



Looking back: Stepping forward!

Celebrating 50 years of veterinary nursing

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What do we hope to achieve today?

- Celebration
- Reflection
- What have we achieved?
- Looking forward...





We've come a long way



Photo courtesy BVNA



A bit of history...

- 1961 – RCVS approved first ANA training scheme (later RANA)
- 1962 – first Registered Animal Nursing Assistant qualified
- 1965 – BVNA inaugurated
- 1984 – Title “Veterinary Nurse” first used
- 1991 – VSA 1966 amended and role of nurse formally recognised in law (Schedule 3)
 - RCVS established the List
- 1992 – First cohort qualify with DipAVN(Surgical)



More history...

- 1997 – College accredited as an awarding body
- 1998 – College starts to offer NVQs
- 2000 – First nurses to be listed by virtue of NVQ
 - First equine veterinary nurses qualified
- 2002 – VN Council held its first meeting
 - First cohort completed BSc Hons in veterinary nursing
 - Schedule 3 further amended increasing scope of role



More history...

- 2007 – Non-statutory Register opened
- 2010 – Transition from NVQ to Level 3 Diploma
 - First VN on RCVS Council
- 2011 – Introduction of disciplinary system for RVNs (first complaint is under consideration)
 - New draft Code of Professional Conduct for VNs





Profile of today's profession

- 8,346 registered veterinary nurses
- 1,542 listed veterinary nurses
- Average age = 31 (45 for vets)
- 98% women (≈ 50:50 for vets)
- 99% ethnically white (similar for vets)
- Just under 10% now enter training with a degree
- Average year of qualification = 2003
- Almost all qualified in the UK
- Average basic working week (full-time) = 39 hours
- Average overtime per month (full-time) = 22 hours
- Quarter planning to leave clinical practice within next five years for reasons other than retirement (mainly pay)



Source for all but register/list = RCVS Survey of Veterinary and Veterinary Nursing Professions, 2010



Best things about being a VN

- Working with animals
 - *“Being able to treat and help animals”*
- Variety
 - *“The variety of the work load throughout the day”*
- Job satisfaction
 - *“Job satisfaction when there is a good outcome to cases”*
- Building client relationships
 - *“Building professional relationships with clients”*
- Making a difference
 - *“Making a positive difference to the lives of animals in my care”*

Source RCVS Survey of Veterinary and Veterinary Nursing Professions, 2010



What would make it a better profession?

- Pay fees/remuneration
 - *“Better pay. Making salaries more public”*
- Greater respect/appreciation in general
 - *“If it was regarded as a ‘real’ profession and treated like human nursing, for example”*
- Greater respect from employers/vets
 - *“If some vet surgeons were taught to value their nurses more, rather than as glorified cleaners”*
- Greater responsibility
 - *“Strong responsibility and involvement in individual cases”*
- Better opportunities for career progression
 - *“Most post-registration qualifications and better career prospects”*

Source RCVS Survey of Veterinary and Veterinary Nursing Professions, 2010



VN ‘profession’: are we there yet?

- Features of a profession
 - Assured standards of training & qualification (✓)
 - Code of professional conduct (✓)
 - Commitment to maintain competence (✓)
 - Sanctions for those who transgress (✓)
 - Practitioners held in high public regard (?)



How can we improve public profile?

- Clarity of role?
- Ensure only those qualified use the title?
- Better definition within the practice team?
- Greater contact with clients?
- More ambassadors within the profession?
- ??



Issues under consideration by VN Council

- Draft Code of Professional Conduct
- Post-qualification awards structure
- Developing proposals for statutory regulation
 - Protection of the title/area of work
 - Raising public awareness of the role of nurses
 - Ensuring nurses used properly within the team
 - Ensuring title 'veterinary nurse' only used appropriately
 - Likely to set up a Working Party, although no concrete promises from Defra



Looking back:

Stepping forward!



Any questions?

