



## QI Boxset

### Webinar/podcast transcript: Clinical Governance and the Practice Standards Scheme

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#### RCVS Knowledge

Welcome to the Quality Improvement Boxset by RCVS Knowledge. A series of webinars, podcasts, and video interviews for practices and practitioners.

#### Anne Lawson:

Hello, I'm Anne Lawson. I'm one of the Practice Standard Scheme's assessors and I'm going to speak to you about how clinical governance fits into your practice standards scheme assessment, and how the RCVS Knowledge resources can help you achieve what is required for the clinical governance element of your Practice Standard Scheme assessments and awards.

So, what exactly is the Practice Standards Scheme? Well, it's been around since 2005, and it's a voluntary scheme, which accredits veterinary practices in the UK, and it promotes maintains the highest standards of veterinary care through both setting standards and regularly assessing practices. The membership of the scheme is increasing year on year and there are now over 65% practices in this scheme, and it is run by the profession. The practice standards group PSG, both sets and updates the standards and the standards are updated approximately every five years or so. And there are representatives in PSG from all the major veterinary organisations.

There's also a team of trained PSS assessors, one of which I am, and we are the people who will liaise with you about your visit if you're being assessed both for accreditation or the awards, and we will look at documentation before the visit and then come and visit you in practice for one or several days, depending on the size and complexity of the practice you're in.

There's two types of practice standards scheme assessment. The first is the accreditation, which we're all quite familiar with. It occurs every four years and practices can apply to be accredited at different levels depending on the services they offer. And that's average thing from core standards to general practice, veterinary hospital and small animal emergency services clinic.

In addition to accreditations there are also optional awards, and awards are for specific areas in which practices believe they excel. They're an extremely rigorous assessment and practices are awarded points on the day based on the evidence they can provide for each of the criteria, and they are then designated as good or outstanding within each award.

So where does clinical governance fit in? Well, it is represented across the board in the accreditation module to PSS accreditation and that is even in the core level, which is the lower level of accreditation. It is also if your practice chooses to do awards, one of the

modules required to achieve the award in team and professional responsibility. So that probably gives us an idea that clinical governance is a very important part of the practice standards scheme.

Just to go over a couple of definitions. What exactly is clinical governance? Quite simply it's a system or a framework for understanding, monitoring and improving the quality of services continuously improving the quality of services care and outcomes. Within that clinical audit lives within that as part of clinical governance, it's a 'how to' of clinical governance and it's a process for monitoring standards of clinical care to see if it has been done in the best way possible, which is better practice. There's an important change that is coming up in the 2020 revision of practice standard scheme. And that is that there is a specific requirement for clinical audit, which used to be in hospital level. And it has been moved into GP level as a requirement from the 2020 revision of practice standards.

If we just pop to the RCVS Knowledge website, you can see under quality improvement, all the resources that are provided for clinical governance. Quality improvement tools, which are guidelines, clinical audit is one of them and significant event, or this is another. Checklist and benchmarking, and all of which are quality improvement tools. So, these are the how to do your clinical governance.

When we go on a PSS visit, here are some of the things that we might hear when we discuss clinical governance. You don't know what it is. I don't know where to start. I don't have time and I don't see the benefit. So we don't know what clinical governance is.

Here's our definition from a couple of slides ago and really what we need to think of in simple themes, in simple words is it's a continual improvement of quality of services, care and outcomes. RCVS Knowledge can help with this because feeling like we don't know what a subject actually involves is probably the biggest stumbling block in getting started. So if you go to the RCVS Knowledge site and go to quality improvement, there are the quality improvement tools I just mentioned, which are really the 'how to do it' of clinical governance. RCVS Knowledge has information that's specific to veterinary practice and there are lots of CPD sections which are really readily accessible and then small segments, which fits in with our busy lives and practice. So they're set up in an hour or less segments and even within these hours there are little sections that you can work your way through and track your progress and then complete a quiz at the end to make sure you've understood the content. It's all free CPD as well. So that's a bonus you can get that recorded in your One CPD log.

'I don't know where to start' follows on from that and sometimes these things just seem like a big topic that seems like something we wouldn't know where to make a start. And it is something that many of us weren't familiar with until more recent times and it's perhaps also something that's been seen as something for a clinical director or a practice owner, or a senior vet to be involved in and not really for anyone else to know about. And again, if we go to RCVS Knowledge, there are the quality improvement tools that we mentioned, which are the 'how to do it'. And, and the best thing they do is give ideas on audits that everyone can get involved. So if you click on that clinical audit box, there's lots of suggestions and ideas of different types of audits, but they involve everyone in the whole veterinary team. It's not just something for a practice owner, it's something that everyone can get involved in and start with simple questions across the range of the teams remit within practice. Here we are there's our screen. So that shows us our quality improvement and there we are clinical audit and there we have a little CPD course at the top - five minute CPD that explains

the process. There's a link to the national audit neutering, a very simple template you can use. Then some case examples for people who have done these things, and you can see 15 minutes, 12 minutes, 15 minutes. So nothing that's taken up too much time and lots of topics that are very relevant to our everyday practice.

'I don't have time' - really I think ties in with, I don't know where to start that's where RCVS Knowledge can help, as we've just shown you that resources are all split up into really small sections. I love that they give you the time that each one takes, because that really does incentivise certainly somebody like me, if I think, oh gosh, 12 minutes, 15 minutes, I can do that and with a cup of coffee by my side, then I'm more likely to get started with it. So RCVS Knowledge everything's into bite-size, and it does give you some ideas for some very small, quick audits to get started with, to get the ball rolling. The examples and things of auditing that people perhaps to simple, but a great place to start.

Reception can look at client waiting times. For our large animal equine colleagues, simple questions like is that a vaccine stamp on each car? How many anaesthetic forums had a pre-op heart rate filled in last month? How many consent forms have a contact phone number checked for the day on admission?

So there are some really simple, nice ideas on there of just how to get started for ideas of audit that won't take up several days to do, they'll take up only several minutes to get started. And they even as I said, provide the templates for you to do that.

The benefits - it's always hard when your starting something when you see bad errors of time and not understanding the subject, that you might not see the benefits. And certainly from being out there in practice, I can see lots and lots of people who have got started with this, and they, in fact, once they get started, they don't really want to stop because they start finding benefits in the information they're collecting.

There are annual quality awards where excellence and quality is recognised. And these are then shared on the RCVS Knowledge site and their case examples are for lots of different types of practices. As I say, once, we're out and about, and we find people who have engaged with this process of clinical governance in a positive way, they really aren't ever going back to not and recording and monitoring, measuring and looking for ways to improve, it definitely is something that once you start, you don't want to stop.

So just to wind up with a few top tips, the main top tips I would gather from being out doing practice visits are to make a start. Don't imagine it to be something that's much bigger than it is. Make a start, get a start somewhere, use RCVS Knowledge, get a simple, small idea and make a start with it.

Get a team together and don't just make that a senior vet or the clinical director team of one, get a team across the board. There'll be lots of ideas, and you can feed off each other's enthusiasm and learn from each others and ways of doing things and generate further ideas for improvement.

It's important to let everyone know what you're doing. So, you understand it's abate improvement. It's not just surveillance and task from senior management. It's a about continual improvement and I think at the end of the day, that's what we all want for the patients that are under our care and for our clients.

Get inspired to have a look at RCVS Knowledge at the quality award winners and resources that are referenced there. You'll be inspired by the projects other people have undertaken. And the improvements that they've made.

Remember it's about your practice, it's worth addressing improving ideas that matter to your practice because I certainly find the more I'm out visiting practices, the more they are all unique in their own way, catering to different types of practice, different size and different and practice demographics. So it's important that you use clinical governance for what's important to your practice, and that really does mean that you get the most benefit. As I said earlier, be warned when she starts in this topic, you wouldn't be able to stop it's. It's one of these topics that people, once they gather some information, they see an improvement, they want to do more. So, enjoy that. And hopefully you will find, and that you will get lots and lots of benefits from it.

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