



News from your APHA OV Team Issue 2

July 2024

Welcome to the team's second OV Newsletter.

We hope you will find this edition informative and useful. If you have any questions about the content or any ideas for future newsletters, please contact the APHA OV team either via telephone or email.

Email CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk

Tel. 020 8026 1094 (08:30 – 17:00 Monday to Friday excluding public and bank holidays).

In this issue:

- [Message from Sue Quinney, Veterinary Head of OV Regulatory Affairs](#)
- [Prompts and reminders](#)
- [OV Conference online - 17-19 September 2024](#)
- [APHA Vet Gateway](#)
- [Useful Links](#)



Message from Sue Quinney, Veterinary Head of OV Regulatory Affairs

We encourage everyone to read these newsletters.

Not every section will be relevant to you, check the headings in bold below – you can skip sections that don't apply to you.

Some information will be relevant to you and time spent reading this now may save you a lot of time in the future. Many points highlighted here are included because they have been an issue, often unintentionally, and we want to avoid non-compliances, not investigate them.

We all make mistakes. If you have made a mistake or something has gone wrong, please tell us. The outcome of a recent RCVS disciplinary hearing (22 April 2024) involving an OV demonstrates why this is important www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary

The OV system is critical to delivery of GB policies and due to the diligence of the vast majority of OVs, we are able to continue to provide assurance to our trading partners that they can trust our system. Thank you.

Prompts and reminders

We've tried to include prompts and reminders for areas where we have had recent queries or issues that need to be shared with the wider OV, AHP and FCCO community.

Training and Authorisation

- **Policy of Authorisation**
All OVs must be familiar with the [OV13](#), which is the Policy for Authorisation of Official Veterinarians (OVs) in Great Britain. Please remind yourselves of the content on a regular basis.
- **Check your authorisation status**
Before carrying out any work, you must ensure that you are properly qualified to do so. Please check, via your Improve International Personal Training Dashboard, that your authorisation is current and has the status 'granted'. If you have any doubt, please contact the APHA OV team for advice. Improve International will notify you by email of any authorisation status changes and send you regular status reports. Check your spam/junk email folders if you haven't received these. If you aren't receiving any training communications at all, please contact Improve International.

Carrying out work without authorisation is a serious non-compliance and may result in formal investigation by APHA.

- **Extensions and Exceptions to training requirements**
A reminder in respect of requesting extensions to deadlines and exceptions to requirements; please complete a [TR588](#) form and send to the APHA OV team for consideration **before** your authorisation is suspended or expired.

- **RCVS membership changes**

If your RCVS membership category is changed for any reason from 'UK practising', you can no longer be authorised as an OV. Your authorisation will be automatically expired. If your RCVS 'UK Practising' membership is subsequently reinstated, your OV authorisation is not automatically reinstated. You must apply to the APHA OV team to see what you need to do to regain OV status for each relevant qualification. In some cases, it will be possible to reinstate without further action on your part but in other cases, revalidation or full retraining will be required. This will be dependent on several factors including the date that your qualification was originally due for revalidation and also whether there have been changes to your work area for which you will not have received notifications. If you know that you will be changing RCVS membership category whilst on parental leave, please notify the APHA OV team **in advance** who may be able to amend your OV status to 'suspended' rather than 'expired' until your return.

- **Revalidation certification exercises – internal verification**

The International School of Veterinary Postgraduate Studies (ISVPS) randomly samples 10% of certification exercises, within one month of completion of all revalidation requirements.

If your certification exercises are in the sample chosen and do not meet the required standard, you will be contacted by ISVPS and offered an opportunity to update them to a satisfactory condition.

If they are updated satisfactorily, within one month, then no further action will be required.

However, if they are not updated satisfactorily within the required time, this will be reported to the APHA OV team and following review the relevant OCQ(V) authorisation may be 'suspended' or 'revoked'.

The internal verification work that ISVPS do, on behalf of APHA, is incredibly important to the integrity of the OV training system. We are currently experiencing a high level of non-compliance in respect of certification exercises so please ensure that you complete these as required and if you are notified that further work is required, please address this promptly.

Biosecurity:

- As all veterinary surgeons will be aware, high biosecurity standards are paramount in our combined efforts to control disease. Failure to implement correct biosecurity measures on arrival and departure from a livestock premises for example, poses a significant disease risk.

APHA has set biosecurity requirements and these standards must be met as a minimum when attending a premises to carry out OV work.

If a premises has additional biosecurity requirements, these must also be followed unless they compromise the APHA standards.

Details of APHA biosecurity requirements for livestock premises can be found within the OCQ(V) training courses, most notably the Essential Skills (ES) course. There is a biosecurity section within the ES revalidation content which can be found in the majority of the OCQ(V) revalidation courses. For those carrying out Notifiable Disease Outbreak work, there is more detail in the Notifiable Disease Outbreak Training (NDOT) courses.

Please review this biosecurity information and help us demonstrate and maintain high standards.

TB specific information:

- It is essential that the TB test is correctly carried out on both days and full procedures are followed at all times.
- **ATTs** must meet the practical testing requirements set out during the conditional authorisation period before embarking on the practical assessment. AVSs must check the ATT has completed all the requirements before they sign the declaration to confirm this.
- The practical testing requirements are as follows:
 1. The ATT must have TB tested a minimum of 500 animals on at least ten different farms (the maximum number of cattle that can be included for a single farm in the case logs is 100).
 2. The ATT must have observed at least 80 reactions (a minimum of 20 circumscribed reactions and 20 reactions with some oedema).
 3. The ATT must have completed and uploaded their case logs on to their Personal Training Dashboard.
- **ATTs** can only act under the supervision of an Approved Veterinary Supervisor (AVS). An ATT must have an AVS and at least one deputy AVS to be eligible for authorisation. Failure to meet this requirement at any time will result in the suspension of the ATT's authorisation.
- An OV must have had a fully compliant audit carried out by either a Veterinary Delivery Partner (VDP), the training provider or APHA in the two years preceding the date of acceptance of the AVS or deputy AVS role. The OCQ(V) - TT practical assessment is not valid for this purpose. Audit records are being checked by the OV team and if a nominated OV's audit requirement is not met, the ATT will not be granted conditional authorisation.
- OVs are reminded that **if a test cannot be carried out safely, it must be stopped** and where possible, a solution found. For ATTs, if the situation cannot be rectified, the AVS must be consulted for further advice. AVSs must ensure that their ATTs are aware of how to handle Health and Safety concerns. Failure to carry out the test according to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) is not acceptable in any circumstances and may result in the test not being valid. A formal

investigation may be triggered and OV/ATT authorisation may be suspended as a precautionary measure pending the outcome of the investigation.

- We have had an increase in the number of **allegations of OVs not carrying out TB testing correctly** and all have been or are being investigated. Please don't compromise disease control by failing to adhere to the SOP. There is never a good reason for this – if you can't do the test properly, don't do it at all. Circumstances whereby individual animals, groups of animals or whole herds cannot be tested must be reported to APHA promptly so that a solution can be found.
- **OCQ(V) - TTr (Tuberculin Testing revalidation)** – OVs must have had a successful APHA / VDP / non-VDP audit OR a Peer Review in the last four years. Please check this well in advance of the revalidation deadline date. Your authorisation will not continue if this requirement has not been met by the deadline. Some exceptions may be permitted for zoo vets – apply for an exception using the TR588.
- In line with the OV instructions, OVs and ATTs must hand over a TB181 information note to the owner/keeper at any test where bovine reactors and/or IRs are disclosed and explain the conditions to them so that they are left in no doubt as to the restrictions applied to their holding/s. In ongoing breakdowns the TB181 could also be emailed to them, subject to certain requirements.

Exports Specific Information:

- OVs must not certify unofficial documents in their capacity as an authorised Official Veterinarian (OV) unless specific written permission has been granted by APHA or Defra. 'Unofficial' means not issued by APHA or for exports, by APHA or Defra. For further info please check the following link:

[Certification of Unofficial Documents by Official Veterinarians \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://defra.gov.uk/certification-of-unofficial-documents-by-official-veterinarians)

General:

- Please ensure that your **Improve International Personal Training Dashboard** is always kept up to date and if you are a TB tester, the details should match your data within Sam.
- Your Improve International Personal Training Dashboard should always have correct personal and professional information. To enable us to contact you, an email address and telephone number must be included in the personal details section. Please also make sure that your location is correct and if your name changes, create a new signature. If your Improve International Personal Training Dashboard is not up to date or is missing contact details, this will be regarded as a non-compliance and your authorisation could be suspended.

- Please refer to recently issued APHA Briefing Note 20/24 [A reminder to OV's of their responsibility to keep their details up to date on their Improve International Personal Training Dashboard \(defra.gov.uk\)](#).
- **How do I update the details on my account?** You may amend any of your details by logging in to your Personal Training Dashboard <https://www.improve-ov.com/login/> and selecting 'Update details' from the left-hand side of the screen. It is important that you do this if you change practice, so that APHA have an up-to-date record to cross check with any certificates that you sign. If you are working in multiple practices, you can enter additional addresses in the comments box found at the bottom of the section.

OV Conference online - 17-19 September 2024

Once again Improve Veterinary Education are hosting an OV Conference, in association with APHA. This will be an online event (and delegates will be able to claim up to 18 CPD hours).

The Conference is open to all OV's, AHP's and students. Conference page link: <https://officialvet.com/>

APHA Vet Gateway

The APHA Vet Gateway website is changing, with the majority of the existing content being moved to GOV.UK. The content is being moved in phases and we will notify you when sections are moving. We hope to have completed this work by October 2024. For further information, please see APHA Briefing Note 16/24. [Changes to the Vet Gateway website \(defra.gov.uk\)](#)

Useful Links

Animal Exports & Imports:

Centre for International Trade

Telephone: 03000 200 301

For contact email addresses see GOV.UK [Animal and Plant Health Agency - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Pet Travel:

Bringing your pet dog, cat or ferret to Great Britain

pettravel@apha.gov.uk

APHA Pet Travel Scheme helpline Telephone: 0370 241 1710

Exports of pet animals (cats, dogs, ferrets and all other small pet animals)

petexports@apha.gov.uk

Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) Queries:

In England, tel. 03000 200 301 or TB.Advice@apha.gov.uk

In Wales, tel. 0300 303 8268 or apha.cymruwales@apha.gov.uk

In Scotland, contact your local Field Services office [Field Services office](#)

Improve Veterinary Education: -

Main Tel. Number 0330 202 0380

enquiries@improve-ov.com

Opening hours

08:30-17:30

www.improve-ov.com

www.improve-ahp.com

EHC Online:

[How to register for export health certificate \(EHC\) online - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

General queries should be directed to the Centre for International Trade

Tel: 03000 200 301

Govt. Gateway account/login related queries to the APHA Service Desk

Tel: 03300 416999

aphaservicedesk@apha.gov.uk

‘Find a professional to certify Export Health Certificates’:

Requests to be listed on the following page on Gov.UK:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/find-a-professional-to-certify-export-health-certificates> should be sent to the OV team.

Please note that that is optional and quite separate from the EHC Online system.

Sam OV support

For queries about using Sam or the initial registration process please contact the Sam support desk on:

03300 416999 [Email Sam support desk](#)

Get in touch with the OV Team

Sue Quinney, BSc.BVetMed.MRCVS, Veterinary Head of OV Regulatory Affairs

Jonathan Booth-Thomas, Team Leader

Michelle Greaves, Administrative Officer

Kate Middleton, Administrative Officer

Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

Telephone: 020 8026 1094 Email: CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk

Address: Level 1, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP

You can also get social with us:



Please contact the APHA.CorporateCommunications@apha.gov.uk mailbox if you no longer wish to receive these email notifications

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.