

Minutes of the board meeting

Tuesday 23 June 2026 at 13:00 | via Teams

Present (Trustees)	Mike Andersson (MA), Caroline Browne (CB) (Senior Independent Director), Jocelyn Cornwell (JC) (Chair), Agnelo Fernandes (AF), Carol Jones (CJ) (joined after item 11), Bill Kilvington (BK) (left during item 5), Harriet Leyland (HL)
Apologies	Amrat Khorana; Farrah Pradhan; Michele Salter (Treasurer); Anna Devine (Director of Fundraising, Marketing and Comms)
In attendance (Staff)	Nathan Bacon (NB) (Operations Director), Lisa O'Dwyer (LOD) (Director of Medico-legal Services), Tim Hammond (TH) (Head of Finance), Ed Maycock (EM) (Head of Events), Paul Whiteing (PWh) (CEO), Rachel Wright (minutes)

1. Apologies for absence

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from trustees Amrat Khorana, Farrah Pradhan and Michele Salter (Treasurer) and from Director of Fundraising, Marketing and Comms Anna Devine.

2. Declarations of interest

BK had joined the all-party-parliamentary group for health professionals on behalf of his college.

3. Minutes of board meeting on 24th March 2026 and matters arising

The chair presented the minutes of a board meeting on 24th March 2026 for approval whereupon they were unanimously approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising

PWh answered trustee questions about actions 308-10; JC and AF re-iterated their wish to contribute to the discussion about implementation of the Harmed Patient

Pathway (HPP). PWh explained why action 305 had not been completed, adding that the reaching out to resident doctors could be picked up as part of the HPP work.

PWh would update the Actions From Lessons Learned report for September's board meeting.

C0315: PWh to update the Implicit Lessons Learned section of the action log for September's board meeting

4. Chair's report and trustee recruitment

There was discussion about the recruitment of trustees, associate trustees and committee co-optees. It was agreed to separate the recruitment processes for trustees and co-optees, starting with advertising for trustees and then identifying co-optees through Avma's networks. For board positions, the following five professional skill sets would be sought as a priority: fundraising, legal, clinical, digital and accountancy/finance - recruitment to be in line with the timetable in the CEO's paper to the board. Each committee would identify the skills gap it wanted filled, bring this to the board and then identify a co-optee. JC, BK, AF and HL volunteered to sit on trustee-interview panels, depending on dates. PWh would ask the absent trustees if they wished to volunteer, too.

C0316: Committees to discuss whether they needed a co-optee and report back to the board

C0317: PWh to ask AK, CJ, FP and MS if they want to sit on trustee-interview panels

5. CEO report

The CEO and board congratulated EM on his 20th anniversary with Avma.

Three members of staff had resigned, reported PWh; Jayne Nichol (JN) and Eleanor Riches (ER) would be greatly missed. He and the board expressed sincere thanks to them for the great work they had done for Avma. Recruitment for JN's replacement as panel accreditation manager had not been successful; PWh is discussing a 'Plan B' with LOD, delegating when necessary, until the vacancy was filled – if not filled, this would be RAG-rated red on the risk register. A new business case would need to be made for ER's role if her post were to be kept as she was originally employed on a fixed term contract.

PWh talked through why White Tail had been appointed to conduct the service review. Trustees would be updated on progress at the September board meeting, if not before, and White Tail would attend the trustee awayday in mid/late November 2026 – PWh to confirm the date.

The training day for staff on AI had been very helpful, reported PWh. Avma was increasingly using AI and starting to feel the consequences of a more people finding Avma through AI.

Business continuity had been included in the risk register. The recent all-day staff session had looked at practical scenarios of things that could go wrong to help identify, and document, how these would be addressed. In response to a trustee question, PWh confirmed Avma had comprehensive cybersecurity insurance in place.

BK left the meeting during this item.

C0318: PWh to set date for trustee awayday

6. Committees' terms of reference for approval

The board approved the revised committee terms of reference subject to clarification that "a quorum consists of two trustees". Each committee would assess its own effectiveness, including a review of its responsibilities to Avma's strategic aim, annually and report to the board.

The board would review its effectiveness in checking whether the committees, individually and as a group, were fulfilling their purpose. JC would discuss with the treasurer whether the board should discuss the management accounts and reporting as a whole board, say, once or twice a year.

C0319: PWh to agendise, for 2027, a review by the board of its effectiveness in monitoring the effectiveness of committees

C0320: JC to discuss with MS whether the board should discuss the management accounts and reporting as a whole board, say, once or twice a year

7. Priorities for Year 3, resourcing and impact measures

The CEO summarised, updated and answered questions about his paper circulated with the meeting's papers. Trustees welcomed the summary of Avma's capacity position.

When asked, the CEO said he had found the exercise useful before explaining how it had informed his/the leadership team's (LT) thinking.

At a trustee's request, PWh would ensure that when the capacity ratings with the effort required came to the board again, they would be looked at along with related risks on the organisation's risk register; however, they need not come to the board often, it was agreed. The ratings – a snapshot in time; some risks being seasonal – would help the LT judge whether to include a capacity issue on the risk register; the team would track the ratings regularly. Avma needed to be better at analysing normal variation as opposed to trend, it was agreed. JC suggested BK might be able help with this.

A trustee flagged the importance of capturing the helpline's call-abandonment rate as it would give a clearer idea of the efficiency of the service than simply the number of calls answered. PWh would investigate obtaining the call abandonment rate.

MA to follow up offline with PWh about the relationship between the two tables in his paper.

C0321: PWh to talk with BK about improving analysis of normal variation versus trend regarding capacity

C0322: PWh to investigate obtaining the helpline's call abandonment rate

C0323: MA to follow up offline with PWh about the relationship between the two tables in his paper (7.1) "Summary of capacity position" and "Year 3 priorities status and effort required"

8. Review of Avma's remuneration policy

PWh explained why he was proposing changes to Avma's approach to total remuneration and staff pay. When asked for comments on his paper, it was suggested the benchmarking exercise should have a minimum frequency of, say, five years.

Trustees approved the six revisions to the policy as recommended by the CEO:

1. Pay increase: The revised wording would be used to take account of affordability and the board's responsibilities to the sustainability of the charity.
2. Pensions: The board would retain its commitment to gradually increasing the employer's contribution to pensions if affordable. All agreed affordability had to be the top consideration in these discussions.

3. Flexible and remote working: The board re-iterated its full support for flexible/remote working for staff.
4. Transparency and context: The board and CEO would be as transparent as possible with staff when setting future cost-of-living payments.
5. Tidying up the Remuneration Policy: The first sentence of the Review of Individual Pay Scales section of the policy would be updated, as recommended, to reflect current practice.
6. Communication and feedback to staff: The CEO would report back to staff about the staff survey results and the decisions taken by the board arising from his paper, along with the context and reasoning. In response to a trustee question, he confirmed he had already talked to staff about the link between affordability and future pay increases. The LT felt staff took a pragmatic view of cost-of-living pay awards and appreciated such payments had to be affordable in the long run to ensure Avma's survival.

9. Investment manager change

TH ran through the process taken to appoint a new investment manager. Trustees were satisfied with the rigorousness of the process and approved Quilter Cheviot as Avma's new investment manager. They authorised TH to complete the transition from the current investment manager to Quilter Cheviot on Avma's behalf. AF was thanked for kickstarting the change of investment management in the first place and he thanked PWh, TH and everyone else involved in the process.

10. Risk-register and project-register progress update

The board noted the (few) changes to the corporate risk register.

PWh recommended the board repeat the risk-appetite exercise it had done two to three years previously: the results would be brought to September's board meeting. In response to a trustee request for a deeper discussion about the risk register at the trustee awayday, JC said she would canvass opinions from trustees in advance of planning an agenda for the awayday.

PWh would monitor whether the proposed changes to the clinical negligence policy (planned for Autumn by the Government) would be delayed due to imminent change of Prime Minister.

CB and PWh would pick up on their outstanding action to discuss the HPP before ER's departure.

C0324: PWh to repeat the board risk-appetite piece of work

C0325: JC to canvass opinions from trustees in advance of planning an agenda for the awayday

C0326: PWh and CB to pick up on their outstanding action (C0302) to discuss the HPP before ER's departure

11. Deep-dive discussion: Strategic Objective 1 – a new website, brand and widening our reach

The CEO delivered a PowerPoint presentation on widening Avma's reach. During the discussion that followed trustees agreed Avma would continue to concentrate on those already avoidably harmed rather than focus on raising awareness/preventing medical harm. The organisation had a unique contribution to make, and all its work should be directed at that; however, trustees were in favour of creating material/providing webinars to the NHS using the data Avma had already gathered to raise awareness from patients' perspective.

Other suggestions included: i) trying to raise Avma's profile on the NHS England website and through mechanisms such as LinkedIn; and ii) noting any emerging patterns in the information gathered from harmed patients/families about the failures that had led to that harm and publicising those patterns on the website. Interaction with NHS organisations via the HPP was the best way forward, it was agreed, as Avma did not have the expertise to embed itself in existing NHS pathways from a prevention perspective.

In three to five years' time, the board would like to see:

- i) a reduction in the Avma helpline call abandonment rate to an agreed percentage
- ii) data collected from all callers to the helpline on the usefulness of Avma's service
- iii) the setting- and meeting of a target for reaching 1-2 target demographic groups who faced innumerable barriers to getting justice

iv) better use made of the data Avma got/could get from those who contacted the organisation with the aim that the data reflected those areas of the NHS/healthcare where patients were more likely to suffer harm.

In answer to a trustee question about data clusters, PWh said Avma seldom had that level of granularity in its evidence; however, the aspiration to think about/look at such data remained – it was a work in progress. Avma collected a range of data and was using AI to search notes and telephone recordings for further intelligence.

The board agreed deep dives into areas of its work were valuable and thanked PWh for his presentation.

PWh would show the board the new website before it was launched.

C0327: PWh and team to explore creating material/providing webinars to the NHS using the data already gathered, to create an income stream

C0328: PWh to look into raising Avma's current profile on the NHS website and through LinkedIn

C0329: PWh to note emerging patterns in the information gathered from harmed patients about the failures that have led to their harm and publicise those patterns on the website

C0330: PWh to show the board the new website before its launch

CJ joined the meeting.

12. CRM benefits realisation review and next steps

Trustees found the review of the CRM, circulated with the meeting's papers, useful. Despite past challenges, it had ended up being a positive project and steps had already been taken to implement some of the recommendations in the review, NB said. The proposed action plan was broadly approved by trustees subject to it being updated in terms of timescales, deadlines and more tangible details by the next IIRC meeting. Some of the change requests would have costs attached by the next board meeting, said NB.

In response to a trustee asking about limitations to the CRM's reporting, NB said that if Avma had collected the data, the CRM should be able to report on it. Strategically, the

organisation needed to decide what data it wanted to report on so that those reports could be built.

NB would: i) locate the data dictionary (useful for aligning everyone in terms of the fields being used and how to use those fields to create reports, etc); and ii) complete the GDPR document about data being collected, why it had been collected and what it was being used for.

The next-steps proposal to create a stakeholder focus group of key staff from each business area to take ownership of the CRM system would be expanded to be about all systems, not just the CRM, reported PWh.

In response to a trustee question, LOD and EM fed back on their experiences using the CRM.

Trustees noted the review had been complimentary about a number of staff including Matt Lowry.

C0331: PWh/NB to update the action plan with timescales, deadlines and more tangible details by the next IIRC meeting

C0332: NB to find and use the data dictionary and complete the GDPR document about what data was being collected and what it was being used for

C0333: NB to bring costings for some of the CRM change requests to September's board meeting (if not in budget)

13. Resources committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 2nd June 2026, the management accounts report for Q4 25/26, and a helpline-volunteers survey had been circulated prior to the meeting.

TH talked through the resources committee's recommendation for an accounting transfer from designated reserves to ensure sufficient general reserves to cover the Reserve Policy, noting that this represented a book entry reclassification rather than an actual movement of cash resources. The board approved the transfer of £180,000 from Avma's strategic reserves to ensure there were enough general reserves to cover the Reserve Policy. In response to a trustee question, TH said that, as far as he was currently concerned, this transfer did not have any significance in terms of limiting

ability to call on the designated reserves. He would reflect the reclassification within year-end financial statements and board reporting.

TH offered to go through the finances with any trustee who wanted confidence in the figures or a deeper dive into certain areas.

14. Service delivery, quality and outcomes committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 20th May 2026 had been circulated prior to the meeting as had reports from the director of medico-legal services, the policy and campaigns manager and the panel accreditation manager. There were no questions.

15. Information, IT, risk and compliance committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 13th May 2026 had been circulated prior to the meeting. There were no questions.

16. Income generation and marketing/comms committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 18th May 2026 had been circulated with the meeting's papers, as had reports from the director of fundraising, marketing & comms and the head of events.

EM reported that the vacancy for a senior event coordinator had been filled and he was very pleased with the appointment. He explained why it was time to stop doing webinars and to explore trying to get a foothold in the healthcare event world.

17. Website and brand steering group

Notes of the meetings on 15th April and 27th May 2026 had been circulated with the meeting's papers. There were no questions.

18. Trustee schedule of appointments and reappointments

Noted.

19. Committee and board calendar 2026

Noted.

20. AOB

NB would send trustees their bios to check they were happy for them to go on the new website.

C0334: NB to send trustees their bios to check they were happy for them to go on the new website

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting ended at 4:20pm.

Dates of 2026 board meetings

22nd September and 15th December (includes AGM)

Action	Date Agreed	Agenda Item	Issue	Description	Person Responsible	Date for Completion	Progress/Completed
C0315	23 June 2026	3	Matters arising	PWh to update the Implicit Lessons Learned section of the action log for September's board meeting	PWh	September 2026 board meeting	
C0316	23 June 2026	4	Trustee recruitment	Committees to discuss whether they needed a co-optee and report back to the board	Committees		
C0317	23 June 2026	4	Trustee recruitment	PWh to ask AK, CJ, FP and MS if they want to sit on trustee-interview panels	PWh		
C0318	23 June 2026	5	CEO report	PWh to set date for trustee awayday	PWh		
C0319	23 June 2026	6	Committee terms	PWh to agenda, for 2027, a review by the board of its effectiveness in monitoring the effectiveness of committees	PWh	2027	
C0320	23 June 2026	6	Committee terms	JC to discuss with MS whether the board should discuss the management accounts and reporting as a whole board, say, once or twice a year	JC		

Action	Date Agreed	Agenda Item	Issue	Description	Person Responsible	Date for Completion	Progress/Completed
C0321	23 June 2026	7	Year 3 priorities	PWh to talk with BK about improving analysis of normal variation versus trend regarding capacity	PWh		
C0322	23 June 2026	7	Year 3 priorities	PWh to investigate obtaining the helpline's call abandonment rate	PWh		
C0323	23 June 2026	7	Year 3 priorities	MA to follow up offline with PWh about the relationship between the two tables in his paper (7.1) "Summary of capacity position" and "Year 3 priorities status and effort required"	MA		
C0324	23 June 2026	10	Risk / project registers	PWh to repeat the board risk-appetite piece of work	PWh		
C0325	23 June 2026	10	Risk / project registers	JC to canvass opinions from trustees in advance of planning an agenda for the awayday	JC		
C0326	23 June 2026	10	Risk / project registers	PWh and CB to pick up on their outstanding action (C0302) to discuss the HPP before ER's departure	PWh and CB	Before ER's departure	

Action	Date Agreed	Agenda Item	Issue	Description	Person Responsible	Date for Completion	Progress/Completed
C0327	23 June 2026	11	Website, brand and reach	PWh and team to explore creating material/providing webinars to the NHS using the data already gathered, to create an income stream	PWh and team		
C0328	23 June 2026	11	Website, brand and reach	PWh to look into raising Avma's current profile on the NHS website and through LinkedIn	PWh		
C0329	23 June 2026	11	Website, brand and reach	PWh to note emerging patterns in the information gathered from harmed patients about the failures that have led to their harm and publicise those patterns on the website	PWh		
C0330	23 June 2026	11	Website, brand and reach	PWh to show the board the new website before its launch	PWh	Before website launch	
C0331	23 June 2026	12	CRM review	PWh/NB to update the action plan with timescales, deadlines and more tangible details by the next IIRC meeting	PWh/NB	Next IIRC meeting	

Action	Date Agreed	Agenda Item	Issue	Description	Person Responsible	Date for Completion	Progress/Completed
C0332	23 June 2026	12	CRM review	NB to find and use the data dictionary and complete the GDPR document about what data was being collected and what it was being used for	NB		
C0333	23 June 2026	12	CRM review	NB to bring costings for some of the CRM change requests to September's board meeting (if not in budget)	NB	September 2026 board meeting (if not in budget)	
C0334	23 June 2026	20	AOB	NB to send trustees their bios to check they were happy for them to go on the new website	NB		