

Action against Medical Accidents

Minutes of the board meeting

held on **Tuesday 9 December 2025** at 13:45

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), Carol Jones (CJ) (via Teams), Amrat Khorana (AK), Bill Kilvington (BK), Harriet Leyland (HL), Farrah Pradhan (FP), Michele Salter (MS) (Treasurer)
In attendance	Nathan Bacon (NB) (Operations Director), Anna Devine (AD) (Director of Fundraising, Marketing and Comms) (via Teams), 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)

1. Apologies for absence

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Stephanie Howden.

2. Declarations of interest

BK had joined an advisory group for NHS Resolution's maternity incentive scheme. FP had joined the editorial board of MNSI (Maternity and Newborn Safety Investigations). Both would formally inform NB of their appointments.

C0275: BK and FP to inform NB of their declarations of interest

3. Minutes of board meeting on 23rd September 2025 and matters arising

The chair presented the minutes of a board meeting on 23rd September 2025 for approval whereupon they were unanimously approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising

The chair thanked the executive team for following up so efficiently on actions arising from board-meeting discussions. The CEO thanked those trustees who had verified their identities with Companies House. He noted the implicit-lessons-learned piece of work needed updating and progress regarding the learning from the 2019-24 strategy needed reviewing.

C0276: Executive team to review progress of the learning from the 2019/24 strategy at their next meeting

4. Chair's report and update

The chair explained how individual trustee appraisals would be conducted. CB would devise a process for appraising the chair. LOD, PWh, JC and mediator Tony Allen had been looking at alternative dispute resolutions, which LOD would bring to the board in 2026.

C0277: CB to devise an appraisal process for the chair

5. CEO report

The CEO gave an update on the following issues:

Harmed Patient Pathway (HPP): The HPP was due to be published imminently. In response to trustee questions, he explained which professional bodies/individuals would be contacted directly regarding the HPP launch, and he confirmed comms were in place to address any misunderstandings about the HPP among maternity groups. A comms briefing for trustees on the HPP would be prepared to ensure everyone was aligned with the same communication: if approached for comment, trustees would refer the questioner to PWh and Eleanor Riches. JC declared a personal interest in the Amos's report on maternity services: her sister was giving evidence to Baroness Amos, and she herself would be writing to Baroness Amos on her own behalf.

C0278: A comms briefing to be prepared for the trustees.

Public Accounts Committee (PAC): Trustees noted the need to be prepared for clinical negligence reforms following the David Lock (KC) review on rising clinical negligence claims in the NHS ahead of a review by the Department of Health and Social Care likely in 2026.

APPG symposium: Speakers had been lined up and invitations issued. In response to a trustee request, PWh would try and bid for additional places for trustees so that more than three of them could attend.

Rebrand: Most staff were onboard with the rebranding; interest in tendering for the website was positive.

6. Year 2 strategic plan priorities & performance measures update

PWh explained the problems of trying to report quarter-by-quarter on long-term impact measures. Elements of the five-year strategy that did not lend themselves to short-term reporting needed separating out from the reporting of operational data/performance. Before the next board meeting, he would rework the current reporting format with the aid of those trustees involved with board-action C0265.

Trustees appreciated having the visuality of a dashboard and were pleased with the development of the dashboard so far. JC asked to have a narrative associated with the dashboard as well as the dashboard itself and for the numbers to be printed in a larger type size. Regarding the benchmarking-overheads graphic, she suggested having a timeline series to show whether AvMA was coming down over time to the benchmark. It would be good to look at trend analysis widely, responded TH, including for things like overheads, to see what was happening over a longer period.

TH/PWh would review the financial dashboard in light of CJ's observation that it needed not only to give a snapshot of where the organisation was in terms of developing income streams and the progress being made in some of the activities, but also the difficulties faced, for example, the website being a key dependency in fundraising, to understand the impact any delays in income generation might have on future work.

PWh flagged AvMA's large number of immediate priorities. Based on helpful advice he had received from businesses and independent consultants interested in tendering for the service review, he felt AvMA needed to prioritise fixing services that did not meet the demand of current beneficiaries, such as the helpline, before taking on new work such as scoping out groups that it currently did not reach.

A trustee asked what postponing the service review did to the five-year plan regarding the risk of the board not achieving what it had agreed in 2024. PWh would map out where projects, such as the service review, stood and what was thought about them now, and report back to the board. He had started working on a prioritisation matrix, which would be available to trustees by the next board meeting. He agreed with CB that when looking at satisfying current service-users' needs it was important to build strength in areas in which AvMA had been unsuccessful in the past but from which existing beneficiaries came.

At the chair's request, LOD would contact the RNIB to ask if they would be interested in helping to make the new website more accessible.

C0279: PWh, MA, CB & JC to rework how impact measures (strategic and operational) are reported to the board

C0280: PWh/TH to provide a narrative associated with the dashboard, to increase the type size of the numbers, and to look at trend analysis widely

C0281: TH/PWh to amend the financial dashboard to show how any delays in the income-generation work stream might impact future work

C0282: PWh to map out where projects, such as the service review, stand in relation to the five-year plan and report back to the board

C0283: PWh to complete the prioritisation matrix by the March 2026 board meeting

C0284: LOD to contact the RNIB to ask if they would be interested in helping to make the new website more accessible

7. Governance actions update

The board noted the update circulated with the meeting's papers, which included actions taken and those proposed for 2026. The description for the treasurer's role was approved. The role description for the chair of trustees was approved subject to stipulating that if the chair stood down the senior independent director would lead on the recruitment of a successor. The board also approved the AvMA Trustee Code of Conduct and Eligibility Statement 2025/2026 subject to rewording the clause/s on maintaining confidentiality to include a commitment to maintain confidentiality after having left the board.

A checklist of requirements for new trustees was needed, it was agreed.

C0285: PWh to revise the Trustee Code of Conduct and the chair's role description in line with trustee recommendations and to correct the typos in the governance documents

C0286: PWh to compile a checklist for new trustees recruitment and on-boarding

8. Staff cost of living increase: preliminary considerations

Responding to a request from the CEO for a steer to help with budget planning, trustees considered their views on a cost-of-living pay increase for staff for 2026/2027. There was a strong consensus for awarding staff pay in line with the consumer price index benchmark on a recurring basis - there was no appetite for making one-off, non-consolidated payments. AvMA had a great staff team, the board agreed, and it was good to show how much it valued them. This would be factored into the budget preparations.

CJ left the meeting.

9. Policies for approval

The *Expenses Policy*, the *Anti-bribery Policy* and the *Anti-fraud Policy* were approved as presented and would be reviewed again in three years. MA would notify TH of minor revisions needed to the policies after the meeting.

C0287: MA to inform TH offline of minor revisions needed to the *Expenses, Anti-bribery and Anti-fraud policies*.

10. Risk-register and project-register progress update

Risk register: The risk of remote working had been closed. All trustee committees had updated their own parts of the risk registers. Alerting the board to the principal emerging and intensifying risks, as requested by a trustee, was extremely helpful, said JC. Further enhancements to the risk register were under consideration, reported PWh. At trustees' request, he would: i) add reputational risk around the HPP to risk 003; ii) agendaise for board meetings a deep dive into one/two full board risks; iii) agendaise for committee meetings a deep dive into one risk and bring the learnings to the board; and iv) amend risk 023 to record "clients" as those affected by the risk, not the "owners" of it.

The advantages and disadvantages of being on the social media platform X were also raised.

There was brief discussion about mitigation around financial investments and a stock market crash. The board agreed to repeat the appetite-for-risk exercise it had done previously during 2026.

AK asked the executive team to consider trend analysis of certain risks and offered to share offline an approach to risk from a strategic perspective that he rated highly.

Regarding risk 022, it was agreed there would be a board seminar, perhaps as part of a board awayday, to bring trustees up to speed with the possible changes by the Government to access to justice, which could be detrimental to the people AvMA supported.

Project register: NB reported the CRM project was complete; there had been slippage on the website's timeline; and the rebranding project had now been separated from the website project in terms of thinking through the implications of each of these projects. In response to a trustee question, he explained why the new website would in all likelihood take until June 2026 to complete, and that the risks regarding the implementation of the rebranding would be captured in a full risk register. PWh understood trustee concerns about a possible reduction in fundraising ability due to having to wait six months for the new website on which fundraising was highly dependent and said this would feature in his upcoming discussions about the next year's budget, and the executive team would work through the real mitigations to the risks posed. The interdependency of fundraising and the new website would be added to the project risk register.

It was noted that membership of the website/rebranding steering committee would need to change as the project became less about the technical side of the website and more about marketing, comms and fundraising.

AD emphasised that everyone in the organisation needed to be an ambassador for the new website and branding to ensure no stakeholder or supporter was surprised by the rebrand.

MA congratulated everyone involved in the CRM project; bringing it to completion was a tremendous achievement, he said. Regarding the commissioning of an independent review of the project, he urged this be undertaken without delay to avoid similar mistakes with the website project, acknowledging that many lessons had already been learnt.

CJ rejoined the meeting.

C0288: PWh to add reputational risk around the HPP to risk 003 and amend risk 023 to record “clients” as those affected by the risk, not the “owners” of it

C0289: PWh to agendaise for board meetings a deep dive into one or two full board risks and to agendaise for subcommittee meetings a deep dive into one risk and bring the learnings to the board

C0290: AK to share with PWh an approach to risk from a strategic perspective that he rated highly

C0291: PWh to organise a board seminar, perhaps as part of a board awayday, to bring trustees up to speed with the anticipated access to justice changes (risk 022)

C0292: PWh to re-configure the governance steering group of the website and brand projects and update trustees.

C0293: NB to add the interdependency of fundraising and the new website to the project risk register.

11. Resources committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 25th November 2025 and the management accounts report for Q2 25/26 had been circulated prior to the meeting. MS explained why AvMA was not doing as well as budgeted for. There were no questions.

12. Service delivery, quality and outcomes committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 19th November 2025 had been circulated prior to the meeting as had reports from the director of medico-legal services, the manager of policy & campaigns and the panel advisor manager. AK briefly summarised the key discussions, highlighting the growth in AI-generated traffic to the website. A new chair for the committee was needed, it was noted. There were no questions.

13. Information, IT, risk and compliance committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 4th November 2025 had been circulated prior to the meeting for information as had a report from the director of operations. There were no questions.

14. Income generation and marketing/comms committee

Draft minutes of the meeting on 20th November 2025 had been circulated with the meeting’s papers, as had reports from the director of fundraising, marketing and comms and the head of events. CJ summarised the key issues discussed. She flagged AvMA was behind where it wanted to be in terms of income generation, not just against budget but also against the previous year. Work on the

reporting dashboard needed finishing. The executive team had been asked to investigate a contingency plan for the website due to the dependency on it for things like grant applications.

Both the Summer Social Sundown and Holly Jolly had been a success. CJ congratulated AD on the It Could Happen To Anyone campaign, and she, in turn, thanked AF for his patience and support when helping with the video filming.

AD re-iterated the importance of doing the rebrand exercise well.

15. Website and brand steering group

Notes of the meetings on 30th September, 27th October and 25th November 2025 had been circulated with the meeting's papers. There were no questions.

16. Trustee schedule of appointments and reappointments

JC recommended focussing on the recruitment of new trustees in Spring/Summer 2026, not least because two long-standing trustees were due to step down near the end of that year.

17. AOB

MA praised the reports of Eleanor Riches and LOD. From his viewpoint as a long-standing AvMA trustee, he was pleased to observe that this was the most positive position in which he had seen the organisation for a few years; his praise for the executive team was echoed by the rest of the board.

The CEO thanked trustees for all their hard work and support; it meant a great deal to the organisation, he said.

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting ended at 16:10.

Dates of 2026 board meetings

24th March, 23rd June, 22nd September and 15th December (includes AGM)