

Action against Medical Accidents

Minutes of the board meeting

held on **Tuesday 23 September 2025** at 13:00

at 39 Essex Chambers, 81 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1DD

Present	Mike Andersson (MA), Caroline Browne (CB) (Senior Independent Director), Janine Collier (JCo) (via Teams, left after item 10), Jocelyn Cornwell (JC) (Chair), Agnelo Fernandes (AF), Stephanie Howden (SH), Amrat Khorana (AK), Bill Kilvington (BK), Harriet Leyland (HL) (Associate Trustee), Farrah Pradhan (FP), Michele Salter (MS) (Treasurer)
In attendance	Nathan Bacon (NB) (Operations Director), Anna Devine (AD) (Director of Fundraising, Marketing and Comms), Ed Maycock (EM) (Head of Events), Lisa O'Dwyer (LOD) (Director of Medico-legal Services), Tim Hammond (TH) (Head of Finance), Paul Whiteing (PWh) (CEO), Rachel Wright (minutes)
Absent	Carol Jones (CJ)

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. Declarations of interest

AF had been appointed provost to a GP faculty in south London; FP had taken on a role with the Teaching Regulation Agency as part of its professional conduct committee; SH had become the course convenor for the ROBUST training programme. All three would formally inform NB of their appointments.

C0255: AF, FP and SH to inform NB of their declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of board meeting on 24th June 2025

The chair presented the minutes of a board meeting on 24th June 2025 for approval whereupon they were unanimously approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting subject to the following adjustment: page 5, paragraph 4, the sentence "Some trustees objected to the use of certain words ('accident', 'victims')" should have read "Some trustees were concerned about the use of certain words ('accident', 'victims')."

Matters arising: The CEO explained why the six outstanding actions on the action log had yet to be resolved. In future, resolved actions would be recorded as 'completed' rather than 'closed'.

C0256: PWh to record resolved board meeting actions as ‘completed’.

4. Chair’s report and update

In response to a question from the chair, the leadership team reported favourably on the new committee structure. Good work was being done and a lot of it. Concerns, if any, would be raised to the board. The excellent administrative help provided by Vicki Noyce was noted.

Trustees advised keeping the focus on restorative justice within maternity work (this work being a key priority) to avoid mission creep. The chair reminded everyone of the decision to discuss/identify other priorities before the end of the year as part of AvMA’s strategic objective to reach a wider range of groups.

Before the meeting, trustees had made suggestions for evaluating the board’s governance, which JC would pick up the CEO.

C0257: PWh to pass on the board’s thanks to VN for her administrative support to the committees.

C0258: JC to share trustees’ ideas for evaluating the board’s governance with PWh.

5. CEO report

The CEO summarised, and expanded on, the key points of his report circulated with the meeting’s papers.

Regarding the Harmed Patient Pathway (HPP), he assured trustees that the product would be finalised at the next core HPP group meeting. In broad terms, all issues had been resolved, he said. Getting agreement was imperative, urged the board; campaign bodies in Ireland, Wales and Scotland were pushing for a harmed patient pathway as were individual services in England. CB pointed out that individual trusts might be able to take on the HPP even if their umbrella organisation did not. PWh said the finalised HPP materials, once published, would always be a working document, which would inevitably be updated as it was used.

Regarding the brand refresh, trustees would be invited to an online meeting with the managing director of the design company handling the re-branding to check that the final design proofs met their expectations. The CEO reported that the rebrand and new website were making good progress.

Trustees were informed that as directors of AvMA they were required by law to verify their identities with Companies House. TH would send them guidance on the self-verification process. Once issued with a verification number, trustees would notify him of that number.

C0259: PWh to invite trustees to an online meeting with the managing director of Electrify to approve the final design proofs.

C0260: TH to send trustees guidance on Companies House’s self-verification process.

C0261: Trustees to send TH their verification number once it had been issued by Companies House.

6. Business cases for approval

Service review

The CEO summarised the arguments for a review of service effectiveness, as set out in the meeting’s papers.

Regarding commissioned research (page 20 of the meeting's papers, section 2a), AK emphasised the importance of this process being trauma informed, suggesting that part of the review should be assessing how trauma informed AvMA's services were. This could be also picked this up as part of trustee development, JC suggested.

[REDACTED]

Depending on in-house capacity, the leadership team would start scoping out the project, market testing consultants and possibly making an appointment in principle, using reserves to enable the project to start earlier. The CEO would correct the typos in the service-review proposal before sending it out.

Investments appraisal review

TH summarised the proposal, circulated with the meeting's papers, for commissioning an independent investments report. After a brief discussion, trustees gave strong approval to the business case presented.

C0262: PWh to correct typos in the service-review proposal.

7. Year two strategic plan priorities and performance: update

PWh talked through his paper circulated with the meeting's papers. Regarding complaints as a form of ADR and dispute resolution, he flagged the challenges of seeking input from legal counsel on a pro bono basis and said next year's budget would probably earmark funding for legal support for such projects. JCo drew attention to the recent appeal decision barring unqualified lawyers from conducting litigation; this might negatively affect clients with lower-monetary-value claims, she said.

PWh highlighted the need to start thinking about widening AvMA's reach. Individual trustees interested in joining PWh and JC to talk about this offline would notify JC.

JC asked trustees if they thought the KPI dashboard circulated with the meeting's papers helped them monitor progress on the strategic plan? TH explained why the data had been organised in the way it had, explaining the value and limitations of this type of snapshot, emphasising that it was a work in progress. Detail on any of the infographics would be sent to TH by individual trustees separately. PWh would arrange for a group of trustees, including JC, MA and CB, to meet to further discuss the dashboard.

In response to a request from the chair, the CEO would send trustees a list of all the things they had been asked to volunteer for over and above board/committee meetings.

In relation to empowering more people, both in the two-year plan and in the three-to-five-year roadmap, something was needed about the crossover with the HPP because the HPP was also about empowering people, observed CB.

C0263: Trustees to contact JC/PWh if interested in joining an offline discussion about widening AvMA's reach.

C0264: PWh to send trustees a list of all the things they had been asked to volunteer for over and above board/committee meetings.

C0265: PWh to arrange for a group of trustees, including JC, MA and CB, to meet to discuss the KPI dashboard.

8. Governance benchmarking update

The CEO summarised his paper, highlighting the recommended actions and proposed timelines.

At the chair's request, AK talked about the type of diversity training he thought most relevant for the board. External facilitation by an expert who understood the field in which AvMA operated/the services it offered would be helpful as part of a training session, he said. One trustee suggested checking whether all the recommendations made at a previous EDI training session for the board had been followed. Others felt the whole organisation would benefit from this training, not just the board. Most important, said MS, was how EDI training translated into service delivery, i.e., what did EDI mean on the ground. JC recommended looking at the timing of the training in relation to the service review. At trustees' request, they would be given the opportunity to contribute to any scoping exercise done ahead of the EDI training.

C0266: PWh to look at the timing of EDI training in relation to the service review.

C0267: PWh to invite trustees to contribute to any scoping exercise done ahead of the EDI training.

9. Policies for approval

The *Remuneration Policy* and the *Anti-Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation Policy* were approved as presented.

The *Policy on Speakers at External AvMA Events* was approved subject to adjustments along the following lines: i) the vetting process to include reviewing a speaker's public social media posts; ii) speakers to be asked to sign a single page outline of what was expected of them; and iii) to include the policy on campaigning under "Related policies".

The *Redundancy Policy and Procedure* was approved subject to the replacement of "threat/threatening/threatened" with "at risk"; and the inclusion of regulatory changes in the section on horizon scanning (page 57 of the board pack).

In response to a question from the chair about the HR policies and employment law, NB said AvMA's HR advisors had clarified those points the leadership team had been unclear about.

The *Risk Policy* was approved subject to the inclusion of specific commitments about how AvMA would identify mitigations to address risk and check those mitigations were pertinent to address the risk that had been cited. In response to a trustee query, the CEO confirmed there was a risk log for the service review and the investments appraisal.

The *Political Activities and Campaigning Policy* was approved subject to changing the review date to September 2026; and editing the sentence "To protect our reputation, AvMA must pay particular consideration to the consequences of working with political parties..." (page 72 of the board pack) – MA and PWh to discuss the edit offline. In response to trustee question about this policy and the helpline volunteers, the CEO would ask Gill whether it was necessary to draw volunteers' attention to the policy; however, while he did not think there was an issue, he agreed it was a good idea in general to consider which policies volunteers needed to follow and how to convey that to them.

In response to a trustee's question, the CEO explained how he intended to get staff thinking about policies and their application at the next all-staff in-person day.

C0268: PWh to amend the approved policies considering trustees' comments.

10. Risk register and project register update

Risk register

Trustees were pleased to note that the risk register became clearer with each iteration. One trustee suggested highlighting the top three organisational risks that the board needed to know about, perhaps under "Executive summary" (page 74 of the board pack).

Project register

At the chair's request, NB would include notional completion dates for the next phases of the website project, i.e., beyond phases one and two. He explained why the CRM project had been marked as not on track; however, very recently, the last part of the development plan had been signed off meaning that, to all intents and purposes, the project had been completed.

CB noted that some of the risks recorded in the "Top 2 risks" column were corporate strategic risks that needed to be captured on the main risk register.

C0269: NB to include notional completion dates for the next phases of the website project, i.e., beyond phases one and two.

C0270: PWh to check that nothing identified as a project risk should, in fact, be on the main risk register.

JCo left the meeting.

11. Resources committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 2nd September 2025 and the management accounts report for Q1 25/26 had been circulated prior to the meeting as had the draft statutory accounts and annual report 24/25.

The treasurer ran through the key discussions taken at the resources meeting. Overall HR was positive. The people report had become a standing agenda item. Financially, quarter one was more positive than forecast due to a large legacy; however, there was no room for complacency as the charity was running a controlled deficit budget, and furthermore, in the treasurer's opinion, the legacy should be spent on something that added extra value, not used for day-to-day running costs.

The resources committee recommended to the board that reserves designated for property replacement/maintenance be reclassified for service outreach, policy and campaigning.

Trustees were urged to give feedback on the draft statutory accounts and annual report 24/25 sooner rather than later; waiting until December's AGM would be too late.

The board welcomed the infographics in TH's reporting. Page 145 of the board pack, explaining the purposes of designated funds, was particularly useful, said the chair.

C0271: Trustees to feedback to the resources committee on the draft statutory accounts and annual report 24/25 before the committee's November meeting.

12. Service delivery, quality and outcomes committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 3rd September 2025 as well as reports from the director of medico-legal services, the manager of policy & campaigns and the panel advisor manager had been circulated prior to the meeting.

CB drew the board's attention to the stakeholder mapping work in progress and the website analytics. Trustees were pleased by AvMA's engagement with patient-safety groups in all four UK nations.

One trustee praised the consistently excellent quality of the committee's meeting papers. At the board's request, LOD would let members know when the training video on informed trauma (designed to raise awareness among helpline volunteers) would be available for them to view.

In response to a trustee asking whether the medico-legal department had capacity constraints that the board needed to address, LOD said this would be part of the service review, adding that one reason for an increased number of enquiries was down to AI directing people to AvMA.

When asked about a recent safeguarding issue, LOD explained how the issue had been resolved.

C0272: LOD to let trustees know when the training video on informed trauma would be available for them to view.

13. Information, IT, risk and compliance committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 6th August 2025 and a report from the director of operations had been circulated prior to the meeting for information.

The committee was generally impressed with the robustness of AvMA's cybersecurity measures, reported MA; however, given the importance of its IT systems, an independent review of cybersecurity would be commissioned. The website had moved to its new host, added NB, and would remain there until the new website was launched.

Regarding governance benchmarking review (p164), CB pointed out the inaccuracy of saying there was a vice-chair vacancy.

In response to a question from the chair, MA reported the committee had yet to decide whether to recommend the appointment of a data protection officer.

14. Income generation and marketing/comms committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 4th August 2025 had been circulated with the meeting's papers, as had a report from the director of fundraising, marketing and comms and the head of events.

EM reported that 2025's Holly Jolly event (28th November in the evening) had nearly sold out, so trustees wishing to attend needed to let him know soon. The panel-members event (28th November in the afternoon) had more availability. The annual conference (19-21st March 2026) would be held in Leeds; board members wishing to attend would contact EM. He would send trustees details of all the events going on around the country.

C0273: Trustees to let EM know asap if they want to attend Holly Jolly on 28th November 2025.

C0274: EM to send trustees details of all events going on around the country.

15. Website and brand steering group

Draft notes of the meetings on 5th and 27th August 2025 had been circulated with the meeting's papers. There were no questions.

16. AOB

AD asked trustees to put aside any new/nearly-new items (non-electrical) they would be willing to donate to a bring-and-buy fundraising event.

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting ended at 16:05.

Dates of 2025 board meetings

9th December (includes AGM)