findon

Ms E Gafenco

Ms L Hall

Mr I A Holloway

Ms A Juneja

Professor D C Knottenbelt

Mr D Kyle

Mr R Locker

Ms L Lockett

Mr J Loeb

Professor S A May

Ms C L McCann

Ms N Sampson

Ms J Shardlow

Senior Events Officer

MRCVS (open session only)

Executive Assistant (EA) to CEO

Media and Publications Manager

Food Standards Agency (FSA) (open session only)

British Veterinary Association (BVA) (open session only)

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) (open session only)

People Director

Director of Communications

FSA (open session only)

MRCVS (open session only)

DAERA, NI (open session only)

FSA (open session only)

CEO

Veterinary Record (open session only)

RCVS Past-President, Ex-RCVS Council (open session only)

Director of Operations

FSA (open session only)

Chair, RCVS Audit and Risk Committee

Dr J L Tomlin	MRCVS, Royal Veterinary College (RVC)
Mr A Webb	<i>Veterinary Times</i> (open session only)
Ms N Widdowson	Defra (open session only)
Mr R Wynn-Davies	FSA (open session only)

President's introduction

1. The President welcomed guests and outlined the order of the meeting.

Apologies for absence

2. Apologies for absence had been received from:
 - Dr C H Middlemiss (Observer)
3. Drs Calow and McLeish, Mr Wilkinson* and Ms Worthington joined the meeting remotely. Mr Bray was not in attendance. *Mr Wilkinson gave apologies for absence for the confidential session of the meeting.

Declarations of interest

4. There were the following declarations of interest:
 - Dr Chambers had been elected as a Member of Parliament for Winchester in July;
 - Dr Paterson was now Chair of Trustees of The Animal Charity Pharmacy.

Minutes

5. Council had had the opportunity to comment electronically on the unclassified minutes and classified appendix of the remote decision held 21-27 August 2024, and the meeting held on 11 September 2024, and they were before Council for approval.
6. The minutes were accepted as a true record by a unanimous verbal vote.

Matters arising

Obituaries

7. The College had been saddened to learn of the recent passing of one of its Past-Presidents, Des Thompson, for whom there had been many worthy tributes in the veterinary press – a copy of the

College's own press release had been included in the meeting bundle. Council and guests stood for a minute silence for all members of the professions who had passed since the last meeting and to recognise the sacrifice made by many at conflicts around the world, to be remembered at the forthcoming Armistice Day.

Council correspondence

8. The President reported the following matters:

RCVS Council Election 2025

9. The nomination period for the RCVS Council election 2025 had opened. Following receipt of a new Election Scheme earlier this year, there was an updated downloadable pack on the RCVS website that outlined the information to be included in nominations in order to stand for election. The deadline for submissions was 5:00 pm on Friday, 31 January 2025.
10. Council members were reminded that they were not permitted to nominate anyone to stand for Council and that, subject to eligibility, if retiring members intended to re-stand then registered addresses were to be used for the Nomination Form. These would be used to confirm the identity of the member standing.

Fellowship Day

11. It was noted that the Fellowship Day was scheduled to be held on Thursday, 28 November 2024 at One Great George Street, Westminster. Registration for the event was open via the RCVS website.

RCVS Honours and Awards

12. The nomination period for RCVS Honours and Awards to be presented at RCVS Day in 2025 opened at the end of September; details were on the website and the deadline for submissions was Friday, 13 December 2024.

CEO update

13. The CEO introduced the update and highlighted the following:
- Registered Veterinary Nurse annual registration fees were being collected; out of the 24,817 expected to renew their membership, 85% had been collected, which was 2% higher than at the same time last year. The process was going well, and thanks were given to the Registration and Finance Teams;
 - Black History Month had been celebrated in October, with a theme that focussed on reclaiming narratives; the aim was to correct historical inaccuracies; showcase untold stories; and change the narratives that were often overlooked. There had been good engagement from the professions;
 - new guidance had been published around navigating the new Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMRs) and the changes to veterinary registration categories that had been agreed by Council earlier in the year. There had been a six-month period from when the

guidance was sent out before they would take effect in 2025; communications would continue going forwards;

- the forthcoming Fellowship Day would see the biggest intake of Fellows thus far; there would be a Fellows of the Future competition (the student research competition); and the guest speaker was Peter Cairns, Executive Director for Scotland: The Big Picture, which was a re-wilding charity. There would also be two really interesting panel discussions: one on preparedness for disease outbreak, and the other on the critical role of veterinary professionals in emergencies and disasters, both of which appeared to reflect the times; there would also be the formal welcome to the new Fellowship Vice-Chair, Professor James Wood;
- the RCVS Academy had re-launched the '*Starting Out*' course for VNs, that had been reviewed after feedback from learners – all courses were perpetually updated to make them more and more relevant; there was also a brand-new course entitled '*RCVS and Me*' that was for student veterinary nurses, looking at the role and remit of the College and what it meant for them; to try and capture their interest as students. There was also a survey asking vets and vet nurses what courses they would like to see on the Academy, and what gaps they would like to see filled;
- the Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) National Booking Database – developed by the RCVS' in-house team – had been launched; it was expected to streamline the process of students being able to book their own EMS and have a better sense of what opportunities might look like and practical matters such as whether there was accommodation and nearby public transport. Currently, it had been launched to providers in order to enter their data and get critical mass of placements on board before it would be opened to students.

14. There were no questions and the update was noted.

Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)

Discretionary Fund

15. The Director of Operations (DoO) reported that the Discretionary Fund was a provision in the annual budget of £150,000 that could be used for projects that could not be budgeted for when it was put together, and to expedite activities during the year that were identified in the period. There were processes in place to ensure the expenditure was in accordance with the College's financial controls and, where relevant, followed the Project Protocol.

16. It was noted that there were commitments of £127,000 and there was c.£23,000 left in the current year's provision.

17. There were no comments, and the update was noted.

Temporary Registration of Novice Official Veterinarians (TRNOV) Scheme

18. The Head of Legal Services, Standards and Advice (HoLS – S&A) introduced the paper and drew attention to the key aspects.

19. The Scheme had been in place since March 2021, when the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Defra first requested that temporary registrants be able to carry out official controls; there was also a certification aspect at that time as well. In February 2023, the Food Standards Scotland (FSS) Scheme commenced, and in February 2024, the DAERA-NI Scheme had commenced.
20. In terms of those delivering official controls on the Temporary Register, those individuals would be eligible to register as MRCVS except for the language requirements; they did not have the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Level 7. It was noted from the paper that the FSA and DAERA-NI Schemes' requirements were Level 6, and FSS was Level 5. During the course of their time on the Temporary Register, individuals would work on their language skills with the aim to attain Level 7 within the time period, so that they could become an MRCVS and work as an Official Veterinarian (OV).
21. As mentioned, when the Scheme was first agreed there were two aspects – delivering official controls in slaughterhouses, which had been ongoing, and then the certification of exports, which was a request from Defra that was agreed in principle.
22. As noted in the paper, the certification aspect had never been triggered, the TRNOVs did not carry out certification and it was done by an MRCVS. TRNOVs did, however, provide information that the Senior OV, who was an MRCVS, would rely on in order for them to certify; that was allowed within the scope of guidance in any event. When considering the Principles of Certification, one of them was that an MRCVS might rely on supporting evidence from an authorised veterinarian in order to carry out their own certification.
23. As the agreement in principle for certification had been in place for more than three years, it was suggested that Council considers whether it was still appropriate for it to stand; with that in mind, the College had approached Defra to enquire whether there would be any objection to it ending and they had confirmed that there would be no objection; that there were no plans for TRNOVs to carry out certification in the future.
24. When the TRNOV Scheme was first proposed, there had been concern from a general conceptual point of view about whether it would create a two-tier system within the veterinary profession, and whether it was appropriate for individuals who did not meet the requisite language criteria, or eligibility criteria, to be carrying out important work in food security. Government colleagues were looking for reassurance from Council that the people who met the eligibility criteria would be admitted to the Temporary Register rather than going through the usual temporary registration process, where the Registration Committee considers applications on a case-by-case basis in a discretionary way. Certainty was required for recruitment to ensure that things could continue and for forward-planning and minimisation of disruption to the delivery of official controls that were crucial for food security and export.
25. Finally, the HoLS – S&A highlighted that, if Council wished to give assurance once it had heard from its government colleagues, it might also wish to consider whether any reviews were required, and whether they should continue to be conducted by the Standards Committee if the certification

element fell away (as what was being done was within the scope of current guidance), or whether any future review be carried out by the Registration Committee.

26. An FSA representative thanked Council for the opportunity to address it and present the joint paper from FSA, FSS and DAERA-NI.
27. The paper focussed on reducing the utilisation of TRNOVs and highlighted the progress made since the last update to Council. Before going into detail, two points were flagged that the FSA was unable to discuss: one was around the FSA tender process for meat official controls – they were bound by the rules around the process (further details would be permitted after 8 November 2024); the other was regarding ongoing court proceedings.
28. FSA, FSS, and DAERA-NI jointly requested access to the RCVS Temporary Registration Scheme by individual applicants for veterinarians delivering meat official controls i.e. OV's working in abattoirs with the Meat Hygiene Industry Service (MHIS) and Vet Track. It was emphasised that recruits were vital in providing animal health, assuring food standards, and underpinning international trade.
29. Work had been ongoing with its Service Delivery Provider (SDP) to significantly reduce reliance on the TRNOV Scheme. Statistics showed that there were 18% (51 TRNOVs) in September 2024, compared to 46% (125 TRNOVs) in July 2022. In addition, they had tried to create a recruitment pipeline through the Vet Track pathway – an alternative to OV qualification for vets who had qualified from a European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE)-accredited university that held IELTS Level 5 and who were recruited to carry out meat official controls within OV-led teams whilst studying for their IELTS Level 7 qualification.
30. Since July 2023, 61 vets had joined the Vet Track pathway, five had converted to MRCVS ahead of the two-year deadline to meet IELTS Level 7. There was a continued conversion of Vet Track Meat Hygiene Inspectors (MHIs) to full MRCVS, and there was confidence from the SDP that the pathway fulfilled the contractual requirements of having OV's in abattoirs. Domestically, awareness continued to be raised to increase the interest of UK vets in OV roles, and to change some of the perceptions of that branch of the veterinary profession. Work had also been undertaken with the SDP to implement various retention strategies including increased salaries, greater job variation; and improved working environments, which was hoped to positively impact retention rates.
31. Following confirmation that it was RCVS' intention to phase out recognition of EAEVE-accredited degrees, the FSA welcomed the opportunity to work with RCVS officials as future accreditation approaches were developed. In terms of re-tender, a part that was key was with regards to recruitment strategies and ensuring a sustainable supply of veterinary resources to deliver the service and that it was a key part evaluated across bids – it allowed the FSA to gain assurance of a stable recruitment strategy to mitigate the risk of service failure; as with current challenge, recruitment of suitably qualified veterinarians continued to be a high risk factor.
32. Following the announcement of the outcome of the tender process on 24 October 2024, it was confirmed that from 31 March 2025, the delivery of the service would be divided into nine

geographical areas; Eville & Jones had been awarded seven, whilst a consortium led by Hallmark Meat Hygiene had been awarded two. The FSA was pleased to be able to offer contracts to multiple service suppliers on that occasion. It was currently awaiting 8 November 2024 before there were any pro-active communications.

33. An FSS representative continued. They stated that they had only utilised the Scheme for one registrant to date, who had achieved full MRCVS status. There were two other trainee OVs, one who had already joined and another who would join shortly – whilst it was being used quite rarely, it was very much a useful avenue to bring in veterinary resource. Actions were being taken to encourage domestic graduates to take up public health roles, such as EMS placements and financial support. It had recently achieved a silver British Veterinary Association (BVA) great workplace accreditation, and there had been a recent shift in uptake – domestic vets were becoming interested and last week its second Glasgow graduate joined (one was already trained and working as a full OV). Considering time and budget constraints required to bring in people from abroad, visa support, relocation, etc. required a huge investment upfront, so a domestic supply was preferred. It should also be acknowledged that the FSS continued to rely on non-UK graduates, so avenues needed to remain open to avoid service failure in the abattoir sector specifically.
34. It was noted that DAERA-NI operated a different system to the FSA. It had a comprehensive veterinary service that covered animal health, welfare, and public health delivery under a provision from the Service Level Agreement (SLA) in abattoirs for the FSA. It also had an appointment system for their OVs; most were employed directly by DAERA and relied on the ability from a consistency and reliability perspective to work with SDPs outside their direct employment. Two tenders were currently out that might also include the use of temporary registrants, which was why it had been requested previously. DAERA had also made huge advances in looking at their terms and conditions for their employed vets to improve domestic pipelines in recruitment and retention.
35. To conclude, it was stated that reliance and bulk applications for temporary registration had been removed and would not require new applications to the current Scheme. After 31 December 2024, FSA, FSS, and DAERA-NI were requesting ongoing access to the Scheme by individual applications for vets delivering meat official controls. If other recruitment methods failed to fully meet resource needs, or during the transition from bulk temporary registration to the Vet Track pathway, they committed to early engagement with RCVS officials to enable timely processing for individual applications if necessary. The rationale for the request was the ongoing uncertainties be it government policies, or various other impacts that might arise.
36. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:
- was there an indication of when the Vet Track pathway would be the sole method of employing veterinary individuals?
 - o the last batch of temporary registrants under the bulk scheme to join before the end of December 2024 was expected to transition to full MsRCVS c. summer 2026, so that was the target timeframe when no, or only exceptional, temporary registrants would be in the

system; that Vet Track would be supplemented by small numbers of direct recruitment of vets that were already full MsRCVS. It was also hoped that numbers of domestic graduates would start to increase;

- [I] always had concern that IELTS Level 5 was too low, and there was a contradiction in paragraph 16 of the paper about Vet Track recruiting at Level 5, and paragraph 19 that stated experience suggested that people needed to be at Level 6 in order to reach Level 7 within 12-18 months;
 - o there were two different roles: temporary registrants were coming in to work as OVs under supervision, where the requirement for English was at a higher level – bringing them in at Level 6 made the transition to Level 7 easier and much more successful. For Vet Track, they were bringing in qualified vets to work as MHIs as part of the OV-led scheme, where there was less pressure for their English to be up towards Level 6 and they had more time to develop to Level 7. Going straight into supervised OV work had a higher requirement;
- it would be interesting to monitor how well people progressed from Level 5 to Level 7 in 12-18 months, particularly if it was the same timeframe from Level 6 to Level 7;
- what was being done to meaningfully change the system to encourage more UK graduates, because a lot was framed around reducing numbers for non-UK vets?
 - o (FSA) examples included: funded EMS to widen participation – the FSA would join the RCVS EMS database as part of its work with the College; attendance at career fairs; making its presence felt at a higher level at vet schools; attendance at school level to try to change how it felt and to widen participation in becoming a vet; sharing international best practice (not international recruitment) such as Australia, New Zealand, and the United States and Canada to consider what works. Culturally there were limited demographics, and it was a challenge for the wider profession. Changes around salaries for international recruits would also be delivered for domestic recruits, as well as job variation;
 - o (FSS) they took an initiative in Scotland and worked very closely with the new SRUC to include the theoretical training within the curriculum, so their graduates in five to six years' time would be able to join the FSS with less training and that would probably just be in terms of practical hours. Changes took a long time, but the FSS was not just looking at the immediate short-term, or medium-term, but also the long-term investment in highlighting its roles through the curriculums, placements of a day or two in an abattoir, or anything else it could help with;
- at Bristol Vet School there were more than 40 final-year students enrolled on the EMS Veterinary Public Health (VPH) programme at the end of the year; students had also been taken from elsewhere. More could be done with Bristol and other colleagues to talk about how to finance individuals who were able, and wanted to, take part in the programme;

- was it correct that the FSS still asked for IELTS Level 5, not Level 6?
 - o that was what had been agreed in 2023. In reality, it had never registered anyone below Level 6; of the two people in the pipeline, one was Level 6, the other was Level 6.5. That was because there were similar concerns about the jump from Level 5 to Level 7 in 12-18 months and it was doubtful they would accept someone with less than a Level 6 even though it was in the paper, and would be happy for Level 6 to be implemented across the board;
- noting the FSS investments to enhance retention, recruitment and its reputation as a key employer at Annex I, paragraph 33, to what extent was that being shared across agencies?
 - o (FSS) there was a different delivery model in Scotland in that OVs were employed directly – that had been a huge project five years ago and had worked really well; a lot of time, resource and money was invested and, in the long run, retention levels had improved significantly to approximately 90-95% retention. It had a very experienced workforce and there was very little movement in the OV cohort; mostly it was to progress upwards, or laterally with the wider FSS. Significant changes were made in terms of the training pay supplements, to try and create a great workplace, and that had been confirmed by the BVA recently. It should not be assumed that what worked well for the FSS would work the same for other agencies as Scotland was smaller and a lot ‘nimble’;
 - o (FSA) in terms of learning from the FSS, it had very close working relationships; it was a three-nation organisation of England, Wales and Northern Ireland and emphasised that it was always trying to learn and adapt what it could from areas that worked. There had been recent consideration about refocussing some of the international work and what could be done with other countries in terms of the specifics of what FSS was doing; whilst the FSA was a lot bigger, it could still learn. It had looked at in-sourcing for a variety of reasons, but it had not been feasible; that was not to say it could not be reconsidered at a later date.

The SDPs had also made huge strides in pay, terms and conditions; visa requirements stipulated that any vet started at 70% of the median salary, pro-rated, and that they needed to reach £48,000 pro-rated within four years. There had also been changes to supervision, training, job variety, etc.;

 - o (DAERA-NI) had recently completed a grading review that would increase the pay for OVs by approximately £5,000 per year in Northern Ireland;
- looking at the job adverts for UK-graduates online – there was talk of a 35-hour week, but was there a scope of doing more of a ‘drop-in’ style of working where people got the qualification and did it on a part-time basis, or for periods of time as they went through different phases of their lives, to work in a more synergistic way where they might only do a couple of hours per week at a certain stage? It had worked well in Ireland and people were happy in their role in doing it;

- the FSA was not only thinking about retention and recruitment, but also return. It was aware that there was a number of postgraduate vets looking for career changes, whether that was part-time because they wanted to do a Masters, for example, or whether it was for family reasons, or the desire to work in One Health; or, whether a new graduate could join a graduate programme in both small animal and One Health. The FSA also had to consider what it was that made the roles attractive whilst still ensuring high standards and the surrounding network. There was a limited amount detailed in the paper and work continued.

37. The discussion was brought to a close.

38. As the FSA and DAERA TRNOV scheme criteria was IELTS Level 6, and the FSS scheme criteria was IELTS Level 5 (though confirmed in reality they would not bring in anyone below a Level 6), the FSS confirmed it would be content to an amendment to their scheme to bring them in line with the other agencies.

39. A motion was put to Council that there be a slight amendment on the wording of the vote:

Proposer: Miss L S Belton

Seconder: Mr T J Walker

Vote to be amended from:

As outlined at Annex I to the paper, Council was asked to decide whether the RCVS should continue to allow those who meet the criteria of the respective schemes to be admitted to the temporary register.

To now read:

*As outlined at Annex I to the paper, Council was asked to decide whether the RCVS should continue to allow those who meet the criteria of the respective schemes **with all now commencing at IELTS Level 6** to be admitted to the temporary register.*

40. The motion was agreed by a unanimous verbal vote. As the motion had passed, the original vote was no longer required.

41. Per the agreed motion, as outlined at Annex I to the paper, Council was asked to decide whether the RCVS should continue to allow those who meet the criteria of the respective schemes with all now commencing at IELTS Level 6 to be admitted to the temporary Register. A vote was taken by show of hands:

For:	23
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

42. This was agreed by a unanimous vote.

43. Council was asked if it wished to impose a time limit on the continuance of the respective schemes:

For:	19
Against:	3
Abstain:	0
Did not vote	1

44. This was carried by a majority electronic vote.

45. A time limit of 30 June 2026 (18 months from the current end of the scheme on 31 December 2024) was suggested as appropriate as that was the proposed target identified by the FSA as the point when no, or only exceptional, temporary registrants would be in the system under the TRNOV Scheme. Further, that the relevant teams should report back in February / March 2026 (exact dates to be confirmed as it would depend on when the respective committees met in 2026).

46. Council was asked to agree a time limit of 30 June 2026. A vote was taken by show of hands:

For:	23
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

47. This was agreed by a unanimous vote.

48. Council was asked if it wished to end the agreement in principle of TRNOVs carrying out certification. A vote was taken by show of hands:

For:	23
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

49. This was agreed by a unanimous vote.

50. As the element of certification had been removed, and the matter was now about how the Temporary Register was used, it was questioned whether the matter of review should move from Standards Committee to now sit with Registration Committee.

51. Consideration was given to how often, and in what format, the two committees met. It was felt that it was not about the individual applications to join the Register, but rather it was about policy – there was no longer a certification element, which had been one of the original issues, and the Chair of Standards Committee also sat on Registration Committee so that if there were any red flags raised around standards it could be circled back. There should be choreography in how that could work, in conjunction with colleagues at the FSA, FSS, and DAERA to ensure that the data was received in time and, should a special meeting be required to discuss matters, it was justifiable.

52. A vote was taken to move the oversight of the scheme from under the remit of Standards Committee, to fall under the remit of Registration Committee. A vote was taken by show of hands:

For:	20
Against:	1
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	2

53. This was carried by a majority vote.

54. The President thanked FSA, FSS, and DAERA-NI guests for joining the meeting. It was noted that confirmation of exact dates when data was due would be agreed in due course.

FSA, FSS, and DAERA-NI guests left the meeting.

RCVS Governance Reform

55. The Policy and Public Affairs Manager (P&PAM) introduced the paper and the background of the work undertaken to date.

56. Council was reminded governance reform would require changes to, or a replacement of, the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966. Any detailed recommendations on governance reform would form part of the College's package of legislative reform recommendations for government. Ultimately, the details of future governance reform would be in the hands of government and parliament and might differ from the College's preferred option as they had clear principles on what the governance of a regulator should look like. The College had tried to develop principles that brought it closer to that kind of regulatory norm whilst allowing some difference to reflect its role as a Royal College that regulated. It was noted that new legislation would not happen overnight, and it was expected that there would be a lengthy process – for example, when numbers on Council were reduced from 42 to 24 it had taken four years.

57. Council had gone right back to first principles and considered what it was to be a regulator, looking at both the Charter and the Act, both of which clearly set out that the College was there in the public interest and to uphold and set standards in that context. It concluded that it was not particularly useful to separate the Royal College and regulatory functions but rather to see them as a single holistic purpose that required a single holistic approach to governance reform – the preliminary recommendations produced were designed to do that whilst bringing the College closer to that regulatory norm.

58. Those preliminary recommendations had been put out to consultation with the veterinary professions and the public. It should be stressed that it had not been a referendum, but a call for new evidence and arguments that might not have been previously considered by Council. The College had received 734 responses primarily from vets, but also from veterinary nurses; the public; allied professionals; and various representative bodies. The responses had been independently assessed by Adelphi Regulatory Consulting and the qualitative analysis broke

them down into main themes to get a sense of whether there was support, neutrality, or opposition to each recommendation.

59. Some of the responses came from organisations on behalf of many, sometimes thousands of people. For context, there was slightly over half the number of responses the College received for the whole Legislative Working Party consultation, which had been much bigger and wide-ranging. As could be seen from the paper and annexes, with the exception of the switch from elections to appointments for members of Council, there was predominantly an absolute majority, or a relative majority, in favour of all reform proposals. There was still a number of people thinking that the College was there to 'represent' them, and there were others that asked for assurances about how appointment systems worked. As such, there were details in the paper of how the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) guidance worked compared to other regulators and more communications would be sent out to help people understand it. There was also an argument that an elected element on the Advancement of the Professions Committee could be retained to oversee the non-regulatory bits as well as all the upstream activities such as Mind Matters and equality, diversity and inclusion, to continue the direct link to the profession – that was separate from the legislative recommendations but complemented them.
60. On page 7, paragraph 28, of the paper, there was a typographical error, and it should read '*inspiring confidence*' not '*inspiring competence*'.
61. Following consultation, there were good grounds for finalising recommendations in their current form. However, it was also important to consider the alternative ideas and suggestions that were raised within the consultation. The College had also received additional correspondence following the consultation from the BVA and the Progressive Veterinary Association (PVA), the latter calling for formal separation between the Royal College and a new regulatory model, whereas the BVA was slightly different as they had already been supportive of reform but felt that, within the College structure, there should be a separate Council of some form to oversee what they termed the Royal College functions. Caution was advised as two governing bodies of equal status would be a source of conflict.
62. There was also the question of whether there should be a separate Veterinary Council sitting underneath the Board alongside Veterinary Nurses Council and any other allied professions. Arguments had been detailed in the paper, and it was worth noting the risk, especially initially, of adding an additional level of bureaucracy that might not achieve a great deal, however, the optics might look advantageous and could also allow the overarching Council to be more narrowly focussed on governance matters. Relative to that was whether the Council continued with 24 members or whether that number should reduce to 12 – a number of respondents, including the BVA and British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) felt there should be a reduction, which would lead to a stronger argument for the overarching Council. That in itself would cause issues and would make it difficult to have representation from all of the other professions the College tended to regulate.
63. It was questioned if there should be a separate Council for allied professionals, to sit alongside VNC (which was technically a committee but one that was called a Council), and would be easy to serve through the committee structure.

64. Council might want to commit to explore some kind of oversight; it was noted it was currently a practical issue and there was not a body formally doing it. The College had reached out to the PSA, who were happy to have a conversation about what would happen in terms of a sort of formal audit, if it was felt to be useful – there would be costs involved that would ultimately be passed on to registrants and thereafter to clients, so more detailed work was required.
65. Finally, there was a push towards the question of having term limits, particularly if there was a separate Chair from the President, as some people were concerned that it might end up with a 'Chair for life'.
66. There was a number of questions at the end of the paper, some of which were to add detail to the reform proposals, and some that might not require a formal vote. It was suggested that the question at paragraph 41c be voted on first before taking the other recommendations.

[Afternote: the suggestion was 41c, but in fact the decision at 41a was taken first.]

67. **Professor Loughrey declared a conflict of interest as a member of the Veterinary Schools Council (VSC), that would be impacted by the discussion.** It was proposed that the conflict be recognised and that all VSC members should remain in the room, contribute to the discussions and vote. This was agreed.
68. Before coming to the individual decisions in the paper, general comments and questions included but were not limited to:
 - what were the thoughts around the reduction of the size of Council and what would it mean?
 - o reform of any kind whether it was the size of Council, or the proportion of veterinary professionals on it, would require the structure of the standing committees to be considered as there would be fewer people to staff them and thought would need to be given to direct appointment to Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC) or co-opting to committees – the College already had the option of co-opting but had not used it much to date. If the number on Council was halved it would have a much bigger impact. Flexibility was being requested in order to more easily manage Council composition, so that it did not mean that all changes would need to be made at one time;
 - there should be a definition of a lay member because it was currently understood that they should not be a member of the RCVS or previously, or currently, regulated by the RCVS; the College was considering the regulation of other allied professionals and if the 'pool' of availability of members was reduced it would change the structure of lay parity;
 - o the PSA had it in their guidance that a lay member was a professional, but not one that [you] were regulating. If the College expanded the number of professionals it regulated, then they would not be in the pool of people to be recruited from. The College had never had a lay person that was a musculoskeletal therapist, or cattle foot trimmer, for example,

so there might not be a big practical impact; but a clear distinction between the allied professions for registration and regulation by the RCVS should be made;

- it was worrying to hear that members of the profession still did not understand what the Royal College did; that they still thought it was a representative body. There was a real opportunity to create some clarity around the differences between its regulatory and Royal College functions as they were distinguishable, but that there was overlap. There was an opportunity in refiguring APC to engage with the profession, to have an elected component of Council and then to call on people to contribute using their skill sets, to challenge and support the executive in order to drive the profession forward; having the two different components would create clarity around what the College actually did and allow the professions to engage. [I] strongly support the progression of BVA's idea that the College consider some form of elected Council for its Charter functions;
- it was not clear what it was that Council was trying to do, whether it was to narrow down what the requests would be to Defra in terms of future legislation or trying to determine the underlying governance structure. It seemed unlikely that a new VSA would have anything laid down in it more detailed than there would be a Council of [X] size. How the architecture below that of the committees, who sat on them, or whether they were elected or not, would probably be down to the College / Council in the future, rather than the legislation itself. Until there was more clarity around the number of members, and the proportion of lay members, Council would not be able to answer those questions;
 - o it was a question of bringing stakeholders on the journey with the College as there were many groups whose willingness to support the top level was contingent on some of the detail; whilst Council would not be able to get into all of the detail, it would be relevant to provide a strong direction of where it might be heading – if it felt there might be some form of elected body within the College it would be helpful to say so;
- support the argument for an elected Veterinary Surgeons Council (or whatever it was called). A huge amount of the College's problems had arisen from the fact it was a Royal College that regulated, and it had 'tried to wear two hats on one head', there would never be a good solution. In addition, the word 'holistic' in the veterinary profession had some negative connotations for many of the College's stakeholders – there was power in language used;
- regarding core regulatory activities and upstream regulatory activities, was that where there could be a separate President and a separate Chair of whatever the Council became?
 - o it was unknown where the Presidential role would lie, but the Chair would have to be the Chair of the regulatory function. If Council thought about the way the College articulated what it did currently – the setting, upholding and advancing the standards of the veterinary profession – then setting and upholding were core functions, whereas advancing was more upstream regulation; interaction was needed where the public interest was – the important 'bit' was from a public perception perspective that the College did not have elected vets deciding upon what other vets should be doing – 'advancing'

was deemed more acceptable for vets and veterinary nurses to be involved in the development of their profession;

- a board could sit above everything and could be relatively small, perhaps the chairs of Councils and others that might be appointed – a type of government governance – do not lose sight of that particular structure;
- a huge part of being a Royal College was to act in the public interest; the problem in terms of perception was not about the Royal College but about the perception of representation. When considering the consultation responses from individuals and some organisations, what they were trying to create was actually a representative function within the RCVS rather than talking about what could be described as a Royal College function; the College had to be very careful it did not try to look like it was fixing that when they were two very different things.

From [my] experience of working in such a structure, and how it worked in practice, the starting principle of the Council (or whatever it was called) was that it was the most senior body within the governance structure, and it had to hold the public interest, it could not split out elements of what made up its public interest duties into other places. It could delegate down into committees but ultimately it held responsibility.

To provide more detail: there was the governing board with a lay chair. It had the President sitting on the board and it was an appointed board. There was also a professional board that delegated to the advancement staff, chaired by the President and made up of professionals – either elected or appointed – who were essentially there with a sort of demographic that reflected the regulated community, and brought the professional perspective. It was very much focussed on two areas – anything about advancement (not the core standards but about pushing the profession and looking to the future in terms of how the profession needed to develop, and respond to changing practice and risk), it was also a body that the main board engaged with to make sure it was informed from a professional perspective. The main board had professionals on it but when it needed more professional perspectives, breadth, or particular specialisms, then it relied on the professional board.

A key element to make it work was by having the two roles – President and Chair – the Chair was not a member of the profession and had a lot more impact and influence in some of the political conversations and some of the public affairs work because they were able to go into that kind of negotiation and policy positioning without any perception of vested interest. The lead member of the profession being the President was someone who could go out and vocalise the professional perspective and engage with the profession; there was a clear delineation of responsibilities for both roles, there was not a hierarchy nor a sense of one being more senior to the other.

Also key, was that the overarching Council could not absolve itself of responsibility – it had to have a relationship with any other body within the structure. It could work, but you had to retain the principles in order to fulfil the public interest duty.

The same principles could be used for the Royal College;

- regarding the issue of having an appointed board and an elected professionally populated group looking at the development and advancement side of the profession, there were general concerns around reporting. [My] understanding was with the lay members of the RCVS, was that the College had decided to re-appoint without advertising, so the College had already picked them without seeing whether there was other talent available and without doing the work. It had already shown it was not going to look for the best possible talent and was instead sticking with what it already had with appointed boards. Having an overarching body made [me] think the same thing would happen and [I] would like to see a good argument based on the RCVS' track record to show that it would not just reappoint people to the overarching body to maintain a direction of travel and the status quo;
 - o there were two issues: comments on the past, and where the College was going now. There was a discussion scheduled for the afternoon around the current position on appointment process, where that would be discussed. In terms of the appointment process going forward, there was a lot of detail of what that would look like and the basis on which it was created in the paper to be discussed;
- there was also a question that Council was asked to consider as part of the discussion around specifying appointment terms. As was already in place at the College, good practice was the stipulation of maximum appointment terms and that was the mechanism where risk was prevented, applied to all members. In addition to the maximum appointment term, it was standard to operate shorter terms within it to make up the maximum term e.g. three or four years, or whatever the rotations could be to allow continuity and transition without disruption; the PSA also had guidance and criteria around that. If there was a move to an appointment system, then that sort of framework would be adopted alongside the appointment process itself;
- Council should also consider the financial impact, because it was all very well picking out a favoured governance structure and making sure it was right, but someone had to pay for it; the appropriate minimum size of allied professional groups should also be considered and how they would be funded; that had been noted during discussions around the regulation of wider groups of professionals;
 - o it should not be underestimated how expensive it would be to have a fully-fledged second Council sitting alongside a board style Council – it would be astronomical – but to convert APC, a structure already in place, and retain an election element and rebranding, would not add huge costs;
- as a College, there were a lot of working parties and groups set up all of the time. Sometimes what happened was that there was a group of people drawn from a pool, and there might not be enough of the right sort of people to do that particular job, so then another group of people were added below – often structures were set up because of the need to get the right skills in the room as there was not much control at the top level about the skills available. A review of the entire structure was required; if there was better control of the skill set at differing levels,

then so many layers might not be necessary to do the day-to-day work, which would have a positive impact on costs;

- Council was in danger of getting into the detail before it had agreed the top line. One approach was to say: what could it do? What would ensure that the College got a new VSA? What would be acceptable to government? What did the College need to do to protect its unique status? There were many examples in the healthcare sector where reform had produced smaller Councils, all with appointed lay parity, and many of the questions had already been answered, implemented, tried and tested. The College must find a way to bridge the gap between the extreme end of the spectrum and a model that was very precious to it. A Royal College that regulates made the interesting point about being value for money; the College had been given the impression that any government legislation would also take value for money into account. Could Council return to the list of points at the end of the paper to bring structure into the conversation because it was in danger of repeating things it had already said – was it talking of responding to the consultation, or was it in the process of moving forward towards a conclusion?
- as commented previously, it felt like the main argument for changing the composition of Council was that the other regulators were doing it or that it needed to be seen to be doing things a certain way; that was style over substance and there was no convincing evidence that the other healthcare professions were in a significantly better regulatory state by moving to those other models, and would argue that the opposite was the case.

The veterinary profession was an evidence-based profession, it should be looking at it as such; it appeared to already doing a very good job and there was a strong argument to say that it had worked, and whilst it might need slight modification, the general principles of its structure should remain consistent because it was not 'broken'; was there significant data to show that in human healthcare the models were significantly better?

Council was also repeating the fallacy that the primary function of the RCVS was to act in the public interest; that was not what the supplemental Charter stated, which indicated the primacy of the terms by the order in which it was written and that the College acted for animal health and welfare and that *in addition* it worked in the broader public interest. Council and the RCVS should change the way it described the function to reflect that because it was a legal document, and it was categorically wrong to keep misrepresenting it. If the primary focus of vets was animal health and welfare, it went some way to resolving the argument over whether the RCVS represented vets;

- o there were two points there: what sort of data were you envisaging would fulfil what was being described?
- [I] did not like arguments that state 'the majority of people liked something', if one of the arguments being used for change was to improve public perception, there should be good data showing the public perception of those various professions had actually improved with their new regulatory models; it could be argued for many of the human healthcare profession

that public perception had dropped. There should also be information about clinical standards and how they had improved, or lowered, with the newer models;

- there was a huge amount of data available where reason, good practice, and best practice governance had been established. The principles in question referred to the data across not only healthcare professions, but also professions more generally in terms of evidence that the public perception underpinned trust and confidence and was hugely reliant on a perception of independence – the principle of independence from the individuals and organisations who were regulated from the decision-making and governance of that regulatory framework, and all of the bodies that had implemented, or were being *required to* implement, updated governance. There was a lot of transparent data, but it was not sitting in one place; all of those reviews would have had the evidence-base behind it;

[Ms Ford could circulate links separately from the meeting if required.]

It should also be kept in mind that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) market investigation into veterinary services for household pets was going on alongside Council's reform discussions. A common outcome after a CMA review was a list of recommendations; it would be sensible for the College to do it itself, have some form of self-reflection and try to move to a model of good practice to avoid a situation where it might be forced into it. It would not prevent it, but the College would stand a better chance of preserving the wearing of two hats if it voluntarily moved to implement some of the principles of good governance.

To correct an earlier assessment, the concept of becoming a chartered body did by its own act establish public interest as the primary duty, therefore, regardless of the wording of any specific charter that any chartered body had and the specifics of its objects and specified purposes, the 'honour' of being a chartered body was to exist in the public interest and being chartered was granted on that basis – it was a principle that sat above any specified narrative or purposes in the documentation;

- for clarity, was there data to show it would improve the perception of the RCVS but not to show that it was effectively better in terms of outcomes?
 - there were two different points: there was evidence available to show that when the public was asked what influenced their trust and confidence in regulated professions, their perception of whether that regulatory model and the governance of it was independent enough from the profession was the primary driver in whether there was confidence or not. That was the reason organisations normally moved to such reforms.

Then there was the different point of whether there was evidence published by bodies that had moved to reform structures as to the impact before and after – that would sit with each individual body and was different for each profession;

- related to the term 'profession', it was understood that that derived from the fact that every member of the profession, in order to practice as a veterinary surgeon, had professed an oath, within that oath it ended with '*ensuring that the health and welfare of animals committed to my care*'. Preceding that was a part about accepting the responsibilities to the public, clients, the profession, and the RCVS, which put vets in a unique position – there were animals under care and the primary concern about their health and welfare, and they were only able to do that by looking at it in the concept of the public, client, wider profession and RCVS. The problem was that the term 'profession' has been destroyed and nobody understood what it meant anymore. Every day the needs of the animal and the public were balanced – if it was about telling the government that the perception of vets was not good because they cannot 'mark their own homework', was it possible to go back to the understanding the fundamental term of what it meant to be a profession?

[My] understanding from the CMA so far was that they were concerned about what might have happened with regards to corporatisation of the profession. The CMA was not a vet, they had not sworn the oath, the College needed to stand up for itself and remain a Royal College that regulated – if it was not prepared to stand by the oath, why have it when you could just state that you were going to do a job;

- o reminding Council of the oath was helpful, and it was also clearly in the Charter – animal health and welfare *and* the wider public interest. The pushback from the public was around the fact that there were some vets who were only elected because other vets wanted them to do the thing that was important to them;
- when walking through the door, it was as an RCVS Councillor, not for any other reason or role; the issues of perception of what that meant were understood and should be made clear;
- many Council members were around the table only because they were elected to the position; it was understood that they were not there to represent people, but that did not stop people from lobbying them about what the College did, or about the vote that had happened earlier in the year about appointed or elected Council. Whatever the College did, it should try and explain to the profession what Council did in the room and as a body;
- there was also the inter-relationship and the complexities of all the various things that Council might vote on and the fact that it was very hard to make one vote without knowing what was going on somewhere else, for example, it might vote for an elected or appointed Council, but it did not know whether it would be with a majority of vets or not. The definition of a lay member was outlined earlier in the meeting, but there was confusion about what an allied profession was; there was no clarity about the number of allied professions and therefore Council did not know how they were going to be represented or how it would affect the number of vets on Council. Council could find itself in the future where it was not talking about a VSA but instead it was talking about, for example, an Animal Caregivers Act.

The veterinary team was understood and there was support for regulation of the professions if it could be defined what they were, but it was entirely possible to see Council sitting in the future returning to the discussions about what was evidence-based medicine, or evidence-

base animal care, there were huge complexities to consider. What was not in the paper was the point of which the College would not go, for example, taking musculoskeletal into consideration, physiotherapists with degrees would be professionals, but what about chiropractors or acupuncturists?

- one of the main reasons the RCVS was founded initially was to differentiate people who had an accredited degree from an accredited university that could practise safely, that founded an evidence-based profession. Take into consideration the Register of Animal Musculoskeletal Practitioners (RAMP); that was a professional organisation that could come under the RCVS, some of the members of which did not believe in evidence-based medicine; it did not appear to have been addressed properly and there was concern that the veterinary profession could be devalued by the inclusion of non-evidence-based practices; or, it could give legitimacy to people such as homoeopaths if they were regulated by the RCVS; it would be bad for the profession, society, and animal welfare; where would the line be drawn? If it was to be a vet-led team including other practitioners and lay people, they had to be from backgrounds that were not counter-productive or, from a medical point of view, dangerous. For practicalities, that would likely mean a larger Council, because if there were only going to be 12 people, half professionals and the other half from a non-veterinary background, suddenly it was not a veterinary regulated profession. There had been discussions on evidence-based medicine for a number of years; if a vote was taken and it went through, there was not a handle on who might, or might not, be regulated by the College;
- o the purpose of the discussion was around the recommendations to Defra around a new VSA, as opposed to nailing down who would be regulated in the future. All concerns were valid and had been addressed in the existing recommendations that went back to the Exemption Orders & Associates Working Party (EOAWP) set up before the Legislation Working Party (LWP) came into existence. 'Allied professions' were defined as paraprofessionals on one of the RCVS' registers, or in a more extended definition candidates to be on a register, and it would be for the RCVS to determine who were added to the registers. It had already been specified that one of the criteria should be that they practice with an evidence-base to prevent any of the problems that were being raised – if the College did not think there was an evidence-base, it would not want to regulate them.

Agree there was an argument for having a larger Council if you wanted to maintain a plurality of vets to help oversee any new paraprofessionals; the people the College was thinking about regulating had already been identified and embedded in the earlier recommendations. The College had been lobbying in the interest of animal health and welfare for many years to stop people without educational qualifications and professional standards underpinned by statute, and to increase the protection of animals;

- one of the things the College needed to demonstrate was that it had surveyed the professions, and it was listening to them; there had been some very strong steers, in particular from the BVA, which represented thousands of veterinary professionals. There was an opportunity to look at an elected component on APC *before* we get a new VSA, and would urge the executive to come back with a formative plan that Council could consider;

- it was appreciated that all of the points were interconnected but, given that Council had nine specific questions to consider whether or not it supported the statements details, with a further six points to consider, the matter of discussing 15 different things within one session was contributing to the lack of clarity. [I] personally would support a fully appointed RCVS Council; lay parity was something [I] agreed but it was who the parity would be set against particularly as it was unknown who the allied professionals would be and the structure of Council thereafter; yes to the flexibility to include allied professionals; no to the separation of the Presidency and Chair of Council; yes, support the reduction in size of the Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC), again taking into account how the structures would be changed given the different allied professionals requiring further consideration, and then there was the proposal for an elected component on APC. There was bias in the elected component of Council which had been very close to having no farm representation this year, that could also happen on an elected APC membership. Regarding whether to introduce a separate governing body or Council of veterinary surgeons, [I] like the current model, and with regards to an appointments system, there had been some distrust raised in the meeting; [I] trust my College to do the appointments process in a very professional manner, without bias. As for separate Councils for each allied profession, it would depend upon how many there were;
 - o regarding the matter of election onto APC, think of it as representation rather than election, because that was what the profession was looking for; if the executive was asked to look at some models, they might include election, suggestions of representative bodies, a mix of different skills, etc., there was more leeway about how the College could handle that process than it currently did for Council;

Mr Wilkinson left the meeting

- working with the Public Advisory Group (PAG), there was currently a lot of trust, this was future proofing and about making Council more independent;
- returning to the point about the BVA representing the profession in generating their response, they did not consult with their members about how the media was going to respond to it. The idea of representation from various bodies would need to come back in detail; the RCVS could only be a strong regulator if it had strong representatives, a job for all members in the political sphere of the veterinary world would be to make it super clear what their roles were;
- how urgent was this as there could be many more steps to be taken?
 - o there were positive noises coming from the government; key were the core questions in order to be able to go to Defra along with the other recommendations and say the College and profession was ready for a new Act – that could not happen until the questions were answered, the rest was detail that did not require legislation and Council could choose not to vote on those. The list of questions in the paper represented the preliminary recommendations that were drawn up after a lot of discussion, they were inter-related and ordered in a way that meant Council would not get items that were mutually exclusive. The package would bring the College a lot closer to the regulatory norm while

representing some of the differences it had as a Royal College that regulated. The consultation results broadly supported those recommendations, however, the importance of bringing its stakeholders with it had been noted;

- it was understood why the questions were there, but not why they were all there now when it was not felt that Defra would give the College more than one governing body; with respect to veterinary nursing colleagues, items g / h / and i in the list of questions in the paper would not be addressed in legislation but instead the College should seek to address how to improve the structures it had now; Defra would be interested in items a / b / and probably f, because those were the things that cropped up in the healthcare regulatory sphere when major reform happened;
- it was important the College went to Defra with unified professions, otherwise it would be criticised; however, it would be better to be clear about a small number of things and say to stakeholders that aspects were going to be given greater consideration.

69. The discussion on the content of the paper was brought to a close. The order of decisions to be taken was discussed.

70. It was agreed to vote on the question at paragraph 41.a) first. There was a motion to amend the wording to include a representative component:

Proposer: Miss L S Belton

Seconder: Dr S Paterson

Vote to be amended from:

Council is asked whether the College should develop proposals for retaining an elected component on the Advancement of the Professions Committee?

To now read:

Council was asked whether the College should develop proposals for retaining a representative component on a committee or Council responsible for the development of the profession which might include elected representatives?

71. The motion was agreed by a majority verbal vote (there was a request to remove the word 'Council' from the amended vote that was not agreed). As the motion had passed, the original vote was no longer required.

72. Per the agreed motion, as outlined above, Council was asked whether the College should develop proposals for retaining a representative component on a committee or Council responsible for the development of the profession which might include elected representative:

For:	21
Against:	1
Abstain:	0

73. This was carried by a majority electronic vote.

74. Council returned to the first set of questions as outlined in paragraph 40 of the paper.

75. Council was asked whether it supported the formal adoption of a fully appointed RCVS Council:

For:	15
Against:	6
Abstain:	1

76. This was carried by a majority electronic vote.

77. Council was asked whether it supported the formal adoption of moving towards lay parity for RCVS Council (for clarification it would be with an appointed Council and the exact make up still to be decided):

For:	19
Against:	3
Abstain:	0

78. This was carried by a majority electronic vote.

79. Council was asked whether it supported the formal adoption of full parity (vote yes) or a small professional majority (vote no). Council decided not to vote on the question as further details and discussion was required.

80. Before taking the next vote, it was emphasised that it was contingent on reassurance of representation on Education Committee (EC), not necessarily the current three Vet Schools Council (VSC) members, but to ensure that there was a majority of appropriate educationalists either as a majority or at least parity. That was different to the current terms of reference of EC derived from the RCVS Delegation Scheme that stated '*a minimum of one third and a maximum of one half of members would be co-opted external members with education expertise*' which would need to be amended. It was argued that whilst expertise was required on EC, it could not be higher than 50% of vet school representation because it voted on items they would be severely conflicted about, and that it should be greater than 50% of *educationalists*.

81. The Chair, Veterinary Nursing Education Committee (VNEC), explained how its structure was made up and suggested the same happen for EC to make sure there was representation from different educational fields and ensure adequate coverage.

82. It was further suggested that a way forward could be to remove VSC appointees from RCVS Council with a proposed development of EC to take into account the representation concerns raised.

83. It was noted that there would also need to be some consideration of wording around a voting majority because not everyone can attend every meeting and if there was 50% it would not take many absentee members before there would be a voting majority from the VSC.

84. It was suggested that, should the vote come back as a majority in favour, an action be taken away to commit to explore the terms of reference, to return to Council with a plan that would ensure an appropriate number of educationalists be on EC and that there should be a structured consultation process with detailed assurances and appropriate checks and balances. This was agreed.

85. Subject to the action as detailed above, Council was asked whether it supported the formal adoption of removal of Vet Schools Council (VSC) appointees from RCVS Council?

For:	22
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

86. This was agreed by a unanimous electronic vote.

87. Council was asked whether it supported the formal adoption of flexibility to include allied professionals. Council decided not to vote on the question as further details and discussion was required.

88. Council was asked whether it supported the formal adoption of separating the Chair of Council from the Presidency. Council decided not to vote on the question as it had not held the requisite discussion prior to coming to a vote.

89. Council was asked whether it supported the formal adoption of a fully appointed Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC)? A vote was taken by show of hands:

For:	19
Against:	3
Abstain:	0

90. This was carried by a majority vote.

91. Council was asked whether it supported the formal adoption of reducing the size of VNC? Council decided not to vote on the question as it linked to further work required around allied professionals.

92. Council was asked whether it supported the formal adoption of lay parity for VNC? Council decided not to vote on the question as it linked to further work required around allied professionals.
93. Council was asked whether to retain a Council (the governing body) of 24 members? Council decided not to vote on the question as it linked to further work required around allied professionals.
94. Council was asked whether the College should investigate introducing a separate governing body / Council for veterinary surgeons, to sit alongside those of the allied professions and below the governing RCVS Council? Council decided not to vote on the question as it linked to further work required around allied professionals.
95. Council was asked whether there should be separate Councils for each allied profession? Council decided not to vote on the question as it linked to further work required around allied professionals.
96. Council was asked whether the College should investigate options for independent oversight of the College?
97. As noted earlier in the meeting, the College had already contacted the PSA, an organisation that looked at regulatory bodies, who was able within its objectives to do consultancy work for the College. It was further noted that the College did already follow PSA standards in many areas of its work.
98. A vote was taken by show of hands:
- | | |
|----------|----|
| For: | 22 |
| Against: | 0 |
| Abstain: | 0 |
99. This was agreed by a unanimous vote.
100. Council was asked whether there should be term limits for the Chair of Council? Council decided not to vote on the question as the discussion had not been held, and that term limits across Council should be considered in conjunction with that discussion.
101. It was agreed that the outstanding votes would come back to Council with further details for discussion in due course.

Reports of standing committees – to note

Advancement of the Professions Committee

102. There were no comments or questions raised.

Audit and Risk Committee

103. There were no comments or questions raised.

Education Committee

104. There were no comments or questions raised.

Finance and Resources Committee

105. There were no comments or questions raised.

Registration Committee

106. There were no comments or questions raised.

Standards Committee

107. There were no comments or questions raised.

Veterinary Nurses Council

108. There were no comments or questions raised.

PIC / DC Liaison Committee

109. There were no comments or questions raised.

Reports of statutory committees – to note

Preliminary Investigation Committee

110. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

111. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

Disciplinary Committee and RVN Disciplinary Committee

112. It was noted that details of individual cases were on the College website. There were no comments or questions raised.

Notices of motion

113. There had been no notices of motion received.

Questions

114. There had been no questions received.

Any other College business (unclassified items)

115. There was no other business to report.

Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified items)

116. There were no items raised to add to the College's Risk Register from the open session of the meeting

Date of next meeting

117. The next scheduled meeting of Council was Thursday, 16 January 2025, commencing at 10:00 am and reconvening in the afternoon. The meeting would be held remotely.

Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)

Update on major projects (confidential)

118. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 – 7.

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) update (confidential)

119. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 8 – 10.

Budget 2025 (confidential)

120. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 11 – 22.

Reporting against vital signs (confidential)

121. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 23 – 30.

RCVS Council lay member re-appointment process (confidential)

122. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 31 – 42.

RCVS Strategic Plan 2025-2029 (confidential)

123. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 43 – 44.

Any other College business (confidential items)

Comments on classified appendices (confidential)

124. There were no comments on the classified appendices as indicated in the classified appendix at paragraph 45.

Other business (confidential)

125. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 46 – 64.

Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)

126. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 65 – 66.

127. The President drew the meeting to a close.

Remote decision made 17 – 19 November 2024

Members:

Miss L S Belton (in the Chair)

Dr L H Allum

Mrs B S Andrews-Jones

Professor D C Barrett

Dr S E Bennett

Mr D Bray

Dr A L Calow

Mr J M Castle

Dr D S Chambers

Mrs O D R Cook

Ms L Ford

Dr M M S Gardiner

Mrs S D Howarth

Mr T M Hutchinson

Professor M D Jones

Dr Z J Kennedy

Professor C M Loughrey

Mrs C-L McLaughlan

Dr A J McLeish

Professor T D H Parkin

Dr S Paterson

Mr T J Walker

Mr W A S Wilkinson

Ms J S M Worthington

*Denotes absent

Statutory Instrument (SI) for the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination (SME)

128. An urgent decision was laid before Council to approve the draft SI for SME:

For:	18
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	6

129. The draft was approved by a majority vote. Following the decision, arrangements were made to officially sign and Seal on the draft; thereafter it was sent to Defra to make arrangements for it to be enacted by the Privy Council. The new SI was expected to be in place for the 2025 examination diet.

Remote decision made 5 – 9 December 2024

Members:

Miss L S Belton (in the Chair)

Dr L H Allum

Mrs B S Andrews-Jones

Professor D C Barrett

Dr S E Bennett

Mr D Bray

Dr A L Calow

Mr J M Castle

Dr D S Chambers

Mrs O D R Cook

Ms L Ford

Dr M M S Gardiner

Mrs S D Howarth

Mr T M Hutchinson

Professor M D Jones

Dr Z J Kennedy

Professor C M Loughrey

Mrs C-L McLaughlan

Dr A J McLeish

Professor T D H Parkin

Dr S Paterson

Mr T J Walker

Mr W A S Wilkinson

Ms J S M Worthington

*Denotes absent

Recruitment of Registrar / Director of Legal Services (DoLS)

130. Council was asked to approve the recommendation from the recruitment panel for the candidate whose CV was included at Annex B to the paper.

131. Additional information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 67.

132. A vote was taken:

For:	14
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	10

133. The appointment was approved by a majority vote. The People Team would commence the onboarding process.

RCVS pays tribute to Professor Simon Doherty

19 December 2024



Following the passing of Professor Simon Doherty FRCVS, the College has paid tribute to the RCVS Fellow who worked closely with the College as a President of the British Veterinary Association and as a member of the Vet Futures Action Group.

Simon graduated from the University of Glasgow in the year 2000 and went on to lead the BVA in 2018-2019, having previously served as President of BVA's Northern Ireland branch and the North of Ireland Veterinary Association.

In his time working with the College, Simon played a key role in turning the Vet Futures project recommendations into clear actions. He also acted as a panel

judge at the second ViVet Symposium's Student Veterinary Innovation competition.

An advocate for animal welfare on an international scale, Simon also supported us on international issues including lobbying for veterinary surgeons to be restored to the Shortage Occupation List and the organisation and running of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe General Assembly in London. He became an RCVS Fellow in 2020.

Paying tribute, RCVS CEO, Lizzie Lockett, said: "We are very saddened to hear of Simon's passing. His energy, enthusiasm and willingness to work positively with colleagues and peers from the veterinary professions and beyond to achieve the best outcomes for animal health and welfare have always been evident and will be sorely missed.

"Throughout my career, I have been lucky enough to work with Simon on a number of occasions. He radiated warmth and optimism and was a genuinely lovely person who cared deeply and passionately about his work and the professions.

"Our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with his family, colleagues and many friends."

BVA's tribute to Simon can be found on the [BVA website](#).

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	16 January 2025
Title	RCVS Accreditation of Veterinary Programmes in the European Union.
Summary	<p>In January 2024, RCVS Council carried out their annual review of the temporary policy in place to recognise graduates from Schools accredited by the European Association for Establishments in Veterinary Education (EAEVE). As in previous years, it was agreed that the policy should remain in place, but for a maximum of five years. The policy should end in January 2029 at the latest and will continue to be reviewed annually until that time.</p> <p>Council was keen to see proposals for a longer-term solution to the temporary policy, specifically plans for the direct accreditation of European Schools by RCVS, and in March 2024 agreed to an approach whereby European veterinary schools would be targeted to offer RCVS accreditation according to criteria associated with the estimated impact on the UK veterinary workforce and likelihood of achieving successful accreditation status.</p> <p>Further to the above, negotiations with EAEVE have since progressed and it has been agreed that RCVS may send up to two representatives, with Observer status, on EAEVE accreditation visits in the EU. Whilst these representatives will not have a role in contributing to the EAEVE report, they would be responsible for gathering evidence and completing the RCVS accreditation rubric, detailing how a programme is meeting RCVS standards.</p> <p>During the visitation, it has been agreed through EAEVE that RCVS may ask questions and collect evidence in relation to our standards, providing EAEVE have covered everything that they need for their reporting purposes. It is not anticipated that this will cause an issue for the RCVS representatives, as there is a degree of harmony between the RCVS and EAEVE standards.</p>
Decisions required	Council to note progress with direct accreditation of EU veterinary programmes.
Attachments	<p>Annex A: List of European veterinary schools teaching in English and the number of registrants with the RCVS from those programmes (confidential)</p> <p>Annex B: Flow chart detailing how RCVS can align with EAEVE visitation processes.</p>
Author	<p>Mr Jordan Nicholls Lead for Undergraduate Education j.nicholls@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0704</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Confidential	3
Annex B	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained	
Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales	
Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Accreditation of Veterinary Programmes in the European Union

Background

1. Following the departure of the UK from the European Union (EU), veterinary graduates from EU schools were no longer eligible to register to work in the UK automatically under the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (MRPQ) legislation.
2. As approximately half of new RCVS registrants at that time were graduates from the EU, this had the potential to have a significant impact on the veterinary workforce in the UK. This was especially concerning given the wider context of capacity shortages within the UK veterinary profession, with challenges in recruitment and retention across all roles. There has also been a significant growth in demand for veterinary certification linked to the export of animal products due to EU exit, which has further exacerbated the shortage of veterinary surgeons.
3. Consequently, RCVS Council made a temporary policy decision in 2019 to continue to recognise graduates from schools with approval / accreditation by the European Association of Establishments of Veterinary Education (EAEVE), to mitigate the impact on the workforce.
4. It was also agreed that this decision should be reviewed annually, as concerns have been raised around EAEVE standards and processes not being equivalent to those in the UK. Whilst there is still a great deal of harmony between the accreditation standards of EAEVE and those of the RCVS, key differences remain as the RCVS implemented new standards and methodology in 2023. A more permanent solution to addressing the shortfall in graduates from the EU registering to work in the UK was needed.
5. An increasing number of schools in the EU are now choosing to deliver veterinary programmes in English. This may provide them with a 'competitive edge' as students are often seen to have more opportunities to work across Europe, including in the UK, when graduating from such programmes. Furthermore, some UK students who are unsuccessful in securing a place at a UK veterinary school are known to apply to EU schools delivering veterinary degrees in English, hoping to return to the UK and work following graduation.
6. Although many schools in the EU offering vet degrees in English have EAEVE approval or accreditation status, this only provides a short-term assurance that their graduates will be eligible to work in the UK. EAEVE 'approval' status no longer exists, and therefore those schools with 'approval' will see their eligibility come to an end in the next few years. At this point, the school can opt to be non-accredited (at which time RCVS would not recognise their graduates) or they would need to apply for EAEVE Accreditation. If successful, and if awarded full accreditation or conditional accreditation (minor deficiencies only), their graduates would continue to be recognised by RCVS, but only as long as the temporary policy remains in place. However, new EAEVE procedures include a classification of 'Pending Accreditation' whereby one to several major deficiencies have been found with the vet programme; such programmes are not recognised by the RCVS.
7. Since the temporary policy to recognise graduates from EAEVE accredited schools was introduced in 2019, it has been reviewed annually in January. This review considered a number of

factors, including workforce data and registrations from European graduates, as well as the degree of harmonisation of accreditation standards.

8. Although the number of registrants from European schools has increased since the UK left the EU and the pandemic, concerns about workforce numbers remain and a decision to continue with the policy had been made each year, despite concerns around decreasing harmonisation of accreditation standards. However, in January 2024, Council agreed that a longer-term solution should be developed as a priority and a time limit was set for the temporary recognition policy to come to an end in five years' time.

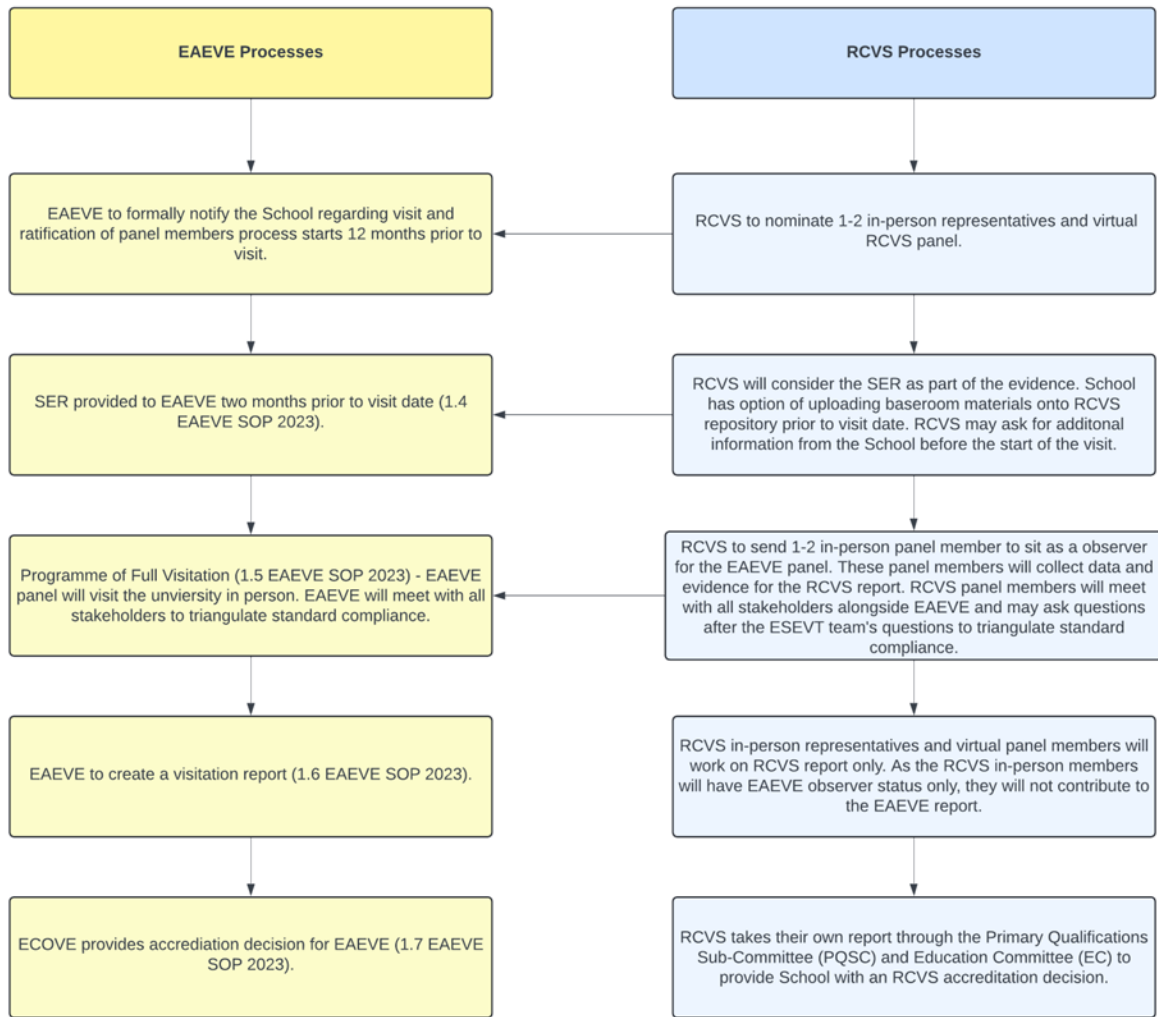
2024 update

9. Current registrant data from EU schools teaching in English can be seen in **Annex A**. Since the Council decision to end the temporary policy, the Education Department has been liaising with veterinary programmes in the EU to offer them direct RCVS accreditation. Previously this task was somewhat challenging as it would have required a full accreditation event from the RCVS, comprising a full accreditation team of 8 individuals (and payment of associated costs) along with an accreditation fee of £17,000, which is likely to be less attractive to EU schools.
10. However, as negotiations with EAEVE have progressed since Council last reviewed this issue in March 2024, it has now been agreed that the RCVS can send representation on EAEVE accreditation visits when requested by the school, which vastly reduces the costs involved for veterinary schools and makes the proposition of direct RCVS accreditation more attractive.
11. The Executive Committee of EAEVE (EAEVE ExCom) has agreed, when requested by a school, to plan 'Full Visitations' with RCVS observers in full agreement with the ESEVT SOP 2023, which means:
 - RCVS is allowed to contact Veterinary Education Establishments (VEEs) members of EAEVE to ask if they are interested in being accredited by RCVS.
 - If yes, in addition to the ESEVT team, RCVS nominates one or two experts who are considered as Observers for the ESEVT procedure.
 - These Observers receive the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), may ask for additional information from the VEE before the start of the Visitation, may participate in all formal and confidential meetings of the ESEVT team, may join the Google-Docs draft report, may ask questions during formal meetings after the questions of the ESEVT team, may make a brief presentation after the Chairperson during the Exit Presentation, and may cut & copy the ESEVT Visitation Report for the RCVS report.
 - Both final reports (ESEVT and RCVS) and final decisions for accreditation are independent and may therefore differ.
 - This agreement should be revised after one year based on the feedback/post-visitation questionnaires.
12. The 2025 schedule of EAEVE visits was used as the starting point for considering which schools to approach. Those with visitations scheduled that did not overlap with the RCVS UK visitations were selected and a total of five schools were contacted:

- a) Ankara (Turkey)
- b) Istanbul (Turkey)
- c) Kosice (Slovakia)
- d) Barcelona (Spain)
- e) Wroclaw (Poland)

13. From this list, three schools responded to the invitation. Kosice declined the offer, expressing that they did not wish for accreditation from the RCVS at this time and that they were only focussed on EAEVE recognition.
14. Both Ankara and Barcelona responded seeking more information on how accreditation could work through joining up with EAEVE on their next visit. Following those meetings, a flowchart was produced detailing how the RCVS could align with EAEVE processes to get the assurances that it needs on accreditation standards. This flowchart can be found in **Annex B** for reference.
15. Representatives from Ankara have since been in touch with the department to explain that the senior leadership of the University has now changed, and they are internally reviewing whether accreditation from the RCVS is still a strategic aim.
16. Barcelona, however, has indicated that it would welcome representatives from the RCVS on their next scheduled EAEVE visitation in September 2025. At the time of writing this paper, the department is waiting for confirmation from EAEVE on how many observers can join their panel.
17. Whilst it should be noted that the programme at Barcelona is not taught in English (Catalan (69%), Spanish (30%) and English (1%)), it should not be a problem for an accreditation panel as an EAEVE requirement for accreditation visits is for all documentation to be translated. In terms of workforce entering the UK, the RCVS registered nine Barcelona graduates in 2024.
18. The full 2026 EAEVE schedule has not yet been released. Once published, it will inform the next round of invitations.
19. Council is invited to note the progress with direct accreditation of EU veterinary programmes.

Annex B – Flowchart detailing how RCVS can align with EAEVE visitation processes



Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	16 January 2025
Title	Council culture
Summary	<p>This paper provides a summary of the actions agreed by Council in relation to Council effectiveness, along with a reminder of the survey results completed in 2023, following recommendations made by the Council Culture Working Group (CCWG). Council is requested to complete the survey again and confirm that documents derived from the CCWG and agreed by Council, remain fit for purpose. The paper also includes the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee members and the Complaints Procedure, for their annual review. Finally, it provides job descriptions for Officer and Committee Chair roles for Council members wishing to be considered for these roles in the future.</p>
Decisions required	Comments are welcome on any aspect of the paper, and in particular any updates required to Annexes B and C.
Attachments	<p>Annex A – Survey results from 2023 Annex B – Code of Conduct Annex C – Complaints procedure Annex D – Job Descriptions and reflection conversation extract update</p>
Author	<p>Lisa Hall People Director l.hall@rcvs.org.uk</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annexes A – D	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
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²Classification rationales

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Council Culture

Background

1. In 2022 the Council Culture Working Group (CCWG) was formed to reviewed ways of working within Council to ensure effective performance which included (but not limited to) a review of the Code of Conduct, a review of the complaints procedure in relation to Council members, how Council perceived their performance via a survey (Governance App) and how to have good conversations through the reflection conversation.
2. The survey was developed early in 2023 based on the Governance App approach to establish Council effectiveness following work undertaken by the CCWG who were stood down following satisfactory completion of its activity in December 2023.
3. Council agreed to complete the survey again to assess progress since the last survey and to annually review the documents updated by the CCWG (Code of Conduct for Council and Committee members (**Annex B**), Complaints Procedure (**Annex C**)) to ensure they were still relevant to support Council effectiveness.
4. Details of the outcome of the survey can be found in **Annex A**. The traffic light indicators were used to highlight areas that showed (what were considered to be) low, average and good scores.
5. Actions were taken to help improve the areas of low score such as additional training, reflection conversations and clear job descriptions were created for Officers and Committee Chairs (**Annex D**).

Actions required

6. **Survey:** to gain a comparison of the results obtained in the first survey, Council is required to complete the sixty-five questions survey. It is expected that all Council members complete the survey to have a full picture of everyone's views, acknowledging that some of those completing the survey will not have done so the first time around. The timeline for completion is shown below. It is advised that Council discuss the results post survey, paying particular attention to those areas where the score has increased or decreased since the first survey and considers possible action where scores are low. It may be necessary for the CCWG to regroup subject to actions required which will be discussed at the March Council meeting.

Activity	By when
Survey available to Council for completion (to be sent a link via email)	16 Jan
Survey completed	31 Jan
Results obtained	6 Feb
Results communicated	6 Mar
Results discussed and action agreed	13 Mar

7. **Code of Conduct and Complaints Process:** Council is requested to review the documents in Annexes B and C to confirm they remain fit for purpose and continue to support a positive culture and Council effectiveness.

8. **Job specifications:** to help with better planning and support the reflection conversation, documentation has been updated in order to capture those Council members who may be interested in Officers or Chair positions in the future. Council is requested to engage in any conversation about future roles when having the reflection conversation meeting. The updated information is shown in Annex D along with job descriptions. It would be helpful to hear any other suggestions for effective development of future Council leaders.

Organisational purpose	
We understand what the RCVS is here to achieve.	4.44
We can demonstrate that the RCVS is achieving its purposes under the Act and Charter.	4.04
We periodically check that our purposes are relevant.	3.36
We can all explain the RCVS's public benefit.	3.8
We regularly evaluate the difference the RCVS is making.	2.96
We regularly review our financial sustainability.	4.32
We recognise our responsibility to the wider environment we operate in.	4.12
We act in a way that's consistent with the RCVS's values.	4.16
Integrity	
We have a clear set of aims and a plan for achieving them.	4.04
We act with honesty, trustworthiness and care.	4.48
We act in the best interests of animal health and welfare, and public health.	4.28
We make objective and independent decisions.	3.88
No one person or group has undue influence in the RCVS.	3.84
All of our decisions are consistent with the RCVS's values.	4.08
The RCVS follows the law, relevant codes and standards, and other good practice initiatives.	4.28
We promote a culture in which everyone feels safe and respected.	4.08
We understand how real and perceived conflicts of interests can affect the RCVS's performance and reputation.	4.2
Leadership	
Council members disclose any actual or potential conflicts and deal with these in line with the RCVS's governance documentation and a regularly reviewed conflicts of interest policy.	4.00
We live the RCVS's vision and values.	4.04
We take collective and individual responsibility for our actions.	3.96
We have clear priorities, structures and processes.	4.00

We have proper procedures for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal, remuneration and, if necessary, dismissal of the Chief Executive.	3.80
Council members' roles and responsibilities are formally recorded.	3.92
Our values underpin our decisions and the RCVS's activities.	4.12
We recognise, respect and welcome diverse, different and, at times, conflicting Council member views.	4.08
We provide oversight, direction, support and constructive challenge to the organisation and its staff.	3.76
Staff feel confident and able to provide the information, advice and feedback necessary to Council.	3.72
Board effectiveness	
We give sufficient time to the RCVS to carry out our responsibilities effectively.	3.84
Our culture, behaviours and processes help us to be effective.	3.6
We take decisions collectively and confidently.	3.88
Once decisions are made, Council unites behind them and accepts them as binding.	3.72
Where differences of opinion arise, we take time to consider the range of perspectives and outcomes, respecting all viewpoints.	4.2
Council has, and regularly considers, the skills, knowledge and experience it needs to govern, lead and deliver the RCVS's purposes effectively	3.48
Council is an appropriate size that the needs of the RCVS's work can be carried out and changes to Council's composition can be managed without too much disruption.	3.4
Council members receive a proper induction when they join Council that covers all areas of the RCVS's work.	3.36
Council reviews its own performance every year, including that of the officer team.	2.8
ED&I	
The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in the organisation and help to deliver the RCVS's public benefit.	4.28
Council is more effective because it reflects different perspectives, experiences and skills, including, where applicable, from stakeholders.	4.04
We assess our own understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion and identify any gaps in understanding which could be filled by discussion, learning, research or information.	3.44
We regularly assess the RCVS's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.	3.36

Council assesses how it demonstrates inclusive behaviours in its decision making and how it engages with all its stakeholders.	3.36
We set a clear organisational approach to equality, diversity and inclusion in line with the RCVS's aims, strategy, culture and values.	3.96
Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is supported by appropriate plans, policies, milestones, targets and timelines.	3.56
We ensure that there are appropriate arrangements and resources in place to monitor and achieve the organisation's equality, diversity and inclusion plans and targets.	3.36
We lead the organisation's progress towards achieving its equality, diversity and inclusion plans and targets and discuss updates on this.	3.36
We periodically take part in learning and/or reflection about equality, diversity and inclusion and understand our responsibilities in this area.	3.52
Openness and accountability	
The organisation's work and impact are appreciated by all its stakeholders.	2.64
The RCVS is seen to have legitimacy in representing its stakeholders.	3.24
Council identifies the key stakeholders with an interest in the RCVS's work.	4.08
We make sure that there is a strategy for regular and effective communication with stakeholders about the RCVS's purposes, values, work and achievements.	3.64
We consult stakeholders about significant changes to the RCVS's policies.	4.08
We get regular reports on the positive and negative feedback and complaints given to the RCVS.	3.28
We learn from mistakes and use this learning to improve performance and internal decision-making.	3.36
We have a transparent, well-publicised, effective and timely process for making, handling and resolving complaints.	3.72
We publish the process for setting the remuneration of any senior staff, and their remuneration levels, in the RCVS's annual report.	3.96
Decision making	
We are clear that Council's main focus is on strategy, performance and assurance, rather than operational matters.	3.64
We have a sound decision-making and monitoring framework which helps the organisation deliver its purposes under the Act and Charter.	3.88
We are aware of the range of financial and non-financial risk we need to monitor and manage.	4.12

Our committees have suitable terms of reference and membership.	4.4
The work of any third party suppliers or services is carried out in the interest of the RCVS, and in line with its values.	3.92
Our operational plans and budgets are in line with the RCVS's purposes, strategic aims and resources.	4.36
We regularly monitor and check performance against the RCVS's strategic aims, operational plans and budgets	4.04
We regularly review the RCVS's specific significant risk and make plans to mitigate and manage them appropriately.	4.12
We review the effectiveness of the RCVS's approach to risk at least every year.	3.96
We have an effective process for appointing and reviewing the RCVS's external auditors.	4.12

Code of conduct for Council (and committee) members

Role of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)

1. The RCVS has statutory and Royal Charter functions; and, through the RCVS Trust (also known as RCVS Knowledge), charitable functions. These are set out more fully in the Charter; the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966; and the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association. See: <http://www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/royal-charter-and-legislation>.

Purpose of this Code

2. In order for the RCVS to command the confidence of all interested parties, it is necessary for the Council members to observe appropriate standards of conduct. The purpose of this Code is to help to ensure that high standards are met and that those who act in the name of the RCVS are beyond reproach in the way they conduct themselves and the business of the RCVS. The required standards are set out in this Code that applies to all members of Council upon appointment. Its provisions apply generally to those who sit on committees; sub-committees; working parties, etc.

Principles

3. In performing their duties, Council members should observe the seven principles of public life ('The Nolan Principles'); namely:

Selflessness: holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest;

Integrity: holders of public office should avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefit for themselves, their family or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships;

Objectivity: holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias;

Accountability: holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this;

Openness: holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so;

Honesty: holders of public office should be truthful;

Leadership: holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

General guidelines

4. Council members are expected to:
 - a. Work in the best interests of the public, and of animal health and welfare and public health;
 - b. Respectfully listen to the voices of the professions, the public and other stakeholders, and reflect them in discussions where appropriate, ensuring they are put into context;
 - c. Neither be answerable to, nor represent, any group of individuals;
 - d. Support the College's vision and work towards the success of the College and its functions;
 - e. Live the College's values (diverse and inclusive; compassionate; forward thinking; straight talking);
 - f. Act at all times in a constructive, supportive and compassionate manner;
 - g. Exercise a duty of care to the staff employed by the College, working through the CEO and Registrar;
 - h. Recognise the importance of a collegiate atmosphere where robust discussion is welcomed in the formation of policy and multiple points of view are listened to and respected;
 - i. Respect and support the decisions made by Council when communicating externally;
 - j. Communicate College activities and positions to relevant stakeholders.

Specific guidelines

5. Council members are responsible for ensuring that they have a clear understanding of their role and the role of the RCVS as set out in the VSA 1966, and the Royal Charters. Council Members are not elected or appointed to represent any constituency, and all have a responsibility equivalent to trustees for the governance of the College. This includes overall fiscal and legal responsibility. Having been elected or appointed, they have a responsibility to make themselves available for meetings of the Council and any committees, sub-committees, working parties, etc., to which they have been appointed (unless they are unable, with good reason, to do so); and to be diligent in reading papers and giving appropriate consideration to issues to ensure that they are making decisions on a fully informed basis.
6. Council members should follow the principles of mutual respect in all their activities and be prepared to accept that others may have equally strong views in good faith that differ from their own. Council members must uphold high standards of courtesy and respect in all Council debates and meetings. Council members should treat colleagues with respect and not engage in any behaviour towards any colleague or member of staff that might reasonably be interpreted as discriminatory, bullying or harassment.

Collective responsibility

7. Council members are collectively responsible for the decisions, even if they have voted against, abstained from voting or were absent when the decision was made, and are expected to respect and support the collective decision, when communicating externally.

Confidentiality

8. Council members must not disclose information that has been shared with them but designated by the RCVS as private or confidential. If members are in any way unsure if they can disclose information, then they should in the first instance seek advice from the President. If members

disagree with a classification of private or confidential then members should raise with the relevant Committee Chair / President

Conflicts of interest

9. The '*Policy for managing conflicts of interest*' (see: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/conflicts-of-interest-policy/>) requires all Council members to file a Declaration of Interest; to keep it up to date; and to declare any additional interests as necessary at each meeting and generally to comply with the requirements of the policy.

Communication

10. Council members have a role in communicating with the public and the profession about what the RCVS does but should take care to ensure that what they say is accurate and consistent with established policies and procedures – if in doubt, they should consult the Communications Department. Any communication with the media on behalf of the RCVS must be discussed with the Communications Department in advance.
11. Council members have a responsibility to distinguish clearly when speaking or writing in any public forum, between the views of the RCVS and their personal views, or of any other organisation they may be affiliated with.

Enforcement

12. Complaints that an RCVS Council member has breached this Code of Conduct should be made at the earliest opportunity to the RCVS President /Registrar, in accordance with the '*Policy for Dealing with Complaints about Council Members*'.

Agreed by Council 8 June 2023

Policy for dealing with complaints about Council (and committee) members

Purpose

1. This Policy sets out the procedures to be followed in dealing with a complaint about a Council member, where it is alleged or appears that the conduct of the Council member has fallen below the standards expected.

Scope

2. The standards expected of Council members are as set out in the Code of Conduct for Council Members. Any alleged breach of the Code or other conduct unbefitting of a Council member should be considered in accordance with this Policy.
3. Poor performance on the part of a Council member would normally fall out of the scope of this policy and be dealt with by means of advice issued to the Council member by the President / Registrar. However, consistent poor performance that goes unremedied, or exceptionally poor performance, may be matters when a Council member could be declared unfit to be a member of Council and, therefore, becomes an appropriate matter to be dealt with under this policy.
4. Complaints about a Council member should be raised in writing with the President and Registrar. In the event that the complaint relates to the President then it should be raised with the Senior Vice President and the Registrar.
5. In the event that the complaint relates to actions of Council as a whole, these should be raised with the Privy Council: <https://privycouncil.independent.gov.uk/work-of-the-privy-council-office/complaints>.

Who can bring a complaint?

6. Complaints may be brought by anyone including Council members, MRCVS', RVNs and employees of the RCVS and should be raised as soon as practicable, and in any event no later than [6] calendar months after the date of the alleged misconduct (or the date on which the complainant became aware of it). The President (or as the case may be Senior Vice President) may dispense with the time limit, if they consider that there were exceptional circumstances and that it is reasonable to do so.
7. Should the complaint be brought by a third party, then the complainant must ensure the individual concerned is aware of the complaint and happy for it to proceed.

Procedure re: Complaint

8. Upon receipt of a complaint the President / Registrar (or as the case may be Senior Vice-President may:
 - a. Conclude that the complaint does not fall within the scope of this policy, and will notify both the Complainant and Council member accordingly; or
 - b. Direct that the matter should be referred to Stage 1

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

9. The complaint will be investigated by the President (or Senior Vice-President). The President (or Senior Vice-President) will notify the Council member complained about and invite them to comment on the complaint and make representations. The President (or Senior Vice-President) may also seek such other information as they consider necessary to carry out an investigation. If the President (or Senior Vice-President) considers that the complaint is capable of Informal Resolution, they will notify the parties of the results of the investigation and the proposed resolution. Resolution could involve mediation between the parties or a written warning or such other resolution as is considered appropriate including to dismiss the complaint or to uphold the complaint but with no further action taken.
10. If the President (or Senior Vice-President) considers that the complaint is not capable of informal resolution and / or if it is considered that, if upheld, it is such that it could lead to the suspension or removal of the Council member, they will write to all parties to advise that the matter will be referred to Stage 2 for Formal Resolution by a Panel (see below).
11. A referral to Stage 2 may also be made if the Complainant is unhappy with the outcome proposed resolution at Stage 1. The President (or Senior Vice-President) will write to the parties giving reasons for their decision to refer or not to Stage 2.
12. The President (or Senior Vice-President) may delegate responsibility for contacting parties and other administrative functions to an appropriate member of RCVS staff.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

13. Where Formal Resolution is directed, the President (or Senior Vice-President) will direct this to be carried out by one of the Legal Assessors appointed to the RCVS under paragraph 6 of Schedule 2 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966, who shall according to the nature and extent of the complaint decide the appropriate procedures to be followed to determine the complaint; to include, for example, written submissions / formal hearings. The procedures to be followed shall be at the discretion of the Legal Assessor but would ordinarily include the establishment of a Panel of three persons (the Conduct Committee), to include: the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, a lay person, and a professional person; to consider the complaint (the lay person and professional person ought not to be members of Council). The Legal Assessor may also delegate responsibility for contacting participants and other administrative functions to an appropriate member of RCVS staff.
14. Upon conclusion of the investigation the Legal Assessor will submit a written report and recommendations to the President / Registrar to include one of the following:
 - a. To dismiss the complaint;
 - b. To uphold the complaint, but with no further action;
 - c. That the Council member should be issued with a written warning;
 - d. That the Council member should be suspended for a period of up to 12 months, or removed from Council.

- e. That the police or a regulatory, law enforcement or prosecuting body be informed of the matter.
15. The President / Registrar will arrange for the Report and recommendation of the Legal Assessor / Conduct Committee to be considered by RCVS Council, in private session which will decide on the appropriate action to be taken.
 16. Any decision by Council as set out in paragraph 14 above should be reported in open session of Council. Where the complaint involves or refers to the health of any person the President may however at their discretion direct that the matter should be kept private and not reported publicly. Similarly, the President may at their discretion determine that no information should be disclosed publicly until the conclusion of any action by the police / other enforcement or regulatory body.
 17. Where Council upholds a complaint about a member (irrespective of the sanction imposed), then if such a member has concerns about the process by which the investigation was handled and within 21 days makes a request in writing for an independent review, setting out in full the reasons for their concerns, the Registrar will appoint an independent barrister or solicitor of at least 10 years' standing to review the way in which the investigation was dealt with and provide a written report. If the report supports the concerns raised by the member, Council will be asked to reconsider its decision.
 18. Where a complaint has been received and before a decision is reached on that complaint (whether at Stage 1 or Stage 2) the member resigns from Council, in the event that the member complained about is re-elected / re-appointed to Council within 2 years of the date of resignation the complaint will be re-activated and considered as set out above.
 19. This Policy may be implemented, if considered appropriate to do so by the President / Registrar, in relation to a complaint against a member of one of the College's Committees (other than Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC), Disciplinary Committee (DC), Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC), or Registered Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee (RVN DC)) who is not also a Council Member.

Agreed by Council 8 September 2022

Role specification for Officer Team member: President

Reporting to: RCVS Council

Elected by Council from within its membership, annually, usually for a one-year term commencing at Royal College Day in any given year.

Based at own personal location and expected to travel to in-person meetings and events; they will be in receipt of an annual payment based on the number of planned meetings per year, which is reflective of the different time commitments and time spent chairing Council and committees.

Background

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is the regulatory body for the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions in the UK. It sets, upholds and advances veterinary standards for the benefit of animal health and welfare, and public health.

The Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966 requires Council to elect the President and Vice-Presidents for the coming RCVS year at the first Council meeting after the Annual General Meeting (AGM) (this is usually immediately following the AGM on the same day). Their term of office comes to an end at the first Council meeting after the annual general meeting the following year (as above). The custom has been for Council to elect as President the Vice-President (Junior) who took office the previous year, and to elect the retiring President to be a Vice-President (Senior) for a further year.

For many years Council has adopted a practice of holding a provisional election for the new Vice-President in advance of the formal election which follows the AGM. The provisional election is held at the scheduled March Council meeting.

In addition to abiding by the role of members of RCVS Council, see: [Role of Council Members - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#), the President is a member of the College's Officer Team.

Officer Team

The Officer Team comprises the President, Junior Vice-President, Senior Vice-President and Treasurer, who are elected by the Council according to the election rules. It oversees the management of all College business and oversees matters of governance and the management of resources. The Officer Team reports to Council.

The Officer Team will meet on a regular basis with senior staff in order to discuss relevant matters, with a focus on external meetings, media management, communications and stakeholder relationships. The Chair of the Veterinary Nurses' Council will be invited to attend meetings of the Officer Team. For full terms of reference, see: [Officer Team - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#).

The Officer Team will also act as the **Nominations Subcommittee**, together with the Chair of VN Council, CEO and Registrar, and one veterinary and one veterinary nurse member of Council, proposing who will be awarded College honours and awards (choices will be ratified by Council and, for the VN Golden Jubilee Award, VN Council).

The Officer Team will also act as the **Remuneration Subcommittee**. The Remuneration Subcommittee meets annually to decide a policy on how the budget allocated to staff salaries, as agreed by Council as part of the budget-setting process, should be allocated, for example, what percentage should be allocated to salary increases and what to bonuses. It does not look at individual staff salaries, which is the role of the Senior Team, apart from the remuneration of the CEO, which is considered by the President in line with the aforementioned policy. The Subcommittee consists of the Officer Team, with the following staff members attending in a non—voting capacity: Directors of People and Operations, Registrar and CEO.

Key tasks

- To work with other members of the Officer Team and senior staff to ensure the College delivers on its purpose, and within budget
- To preside at General Meetings and meetings of Council (further information on being an RCVS Committee Chair available on request)
- To take responsibility for Council members – check in conversations, training needs, etc.
- To take action in the name of the College and of the Council as may be reasonably necessary (subject to the provisions of the Charter, Act and Meeting Procedure Rules)
- To play a key part in the development and co-ordination of policy
- To chair meetings between RCVS and other organisations e.g. Joint Officer meetings with veterinary organisations
- To act as a key College spokesperson in the media, always in consultation with relevant College staff
- To represent the College at 'in-house' and external functions, including congresses and events, as agreed with the Officer Team
- To preside at Regional Meetings
- To address Admission Ceremonies of veterinary surgeons
- To address veterinary students – predominantly 4th year students, welcome and introduction to the RCVS lecture, held in conjunction with staff members from the College's Education, and Legal, Teams
- To visit veterinary schools to address students, usually fourth year, but often first year also

Skills required

- Ability to deal with confidential and / or sensitive issues in a timely manner
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to communicate with stakeholders at all levels
- Ability to deal with people in a compassionate, just and fair manner

Personal behaviour

- See all sides of an argument and encourage constructive debate
- Make sure all voices in the room are heard and respected

- Declare any relevant gifts, hospitality or lobbying they receive in their capacity as President
- Make themselves familiar with key subject areas but will not be expected to be an expert
- Work with the relevant RCVS staff members in a constructive and respectful manner
- Respect and encourage the College's [statement of intent on diversity and inclusion](#)
- Respect and embody the College's values and the Nolan principles

Personal characteristics

- Approachable
- Tactful and diplomatic
- Empathetic
- Able to delegate
- Strategic thinker
- Good networker
- Good at team building
- Self-reflective and willing to learn
- Willing to encourage and develop others
- Able to manage conflict

Role specification for Officer Team member: Treasurer

Reporting to: RCVS Council

Elected by Council from within its membership, annually, for a maximum of three consecutive years, commencing at Royal College Day in any given year.

Based at own personal location and expected to travel to in-person meetings and events; they will be in receipt of an annual payment based on the number of planned meetings per year, which is reflective of the different time commitments.

Background

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is the regulatory body for the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions in the UK. It sets, upholds and advances veterinary standards for the benefit of animal health and welfare, and public health.

When the RCVS Supplemental Charter was granted on 17 February 2015, new Bye-Laws came into force on the same date that the Charter came into effect; and that the Office of Treasurer shall be elected from amongst the members of Council, by the Council, in each year. It was agreed at the September 2017 Council Meeting that the Office of Treasurer be elected through the same process used to select a new Vice-President (Junior) and Chairs of Standing Committees; to take place at the scheduled March Council Meeting each year. It was further agreed that individuals undertaking the role be limited to a maximum period of three years, elected annually.

In addition to abiding by the role of members of RCVS Council, see: [Role of Council Members - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#), the President is a member of the College's Officer Team.

Officer Team

The Officer Team comprises the President, Junior Vice-President, Senior Vice-President and Treasurer, who are elected by the Council according to the election rules. It oversees the management of all College business and oversees matters of governance and the management of resources. The Officer Team reports to Council.

The Officer Team will meet on a regular basis with senior staff in order to discuss relevant matters, with a focus on external meetings, media management, communications and stakeholder relationships. The Chair of the Veterinary Nurses' Council will be invited to attend meetings of the Officer Team. For full terms of reference, see: [Officer Team - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#).

The Officer Team will also act as the **Nominations Subcommittee**, together with the Chair of VN Council, CEO and Registrar, and one veterinary and one veterinary nurse member of Council, proposing who will be awarded College honours and awards (choices will be ratified by Council and, for the VN Golden Jubilee Award, VN Council).

The Officer Team will also act as the **Remuneration Subcommittee**. The Remuneration Subcommittee meets annually to decide a policy on how the budget allocated to staff salaries, as agreed by Council as part of the budget-setting process, should be allocated, for example, what percentage should be allocated to salary increases and what to bonuses. It does not look at individual staff salaries, which is the role of the Senior Team, apart from the remuneration of the CEO, which is considered by the President in line with the aforementioned policy. The Subcommittee consists of the Officer Team, with the following staff members attending in a non—voting capacity: Directors of People and Operations, Registrar and CEO.

Key tasks

- To oversee and scrutinise the organisation's finances on behalf of Council, chairing the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) and ensuring that the organisation's financial interests are taken into account in all debates
- To attend Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meetings as an ex officio observer
- To attend meetings of the RCVS Knowledge Board of Trustees

Budget

- To have first sight of the draft budget at least two weeks before consideration by FRC
- To provide guidance and support to management in the journey towards a final budget, ensuring it is aligned with the organisation's strategic and financial objectives; and
- To present the framework of the budget to Council, leaving the CEO and Operations Director to answer more detailed questions

Compliance with protocols

- To review delegated authority limits annually and provide assurance to Council that financial controls are appropriate, and mechanisms are in place to ensure they are adhered to
- To be a signatory as identified in the agreed RCVS Financial Controls
- To be a member of the Project Board for projects over £150k

Investments

- To meet with the College's investment managers and ensure the investment policy is appropriate for the organisation

Accounts

- To meet with auditors independently to enable them to provide feedback and provide additional assurance to Council
- To review management and annual accounts, obtaining feedback from the Senior Team
- To present the framework of the accounts to Council, leaving the CEO and Operations Director to answer more detailed questions

Additional roles

- To work with other members of the Officer Team and senior staff of the College
- To play a key part in the development and co-ordination of policy
- To attend meetings between RCVS and other organisations e.g. Joint Officer meetings with veterinary organisations

- To represent the College at 'in-house' and external functions as agreed with the Officer Team, for example, student talks, congresses and events

Skills required

- Knowledge of financial controls is essential
- Ability to deal with confidential and / or sensitive issues in a timely manner
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to communicate with stakeholders at all levels
- Ability to deal with people in a compassionate, just and fair manner

Personal behaviour

- See all sides of an argument and encourage constructive debate
- Make sure all voices in the room are heard and respected
- Declare any relevant gifts, hospitality or lobbying they receive in their capacity as Treasurer
- Make themselves familiar with key subject areas but will not be expected to be an expert
- Work with the relevant RCVS staff members in a constructive and respectful manner
- Respect and encourage the College's [statement of intent on diversity and inclusion](#)
- Respect and embody the College's values and the Nolan principles

Personal characteristics

- Approachable
- Tactful and diplomatic
- Empathetic
- Able to delegate
- Strategic thinker
- Good networker
- Good at team building
- Self-reflective and willing to learn
- Willing to encourage and develop others
- Able to manage conflict
- Able to maintain confidentiality

Role specification for Officer Team member: Senior Vice-President

Reporting to: RCVS Council

Elected by Council from within its membership, annually, usually for a one-year term commencing at Royal College Day in any given year.

On the occasion when the President's term on Council terminates prior to their becoming Senior Vice-President, the Senior Vice-President remains on the Officer Team for a further year.

Based at own personal location and expected to travel to in-person meetings and events; they will be in receipt of an annual payment based on the number of planned meetings per year, which is reflective of the different time commitments.

Background

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is the regulatory body for the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions in the UK. It sets, upholds and advances veterinary standards for the benefit of animal health and welfare, and public health.

The Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966 requires Council to elect the President and Vice-Presidents for the coming RCVS year at the first Council meeting after the Annual General Meeting (AGM) (this is usually immediately following the AGM on the same day). Their term of office comes to an end at the first Council meeting after the annual general meeting the following year (as above). The custom has been for Council to elect as President the Vice-President (Junior) who took office the previous year, and to elect the retiring President to be a Vice-President (Senior) for a further year. Therefore, becoming Senior Vice-President is the end of a three-year cycle.

For many years Council has adopted a practice of holding a provisional election for the new Vice-President in advance of the formal election which follows the AGM. The provisional election is held at the scheduled March Council meeting.

In addition to abiding by the role of members of RCVS Council, see: [Role of Council Members - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#), the President is a member of the College's Officer Team.

Officer Team

The Officer Team comprises the President, Junior Vice-President, Senior Vice-President and Treasurer, who are elected by the Council according to the election rules. It oversees the management of all College business and oversees matters of governance and the management of resources. The Officer Team reports to Council.

The Officer Team will meet on a regular basis with senior staff in order to discuss relevant matters, with a focus on external meetings, media management, communications and stakeholder relationships. The Chair of the Veterinary Nurses' Council will be invited to attend meetings of the Officer Team. For full terms of reference, see: [Officer Team - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#).

The Officer Team will also act as the **Nominations Subcommittee**, together with the Chair of VN Council, CEO and Registrar, and one veterinary and one veterinary nurse member of Council, proposing who will be awarded College honours and awards (choices will be ratified by Council and, for the VN Golden Jubilee Award, VN Council).

The Officer Team will also act as the **Remuneration Subcommittee**. The Remuneration Subcommittee meets annually to decide a policy on how the budget allocated to staff salaries, as agreed by Council as part of the budget-setting process, should be allocated, for example, what percentage should be allocated to salary increases and what to bonuses. It does not look at individual staff salaries, which is the role of the Senior Team, apart from the remuneration of the CEO, which is considered by the President in line with the aforementioned policy. The Subcommittee consists of the Officer Team, with the following staff members attending in a non—voting capacity: Directors of People and Operations, Registrar and CEO.

Key tasks

- To assist the President in the discharge of their duties
- To work with other members of the Officer Team and senior staff of the College
- To assume particular responsibility for certain areas of activity, as agreed by the Officer Team
- To attend meetings of Council, Officer Team and nominated committees,
- Chairing those committees that fall under the role (some RCVS committees, such as Registration, and Preliminary Investigation Committee/Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee, are chaired by the JVP for three years as they progress through the Officer Team)
- In the President's absence, the chair of the AGM or RCVS Council shall be taken by whichever of the Vice-Presidents first took office as a Vice-President or President. If the President and the Vice-Presidents are not present, the members present shall choose one of their number to take the chair
- To attend nominated meetings between RCVS and other organisations e.g. Joint Officer meetings with veterinary organisations
- To take delegated action in the name of the College and of the Council as may be reasonably necessary (subject to the provisions of the Charter, Act and Meeting Procedure Rules) which may include presiding at registration / graduation ceremonies
- To play a key part in the development and co-ordination of policy
- To represent the College at 'in-house' and external functions as agreed with the Officer Team which may include student presentations, congresses and events
- To be a College spokesperson on agreed topics, in discussion with the College Communication team
- To work with the CEO to review the delegation scheme and assign committee and working group roles towards the end of the presidential year

Skills required

- Ability to deal with confidential and / or sensitive issues in a timely manner
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to communicate with stakeholders at all levels
- Ability to deal with people in a compassionate, just and fair manner

Personal behaviour

- See all sides of an argument and encourage constructive debate
- Make sure all voices in the room are heard and respected
- Declare any relevant gifts, hospitality or lobbying they receive in their capacity as Senior Vice-President
- Make themselves familiar with key subject areas but will not be expected to be an expert
- Work with the relevant RCVS staff members in a constructive and respectful manner
- Respect and encourage the College's [statement of intent on diversity and inclusion](#)
- Respect and embody the College's values and the Nolan principles

Personal characteristics

- Approachable
- Tactful and diplomatic
- Empathetic
- Able to delegate
- Strategic thinker
- Good networker
- Good at team building
- Self-reflective and willing to learn
- Willing to encourage and develop others
- Able to manage conflict
- Able to maintain confidentiality

Role specification for Officer Team member: Junior Vice-President

Reporting to: RCVS Council

Elected by Council from within its membership, annually, usually for a one-year term commencing at Royal College Day in any given year.

Based at own personal location and expected to travel to in-person meetings and events; they will be in receipt of an annual payment based on the number of planned meetings per year, which is reflective of the different time commitments.

Background

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is the regulatory body for the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions in the UK. It sets, upholds and advances veterinary standards for the benefit of animal health and welfare, and public health.

The Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966 requires Council to elect the President and Vice-Presidents for the coming RCVS year at the first Council meeting after the Annual General Meeting (AGM) (this is usually immediately following the AGM on the same day). Their term of office comes to an end at the first Council meeting after the annual general meeting the following year (as above). The custom has been for Council to elect as President the Vice-President (Junior) who took office the previous year, and to elect the retiring President to be a Vice-President (Senior) for a further year. Therefore, becoming Junior Vice-President is the start of a three-year cycle.

For many years Council has adopted a practice of holding a provisional election for the new Vice-President in advance of the formal election which follows the AGM. The provisional election is held at the scheduled March Council meeting.

In addition to abiding by the role of members of RCVS Council, see: [Role of Council Members - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#), the Junior Vice-President is a member of the College's Officer Team.

Officer Team

The Officer Team comprises the President, Junior Vice-President, Senior Vice-President and Treasurer, who are elected by the Council according to the election rules. It oversees the management of all College business and oversees matters of governance and the management of resources. The Officer Team reports to Council.

The Officer Team will meet on a regular basis with senior staff in order to discuss relevant matters, with a focus on external meetings, media management, communications and stakeholder relationships. The Chair of the Veterinary Nurses' Council will be invited to attend meetings of the Officer Team. For full terms of reference, see: [Officer Team - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#).

The Officer Team will also act as the **Nominations Subcommittee**, together with the Chair of VN Council, CEO and Registrar, and one veterinary and one veterinary nurse member of Council,

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Key tasks

- To assist the President in the discharge of their duties
- To work with other members of the Officer Team and senior staff of the College
- To assume particular responsibility for certain areas of activity, as agreed by the Officer Team
- To attend meetings of Council, Officer Team and nominated committees, taking the Chair if elected / nominated for the role (further information on being an RCVS Committee Chair available on request)
- Chairing those committees that fall under the role (some RCVS committees, such as Registration, and Preliminary Investigation Committee/Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee, are chaired by the JVP for three years as they progress through the Officer Team)
- In the President's absence, the chair of the AGM or RCVS Council shall be taken by whichever of the Vice-Presidents first took office as a Vice-President or President. If the President and the Vice-Presidents are not present, the members present shall choose one of their number to take the chair
- To attend nominated meetings between RCVS and other organisations e.g. Joint Officer meetings with veterinary organisations
- To take delegated action in the name of the College and of the Council as may be reasonably necessary (subject to the provisions of the Charter, Act and Meeting Procedure Rules), which may include presiding at registration / graduation ceremonies
- To play a key part in the development and co-ordination of policy
- To represent the College at 'in-house' and external functions as agreed with the Officer Team, which may include student presentations, congresses and events
- To be a College spokesperson on agreed topics, in discussion with the College Communication team
- To work with the CEO to review the delegation scheme and assign committee and working group roles towards the end of the presidential year

Skills required

- Ability to deal with confidential and / or sensitive issues in a timely manner
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to communicate with stakeholders at all levels
- Ability to deal with people in a compassionate, just and fair manner

Personal behaviour

- See all sides of an argument and encourage constructive debate
- Make sure all voices in the room are heard and respected
- Declare any relevant gifts, hospitality or lobbying they receive in their capacity as Junior Vice-President
- Make themselves familiar with key subject areas but will not be expected to be an expert
- Work with the relevant RCVS staff members in a constructive and respectful manner
- Respect and encourage the College's [statement of intent on diversity and inclusion](#)
- Respect and embody the College's values and the Nolan principles

Personal characteristics

- Approachable
- Tactful and diplomatic
- Empathetic
- Able to delegate
- Strategic thinker
- Good networker
- Good at team building
- Self-reflective and willing to learn
- Willing to encourage and develop others
- Able to manage conflict
- Able to maintain confidentiality

Role specification for an RCVS Committee Vice-Chair

Reporting to: Committee Chair

Background

The overall role of a Chair is to provide leadership and direction to the work of the committee, to develop positive relationships with relevant stakeholders and the management team, and to ensure the purpose of the committee is fulfilled within the governance structure of the College.

The role of the Vice-Chair is to assist the Chair with their responsibilities and to act as a 'stand-in' in the absence of the Chair in meetings or in fulfilment of other duties as required. At such time, the details of the role and personal characteristics, etc. will be the same as the role specification for an RCVS Committee Chair.

(Chairs should be encouraged to make use of their vice-chair, to share the responsibilities and to provide an opportunity for vice-chairs to gain experience.)

All should be aware of the College's Meeting Procedure Rules and the Terms of Reference for their Committee per the RCVS Delegation Scheme.

Key tasks

In the meeting

- Ensure neither they nor members promote a personal agenda

Working with the secretariat

- Support the staff team, being prepared to meet with relevant team members before the meeting if necessary
- Review minutes produced by the secretariat in a timely fashion
- Undertake actions on any matter which may be considered urgent, routine or not of sufficient importance to justify the calling of a meeting – and to report back to the Chair

Personal behaviour

- See all sides of an argument and encourage constructive debate
- Make sure all voices in the room are heard and respected
- Declare any relevant gifts, hospitality or lobbying they receive in their capacity as Vice-Chair
- Make themselves familiar with key subject areas but will not be expected to be an expert
- Work with the relevant RCVS staff members in a constructive and respectful manner
- Respect and encourage the College's statement of intent on diversity and inclusion
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Section 6: Future roles

Are there any future roles within Council that you would be keen to explore?

What support might you need to help you move into this/these roles?

What timescale are you thinking about the role?

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	16 January 2025
Title	Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report describes the work of the Preliminary Investigation Committee since RCVS Council's last meeting, including by reference to key stage indicators, and provides information about the nature of concerns being considered by the RCVS.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Chris Murdoch Senior Case Manager c.murdoch@rcvs.org.uk</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
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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"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to Council January 2025

Introduction

1. This report provides information about the activities of the Preliminary Investigation Committee since the last report (3 January 2025 being the date of writing the report).
2. Since the last Report to Council (which gave information to 25 October 2024), there have been four Stage two Preliminary Investigation Committee (S2PIC) meetings (6 November, 20 November, 4 December and 18 December 2024).

New cases considered by the S2PIC

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

Ongoing Investigations

5. The S2PIC is currently investigating 17 ongoing cases where the Committee has requested statements, visits or preliminary expert reports (for example).

Health Protocol

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

Performance Protocol

7. There are no veterinary surgeons currently on the RCVS Performance Protocol.

Professional Conduct Department - Enquiries and concerns

8. Before registering a concern with the RCVS, potential complainants must make an Enquiry (either in writing or by telephone), so that Case Managers can consider with the enquirer whether they should raise a formal concern or whether the matter would be more appropriately dealt with through the Veterinary Client Mediation Service.
9. In the period 25 October 2024 to 3 January 2025:
 - the number of matters registered as Enquiries was 533; and,
 - the number of formal Concerns registered in the same period was 111.

10. The table below shows the categories of matters registered as Concerns between 25 October 2024 and 3 January 2025.

Concerns registered between 25 October 2024 and 3 January 2025

Description of Category	Number of Cases
- Advertising and publicity	0
- Appeal against DC decision	0
- Certification	1
- Client confidentiality	0
- Clinical and client records	6
- Clinical governance	0
- Communication and consent	3
- Communication between professional colleagues	0
- Conviction	1
- CPD compliance	0
- Delegation to veterinary nurses	1
- Equine pre-purchase examinations	0
- Euthanasia of animals	5
- Euthanasia of animals – ‘Tuk’s law’	1
- Fair trading requirements	0
- Giving evidence for court	0
- Health case (<i>potential</i>)	0
- Illegal practice	0
- Microchipping	0
- Miscellaneous	2
- Practice information, fees & animal insurance	1
- Performance case (<i>potential</i>)	0
- Recognised veterinary practice	0
- Referrals and second opinions	0
- Registration investigation	0
- Restoration application	0
- Social media and networking forums	4
- Treatment of animals by unqualified persons	0
- Use of samples, images, post-mortems and disposal	0
- Veterinary care	77
- Veterinary medicines	3
- Veterinary medicines – application of factors without physical examination	0
- Veterinary medicines – prescribing CDs/antimicrobials without physical examination	0

Description of Category	Number of Cases
- Veterinary medicines – ‘under care’ query, other	0
- Veterinary teams and leaders	0
- Whistle-blowing	1
- 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief	2
- Unassigned	3
Total	111

Data source – Profcon computer system concerns data.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

11. In the period 25 October 2024 to 3 January 2025, the Committee has referred three cases involving three veterinary surgeons to the Disciplinary Committee.

Referral to Charter Case Committee

12. In the period 25 October 2024 to 3 January 2025, no cases have been referred to the Charter Case Committee.

Veterinary Investigators

13. The Chief Investigator and Veterinary Investigators have undertaken one announced visit to a veterinary practice at the request of the Committee.

Concerns procedure

14. As Council is aware, the process for the consideration of concerns at Stage one changed at the beginning of October 2022. The median number of weeks in which cases concluded at Stage one can be seen below.

Month in which case concluded	Median number of weeks taken
February 2023	13
March 2023	13.3
April 2023	14.9
May 2023	14.3
June 2023	14.4
July 2023	15
August 2023	15.9
September 2023	13.4
October 2023	12.6
November 2023	18.3
December 2023	11.5
January 2024	16
February 2024	15
March 2024	17.6
April 2024	15
May 2024	12.9
June 2024	19.9
July 2024	11.9
August 2024	15.2
September 2024	13.9

Month in which case concluded	Median number of weeks taken
October 2024	12
November 2024	14.4
December 2024	15.9

15. PIC/DC Liaison Committee considered detailed information on the time taken by cases at Stage one at its meeting in November and discussed a new KPI timeframe in light of the data provided and the steps involved in the process. The Liaison Committee concluded that six months was an appropriate timeframe. It also concluded that it would still be helpful to provide median times taken, as this is a good indicator of the most likely duration of matters for those involved in the process.
16. In line with the above KPI, cases that commenced in September and October 2023 have been assessed retrospectively to determine what percentage of them met the six-month KPI. These can be seen below, and we continue to report on this percentage in the future. Council is asked to note that the number of cases that started in June 2024 was markedly lower than in other months, which has had an impact on the percentage that met the KPI (for example, the same number failing to meet it in the month prior would have led to a compliance rate of 85%). As always, the Profcon team strive to conclude cases as efficiently as possible.

17.

Month case started	Percentage of cases that met KPI
October 2023	94%
November 2023	87%
December 2023	84%
January 2024	86%
February 2024	93%
March 2024	87%
April 2024	90%
May 2024	85%
June 2024	75%

18. The Stage 2 KPI is currently for the PIC to reach a decision on simple cases before it within seven months. A case is deemed to be complex where the PIC requests that witness statements and/or expert evidence be obtained. At its meeting in May 2024, PIC/DC Liaison Committee, having undertaken a full review of the Stage 2 KPI, concluded that it was not appropriate to have a KPI for complex cases, in view of the specific complexities of each case. Cases are reported in detail to that Committee, which is able to discuss and monitor performance accordingly.
19. In the period 25 October 2024 to 3 January 2025, the PIC reached a decision (to close, refer to the Charter Case Committee, or refer to DC) within the relevant KPI in two out of two simple cases.
20. Four complex cases were decided. In accordance with the above, these cases (and the work of the department in general) are reported and discussed in detail at the PIC/DC Liaison Committee meeting.

Illegal practice

21. Since the last Report to Council (which gave information to 25 October 2024), three new reports of suspected illegal practice have been received, and which are subject to ongoing enquiries. There is a total of eight ongoing enquiries.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	16 January 2025
Title	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report sets out the work of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Sandra Neary Secretary to the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee s.neary@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0730</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0740</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

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²Classification rationales

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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to Council

Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Council, there has been two meetings of the Stage 2 VN PIC, which took place on 12 November and 17 December. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 28 January 2025.

RVN Concerns received / registered

2. In the period 25 October 2024 to 3 January 2025, there were eight new Concerns relating to RVNs. Of these eight new Concerns, all are currently under investigation by a Case Manager, Veterinary Nurse, Veterinary surgeon, and a lay member (Stage 1 VNPIC).

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. Six new cases have been considered by the Stage 2 VNPIC between 25 October 2024 and 3 January 2025. One case was referred to external solicitors for formal statements to be taken. Two cases were referred to the Charter Case Committee. One case was adjourned for further enquiries to be made. One case was adjourned to obtain an expert opinion. One case was referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

Ongoing Investigations

4. Five concerns are currently under investigation by the Stage 2 VN PIC, and these will be returned to the Committee for a decision in due course.

Health Concerns

5. There are currently no RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Health Protocol.

Performance Concerns

6. There are currently no RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Performance Protocol.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

7. Since the last report, five cases involving two veterinary nurses have been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

Referral to Charter Case Committee

8. Since the last report, two cases involving two veterinary nurses have been referred to the Charter Case Committee.

Disciplinary Hearings

9. Since the last report, one disciplinary hearing has taken place in relation to a veterinary nurse. The charge related to the Respondent's conviction for the theft and attempted theft of animals. The Disciplinary Committee found that the conviction, set out in the charge, rendered the Respondent unfit to practise and decided to impose a reprimand and warning as to their future conduct.