

Candidate Brief



Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

2023 and 2024 Appointments

RCVS Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)

(1 veterinary surgeon for 2023 and 1 lay member for 2024 plus
3 reserve veterinary surgeons
and 1 reserve lay member)

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

(1 veterinary surgeon for 2023)

RCVS Disciplinary Committee (DC)

(4 veterinary surgeons for 2023 and 2 lay members for 2023
plus 2 reserve veterinary surgeons
and 1 reserve lay member)

AA0202Lay – Lay Member

AA0202Vet – Veterinary Surgeon

March 2023

Managing Director

Sarah Thewlis

sat@thewlisgraham.com

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Welcome from Dr Melissa Donald President of the RCVS


Dear Candidate,

The RCVS PIC, RCVS DC and RVN PIC are all committees of the RCVS which deal with allegations of professional misconduct against veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses. As such they are a vital element of regulation and serve to assure the public that those who give veterinary care are properly qualified and fit to practise.

We are intending to make a number of appointments this year and next and I am delighted you are interested in one of these positions. If, having read the brief, you believe you have the requisite skills and knowledge and are committed to the seven principles of public life we would like to hear from you. These are exciting opportunities to support the RCVS in our commitment to excellent standards of veterinary care.

For a confidential conversation with Thewlis Graham Associates who are managing the process, please contact Sarah Thewlis, Managing Director on 0207 850 4781 or email rcvs@thewlisgraham.com. Sarah will be happy to discuss this opportunity with you and answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely



Dr Melissa Donald

RCVS President

2. About the RCVS and the committees

The RCVS was established in 1844 by Royal Charter to be the governing body of the veterinary profession. Its statutory duties are currently set out in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, and Supplemental Royal Charter 2015. The RCVS safeguards the interests of the public and animals by ensuring that only those registered can carry out acts of veterinary surgery.

The RCVS aims to enhance society through improved animal health and welfare and does so by setting, upholding and advancing the educational, ethical and clinical standards of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses.

The RCVS is an organisation of two parts:

A **regulator**, with responsibilities set out in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 and arising via its Supplementary Charter 2015:

- To maintain a Register of veterinary surgeons entitled to practice in the UK
- To maintain a Register of veterinary nurses entitled to practice in the UK
- To regulate veterinary education and the standards required for inclusion on the Registers
- To regulate professional conduct of both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses through Codes of Professional Conduct; investigating concerns and potentially removing names from the Register

A **Royal College**, with powers under the Royal Charter of 1844 and the Supplemental Charter of 2015:

- To award postgraduate qualifications, including Fellowships and Certificates
- To maintain a list of veterinary surgeons who are RCVS Specialists
- To inspect and accredit practices in accordance with the voluntary Practice Standards Scheme
- To support RCVS Knowledge and the development of veterinary science
- To provide a source of information and opinion on relevant veterinary matters.

In addition, we also:

- Register veterinary practice premises where veterinary medicines are stored or supplied, on behalf of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate
- Maintain, a list of approved riding establishment inspectors



On registering all members declare that they “will pursue the work of the profession with integrity, and that their constant endeavor will be to ensure the health and welfare of animals committed to their care”. Our combined role, as regulator and Royal College, is to ensure that veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses live up to this promise.

<http://www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/royal-charter-and-legislation/>.

RCVS & RVN Committees

The RCVS regulates the educational, professional and ethical standards of all veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, regardless of the kind of work they do. A robust investigation and disciplinary mechanism is in place and will be triggered if a veterinary surgeon or nurse falls short of the standards expected by the profession and the public. The statutory functions are set out in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, and Supplemental Royal Charter 2015. Veterinary Nurses follow the same processes as veterinary surgeons as confirmed in the Veterinary Nurse Conduct and Discipline Rules 2014 (see Annex C).

The Act requires the governing Council of the college to establish a Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) and a Disciplinary Committee (DC). The task of the PIC/RVN PIC is to investigate any case in which it is alleged that a veterinary surgeon or nurse is liable to be removed from the register of veterinary surgeons and nurses, or suspended from the register for a period, by reason of serious professional misconduct. After investigation, the PIC/RVN PIC decides whether to refer the case to the DC/RVN DC.

If a case is referred, the DC/RVN DC hears the evidence, determines the facts and, amongst other sanctions, has power to direct that the name of the person concerned should be removed from the register or that registration should be suspended for a period of time. The DC/RVN DC also deals with applications for restoration to the register following removal.

A new Charter Case Committee (to be introduced shortly) will offer an alternative to a disciplinary hearing in certain cases where specified criteria has been met. This is via a system of public or private warnings. The Protocol governing this new Committee and its Rules are set out respectively in Annexes D and E.

Working methods:

On average around 600 concerns about veterinary surgeons are reported to the RCVS each year and considerably lesser numbers for veterinary nurses. As explained below, all of these are considered by a Stage 1 PIC and around a fifth are investigated by the Stage 2 PIC.

Stage 1 PICs are made up of three members (for veterinary cases, this will include one veterinary surgeon, one lay member and one other; for veterinary nursing cases, this will include one veterinary nurse, one lay member and one other, which may be a veterinary surgeon) who are assisted by a Case Manager from the Professional Conduct Department. Stage 1 PICs consider concerns on the basis of documentary evidence (including information submitted by the complainant and the respondent veterinary surgeon/nurse). If the Stage 1 PIC considers that there is no realistic prospect of establishing serious professional misconduct it may close a case with or without issuing advice. If it considers that further information is required by way of expert reports and/or formal witness statements before a decision can be made, it will refer matters to the Stage 2 PIC for its consideration.

The Stage 2 PIC is generally made up of five members and will meet every two weeks. (less frequently in the case of RVN PIC - see below)

It will decide whether to refer the case on to the DC and in certain circumstances may refer a case to the Charter Case Committee. Further details about the procedure can be found here: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/concerns/>

Workload and time commitment:

The PIC

The Stage 2 PIC meets twice every month, and each member is required to attend around 10 meetings per year (up to one a month). One days' preparation/reading time is available per meeting. These alternate between on-line video conferencing and face-to-face meetings (which are held in central London).

In addition, each member will also be part of one of the four Stage 1 PICs. The majority of input will be in writing to an individual case action/investigation plan. Time commitment for this is likely to be between a half, and a full day, per week but can vary depending on the volume of concerns at any given time. There is some flexibility for individual members in how they approach this as this is a remote process. However, it is expected that case responses will be submitted within a week; with follow up issues generally responded to within 48 hours.

Before making a decision on a case there will be a Stage 1 PIC decision meeting held by video conferencing. These meetings will be scheduled every two weeks and may be short depending on case numbers, but it is expected that most of the decision-making process will have been carried out previously on line, so each is generally very short (usually less than half an hour).

Taking all into account and including reading time, the time commitment estimated is five-six days per month per member.

The RVN PIC

The Stage 2 RVN PIC meets between six and eight times a year. Meetings are generally short, up to half a day, and are generally held remotely by video conferencing, though there will be occasional face to face meetings. Half a day's reading time is available per meeting. As above, a member will also be part of a Stage 1 RVN PIC with the same process of remote written input to each case and decision meetings. Given the much lower volume of RVN cases and that decision meetings it is anticipated that overall time commitment including decision meetings will be in the region of half a day per month.

The DC

The DC has a quasi-judicial role and procedure. The case is generally heard in public. The respondent veterinary appears before the panel, will frequently be legally represented and is subject to cross-examination; oral evidence is normally heard from witnesses; a legal assessor advises on points of law; and the committee retires to consider its findings and decisions in private.

Numbers of cases referred to the DC vary; but are generally in the region of 15 – 20 per year. Hearings are usually listed for between two and ten days, but very occasionally lasting up to 3 weeks. Listings are set some time in advance and individual members canvassed regarding their availability. There is an allowance of between half a day and a full day for reading time per case. Cases are generally held in person in central London, though some may be held remotely via video conferencing and/or in other locations. This will be notified to members at the same time as canvassing availability.

3. Person Specification

It is proposed to make the following appointments with effect from July 2023:

RCVS PIC: 1 veterinary surgeon, plus 3 reserve veterinary surgeons and 1 reserve lay member

RVN PIC: 1 veterinary surgeon

RCVS DC: 4 veterinary surgeons and 2 lay members, plus 2 reserve veterinary surgeons and 1 reserve lay

In addition, it is proposed to make the following appointment with effect from July 2024:

RCVS PIC: 1 lay member

The normal term of office will be four years, with a maximum of two terms (any extension of term will be at the discretion of the RCVS)

Veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses must be currently registered, and in active practice. Generally, a minimum of 5 years' experience will be expected

All committee members must:

- be committed to the seven principles of public life (see Annex A);
- understand the importance of maintaining public confidence in the regulation of the veterinary profession;
- (for lay members only) have a general understanding and genuine interest in the work of the veterinary profession and animal health and welfare;
- be able to grasp detail and contribute to objective decision-making by exercising sound judgment;
- be able to establish and maintain excellent working relationships with a changing group of colleagues from a range of backgrounds and experiences;
- have good oral and written communication skills;
- have a reliable internet connection; and
- be able to manage time effectively.

Appointments will be made on the basis of merit. In choosing between candidates of equal merit, regard may also be had to the desirability of committee members having a range of collective experience.

4. Conflicts of interest

Committee members will be required to declare any general conflict of interest of any relevant business interests, positions of authority or other connections with organisations relevant to the business of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and any conflict of interest that arises in the course of committee business.

Candidates who hold office in, or are employed by, organisations which represent the interests of the veterinary profession, or provide indemnity insurance for veterinary surgeons, may also be required to withdraw from such offices or employment if offered appointment to one of the committees. Any such office or employment should be declared at the outset. Candidates should also be aware that, if appointed to any of the committees, they would be expected to refrain from becoming involved in their

private capacity in investigating or acting as expert witnesses in relation to any matter that might potentially come before one of the committees.

A former member of the PIC will only be considered for appointment to DC after a break of three years.

5. Fitness to be a member or one of the committees

Members of the PIC/RVN PIC, RVN DC hold office subject to satisfying certain conditions. Factors which will affect an applicant's suitability include, but are not limited to:

- criminal convictions or outstanding criminal charges;
- a finding of impaired fitness to practise by any regulatory body;
- disqualification from a profession or as a company director;
- bankruptcy
- having an unspent conviction for a money laundering, bribery or terrorism-related offence, among others;
- having ever been found to be in contempt of court;
- having ever been removed as an officer or employee of a charity for misconduct or mismanagement;
- being subject to notification requirements under sexual offences legislation (i.e., they are on the sex offenders register); or
- being a "designated person" under anti-terrorist legislation.

The full conditions which apply to service as a member of the PIC or DC are set out in PIC and DC Protocol and the relevant provisions of which are in Annex B below. Applicants must disclose full details if any of the matters mentioned in the protocol applies to them.

Veterinary surgeons who seek appointment should be aware that, if they are selected for interview, information held by the RCVS on any past complaints against them which have been referred to the PIC or DC, or any current complaints, will be disclosed to the Selection Committee. Any information disclosed in this way will be copied to the candidate in question.

6. Terms and conditions of office

Payments

- Committee members will be office holders, not employed by the RCVS. They will be entitled to a financial loss allowance based on the number of days or half days spent on College business.
- The limits for reimbursement of financial loss and travelling expenses are set by the RCVS Council.

Loss of Earnings

- Committee members are eligible to claim loss of earnings of, currently, £325 per day.
- Members of the DC may receive a compensatory loss of earnings payment if a hearing is cancelled at short notice.

Allowances

- Committee members are eligible to claim reimbursement of overnight subsistence of up to £245 per night and economy rail or air fare or motor mileage.
- There is no stationery/computer consumables allowance.

Taxation

- For those in full or part-time employment, or those not in employment, the RCVS will deduct at tax at source as though the individual was on the RCVS payroll.
- Those who are self-employed, and have a consultancy, would be paid in full on an invoice from the consultancy, on the assumption that they pay any tax due themselves.

All committee members will be required to comply with arrangements for appraisal for their performance plus attend two-day annual training (post appointment) and any necessary ad hoc training. There will be additional one-day training for Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

7. Timeline, Application Process and How to apply

Timeline

Dates	Activity
13 April 4pm	Closing date for applications
w/c 24 April	Candidates informed of outcome
Starting from 9 May	Interviews by Thewlis Graham Associates – via video call
Vets – 5, 9 and 12 June Lay – w/c 26 June	Independent Selection Panel interviews – via video call
No later than 3 July	Candidates informed of outcome

Application Process

Members will be appointed to serve on **one** specific committee. Applicants should indicate whether they wish to be considered for appointment to more than one committee and to specify which committees.

Thewlis Graham Associates will acknowledge all applications. These will be assessed against the criteria in the Person Specification section and the people who best meet these will be invited for interview with Thewlis Graham Associates. These will be held via video interview.

Those candidates not invited to interview will be advised by email.

Longlisted candidates will also be advised by email. After a consultation between the Independent Selection Panel and Thewlis Graham Associates, a shortlist will be drawn up and shortlisted candidates invited for interview by the Independent Selection Panel. All candidates will be informed of the outcome following this date.

Please ensure that you include your mobile phone number and email address in your application. Do not hesitate to contact Thewlis Graham Associates on: RCVS@ThewlisGraham.com if you have any queries or wish to arrange a confidential conversation with Sarah Thewlis.

How to Apply

To apply for any of these roles, please download the editable relevant application form which you will find on the microsite. Then download the editable social media and reference document which you will find on the microsite. We require all documents to be in word format only please.

The microsite can be found here:

<https://www.thewlisgraham.com/assignment-briefings/>

Please email to RCVS@thewlisgraham.com the following documents. Please note that we will only consider full applications which consist of all the following:

1. **Completed application form (link on microsite).**
2. **Completed professional references and social media form (link on microsite).**
The reference part of this asks for the name, job title, organisation, email address and mobile number of two professional referees. (Please note that referees will not be approached without your prior permission).
3. **CV in word format**
4. **Personal summary/cover letter** in word format, which fully addresses the criteria listed in the Person Specification section and outlines your interest in the role and the RCVS. Maximum 2 pages only please.
5. **Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring form – online survey to be completed**

Application form links – these are on the microsite underneath ‘How to Apply’, the word document will download into the bottom of your browser screen for you to open and complete.

Professional references and social media form link – this is on the microsite underneath ‘How To Apply’, the word document will download into the bottom of your browser screen for you to open and complete.

Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring

Please click on the relevant link to complete the diversity and inclusion monitoring survey. You only need to do this once and you can do this from this document or the microsite.

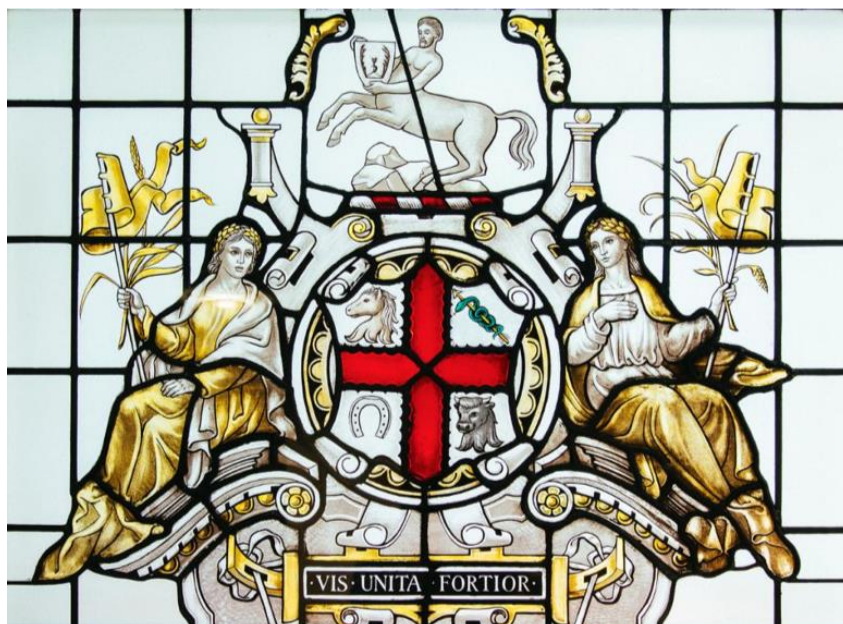
AA0202LAY – [link here](#)

AA2020VET – [link here](#)

This is independent of the recruitment process but please do send a completed form with your application as Thewlis Graham Associates is committed to monitoring and analysing diversity information so that we can ensure that our processes are fair, transparent, promote equality of opportunity for all, and do not have an adverse impact on any particular group.

Any information provided on this form will be treated as strictly confidential and will be used for statistical purposes only. It will not be seen by anybody directly involved in the selection process. No information will be published or used in any way which allows any individual to be identified.

Thank you



Annex A)

The seven principles of public life

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must 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 benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. 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 so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. 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.

Annex B)

Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee protocol

Made by the Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons on 11 November 2021, to come into force on 1 October 2022.

Citation

1. This protocol may be cited as the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Protocol 2021.

Interpretation

2. In this protocol, "the committees" or "the statutory committees" means the Preliminary Investigation Committee and the Disciplinary Committee.

References to the appointment of members of the committees are to the appointment by the Council of persons other than its own members under paragraph 1 of Schedule 2 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.

3. "Stage one cases" are those in which the Preliminary Investigation Committee can decide that there is not a realistic prospect of proving serious professional misconduct on the basis of information provided without recourse to further or more extensive investigation.

4. "Stage two cases" are those that may require further investigation (for example, expert evidence or formal statements) in order to determine whether there is a realistic prospect of proving serious professional misconduct.

Appointment of committee members

5. The Council will set up a committee (here referred to as "the selection committee") to advise it on the appointment of members of the statutory committees. Before appointing members of the committees Council will have regard to the advice of the selection committee.

6. The selection committee will not include members of the Council.

7. A person who has served as a member of the Preliminary Investigation Committee will not be appointed to the Disciplinary Committee unless three years have elapsed since the person concerned ceased to be a member of the Preliminary Investigation Committee.

Term of office

8. Appointed members of the committees will hold office for four years or such shorter term as the Council may determine in a particular case.

9. Appointed members may serve for a maximum of two terms.

Conditions about fitness to be a member of a statutory committee

10. Members of the committees will hold office subject to satisfying the following conditions:-

(a) they must at no time have been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty or deception in the United Kingdom, or in relation to the welfare of animals, or where the final outcome of the proceedings was a sentence of imprisonment or detention, the conviction not being a spent conviction;

(b) they must at no time have been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by reason of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity for which the person was responsible or to which the person was privy, or which the person contributed to or facilitated by their conduct;

(c) they must at no time have been removed from office as the chair, member, convenor or director of any public body on the grounds that it was not in the interests of, or conducive to the good management of, that body that the person should continue to hold that office;

(d) they must at no time have been adjudged bankrupt or had sequestration of their estate awarded, the person not having been discharged;

(e) they must not be the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order;

(f) they must at no time have made a composition or arrangement with, or granted a trust deed for, their creditors, not having been discharged in respect of it;

(g) they must not be disqualified from being a company director;

(h) they must not be included in a barred list under statutory provisions for the safeguarding of vulnerable groups;

(i) they must at no time have been subject to any investigation or proceedings concerning fitness to practise by any licensing body, if the final outcome of the investigation or proceedings was suspension from a register held by the licensing body (that suspension not having been terminated), or erasure from such a register, or a decision that had the effect of preventing practice of the profession licensed or regulated by the licensing body, or only allowing practice subject to conditions which were not lifted;

(j) they must at no time have had their name removed from the register of veterinary surgeons under section 16 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966;

(k) they must not have been the subject of a direction under section 16 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 for their registration to be suspended, if that suspension remains in operation;

(l) they must not be, or have been, subject to any investigation or proceedings concerning fitness to practise by any licensing body or by the Council, or at any time convicted of an offence elsewhere than in the United Kingdom, if the Council is satisfied that their membership of the committee would in view of that investigation or those proceedings or that conviction be liable to undermine public confidence in the regulation of the veterinary profession;

(m) their attendance at meetings of the committee must not have fallen below a minimum level of attendance acceptable to the Council;

(n) they must undertake any education or training required by the Council and comply with any arrangements as to appraisal of their performance as committee members which the Council may require;

(o) they must not be unable to perform their duties as committee members because of adverse physical or mental health.

11. The Council may remove from office any member of a statutory committee if satisfied that they do not comply with one or more of the conditions mentioned above, or that their membership of the committee would for any other reason be liable to undermine public confidence in the regulation of the veterinary profession.

12. Before removing from office a member of a statutory committee, the Council will set up a panel to advise it on the matter and will have regard to the advice of that panel. The panel will not include members of the Council.

Chair

13. The Council shall designate a member of each statutory committee as chair, as specified in paragraph 1(5) of Schedule 2 of the Act.

Vice-chair

14. The Council may from time to time designate one or more members of a statutory committee to be vice-chair and may at any time remove such a designation.

Clerk to Preliminary Investigation Committee

15. The registrar shall appoint a clerk to the committee, who may be an employee of the College but not a member of the Council.

Stage one case meetings of the Preliminary Investigation Committee

16. Cases at stage one shall be considered at a meeting of the committee (generally consisting of three members), one of whom will lead the meeting. The Clerk shall convene meetings in consultation with the members. Such meetings shall be held fortnightly.

17. Cases can be closed with or without advice at stage one meetings. Matters that cannot be concluded at this point will be referred on to a stage two case meeting.

Stage two case meetings of the Preliminary Investigation Committee

18. Cases at stage two shall be considered at a meeting of the committee. Such meetings are to be held as required.

19. Stage two cases can be closed (with or without advice), referred to the Disciplinary Committee, or referred to the Charter Case Committee [not yet in place – name to be confirmed].

20. The clerk shall convene stage two case meetings of the committee, having consulted the chair or, in the absence or incapacity of the chair, the vice-chair. At least ten days' notice shall be given of every meeting, unless the chair or vice-chair who is to preside at the meeting directs that a shorter period is permissible.

21. The agenda for a stage two case meeting of the committee shall state clearly the business to be transacted.

22. The chair or a vice-chair of the Preliminary Investigation Committee shall preside at stage two case meetings. If, during the course of a meeting of the committee, the person presiding ceases to be able to do so by reason of indisposition, conflict of interest or some other cause, the chair or a vice-chair or such other member of the committee as the members of the committee present may choose shall preside for the rest of the meeting.

Meetings of the committees

23. The committees may meet and conduct inquiries with less than the full membership of the committee being present.

24. Any decision made by one of the committees at such a meeting or inquiry shall be a decision of the committee, provided that the quorum for meetings of the committee, as specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 2 to the Act, is observed.

Reporting to the Council

25. The committees shall report to the Council from time to time on the discharge of their functions.

Annex C)

RVN Conduct and DC rules

Made by the Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons on 6 November 2014, to come into force on the date when the Supplemental Royal Charter of 2014 comes into operation

Investigation of complaints

- There shall be a Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee which shall carry out a preliminary investigation into every disciplinary case and decide whether the case should be referred to the Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee.
- The Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee shall be appointed by the Veterinary Nurses' Council. The Committee shall not include members of the Preliminary Investigation Committee, the Disciplinary Committee, or the Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee.
- The quorum of the Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee shall be three, to include: a lay member, a registered veterinary nurse and a veterinary surgeon; or: a lay member and two registered veterinary nurses.
- The Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee shall adopt, with any necessary modifications, the practices and procedures of the Preliminary Investigation Committee. Adjudication of complaints
- There shall be a Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee which shall adjudicate any disciplinary case referred to it and any application for restoration following removal or suspension at the direction of the Committee.
- The Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee shall be appointed by the Veterinary Nurses' Council. The Committee shall be chaired by a lay person.
- The Committee shall not include members of the RCVS Council, the Veterinary Nurses' Council, the Preliminary Investigation Committee, or the Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee.
- The quorum of the Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee shall be three, to include a registered veterinary nurse, a veterinary surgeon and a lay person.

Further information regarding removal of names from register for crime or disgraceful conduct, appeals and restoration to the register can be found here

<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/veterinary-nurse-conduct-and-discipline-rules-2014/>