



## News from your APHA OV Team

### Issue 4

#### March 2026

Welcome to the fourth OV team Newsletter. This time it is going out to all OVs, AHPs and FCCOs.

If you have any questions about the content, please contact the OV team either via telephone or email and we'll be happy to help you.

We also appreciate feedback in relation to our newsletters and if you have any ideas of what you would like us to include, please get in touch with us.



**Email** [CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk](mailto:CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk)

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

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## Message from Sue Quinney, Veterinary Head of OV Regulatory Affairs

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Thank you for reading this Newsletter - please encourage your colleagues to read it too. We want to ensure that delivery of Government work continues to be delivered to high standards and this can only be achieved if important messages are disseminated to the people delivering the work. In a busy world, it is easy to ignore the next email, another briefing note, another Newsletter...

OVs, AHPs and FCCOs deliver important work on behalf of Ministers across GB and failure to comply with requirements can have wide-reaching impacts. This can include invalidation of TB tests and rejection of exports at the destination country, each having a potential and sometimes direct impact on disease control and trade. Mistakes happen – we are all human. But failure to follow standard procedures or principles of certification will result in further investigation so please don't let that be you. A summary of 2024 non-compliance investigations is included in this Newsletter. If you are aware of or suspect poor practice, please let us know.

The majority of you, who are delivering this work to high standards, can rest assured that we are identifying and acting upon non-compliance and will continue to do so into 2026. Thank you once again for all your hard work in protecting animal health and welfare in GB and beyond.

### Prompts and reminders

#### Training and Authorisation

- OVs are reminded to ensure they are familiar with the content of the [OV13 Policy for authorisation of Official Veterinarians \(OVs\) in Great Britain](#)
- ATTs and their Approved Veterinary Supervisors (AVSs) and deputies, must ensure they are familiar with the [TR541 Policy for APHA authorisation of ATTs in England and Wales](#).
- CSOs must ensure they are familiar with the [ET175 Policy: APHA authorisation of export Certification Support Officers in GB](#)
- FCCOs must ensure they are familiar with the [ET209 Policy for Authorisation of FCCOs in Great Britain by APHA](#)

- ABSs and their Approved Veterinary Supervisors – Blood Sampling (AVS-BS) and deputies must ensure they are familiar with the [OV69 Policy for APHA authorisation of Approved Blood Samplers in England & Wales](#).

### AHP & OV Instructions:

- Instructions can now be found in the following locations via the Improve International websites: [Official Animal Health Paraprofessional Training](#) [Official Veterinarian Training](#).

### Online Learning:

- Improve International has released a series of free, on-demand webinars which cover a range of important topics for OVs and AHPs alike. CPD certificates are provided upon completion of the webinars, and an online forum is available for discussion of webinar content. The webinars are available until 31 March 2026, before the OV Conference returns with a full programme later this year. To access the webinars, or find out more, please visit the [Improve OV Conference website](#).

### OV RCVS membership changes:

- If your RCVS membership category is changed for any reason from 'UK practising', your OV 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 depend on several factors including the date that your qualification was originally due for revalidation and 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.

### Change of veterinary practice details on Sam

Applicable to veterinary practice administrators, OVs and ATTs conducting work under the OCQ(V)-TT (Tuberculin Testing) and OCQ(V) – SS (Statutory Surveillance).

Please complete the OV58 form found on GOV.UK to tell APHA:

- that you've moved to a new practice, if you're an OV or ATT
- about a change to a practice's details, such as name or address

Once your form has been processed, the OV team will update all relevant details on Sam (APHA's online system for recording TB test results).

APHA uses these details to send you important information about your ATT or OV authorisation. It's your responsibility to make sure the details are correct.

Send the completed OV58 form to the OV team at [CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk](mailto:CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk).

The OV58 form is for practice details only. You can use the [OV57 form on GOV.UK](#) to change your name on Sam.

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## Principles of Certification

**OVs are reminded that they must consider the RCVS principles of certification before signing any certification or declarations. This applies to all OV work areas.**

Details can be found here - [Certification](#).

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## TB specific information

### Updated requirement for OCQ(V)-TT nominated supervisors

As part of the OCQ(V)-TT training, candidates must nominate a supervisor for their practical training period. The nominated supervisor must be an OV who also holds OCQ(V)-TT and who is experienced and confident to train the new OV. The current OV instructions do not stipulate any previous audit requirements for the nominated supervisor.

To align the supervisor requirements of both the OCQ(V)-TT and the OCQ(AHP)-ATT courses, a new audit requirement is being introduced. All OVs who wish to take on a new role as a supervisor on or after 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026 must hold a fully compliant Veterinary Delivery Partner (VDP), APHA or Improve International audit within the two years prior to accepting the role. Where there have been multiple audits within that period, the last audit must have been fully compliant. If there are any recorded non-compliances, an individual will not be considered suitable to fulfil the nominated supervisor role. For further information, please see [APHA briefing note 47/25](#).

## On Farm Records of TB testing

An individual tester is responsible for their test data, and it is not acceptable for a tester to leave test records on farm between day 1 and day 2, or at the end of day 2, even if the farmer will send the data to the tester later. A tester needs to always be in possession of the test data and any systems, IT or otherwise, that contain such data. The tester must use a system that allows them full control and oversight of the test data before, during and after the test. Testers must not rely on the farmer or helpers to effectively manage their test data.

## Duplication of Animals on Submitted TB Test Results

[APHA Briefing Note 36/25](#) issued on the 2nd of October 2025 informed OVs and ATTs that there had been multiple occasions where cattle had been recorded on SAM as having been tested more than once on the same farm within a 60-day period.

APHA is conducting investigations into these cases and initial findings indicate that errors at the time of submission may account for many of the duplicated animal records.

OVs and ATTs are reminded that it is their responsibility to verify the accuracy of test records when submitting them on SAM. Approved Veterinary Supervisor's must also check test data entered by ATTs and address any anomalies with the ATT before signing off the test.

Where a test has been conducted by more than one TB tester in multiple parts, each tester should ensure that they only submit the results for the cattle that they have personally tested. Please also refer to [APHA Briefing Note 26/23 Submission of part skin test results undertaken by different testers and/or on different dates](#).

If digital recording devices are used as part of TB skin tests, care must be taken to ensure that the test results uploaded to SAM are accurate. OVs should be aware that duplication errors seem more common when the test has been conducted in multiple parts.

OVs and ATTs are also reminded that they are required to maintain records of TB skin test for 3 years and 60 days.

APHA will continue to monitor for duplicate submissions and will investigate as necessary.

## ATT & OV Improve Training Records

Please ensure that your details are up to date, including whether you are delivering TB testing on behalf of a Veterinary Delivery Partnership (VDP). It has

come to our attention that several ATTs have listed themselves as 'non-VDP' when we know that is not the case. Some OV records are also incorrect. If you are unsure as to whether you are working as part of the VDP, please discuss with your practice managers. It is important that this information is correct on your training record.

### **bTB Cattle Vaccine Field Trials (Phase 3)**

The third phase of the bTB cattle vaccine field trials started in September 2025. These trials will involve approximately 750 cattle being vaccinated with a BCG vaccine across 10 - 12 herds that will subsequently undergo a DIVA skin test (**D**etect **I**nfected amongst **V**accinated **A**nimals).

At the time of writing this article, APHA has conducted 24 visits across 8 farms as part of this trial.

Farms 1 - 3 have completed their trials.

Farms 4 - 8 have had their BCG vaccinations and will undergo DIVA tests in the coming months.

Farms 9 - 11 will be vaccinated in Spring 2026.

Three of the selected farms are in the low TB incidence area of Wales, the remaining eight are spread across the Low Risk Area of England.

As part of the trial, APHA veterinarians are working closely with private veterinary surgeons to ensure they are fully aware that their clients are participating in this ground breaking programme. They are also being briefed on the specific actions required should they be called to attend animals involved in the trial.

The trial is progressing well and is anticipated to be completed in Summer 2026.

### **Voluntary Gamma Testing Available for Eligible TB Breakdown Herds**

OVs and ATTs are reminded that **voluntary interferon gamma testing is available to cattle keepers in the High Risk Area (HRA) and six monthly TB surveillance testing parts of the Edge Area of England** whose herds are under TB breakdown but **do not qualify for compulsory gamma testing**.

This government funded offer provides an additional diagnostic tool for herds with Officially TB Free Withdrawn (OTFW) status, helping to identify infected animals earlier, potentially recover their OTF status more quickly, and reduce the risk of recurrence. Testing is available subject to the breakdown herd meeting the eligibility criteria and the availability of APHA gamma testing resources

locally. By offering voluntary testing in eligible herds, we also aim to give farmers greater control and a better chance of minimising disruption to their businesses.

OVs are encouraged to make cattle keepers aware of this option during breakdown management discussions and advise them to consider whether a voluntary gamma test could support their herd health planning. Keepers who wish to pursue testing should contact APHA directly.

For full details of eligibility, conditions and testing arrangements, please refer to [APHA Briefing Note 32/25](#) and information in the [TB Hub](#).

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## Exports specific information

- For product exports, OVs and FCCOs are reminded that they must work with the exporter to agree a process where they can confirm that the consignment only contains eligible product.
  - During notifiable disease outbreaks such as Avian Influenza, many EHCs require OVs to confirm that the consignment only contains product from specific premises or areas during specific timeframes.
  - For further information, please see [APHA briefing note 04/26](#).
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## Allegations of Non-Compliance

Notification of alleged non-compliance originates from various sources including Quality Assurance (QA) findings, complaints from farmers, vets and trading partners for example. Most cases are resolved without the need for formal investigation, but each is assessed and proportionate action taken. Some allegations are not substantiated, and no further action is taken. Other cases are followed up with a formal letter providing advice as required. Allegations of a more serious nature or which require more extensive investigation, trigger formal investigation. For OVs, concerns of professional misconduct are referred to RCVS.

### **2024 data:**

In 2024, investigation cases related to OVs, ATTs in England, Wales and Scotland and one FCCO in England.

- England – 1 FCCO, 2 OV export, 3 ATT and 10 OV TB cases
- Wales – 1 ATT and 2 OV TB cases

- Scotland – 1 OV TB case

<b>Table 24: Details of the formal investigations carried out in 2024 (2023 figures in red)</b>		
<b>1. Number of cases progressed to formal investigation</b>		20 (14)
Personnel:		
Number of OVs formally investigated		15 (11)
Number of ATTs formally investigated		4 (2)
Number of CSOs formally investigated		0 (0)
Number of FCCOs formally investigated		1 (0)
<b>2. Nature of allegations:</b>		
TB Testing (TT) related	OV	13 (2)
	ATT	4 (2)
Exports (EX) related	OV	2 (6)
	FCCO	1 (0)
Notifiable disease outbreak related	OV	0 (3)
	ATT	0 (1)
Other	OV	0 (1)
	ATT	0 (0)
<b>3. Precautionary measures implemented pending outcome of the investigation:</b>		
Authorisation suspended	OV	7 (6)
	ATT	2 (2)
Authorisation conditions amended	ATT	2 (0)
None. Individual able to continue in role during the investigation	OV	8 (6)
	ATT	0 (0)
<b>4. ATT Review Panel outcome summary (more than one outcome may apply per case)</b>		
Authorisation revoked		0 (0)
Improvement plan		3 (1)
Revalidation / retraining		2 (2)
Re-reading of rules/procedures		1 (1)
Enhanced QA measures (all however are targeted for future audit)		1 (0)
Testing restrictions (Testing under supervision for a specified period)		3 (1)
Suspension		0 (2)
<b>5. OV Review Panel outcome summary (more than one outcome may apply per case)</b>		
Authorisation revoked		5 (6)
Authorisation suspended		6 (1)
Written advice provided		0 (1)
Biosecurity checklist required		0 (0)
Improvement plan		7 (0)

Revalidation/on-line training	10 (2)
Enhanced auditing	8 (0)
No action	2 (3) 1 case did not reach review panel stage. It was dropped following a review of the evidence 1 case was not upheld by a review panel.
<b>6. Referral to RCVS</b>	
OV	0 (4)
<b>7. Time taken per case</b>	
Average (months)	5.2 (6)
Range (months)	2 - 15 (1.5 - 12)
<b>Note:</b> This is for cases triggered in 2024 only	

**Table 25: Details of 2024 appeal cases and revocations due to outcomes of RCVS hearings**

1. Appeals raised (against Review Panel decisions)	OV	1
	ATT	0
2. Number of appeals upheld	OV	0
	ATT	n/a
3. OV Authorisations revoked as a result of RCVS disciplinary hearings into matters not related to OV work that resulted in suspension or removal from the RCVS register		3

**Table 26: Data on allegations/circumstances not referred for formal investigation in 2024 (2023 figures in red)**

<b>1. Number of cases subject to enquiry but not referred for formal investigation</b>	
Total personnel	16 (19)
OVs	16 (14)
ATTs	0 (3)
FCCOs	0 (2)
<b>2. Nature of allegations</b>	
TB testing	8 (7)
Export related	7 (7)
Outbreak related	0 (5)
Other	1 (0)
These individuals were sent formal letters advising them of any errors and providing guidance as applicable. The exception being those for which no non-compliance was identified.	

## Outcomes of cases referred to RCVS

In 2024, the RCVS held 2 disciplinary hearings for OV cases referred by APHA. Outcomes can be found on the RCVS website [Disciplinary Committee hearings](#) – one TB testing related and the other export related. Both individuals were removed from the RCVS register.

## Summary of 2025 investigations:

We have yet to complete all investigation cases from last year, but numbers are included below.

Number of TB cases – **9**

Number of Exports cases – **3**

Other – **0**

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## Useful Links

### **Animal Exports & Imports:**

APHA Centre for International Trade (CIT)

Telephone: 03000 200 301

For contact email addresses see [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

From 23 February, all export related enquiries should be directed to [exports@apha.gov.uk](mailto:exports@apha.gov.uk)

### **Pet Travel:**

Fill in the [pet travel contact form](#).

APHA Pet Travel Scheme helpline Telephone: 03000 200 301

### **Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) Queries:**

In England, tel. 03000 200 301 or [TB.Advice@apha.gov.uk](mailto:TB.Advice@apha.gov.uk)

In Wales, tel. 0300 303 8268 or [apha.cymruwales@apha.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@improve-ov.com)

### **Opening hours**

08:30-17:30

[Improve OV](#)

[Improve AHP](#)

**EHC Online:**

[How to register for export health certificate \(EHC\) online - GOV.UK](#)  
([www.gov.uk](http://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](mailto:aphaservicedesk@apha.gov.uk)

### **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**

**Claire Wade, BVSc MRCVS, Veterinary Training & Regulatory (OV) Advisor**

**Jonathan Booth-Thomas, OV Regulatory Affairs Lead**

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**Michelle Greaves, Administrative Officer**

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**Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)**

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You can also get social with us:



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