Veterinary Medicines Directorate

Technical guidance for completion of Standard and Urgent Signal Notifications

This guidance applies only to signal notification submissions. For Benefit-Risk Submission Reports, refer to the guidance document 'Technical guidance for completion of the Benefit-Risk Submission Reports' and for sales submissions, refer to the guidance document 'Technical guidance for completion of the Pharmacovigilance Sales Submission (PSS)' which can be found on the Benefit-risk report (BRR) and signal notification submissions page. Related guidance can be found in Pharmacovigilance of Veterinary Medicinal Products in Great Britain.

1. General guidelines

1.1 Submissions

Signal notifications should be submitted as one completed Excel document using the BRSR template on the Benefit-risk report (BRR) and signal notification submissions page. per MA number or Product Group Code (see section 1.6 of this guidance for further details on Product Group Codes).

They should be used to inform the VMD of all validated signals which following assessment, suggest a new risk, change to the benefit-risk balance, or require further investigation.

One signal notification should be submitted per signal (PT or non-VeDDRA term if a PT does not apply).

Signal notifications should be submitted using the Veterinary Medicines Digital Service (VMDS), a secure messaging service. Any MAH not signed up to VMDS can register at Veterinary Medicines Digital Service (VMDS).

Once signed in to the VMDS account, the MAH should select the relevant group. This is PHV Signals for Standard (30-day) Signals and PHV Urgent Safety Signals for Urgent Safety Signals.

Urgent safety signals notifications should be used for signals containing new information affecting the benefit-risk balance of a product which require *rapid* implementation of risk minimisation/safety measures.

Further information on the types of signal notification can be found in sections 2 and 3 of Guideline IV of Pharmacovigilance of Veterinary Medicinal Products in Great Britain guidance.

Further information on signal submissions can be found in section 3.1.3 of Guideline IV of the Pharmacovigilance of Veterinary Medicinal Products in Great Britain guidance.

Submission queries should be sent to psur.queries@vmd.gov.uk or via VMDS secure messaging to the PSUR Queries group.

1.2 Language and scope

All signal notifications must be completed in English.

All signal notifications must take into account all adverse events occurring in the UK and in third countries.

1.3 Document type and formatting

The template must be submitted in the Excel format type .xlsx

The layout of the template must remain the same to allow mapping into VMD systems. Data incorrectly entered into cells which does not follow the guidance/validation criteria for that cell or addition of data where it is not required (for example extra notes) will result in failed validation, and MAHs may be requested to make revisions

Note that for accessibility reasons, the template found on Gov.uk on the Benefit-risk report (BRR) and signal notification submissions page is in ODS (OpenDocument) format.

If copying and pasting data from another source, only paste the values, not format or other parameters.

1.4 Naming convention for signal notifications

The Excel document should be named using the applicable MA number (with an underscore rather than forward slash separation) or Product Group Code (PGC), the year of submission, type of signal (Signal for standard signals and Urgent for urgent signals) and number describing the order of signals submitted, separated by underscores:

MAnumber_YYYY_Signal_x	or	MAnumber_YYYY_Urgent_x
PGC_YYYY_Signal_x	or	PGC_YYYY_Urgent_x

Number 1 should be used for the first signal for that product of that type submitted in that year, and 2, 3, 4 etc used for subsequent signals. For example, the first standard signal document for a product with an MA number 09285/8019 being submitted in the year 2024, would be named 09285_8019_2024_Signal_1. The second would be

09285_8019_2024_Signal_2. And if subsequently the first urgent signal was submitted for the same product within the same year, the document would be named 09285_8019_2024_Urgent_1.

No special characters other than underscores (_) should be used as separators. Spaces should not be used. The total number of characters should not exceed 40 characters (if the PGC is too long, and the total number of characters will exceed 40 characters, use only the overarching group name rather than the entire PGC e.g. BENEFITAS_2024_Signal_1).

1.5 Naming convention for additional documents

It is not anticipated that additional documents other than the Excel signal document will be submitted. If further documentation is considered necessary, use the same naming convention as described above, following by underscore 2, 3, 4 for subsequent additional documents. For example, a second document submitted for the above-described urgent signal should be named 09285_8019_2024_Urgent_1_2.

Multiple documents can be submitted per VMDS submission using any of the file types .pdf, .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx.

No special characters other than underscores (_) should be used as separators. Spaces should not be used. The total number of characters should not exceed 40 characters

1.6 Product Group Codes (PGCs)

A Product Group Code (PGC) links a set of individual Marketing Authorisations together into a single group. It should be used to link both UK MAs and, at minimum, their EEA equivalent products if the product is authorised in EEA.

If one or more PGCs are to be used, they must be either proposed by the MAH and accepted by the VMD or requested by the MAH at least one month prior to the first BRSR or PSS submission using these PGCs, and a BRSR or PSS using these PGCs should not be submitted until these PGCs have been agreed.

Note that if a signal notification (Standard or Urgent) needs to be submitted and no PGC has been pre-agreed, the VMD should be contacted at the earliest opportunity.

Any future changes to products grouped within the Product Group Code should also be agreed at least one month prior to the next submission.

Further details on PGCs can be found in section 4.3 of Guideline IV of the Pharmacovigilance of Veterinary Medicinal Products in Great Britain guidance.

Queries related to Product Group Codes should be directed either via VMDS to the PSUR Queries group or via e-mail to psur.queries@vmd.gov.uk.

Only the first (Benefit-risk statement) and last (Signals and regulatory actions) sheets need to be completed for a signal notification

2. Signal notification template completion

2.1 Benefit-risk statement sheet

The table below explains the required content of each cell on the first sheet of the template.

Validation rules **must** be followed for data entered within the cell. The 'Validation type' determines whether the field is mandatory or not (whether data must be provided or not) and which character and number types are allowed.

If data is not entered into a cell, leave the cell blank. Do not enter N/A or any other text unless requested to do so by the following guidance.

Ensure the cell format is correct as per the 'Required cell format' before submission. If data is copied into the Excel template, ensure only values, not formats are copied.

If the dropdown menus provided within the template are not used, ensure the content of the cell matches one of the options in the dropdown menu exactly.

No cells need to be completed below cell B4 (Submission type)

Cell	Type	Required content	Validation rules	Validation type	Required cell format
B1	Product Name	For signals involving a single MA number, enter the name of the product as stated in the national MA and associated documentation. For signals involving split GB/NI MA numbers, enter the product name as stated in the national MA and associated documentation if it is the same for GB and NI, or a partial product name if it is not. For example, for a product named Benefitas chewable tablets for dogs in GB and Benefitas chewable tablets in NI, enter Benefitas chewable tablets. For signals involving multiple strengths of the same product, enter partial product name (product name as stated in the national MA and associated documentation without the strength information). For	Not applicable	Mandatory *Numbers, special characters, text*	General

		example, for a product named Benefitas chewable tablets, if 10 mg, 20 mg and 30 mg strengths were all applicable to the signal, enter Benefitas chewable tablets.			
B2	Marketing Authorisation Holder	Enter the business name of the MAH as stated in the national MA and associated documentation.	Name must be identical to the business name of the MAH as stated in the national MA and associated documentation.	Mandatory *Numbers, special characters, text*	General
B3	Marketing Authorisation Number/Product Group Code	For signals involving a single MA, enter the MA number as stated in the national MA and associated documentation, unless the MA number has been updated since initial authorisation, in which case the *current* MA number must be used. If a national authorisation number is used enter only the authorisation number **without Vm or Vh** preceding it. For signals involving multiple MAs including split GB/NI MAs or multiple strengths of the same product, enter the pre-agreed Product Group Code (PGC).	MA number must be identical to that stated in the national MA and associated documentation, unless the MA number has been updated since initial authorisation, in which case the **current** MA number must be used. PGC must be identical to that agreed with the VMD.	Mandatory **Must be entered correctly to allow mapping** *Numbers, special characters*	General
B4	Submission type	Enter the applicable option from the pre-defined list: Signal notification Urgent signal notification	Contents of cell must be identical to one of the pre-defined options.	Mandatory **Must be entered correctly to allow mapping** *Text*	General

2.2 Signals and regulatory actions

*Note that all validated signals which following assessment are **not** deemed to suggest a new risk or change to the benefit-risk balance, should be submitted annually via the BRSR template and not via a signal notification.*

The table below explains the required content of each cell on the final sheet of the template.

Cell	**Type**	**Required content**	**Validation rules**	**Validation type**	**Required cell format**
Column A (cell A2 onwards)	Signal VeDDRA Preferred Term (or non-VeDDRA term if no suitable preferred term)	Enter the applicable VeDDRA PT or non-VeDDRA term if there is no suitable PT. PTs should be used wherever possible. Each individual PT should be entered on a different row. If the same PT affects multiple species, it should be entered multiple times on different rows (one row per species).	As selected from the Combined VeDDRA list of clinical terms which can be found on the EMA website (unless no PT is suitable).	Mandatory *Text*	General
Column B (cell B2 onwards)	VICH Species Code	The species of the animal(s) affected by the signal PT. Enter 'HUM' for human exposure reports. If the same PT affects multiple species, it should be entered multiple times on different rows (one row per species).	Select the most relevant species from VICH gl30	Mandatory *Text*	General
Column C (C2 onwards)	Date first detected	Date the signal was first detected by a MAHs signal management process or by a regulatory authority, whichever occurred first. This date may be earlier than the date the signal was first validated. If the exact date is unknown, enter at minimum the month	Enter in format DD/MM/YYYY.	Mandatory *Numbers, special characters*	Date

		and year and enter '01' for DD i.e. for APR-2024, enter 01/04/2024. If applicable to the signal, clarifying details can be added to the Evaluation and summary of findings cell.			
Column D (D2 onwards)	Current status	Select Ongoing or Closed. Closed should only be selected for any signal where the action has been completed, or for signals where it is proposed or has been agreed by a regulatory authority that there is no requirement for further action.	Select Ongoing or Closed only.	Mandatory *Text*	General
Column E (E2 onwards)	Date closed (for closed signals)	The date the action was finalised. Only applicable for Closed signals. If the exact date is unknown, enter at minimum the month and year, enter '01' for DD i.e. for APR-2024, enter 01/04/2024. If applicable to the signal, clarifying details can be added to the Evaluation and summary of findings cell.	Enter in format DD/MM/YYYY. Must be completed if Closed has been entered into cell D of the same row.	Non-mandatory unless a value has been entered into cell D of the same row. *Numbers, special characters*	Date
Column F (F2 onwards)	Source of Signal	Suggestions for sources include MAH database, regulatory authority database, literature report. If multiple sources apply, enter these separated by a comma.	Not applicable	Mandatory *Text, special characters*	General
Column G (G2 onwards)	Country (2-character country	For GB or UK-wide signals enter GB.	In 2-character country code ISO 3166	Non-mandatory	General

	codes ISO 3166)	If the signal is not country-specific, leave blank. Further location-related information should be entered within the Evaluation and summary of findings cell if applicable to the case e.g. region or county.	format as per www.iso.org	*Text*	
Column H (H2 onwards)	Evaluation and summary of findings	This should provide adequate evidence of how the signal was validated and assessed. Information that should be considered for inclusion within this section may include: • signalment and clinical details • brief description of event outcome • location related data if non-country specific • observed patterns of event development • details of other products • reversibility • supporting lab data • assessment of the causal relationship • details of regulatory procedures ongoing at the time of submission e.g. variations or signal processes, including those involving other regulatory authorities • details of the source • event incidence • an evaluation of the potential impact Incidence should be calculated for signals submitted as per section 4.4 of Guideline IV of the Pharmacovigilance of	Not applicable	Mandatory *Text, numbers, special characters*	General

		Veterinary Medicinal Products in Great Britain guidance. No incidence calculations are required when no signals are submitted. Incidence calculations may be included within this cell or provided within a separate document submitted alongside the BRSR. Overall incidences can be added to cell H2 only with a note that these apply to all events/species. Any other extended supporting information may be submitted within a separate document submitted alongside the BRSR but at least a brief summary should be provided within this cell (at minimum number of animals affected, signalment if relevant, outcome, causality assessment and other regulatory authority actions).			
Column I (I2 onwards)	Proposed Action	The action that was initially proposed by the MAH or regulatory authority. Select one of the options from the dropdown menu: • Product/batch recall • No further action required • Post-marketing surveillance study • Risk management plan • Suspension • Withdrawal • Variation, including change to the product literature • Other • Close monitoring	Contents of cell must be identical to one of the pre-defined options.	Mandatory *Text, special characters*	General

		Only select Other if no other option applies. If more than one option applies, select the most applicable, and provide further information within the related Proposed Action Details cell.			
Column J (J2 onwards)	Proposed Action Details	Provide further details of the proposed action. If a product/batch recall is proposed, details of the batches affected and whether they have been distributed should be provided. If the MAH proposes that no further action should be taken, an explanation of why this has been proposed should be provided. It is expected that signals reported via a signal notification will involve an action. If a post-marketing surveillance study is proposed then details regarding the scope, objectives and timelines should be provided. If a risk management plan is proposed, details should be provided e.g. details of communications disseminated to specified stakeholder groups and a proposed timescale, or details of a restriction. If a suspension or withdrawal is proposed, details should be provided including dates if applicable.		Mandatory *Text, special characters, numbers*	General

		If a variation is proposed, details of this should be provided. If the variation proposed involves a change to the product literature, then details of the section of the product literature affected and proposed wording should be provided. If close monitoring is proposed, the period over which the product will be closely monitored should be specified, alongside any details of additional monitoring processes that will be put in place. Extended details/images/graphs can be provided within a separate document submitted alongside the BRSR if required but at least a brief summary should be provided within this cell.			
Column K (K2 onwards)	Final Action (for closed signals)	The action that was finally taken by the MAH or regulatory authority. Select one of the options from the dropdown menu: • Product/batch recall • No further action required • Suspension • Withdrawal • Variation completed • Other Only select Other if no other option applies. Leave blank for ongoing actions, such as a post-surveillance study, risk management plan or close monitoring. If these	Contents of cell must be identical to one of the pre-defined options.	Non-mandatory unless Closed has been entered into cell D of the same row. *Numbers, text, special characters*	General

		actions were both carried out as proposed and a resulting final action was also completed within the reporting period (such as a variation or a new decision made that no further action is required as a result of the proposed action), this resulting final action should be entered. If more than one option applies, select the most applicable, and provide further information within the related Final Action Details cell.			
Column L (L2 onwards)	Details of Final Action (for closed signals)	Provide further details of the final action. If a product/batch recall has been carried out, details of the batches affected, whether they had been distributed and the date of the recall should be provided. If 'No further action required' is selected, an explanation should be provided, unless this matches the initial proposed action and therefore an explanation has already been provided within the proposed action details section. If a suspension or withdrawal is proposed, details should be provided including dates if applicable. If a variation, such as a change to the product literature, was initially proposed, and a variation has since been completed, details of the section of the product literature affected, finalised wording and	Not applicable		

		completion date should be provided. The VMD will contact the MAH for further information if required.			