

Farm Vet Champions (FVC) Task and Finish Groups' Terms of Reference

(Updated 18/01/2021)

1. Background

- 1.1. The improvement of professional capacity and capability for effective infection prevention and control (IPC) and good antimicrobial stewardship in human medicine has been recognised as essential within the UK's five-year National Action Plan for tackling antimicrobial resistance¹. The Farm Vet Champions (FVC) aims to extend these ambitions to encompass veterinary medicine too.
- 1.2. The 2040 vision for AMR contained within the UK's National Action Plan has nine ambitions for change. Three of these are to: minimise infection; to protect animal health and welfare; and to demonstrate appropriate use of antimicrobials². The plan also commits the UK to:
 - 1.2.1. 'work with industry to develop appropriate training, guidance and other communications for antimicrobial users and prescribers to encourage the uptake of recommended practices and evaluate their impact';
 - 1.2.2. 'assess prescribing practices and work with industry to develop evidence-based tools that can better guide these practices';
 - 1.2.3. 'explore business models that make better use of veterinary expertise in optimising antibiotic use'³.
- 1.3. In Wales, the Arwain Vet Cymru project⁴ was set up in late 2019 and will run until mid-2021. Funded by the Welsh Government and co-ordinated by Gwen Rees, Senior Research Associate at University of Bristol in collaboration with Iechyd Da and Welsh Lamb and Beef Producers. This project has identified a prescribing champion for each farm practice in Wales. The project has seen the recruitment of 47 out of the total of 59 farm vet practices in Wales.
- 1.4. With some key differences, the UK Farm Vet Champion project will take a phased approach to work alongside, and build on, the learnings and outcomes from the Arwain Vet Cymru project.
- 1.5. The project will improve prescribing behaviours of UK farm animal veterinary practices by setting up Farm Vet Champions who will be responsible for improving antibiotic stewardship within their practices and build their capacity and capability through education (online learning platforms), with engagement being at the level of the individual vet, as well as at the practice or practice group level. FVCs will be able to set and track SMART goals.

2. Project delivery

2.1 The project consists of two phases:

- 2.1.1 **Phase 1** involves the development of the education modules and training packages. Including:
 - 2.1.1.1 Design of course structure and templates by RCVS Knowledge
 - 2.1.1.2 Delivery of the education modules by the relevant members of the steering group and working parties to provide free-to-use online training which is peer-reviewed, and based on best available evidence

¹ AMR 5 Year National Action Plan

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/784894/UK_AMR_5_year_national_action_plan.pdf

² Page 26 AMR 5 Year National Action Plan

³ Page 61, 62 AMR 5 Year National Action Plan

⁴ <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2019/november/arwain-vet-cymru.html>

- 2.1.1.3 Proactive promotion and marketing, along with direct invitations, to encourage registration of FVCs by the Project Board, Steering and Stakeholder Group, and others
 - 2.1.1.4 Testing of the education platform by the Project Manager, technical team, Steering group and pilot group
 - 2.1.1.5 Launching the platform for FVCs to access training in good practice stewardship principles for different farm animal species.
- 2.1.2 Phase 2**, once funding is secured, will provide the functionality within the platform for FVCs to set **SMART goals** that are specific to their individual circumstances, such as a commitment to complete a specific number of training sessions or to undertake a specific number of on-farm health reviews. It is anticipated that at the level of the veterinary practice, further **SMART goals** will be set and accessible by all FVCs within the practice so that they might hold each other accountable for making progress as a practice in good stewardship activities.
- 2.1.3 Phase 2 will allow measurement, at a national level, to demonstrate the overall impact of the project and the outcomes of the FVC interventions at both a farm and practice level.
 - 2.1.4 Phase 2 will include:
 - 2.1.4.1 Development and testing of the platform by the Project Manager, technical team, Steering group and pilot group;
 - 2.1.4.2 Promotion and launch of the platform;
 - 2.1.4.3 Provision of a forum/s for FVCs to collaborate alongside a virtual or in person meeting to establish a community and to discuss good practice and lessons learned.
 - 2.1.4.4 Provision of exemplar case examples on the platform
 - 2.1.4.5 Further resources to encourage continuous improvements provided in collaboration with the Steering and Stakeholder Groups and FVCs.
 - 2.1.4.6 A campaign will run to evolve the practice-to-farm culture, securing both veterinary and farmer buy-in through behaviour-change theory, and through implementing antibiotic stewardship campaigns with both top-down and bottom-up approaches.

3. Remit and responsibilities

3.1 RCVS Knowledge has established a Project Board to

- 3.1.1 Consist of key funders and supporters, who will:
 - 3.1.1.1 Provide a consensus on the scope and content of the project;
 - 3.1.1.2 To ensure alignment with the project's Communication and Marketing Strategy;
 - 3.1.1.3 To identify and consider opportunities, issues and activities for communication to the Project Manager;
 - 3.1.1.4 To act as representatives of their organisations to accurately represent their organisations' needs, with the principal aim of meeting the project aims and for advancing the quality of veterinary care for the benefit of animals, the public, and society;
 - 3.1.1.5 To champion the project internally and externally to secure buy-in, including, where possible, providing direct access through to the FVC platform (hosted by RCVS Knowledge) via links on the organisations' relevant websites.
 - 3.1.1.6 To identify and secure ongoing sustainable funding for the project.

3.2 RCVS Knowledge has appointed a Clinical Lead to

- 3.2.1 Provide clinical oversight and accountability for the delivery of the FVC in order to meet the expected high-level requirements and key-performance indicators as set out in the Project Charter, to:
 - 3.2.1.1 Secure initial funding and to work with the Project Board to secure ongoing funding for the project;
 - 3.2.1.2 Identify and invite members to the Steering Group, Project Board and Stakeholder Group;

- 3.2.1.3 Lead the Steering Group, and, where relevant other working parties (co-opted as required) in authoring training materials and clinical content by the veterinary associations;
- 3.2.1.4 Represent the project as the main clinical contact, spokesperson and Chair for the Steering Group and Stakeholder Group;
- 3.2.1.5 Lead on authoring reports, possibly for publication in a peer-reviewed journal/s and/or for major funders/supporters;
- 3.2.1.6 Encourage engagement and present results through events, written materials and social media;
- 3.2.1.7 Advise on appropriate mitigations of risk;
- 3.2.1.8 Horizon-scan for opportunities and threats, building networks to understand, for example, research and best practice from other similar organisations, and acting on this information appropriately;
- 3.2.1.9 To champion the project internally and externally to secure buy-in.

3.3 RCVS Knowledge has established the Farm Vet Champion Steering Group (FVC-SG)

- 3.3.1 To advise on the development and running of the platform/s;
- 3.3.2 To co-ordinate, author and approve training and guidance materials for the platform/s and associated website/s. Including:
 - 3.3.2.1 Authoring materials that are evidence-based;
 - 3.3.2.2 Providing references to the evidence-base where appropriate;
 - 3.3.2.3 Provide training and guidance materials within the template provided by RCVS Knowledge and the Clinical Lead;
 - 3.3.2.4 To coordinate a round of peer-review for the authored training and guidance materials within your organisation before submitting to the Clinical Lead;
 - 3.3.2.5 To provide a list of those that have contributed to authoring the training and guidance materials, and those that were involved in the peer-review;
- 3.3.3 To test the platform/s and website/s to ensure that they meet requirements;
- 3.3.4 To recommend on the future direction of the project, including support to assess cost-benefit analyses and potential funding sources which would be for approval by the Project Board and within the structures of RCVS Knowledge;
- 3.3.5 To identify and consider opportunities, issues and activities to the Project Manager;
- 3.3.6 To submit the training and guidance materials to be reviewed by RCVS Knowledge to ensure uniformity;
- 3.3.7 To identify and proactively encourage FVCs;
- 3.3.8 To act as representatives of their organisations with the principal aims of meeting the project objectives and advancing the quality of veterinary care for the benefit of animals, the public, and society;
- 3.3.9 To work in partnership with RCVS Knowledge to ensure alignment with the project's Communication and Marketing Strategy;
- 3.3.10 To champion the project internally and externally to secure buy-in, including, where possible, providing direct access to the FVC platform (hosted by RCVS Knowledge) via links on the organisations' relevant websites.

3.4 RCVS Knowledge has established the Farm Vet Champions Stakeholder Group (FVC- StG)

- 3.4.1 To champion the project internally and externally in order to secure buy-in, including, where possible, providing direct access to the FVC platform (hosted by RCVS Knowledge) via links on the organisations' relevant websites
- 3.4.2 To identify and consider opportunities, issues and activities to the Project Manager
- 3.4.3 To act as a representative of their organisations with the principal aims of meeting the project objectives and advancing the quality of veterinary care for the benefit of animals, the public, and society
- 3.4.4 To identify and proactively encourage FVCs

- 3.4.5 To work in partnership with RCVS Knowledge to ensure alignment with the project's Communication and Marketing Strategy.

3.5 RCVS Knowledge will.

3.6 Lead and manage the project to:

- 3.6.1 Provide a consensus on the scope and content;
- 3.6.2 Create and maintain the learning platform, hosted on the RCVS Knowledge Learn website;
- 3.6.3 Drive alignment with the projects Communication and Marketing Strategy
- 3.6.4 Provide links and embed codes where required for organisations so that a direct link can be made via the organisation's relevant websites.
- 3.6.5 Provide a template for the learning modules for organisations to use.
- 3.6.6 Provide support when creating content to include an onboarding document, in-house style document and support with recording and resources.
- 3.6.7 Finalise content, design and visuals.
- 3.6.8 Champion the project internally and externally to secure buy in
- 3.6.9 Work with the Project Board to identify and secure ongoing sustainable funding for the project

3.7 All members of the team are appointed to champion the FVC internally and externally to secure buy-in. This includes;

- 3.7.1.1 Working in partnership with RCVS Knowledge Communications and Digital team to ensure alignment with RCVS Knowledge Communications Strategy;
- 3.7.1.2 Identifying and considering issues and activities for communication to the wider organisation, profession and public;
- 3.7.1.3 Act as a customer representative to accurately represent the customer's needs with the principal aim of advancing the quality of veterinary care for the benefit of animals, the public, and society.

3.8 All members of the team will be required to

- 3.8.1 Attend all meetings where possible, including pre-meetings.
- 3.8.2 Read paperwork provided in advance of meetings.
- 3.8.3 Suggest questions and issues to be investigated.
- 3.8.4 Maintain efficient communication with the project team.
- 3.8.5 Help to identify and develop possible recommendations.

4. Accountability

4.1 The FVC-SG are accountable to the Clinical Lead of the FVC.

4.2 The Clinical Lead of the FVC is clinically accountable to the RCVS Knowledge Chair of the Board of Trustees and managerially accountable to the Project Manager and Head of Quality Improvement of RCVS Knowledge.

4.3 Regular updates will be provided to the Project Board, either by progress reports or meetings. Any decisions made outside of the scope, budget or timescales that have already been agreed, must be accepted by the Project Board. The Project Manager will have the authority to halt progress which may affect budget until approval has been given.

5. Membership

- 5.1** The Project Board, the FVC Clinical Lead, the FVC-SG, and the FVC-StG, are appointed through arrangements agreed by RCVS Knowledge.
- 5.2** Members of the Project Board will be defined based on the requirements in 2.1, and currently include representatives from :
 - 5.2.1 RCVS Knowledge Board of Trustees;
 - 5.2.2 Veterinary Medicine Directorate (VMD).
- 5.3** The FVC-SG shall have between eleven to fourteen members, but may operate with fewer provided all module topics are covered.
- 5.4** The members of the FVC-SG shall include;
 - 5.4.1 The FVC Clinical Lead who will be the Chair;
 - 5.4.2 At least one representative of the RCVS Knowledge QIAB;
 - 5.4.3 A subject matter expert from Arwain Vet Cymru;
 - 5.4.3.1 A clinical support/academic/comms representative e.g. for assistance in publishing in peer reviewed journals/reporting etc.
 - 5.4.3.2 A non-veterinary farmer representative– who may be included in one of groups below (e.g. from RUMA Target Task Force cattle group)
 - 5.4.4 At least one representative from each of the following organisations:
 - 5.4.4.1 British Veterinary Associations (BVA);
 - 5.4.4.2 British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA);
 - 5.4.4.3 Sheep Veterinary Society (SVS);
 - 5.4.4.4 Goat Veterinary Society (GVS);
 - 5.4.4.5 Pig Veterinary Society (PVS);
 - 5.4.4.6 British Veterinary Poultry Association (BVPA);
 - 5.4.4.7 Responsible Use of Medicine (RUMA);
 - 5.4.4.8 Food Industry Initiative on Antimicrobials (FIIA);
 - 5.4.4.9 National Office of Animal Medicines (NOAH)
 - 5.4.5 Other members may be co-opted as required by the FVC-SG with prior approval from RCVS Knowledge. This may be on an ad-hoc or a regular basis.
- 5.5** If any member has an interest relating to a specific project issue, pecuniary or otherwise, and is present at the meeting at which the matter is under discussion, they will declare that interest at the start of the meeting, or when the Conflict of Interest becomes apparent, and shall not participate in the discussions. The Chair will have the power to request that member to withdraw from the meeting until the consideration has been completed.

6. Code of Conduct

- 6.1** All members are required to abide by the RCVS Knowledge's Code of Conduct, Annex 1. It is the responsibility of the members to ensure that declarations are kept up-to-date.

7. Confidentiality

- 7.1** Members are privy to materials and information on the design and nature of the content itself, in the conduct of their roles that may be confidential in nature or not for wider distribution. This confidentiality is required to be maintained.
- 7.2** All members shall handle personal data as confidential personal information in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 7.3** All materials shared are assumed to be confidential, unless otherwise stated.

8. Quorum

8.1 A quorum for each Committee of the FVC-SG and FVC-StG of at least three members in attendance in person or via teleconference (or similar), is maintained.

9. Attendance

9.1 FVC-SG members are required to attend all scheduled meetings. However, a deputy nominated by the member's organisation, approved by the Chair, may attend in the member's absence.

9.2 Where the Chair is unable to attend, the meeting will be rescheduled.

10. Frequency of meetings

10.1 It is expected that members will meet electronically, regularly until the project is completed. This will be no more than 6 times within the first 6 months of the project.

10.2 Frequency of meetings thereafter will be subject to change.

11. Terms of office

11.1 All members are appointed as a task and finish group and terms will end at the end of the project.

12. Removal of appointed members

12.1 RCVS Knowledge may remove a member before the completion of the task in agreement with the Project Board.

13. Disqualification or vacation of office

The office shall be vacated if

13.1 The member ceases to be in good professional standing with the RCVS;

13.2 The member is absent from two consecutive meetings without leave and RCVS Knowledge resolve that the office should be vacated;

13.3 The member is directly or indirectly interested in any contract with RCVS Knowledge and fails to declare the nature of their interest and the Project Board resolve that the office should be vacated;

13.4 The member ceases to hold the appointment in line with the relevant membership requirements as set out in points 4.3 (all) and 4.4 (all) and RCVS Knowledge resolve that the office should be vacated;

13.5 A member holds an interest which is in conflict with the objectives of the project or the charity and the Project Board resolve that the office should be vacated.

14. Conflicts of interests and conflicts of loyalty

14.1 Whenever a member has a personal interest (including but not limited to a personal financial interest or a duty of loyalty owed to another organisation or person) directly or indirectly in a matter to be discussed at a meeting or in any transaction or arrangement with regards to the project (whether proposed or already entered into), the member concerned shall;

14.1.1 Declare an interest at or before any discussion on the item;

14.1.2 Withdraw from any discussion on the item save to the extent that they are invited expressly to contribute information;

14.1.3 Not be counted in the quorum for the part of any meeting and any vote devoted to that item; and

14.1.4 Withdraw during the vote and have no vote on the item.

15. Remuneration

- 15.1** Remuneration is available in return for a complete learning module as tasked by the Clinical Lead and Project Manager. Please see **Remuneration for Farm Vet Champion modules** which can be seen at **Annex 2**.
- 15.2** Remuneration can be claimed by invoicing RCVS Knowledge and sending this invoice to amelia@rcvsknowledge.org.

16. Review of the Terms of Reference

- 16.1** RCVS Knowledge undertakes to give prior notice to the members of any updates to these Terms of Reference.