

Veterinary Nurses Council

Wednesday 14 September 2022 at 10.30am at the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

Agenda		Classification¹	Rationale²
1.	Welcome to new members	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2.	Apologies for absence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3.	Declarations of interest	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
4.	Obituaries	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
5.	Minutes of meeting held on 11 May 2022		
	i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
	ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1,2,3,4
6.	Matters arising	Oral report	n/a
7.	CEO update	Unclassified	n/a
Matters for decision by VN Council and reports from Committees (unclassified items)			
8.	VN Education Committee		
	8.01 Minutes of meeting held on 14 April 2022	Unclassified	n/a
	8.02 Minutes of meeting held on 16 June 2022	Unclassified	n/a
9.	Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Minutes of CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee held on 8 June 2022	Unclassified	n/a
10.	Reports from RCVS Committees		
	10.01 VN Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
	10.02 Standards Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a

	10.03 VN Disciplinary Committee	Unclassified	n/a
11.	Policy and Public Affairs update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
12.	VN Futures Report	Unclassified	n/a
13.	Communications report	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
14.	Any other business (unclassified)	Unclassified	
15.	Date of next meeting Wednesday 16 November 2022		
Confidential and private items (closed session)			
16.	Draft budget for 2023	Confidential	1,4
17.	VN Education Committee confidential items		
	17.01 Confidential items from meeting of 16 June 2022	Confidential	2,3,4
	17.02 Report of meeting of 9 August 2022	Confidential	2,3,4
18.	Risk Register		
	18.01 Update on changes since the previous meeting	Confidential	1,2,3,4
	18.02 Items identified from the meeting to add to Risk Register	Oral report	
19.	Items for RCVS Committees	Oral report	
20.	Any other business (confidential items)	Oral report	

Annette Amato

Secretary, VN Council

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¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation3. To protect commercially sensitive information4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	14 September 2022
Title	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 11 May 2022
Summary	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 11 May 2022
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2,3,4

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Veterinary Nurses Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11 May 2022 at Harper Adams University

Members:	Mrs Belinda Andrews-Jones	-	Vice-Chair
	Miss Alison Carr		
	Dr Niall Connell	-	Officer Team observer (non-voting)
	* Ms Elizabeth Cox		
	Miss Jane Davidson		
	* Mr Dominic Dyer		
	^ Ms Sarah Fox		
	Mrs Susan Howarth		
	Mrs Katherine Kissick		
	^ Mrs Donna Lewis		
	* Dr Susan Paterson		
	Mr Matthew Rendle	-	Chair
	Dr Katherine Richards		
	Ms Stephanie Richardson		
	Mrs Claire Roberts		

^Denotes remote participant

*Absent

In attendance:	Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	-	Qualifications Manager
	Mrs Suzanne Edwards	-	Chair, Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee
Remote:	Mr Luke Bishop	-	Media and Publications Manager
	Ms Eleanor Ferguson	-	Registrar
	Mrs Tash Goodwin Roberts	-	Veterinary Nursing Registration Lead
	Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	Examinations Manager
	Mr Robert Hewes	-	Head of Insight and Engagement
	Ms Lizzie Lockett	-	Chief Executive Officer
	Mr Ben Myring	-	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
	Mrs Kirsty Williams	-	Education Quality Improvement Manager
Guests:			
	<i>Ms Caitlin Frances</i>	-	<i>VNOnline</i>
	<i>Ms Georgina Mills</i>	-	<i>VetRecord</i>

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Dominic Dyer and Susan Paterson.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

Obituaries

3. Council observed a minute's silence for all members of the professions who had passed away since the last meeting, and the people of Ukraine.

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2022

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2022 were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

5. There were no matters arising on the previous Minutes.

CEO update

6. The CEO provided an oral update on a number of operational matters and recent activities since the previous meeting.
7. The staff had settled into the shared office space in Chancery Lane and the system was working well. A new working group had been set up to look at the requirements for the refurbishment of the new permanent headquarters. A staff awayday would take place at the end of June and would include discussion on creating a positive working environment and culture, and interaction between staff and Council and Committee members. The Officer team would be reviewing the meeting plan for the coming year, and the pros and cons of hybrid and in-person meetings, going forward.
8. The Workforce project for the professions was continuing. The report from the event in November 2021 had been published in February and the Vivet team was now working on an action plan which would be published shortly.
9. The results of the elections for VN Council and RCVS Council members had been published, and the new Officer team had been elected at the previous meeting of RCVS Council, to take effect from the AGM in July.
10. The Annual report was currently being prepared and would be published at the Annual General Meeting in July. It was confirmed that all VN Council members would be invited.

11. Work had continued on the Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) with the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) and VetLed, on a campaign around incivility in the workplace and how workplace culture can be improved, particularly for veterinary nurses.
12. The launch of the RCVS Academy, the online portal for learning that supports veterinary professionals meeting the standards, was planned for the June with a suite of courses, some of which were relevant for veterinary nurses.
13. The refugee support package proposal for veterinary nurses who hold refugee status, which had been recommended to the Finance and Resources Committee by VN Council, had been approved.
14. The RCVS had recently achieved the Investors in the Environment Bronze Award, as part of the work of the RCVS Green Team.
15. A new working party had been set up to look at how to expand the possibilities for people with disabilities and chronic illness to join the veterinary professions. The BVNA would be represented on the working party to look at this from the nursing perspective.

E-Certificate for Veterinary Nurse Registration

16. The Veterinary Nursing Registration Lead presented a paper summarising the outcome of the extended trial of the use of e-certificates for newly registered veterinary nurses, and provided updated figures. Since its commencement in November 2021 there had been 851 RVNs included in the trial, 430 of whom had requested a hard copy of their certificate. It had been clear from the survey feedback that the hard copy was valued. Whilst veterinary nurses appreciated the environmental positives and convenience of the e-certificate, a large proportion had indicated that they would also like to have the option to receive a physical copy. It was important to be able to demonstrate to the veterinary nursing population that their feedback had been listened to and acted upon, and it was therefore proposed that the option to receive a hard copy certificate should continue.
17. In order to offer the most effective option in terms of staff time and postage costs, it was proposed that as part of the initial registration process, applicants should be given the option to opt in or out of receiving a hard copy of their certificate, which would be posted along with the badge which is sent out to all new registrants. The application would clearly outline the benefits of the e-certificate, which would be issued to all new registrants as standard. There would be no charge for the first hard copy, although there would be a charge for replacements, as is currently the case.
18. Council was unanimous in its agreement to the proposal, which it was felt was a good compromise, and it was agreed that it was important to continue to expand the communications message around the environmental benefits of the e-certificate. It was also reiterated that any communications, while supporting the use of the e-certificate, should include reminders that employers should check the online Register for confirmation of a nurse's registration status, as the certificate is not a proof of current registration status.

19. It was confirmed that going forward, the intention was to introduce e-certificates for other areas such as the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing.

Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC)

20. **Meeting held on 16 February 2022.** Susan Howarth, Chair of the VNEC, presented the minutes of the meeting of the VNEC held on 16 February 2022, and drew attention to the following points:
21. The RCVS would continue to keep in place the provision to review registration applications on a case-by-case basis for students who had completed their qualification, but had been unable to complete the required 1,800 required practice training hours due to the effect of the Covid pandemic. No further such applications had been received since the previous meeting.
22. The Committee had received a considerable number of reports and updates on action plan monitoring and quality monitoring activities carried out by the qualifications team. It had been confirmed that the RCVS standards do not require students to undergo a mock OSCE, although the students are required to be appropriately assessed and a discussion on the assessment always forms part of the accreditation process.
23. The Committee had commented on the increased trend towards the inclusion of suggestions and actions around wellbeing in the monitoring reports and had noted that wellbeing had been incorporated more fully into the revised Day One Competences, Day One Skills and Professional Behaviours. The focus on wellbeing would be included as part of the new pre-accreditation support process which had been approved by the Committee.
24. The VN Education digital newsletter for AElS, centres and training practices, and the meetings for educators had now been reinstated, enabling communication of key themes and updates to all educators. The Committee would encourage centres to set realistic timescales for meeting their actions, which should be sensible and achievable.
25. A new examination venue for the pre-registration examinations, MYF training, had been contracted for a period of three years, and the first examinations had been held there in March 2022. The Chair of the Pre-registration Examination Board, Professor Elizabeth Mossop, had retired from the Board, and a new Chair was being sought from the VNEC.
26. **Meeting held on 14 April 2022.** A very brief oral report was provided on the meeting held on 14 April 2022, which had included routine quality monitoring reports. One small module change had been agreed. The minutes would be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting of Council.

Report on registrations and enrolments from overseas

27. **Annual update report.** The Examinations Manager presented the report summarising the applications for registration and assessment of qualifications from nurses educated outside the UK, covering the period between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, with figures for the previous

- year shown for comparison. It was noted that the overall number of applications (58) for the reporting period had been low, as had been the case for the previous year, and this was likely to have been due to the combined effect of the Covid pandemic and the exit from the EU. There had been a significant increase in applications from the USA and South Africa. Most applications had been received in the latter half of the reporting period when travelling restrictions had been lifted, and it was predicted that there would continue to be an increase in applications for the remainder of the year.
28. It was noted that due to legislative changes, most applicants are now required to take the pre-registration examination. There had been some changes in the payment system, allowing candidates to pay online by credit card. This had been appreciated by candidates, allowing them to spread the costs.
29. It was noted that to date there had been no applications through the refugee support programme which had been approved earlier in the year. The Refugee Council would ensure that any eligible applicants were made aware of the scheme, and the registration and education teams were liaising with the veterinary practices which had expressed an interest in employing veterinary surgeons and nurses from Ukraine.
30. **Report on temporary student enrolments.** Council noted a paper setting out information on the number of temporary enrolments from student nurses educated outside the UK, working or on placement for a short period in the UK as part of their training, for a maximum of twelve weeks. The numbers applying during the current year had been similar to those in the previous year.
31. **Translation of documents.** The Examinations Manager presented a paper outlining details of a proposed process, making use of translation software, for translating documents for applicants educated outside the UK applying to join the Register of Veterinary Nurses. The current requirement for applicants to provide an official translation of syllabus and curriculum documents which are not in English is costly and can be a barrier to some candidates. The proposal was that the VN department would use free translation software to translate these documents, which would be relatively quick and would not add significantly to the workload of the department. The cost saving to applicants would be significant and was expected to assist around 10 - 20 applicants per year.
32. It was confirmed that the system would be kept under constant review to ensure it was fit for purpose, and that the RCVS would need to reserve the right to require an official translation to be provided in certain cases. With these conditions, Council agreed unanimously to accept the proposal, which it was felt was in line with the RCVS intention to be a supportive regulator. A formal review should be carried out after 12 months, and would be reported back to VN Council at its May 2023 meeting.

ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education)

33. The Education Quality Improvement Manager informed Council of the activities being undertaken in readiness for the next ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) review. The last ENQA review had taken place in 2018, and is a cyclical five-year review, the next

being due in 2023.

34. The RCVS application had been acknowledged and terms of reference were awaited. The Self-Assessment Review (SAR) was due to be completed by November, and was currently being worked on, with regular meetings taking place between the veterinary nursing and education teams. Some policies had been updated and were being looked at by the Audit and Risk Committee. The Comms team would be working on the presentation and accessibility aspects of the SAR.
35. The Education Quality Improvement Manager had recently undergone training to become an ENQA reviewer and was now on the list of panel members for ENQA accreditation events, along with the VN Qualifications Manager, who undertook the training in 2021.

Reports from RCVS Committees

Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

36. The Chair welcomed the Chair of the RVN PIC, Suzanne Edwards, who presented the annual report of the Committee which had been circulated with the agenda. This showed a yearly tally of the number of concerns raised against RVNs, and it was noted that there was a steady and relatively low caseload of concerns. Two of the recent scheduled meetings had been cancelled due to there being no cases, and the forthcoming meeting would just have one case to consider.
37. Mrs Edwards expressed her thanks to the PIC and in particular to Arun Midha, who had served as a member for the last eight years and whose term would end in June.

Standards Committee

38. There were no items to report from the Standards Committee.

Policy and Public Affairs update

39. The Policy and Public Affairs Manager provided an oral update on recent activities and developments.
40. **Legislation review.** Defra had been actively engaging with the RCVS on the review, and regular constructive meetings were taking place to explore the complexities and details. A scoping exercise was being carried out by the RCVS, with legal advice, to ascertain which areas should be included in primary and secondary legislation, and what should be included within the rules and regulations.
41. Lobbying activities were continuing, including a recent meeting with Tobias Elwood MP, facilitated by the VNC Vice-Chair. The Comms Department continued to work on simple straightforward messaging including case studies and videos, to demonstrate the benefits of the vet let team, for use in the various lobbying campaigns and parliamentary events which were due to take place in the forthcoming months. Council members were encouraged to engage with their MPs on this if

possible.

42. **Nurse Prescriber role.** The first stage of the nurse prescriber research had now been completed. The next stage would be the development of the findings into a shorter survey for review by an expert panel, followed by a final stage to look at the impact on animal health and welfare, and potential training required. The project was now well underway, led by Professor Stephen May, and there should be more to report at the end of the year.
43. **Limited Licensure – Reasonable adjustment working party.** As mentioned in the CEO's update, a working party had been established to look at suitable mechanisms for access to the professions for disabled people. A range of options would be considered ranging from limited licensure to reasonable adjustment mechanisms. It was hoped that the first meeting would take place in the summer. In response to a question, it was confirmed that this was a complex area and that legal advice would be taken, including relating to protected characteristics. The Registrar added that although this was complex, the aim was to find ways to provide more access to entry to the professions in future.

Communications report

44. The Media and Publications Manager provided an overview of recent VN-related activities in the Comms Department.
45. The department was currently working on the web version of the Day One Skills, Day One Competences and Professional Behaviours.
46. A number of features were being prepared for various publications around what constitutes CPD, and the use of the 1CPD platform. The uptake of the 1CPD platform by veterinary nurses has been very high, being currently used by 91% of nurses.
47. Following on from the publication of the Workforce Summit report, a series of feature articles were being prepared, ahead of the publication of the action plan. These would focus on a variety of current activities around recruitment and retention, including the VN Futures Project school ambassadors scheme which was being launched in May to tie in with Veterinary Nursing Awareness month.
48. A number of publications were currently being updated for the website, including the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing handbook.
49. Forthcoming veterinary nursing events included a VN day in Manchester on 28 July and in Oxford on 19 August. The guest list for the VN Diamond Jubilee event, to be held at the Oxford Museum of Natural History on 19 August, was being prepared and invitations would be sent out within the next month.
50. RCVS day would be held on 8 July and would include the AGM and RCVS Awards.

VN Register report update

51. Council was provided with an updated version of the paper which it had received in February 2022, with the addition of figures on annual removals due to non-payment of the annual fee. It had not been possible to provide this information in February due to an extension of the annual fee payment period due to Covid-19.

VN Council membership

52. The Chair confirmed that Jessica Beckett and Holly Witchell had been elected for a three-year term with effect from the AGM in July.
53. The Chair also confirmed that this would be the last VN Council meeting for Jane Davidson and Elizabeth Cox, and thanked them both on behalf of Council for all their contributions.
54. Jane had served a three-year term on VN Council since July 2019, and had represented Council on the CPD Committees, and currently on the Finance and Resources Committee.
54. Elizabeth Cox was first elected as a member of VN Council in 2011 and had served for 12 years during which she had represented Council on numerous committees and working parties, including the Communications and Public Affairs Board, the Practice Standards Group, Standards Committee, Schedule 3 Working Party, Legislation Working Party, CPD Policy and CPD review groups. Liz was Chair of VN Council from 2015 to 2018 and during that time was a member of RCVS Council and the Operational Board.
55. A formal farewell and thanks would be made at the Annual General Meeting in July.

Any other business (unclassified)

56. It was commented by several members that the unconscious bias training provided for Council and VN Council members had been very useful and relevant.

Date of next meeting

57. Wednesday 14 September 2022 in-person in London, at a venue to be confirmed.

Summary	
Meeting	RCVS Council Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	8 September 2022 14 September 2022
Title	CEO update, including progress against Strategic Plan
Summary	This paper offers a summary of activity against the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	None
Author	Lizzie Lockett CEO l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification	Rationales
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

Background

1. The RCVS Strategic Plan 2020-2024 was approved at the RCVS Council meeting in January 2020 and came into immediate effect. The full report, including all of the narrative, together with case studies from the previous plan's successes, can be found here:
<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/rcvs-strategic-plan-2020-2024/>
2. For each action, progress to date, responsibilities and next steps have been identified in the following table. At its meeting in July 2020, the Officer Team felt it appropriate that an update be given to Council three times a year – in September, January and June – and information about a specific action can be made available to any Council member on request in between times.
3. Outside of those changes noted in the Strategic Plan table to follow, since the June 2022 Council meeting we have also:
 - a. Launched the RCVS Academy, the College's online learning platform to help vets and nurses meet their professional standards
 - b. Welcomed vets from across the EU and beyond at the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) General Assembly in London, jointly hosted with the British Veterinary Association
 - c. Published recommendations on improving support for Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) veterinary students
 - d. Published guidance on religious clothing and beliefs to support those in clinical practice
 - e. Launched new guidance for routine veterinary practice, including, for the first time, guidance on clinical veterinary research
 - f. Hosted an event at the House of Lords to discuss veterinary legislative reform with key stakeholders
 - g. Published our Annual Report and Accounts
 - h. Opened the nomination round for the Chair of the Fellowship Board and roles on the Board and the Science Advisory Panel
 - i. Published our new sustainability and equality, diversity and inclusion standards within the Practice Standards Scheme, together with a new Environmental Sustainability Award
 - j. Held an in-person RCVS Day, which included our AGM, Honours and Awards Ceremony and the investiture of the new Officer team, at One Great George Street
 - k. Held VN Days in Manchester and Oxford, and a reception to celebrate the VN Diamond Jubilee (delayed from 2021)
 - l. Launched the Under Care/ Out of Hours review
 - m. Invited members of the professions to our first in-person Regional Question Time for over two years (to be held in Glasgow, 7 September)
 - n. Announced that 31 veterinary surgeons will join the Fellowship this year

A: Clarity

Ambition: to ensure that we have clarity of purpose and that our internal and external stakeholders and service-users understand our role in the world. We will endeavour to become a proactive regulator that remains a step ahead, even in the face of constant change and uncertainty. We will listen widely, consult meaningfully, make confident decisions, then communicate with clarity, appreciating that the final outcome may not suit everyone.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
1. Continue, via the work of the Veterinary Legislation Working Party (LWP) and other groups, to review the regulatory landscape to ensure we develop world-leading, robust standards and approaches that are grounded in evidence and risk-based, in order to safeguard animal health and welfare, and public health, and maintain trust in the veterinary professions.	LWP/ Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LWP reported to Council June 2020; Council agreed to consult on proposals, consultation opened 5 November 2020 and closed on 23 April 2021. Responses to consultation were considered by Council in June 2021 and recommendations to Defra in August 2021. A new set of veterinary education accreditation standards has been agreed, which accommodate different models of curricula and delivery and enable flexibility whilst driving quality improvement. A new education accreditation methodology has been agreed, which is more outcomes-focused and adopts a risk-based approach. Following introduction of new VN accreditation standards in January 2020, we carried out a small-scale review to ensure they were outcomes-focused and to remove any duplication. Completed and approved by VNC 10 February 2021. Updated Standards Framework available on the website. Day-One Competences and skills for VNs (to include the professional behaviours) reviewed and updated. Approved by VNC in Feb 2022. Implementation of the new veterinary education accreditation standards and methodology in 2023 is on track: 1:1 support sessions with all directly-accredited veterinary schools have taken place, to ensure they understand the changes and have an opportunity to ask us any questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive responses to the legislation proposals have been forthcoming from Defra / the Minister (albeit short of a formal commitment to go ahead). The Public Affairs and Communications teams are progressing a programme of engagement with MPs and others and liaison continues with the BVA and BVNA in respect of narrowing areas of disagreement. Lunch reception took place at House of Lords on 28 June and further event planned for 25 October. Communications campaign has been developed to illustrate the importance of new legislation. The accreditation evidence repository for the new educational standards has been agreed as SecureDocs, and the development of the training for panel members is underway. Implementation of a pre-accreditation support package is underway. This aims to help veterinary nursing providers to better understand the Framework and how it relates to their individual programmes, and what evidence submission might look like.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
<p>2. Ensure that we are addressing what matters to our stakeholders and that we horizon-scan for issues that are beyond the scope of our immediate view. For example, regulation of new technologies, regulation of practices, review of our concerns and disciplinary process, and regulation of the wider veterinary team and the environment in which they work.</p>	<p>APC/ LWP/ PICDCL /EC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with ViVet, including events around creativity and reflecting on the impact of Covid-19 and the professions' response to it, was carried out. • Regulation of practices falls part of A1 above. • Review of concerns/disciplinary processes consultation alongside LWP – see A1 above. • A lot of focus on 'what matters to our stakeholders' was carried out during pandemic work. • Stakeholder event took place online on 23 October 2020 to discuss current consultations and impact of Brexit; second stakeholder event on 8 December 2021. • Updates to PSS published May 2021. • Review of mental health impact of concerns process has been published, alongside updated action plan, with launch of ProfCon Investigation Support – June 2021. • Increasing challenges with the availability and implementation of EMS requirements in future recognised. We hosted a stakeholder event to look at the longer-term solutions, which was successful. A report of the proceedings and supporting press release was published 11/5/22. A proposal for future EMS policy has been developed and is being considered by EC in September 22. • A Workforce Summit with key stakeholders was hosted by ViVet on 30 November 2021. Engagement with the wider professions was completed in advance using an independent consultant (virtually). A report of the proceedings was published on 28 February 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up action plan from the Workforce Summit is with APC for consideration. • Consideration of the regulation of wider vet team ongoing. The Vet Techs Working Group reporting to Registration Committee has met and while issues have arisen over the nature of the work being undertaken and whether there are sufficient numbers to allow financing, discussions will continue. Likewise there have been discussions with behaviourist groups and issues over the nature of the work and whether it crosses over into acts of veterinary surgery are being referred to the Fellowship Science Advisory Panel. With the progress of the LWP proposals pending (A1 above) Council has agreed to put a hold on the accreditation model at this time. This was the preferred route for members of the Association of Meat Inspectors (AMI) and while the door remains open for discussions these are on hold pending progress of the LWP proposals. • Following an external recruitment process, Mini-PICs are scheduled to be launched in late September. A further recruitment process is scheduled for the autumn with a view to launching the Charter Case Committee in early 2023. Committee training is also scheduled before launch, along with work to ensure the new concerns framework is built into the website.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals for the longer term future implementation of EMS have been agreed in principle by Education Committee, and a report was published on 11 May 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizon-scanning process to take place for Vet Futures #2 and VN Futures #2– inc impact of Covid-19 – we continue to liaise with BVA on this, alongside an evaluation report. Under care review ongoing. Consultation to the professions is under way and is due to run until 12 September. Engagement has been excellent, with around 1,200 responses at the halfway stage. A separate survey for the public is being considered by Standards Committee to be run independently by YouGov within the same time frame as that for the professions. It is anticipated that the results will come back to November Council. Coms will continue to promote the consultation to both the profession and the public.
<p>3. Review whether we can take a more proactive role around breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act involving unqualified individuals, or courses that purport to lead to registration but do not, both through education to end-users of veterinary services, and working more actively to support those wishing to raise concerns with the relevant authorities.</p>	Registrar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some work on this had started pre-Covid This has been progressing and a paper around action in relation to breaches of the VSA is currently being finalised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A paper on breaches of the VSA will be submitted for consideration by Council in September 2022 along with consideration of courses that purport to lead to registration but do not.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
<p>4. Work with our partners overseas to ensure that the UK remains relevant in the veterinary world post-EU exit, including sharing knowledge, marketing our standards and services, and building an engaged diaspora of members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MsRCVS) and registered veterinary nurses (RVNs). Ensure there is a global element to all that we do, and that our international members feel engaged and included.</p>	<p>APC/ FVE/ Brexit T/F EC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing work via Advancement of the Professions Cttee to consider global offering. • Signed up to World Veterinary Association in observer capacity. • Building relationships via MMI International, with two events in 2021 and one in 2022. • Continuing to play a role in the International Veterinary Regulators Network (IVRN): hosted a session on mental health as part of the June 2021 series of educational events. • Continuing to play a role in the Global Veterinary Innovation Network. • Presented on Mind Matters at World Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress (March 2021). • Continuing to work with International Accreditation Working Group (IAWG) to facilitate joint accreditations. RCVS chaired a virtual meeting of IAWG autumn 2021, and attended the virtual meetings in June 2022. • Signed up to World Veterinary Association statement on global climate crisis. • Protocols for joint accreditation visits using the new RCVS Standards and methodology agreed with IAWG members. • Hosted a workshop on wellbeing on 7 December 2021 for FVE; took part in working group on pan-European Survey of the Professions. • Overseas member blog series launched to highlight the work of MsRCVS outside the UK. • Hosted an event with IVRN on workforce on 10 January 2022. • Hosted Federation of Veterinarians of Europe General Assembly, with BVA, in June 2022, including presentation on workforce issues. • Contributed to IVRN 2022 CPD events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop actions from overseas member research. • Work ongoing to develop more permanent solution to loss of mutual recognition of professional qualifications – proposal under development for CVO for funding to support direct accreditation of a selection of EU schools. • Have run third EU graduates survey ref impact of Brexit and will publish shortly. • Pick up work with OIE - to be restarted. • We have been approached by a number of third-party organisations wanting to use either 1CPD or our model of VetGDP (and Adviser training), discussions ongoing. Presenting to CLEAR international regulator conference on mental health and attending the American Association of Veterinary State Boards Congress to raise profile of UK activity

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
<p>5. Build a closer relationship between the College, the professions and the public by continuing our outreach programme. Review how we gain input from stakeholders at all levels, including the development of an improved process for seeking input from members of the public.</p>	<p>APC/ Comms/ Exec</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder research published January 2020. • Feedback from practices sought as part of regular Covid-19 surveys. • Much of our face-to-face public outreach was on hold in 2021 and 2022 due to Covid; plan to return to these events in 2023. • Stakeholder events held in October 2020 and December 2021. • New role established in Communications team to support student and new graduate engagement and planning work underway with Education and VN teams. Planning and production of content for new student-focused area of the website underway, along with review/update of <i>RCVS Guide for New Members</i>. Series of in-person talks from Officers planned for 2022 freshers to explain role of College and help establish positive early relationships. • Developing iMIS to allow vet/VN students to sign up for 'MyAccount' on the RCVS website, which will enable direct email communications with students and give them access to the RCSV Academy. • Role of Head of Insight and Engagement established in January 2021 to support this work and also A6 below. • VN Education publication re-instated March 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals to Council on public engagement were discussed at the January 2022 meeting and the setting up of a Public Advisory Group was approved in principle. Details and further detail to come to September 2022 meeting of Council. • ViVet continuing to run a free series of workshops on 'Customer Experience' to try to better understand some of the frustrations and potential solutions in relation to workforce challenges. • Survey planned to evaluate effectiveness of RCVS coms activities and member engagement, and review vet/VN coms preferences. • Comms with stakeholders for CPD, VetGDP • Academy courses to include Overseas, Clinical Supervisor Training, Delegation etc

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
<p>6. Establish clarity around a data-sharing commitment, and ensure that our views, our data & our insights are shared regularly in an easy-to-search way, for example, easy-to-find FAQ on key issues, insights gained from concerns & complaints data, and self-service facts and figures about the professions. Make available accessible & anonymised versions of the data we hold to all stakeholders to enable them to generate value and insights for the sector.</p>	<p>FRC/ Digital/ Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAQ on Covid have been well received (now archived), along with those for CPD, LWP, Practice Standards and VetGDP. • Role of Head of Insight and Engagement established January 2021 to support this work. • New Research Officer hired January 2021 to support this work and a broad range of other research across the organisation. • FAQ on medicines published spring 2021. • Data sharing policy reviewed by Audit and Risk and Finance and Resources Committees end of 2021. • Survey on impact of Covid on vets and nurses published in January 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop dashboard on key metrics – process of identifying key areas underway. • Data management system review under consideration by Finance and Resources Committee.
<p>7. Plan and implement a cycle of review and improvement for our educational standards and processes, to ensure we continue to take a leadership role with our international partners.</p>	<p>Ed Cttee/ VN Ed Cttee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Day-One Competences launched 2/7/20. • VN Standards reviewed and published and CertAVN developed with four Higher Education Institutions now delivering in a range of areas. • WP, Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC) and Education Committee agreed new accreditation standards & methodology. Council approved post consultation in Nov 2021. • Advanced Practitioner (AP) & CertAVP surveys completed. The AP Focus groups held in June and results discussed by EC in Sept 2021. • Hosted virtual International Accreditors Working Group (IAWG) in 2020 & 2021, due to participate in 2022 meeting (June). • Presented new standards and methodology to IAWG in July 2021, and established future proposals for joint visitations. • The VN Qualifications Team is in regular contact with HEIs and Colleges to provide support and understand Covid-related challenges and changes to provision. • Education Team in regular contact with Veterinary Schools Council to mitigate impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See A1 for VN DOC/DOS details. • New vet school accreditation standards and methodology approved for implementation in 2023 – work now focuses on developing guidance and new training for accreditation panel members, as well as liaising with schools on the new standards. • Working groups established to explore future proposals for AP status. Stakeholder event planned for Oct 22. • Support scheme for programmes going through the VN Accreditation process launched March 2022, to be reviewed December 2022. Feedback so far has been very positive. • ENQA re-accreditation due 2023, Self-Evaluation Report currently being compiled. • Accreditation panel member training expected October 2022.

		<p>of Covid on veterinary undergraduate education – many temporary amends made to policy to support schools and students during this time, being kept under review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to implement new veterinary accreditation standards and methodology in 2023 continues – hosted 1:1 sessions with staff from all directly accredited vet schools, evidence repository now developed and accreditation panel training being developed. Recruitment of new visitors has been successful – approx. 50 new members have put their name forward for training. 	
Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
8. Ensure clarity of appeal across all the areas where we make decisions, modernising where appropriate; where appeal is unavailable, clearly justify.	Legal services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellowship Board has reviewed appeals process and some changes have been made • New Accreditation Appeal Panel proposed as part of Delegation Scheme, June 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit current processes; review best practice – process underway. • New registration appeals process required now MRPQ no longer exists.

B: Compassion

Ambition: to be a compassionate upstream regulator and a supportive Royal College by ensuring that high standards continue to be met while working in an empathetic way that respects all of our stakeholders and service-users as individuals. We will recognise that a compassionate approach involves helping members of the veterinary team build the skills and knowledge they need to meet our standards, which is ultimately in the interests of animal health and welfare.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
1. Endeavour to ensure that the College is seen as approachable, helpful, fair and accessible to all.	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of communications around registration renewal and renewal of AP, Specialist and Fellowship statuses has taken place. Good positioning of all external vacancies, providing insights into our role and key values. Data on KPIs (ProfCon) regularly published. Full web content review is underway on the current website, with consideration being given to information accuracy, content design, language style, accessibility, diversity and inclusion and search engine optimisation (SEO). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review public- and profession-facing documentation for 'Plain English'. In-person Regional Question Time meeting organised for September with a virtual meeting planned for November and a further in-person meeting planned for January. Tie-in with stakeholder mapping (A5, above) Taking forward work of DIG to review all our process to ensure they are fair and do not discriminate, eg work underway with Fellowship regarding application process. Improving the way we communicate Council and committee activities as part of the Council Culture project.
2. Enable our teams to deliver compassionate regulation by providing structures, training and support to ensure they can help vets and nurses meet the standards required in a compassionate way, and take ownership and communicate clearly when things don't go to plan. Recognising that, in order to achieve this, our team members must also feel well supported and that they are compassionately treated.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peakon staff engagement tool gives 'real time' view on how staff are feeling. Launched e-cards to celebrate staff members who meet our values. Have rolled out Diversity & Inclusion training for all staff, including on pronouns and allyship. MH for Managers training taken place. Support sessions ref virtual working for staff have taken place. Training for staff dealing with people in difficult situations completed. Update for staff taken place on resources available via our Employee Assistance Programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review data and identify priorities for staff training and review of materials – ongoing process. Reviewing options for online learning system for staff – some delays with this project. Review discussions data from Peakon and other staff meetings for training gaps. Encourage and support managers in acting on findings/comments from Peakon tool. Supervision / support for those taking stressful calls – process under development.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ProfCon Investigation Support service launched in June 2021. • Staff invited to attend all appropriate Mind Matters sessions, for example, campfire chats, resilience training. • Stress management workshops completed to support staff back into BH. • Away Day for staff took place on 30 June 2020 – first in person for three years – and considered how we continue to live our values in the new ways of working. 	
3. Review our concerns process through the eyes of each of our stakeholder and service-user groups to ensure that it is fair, forward-thinking and compassionate, and set out a programme of quality improvement.	ProfCon MMI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ProfCon Investigation Support Service launched June 2021 – keep under review. • Audit of impact of concerns process on MH published summer 2021. • Ongoing engagement with new graduates to support their transition into practice, including myth-busting seminars. • Proposals for engagement with public were before Council in January 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Public Advisory Group (PAG) – details to Council in September. • Review how we gather data, moving to a 'live' feedback model – consult with consumer organisations. • Further training for the ProfCon Investigation Support Service due in September following a review meeting in June 2022.
4. Help our regulated professionals to meet the standards expected of them by their peers, the public and society at large by launching the RCVS Academy, which will house a range of online educational tools to help veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and other potential associates of the College understand what is expected of them in terms of meeting standards, and to support them acquiring relevant knowledge and staying up to date in a creative, accessible and inspiring way.	Exec ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas for content have been listed. Focus groups have been carried out. Testing of concept also at London Vet Show 2021. • Academy Plan approved by FRC Nov 2021. • VetGDP Adviser Training now transferred from RCVS Knowledge Moodle platform to Academy. • VetGDP Adviser e-learning modules actively being used. Evaluation of Adviser e-learning has been extremely positive. A number of international organisations have approached us interested in this. • Content for a 'Dealing with difficult situations' module being planned for launch in 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New content being developed for the Academy. • Develop a support package for newly registered veterinary nurses and supervisors/mentors supporting them in clinical practice.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCVS Academy team recruited educational designer and administrative support. Moodle development contract in place. • Vet/VN advisory panel set up, alongside staff champions. • RCVS Academy launched in June 2022. • New course for new graduates launched in August to help them get the best out of VetGDP. 	
Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
5. Continue to support the mental health and wellbeing of members of the veterinary team, and our College staff, through the Mind Matters Initiative under its workstreams of 'prevent, protect and support' (see www.vetmindmatters.org), and also help veterinary professionals to take account of the mental health of those with whom they come into contact.	APC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MMI has been adapting to the Covid world with online tools and Covid-specific advice and guidance. • Successful research project and roundtable held on student VN working culture. • Third MMI Symposium on Mental Health Research held Nov 2021, with international speakers. • MMI Kite App launched September 2021. Kite for Students launched in collaboration with University of Nottingham in May 2022, this is being run as a trial to provide evidence and benchmarks of user experience. • Collaboration with various organisations to include MMI content, such as #safetospeakupweek with VetLed, mental health for managers in VMG training. See vetmindmatters.org for other specific activities under Mind Matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborations have taken place with various organisations to include MMI content, such as #safetospeakupweek with VetLed, mental health for managers in VMG training with over 250 managers trained already, more planned for the autumn. • Training pilots have now completed; new programme will be announced for courses that will start autumn / winter. New strategic plan for MMI under development. • Kite for students pilot has taken place, the student response has concluded that we will not be launching a student version of Kite at this time. • Rural and student Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) certificated courses have been running with the aim of creating a network, supported by MMI, of MHFA who meet quarterly. • Fourth MMI Int event planned autumn 2022.
6. Continue to foster a reflective learning culture amongst members of the veterinary team, so that they can continue to grow and develop in a supportive, no-blame environment.	APC Ed Cttee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of 1CPD app January 2020 (with further updates) to enable reflective learning. Ongoing communications activities to support members of the profession in completing 1CPD. Use of 1CPD became compulsory from Jan 2022. • Support of RCVSK QI work ongoing. • Addressed via Edward Jenner Leadership MOOC modules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further promotional activities planned for BVNA Congress and London Vet Show, in Q4 2022. Evaluation data collection for VetGDP to explore impact – to be considered by EC and Council later in 2022. • Evaluation of VetGDP Adviser e-learning highly positive.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech to World Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress (March 2021) on learning culture and the role of the regulator. • VetGDP will help promote and develop a learning culture for new graduates. • VetGDP Adviser e-learning specifically covers how to develop a positive learning culture, guide reflection and coaching techniques and support for new graduates. • New VetGDP Subcommittee has been established to oversee programme delivery and monitor quality. First meeting took place October 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Leadership Library launched January 2022 has been growing and having excellent feedback, notably for QI and Inclusive Leadership topics. Free for whole vet team. • Edward Jenner Leadership MOOC has been upgraded by the NHS, and will be launching later this year with new content. • New Leadership role model content under development.
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C: Courage

Ambition: we will have the courage to take a leadership role within the professions, to ensure that the pervading culture is healthy, sustainable, inclusive, innovative and respectful; through this, will develop confident veterinary professionals.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
1. Continue to seek culture change within the wider professions around help-seeking behaviour to support both mental and physical health, learning culture, leadership, innovation, sustainability and diversity.	DIG MMI APC Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DIG published strategic plan February 2021. See B5 for MMI progress. See B6 for learning culture. Leadership – Inclusion & Leadership Manager now in post, Leadership Library launched. Sustainability WG wrapped up, working with Fellowship Science Advisory Panel (FSAP) and Practice Standards Group taking on external actions, and RCVS Green Team for internal. Staff-level EDI plan underway. VetGDP Adviser e-learning modules specifically focus on learning culture and the need to support graduates' help-seeking behaviour and see this as a positive thing to be actively welcomed when supporting new graduates. Modules also cover wellbeing of new grads. – evaluations were highly positive. New accreditation standard around sustainability added to the 2023 standards for veterinary programmes. Skills for Veterinary Nurses approved by VNC February 2022. PSS sustainability and EDI standards launched summer 2022. Resources currently being created to support assessors and practices. New video content launched to help to continue to explain and promote VetGDP for new grads and those returning to the profession. DIG presentations at BSAVA Congress 2022. BAME Student WG report and religious clothing guidance published June 2022 – has been positively received. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSAP is working with UKHACC on Net Zero Surgery – a project steering board has set up. FSAP has run a series on 'Quality of Life' which were oversubscribed, there is more planned for this autumn. Edward Jenner Leadership MOOC has been upgraded by the NHS, and will be launching later this year with new content. Leadership Stories will be relaunched to coincide with Black History Month. Leadership Library is continuing to grow, and Leadership content is also going into the Academy. College has been awarded iie Investors in the Environment Bronze award and is working towards Silver in 2023. VetGDP graduate e-learning to ensure new graduates know what to expect from the programme around asking for help, support and a learning culture launched August 2022 as part of the Academy. We are evaluating the VetGDP through a questionnaire for graduates once they've completed the programme, this will provide data on workplace culture and learning culture. VetGDP for returners is being launched to help people to return to veterinary work following a career break.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
2. Celebrate the art as well as the science of veterinary medicine and ensure that wider professional skills are properly and credibly supported.	APC RCVSK Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-clinical skills have been highlighted as part of the Graduate Outcomes review and now reflected in Day One Competences. • Professional skills focus within the VetGDP, including training for VetGDP Advisers. • MMI developed new webinar programme, celebrated Neurodiversity Week, and delivered other materials to support the impact of Covid. • VN Diamond Jubilee celebrations included webinars/podcasts already published, social media engagement underway and other activities being planned. VN Diamond Jubilee e-book published at end of 2021, and in-person Reception held in Oxford on 19 August 2022. • Two in-person VN Days held in July (Manchester) and August (Oxford). • All nominees for 2022 Honours and Awards accepted their awards and were invited to attend in-person Royal College Day in July to celebrate their success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop materials for Academy. • Wider cultural project to celebrate history and development of modern veterinary practice – tie in with new building? • Work ongoing to encourage a wider diversity within Fellowship applications – such as increasing the number of women applying and receiving the status. • ViVet Innovation series to encourage the veterinary team to consider innovation within their organisation. • In-person Fellowship Day 11 November 2022 with interactive sessions to showcase the breadth of knowledge and skills within the Fellowship.
3. Work with other stakeholders to retain skills and talent within the professions, by developing return-to-work options that build confidence in those who have had a career break, for whatever reason.	Education MMI ViVet Academy Exec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VetGDP is available for those returning to the profession. Compulsory for those away from the profession for more than five years, optional for those away for a shorter period. Now covered in VetGDP coms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following 30 November 2021 Workforce Summit, and publication of meeting report, action plan under development that will address recruitment, retention and return. • Materials for the Academy. • Review our policies to ensure return to work is as accessible as possible. • Will be reviewing Period of Supervised Practice for RVNs during 2022. • Research underway to understand recruitment, retention and return activities within the government / public health veterinary sector. Workshop will be held with stakeholders to identify gaps before collaborative action plan produced.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
4. Ensure a pathway for career progression for vets and nurses via postgraduate/post-qualification accreditations and qualifications – to meet the needs of vets and nurses at all stages of their careers.	Education VN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review has started ref AP and CertAVP for vets – surveys completed and findings reported to Education Committee. The AP focus groups took place in June 2021 and results and next steps were discussed by Education Committee in September 2021. Advanced qualifications framework for VNs published and we now have four HEIs accredited with a further two accreditations booked. A range of focused qualifications are now available (for example, anaesthesia, oncology, emergency and critical care, dentistry, coaching and mentoring and evidence-based nursing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish recommendations on vet quals/status. VN career progression linked to LWP proposals. Review development routes for general practitioners. Working groups established to explore future changes to AP status. These will report in September 2022 and a stakeholder event is planned to discuss a way forward in October. This work is also looking at career pathways. Research the Advanced Practitioner role for veterinary nurses.
5. Develop extra-mural studies (EMS) and work experience opportunities at the College, together with more opportunities for veterinary professionals and members of the public to become engaged with the work of the regulator at first hand and gain an understanding of its complexities.	Comms APC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New online EMS programme developed and piloted, jointly with the Veterinary Policy Research Foundation. EMS student attended placement with RCVS w/c 19 July 2021, spending time with Ed/PSS; further round of placements early 2022. Podcasts recorded with Webinar Vet and British Cattle Veterinary Association to better explain role of the College to their members. Round of President/Registrar talks to final-year vet students organised again for 2022/23 academic year. Round of President talks for first-year vet students organised for Freshers' Weeks in September/October 2022. CEO talking to new graduate groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop modules for Academy to better explain our key functions. Recruitment for next round of EMS placements is live.
6. Create an innovation funding pot to enable the professions to help solve regulation and professional standards issues that matter to them.	Exec FRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have approval of the small bursaries pot – for individuals' personal development aligning to strategic plan – not yet launched due to Covid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch bursary scheme – title? Consideration of challenge prize on hold due to pandemic and other priorities. It will also be important to ensure the professions have the right skills and approach to innovation in order to maximise the opportunity.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
7. Continue to develop the Fellowship into a learned society that reflects the varied achievements of the veterinary profession; encourages the advancement of standards; and, develops public awareness of veterinary medicine and science, for example, via the development of a Fellow on the Public Understanding of Veterinary Science.	Fellows APC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unconscious bias training of Fellowship Board and Credential Panellists to continue (March). Fellowship Week took place in September 2021, online, with good attendance and engagement. Restoration and fee payment policies completed. Fellowship discussion forum ('Discourse') launched. Fellowship newsletter launched. 31 new Fellows to be admitted in 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next 'Fellows on Tour' to start autumn. Quality of Life to be developed further following summer's webinar and panels. Next Fellowship Day to take place in person in November 2022 at the Royal Institution in London. Guest speaker invited and programme being planned. Elections for new Chair underway, plus new Chair of the Science Advisory Panel. Student 'Fellows of the Future' competition due to be launched.
8. Review new ways of reaching consensus and driving change within our leadership and governance structure.	Exec Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unconscious bias training now routine for new members of Council/VNC. One-to-one interviews taken place with Council members and independent facilitator – discussion took place at meeting in June 2021. Paper on in-person/virtual meetings approved by Council June 2021. Council Culture plan approved November 2021 and groups reported to Council April 2022. Paper concluding first phase approved by Council in June 2022, inc 'How we work' statement, Chair spec, induction, comms etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part two will include ongoing skills/training requirements, additional communications, strategy sessions, refined complaints process and updated elections paperwork etc. Paper to Council September 2022. Review impact of 2018 LRO on Governance (see also D1).
9. Work with the BVA and the BVNA to evaluate the success of the first action plans for Vet Futures and VN Futures respectively, assess whether the ambitions remain relevant, and develop new action plans accordingly. Work with the FVE to support the delivery of Vet Futures Europe.	Exec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan agreed with BVA that we review research and ambitions, then develop second plan. Evaluation of first action plans started but to be completed – interrupted by Covid. Interim VNF Report published Sept 2021. Review of pandemic response took place at Council in September 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies on VF successes need to be refreshed, to form part of VF evaluation document (joint with BVA).

D: Confidence

Ambition: in order to deliver our Strategic Plan we must not only have the mandate that is secured by the Veterinary Surgeons Act and our Royal Charter, but also the confidence to succeed that will be brought by the right underpinning – the governance, people, finance, communications and IT structures that are crucial to our success.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
1. Review the bedding-in of the 2018 Legislative Reform Order to ensure that our Council and committee structure is efficient, effective, and transparent, and provides the right level of strategic oversight coupled with skills-based input to allow the College to function to the best of its abilities.	Officers Exec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are not mandated by govt to do a review (unlike for the 2013 LRO) but it is good practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoping in 2022 for review in 2023 (previous plan for informal review in 2021 not completed due to Covid). Informal review of arrangements was discussed at Officer planning day in July; paper to November 2022 Council. Governance Manual in progress – likely to come to November 2022 Council. Action plan to resolve gaps vs Charity Code being worked through by Senior Team.
2. Review the structure of all of our groups operating below committee level, to ensure the right mix of skills are available to tackle the tasks at hand and that each group has clear membership, purpose, principles, time-frame and sense of what success will look like.	FRC Ops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process has started, with more transparency over ToFR, membership and composition – all now online. Delegation scheme (to committee level) updated annually. CPD working groups consolidated. Skills matrix updated with new Council members. More recently set up groups – eg Environment and Sustainability Working Group – had much tighter terms of reference and end dates. All groups summarised in one document, with ToR, membership, quorum, etc – bit unwieldy and needs some additional work. Parent committees reviewed groups reporting to them during autumn 2021. New lay member appointment process approved by Council in January 2022. Updated delegation scheme approved by Council in June 2022 and now live. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills being considered as part of Council Culture project. New software for the management of Council and committee papers introduced summer 2022. New templates for papers under development, along with training for secretariats.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
<p>3. Develop and embed a meaningful dashboard to help ensure that appetite for risk is clear, risk is managed and any early warning signs are addressed.</p>	<p>ARC FRC Ops</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magique risk management tool now in place for all areas, clear ownership, regularly updated. • Process introduced to ensure risks identified by RCVS Council are considered at next ARC and reported back to the next meeting of RCVS Council. • Departmental risk registers reviewed on a cycle by Senior Team and Audit and Risk Committee • Better signposting to committees of where risk registers can be found on BoardPacks. • Business continuity planning meeting held August 2021 to reflect on Covid experience. • Risk workshop held with VN Council in September 2021 and with RCVS Council in March 2022. • Comprehensive risk policy agreed by RCVS Council in March 2022. • Senior Team reviewed Corporate Risks in May 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business continuity plan annual meeting/refresh due late October 2022. • Work ongoing on risk dashboard and assurance map.
<p>4. Collate and review our member and service-user feedback on an ongoing basis, against key performance indicators, and work with RCVS Knowledge to employ a quality improvement and innovation methodology to ensure we are providing services that meet the needs of our audiences and society at large.</p>	<p>Ops Head of I&E</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have gathered a list of sources of current feedback. • Data tile on RCVS.me (RCVS intranet) for internal use showing current and historical information on membership, which provides a useful reference tool for trends. • Customer journey exercise carried out. • Updated survey to capture data about why vets leave the Register or move to non-practising category now in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of data held and future data requirements underway. • Develop QI process – Education team developing via Education QI manager and also to link to Head of Insight and Engagement. • Process for reviewing / analysing all complaints about RCVS, regardless of area of work, under development. • Consideration underway for dedicated query-handling process. • VN 'leaver survey' under development. • Zero tolerance for abuse of our staff statement to go on the website.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
<p>5. Put in place a People Strategy that develops our talent, diversity, leadership and culture, across the staff team, Council and committee members, examiners, assessors and all others who work on behalf of the College.</p>	<p>Exec People</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in place: D&I training for all staff carried out; agreement with BAME recruitment experts in place; pronoun policy in place and training completed; allyship training completed. • External Diversity and Inclusion Group strategy published February 2021 and interfaces with internal strategy. • Talent & Leadership (T&L) framework conversations taken place ref competencies. • New recruitment policy developed and in place. • New 'Where we work' policy designed to support remote working. • People systems developed to support new employees into the organisation. • Pay policy developed and communicated. • Stress Management sessions completed to support staff returning to BH in place. • Competencies agreed for all College roles – wider framework in progress. • Salary benchmarking completed. • People Plan approved, launched and communicated to all staff. • New policies regarding menopause and transitioning in the workplace written – to be shared with all staff. • Crucial conversations training material developed to support pay and performance discussions, was rolled out Q1 2022. • Collaboration conversation with ST about staff engagement actions. • Introduction of Guide your Progress programme for managers completed, with remaining sessions due during the year. • Redesign of onboarding and leavers documentation for better communication and reduction of questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide data ref current position on gender and other diversity strands by end of Q3 2022. • Pilot mentoring scheme. • Recruitment training for legal, best practice and systems underway. • Learning management system review remains ongoing. • Review of benefits e.g. income protection and medical insurance. • Data dashboard under construction to highlight people data to include diversity and gender information. • Competency alignment with Evaluate levels, recruitment and talent development. • Wellbeing and employee networks relaunch. • Pension review in conjunction with Wingates to ensure staff offering is fair and appropriate in a modern day workplace. FRC agreed change in May 2022, next step staff communication for autumn implementation. • Update of induction and probation processes in progress. • Improved communication with staff on issues such as parental leave and flexible working. • Leadership course - 'Guide your progress' - at midway point. • Trans and menopause policies drafted – engagement sessions with staff shortly. • Team enhancements underway using RASCI model to plan an approach. • Review of payroll and people systems underway.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
6. Ensure our financial systems are customer-focused, fraud-resistant and efficient, and improve communication and clarity over where money is spent and its impact.	FRC Ops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have gathered data ref fraud prevention activities across the organisation. We are reviewing the systems and reporting processes of our accounting systems so deliver more transparency over how money is spent and on a timely basis. No issues raised by 2020 or 2021 audits. Regular cyber-security training for staff. Review of Finance Team roles taken place to improve division of duties and a new Head of Finance appointed. Positive outcome of recent external audit of financial digital systems, small number of actions to be followed up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review data/prioritise areas for improvement. Ensure database upgrade includes a flexible customer interface.
7. Develop and implement a technology strategy that puts digital first, is collaborative, and focuses on simplification and convergence.	Exec Digital FRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New CTO recruited in January 2022. Two software developers recruited in April 2022 and one further developer promoted internally. Recruitment to support data management support, Business Analyst and Project Manager posts underway. Hold on further recruitment to enable new postholders to settle into their roles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roadmap and action plan being developed by CTO in conjunction with Digital Team and senior colleagues New CTO working with approved Digital Strategy for remainder of 2022 and will refresh Strategy by November FRC. New governance structure for digital work under development. Discussions about new data management system underway with FRC.
8. Purchase a new property that aims to serve the needs of the College for the next twenty years, while not putting an undue future financial commitment on our members.	Estates Ops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sale of BH completed March 2021. RCVS moved out of Belgravia House March 2022, and all furniture, fittings, records, historical collection and artefacts have been moved to suitable storage locations. Staff moved into temp offices 14 Feb 2022. A new building has been purchased, which is currently fully tenanted. A project group – Hardwick Street Refurbishment Group (HSRG) - set up to oversee the refurbishment of the new premises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tender process for project management of HS refurbishment underway. Consider future of RCVS flat.

Action (numbering as per full plan)	Who?	Status/history	Next step/due date
<p>9. Put in place a communications strategy that will focus on clarifying what we are, and what we are not, and be stronger about calling out those who seek to undermine the College; own our shortcomings and be clear about where and how we will change; and be bolder about celebrating our successes and our unique contribution to animal health and welfare, and public health. Empower our wider team to become communications ambassadors for the College.</p>	Comms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marcoms Officer and Media & Publications Officer recruited to support expanding workload of coms team. Further recruitment under review. • New system built to consolidate and guide the use of RCVS brand assets, visual identities and web/print accessibility. • Trial period for additional social media monitoring/commenting role for Committee Chairs and Officers. • Planning meetings held with all teams to identify departmental long-term aims and activities early 2022. • Full web content review is underway on the current website, with consideration being given to information accuracy, content design, language style, accessibility, diversity and inclusion and search engine optimisation (SEO). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCVS comms survey of key stakeholders (including professions, public etc) to establish preferences and gain feedback. • Use feedback to devise coms strategy to support strategic ambitions, departmental activities and stakeholder requirements. • Produce social media guidance. • Social media strategy under development as part of broader planning work. • Communications activities to flow from Culture project. • Development of Language/Content Style Guide underway as part of web content review.
<p>10. Develop and implement a corporate social responsibility strategy that befits an organisation that works in the public interest.</p>	FRC Ops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Team developed internal sustainability policy and achieved Investors in the Environment Bronze Award. • Council agreed investment policy and to divest from fossil fuels in November 2021. • Covid has been positive in reducing impact of travel, both overseas and domestic. • Divestment from Russian business interests in March 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental impact of any new building under consideration. • Work ongoing with UKHACC. • Push to encourage staff to make more use of volunteering days to support social responsibility of the organisation. • Working towards iiE Silver. • Consideration of carbon off-setting line in 2023 budget.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	14 September 2022
Title	Minutes of meeting of VN Education Committee held on 14 April 2022
Summary	Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee held on 14 April 2022
Decisions required	To approve
Attachments	none
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Veterinary Nurse Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2022

Members:	Mrs Donna Cotton	-	Employer representative
	* Miss Julia Cox	-	Employer representative
	* Ms Sarah Fox	-	VN Council lay member
	* Mrs Sarah Holman	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Susan Howarth	-	VN Council veterinary nurse (Chair)
	Miss Carla Husband	-	HE student representative
	Mrs Caroline McCormick-Clarke	-	FE student representative
	* Professor Elizabeth Mossop	-	Independent educationalist
	* Mrs Sarah Parkhouse	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Sarah Reynolds-Golding	-	HE veterinary nursing provider
	* Mrs Perdi Welsh	-	Post-registration veterinary nurse provider

*absent

In attendance:	Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
	Mrs Jasmine Curtis	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	-	Qualifications Manager
	Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	Examinations Manager
	Mrs Tori Page	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Kirsty Williams	-	Education Quality Improvement Manager

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Julia Cox, Sarah Fox, Sarah Holman, Elizabeth Mossop, Sarah Parkhouse and Perdi Welsh.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) held on 16 February 2022

3. The Committee accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2022 as a correct record.

Matters arising

4. There were no matters arising on the previous minutes.

Veterinary Nursing update

5. The Director of Veterinary Nursing updated the Committee on recent developments and activities.
6. **Registration applications.** There had been no further applications received since the previous meeting, from students who had completed their registrable qualification, but had been unable to complete the 1,800 required practice training hours due to the effect of the Covid pandemic. The guidance would remain in place for some time and any applications would continue to be reviewed on a case by case basis. An update would be provided at each meeting. The Committee was pleased that this facility would remain in place for the time being, as students currently still undergoing training may have been affected.
7. **VN Education publication.** The *VN Education* digital newsletter had been published in March and had included information on the support package which the Committee had agreed should be put in place for those undergoing accreditation or re-accreditation. The support package had been well received and there had been very positive feedback.
8. It was clarified that the newsletter is sent biannually to AEIs, centres and training practices, not to individuals. It was agreed that members of the VNEC should be notified by email when each edition was published, with a link to the website. It was commented that educational establishments had been pleased to see the return of the publication.
9. **Veterinary Nursing team.** The Examinations Co-ordinator had left the RCVS in March and the recruitment process was ongoing for a replacement, to support the Examinations Manager.
10. **VetSkill.** The response from VetSkill to its accreditation audit report had been reviewed and some further information had been supplied. Additional information was due to be submitted shortly and an oral update would be provided to the Committee in June.

VN Licence to practise qualifications

Programme changes

11. **Hartpury University (HU).** The Qualifications Manager presented a paper setting out proposed changes to all accredited programmes delivered by Hartpury University. The proposal was a result of changes to the curriculum framework for the university as a whole, and was required to keep the veterinary nursing provision in line with all HU programmes.

12. The Qualifications Manager added that the proposed changes had been well justified with a clear rationale, and with minimal amendments to the outcomes of the programmes. A sensible action plan had been submitted to address the two actions required.
13. The Chair confirmed that four of the committee members who were absent had sent comments in support of the proposed changes, and those present agreed unanimously that the proposed programme changes should be accepted.

Pre-accreditation support

14. The Qualifications Manager provided an overview of the standard approach to the support package and what is covered in each visit, and information on the four visits which had taken place to date. AEs due for accreditation in the academic year 2022/23 were being contacted to discuss the support package in further detail and arrange dates for in-person visits during 2022. All AEs with new programmes would be required to undertake the support package, and those with existing programmes due for re-accreditation would be given the option to undertake the support package, with a potential extension to the current accreditation cycle if necessary.
15. It was noted that the response to the support package had been overwhelmingly positive, with very good feedback provided by those AEs which had already received in-person visits.
16. It was confirmed that although there is a template agenda for the visits, going forward, AEs would be asked to pick three key areas which they would like to discuss, which would encourage flexibility and empowerment for the AEs.
17. The Education Quality Improvement Manager, who had sent out the feedback forms, added that she had been very pleased with the positive comments, and the visit which she had attended had a very collaborative atmosphere. The feedback also enabled the visit schedule to be adapted where necessary.
18. In response to a query on the audit activity which would need to be carried out if an accreditation event had been cancelled in order to provide pre-accreditation support, the Qualifications Manager reassured the Committee that quality monitoring audit activity would continue, based on the risk banding, and would focus on any areas of specific concern. AEs were always advised, when a visit has been cancelled, that routine quality monitoring would continue.

Action plan monitoring accreditation/re-accreditation

19. The Committee was provided with oral updates from members of the qualifications team on the action plan monitoring for the following Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs):
 - Lantra Awards

- University of Portsmouth
- University of South Wales

20. Any areas of concern arising from the monitoring activities would be included in the risk banding.

Quality Monitoring activities

21. The Committee was provided with papers setting out full updates on quality monitoring activities and the actions which had been taken, for the following universities and centres:

- Wrexham Glyndwr University
- College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)

22. **Self Assessment reports.** Self assessment reports (SARs) had been sent out to all AEIs and delivery sites in December 2021. All SARs had been returned and reviewed. The data and contents of the reports had been analysed and each report had been allocated a level of risk which had been incorporated into the overall risk rating. The Committee was provided with a chart showing the Risk Rating from the SAR, and the overall Risk Rating of each AEI. Meetings had taken place with any institutions rated as high risk.

23. The Chair commented that the overview was very useful and worthwhile. It was also felt that the support which is being provided is having a positive effect and is therefore beneficial for students.

Action plan quality monitoring - quality assurance

24. Oral reports were provided on the monitoring of action plans and future planned actions for the following AEIs and centres:

- Oxford Brookes University
- Royal Agricultural University (Plumpton College)
- University of Bristol
- University of Glasgow
- Writtle University College
- ChesterGates Veterinary Training Centre
- Royal Veterinary College

External Examiner update

25. The Committee noted the current list of external examiners for VN Licence to Practise qualifications, together with the details of a new appointment for one institution.

VN Pre-registration Examination Board

26. The Examinations Manager reported that the Pre-registration Examination Board had met on 13 April to discuss and agree the examination results for the March OSCE. The minutes would be provided at the next meeting.
27. The Committee was reminded that at its previous meeting, it had been confirmed that an additional member of the Board needed to be recruited from the VNEC, as Professor Mossop had stepped down as a member and Chair of the Board. The Committee would also need to appoint a new Chair. It was agreed that this should be an agenda item for the June meeting of the Committee, in order that the Board membership should be settled in time for its meeting in late July.

Post-registration qualifications

28. **Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN).** The Qualifications Manager reported that the Royal Veterinary College had notified the RCVS that it intended to increase the student numbers on its CertAVN programme with effect from the next intake, in order to be able to offer places to all applicants that met the entry criteria. It had been confirmed that the required funding and personnel would be in place so that all students would be appropriately supported.

Items for publication

29. It was suggested that the next *VNEducation* newsletter should contain an update report on the support package for AElS.
30. It was confirmed that publication of relevant staff vacancies takes place via the RCVS website, LinkedIn and other publications and where relevant would be raised at educators meetings.
31. It was noted that, in line with RCVS procedures, the terms of office of the two student members of the VNEC would come to an end at the July AGM, and the AElS would be notified so that the vacancies could be drawn to the attention of students who may be interested in serving on the Committee, as well as including information in other relevant publications.

Any other business

32. **Proof of qualifications for enrolment.** The Director of Veterinary Nursing reported that a query had been raised by some educators as to whether a Personal Learning Record (PLR) would be acceptable as proof of qualifications obtained to meet the entry requirements, rather than the applicant's certificates. The PLR is held centrally by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and contains a record of qualifications regulated by Ofqual issued from 2012. The PLR is now accepted by many Awarding Organisations as a true record of a candidate's achievements.

33. It was agreed that this would be a useful alternative option, where available. It was noted that some items may be missing from the PLR and in such cases proof of individual qualifications would need to be requested, but it would be helpful to applicants and course providers to have this option.
34. **Day One Skills, Day one Competences and Professional Behaviours.** It was confirmed that the final revised versions approved by VN Council in February 2022 were being prepared for the website by the Comms department. All AEs and delivery centres had been provided with pdf versions in the meantime, for dissemination to relevant staff and to use in preparation of curricula for the forthcoming academic year.

Meeting dates 2022

35. Meeting dates for 2022:
- Thursday 16 June – in person, all day meeting
 - Wednesday 10 August
 - Wednesday 12 October
 - Tuesday 13 December

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	14 September 2022
Title	Minutes of meeting of VN Education Committee held on 16 June 2022
Summary	Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee held on 16 June 2022
Decisions required	To approve
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	2,3,4

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Veterinary Nurse Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2022

Members:	Mrs Donna Cotton	-	Employer representative
	* Miss Julia Cox	-	Employer representative
	Ms Sarah Fox	-	VN Council lay member
	Mrs Sarah Holman	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Susan Howarth	-	VN Council veterinary nurse (Chair)
	Miss Carla Husband	-	HE student representative
	* Mrs Caroline McCormick-Clarke	-	FE student representative
	Professor Elizabeth Mossop	-	Independent educationalist
	Mrs Sarah Parkhouse	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Sarah Reynolds-Golding	-	HE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Perdi Welsh	-	Post-registration veterinary nurse provider

*absent

In attendance:	Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
	Mrs Jasmine Curtis	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	-	Qualifications Manager
	Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	Examinations Manager
	Mrs Tori Page	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Kirsty Williams	-	Education Quality Improvement Manager

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Julia Cox and Caroline McCormick-Clarke. Comments had been sent in writing, which would be reported at the relevant points in the meeting.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no conflicts of interest relating to items on the agenda.

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) held on 14 April 2022

3. The Committee accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2022 as a correct record.

Matters arising

4. There were no matters arising on the previous minutes other than items which would be discussed later in the agenda.

Veterinary Nursing update

5. The Director of Veterinary Nursing updated the Committee on recent developments and activities.
6. The online student enrolment process had been launched on 10 January 2022 and 640 enrolments had been processed since the launch. No enrolments were pending.
7. The updated Day One Competences, Day One Skills (DOS) and Professional Behaviours approved by VN Council in February were currently being prepared into an online accessible format by the Comms department. The DOS had also been sent to Skillwise for incorporation into the Nursing Progress Log (NPL). All work was on track in preparation for the September intake of students.
8. There had been one registration application received since the previous meeting, from a student who had completed their registrable qualification but had been unable to complete the 1,800 required practice training hours due to the effect of the Covid pandemic. The application had been approved.
9. Discussions had been taking place with the universities in order to streamline the initial registration process, to reduce the need and therefore the cost of temporary registration for new VN graduates. The aim was to ensure that students would be registration-ready in time for the examination boards, so that registrations could be carried out on receipt of the official pass list at the RCVS, as determined at the examination boards, rather than waiting until the graduation date, which in some cases can be some months later. This was welcomed by the Committee.
10. The recruitment process was still ongoing for an Examinations Officer to work alongside the Examinations Manager, in the veterinary nursing team.
11. The Post Registration Framework handbook was in the final stages of preparation and would be published on the website very shortly.
12. The VN Futures Board had met the previous month and had assigned areas of responsibility for priority activities for the RCVS and the BVNA.
13. The RCVS Academy was due to launch the following week, providing a digital learning platform for veterinary professionals, with the initial content on veterinary nursing being for those applying to register from overseas.
14. Two Veterinary Nurses' Days had been organised to take place in July and August, in Manchester and Oxford respectively, to celebrate the achievements of those nurses

qualified by the Level 3 Diploma route who had recently joined the Register, and those who had completed Certificates and Diplomas in Advanced Veterinary Nursing. There would also be an event to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee for Veterinary Nursing, to be held at the Natural History Museum in Oxford.

Matters for decision

Licence to practise qualifications

15. **VetSkill Accreditation status.** The Director of Veterinary Nursing presented a paper summarising the further evidence which had been provided by VetSkill, to address the issues raised in the audit report. The full report had not been included with the agenda papers as it had not yet been officially signed off by VetSkill. However, in the meantime VetSkill had submitted evidence which clearly demonstrated compliance with the standards, on the issues which had been raised. In response to a query, more information on the details of the auditing activity was provided.
16. On the basis of the information provided, the Committee agreed that VetSkill had provided evidence to address the accreditation condition applied to its Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Companion Animal) and that full accreditation without conditions should now apply.
17. **Accreditation visitor approval.** The Committee considered and approved person specifications, Curriculum Vitae and CPD records for two new educator members of the accreditation panel.

Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing Qualifications

New accreditations

18. **Hartpury University (HU).** The Qualifications Manager presented the report of the accreditation event carried out on 30 March 2022 to Hartpury University, to review a number of proposed post-registration qualifications. The panel had noted limited discretion between the graduate and post-graduate pathways; following lengthy discussion at the accreditation event the university confirmed that it would propose the post-graduate certificates for accreditation only. It was confirmed that the University had provided appropriate evidence that the standards for a Level 7 qualification (postgraduate certificate) had been met, with minimal actions.
19. On the basis of the report and action plan and subsequent correspondence, the Committee agreed to offer full accreditation for the following qualifications:
 - Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing Equine Critical Care
 - Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing Equine Diagnostic Imaging and Rehabilitation
 - Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing Perioperative

Nursing and Patient Safety

- Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing Clinical Nursing and Client Support
20. The Committee expressed some disappointment that the University would not be offering a Level 6 (Graduate) option but accepted that this was a matter for the University. It was noted that there would be a bridging support option for RVNs sitting the Certificate from industry, and that future auditing activity would include looking for evidence of the support, and recruitment and attrition.
21. **University of Central Lancashire.** The Committee reviewed the report of the accreditation event conducted on 28 April 2022 and subsequent action plan, in relation to the application for accreditation for two post registration qualifications. It was noted that the University had met all standards, with minimal actions to be addressed. The panel had identified concern regarding the compensation allowance for the surgical practical assessment, and the University had agreed that this should be changed to a non compensatable assessment and had addressed this within the action plan.
22. The Committee agreed that full accreditation should be granted for the following qualifications:
- Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Surgical Nursing Care)
 - Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Anaesthesia and Analgesia)

Matters for note

Licence to practise qualifications

Pre-accreditation support

23. The Qualifications Manager provided an overview of the current status of the roll out of the pre-accreditation support package for all Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs), including those AEIs due for accreditation in the academic year 2021/22 which had now undertaken the support, and would be offered a 12-month extension to the accreditation cycle, and information on the planned meetings for AEIs due for accreditation in the academic year 2022/23.
24. It was noted that the response to the support package continued to be overwhelmingly positive, with very good feedback provided by those AEIs which had already received in-person visits. The Director of Veterinary Nursing, and those members of the Committee who had been involved with the visits at their own institutions, confirmed the positive response.
25. The Education Quality Improvement Manager continued to collect independent feedback which was overwhelmingly very good.

It was clarified that the 12-month extension to the accreditation cycle for those accepting the support package was optional. This was generally being taken up but in some instances it did not tie in with the university validation timelines and was therefore not requested.

26. It was confirmed that the support package is offered for Licence to Practise qualifications only and is not available for post-registration qualification accreditations.

Action plan monitoring accreditation/re-accreditation

27. The Committee was provided with oral updates from members of the qualifications team on the action plan monitoring for the following Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs):
- Lantra Awards
 - University of South Wales
28. It was requested that in general, for reports on quality monitoring activities, the risk banding for the institution should be shown at the start of the report. It was agreed that going forward, the risk banding should be included in the covering summary for each paper.

Quality Monitoring activities

29. The Committee was provided with papers setting out full updates on quality monitoring activities and the actions which had been taken, for the following universities and centres:
- Anglia Ruskin University
 - College of West Anglia
 - Coventry University
 - Goddard Veterinary Nursing College
 - Hartpury University
 - Lantra Awards
 - Norwich City College
 - Scotland's Rural University College (SRUC) Oatridge
 - University of Plymouth
 - University of Portsmouth
 - City and Guilds

Action plan quality monitoring - quality assurance

30. Oral reports were provided on the monitoring of action plans and future planned actions for the following AEIs and centres:
- Anglia Ruskin University
 - College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)
 - North Highland College
 - Oxford Brookes University
 - Royal Agricultural University (Plumpton College)
 - University of Bristol
 - University of Glasgow
 - Wrexham Glyndwr University

- Writtle University College

31. The Qualifications Manager confirmed that all AElS had been provided with a mapping spreadsheet and are required to demonstrate how they are mapping the new DOC/DOS/PBs into their accredited qualifications. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

External Examiner update

32. The Committee noted the current list of external examiners for VN Licence to Practise qualifications, together with the details of a new appointment for one organisation, and updates on terminating appointments.

VN Pre-registration Examination Board (PREB)

33. The Examinations Manager presented the Minutes of the PREB meetings held on 2 March 2022 and 13 April 2022.

34. The Committee noted the current Terms of Reference for the VN Pre-registration examination Board. The Board had been without a permanent Chair since early 2022 and had been chaired in the meantime by examiner members of the Board. It was suggested that the Terms of Reference should be revised with a view to increasing the size of the Board and appointing an external chair, who could be recruited externally. The Examinations Manager would draft revised Terms of Reference for consideration and circulate these to the Committee.

Items for publication

35. Items identified for publication in the next *VNEducation* newsletter were as follows:

- Information on the newly accredited Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing qualifications
- An update on the support package and visits
- Advertisement for an external Chair of the Pre-registration examination Board.

Any other business

36. No items were raised.

Meeting dates 2022

37. The remaining meeting dates for 2022 were confirmed:

- Wednesday 10 August
- Wednesday 12 October
- Tuesday 13 December

All to be remote meetings, starting at 10.00am.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	14 September 2022
Title	Update from the CPD Policy and Compliance Subcommittee
Summary	Minutes from the meeting of the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee on 8 June 2022
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0701

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

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CPD Policy and Compliance sub-committee Notes of the meeting held on 8 June 2022

Present:	Linda Ford Alison Carr Susan Paterson Claire Roberts Alison Reid Claire Bloor	Chair
In attendance:	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Joanne Stetzel Julie Dugmore	Lead for Postgraduate Education Head of Marketing and Digital Communications Director of Veterinary Nursing

Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, Elizabeth Cox and Neil Smith had sent their apologies.

Minutes of the meeting on the 26 January 2022

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2022 were received and approved as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising

3. There were no matters arising that were not covered within the main agenda.

1CPD/Communication Update

4. Ms Stetzel gave an update on the CPD communication plan. The focus is still to support members, either to engage with the outcome based CPD requirement or using 1CPD and how to reach members that are still not using 1CPD.
5. There has been an increase in 1CPD users amongst all groups, but overseas practising veterinary surgeons are still using it much less than UK practising and registered veterinary nurses. The committee thought it would be useful to understand how many overseas veterinary nurses are currently on the Register so that the number of non 1CPD users can be compared across professions.

Action: Bring data on overseas RVNs to next meeting

6. We will continue to support members with CPD webinars and also offer one to veterinary surgeons who have completed VetGDP so they will have a good understanding of what counts as CPD and recording of CPD as they start their career.
7. The committee asked if there was a cut off date for recording your CPD for each calendar year and at the moment there isn't, but it could be considered now that 1CPD is mandatory. The committee felt that it needed careful consideration especially if someone was attending CPD at the end of the year or if they were doing a qualification stretching over two years so to not make it too bureaucratic. The committee felt it would be useful to see some examples of how it would work in 1CPD.

Action: Demonstrate options in 1CPD for next meeting

8. It was also suggested that it would be useful to have some targeted comms for employers about how they can support employees' CPD including reflection and how that can be incorporated into appraisals and personal development plans.
9. The committee felt that it would be useful if the reports included percentage of veterinary surgeons and nurses that were recording reflection rather than the number of reflections recorded in total.

Action: Education Department to update the report and include percentage of VS/VNs using reflections.

VS CPD Audit Update

10. The committee received an update about the results from the VS CPD audits. Non 1CPD users and 1CPD users that were non-compliant were targeted as part of the sample group and that is probably the reason why response rate and compliance were lower in last year's audit compared to previous years.
11. The committee discussed how to engage with the groups that do not respond to any communication from the RCVS and suggested that develop a comms campaign about the privilege and responsibility of being a self-regulated profession and make comparisons to other professions.

Action: Comms to explore formats for campaigns that discusses responsibilities of a self-regulated profession.

1CPD Exemptions

12. The Committee received and noted the paper about exemptions to 1CPD.
13. 377 applications for exemption to 1CPD have been received but 37 were from non-practising members who do not need to meet the CPD requirement (including using 1CPD). The reason for exemption were:
 - (a) Overseas Practitioners (185)
 - (b) HP - Working Abroad (11)

- (c) Record CPD using another system (12)
- (d) Not in Clinical Practice (26)
- (e) Do not wish to use a computer system (44)
- (f) Will start/ or doing VetGDP/PDP (27)
- (g) Other (35)

14. The committee felt that they were unable to agree an outcome for the overseas practitioners until there had been a discussion between Education Committee and Registration Committee about CPD requirement for overseas users.

Action: Bring back 1CPD exemption for overseas users to next meeting

15. Many members who had applied for an exemption due to recording in other systems were also members of the Royal College of Pathologists and recording CPD using their system. The committee felt that it would be useful to understand the level of details required by the Royal College of Pathologists before making a decision about exemption to 1CPD.

Action: Education Department to contact Royal College of Pathologists to discuss CPD requirements.

16. The committee felt that applications from the other group of members should not be approved as they did not feel that their application demonstrated that could not use 1CPD due to a legitimate reason such as disability or being were digitally excluded in some way.

17. The committee suggested that we write to members of these groups informing them that the committee has not granted them an exemption, but they can provide the committee with further details of legitimate reason not to use the system. Anyone not using 1CPD will need to submit records for audit on an annual basis.

Action: Education Department to contact members who applied for 1CPD exemptions

Any other business

18. There was no other business to discuss.

Next Meeting

19. The next meeting is scheduled for the 27th October 2022.

Jenny Soreskog-Turp

June 2022

j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	14 September 2022
Title	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Annual Report to VN Council
Summary	This report sets out the work of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Sandra Neary Secretary to the RVN PIC s.neary@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0730</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0740</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to VN Council

Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Veterinary Nurses Council, there have been three meetings of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee, which took place on 17 May, 28 June and 9 August 2022. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 20 September.

RVN Concerns received / registered

2. Between 22 April 2022 and 22 August 2022, there were 10 new concerns relating to RVNs. Of these 10 new concerns:
 - One was closed at Stage 1 of the concerns process.
 - Eight are currently under investigation by the Case Examiner Group (a veterinary nurse and lay member on RVN PIC and a Case Manager).
 - One has been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. Six new concerns have been considered by the RVN PIC between 22 April and 22 August 2022. Of these, one case was closed with advice to the RVN. Two cases were referred to external solicitors for formal statements to be taken. A decision on one case was adjourned pending referral and consideration by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate. Two cases were referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

At the meeting on 17 May 2022, two ongoing cases were considered, and both were referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

Ongoing Investigations

4. Four concerns are currently under investigation, and these will be returned to the RVN PIC for a decision in due course.

Health Concerns

5. One RVN is currently being managed in the context of the RCVS Health Protocol.

Performance Concerns

6. There are currently no RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Performance Protocol.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

7. Since the last report, four cases have been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee. The first disciplinary hearing in relation to Stephanie Hazelwood RVN is scheduled to take place between 22 – 24 August 2022. The second disciplinary hearing in relation to Chelsea Strangeway RVN is scheduled to take place between 19 – 23 September 2022. The two remaining hearings will be listed in due course.

A disciplinary hearing took place between 24 March and 1 April 2022. The Disciplinary Committee directed that the RVN's name should be removed from the Register.

Operational matters

8. A face-to-face training day for all PIC members and staff is due to take place on Friday 23 September. The training will cover the changes to the concerns process that were approved by RCVS Council in June. These include the introduction of a "Charter Case Protocol" and amending the process to create Stage One PIC's to discuss and decide cases.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	14 September 2022
Title	Disciplinary Committee Report
Summary	Update of RVN Disciplinary Committee
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Hannah Alderton Committee Liaison Officer Tel: 020 7202 0729 Email: h.alderton@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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Report of the RVN Disciplinary Committee

Hearings

Stephanie Hazelwood RVN

1. The RVN Disciplinary Committee met virtually on Monday 22 – Tuesday 23 August 2022.
2. The charges against Ms Hazelwood were in relation to taking a number of items from Orwell Veterinary Group without paying as well as ordering and/or taking POM-V medication without payment or a prescription from a veterinary surgeon.
3. The hearing began with an application from the College to proceed in the respondent's absence. This application was accepted as the Committee concluded that it was in the interests of justice that the matter should proceed notwithstanding the absence of Ms Hazelwood. The respondent supplied written submissions for the Committee to consider.
4. The Committee found the charges proved on the basis of Ms Hazelwood's admissions supplied in writing, as supported by the evidence relied on by the College.
5. It was concluded that the Respondent's conduct fell far below the standard expected of a register veterinary nurse. The Committee found that her actions would be considered deplorable by other members of the profession and the public at large and amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.
6. In regard to sanction the Committee took into account the mitigating factors in this case and that Ms Hazelwood stole these items at a time when she was under particular financial and personal pressure. The amounts involved were small and had been repaid. The Committee concluded that through her written submissions significant insight had been demonstrated and full recognition of the dreadful thing that had been done.
7. It was the Committee's view that while the conduct was extremely serious it would have been unduly punitive to direct the Registrar to remove her name from the register. The Committee therefore directed the Registrar to remove her name for a period of three months.
8. The Committee's full decision in relation to this matter can be found here: [Hazelwood, Stephanie August 2022 Decision of the Disciplinary Committee - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	14 September 2022
Title	VN Futures update to VN Council
Summary	An update on progress and plans for the VN Futures Project
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Annex A – VN Futures Interim Report
Author	Jill Macdonald VN Futures Project Lead j.macdonald@rcvs.org.uk / 07867 301723

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a

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VN Futures update to RCVS VN Council

Background

The VN Futures Project is a joint initiative from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) and was launched in 2016 to run in parallel to the Vet Futures Project.

From its outset the initiative has recognised that veterinary nurses (VNs) have an increasingly crucial and influential role in veterinary practice and the veterinary team and in maintaining the regard and the trust of the public in the veterinary professions.

The VN Futures project aims to:

- Address challenges in the profession and create initiatives that effectively address those challenges.
- Identify opportunities for the profession and ensure that those opportunities are effectively exploited, and accessible to the whole profession.

Current position

1. Phase one of the Project ran from July 2016 – September 2021
2. The VN Futures Interim Report, which highlighted the past five years' activities and offered suggestions for potential future work of the project, was published in September 2021 and can be accessed here: <https://www.vnfutures.org.uk/resource-items/vn-futures-interim-report-2021/> It is also included as Annex A.
3. Several initiatives and areas of activity which were commenced in phase one will continue into phase two.
4. The VN Futures Board have reviewed the approach to initiatives, and moving forward, RCVS and BVNA will lead on and be responsible for distinct areas of work within the project, whilst still collaborating on joint initiatives.

Discussion/ issues

Included below are key updates on the Project for VN Council to note.

5. Animation to present progress and plans
 - a. Initial discussions are taking place to produce an animation which highlights the work of the VN Futures Project and offers insight into potential areas of work over the coming months and years
 - b. The animation's intention will be to increase awareness and engagement with the project and provide aspiration for the future of the VN profession
6. The VN Futures School Ambassadors Scheme
 - a. The Scheme was launched on 5 May 2022
 - b. Since launch, over 230 RVNs and SVNs have signed up to the Scheme
 - c. Resources are hosted within a secure area on the VN Futures website

- d. Ways of enhancing accessibility and structure of the resources, and enabling ambassador communication are being explored
 - e. Monitoring outcomes is underway
7. The Mind Matters Initiative
- a. Following on from the SVN Wellbeing Survey and Discussion Forum, MMI held a series of pilot sessions to address civility in the workplace, supported by Vet Led
 - b. A full programme of sessions is to be rolled out over late 2022/early 2023
8. Career case studies
- a. VN Futures has continued to build up a database of career case studies from across the profession
 - b. The most recent studies have been presented as video interviews
9. Review of careers materials
- a. Careers materials that are available through the College are to be reviewed, and potentially the materials produced through the school ambassadors work will be utilised
10. Outreach
- Activities over 2022 which contribute to outreach of the project include:
- a. Attendance at VN MEG meetings with provision of update on project work to the group
 - b. Talks and Q+A sessions whenever requested by education providers or practices / practice groups
 - c. A session request form has been added to the website
 - d. Presence and discussion sessions planned for BVNA Congress 2022
 - e. Contribution to the VN Diamond Jubilee content
11. The Diversity, Inclusion and Widening Participation Group
- a. The work of this group began as an internal RCVS group of three staff members
 - b. BVNA now lead on the group, entitled the VN Futures Diversity, Inclusion and Widening Participation Group (DIWP) which reports in to the Diversity and Inclusion Group (DIG)
 - c. A role model campaign was held over May and June 2022, and the case studies and additional content are available on the BVNA website:
<https://bvna.org.uk/blog/category/diwp-role-models/>
 - d. The VN DIWP Chair, Jo Oakden, produced a short video for the School Ambassadors Scheme, outlining the work of the group

Financial issues / PR implications

12. None identified at this stage.

Recommendations

13. This report is to note, however we welcome any feedback from RCVS VN Council.



VNFUTURES INTERIM REPORT **2021**

Introduction from the Chair of RCVS VN Council and the BVNA President

The veterinary nursing profession is growing and developing so fast. If we look back over the last 15 years, we can see a number of significant events that have shaped our profession, from the Register of Veterinary Nurses starting in 2007 to the introduction of a disciplinary system for RVNs in 2011, and then a new *Code of Professional Conduct* including – for the first time – a declaration to be made by RVNs on their professional registration.

At the launch of the VN Futures (VNF) project in 2016, there were 13,678 RVNs on the Register, and this figure officially reached 20,000 in July 2021. This is an incredible amount of growth in a short amount of time for a profession who, pre-1984, couldn't even use the term 'Nurse'. There are an increasingly diverse range of routes for qualification, and development of post-registration qualifications to further advance and recognise our skills.

VN Futures launched in 2016 to look at the future of veterinary nursing. There was a focus then on highlighting veterinary nursing as a career and increasing our RVN numbers as well as developing career pathways and maximising the potential of nurses within their roles. Between 2016 and now, VN Futures has achieved many goals, and identified further areas that need to be worked on as our profession evolves; demonstrating that the work of the VN Futures project is an ongoing endeavour, one that will probably never be finished!

The project has created a School Ambassadors Development Group – this will be ongoing throughout the next stages of VN Futures and is a key area of work for raising awareness of careers in veterinary nursing and supporting widening participation in our profession. This work is key to the future sustainability of veterinary nursing. It has become apparent that many of us who have become veterinary nurses did not learn about this career pathway whilst at school, and providing information on a VN career as early as possible to school-children is a great way to increase awareness. Not only will it have the potential to increase those coming into our profession, but it will serve to continue to highlight veterinary nursing and recognition of the VN role. We need to increase and support diversity within our profession so that the profession reflects the society that we serve, and this area of work will continue into the next phase of the project.

Maximising nurse potential was such an expansive goal for the first stage of the VNF Project and a huge amount has been achieved already towards this. VNF has collated case studies to demonstrate veterinary nurses being utilised to their full potential in a range of situations and job roles. The rolling out of the new Certificates in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN) in 2019 offers a pathway for a post-registration qualification for veterinary nurses up to a level 7



qualification, is accessible by those who have entered the profession via any route and allows members of the profession to further develop their skills and knowledge in a defined area of practice.

As our profession grows, we need to consider the sustainability of veterinary nursing as a whole. We need to ensure we are keeping our veterinary nurses in the profession by ensuring they are able to achieve all they want to out of their work and careers. Sustainability is something we need to all champion – not only the environmental but the human, social and economic factors too. There are also some significant questions that have been asked about the governing framework behind the profession, resulting in the extensive work of the Legislation Working Party and its consultation on legislative change with the profession and the public. Proposed changes include enhancement of the VN role and protection of the VN title.

The profession is advancing, there is significant focus on the vet-led team and the culture within the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions as a whole, and this needs to be considered within the VN Futures project's long-term goals. Moving forward we aim to work closely with the Vet Futures project – we are one team working together towards similar goals. Veterinary Nurses are allied professionals, registered with the RCVS as associate members, and accountable for our actions.

We need to ensure this continues to be recognised, respected and that we are utilised for our skill set.

We are so proud of how far veterinary nursing has come, and excited to be able to share this report and celebrate the work VN Futures has completed and continues to work on since its launch in 2016. VN Futures remains a joint initiative between the BVNA and the RCVS, working collaboratively to maximise what we can achieve for the veterinary nursing profession; and we look forward to embracing the next stages of the project.



Jo Oakden,
BVNA President



Matthew Rendle,
RCVS VN Council Chair

Introduction to VN Futures

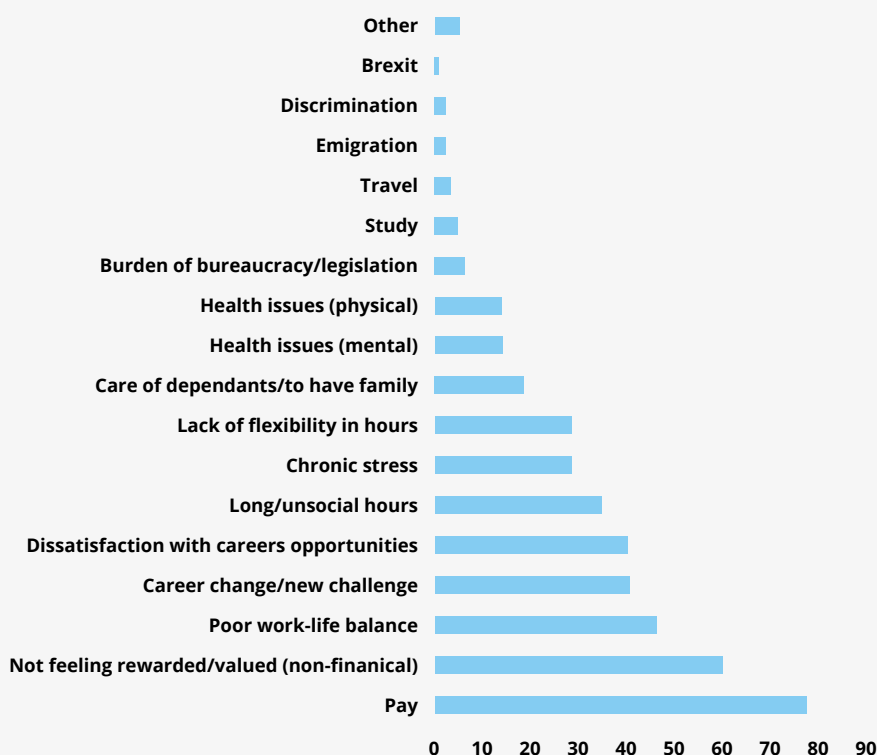
The VN Futures Project is a joint initiative from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) and was launched in 2016 to run in parallel to the **Vet Futures Project**.

From its outset the initiative has recognised that veterinary nurses (VNs) have an increasingly crucial and influential role in veterinary practice and the veterinary team and in maintaining the regard and the trust of the public in the veterinary professions.

Veterinary nurses are fundamental in the delivery of both primary and advanced nursing care to the country's animals. They are becoming increasingly involved in areas such as practice management and ownership, quality improvement, research, education and One Health. Many nurses choose to undertake post-registration qualifications and focus on certain

areas of clinical nursing or nursing management. The profession holds many opportunities; but VN Futures also hasn't shied away from recognising that there are also challenges to face, particularly around retention. For example, according to the 2019 Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession (available to download from www.rcvs.org.uk/publications) nearly 25% of nurses planned to leave the profession within the next five years.

Many veterinary nurses do not feel valued in their role, they struggle to have a good work-life balance, and a clear career structure is not always visible or achieved. Furthermore, VNs are often not effectively utilised or delegated to within practice, and remuneration is frequently identified as a cause for concern. The full breakdown of answers given by those who said they wanted to leave the profession in the next five years can be found in the table below.



Reasons for planning to leave the VN profession, % (24.8% plan to leave in the next five years)

Source: 2019 Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession (www.rcvs.org.uk/publications)



However, despite the challenges faced by veterinary nurses, the profession is moving forward and the signs are that it has a bright future ahead of it. In order to mitigate the challenges and make sure that the profession seizes the opportunities, it is imperative that its development continues to be supported. This support will mean the profession can sustain its advancements and ensure that there are sufficient nurses in the UK to support the ever-growing number of veterinary practices and the increasing expectations of pet owners regarding the level of care offered to pets.

To this end, *VN Futures – Taking charge of our future together*, a report and strategy produced in 2016 following a programme of research and engagement, included 31 actions across six overarching ambitions. The report was launched at the Vet Futures Summit on 4 July 2016 and has guided the work of the project over the past five years.

The VN Futures project aims to:

- Address challenges in the profession and create initiatives that effectively address those challenges.
- Identify opportunities for the profession and ensure that those opportunities are effectively exploited, and accessible to the whole profession.

Aim of this report



Now that, five years after its initial launch, the first stage of the VN Futures project has come to a close, this interim report provides information on the work carried out by VN Futures initiatives and activities undertaken to address actions so far, areas that we will continue to work on; and highlights where we may focus in the future. It will also discuss the challenges that such an ambitious and diverse project brings and the positive steps we are taking to enable it to function more effectively.

The evidence-base upon which the original ambitions and actions have been built is covered within the initial report, which is available to view online at

www.vnfutures.org.uk

More about the project

Dedicated to the VN profession

The VN Futures project is dedicated to the VN profession. Whilst it began life as part of the overall Vet Futures project launched in 2015, it soon became apparent that consideration of the future of the veterinary and the veterinary nursing professions required a distinct approach to each, and so, while Vet Futures focused on veterinary surgeons, VN Futures was formed to focus on issues and opportunities for veterinary nurses.

The project is supported and driven mainly by veterinary nurses and those who have a passion for the future of our profession, and the knowledge and foresight to consider how to address challenges and drive the profession forward to meet its potential.

Financial commitment

The RCVS has maintained strong financial commitment to the project, both through budgetary input and provision of RCVS staff time, expertise and support. The RCVS has also developed key initiatives which feed into the ambitions of VN Futures: The Mind Matters Initiative, developed to promote and support the mental health and wellbeing of the veterinary professions; the Leadership Initiative, developed to nurture the next generation of veterinary leaders, including development of a comprehensive, subsidised leadership course; and ViVet, which exists to ensure that veterinary professionals are at the centre of innovation in the animal health sector.

VN Futures works with the alignment and support of RCVS Veterinary Nurses (VN) Council and the RCVS Advancement of the Professions Committee, with regular communication on the progress of the project.

As co-founder of the project, BVNA has committed to financially support it as well as an investment in resources, with BVNA's Head of Learning and Development maintaining a fixed seat on the Board. BVNA Council is working with VN Futures and is evolving joint projects that are led by the BVNA, but that feed back into the wider project, for example, the BVNA Chronic Illness Campaign and the formation of a BVNA Diversity, Inclusivity & Widening Participation Working Group. BVNA also host VN Futures streams at BVNA Congress – to gather evidence for the initiative, as well as share the work done so far within the project.

Engagement from the profession

A key requirement for the success of the project is engagement from the VN profession itself. This is vital in order to gain input from veterinary nurses – both in the form of opinion and feedback - and in assisting with meeting the aims of the project. It is also imperative to the success of initiatives and processes developed by the project that the profession is aware of the achievements, advocates them, and understands how they affect our profession and how they may be implemented.

Since a dedicated point of contact in the form of a VN Futures project manager has been available, engagement has improved, and many members of the profession have come forward and expressed interest and become involved in its work. However, we still need you – members of the profession - to be engaged with, supportive of, and involved with the work of the project in order for it to continue to be a driving force behind advancement of our profession.

Examples of some of our engagement activities over the years include: VN Futures streams at BSAVA Congress, BVNA Fringe Events dedicated to VN Futures, attendance at Clinical Coach and Head Nurse Congresses, promotion of the project at SVN Fest in 2019, the 2020 webinar series, a VN Futures e-newsletter, and numerous blogs, articles and press releases.

Dedicated website

A website dedicated to the VN Futures project was launched in May 2020. The site provides details of the work of VN Futures, with features and content designed to help nurses appreciate their value to animal health and welfare, showcase the everyday leadership and range of career options open to members of the profession, and actively encourage input from the profession through case studies, blogs and articles.

VN Futures leadership

In May 2018 the VN Futures Project Board was formed, comprising the Chair and Vice-Chair of RCVS VN Council, and the President and Junior Vice-President of BVNA. The Board is supported by an executive group comprising: the RCVS Director of Veterinary Nursing; the VN Futures Project Manager; and the Head of Learning and Development at BVNA.



The Board meets regularly to provide oversight and direction to ensure the project remains in budget and on track for delivery of actions, and to ensure actions remain relevant and appropriate.

Ambitious

The ambitions of the project are just that – ambitious; and this is both challenging and aspirational. Its ambitions incorporate a wide view of the veterinary nursing profession, relating to veterinary nurse potential, recognition, diversity, career structure, well-being and mental health, leadership, recruitment and retention, and involvement in One Health. Within each of these areas, there are many aspects to consider, and overlap between many of the areas of work are often identified and exploited.

Structure

VN Futures is essentially a hybrid project. It has a linear aspect, in that there are clear ambitions which the

project aims to meet, however, to meet the actions which underpin the ambitions, many iterative and concurrent projects need to be delivered. This creates quite a complex picture for which applying clear desired outcomes and deadlines for completion is challenging.

The coronavirus pandemic has, as with so many other areas of life and business, had an impact on the work of the project. The veterinary profession has experienced many challenges in the provision of veterinary care, and since many of the contributors to the project work in frontline practice, this has directly affected the ability to continue with work. For example, one of the key initiatives, the School Ambassadors Pilot, was in abeyance due to the closure of schools; however, the group made an opportunity out of an obstacle, and focussed on online delivery for careers information, which is something that we envisage will continue.

The following pages highlight some of the projects and initiatives that were achieved during the first phase of the VN Futures project 2016-21.

The Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN)

Ambition two – Structured and rewarding career paths Ambition five – Maximising nurses' potential

One of the key findings of the initial research stages of the VN Futures project was that veterinary nurses were looking for meaningful paths for career development, with the possibility of further developing their skills and experience in specific areas of practice.

The VN Futures Post-Registration Qualification Working Group developed the framework for a new Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (or CertAVN) which was approved by the RCVS Veterinary Nurse Education Committee and RCVS VN Council in 2019.

The CertAVN, which replaces the previous Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing, is an advanced professional qualification awarded by the RCVS, and at time of publication of this report, is delivered by four providers. You can find more details about the CertAVN including a set of frequently asked questions on the RCVS website. (www.rcvs.org.uk/certavn)

The qualification aims to encourage RVNs who wish to take their education in a specific area of veterinary nursing practice further, with an opportunity to study a level 6 or

7 qualification. The CertAVN is accessible to nurses who have followed any route into the profession, from Level 3 Diploma to Level 6 BSc. It is expected that many Higher Education Institutions will want to offer the qualification and we hope that, in time, this will cover a wide range of discipline areas.

The qualification allows those veterinary nurses who have already taken their first steps along the path of further expertise to continue to strive for deeper knowledge and understanding in their chosen areas. The qualification meets the needs of veterinary nurses wishing to develop their skills now, while also providing a future aspiration for veterinary nurses by offering a clearer path for progression.

In the future we aim to:

- Encourage universities and awarding organisations to develop and deliver focussed programmes
- Raise awareness of the CertAVN within the profession
- Begin the process of developing an advanced veterinary nurse status



PERDI WELSH

Course Director for Graduate Diploma in Veterinary Nursing and Certificates in Advanced Veterinary Nursing at the Royal Veterinary College:

"In May 2021, we welcomed our first cohort of students onto our new RCVS-accredited Certificates in Advanced Veterinary Nursing.

"These CertAVN courses offer an exciting opportunity for professional progression for RVNs of all levels of experience and education.

"We're keen to play our part in meeting the vision set out by VN Futures by preparing RVNs for future opportunities in the profession and giving them the ambition and confidence to take on new challenges and succeed. This course lays the foundations for the strong leadership skills they'll need to proactively engage in all aspects required of a modern, dynamic veterinary nurse shaping the future of the profession during the next 60 years!"

NATHAN PRICE
Studying for two postgraduate (level 7) certificates in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Anaesthesia) (Analgesia and Pain Management)



"Studying for the certificates has given me the opportunity to concentrate on specific subject

material that will benefit the profession and my own expertise. As the qualifications are also offered at level 7, this gives me the option to build them into an MSc by topping up with a research module."

"To be able to study in specific areas of interest gives you the ability to grow and develop on knowledge and understanding that can be transcribed into practice, understand mechanisms better, provide better quality of care to patient and client, and achieve more satisfaction in your role.

"Through appraising literature and looking at current research and therefore expanding your knowledge base – knowledge is gained that can be put into practice, and enhance discussions with peers and clients."

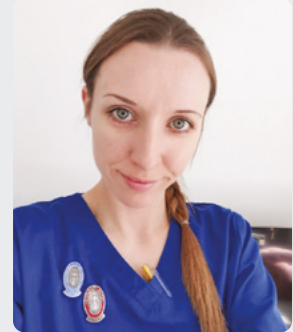
SUSAN HOWARTH
VN Council member and Principal Lecturer and Programme Manager for Veterinary Nursing at Harper Adams University



"I'm looking forward to seeing how veterinary nursing can develop. Research is a big part of what we can

improve in veterinary nursing and it's really exciting that nurses can take on the challenge and complete vet nursing research projects as part of an MSc, and benefit our profession into the future."

KAT HART
Studying for two postgraduate (Level 7) certificates in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Anaesthesia) (Analgesia and Pain Management)



"Studying for the qualification will enable me to provide better patient care, and will also provide me with greater knowledge to support my teaching role.

"These new and exciting qualifications also offer nurses the opportunity to gain a Level 7 qualification that can be used in a variety of settings, will be attractive to employers, and could be beneficial to those looking at different career pathways.

"The CertAVN can benefit the profession massively. Previously, post-graduate courses were only offered to vets but now VNs are able to achieve this level of education too and it will help with professional recognition for our profession.

"It gives nurses a reason to stay in the profession and feel fulfilled."

GEORGE ASPEY
The first veterinary nurse to graduate with a Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Anaesthesia) and achieve CertAVN post-nominals



"Completing the CertAVN has put me in a better position to support colleagues - from training students to other qualified nurses when different cases arise – and helps me to play a greater part in conjunction with the veterinary surgeon, relay what I've learnt, and be involved in clinical discussions.

"The focus on evidence-based nursing and putting these principles into practice, and the skills to reflect more critically and effectively on what I do; has enabled me to more effectively consider how things could be done better if a similar case presents again.

"The CertAVN could help with retention of veterinary nurses - it provides a more structured career path and avenues similar to human nursing, for example; working towards a certain goal, focussing your interests on a particular area, and offering more job satisfaction."

Sustainability in veterinary nursing



Ambition one – Creating a sustainable workforce

The work of the School Ambassadors Pilot began in late 2019 and aims to highlight veterinary nursing as a career option to school-age children, provide information on routes into veterinary nursing, and develop resources to support future school ambassadors and careers advisors.

The full report for the pilot can be viewed on the VN Futures website at www.vnfutures.org.uk

The *School Ambassadors Pilot* evolved to become the School Ambassador's Development Group (SADG), continuing to develop and support an ambassadorial role in the profession.

The work also has the potential to encourage those from more diverse backgrounds into the VN profession, and to effectively address increasing widening participation in the next generation of veterinary nurses.

Registered Veterinary Nurse Tina Leake was appointed as Lead School Ambassador in April 2021, to support the ambassadors and the VN Futures Project Manager in coordinating ongoing development of the work. Tina expressed her reasons for wanting to be involved in the project as:

"I have always enjoyed school visits and engaging children in looking after pets, promoting animal welfare and explaining the role the veterinary nurse has in the professional setting. I am so proud to be part of the SADG and what we are creating is the foundation for fellow VNs to use to promote our profession and inspire the next generation. It's so important, now, more than ever, to promote veterinary nursing as a career option for children to ensure we have veterinary nurses in the future."

Sam Fontaine, a member of the SADG says:

"I was keen to get involved in the VN Futures School Ambassador's Pilot Scheme as I would like to see

veterinary nursing considered a first-line career for any student who has an interest in science and animal welfare. So often the focus in schools for students with these aptitudes is veterinary medicine, but as an RVN and Lecturer at Glasgow University's School of Veterinary Medicine, I am keenly aware that only a very few people are lucky enough to get a place on one of these degrees. I wanted to help promote the role of the RVN within schools in the hope that it widens school students' and the general public's perception of our important and diverse role, and to encourage students from diverse backgrounds to apply so that our profession can truly represent the communities it serves."

Increasing Training Practices

In order to support more student veterinary nurses entering training, there needs to be the availability of sufficient Training Practices (TPs) to accommodate the placement and clinical training aspects of their study. Whilst this was initially identified as a need, during the early stages of the project the number of TPs steadily increased, and this action was no longer deemed a priority. However, it is unclear how this picture will change and the impact that the coronavirus pandemic has had on the number of TPs, so this will be closely monitored over the coming months.

Being a TP, whilst a commitment, has significant positive benefits, to the practice, to staff and to the profession as a whole. A series of case studies submitted by those involved in VN training within TPs are in the process of being collated and published on the website.

VN Educator Forum

In line with VNF's aims to create a VN Schools Council, BVNA has facilitated the development of a "VN Educator Network", which has accumulated over 150 participants from within the VN training sector since its launch in late



2019. In its current format, the VN Educator Network involves regular online meeting opportunities to discuss a wide range of issues relating to VN education, drawing on the support of the RCVS and awarding organisations as required. BVNA also incorporate a VN Educators stream and Open Forum within its annual Congress programme.

Future plans to develop the VN Educator Network include the introduction of an annual VN Educator Survey, in order for BVNA to remain informed on current training issues and to facilitate feedback to relevant bodies. BVNA also plans to deliver regional VN Educator meetings, with the longer-term goal of hosting an annual dedicated VN Educator Congress.

Finally, many Network members have shown an appetite to work towards VNF's original goal of developing a VN Schools Council, with a comparable level of influence on VN training matters as the Vet Schools Council. BVNA is currently scoping opportunities to support educators to achieve this aim.

Future plans include:

- Disseminating information on veterinary nursing careers to online careers hubs and careers advisors
- Potential collaboration with My Vet Future (an initiative run jointly by the BVA and the RCVS)
- Creating animated careers videos for younger and older age-groups, highlighting veterinary nursing as a career option
- Being part of the 'Vet-Team-in-a-Box' project, which disseminates careers information as practical, curriculum-linked activities to schools
- Reviewing veterinary nursing careers information provided by the RCVS and the BVNA
- Highlighting the ambassadorial role to the profession and creating a network of ambassadors
- Creation of VN careers ambassadors to inspire and support veterinary nurses exploring career options
- Highlighting the benefits of being a veterinary nurse Training Practice
- Continuing the work of the VN Educator Network

Diversity and Inclusion

Ambition one – Creating a sustainable workforce

Whilst striving for a more diverse workforce in veterinary nursing is linked to sustainability, the core values run deeper than just meeting this need. There are so many important reasons to encourage diversity and inclusion in our workforce. We must reflect the communities we live and work in and we must be an example to young people who often cannot see themselves doing this work because they do not currently have the role models to help them to visualise this.

People from all walks of life have animals and a diverse veterinary team will only encourage trust and confidence in the care of those animals. Incorporating as many different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives as possible into the profession can only benefit the team, pet owners and animal welfare.

The RCVS Diversity and Inclusion Group (DIG) published its strategy in February 2021, which includes various workstreams on improving diversity and inclusion across both the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions. However, it is acknowledged that the challenges and actions required may require a different focus for veterinary nursing, and an RCVS internal group was set up to specifically address this area. In the coming months this group will be widened to become a BVNA Council-led VN Futures group and will develop its own distinct aims whilst still collaborating with and working alongside the RCVS DIG.

The Chronic Illness Campaign

During August and September of 2021, the BVNA ran a campaign to help support nurses affected by chronic illness or conditions. The campaign also focused on

providing tools for employers to ensure affected nurses are given what they need in the workplace.

A survey was initially used to drive the direction of the campaign, providing important information on the challenges faced by veterinary nurses with chronic illness, as well as preferred methods of how they would like any useful resources shared. Over the course of the campaign, information was shared via blogs, podcasts, articles, a supplement in the *Veterinary Nursing Journal*, a series of webinars and finally a free, downloadable toolkit for all to use will be available on completion of the campaign.

Additional work to promote diversity and inclusivity in our profession has included:

- The publication of a variety of career case studies incorporating a wide variety of career paths and people from different backgrounds.
- Obtaining imagery that depicts veterinary nurses from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities that can be used on careers materials, in flyers, posters and website content.
- Creation of blogs and personal accounts.
- Ensuring that diversity and inclusion is included in the strategy for highlighting veterinary nursing as a career.

The above activities will continue, with the understanding that much work needs to still be done; including support for those from diverse backgrounds who are already in the profession, accessing up-to-date research and data to inform our activities, and working with similar groups, organisations and veterinary practices to ensure that the picture is complete.



Maximising potential

Ambition five – Maximising nurses' potential

Clearly, 'maximising nurses' potential', one of the six key ambitions of the *VN Futures Report and Action Plan*, covers many aspects of the veterinary nursing profession and also needs input and 'buy-in' from the wider veterinary team. This ambition encompasses and interlinks with the other ambitions and aims of the VN Futures project, for example, to provide clear and structured career pathways for veterinary nurses (which is also linked to development of the CertAVN), and enhancement of the role through a reformed Schedule 3 (linked to the work of the Schedule 3 Working Party, the Legislation Working Party, and the subsequent work on proposed changes to the legislation).

Realising the potential of veterinary nurses also relates to societal views of the role and improving public understanding of the input that nurses have into veterinary care.

Thus, advocating and supporting veterinary nurses to achieve their full potential in practice is a complex topic that incorporates many components.

Areas of work that the VN Futures Project has completed so far that feed into this ambition are covered below.

Online and in-person engagement

VN Futures has held a number of in-person and online events on maximising potential to engage and share ideas and obtain feedback from members of the profession, .

In 2017 we held a talk called 'How to influence people and remain friends' which looked at how nurses could push for more responsibility and leadership at work without it needing to unnecessary conflict. This was followed by a 2018 talk on how VNs could take advantage of flexible working opportunities, including job shares.

In 2020 VN Futures held a series of three well-

attended **webinars** covering key areas such as:

- 'Maximising the potential of the veterinary nurse': Effective delegation and utilisation of nurses, and development of roles within practice.
- 'Veterinary nurses' time is valuable: How and why to charge for it': Financial implications and benefits of charging specifically for veterinary nurse time and expertise and the importance of veterinary nurses demonstrating their value to clients.
- 'Lead or Head RVN: What's in a name?': How development of 'Lead RVNs' in different areas of practice can provide increased and shared responsibility and progression, and ultimately, retention within the profession.

Career case studies

We know that veterinary nursing offers a wide range of career pathways following registration, and our aim has been to showcase some of these options to current veterinary nurses, and to those considering a career in veterinary nursing. Veterinary nurses sharing their stories and experiences can offer inspiration and ideas to others for reaching their own career goals.

A series of career case studies, demonstrating diverse careers and diverse people, are published on the VN Futures website (www.vnfutures.org.uk), and are being built upon on an ongoing basis.

BVNA This Is Us 2020

VN Futures held a series of five discussion sessions at the BVNA online Congress-style event, 'This is Us 2020', which included potential legislative reform and the impact this may have on the role of veterinary nurses; and the value of veterinary nurses and recognition of the veterinary nurse role.

BSAVA

A dedicated VN Futures stream was held at BSAVA



Congress in 2019, and in 2021's virtual BSAVA Congress, where a presentation was provided addressing the factors affecting retention of veterinary nurses within the profession.

Support for overseas nurses

A new iteration of the *Introduction to the UK veterinary profession – online CPD course for overseas vets and VNs* was developed in 2021 and is run jointly by the RCVS and VDS Training.

The two-part online course is aimed at overseas-qualified veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses during their first two years working in the UK, as well as those considering working here. It aims to equip

professionals with the vital knowledge and insight needed to work as a veterinary professional in UK veterinary practice.

VN Futures has also published a short series of overseas veterinary nurse case studies which help to provide some insight into the process of joining the UK veterinary nursing profession and share experiences and advice on the transition to nursing in the UK.

Future plans:

The work to meet this ambition is ever-evolving as the profession develops, and we envisage that we will continue to address this area in the next phase of the project through a focus group and a series of initiatives.

Legislative reform

Ambition six – a clarified and bolstered VN role via a reformed schedule 3

Veterinary Nursing Schedule 3 Working Party

The Working Party was developed to specifically address the potential legislative reform that could enhance the nursing role. To do so it developed a comprehensive survey which was delivered to both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses in 2016 in order to gauge levels of understanding about Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act and how it was enacted on a day-to-day basis. The survey results indicated considerable lack of understanding of what could and couldn't be delegated to veterinary nurses amongst both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, which undeniably has had an effect on the likelihood and efficiency of delegation within practice.

Following the survey, the Working Party went on to develop two key areas of guidance to assist both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses to better understand the principles of delegation:

- The SUPERB poster: a mnemonic publication offering a framework for delegation by veterinary surgeons to veterinary nurses, which was provided to all veterinary practices in the UK.
- Schedule 3 case studies: a series of practical case study examples published to assist veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses in deciding what tasks can and cannot be delegated.

The Legislation Working Party

The work of the Veterinary Nursing Schedule 3 Working Party was later subsumed into the RCVS Legislation

Working Party which was set up to consider root-and-branch reform of the legislation governing the veterinary professions and to make proposals for new primary legislation.

In late 2020, a comprehensive report containing the recommendations for potential legislative reform was approved by RCVS Council and formed the basis of consultation to the profession and public. This consultation marks a significant milestone within the profession, especially since we are governed by legislation that is 55 years old. Following the consultation, RCVS Council adopted the recommendations of the Report in June 2021, and the RCVS will now begin discussions with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) about the possibility of introducing new legislation that would replace the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 with a new Act framed around these recommendations.

Future plans include:

- Actions based upon discussions with Defra, and potential legislative reform
- Creating further schedule 3 case studies to support delegation decisions
- Creation of an Advanced Practitioner status for veterinary nurses to work in conjunction with gaining a Certificate of Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN).

For more information visit: www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/advice-on-schedule-3/



Is your delegation

SUPERB?

A six-point checklist for veterinary surgeons wishing to delegate work to registered/student veterinary nurses under Schedule 3*

S	<p>PECIFIC PROCEDURE? <i>Is the procedure medical treatment or minor surgery, not involving entry into a body cavity?</i></p> <p>a. Remember, certain things are off-limits, including: independent medical treatment or minor surgery, major surgery, diagnosis, certification, castrations, spays, and dental extractions using instruments.</p>	 
U	<p>NDER CARE? <i>Is the animal under your care?</i></p> <p>a. Has the client given you responsibility for the animal's health? b. Have you seen the animal immediately before delegation, or recently enough to have personal knowledge of its condition?</p>	 
P	<p>ERSON? <i>Can you delegate to this person?</i></p> <p>a. Under Schedule 3, you can only delegate medical treatment and minor surgery (not involving entry into a body cavity) to RVNs and SVNs, not to lay people.</p>	 
E	<p>XPERIENCE? <i>Does the RVN/SVN feel capable, and have sufficient competence and experience?</i></p> <p>a. Are they familiar with the species? b. If they have not done this procedure before, have they had the right training and will they be supervised? c. If there is a problem, do they know what to do?</p>	 
R	<p>ISKS? <i>Have you considered the risks specific to this case?</i></p> <p>a. How difficult is the procedure? b. How likely is it that something could go wrong? c. Does the RVN/SVN understand the associated risks?</p>	 
B	<p>E THERE! <i>Are you available to direct or supervise, as necessary?</i></p> <p>a. RVNs must work under your direction, ie you have provided the necessary instructions about the task to be performed, but you do not have to be on the premises. b. SVNs must work under your supervision i. For medical treatment, you need to be on the premises and available to assist. ii. For minor surgery (not involving entry into a body cavity), you must stay with the SVN and give them your undivided personal attention</p>	 

www.rcvs.org.uk/schedule3

*Under Schedule 3 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act, only registered veterinary nurses and student veterinary nurses have the privilege to perform certain procedures in veterinary practice, as delegated to them by you, a veterinary surgeon colleague employed in the same practice. Make sure your delegation is SUPERB!

RCVS SETTING VETERINARY STANDARDS

The veterinary nurse's role in One Health

Ambition four – Proactive role in One Health Ambition five – Maximising nurses' potential

Smoking cessation

A collaboration between the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), the BVNA and the RCVS as part of the VN Futures initiative used a One Health approach to support smoking cessation.

The aim of this project was to highlight veterinary research that demonstrates the effects of passive smoking may extend to animals as well as humans.

A joint press release was written and disseminated widely, with the aim of sharing the information with the general public, as well as both veterinary and human-centred nursing professions.

The objective of disseminating the information widely was so that:

- Human-centred nurses might have a novel approach when discussing smoking cessation.
- Veterinary nurses might feel more confident to discuss smoking cessation with owners within the context of the health and wellbeing of their pet.
- Existing smokers with pets might be provided with a new, strong incentive to give up smoking.

Following on from this work, the One Health Working Group performed additional research on the support available for smoking cessation, and the future aim is to create a basic support pack for veterinary nurses to assist them in talking about this topic within practice.

Community nursing

During the research phase of this aim we have been focused on the work that many veterinary nurses are already doing that might be described as 'community veterinary nursing' and have been profiling veterinary nurses working in a variety of community roles and aim to publish these in order to inspire others to consider a similar career path. The profiles obtained so far further demonstrate the diversity of community roles – ranging from providing end-of-life care to animals within an

owner's home, to educating pet owners on health and wellbeing. The scope is broad, and encompasses far more than the district nursing role, where home visits are performed.

There are specific groups of people for whom having access to a community veterinary nurse would be of huge benefit, for example the elderly and those with long-term physical and/or mental health conditions, who may otherwise struggle to provide appropriate care for their pets. There is growing evidence of the positive effects of the human-animal bond on both mental and



physical health and VNs can play a role in assisting vulnerable people to be able to keep their pets and keep them healthy.

There is clearly much that can be learned from our human-centred counterparts, and the group has been in regular contact with a university providing human-centred nurse training in order to build links with community medical nurses and obtain information about how the skillset and knowledge required differs from that of other nursing roles. Conversations with both medical and veterinary community nurses have echoed the very specific challenges of the community veterinary nursing role and the skills needed for this. For example, working away from the support of the practice environment can be isolating and requires strong communication skills and a need for a higher level of professional autonomy. Working in the animal owner's home environment can be a challenge in itself and it can be more difficult to maintain professional boundaries.

The legal requirement (under Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act) says that veterinary nurses must work under the direction and employment of a veterinary surgeon. This does create challenges to the creation of what might be called a truly independent

community veterinary nurse practitioner, and one of the recommendations in the RCVS Legislation Working Party Report is that 'direction' and 'employment' should be uncoupled, thus facilitating veterinary nurses to perform the role outside of the employment of the veterinary surgeon managing the case.

Safety and safeguarding are also areas that requires specific consideration in order to ensure that protocols and systems of working protect both veterinary nurses and the public, and medical nurse colleagues have advised that safeguarding policies and an excellent support network are vital components in provision of community and district nursing.

Future plans include:

- Continued collaboration with human nursing counterparts
- Potentially develop a post-registration qualification in District Veterinary Nursing
- Help to ensure that safety, safeguarding and support measures are addressed during development of this role
- Investigate the additional ways that veterinary nurses can work within the community

The RCVS Mind Matters Initiative

Ambition three - Confident, resilient, healthy and well-supported workforce

The Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) aims to support the mental health and wellbeing of those in the veterinary team, including registered and student veterinary nurses. The initiative was launched in 2015 and is funded and run by the RCVS. Its core work is divided into three streams of activity – Prevent, Protect and Support.



MMI has delivered a number of activities to enhance support for members of the veterinary professions, including Mental Health Awareness Training, Resilience Training and the Vet Wellbeing Awards.

Over the past 18 months during the coronavirus

pandemic, MMI has worked to provide sessions to support veterinary staff, keep open the lines of communication, and help find solutions to some of the issues that have been faced.

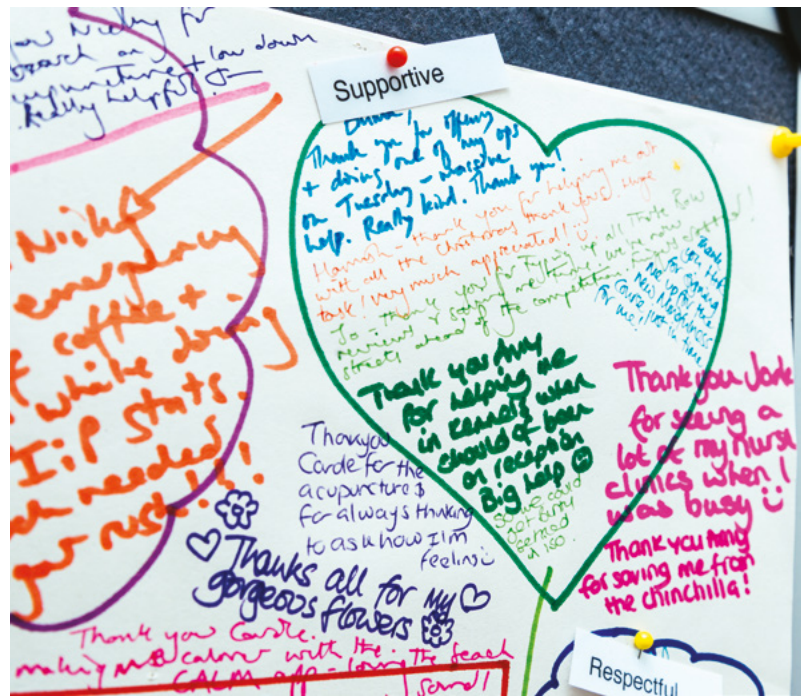
Student veterinary nurse wellbeing

In 2021, MMI, working in collaboration with VN Futures, has performed work to help identify the key wellbeing issues affecting student veterinary nurses, and an interactive discussion event is planned for later in 2021. A survey was published in June 2021, the aim of which is to provide the Mind Matters Initiative with information that will help it tailor specific events and projects for the profession. Lisa Quigley, Mind Matters Initiative manager:

“There is a bit of a research gap when it comes to the mental health and wellbeing of veterinary nurses – particularly student VNs – and we are seeking to address this, with this survey being a crucial first step. Mind Matters is committed to listening to the people that we want to reach, to help us understand the issues they face and what matters to them.”

The survey and discussion event includes student veterinary nurses, veterinary nurses who have qualified in the preceding two years, clinical coaches and veterinary nursing educators, to ensure all those who have an input to and influence on veterinary nurse training are able to contribute.

For more information visit: www.vetmindmatters.org



Leadership

Ambition two – Structured and rewarding career paths



The RCVS Leadership Initiative

Inspired by the Vet Futures and VN Futures projects, the RCVS Leadership initiative seeks to meet the College's strategic ambition 'to become a Royal College with leadership... at its heart, and support this creatively and with determination.'

It is focussed around three areas of work:

1. Leadership for everyone
2. Leading the profession
3. Tomorrow's leaders

For more information visit: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/lifelong-learning/rcvs-leadership-initiative/>

RCVS LEADERSHIP

Inspiring Veterinary Leaders campaign

In 2019 the RCVS launched the 'Inspiring Veterinary Leaders' campaign to highlight and showcase some of the veterinary leaders of today and tomorrow, with three VN leaders from across the VN profession taking part in the campaign.

You can read more about the campaign and view videos of the VN leaders sharing their candid stories and experiences here: <https://www.vnfutures.org.uk/our-activities/vn-leadership/inspiring-veterinary-leaders-campaign/>



The Edward Jenner Veterinary Leadership Programme

The RCVS Edward Jenner Veterinary Leadership Programme for Veterinary Professionals is a key outcome of the Leadership initiative. The programme, which was launched in 2018, is a free-to-access MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses.

Through VN Futures, the course has been actively highlighted to veterinary nurses, and nurses have made up approximately 20% of those completing the programme.

Account from Kirsty Cavill

"I completed The Edward Jenner Leadership course in 2020. I found this online course invaluable in equipping me with the skill set required of a Head Nurse within the veterinary profession.

"Delivered in an accessible format, the course was challenging yet motivating, and encouraged a reflective and open mindset to explore the concepts of leadership, communication, power and care. The course enabled me to better understand behaviours and to develop adaptive leadership practices to promote effective decision making."



Account from Claire Hobson

"As an RVN myself, who has completed the course and now as an online mentor for the programme, I have experienced how relevant it is for our day-to-day lives.

"I haven't met an RVN yet who hasn't had to deal with any leadership problems or decisions. Maybe the leadership role we have isn't apparent to the individual, but it is there, and we need to ensure we take on the responsibility and get better at the many decisions we face, which sometimes makes us feel uncomfortable.

"I work within VN education and found this course helped me to develop much needed skills to deal with the challenges I face, this included outside of the veterinary practice environment too.

"Almost two years on, I now have a leadership position at work, and I feel more relaxed, skilled and confident to be able to lead and tackle issues within the workplace."



The future

Looking to the next phase of VN Futures, we will draw information from a wide range of sources to inform the direction of future initiatives for the project.

These sources include (but are not limited to):

- The 2019 Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession
- The work on potential legislative reform, led by the RCVS Legislation Working Party
- The 2021 MMI survey for student veterinary nurse wellbeing
- The outcomes from the MMI Student Veterinary Nurse Wellbeing Discussion Forum
- A survey of the profession conducted by BVNA prior to the This Is Us 2020 event
- Data collected during the BVNA This Is Us 2020 event VN Futures discussion sessions
- VN Futures interactive discussion events, scheduled for BVNA Congress 2021

Future structure

We have learnt a lot over the past five years: that our ambitions were just that – ambitious; and that much of this work will continue into the next phase of the project and beyond. Veterinary nursing is constantly evolving, and novel needs and issues that may not have existed at the outset of the project plan, will need to be identified, addressed and bolstered. Whilst it is of course important to have an overall strategy, we need to be flexible and

consider further needs as they arise.

The RCVS and BVNA will continue to work collaboratively and in partnership on the VN Futures project, and the leadership for the project will remain with the VN Futures Board, with membership provided by both organisations. However, each party will take leadership on individual initiatives that sit most appropriately with their remit and available resources.

The VN Futures Board has broadened its membership to include student veterinary nurse representation, and input from the RCVS and BVNA communications teams.

We aim to continue to collaborate with allied organisations and groups such as the BVA and Vet Futures, and continue to build relationships with additional groups, including those in human medicine and nursing.

The coronavirus pandemic has changed the way we work, and as for so many other organisations, we aim to continue to exploit technology and host more meetings and events virtually.

We aim to engage internal and external sources, to identify and employ the most suitable people to perform particular areas of work as required.

The veterinary nursing profession is a thriving, exciting and progressive place to be; and we hope that you will be by our side and as excited as we are about the future as we move into the next phase of the VN Futures project.



VNFUTURES INTERIM REPORT 2021



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