Action against Medical Accidents

Minutes of the board meeting

held on **Tuesday 24 March 2026** at 13:00

at Canopi, 82 Tanner Lane, London SE1A 3GN

Present	Mike Andersson (MA), Caroline Browne (CB) (Senior Independent Director), Jocelyn Cornwell (JC) (Chair), Agnelo Fernandes (AF), Amrat Khorana (AK), Harriet Leyland (HL)) (**via Teams**), Farrah Pradhan (FP), Michele Salter (MS) (Treasurer)
In attendance	Nathan Bacon (NB) (Operations Director), Anna Devine (AD) (Director of Fundraising, Marketing and Comms), Lisa O'Dwyer (LOD) (Director of Medico-legal Services), Tim Hammond (TH) (Head of Finance), 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 Carol Jones and Bill Kilvington, and from Head of Events Ed Maycock.

2. Declarations of interest

AK had been appointed as chief executive of International Prader-Willi Syndrome Organisation.

3. Minutes of board meeting on 9th December 2025 and matters arising

The chair presented the minutes of a board meeting on 9th December 2025 for approval whereupon they were unanimously approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising

Paragraph two of item 10 of the minutes would be amended to read "The advantages and disadvantages of being on the social media platform X were raised".

C0294: PWh to amend paragraph two of item 10 of the December board minutes to read "advantages and disadvantages of being on the social media platform X were raised"

4. Chair's report and update

The resignation from the board of Stephanie Howden on 21 January 2026 was noted. There was a brief discussion about the recruitment and retention of trustees. Suggestions included having a large pool of associate trustees, recruiting recently retired clinicians and matching new trustees with mentors. Improvements to the ways in which the board recruited were noted.

CB reported on the chair's recent appraisal: trustee endorsement for her had been unanimous. The suggestions for even better board/meeting management that had come up during her appraisal would be circulated to trustees.

C0295: JC to circulate to the board the suggestions for better board operations/meeting management that had been made during her appraisal

5. CEO report

Heartfelt tribute was paid to AvMA's co-founder and honorary life president Peter Ransley following his recent death.

Trustees were given a progress report on the website and rebranding projects: Following an information architecture workshop on the website wireframes, it was noted that significant progress has been made with the conceptual design of the new website. PWh reported that some costings coming in for the website and brand re-fresh suggested that the current contingency may not be sufficient and if so a business case to trustees would follow in due course.

The CRM benefits realisation report, received on the day of the meeting, was generally positive albeit it raised a number of issues for AvMA to consider. The information, IT, risk and compliance committee (IIRC) would consider how to make this good product even better and bring its findings to the next board meeting.

The 2026 Annual Clinical Negligence Conference had been a resounding success, agreed trustees and the leadership team. The CEO would thank Head of Events Ed Maycock and his team on behalf of the board.

Trustees congratulated the CEO on the number and range of forums he had attended.

C0296: PWh to add the new logo to the risk register
C0297: PWh to thank Ed and his team on the board's behalf for the success of the 2026 Annual Clinical Negligence Conference

6. Staff cost-of-living increase and budget 2026/27 for approval

The board approved the recommendation from the resources committee to adjust the staff salary inflationary cost-of-living increase from 3% to 3.4% (in line with the CPI inflation reported by the ONS in December 2025) in the budget for year ending 31st March 2027. The treasurer explained why the additional 0.4% was affordable despite the charity running a significant controlled-deficit budget, adding that it showed the esteem in which the board held AvMA's staff.

On the recommendation of the resources committee, the board approved the revised draft budget for 2026/27 and the accompanying revised five-year financial forecast, as presented with the meeting's papers. Trustees accepted that the investment being made in fundraising and the delays in having the infrastructure in place to support that fundraising endeavour had caused changes to the original five-year forecast, pushing overall financial sustainability out by three years, to 2031/32, to allow for the return on the investment to be realised.

Trustees noted that the revised forecast had assumed inflation running at 3%; consequently, any inflationary increase would create uncertainty for the organisation. After this budget, the CEO would think again about mitigations in the event of inflationary shock/rising costs. (Overall, income in the original five-year plan versus the revised five-year plan remained almost the same.)

The impact on reserves in the event of stock market volatility was noted. Trustees agreed that, going forward, it was important to think in wider terms about income sources as well as mitigations relating to costs, for example, looking at the cost of/return on a service/investment against the impact they made, starting with the service review.

C0298: PWh to think about mitigations in the event of an inflationary shock/rising costs

7. Priorities for Year 3 (2026/27) and impact measures

The CEO introduced his paper circulated with the meeting's papers. Trustees were impressed by what had been achieved, and they found the circulated plans extremely helpful.

Responding to trustees' concern about capacity within the organisation, the leadership team (LT) explained why they thought the priorities were achievable. In response, the CEO would consider what additional capacity plans would assist with resource planning, and he/the LT would review how resourcing issues were reported to trustee committees, to better distinguish between actual- and perceived capacity constraints.

LOD outlined how AvMA was ensuring it would be able to communicate effectively with those with whom it engaged as it broadened its reach.

Trustees recommended integrating the stakeholder mapping paper into the priorities plan as the former had implications for activity and time from different people. PWh, JC and other trustees would consider the measurement they would apply to show whether any of the priorities had been achieved and where they could put numbers on them in terms of desirable outputs/outcomes.

Regarding Objective 1.2 *("We re-establish our approach to, and policies, in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion across AvMA"),* a trustee observed this had more to do with AvMA as an organisation rather than specifically widening its reach. Other trustees agreed that a true understanding of EDI had to be part of AvMA's "DNA" and there was scope to do more as an organisation in this regard.

Trustees recommended linking some of the guidance in the Harmed Patient Pathway (HPP) with Year 3's Objectives 1, 2 and 3 as there were overlaps between these objectives and the guidance on, for example, harmed individuals themselves starting conversations with the organisation that had harmed them.

Trustees were aware that some of the objectives might be harder to achieve than expected due to major organisational change such as the merger of NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care.

C0299: PWh to review how resourcing issues are reported to trustee committees to better distinguish between actual- and perceived capacity constraints
C0300: PWh to consider capacity planning as part of the wider delivery of the Year 3 priorities
C0301: PWh to: i) integrate the stakeholder mapping paper into the priorities plan; and ii) join JC and other trustees in considering the measurement they would apply to know whether any of Year 3 priorities had been achieved
C0302: PWh to link guidance in the HPP with Year 3's Objectives 1, 2 and 3

8. Stakeholder mapping outputs and recommendations

Trustees praised the stakeholder mapping and management overview that had been circulated with the meeting's papers, saying how useful it was.

Due to the amount of overlap, AD's stakeholder mapping for fundraising had been included in the stakeholder mapping overview. Trustees suggested the CEO's work with journalists should be included. Proper consideration of how best to measure and report impact of stakeholder-engagement activity was essential - the more intentional AvMA was about this, the more it could have outcomes in mind. Another iteration of this overview was needed – one that began to say how AvMA would know whether an activity intentionally directed one way was achieving what it was meant to achieve.

Trustees recommended trying to get into the networks of junior doctors, young lawyers and future clinical negligence lawyers, and trying to establish relationships with medical examiner offices – FP would share a contact she had.

The CEO would share with the board the outcomes from the widening-our-reach mini meeting.

It was noted that should AvMA want to encourage coroners to do something collectively, such as agree to a pathway, engagement with the monarch (the authority above coroners) might be necessary.

C0303: PWh to include his work with journalists in the stakeholder mapping overview
C0304: PWh to include in the review of the stakeholder map an update on activity undertaken v results/impacts made
C0305: PWh to try to get into the networks of junior doctors, young lawyers and future clinical negligence lawyers, and to establish relationships with medical examiner offices – FP to share her contact with him
C0306: PWh to share with the board the outcomes from the widening-our-reach mini meeting

9. Interim policy and guidance on use of AI

The board approved the policy and related guidance on the use of AI subject to the following amendments: i) deletion of the words 'interim' and 'draft'; ii) inclusion of the word 'solely' in Section 5 ("Relying solely on AI for legal advice, clinical interpretations, or direct client-facing outputs"); iii) inclusion of guidance on the type of double-checking expected when using AI for legal advice; iv) inclusion of a clause stating that any AI-generated response to beneficiaries should make it clear that AI had been used; and v) inclusion of a review date. The CEO would update the board on how often the policy would be reviewed.

Trustees were directed to an online AI training course, a link to which had been sent by AK to PWh, JC and NB.

C0307: PWh to update the policy and trustees on how often the AI policy would be reviewed

10. Delegation framework 2026 for approval

The delegation framework, circulated with the meeting's papers, was approved by the board.

11. Risk-register and project-register progress update

The board noted the changes to the corporate risk register, the CEO's observations about emerging and intensifying risks, and the project risk register. Trustees appreciated the inclusion of the heat map alongside the risk register.

12. Deep-dive discussion: Strategic Objective 3 and the Harmed Patient Pathway (HPP)

The CEO delivered a PowerPoint presentation on eliminating compounded harm that covered what AvMA had done so far and what success would look like at the end of the five-year strategy.

13.Resources committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 24th February 2026 and the management accounts report for Q3 25/26 had been circulated prior to the meeting as had an investment review and staff survey 2025.

The treasurer reported on the outcome of the independent investment review: the resources committee would go out to tender for a new investment manager. The board delegated to the resources committee the decision on whether to engage the services of investment specialists Yoke and Company to assist with the tendering process.

TH would send out a risk profile to gauge the board's risk appetite.

Auditors Sayer Vincent were reappointed for the March 2026 year-end accounts.

In terms of good practice, AvMA was overdue a review of its auditors. The treasurer explained why, from an auditing point of view, it might be advisable to bring the AGM forward, from December to, say, September. This will be taken forward as part of the tender for new auditors when audit timings will be considered.

C0311: TH to circulate a risk profile to gauge the board's investment risk appetite

14. Service delivery, quality and outcomes committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 25th February 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 11th February 2026 had been circulated prior to the meeting. Trustees were told they needed to use their AvMA emails instead of their personal ones for the sake of security and confidentiality.

C0312: All trustees to use their AvMA emails, not their personal ones

16. Income generation and marketing/comms committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 19th February 2026 had been circulated with the meeting's papers, as had reports from the director of fundraising, marketing and comms and the head of events. The main updates had been covered earlier in the meeting. There were no questions.

17. Website and brand steering group

Notes of the meetings on 28th January and 4th March 2026 had been circulated with the meeting's papers. Should the rebranding designs/new website be finalised before the next board meeting, the LT would share this with trustees ahead of the meeting.

18. Trustee schedule of appointments and reappointments

Noted.

19. Committee and board calendar 2026

Noted.

20. AOB

Trustees would complete and return the self-assessment form they had received from NB by Friday 3 April 2026.

NB would seek, and circulate, feedback about this meeting from trustees.

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting ended at 3.55pm.

C0313: NB to send the feedback questionnaire about March's board meeting to trustees and circulate the responses
C0314: Trustees to return the self-assessment form received from NB by Friday 3 April 2026

Dates of 2026 board meetings

23rd June, 22nd September and 15th December (includes AGM)