

## Veterinary Nurses Council

Wednesday 13 September 2023 at 10.30am at the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

<b>Agenda</b>		<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationale<sup>2</sup></b>
1.	<b>Welcome to new members</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2.	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3.	<b>Declarations of interest</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
4.	<b>Obituaries</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
5.	<b>Minutes of meeting held on 10 May 2023</b>		
	<b>i.    Unclassified minutes</b>	Unclassified	n/a
	<b>ii.   Classified appendix</b>	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1,2,3,4</b>
6.	<b>Matters arising</b>	Oral report	n/a
7.	<b>CEO update</b>	Unclassified	n/a
<b>Matters for decision by VN Council and reports from Committees (unclassified items)</b>			
8.	<b>VN Education Committee</b>		
	<b>8.01 Minutes of meeting held on 18 April 2023</b>	Unclassified	n/a
	<b>8.02 Minutes of meeting held on 14 June 2023</b>	Unclassified	n/a
	<b>8.03 Minutes of meeting held on 10 August 2023</b>	Unclassified	n/a
9.	<b>Continuing Professional Development (CPD)</b> Minutes of CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee held on 14 July 2023	Unclassified	n/a
10.	<b>Reports from RCVS Committees</b>		

	10.01 VN Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
	10.02 Standards Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
	10.03 Advancement of the Professions Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
	10.04 VN Disciplinary Committee	Unclassified	n/a
11.	<b>VN Futures Report</b>	Oral report	n/a
12.	<b>Communications report</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
13.	<b>Any other business (unclassified)</b>	Unclassified	
14.	<b>Date of next meeting</b> Wednesday 15 November 2023 (remote)		
<b>Confidential and private items (closed session)</b>			
15.	<b>Draft budget for 2024</b>	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1,4</b>
16.	<b>VN Education Committee confidential items</b>		
	16.01 Confidential items from meeting of 18 April 2023	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>2,3,4</b>
	16.02 Minutes of meeting held on 23 May 2023	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>2,3,4</b>
	16.03 Confidential items from meeting of 14 June 2023	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>2,3,4</b>
	16.04 Confidential items from meeting of 10 August 2023	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>2,3,4</b>
17.	<b>Risk Register</b>		
	17.01 Update on changes since the previous meeting	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1,2,3,4</b>
	17.02 Items identified from the meeting to add to Risk Register	Oral report	
18.	<b>Survey of the Professions 2023</b>	Unclassified	n/a
19.	<b>Legislative reform</b>	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1,2</b>

20.	<b>Items for RCVS Committees</b>	Oral report	
21.	<b>Any other business (confidential items)</b>	Oral report	
22.	<b>Reflective session</b>		

Annette Amato

Secretary, VN Council

0207 202 0713 / [a.amato@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:a.amato@rcvs.org.uk) /

---

## **<sup>1</sup>Classifications 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.

## **<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li><li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li><li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li><li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li></ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>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</li></ol>

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	13 September 2023
Title	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 10 May 2023
Summary	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 10 May 2023
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1,2,3,4</b>

**<sup>1</sup>Classifications 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.

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ol>

## Veterinary Nurses Council

Minutes of the meeting held online via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 10 May 2023

<b>Members:</b>	*	Mrs Belinda Andrews-Jones	-	Vice-Chair
		Miss Jessica Beckett		
		Miss Alison Carr		
		Dr Niall Connell	-	Officer Team observer (non-voting)
		Mr Dominic Dyer		
	*	Ms Sarah Fox		Chairing this meeting
		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		
	Miss Holly Witchell			

\*Denotes absent

<b>In attendance:</b>		Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
		Mr Luke Bishop	-	Media and Publications Manager
		Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
		Ms Eleanor Ferguson	-	Registrar
		Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	Examinations Quality Lead
		Ms Lizzie Lockett	-	Chief Executive
		Mr Ben Myring	-	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
		Mrs Jenny Soreskog-Turp	-	Lead for Postgraduate Education

<b>Guests:</b>		<i>Ms Rachael Buzzel</i>	-	<i>VN Times</i>
		<i>Mr Josh Loeb</i>	-	<i>BVA Journals</i>
		<i>Ms Kelly Nickalls</i>	-	<i>The Veterinary Nurse</i>

### Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Belinda Andrews-Jones, Sarah Fox, Donna Lewis, Susan Paterson and Matthew Rendle. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate. In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the meeting was chaired by Susan Howarth, Chair of the Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC).

### Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

### Obituaries

3. No written obituaries had been received. Council observed a minute's silence for all members of the professions who had passed away since the last meeting.

### Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023 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 few operational matters and recent activities since the previous meeting.
7. A group had been set up of the veterinary nurses who were now employees of the College. There were now many veterinary nurses employed in several teams within the College. The group would work together to provide support and maintain their professional identity within the College. This also would provide an excellent opportunity to work as ambassadors for the profession, and to act as role models.
8. The RCVS Academy had launched a course the previous week designed to support newly registered veterinary nurses, to coincide with Veterinary Nursing Awareness Month. The Academy was working very well and its courses to support vets and veterinary nurses had already been accessed over 8,000 times.
9. The RCVS, through its Mind Matters Initiative and Diversity and Inclusion Group, together with the British Veterinary Chronic Illness Society (BVCIS) had launched a survey aimed to provide a better understanding of the views, experiences and challenges faced by disabled and chronically ill people within the professions, and to provide insight into how the veterinary professions and educational institutions could be more inclusive. The survey was open to all veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and students, both those with illness and disability and their potential allies and supporters.
10. The College was continuing with moves to set up a Public Advisory Group (PAG) aiming to have more public input, to better understand the issues currently affecting the public, to consult with on the development of policy, to help develop and improve services for the public, and to test messaging and communications to ensure they were clear and understandable. The aim was to recruit thirty animal owners and keepers, including small animal, large animal and equine, to join



the group, which would be chaired by RCVS Council member Louise Allum, and to be operational by September.

11. Consideration of plans drawn up by the consultants for the College's new headquarters building was continuing, including senior staff input and consideration of costs. The building should be available for the refurbishment process to start from the end of the summer.
12. An all Staff Awayday would be held in June, and would cover a variety of issues around culture, including communications across the organisation and hybrid working, and development of a learning culture within the College.
13. The CEO, Registrar and Policy and Public Affairs Manager had attended two conferences held in Dublin the previous week on regulation – the International Veterinary Regulators Network, and a Global Regulators Conference (CLEAR). These had been very useful and interesting and provided a good opportunity to share knowledge and best practice.
14. RCVS Council had agreed to review the Committee meeting structure, including the frequency and timings of the meetings of its standing committees. It would be useful for VN Council to also give consideration to this issue for its own meetings, so that proposals could be made, to take effect in 2024. The Director of Veterinary Nursing confirmed that the VNC Terms of Reference were due to be discussed later in the meeting and this could be included in the discussion.

#### Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC)

15. **Meeting held on 21 February 2023.** Susan Howarth presented the minutes of the meeting, which had been chaired by the Deputy Chair, Sarah Reynolds-Golding, and highlighted the following decisions:
  - The re-accreditation of the BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing and Companion Animal Behaviour awarded by the University of Bristol.
  - The change of status from provisional to full accreditation of the Vetskill Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (Equine).
  - The alignment of the accreditation periods for the Royal Veterinary College's suite of Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing programmes.
16. The pre-accreditation support visits to Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) continued to be well received.
17. The Committee had been provided with many reports on action plan monitoring and quality assurance activities, both for the Licence to Practise and Post-registration qualifications.
18. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) was in the process of updating its veterinary nursing subject benchmarks, and the VNEC Chair and the Director of Veterinary Nursing were both involved in the working group.

19. **Meeting held on 18 April 2023.** A brief oral report was provided on the meeting held on 18 April 2023. The minutes would be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting of Council.
20. The Committee had discussed the standard classifications used in accreditation visit reports, where currently a standard is noted as either being “met” or “not met”, and had agreed to re-introduce a third category, previously used, of “partially met”.
21. The Committee had approved a number of new accreditation visitors, for both the Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) panels.
22. As always, many quality monitoring reports had been presented to the Committee.

### Report on registrations and enrolments from overseas

23. **Annual update report.** The Examinations Quality Lead presented the report summarising the applications for registration and assessment of qualifications from nurses educated outside the UK, covering the period between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, with figures for the previous year shown for comparison. Following low numbers of applicants in the recent previous years, there had been a significant upward trend.
24. Council was reminded that there were two categories of applicants. Those educated in an ACOVENE (Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education) accredited school, if accepted, were permitted to register without completing any additional examinations. Other applicants, if it was clear that they had covered the majority of the Day One Competences (DOC) and Day One Skills (DOS) within their education, were then permitted to proceed to the Pre-registration examination.
25. In the reporting year, there had been 27 applications accepted from veterinary nurses educated in an ACOVENE-accredited school, the great majority of these being from the Republic of Ireland. 70 applicants educated at non-ACOVENE-accredited schools had been accepted to proceed to the examinations, with a significant area of growth being nurses educated in Hong Kong (21 applications as compared with nine in total over all previous periods combined).
26. In total, 78 VNs educated outside the UK had entered the Register during the reporting period. As of 31 March there were 513 nurses educated outside the UK on the Register - approximately 2.3% of all RVNs on that date.
27. **Submission of syllabus.** It was confirmed that non-ACOVENE applicants were normally required to provide their syllabus, mapped to the RCVS DOC DOS, to be checked by the Qualifications Assessor for advice on whether the qualification had met the majority of the DOC and DOS. When a number of applications had been received from a particular country or school with the same syllabus, permission had been sought from Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) to accept these qualifications in future without the applicant needing to submit the syllabus. It was clarified that each individual application would still go through a rigorous process. It was also noted that where this occurred there was not a contract with the school, and it was neither an accreditation nor

- endorsement, but an acceptance of the qualification without each applicant submitting the syllabus cross mapped to the DOC and DOS.
28. Council was provided with a table showing the qualifications that were currently accepted without further submission of syllabus, and those for which VNC was asked to consider removing the syllabus requirement. It was agreed to remove the syllabus submission requirement for applicants with the following qualifications:
- Cert IV in Veterinary Nursing ACM40418 – Australia.
  - Bachelor of Veterinary Technology / BSc Science with extended Major in Veterinary Technology awarded by the University of Queensland before 2022 (including 2022) – Australia.
  - Advanced Diploma in Veterinary Nursing awarded by SCOPE between 2016 and 2022 – New Zealand.
  - National Diploma in Veterinary Nursing NCF 2491 – Australia.
  - Diploma in Veterinary Nursing awarded by the University of Zimbabwe between 2006 and 2022 – Zimbabwe.
29. It was confirmed that these applicants would still need to submit an application and to pass the pre-registration examination. It was also confirmed that where an applicant has been out of veterinary nursing for five years, they were asked to provide evidence of recent practical experience, either within or outside the UK, before being permitted to submit an examination entry.
30. **Other activities.** A course had been developed within the Academy aimed at veterinary nurses educated outside the UK, taking them through the journey from initial application through to registration. This would be developed further in the future. The information on the Code of Professional Conduct had also been incorporated within the course.
31. There had been a slight change in the registration process in respect of acceptable confirmation of qualifications from education providers, bringing the process in line with that for veterinary surgeon applicants.
32. Council thanked the Examinations Quality Lead for the very clear report and explanation of the process. It was also commented that the increase in the number of applications was pleasing to see. It was confirmed that this seemed to be an upward trend. The number of applications in the first quarter of the year had been high, and there had also been the highest ever number of applicants for the forthcoming pre-registration examinations.
33. In response to a query regarding the use of translation platforms on the internet, it was noted that these had been used on three occasions. In these particular instances, the applicants had not been accepted as it was clear that the DOS/DOC requirements had not been met within the syllabus. The Examinations Quality Lead was commended on the rigour of the process.
34. **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 slightly lower than those in the previous year.

## Reports from RCVS Committees

### Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

35. Council noted the annual report of the RVN PIC Committee that had been circulated with the agenda. Unfortunately, neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair of the Committee were available to present the report, but any questions would be relayed back to the Chair.
36. It was noted from the report that both the Chair, Suzanne Edwards and Vice-Chair, Susan Little were coming to the end of their terms on the Committee, and VNC wished to express its thanks to them both for their work over the past years.

### Standards Committee

37. The next meeting of the Standards Committee was due to take place the following week, so there was no report to provide.

### Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

38. The Acting Chair read out a report which had been provided by the Chair of the APC, who was unable to attend the meeting. This included the following:
  - As referred to earlier by the CEO, the disability and chronic illness survey had been launched.
  - A meeting was planned to take place in June with the NHS on the progress of the Edward Jenner Leadership programme.
  - Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) – there had been a successful stream at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress on neurodiversity, as well as MMI-supported sessions on wellbeing. The MMI mental health symposium would take place in Manchester on 10 October 2023.
  - RCVS Knowledge had introduced new quality improvement tools on patient safety. In April a new e-learning platform had been launched, with 30 hours of free CPD.
  - As well as the launch of the Academy course for newly registered veterinary nurses, a follow-up course was planned for returners. A VN Futures animation was due to be released in collaboration with the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA). More than 270 RVNs had signed up as VN Futures schools ambassadors.
39. Kate Richards added that as Chair of the MMI, she had attended a recent mental health wellbeing conference in Belfast. A great proportion of the delegates had been veterinary nurses and practice managers, and it had been good to make contacts, with many potential opportunities for future collaboration.

## RVN Disciplinary Committee

40. The report from the Disciplinary hearing in April 2023 was noted.

## Communications report

41. The Media and Publications Manager provided an overview of recent VN-related activities in the Comms Department.
42. There had been a slightly increased turnout for this year's VN Council elections - 8.8% of those eligible to vote, compared to 8.4% in 2022. However, there had been a downward trend since the high point of over 17% in 2020. It had been noted that voting spikes had occurred after each reminder, and the number of reminders had been increased. The RCVS had been reassured by Civica, the company which conducts the elections, that the percentage turnout was generally in line with other similar organisations. The Council Culture Working Group would be looking into how the election could be improved.
43. It was commented that it would be useful to manage the expectations of potential candidates as to what they could achieve as member of Council. Other suggestions were made in the meeting which would be taken on board, including encouraging those attending post-registration qualifications, whilst at college, to vote. It was not known what had been the cause of the high turnout in 2020, which was also high for the veterinary elections in that year.
- 44.. A number of activities were being arranged to coincide with VN Awareness Month, including VN Futures-related activities on the stand at BVA Live, and presentations on the VN Futures project at the learning zone. An animated video had also been produced.
45. There would also be a campaign highlighting the more than 20 RVNs who worked at the RCVS in various teams, with Q&A and short videos on the website and social media channels, for the latter part of VN Awareness Month.
46. The next Veterinary Nurses Day to celebrate newly qualified veterinary nurses and those achieving advanced qualifications, would take place in Central Hall Westminster on Friday 16 June.
47. The College was also carrying out a web content review to see where improvements in accessibility and quality of content could be made.

## VN Council membership

48. **VN Council election 2023.** Council was pleased to note that Matthew Rendle had been re-elected, and Simon Williams had been elected, both for a three-year term, and looked forward to welcoming Simon at the AGM in July.
49. **Farewells.** This would be the last Council meeting for Dominic Dyer, Claire Roberts and Niall Connell.

50. Dominic Dyer had served as a lay member of VN Council for ten years, and had brought to the table and Council's various discussions - his invaluable experience as an animal rights campaigner, policy advisor and charity worker. Throughout his time, Dominic had been extremely supportive and had helped spread the word about the value of veterinary nurses and the important role they play in UK animal health and welfare through various platforms.
51. Claire had served three years as an elected member. During that time, she had represented VN Council on the Standards Committee for her full three-year term, and had also been a valued member of the CPD Policy and Compliance sub-committee, additionally having helped considerably in promoting CPD, and reflections, in the CPD webinars.
52. Niall Connell had been involved with VN Council since his election to RCVS Council in 2013, serving as a VN Council member for many years, Vice-Chair in 2015-2016 and latterly as an officer observer. He had been hugely supportive of the veterinary nursing profession throughout and a most valued member of VNC, and would be much missed.
53. Council expressed its thanks to all three, and a formal farewell would be made at the Annual General Meeting in July.
54. **Lay member appointments.** The Acting Chair was delighted to confirm that both Sarah Fox and Stephanie Richardson had been re-appointed to VNC for a further three years.

#### **Any other business (unclassified)**

55. There was no other business.

#### **Date of next meeting**

56. The next meeting would be held in person, on Wednesday 13 September 2023, at a venue to be confirmed.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	RCVS Council Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	7 September 2023 13 September 2023
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

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Rationales</b>
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. 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. For each action, responsibilities, recent activities and next steps have been identified in the following table, alongside a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating, to show progress compared to what was anticipated at this point in the Strategic Plan's implementation.
4. Outside of those changes noted in the Strategic Plan table to follow, since the 8 June 2023 Council meeting, we have also:
  - a. Published our annual report and accounts
  - b. Held two webinars on our new under care guidance, along with case studies and FAQ
  - c. Opened booking for our Mind Matters Mental Health Research Symposium (10 October)
  - d. Launched a new course on RCVS Academy to support veterinary professionals in complaints handling, and celebrated the Academy's first birthday and 10,000-enrolment milestone
  - e. Hosted RCVS Day, our annual general meeting and awards event, including the inauguration of the new Presidential team
  - f. Awarded our Mind Matters Sarah Brown research grant to a project exploring student veterinary nurse mental health education
  - g. Paid tribute to former Registrar, Alastair Porter, who sadly passed away in July
  - h. Admitted 34 new Fellows and announced Dame Sally Davies as speaker for the 27 November Fellowship Day
  - i. Provided advanced warning to VNs about the forthcoming renewal process
  - j. Launched our Charter Case Committee



## 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	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
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.	Exec Office/ Ed/VN		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful event to promote the need for new legislation at the House of Lords in October 2022 and parliamentary drop-in session in April 2023. New microsites built to support the argument – which have been shortlisted for an award. Two educational webinars took place during May with RCVS and VN Council members, and representatives of BVA and the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA). Defra supportive, progress now depends on available time.</li> <li>• First accreditations using the new educational standards and methodology were completed in Liverpool (March 2023), and Aberystwyth / RVC (May 2023). Launched a comprehensive new online training programme for accreditation panel members via RCVS Academy, with positive initial feedback. Panel member feedback following new accreditation processes also positive.</li> <li>• The evidence-base informing the new accreditation standards for vet degrees has been published in the <i>Journal of Veterinary Medical Education</i>.</li> <li>• Following VN support meetings, there have been three successful accreditations.</li> </ul>
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.	APC/ LWP/ PICDCL /EC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation of the wider vet team is linked to new legislation. We continue to investigate the most appropriate groups to bring under any future regulatory umbrella, for example, the first behavioural medicine roundtable was hosted by the Fellowship Science Advisory Panel in May. This was a useful initial discussion and precursor to the establishment of a FSAP working party to investigate whether and how animal behavioural medicine should be regulated. Membership of the working party has now been selected, chaired by Professor Anna Meredith, and planning is underway for the first meeting.</li> <li>• The new concerns process has been launched. and website has been updated.</li> <li>• The new Charter Case Committee members have been trained, and also PIC members. The CCC was launched on 25 August.</li> <li>• New plans for Extra Mural Studies (EMS) published and communicated.</li> <li>• Report of Clinical Careers Pathway stakeholder published.</li> <li>• New Under Care/Out-of-Hours guidance came into force on 1 September 2023. Webinars have been held and case studies and FAQs produced.</li> <li>• New guidance on canine AI published.</li> <li>• A discussion paper on the longer-term future of veterinary education is going to Education Committee in September.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
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.	Registrar		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following approval at the March 2023 meeting of Council, the 12-month trial of a protocol for the private prosecution of breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act was launched on 1 April.</li> </ul>
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.	APC/ FVE/ EC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue improving engagement with overseas members.</li> <li>Work ongoing to develop more permanent solution to loss of mutual recognition of professional qualifications – paper with Defra but no response has been received.</li> <li>First consultative accreditation visit to an EU school under our 2023 accreditation standards took place in May.</li> <li>Continuing strong relations with International Accreditors Working Group, Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, Mind Matters International and International Veterinary Regulators Network (attended IVRN meeting in Dublin in May and also presented at CLEAR international regulatory conference on compassionate regulation). Attended useful meeting of IAWG in Melbourne in July. RCVS presented a proposal for adopting a more environmentally sustainable approach to joint international accreditations involving visitors trained in the standards and processes of more than one agency. Previously there has been resistance, but this proposal was received positively and all IAWG members have agreed to take it to their decision-making committees. Subject to agreement, RCVS proposing to pilot this with a partner IAWG agency.</li> <li>President and CEO were guests at AVMA Congress in July and continue to build strong networks with our US colleagues.</li> <li>Involved in ESNO (for European specialist nurses) discussions on workforce shortages and retention, culminating in a report to the European Commission.</li> <li>Involved in the review and revision of the Accreditation Committee of Veterinary Nurse Education (ACOVENE) Standards.</li> <li>Academy course developed for overseas vets / VNs applying to register launched.</li> <li>There are opportunities to promote and 'sell' some of our initiatives overseas, but UK work takes priority during this busy time.</li> <li>CEO joined FVE taskforce on development of European Veterinary Foundation.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
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.	APC/ Comms/ Exec		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment for Public Advisory Group completed and first meeting due 22 September; first piece of work on advice for animal owners on the website.</li> <li>Programme of attendance at events and congresses for 2023 ongoing.</li> <li>Survey planned to evaluate effectiveness of RCVS coms and engagement activities, and review vet/VN preferences, to inform new comms strategy.</li> <li>New iteration of Council Culture Working Group continues to recommend how relationship between Council and professions can be improved.</li> <li>Chronic Illness and Disability Survey for vets, nurses, student vets and SVNs gained over 3,000 responses. Data being analysed and will be published in autumn. It will be used to inform our own EDI activities and as an opportunity to provide landmark statistics and insight to the veterinary professions.</li> </ul>
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.	FRC/ Digital/ Policy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop dashboard on key metrics - part of KPI project (see later).</li> <li>Data management system (CRM) review under consideration by a project board reporting to Finance and Resources Committee.</li> <li>Additional data being gathered about reasons for leaving the RCVS Registers – reported to Registration Committee.</li> <li>More work needs to be done on the self-service data aspect.</li> <li>Development of Surveys of the Professions questionnaires for 2024 underway – stakeholder views being sought.</li> </ul>
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.	Ed Cttee/ VN Ed Cttee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCVS Academy for accreditation panellists launched, initial feedback positive.</li> <li>First accreditation events under new standards have been completed successfully in March 2023 (Liverpool) and April (Aber/RVC). Evaluation being analysed to inform quality improvement to our processes.</li> <li>Review of AP / Specialist status ongoing – clinical careers event 7 December 2022, and report now published. Initial framework for clinical career pathways agreed at EC in May – allowing project planning and development.</li> <li>Following VN support meetings, eight successful accreditation events.</li> <li>ENQA re-accreditation w/c 5 June; completed factual accuracy check of the report early August. Outcome due September/October.</li> <li>VN Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training review due to commence autumn 2023.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>Registration appeals process to be considered now MRPQ no longer exists.</li> <li>Appeal process for Statutory Membership Examination to be considered.</li> <li>Review and revise VN accreditation appeals process.</li> </ul>

## 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	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
1. Endeavour to ensure that the College is seen as approachable, helpful, fair and accessible to all.	All		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full web content review is underway, with consideration being given to information accuracy, content design, language style, accessibility, diversity and inclusion and search engine optimisation (SEO).</li> <li>• See also A5 above ref engagement.</li> <li>• Review of appeals processes ongoing, see A8 above.</li> <li>• Improving the way we communicate Council and committee activities as part of the Council Culture project.</li> <li>• Continue with VN support package, see A7 above.</li> <li>• Have supported refugees through the Statutory Membership Examination process and the first one has now passed and will register with us.</li> </ul>
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.	People		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peakon data regularly reviewed.</li> <li>• New Staff Network Group set up (to bring together previous LGBTQ+, wellbeing and EDI groups).</li> <li>• New staff training priorities fall out of 'My Progress' annual reviews; this now has greater focus on values. What it takes to become a 'learning organisation' was discussed at June's staff away day and initiatives being planned.</li> <li>• New online learning hub for staff under development (aligned with RCVS Academy), and new intranet.</li> <li>• Thematic review of data from exit interviews now going to Senior Team.</li> <li>• Review of EAP and other support will take place shortly. Monthly tips and advice shared on Loo News (weekly staff news-sheet).</li> <li>• Dedicated Talent resource appointed, full review of career website and assessment material due to take place.</li> <li>• Growth mindset group in place to encourage different ways of thinking.</li> <li>• Review of benefits underway, will take account of needs of home-workers.</li> <li>• Succession planning conversations taken place with ST.</li> <li>• Career progression framework under review to provide clarity of movement across the organisation.</li> <li>• Training support policy near completion to provide greater clarity on learning outcomes where financial support is provided.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
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"> <li>Promotion of ProfCon Investigation Support Service; article May RCVS News.</li> <li>Registrar took part in 'myth-busting' panel ref complaints at BVA Live.</li> <li>Public Advisory Group will support us developing more compassionate approach for animal owners.</li> <li>Academy courses on resolving complaints in practice, and Complaints: communication, confidence and compassion now available.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>New Academy courses being launched regularly, recently including working in the UK and a course for newly-registered veterinary nurses.</li> <li>10,000 learners now signed up.</li> <li>Regular contact with advisory panel of vets and nurses ensures content is relevant.</li> <li>Regular review of content based on dashboard of metrics and suggestions from learners.</li> <li>Sessions planned at congresses (eg SPVS and BVNA) to promote and engage.</li> <li>Apprentice being recruited to the Academy team.</li> </ul>
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 <a href="http://www.vetmindmatters.org">www.vetmindmatters.org</a> ), 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"> <li>MMI Strategy and Evaluation documents published.</li> <li>Collaboration with BSAVA for 2024 Congress content underway</li> <li>Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grant awarded, and this will be the first piece of research dedicated to Vet Nurses</li> <li>MMI Mental Health Research Symposium tickets on sale, this is the first in-person MMI Symposium since Covid. Being held on World Mental Health Day (10 October) in Manchester.</li> <li>MM International research event under discussion as possibility.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>Reflective CPD and use of 1CPD app now mandatory – communications and promotion have taken place and will continue.</li> <li>Evaluation of VetGDP Adviser e-learning highly positive.</li> <li>Discussions remain ongoing with NHS regarding relaunch of Edward Jenner Leadership MOOC.</li> </ul>

## 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	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
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"> <li>• See B5 for MMI and B6 for learning culture.</li> <li>• VN version of religious clothing document under development.</li> <li>• Fellowship Science Advisory Panel project on Net Zero practice moving forward with Chairs appointed to the Medicine WG and the Surgery WG.</li> <li>• Sustainability is a key aspect of Hardwick Street refurbishment project.</li> <li>• Co-signatory for Zero Hour UK letter to Dept of Health and Social Care on zero-carbon healthcare.</li> <li>• ViVet strategy under review at present.</li> <li>• Paper on learning culture in VetGDP published in <i>Journal of Veterinary Medical Education</i>.</li> <li>• Poster presentation on BAME Recommendations and Religious Clothing Guidance at July Association for the Study of Medical Education EDI event.</li> <li>• VetGDP for returners now launched to help people to return to veterinary work following a career break.</li> <li>• Chronic illness survey has now been completed and is currently being analysed by our research partners (more detail above).</li> <li>• 'RVN – Starting Out' course, designed to support the transition from student to registered nurse, launched May 2023.</li> <li>• Course under development to support those returning after a career break.</li> <li>• Menopause tool kit launched as part of VN Futures (VNF).</li> <li>• Flexible working tool kit being developed as part of VNF.</li> <li>• Work has started on a new Academy course, open to all, on Unconscious Bias, and also one specifically for Fellowship Assessors.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• Improvements to honours and awards process agreed at June Council.</li> <li>• New building will focus on history and future of veterinary practice.</li> <li>• Education space for school-age children planned for new building to encourage better understanding of veterinary profession from a younger age and potentially encourage applications to vet school from a wider pool.</li> <li>• The introduction of the new Fellowship categories has brought in a wider diversity of Fellows, whose expertise on the art and science of veterinary medicine needs to be harnessed. Wider skills continue to be championed through the CertAVP and the new vet school standards.</li> </ul>



Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
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.	<i>Education MMI ViVet Academy Exec</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of Workforce Action Plan outlines range of actions to be taken under this heading. A series of webinars with the wider profession have now taken place – see A2.</li> <li>• DIG is due to focus next on an inclusive recruitment toolkit to support organisations to consider their recruitment process from job description thorough to induction, which should impact on recruitment and retention.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Work ongoing to understand recruitment, retention and return activities within the government / public health veterinary sector and develop an action plan based on gap analysis.</li> <li>• Nurse Return course available for all nurses returning to the Register. Compulsory for those who have been off the register for five years or more.</li> </ul>
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.	<i>Education VN</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fifth provider of CertAVN approved.</li> <li>• Clinical career pathways report has been published.</li> <li>• Framework for future clinical career pathways approved by Education Committee. Detailed project plans to be discussed at EC in Sept.</li> <li>• VN career progression linked to LWP proposals (see A1).</li> <li>• Proposals under development for the Advanced Practitioner role for veterinary nurses.</li> <li>• VN Prescriber survey to be launched.</li> <li>• Actions within Workforce Action Plan also consider fulfilling careers.</li> </ul>
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.	<i>Comms APC</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop modules for Academy to better explain our key functions.</li> <li>• Recruitment for next round of EMS placements, jointly with Veterinary Policy Research Foundation, ongoing.</li> <li>• Officers will attend a range of freshers' weeks and careers fairs at the vet schools in autumn 2023.</li> <li>• Plan for attending VN schools' induction weeks underway for autumn 2023.</li> <li>• CEO undertaking talks with practices - including those on new grad schemes – to demystify the work of the College.</li> <li>• RVNs working at the College were recently profiled as part of VN Awareness Month; an RVN group has been set up to support the professional identity of RVNs working at the College and part of this will be showcasing the work of the College and the opportunities to be had.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
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"> <li>• Launch bursary scheme – needs name!</li> <li>• Consideration of challenge prize on hold due to 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.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• New Board members are creating the plan for Fellow outreach and interactions over the next few months, for example, Fellows on Tour and wider speaking opportunities.</li> <li>• Plans underway for Fellowship Day 2023, with Dame Sally Davies confirmed as guest speaker, and two interactive sessions on Net Zero and behaviourism planned. 34 successful 2023 applicants have been informed and invited to Fellowship Day</li> <li>• FSAP looking at behaviourism and net zero with specific working groups appointed.</li> <li>• Review of the application form, creation of new Assessors training course on the Academy and promotion of the application process has been started. Recruitment for both assessors and Fellows should be encouraged.</li> <li>• New Chairs for all three routes into Fellowship will be elected this autumn.</li> </ul>
8. Review new ways of reaching consensus and driving change within our leadership and governance structure.	Exec Officers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work of Council Culture Working Group continues and will be reviewed at the end of 2023. Some decisions coming to September Council meeting.</li> <li>• New induction process was rolled out with new Council members.</li> <li>• Reflection sessions Council meetings to discuss how effectively business was conducted continue.</li> <li>• Workshop sessions to be planned with external speakers on board effectiveness.</li> <li>• Chairs training taking place in September; other training sessions in the pipeline.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• Case studies on VF successes need to be refreshed, to form part of VF evaluation document (joint with BVA). Some delays due to resourcing.</li> <li>• VF part two under consideration.</li> <li>• VN Futures evaluation report published in September 2022; animation to outline achievements and future activities launched at BVA Live May 2023.</li> <li>• VNF sessions to be held at BVNA Congress Oct 2023.</li> </ul>



## 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	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
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"> <li>Scoping for informal review - although this may be superseded by work considering new governance structure as part of legislative changes (meanwhile, second five-year review for the LRO that separated PIC and DC from Council underway with Defra).</li> <li>Some of these issues under consideration by Council Culture Working Group.</li> <li>Governance Manual in progress.</li> <li>Action plan to resolve gaps vs Charity Code being worked through by Senior Team and reviewed by Audit and Risk Committee.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>Skills being considered as part of Council Culture project.</li> <li>Annual review of delegation scheme now routine and all groups now have ToR and greater clarity.</li> <li>New paper templates under development, along with training for secretariats.</li> <li>Paper ref the number of Council and Committee meetings we have, and their timing, coming to September meeting of Council.</li> </ul>
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.	ARC FRC Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk process well embedded and regularly praised by Audit and Risk Committee for its effectiveness.</li> <li>Annual Business Continuity Planning meeting takes place and changes are made to the plan in response. This year's to take place 6 September.</li> <li>Work ongoing on risk dashboard and assurance map, reviewed by Audit and Risk Committee.</li> <li>Greater visibility of Corporate Risk Register now available to Council. Workshop to take place on 7 September.</li> </ul>
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.	Ops Head of I&E		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New KPIs to be rolled out for new presidential year. A draft policy has been discussed with Officers and a revised version to come to November Council.</li> <li>Process for reviewing / analysing all complaints about RCVS, regardless of area of work, still ongoing.</li> <li>New Customer Services team set up on a trial basis; going well.</li> <li>Vet and VN exit survey data now being gathered.</li> <li>Zero tolerance for abuse of our staff statement now on the website.</li> <li>Members' views will be gathered as part of the 2024 Surveys of the Professions.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
<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"> <li>• Data ref current position on gender and other diversity strands due to be presented to FRC shortly – delayed, data available</li> <li>• Learning management system platform under development.</li> <li>• Change of pension provider has been implemented for staff who were members of the current scheme. Review of remaining scheme to take place.</li> <li>• Data dashboard under construction to highlight People data to include diversity and gender information.</li> <li>• First cohort has completed new Guide Your Progress Course for middle managers and been very well received. Work underway to review support to evaluate level 'Lead' and 'Translate'.</li> <li>• New employee network launched.</li> <li>• Update of staff induction and probation processes in progress, majority of the policies are complete with some minor adjustments based on feedback being updated. Induction is now managed monthly, with less requirement of colleagues to support; more enhancements in progress.</li> <li>• Regular training sessions for managers – in the form of clinics – now being rolled out. Rotation arrangements for new managers and emerging managers underway, and additional training.</li> <li>• Review of payroll and people systems underway, to reduce repetition and administration, provide a better service to managers and improve the experience for new recruits. Likely to be completed by end of year.</li> <li>• Greater support for all colleagues impacted by parental leave rules - by means of detailed guidance, simple language and advice - being developed.</li> <li>• Council Culture Working Group completed phase of work for 2023 – approval required by Council in September meeting.</li> <li>• Large volume of external recruitment for committee appointments completed.</li> <li>• Lieu time policy under construction for staff.</li> <li>• Review of notice periods underway.</li> <li>• Launch of Neurodiversity training for People team and ST to take place in Nov, followed by all-employee roll out by year end.</li> <li>• Career web page review underway to better promote career opportunities externally.</li> <li>• Apprentice recruitment underway – first apprentice recruitment (not apprenticeship funding).</li> <li>• Internal 'engagement hub' agreed, implementation prior to year-end.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
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"> <li>Ensure database upgrade includes a flexible customer interface.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>Platforms for NPL, PDR and Stanley (PSS) purchased late spring 2023 from supplier.</li> <li>CRM review project has been through robust process, project board will make recommendation to Finance and Resources Committee in September.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>Peldon Rose hired to support commercial strategy and refurbishment approach. Meetings taken place with staff and Council, and staff survey taken place. Feasibility plan has been received. Work reports to HS Refurbishment Group.</li> <li>First set of tenants now exited HS; second set of tenants due to leave end of September.</li> <li>Tender process under way to select team to draw up refurbishment requirements.</li> <li>Planning applications due to be submitted.</li> </ul>
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.	Comms		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCVS comms survey of key stakeholders (including professions, public etc) to establish preferences and gain feedback.</li> <li>Use feedback to devise coms strategy to support strategic ambitions, departmental activities and stakeholder requirements.</li> <li>Produce social media guidance.</li> <li>Social media strategy under development as part of broader planning work.</li> <li>Development of Language/Content Style Guide underway as part of web content review.</li> <li>Brand development review ongoing, to be aligned with new building presentation.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
<p>10. Develop and implement a corporate social responsibility strategy that benefits an organisation that works in the public interest.</p>	<p>FRC Ops</p>	<p style="background-color: #FFA500;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental impact of any new building under consideration, plus how it can help us integrate into, and support, local community, for example, working with local schools.</li> <li>• Work ongoing with UK Health Alliance on Climate Change (UKHACC).</li> <li>• Regular reviews of investment portfolio to ensure it aligns with our values.</li> <li>• Push to encourage staff to make more use of volunteering days to support social responsibility of the organisation.</li> <li>• Working towards Investors in the Environment (iE) Silver once in new building (we secured Bronze for another year in 2023).</li> <li>• Consideration of carbon off-setting line in 2025 budget.</li> <li>• Sustainability considered for VN Pre-Registration Examinations. Reduction of single-use items, reuse, repurpose or recycle where possible.</li> <li>• Events strategy – eg around merchandise and give-aways – reflects environmental policy.</li> </ul>

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	13 September 2023
Title	Minutes of meeting of VN Education Committee held on 18 April 2023
Summary	Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee held on 18 April 2023
Decisions required	To approve
Attachments	none
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

**<sup>1</sup>Classifications 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.

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ol>

## Veterinary Nurse Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2023

<b>Members:</b>	* 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 Sophia Hoyland	-	HE student representative
	Miss Betsy Malamah-Thomas	-	Employer representative
	* Professor Elizabeth Mossop	-	Independent educationalist
	Mrs Sarah Parkhouse	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Sarah Reynolds-Golding	-	HE veterinary nursing provider (Deputy Chair)
	Mrs Perdi Welsh	-	Post-registration veterinary nurse provider
	Miss Leigh Willson	-	FE student representative

\*absent

<b>In attendance:</b>	Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
	Mrs Jasmine Curtis	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	-	Qualifications Manager
	Miss Abigayle Gomez	-	Senior Qualifications Officer
	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 Donna Cotton and Elizabeth Mossop.

### Declarations of interest

2. Two members declared an interest in relation to specific items on the agenda. These were noted at the relevant item and where considered necessary, the member left the meeting for the discussion of the item.

### Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) held on 21 February 2023

3. The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2023 as a correct record.

### Matters arising

4. There were no matters arising from the previous minutes other than those which were covered throughout the agenda.

### Veterinary Nursing update

5. The Director of Veterinary Nursing updated the Committee on recent developments and activities.
6. **Enrolments.** In the period between 1 August 2022 and 18 April 2023, 1,953 enrolment applications had been processed, and a further 128 applications were pending completion on receipt of payment.
7. **Registrations.** No applications had been received since the previous meeting from students requiring special consideration in respect of the completion of the required 1,800 practice training hours due to the effect of the Covid pandemic, but the provision would continue to remain in place for the time being to ensure that any students potentially affected could apply for consideration.
8. The registration department had been working with the universities for final year degree students, to ensure that students would be registration-ready at the point of achievement of their award, rather than having to wait for the official graduation before they could enter the Register. This would avoid the need for a temporary registration process which had been necessary when there was a gap of more than a few weeks between award and graduation, providing a cost saving for the students and enabling them to work as an RVN on conferment of their award, before their celebratory graduation event. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.
9. It was commented that the new registration-ready process would be very helpful to universities and students alike. It was noted that this process would only be available to those universities with full accreditation, and not to any with provisional or terminal accreditation, whose students may be required to sit the Pre-registration examination.
10. **VN Awareness Month (May).** A support course for newly registered nurses had been developed with the RCVS Academy and was on target to be launched in May to coincide with VN Awareness Month. The VN Futures team had been working on an animated video to support the interim report which had been published in September 2022 showing the achievements over the past five years, to be launched at BVA Live in May.
11. **Veterinary Nurses' Day.** The venue for the next Veterinary Nurses' Day would be the Westminster Central Hall in London, on Friday 16 June.



12. **VN recruitment.** The new Senior Qualifications Officer had started in post in March, and an additional Qualifications Assessor was due to start in mid-May. The recruitment process was still ongoing for an Examinations Assessor.
13. **VNEC Terms of Reference (ToR).** The current ToR included representation on VNEC from education providers delivering a degree or further education qualification, but there was currently no representation from an awarding organisation from a regulatory perspective. The ToR therefore needed to be updated to include these representatives, for submission to VN Council for approval at its May meeting, and the Director of Veterinary Nursing would circulate the proposed amended ToR for approval, by email.

## Matters for decision

### Licence to practise qualifications

#### Accreditations and Re-accreditations

14. The Committee reviewed and discussed reports and action plans and took the following decisions:
15. **New accreditation - University Centre Askham Bryan**  
Provisional accreditation for the following programme:
  - FdSc Veterinary Nursing
16. **Re-accreditation - University of Glasgow**  
Full accreditation for the following programme:
  - BSc Veterinary Nursing / BSc(Hons) Veterinary Nursing
17. **Standard Classifications**  
The Qualifications Manager (QM) summarised the background to this item. When the reporting format for accreditation visits and quality monitoring reports had been updated a few years ago, following discussion with ENQA (The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) it had been decided to use three options for classification of each standard – “met”, “partially met” or “not met” and this system had been in use for one year. However, VNEC had identified a difficulty when reviewing some accreditation reports, in determining the overall classification when a number of “partially met” classifications had been identified. It had therefore been decided to remove the “partially met” option, and the system currently in use offered two options “met” or “not met”.
18. The Education Quality Improvement Manager (EQM) had identified as part of her review of the accreditation process that panel members had at times struggled with only two options and had informally discussed re-introducing the option of “partially met”. The EQM presented a paper setting out the rationale for introducing a third option of “partially met”, including examples of recent situations where difficulties had occurred. This would also bring VN practice in line with classification options used for both veterinary surgeon and ENQA accreditations, both of which have a three-point scale.

19. The QM acknowledged the difficulties which VNEC had encountered at times when the “partially met” category had been in use, but commented that the accreditation process and standards had changed since that time, and the same difficulties were less likely to arise in future.
20. Some concerns were raised by Committee members regarding the re-introduction of the “partially met” category and it was felt that if this were introduced, it would be necessary to ensure that the panels had sufficient training to ensure that they were clear in the requirements and could fully support the reasons for their decisions. It was also felt that the robustness and rationale for use of the category should be the responsibility of the Chair of the event. The QM suggested that more in-depth training for the Chairs would be appropriate to assist with this.
21. In summarising, the EQM added that part of her role at accreditation events was to ensure that there was a consistent application of the standards. Following this, the review of the report by the QM allowed questioning and clarification where necessary, followed by review of the detailed report by VNEC and questioning where necessary. These three levels ensured the robustness of the system. The QM added that the Senior Qualifications Officer would be attending visits and part of her role would be to ensure consistency in the reporting.
22. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Committee agreed that the category “partially met” should be re-introduced to the reporting format. This should be used for all reports including quality monitoring audits and it was confirmed that staff members using these reports would also be undertaking standardisation training. It was further agreed that the revised format should be introduced with immediate effect if this was realistic for the quality team.
23. **Accreditation visitor approval**  
The Committee was provided with the completed person specifications, Curriculum Vitae and CPD records for four proposed panel members at accreditation events. It was clarified that panel members should have a qualification equivalent to or at a higher level than the one being accredited. The applications were discussed in detail by the Committee, including which panel each applicant should be allocated to. One applicant was appointed for Further Education (FE) and two for Higher Education (HE) and advanced veterinary nursing programmes. One applicant would be requested to supply further information before a decision could be taken.

### VN Pre-registration Examination

24. **Development of Pre-registration knowledge examination**  
VNEC had previously agreed to add a knowledge examination to the RCVS Pre-registration Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). An examination developer had been recruited by the RCVS to develop this examination, and the Examinations Manager presented in detail a paper outlining the process undertaken and the proposed structure of the examination.

25. It was proposed that the examination should be in the form of a multiple-choice question (MCQ) examination, held using Computer Based Testing (CBT), with three opportunities per year to sit the examination. A draft of the assessment outcomes documents outlining what the test would cover was also provided. Research had been carried out with some overseas educated veterinary nurses, including candidates and former candidates, to assist with consideration of the time to be allowed for each question. The document was also being reviewed by Kathy Kissick, a VN Council member and educational expert, as a critical friend. The Committee was asked to review in detail the proposals and the process set out in the paper.
26. There was some discussion on the separation of the three sections of the examination into discrete papers, and whether they could be spaced out over a period of, for example a week, with candidates having the option to sit all three papers in one week, or deferring one or two sections to another examination session to accommodate different types of learners. Whilst this would be possible, the Committee was reminded that there are three examination sessions per year, and the rules currently state that candidates must achieve the whole examination, including the OSCE, within eighteen months. This system could result in candidates taking a year to pass the knowledge section of the examination, or longer if re-sits were required.
27. It was noted that certain systems of on-demand proctored examinations would not be feasible due to the costs involved, as the examination must be self-financing. Details of possible systems would be brought back to the next meeting. The EM answered questions from the Committee regarding examination security, the number of questions per section and the standard setting method. It was confirmed that the level of the examination was set at Level 3, equal to European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level 4.
28. Arising from the discussions on the separation of the sections and the number of questions in each, it was suggested that these could be reviewed with a view to possibly redistributing the questions to enable a split into two equal or nearly equal sections/papers rather than three. This would be taken back to the examination developer for consideration.
29. Regarding number of examination attempts, it had previously been agreed that there should be no limit to the number of attempts, but in practice the progress of candidates serially failing was reviewed. Regarding examination preparation, it was intended to develop a module to be added to the Academy to cover examination preparation.
30. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Committee confirmed its agreement to the general process and procedures set out in the paper. The examination developer would be asked to review the sections with a view to creating two sections. The question of online proctoring and logistical details would be brought to the next meeting. The Committee thanked the EM for all the work which had been put into this development.

## Matters for note

### Licence to practise qualifications

#### 31. **Pre-accreditation support**

The Qualifications Manager provided a report on the current status of the pre-accreditation support package for all Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) and meetings which had been planned for the current year. Feedback continued to be extremely positive. It was confirmed that the support package would be mandatory for any new provision.

### Action plan monitoring accreditation/re-accreditation

#### Quality Monitoring activities

32. The Committee was provided with papers setting out full updates on quality monitoring activities and the actions which had been taken, for the following Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) and centres:

- Royal Agricultural University / Plumpton College
- University of Portsmouth

### Action plan quality monitoring - quality assurance

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

- Anglia Ruskin University
- Coleg Gwent
- Coleg Sir Gar
- Goddard Veterinary Nursing College
- Hartpury University
- Lantra Awards
- North Highland College
- Reaseheath College
- Royal Agricultural University / Plumpton College
- South Staffordshire College
- University of Central Lancashire
- University of Chester
- University of Glasgow (SRUC Aberdeen)
- University of South Wales
- Wrexham Glyndwr University

### Post registration qualifications

#### Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing Action plan monitoring

34. **Hartpury University.** It was reported that the remaining action was progressing.

## VN Pre-registration Examination

### 35. VN Pre-registration Examination Board (PREB)

The Committee noted the minutes from the PREB meeting held in March to review the examination results for the February 2023 OSCE. There had been 31 candidates for the examination, five of whom had been educated in the UK. 22 candidates had passed the examination (71%). One candidate had sat the equine examination. It was likely that the June examination would need to take place over three days.

## Items for publication

36. It was suggested that the introduction of the new “partially met” classification for accreditation and audit reports should be included within the qualification handbook.

## Any other business

37. The Committee was informed that VetSkill had contacted its centres regarding mechanisms to identify AI plagiarism.

## Meeting dates 2023

38. The remaining meeting dates for 2023 were confirmed as follows:
- Wednesday 14 June (in person) – to be held at the Royal College of Nursing, London W1G 0RN, starting at 10.30am
  - Thursday 10 August
  - Thursday 12 October
  - Monday 11 December
- Remote meetings would start at 9.30am.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	13 September 2023
Title	Minutes of meeting of VN Education Committee held on 14 June 2023
Summary	Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee held on 14 June 2023
Decisions required	To approve
Attachments	none
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

**<sup>1</sup>Classifications 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.

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ol>

## Veterinary Nurse Education Committee

### Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2023

<b>Members:</b>	Mrs Donna Cotton	-	Employer representative
	Mr Nick Cutland	-	FE Independent regulatory expert
	* 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 Sophia Hoyland	-	HE student representative
	Miss Betsy Malamah-Thomas	-	Employer representative
	* Professor Elizabeth Mossop	-	Independent educationalist
	Mrs Sarah Parkhouse	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Sarah Reynolds-Golding	-	HE veterinary nursing provider (Deputy Chair)
	Mrs Perdi Welsh	-	Post-registration veterinary nurse provider
	Miss Leigh Willson	-	FE student representative

\*absent

<b>In attendance:</b>	Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
	Mrs Jasmine Curtis	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	-	Qualifications Lead (QL)
	Miss Abigayle Gomez	-	Senior Qualifications Officer
	Mr Matthew Hall	-	Qualifications Assessor
	# Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	VN Examinations Quality Lead (VNEQL)
	Miss Lisa Hilton	-	Examinations Assessor
	Mrs Kirsty Williams	-	Education Quality Improvement Manager (EQIM)

#remote

### Apologies for absence

- The committee introduced themselves, and welcomed Nick Cutland to his first meeting, as the independent Further Education (FE) regulatory expert, as well as two new members of the VN team, Matthew Hall (Qualifications Assessor) and Lisa Hilton (Examinations Assessor). Apologies for absence were received from Julia Cox, Sarah Fox, Sarah Holman and Elizabeth Mossop.

### Declarations of interest



2. Two members declared an interest in relation to specific items on the agenda. These were noted at the relevant item and where considered necessary, the member left the meeting for the discussion of the item.

#### Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) held on 18 April 2023

3. The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2023 as a correct record.

#### Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) held on 23 May 2023

4. The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2023 as a correct record.

#### Matters arising

5. There were no matters arising from the previous minutes other than those which were covered throughout the agenda.

#### Veterinary Nursing update

6. **ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education).** The Director of Veterinary Nursing thanked those members of the committee who had participated in the recent ENQA review, and the Education Quality Improvement Manager (EQIM) provided a brief update. Full feedback from ENQA was due in early August, and initial feedback at the time had generally been positive, and it had been commented that the RCVS core values of compassion, clarity, courage and confidence had been evident throughout all areas. The panel had commended the prompt reaction to the issues with the new VN accreditation standards and the prompt introduction of the pre-accreditation support package, driven by VNEC. Other areas commented on had been student engagement, and training. The full report would be provided to the committee when available.
7. **ACOVENE (Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education).** Two members of the VN team had recently been involved in accreditation events in two European schools. ACOVENE had updated its Dossier of Competences, which was now aligned with the RCVS Day One Competences, and the updated policies and procedures were due to be approved by the ACOVENE Board at its next meeting.
8. **VN Awareness Month (May).** The RCVS Academy had launched its support course for newly registered veterinary nurses in May, to coincide with VN Awareness Month. The course can be accessed by all veterinary nurses, and comments received from the pilot group indicated that it was very useful for all veterinary nurses.

9. There were now twenty five RVNs employed withing the RCVS, across a variety of departments. Some of the nurses had provided case studies highlighting their roles, which had been made available during VN Awareness Month.
10. **VN Futures.** The animation which had been prepared covering the VN Futures strategy had been launched at the British Veterinary Association (BVA) Congress in May, as planned. A planning meeting would be held after the AGM in July.
11. **Veterinary Nurses' Day.** The next Veterinary Nurses' Day would take place on Friday 16 June in London, with 350 attendees expected of whom 123 would be newly registered veterinary nurses. It was confirmed that there would be no Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN) holders at the ceremony, and the process for inviting CertAVN achievers was outlined. The relevant HEIs would be informed when CertAVN achievers had been invited to a Veterinary Nurses' Day. A further VN Day would be organised for October or November 2023.
12. **City & Guilds.** The certification end date for the City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing was 31 August 2023. A set of FAQs had been provided to all centres delivering this award with current students, which would also be posted on the RCVS website. All Awarding Organisations were being asked to provide update information on current students and their status.
13. **Registrations.** Eight applications for veterinary nurse registration had been received since the previous meeting, from students requiring special consideration in respect of the completion of the required 1,800 practice training hours due to the effect of the Covid pandemic. As the number of hours completed by each of these students did not fall below the required threshold for additional auditing activity to be carried out, all eight had been permitted to proceed to registration. The provision would continue to remain in place for the time being. It was confirmed that in any cases where the hours had fallen below the required threshold, additional evidence would be requested to show how the standards had been met, rather than additional training hours.
14. **Nursing Progress Log (NPL).** The NPL was now wholly owned by the RCVS, allowing more flexibility to deal with any issues that may arise. The Qualifications Officer was working with the IT team on the development of a training platform for users, and a temporary fix had been provided until this was up and running.
16. **Enrolments.** In the period between 1 August 2022 and 14 June 2023, 2,196 enrolment applications had been processed, and a further 123 applications were awaiting completion requiring either receipt of payment, correction of details, or completion of the cohort. It was suggested that it would be useful to have information on the numbers of RVNs leaving the profession and whether there were any trends that could be identified in regard to entrants by the HE or the FE route. It was confirmed that although the entry route (HE, FE or overseas) was known, there is no such information available on those leaving the profession, or the reasons. There are currently over 22 thousand active RVNs.

## Matters for decision

### Licence to practise qualifications

#### Accreditations and Re-accreditations

17. The Committee reviewed and discussed reports and action plans and took the following decisions:
18. **Central Qualifications**  
Full accreditation for a period of two years for the following programmes:
- CQ Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing Small Animal Practice
  - CQ Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing Equine Practice
19. **Coventry University**  
Full accreditation for a twelve-month period for the Coventry University veterinary nursing degree programmes:
- FdSc Veterinary Nursing
  - BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing
20. **Harper Adams University**  
Full accreditation for a twelve month period for the Harper Adams University veterinary nursing degree programmes listed below:
- BSc/BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing
  - BSc/BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing with Companion Animal Behaviour
  - BSc/BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing with Small Animal Rehabilitation
21. **Nottingham Trent University**  
Full accreditation for five years for the Foundation Degree (FdSc) Veterinary Nursing Science awarded by Nottingham Trent University.

#### Changes to accreditation status

22. **University of Chester**  
Change of status from Provisional accreditation to Full accreditation for the existing BSc(hons) in Veterinary Nursing.
23. **External Examiners**  
The Committee was provided with a paper detailing all current External Examiner (EE) appointments for licence to practise and post-registration qualifications, which had been prepared following a thorough review. It was noted that EE updates had historically been provided for note at every Committee meeting. However, due to the fixed term nature of the role, it was suggested that this paper should in future become an annual update. The

Committee was in full agreement with this suggestion, and going forward, this would be an agenda item for the August meeting of the Committee, starting in 2024. Any major changes in the interim would, of course, be notified to the Committee.

### Post-Registration qualifications

#### 24. **Programme changes – Hartpury University**

The Committee considered and agreed that the proposed changes to the following programmes:

- 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

### Matters for note

#### Licence to practise qualifications

#### 25. **QAA Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies**

The EQIM reported that in May, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) had held a PSRB (Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies) forum. One item arising in the discussion was that the UCU (University and College Union) was requesting its members, as part of an ongoing pay and working conditions dispute, to carry out a boycott on marking and assessment. The boycott had started in April and was likely to last until September, and not all members were taking part.

26. QAA had provided good guidelines, and these would be circulated with the minutes of the meeting. The Director of Veterinary Nursing reported that the RCVS had not heard of any veterinary nursing students being affected.

27. The Committee agreed that it was necessary to be proactive in this situation, and that each university should be contacted to enquire whether they were engaging in the action, and if so, how any issues were being mitigated and what information was being provided to students. The possibility of strike action and its effects on students should also be monitored.

28. The issue of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its impact had also been discussed.

#### 29. **Pre-accreditation support**

The Qualifications Lead provided a report on the current status of the pre-accreditation support package for all Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) and meetings which had been planned for the current year. Four institutions with current provision were still due to

receive a support visit. Information was also provided on approaches which had been made by other potential AEs hoping to deliver VN training.

30. The EQIM reported that she had been conducting a thematic analysis in order to discover the impact of the support visits.

### Action plan monitoring accreditation/re-accreditation

31. Brief oral updates were provided on the action plan monitoring for the following:
- University of Bristol
  - University Centre Askham Bryan

### Quality Monitoring activities

#### 32. **Self Assessment Reports (SARs) and risk rating**

The Committee noted a report of the review of the annual the self-assessment reports submitted by the Awarding Organisations, Higher Education Institutions and delivery centres, including CertAVN provision. The data and content 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. Changes in the risk ratings had been identified, and meetings had taken place with any institutions where specific concerns had been raised.

33. The Committee was provided with papers setting out full updates on quality monitoring activities and the actions which had been taken, for the following Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) and centres:
- College of West Anglia
  - Lite Limited
  - University of Plymouth

### Action plan quality monitoring - quality assurance

34. Oral updates were provided on the monitoring of action plans and future planned actions for the following AEs and centres:
- Central Qualifications
  - Royal Agricultural University / Plumpton College
  - Coleg Sir Gar
  - Goddard Veterinary Nursing College
  - Lantra Awards
  - North Highland College
  - Reaseheath College
  - South Staffordshire College
  - University of Chester
  - University of Portsmouth
  - Wrexham Glyndwr University

### Items for publication

35. No specific items were identified.

#### **Any other business**

36. The Chair commented that the reintroduction of the 'partially met' category into the accreditation and audit reports, following the discussion and agreement at the previous meeting of the Committee, had been helpful. Accreditation visitors had been fully briefed in the use of this category.
37. The Chair requested that for future reports, the cover sheet should contain a summary box listing each standard and which had been met, partially met or not met, to aid in consideration of the overall report. This would be implemented for the next meeting.
38. In regard to risk rating, it was agreed that the current risk rating could be included in the cover sheet for relevant papers.
39. It was suggested that the bookmarking in the Board Effect meeting book could be looked at to see if this could be made clearer.

#### **Meeting dates 2023**

40. The remaining meeting dates for 2023 were confirmed as follows:
- Thursday 10 August
  - Thursday 12 October
  - Monday 11 December
- Remote meetings would start at 9.30am.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	13 September 2023
Title	Minutes of meeting of VN Education Committee held on 10 August 2023
Summary	Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee held on 10 August 2023
Decisions required	To approve
Attachments	Annex A – Format of pre-registration knowledge examination
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a

**<sup>1</sup>Classifications 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.

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ol>



## Veterinary Nurse Education Committee

### Minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2023 held remotely via Teams

<b>Members:</b>	Mrs Sarah Batt-Williams	-	HE veterinary nursing provider
	Mr Nick Cutland	-	FE Independent regulatory expert
	* 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 Sophia Hoyland	-	HE student representative
	Miss Betsy Malamah-Thomas	-	Employer representative
	* Professor Elizabeth Mossop	-	Independent Educationalist
	* Mrs Sarah Parkhouse	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Sarah Reynolds-Golding	-	HE independent regulatory expert
	* Mrs Perdi Welsh	-	Post-registration veterinary nurse provider
	Miss Leigh Willson	-	FE student representative

\*absent

<b>In attendance:</b>	Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
	Mrs Jasmine Curtis	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	-	Qualifications Lead (QL)
	Miss Abigayle Gomez	-	Senior Qualifications Officer
	Mr Matthew Hall	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	VN Examinations Quality Lead (VNEQL)
	Miss Lisa Hilton	-	Examinations Assessor
	Mrs Kirsty Williams	-	Education Quality Improvement Manager (EQIM)

### Apologies for absence

1. The Committee introduced themselves, and welcomed Sarah Batt-Williams to her first meeting, as the HE veterinary nursing provider representative. Apologies for absence were received from Julia Cox, Sarah Holman, Sophia Hoyland, Elizabeth Mossop, Sarah Parkhouse and Perdi Welsh.

### Declarations of interest

2. There were no declarations of interest relevant to items for decision on the agenda.

### Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) 14 June 2023

3. The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2023 as a correct record.

### Matters arising

4. There were no matters arising from the previous minutes other than those which were covered throughout the agenda.

### Veterinary Nursing update

7. **City & Guilds (C&G).** The certification end date for the City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing was 31 August 2023. Two other Awarding Organisations (AOs), Central Qualifications and VetSkill, had both run OSCEs recently to include City & Guilds students, so that those achieving could meet the certification end date. The RCVS would be able to provide full information at the next meeting on the number of students who had not been eligible to be certificated under the C&G award, including those who had withdrawn from training and those who had transferred to other AOs.
8. **Veterinary Nurses' Day.** The next Veterinary Nurses' Day would take place on 7 December 2023 in Cutlers Hall, Sheffield. The RCVS would contact all Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN) providers with the date and details. Going forward, details of the VN Days would continue to be shared with the providers well in advance, so that they could encourage those achieving the CertAVN to attend.
9. **QAA (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) Benchmarks.** The QAA Subject Benchmark statements for veterinary nursing were currently under review, and the RCVS was part of the review panel. It was likely that the consultation to the professions would take place in October, and would include Levels 5, 6 and 7, and other new items such as sustainability, equality, diversity and inclusion.
10. **ACOVENE (Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education).** The ACOVENE Board had recently reviewed and updated its Accreditation Standards and would be sending these to the accredited schools and affiliated regulators for feedback and comment, to be put to the Board meeting in early November. Andrea Jeffery had been a member of the working group, to provide an ex-VN Council and RCVS perspective. Once finalised, the revised Standards would be put to VN Council to confirm that holders of ACOVENE accredited qualifications under these revised standards could continue to be accepted on to the RCVS Register of veterinary nurses without further assessment.
11. **Registrations.** Two applications for veterinary nurse registration had been received since the previous meeting, from students requiring special consideration in respect of the completion of the required 1,800 clinical training hours due to the effect of the Covid pandemic. As the number of hours completed by each of these students did not fall below

the required threshold for additional auditing activity to be carried out, both had been permitted to proceed to registration.

12. **VN Futures.** There would be a VN Futures session at the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) Congress in October, looking at the RCVS Academy's Starting Out course for newly registered VNs, and other Academy courses. BVNA had agreed that with effect from 2024, a half-day slot would be allocated at each annual congress for VN Futures.
13. **RCVS Academy.** The RCVS Academy had launched its support course for newly registered veterinary nurses in May. Other courses which had been developed for veterinary nurses, with collaboration from the VN team, included the pre-registration course for overseas educated veterinary nurses and the clinical supervisor course. The Academy was currently working on a nurse returner course, to include the requirements for the Period of Supervised Practice, and future plans included mentoring guidance and support for External Examiners reviewing VN provision.
14. **ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education).** The report from the ENQA visitation in June had now been received and was being checked for factual accuracy. Due to ENQA's requirement to use external panel members for accreditations, there was a need to review the VN accreditation fees. The current fee for an accreditation (£4,820) was well below the costs of the event, which includes the fees and expenses for the required external expert panel and administrative costs, as well as the associated work of the VN team. The fees had been reviewed and would be increased. Initially this would be communicated directly to the Awarding Organisations (AOs) and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and then more widely to the professions. The revised accreditation fee for a licence to practise qualification would be £12,500 with an additional charge of £500 for each additional qualification awarded by the same institution, and £7,400 for a CertAVN accreditation. The revised fee structure would come into effect from January 2024.
15. Other points which were made in discussion, and in response to queries from the Committee, were:
  - The realistic cost of a licence to practise accreditation was in the region of £20,000.
  - It was not known how the fees compared with similar events in other countries, but the fees are very competitive in comparison with other UK regulators.
  - There is no charge made for visitations to UK veterinary schools, as this is a requirement of the Veterinary Surgeons Act, and charges are not permitted. The costs to the RCVS of these visits would be similar (approximately 20K per visit).
  - The charge for an ENQA accreditation visit, which is comparative in length to a VN accreditation visit, is €30,000.00, as well as an annual fee.
  - The additional proposed £500 fee would be for each additional programme awarded, not for one programme set at two different levels.
16. Committee members expressed support for the increase in fees.

### Matters for decision

## Licence to practise qualifications

### Accreditations

The Committee reviewed and discussed reports and action plans and took the following decisions:

17. **University of Greenwich**  
Provisional accreditation for the FdSc in Veterinary Nursing delivered by Plumpton College.

### Changes to accreditation status

18. **Royal Agricultural University**  
Voluntary Terminal accreditation for the FdSc Veterinary Nursing delivered by Plumpton College.
19. **Wrexham Glyndwr University**  
Full accreditation for the FdSc in Veterinary Nursing.
20. **Accreditation panel member approval**  
The Committee considered the completed person specifications, Curriculum Vitae and CPD records for two proposed panel members at accreditation events. Both applicants were appointed as educator representatives for licence to practise and advanced nursing programmes.
21. In a general discussion of the application process, it was agreed that additional guidance to aid applicants in completing the required documentation, would be considered.

### Programme changes

22. **University of Chester**  
Programme changes to the BSc(Hons) had been agreed and were noted.

### VN Pre-registration Examination

23. **Development of Pre-registration knowledge examination**  
At its meeting on 18 April 2023 the Committee had agreed a number of aspects of the design and delivery of the new knowledge examination. Two aspects (number of papers and compensation within the examination) had been undecided and the Committee had requested that the Examinations team consider reducing the number of sections from three to two, with both sections having an equal number of questions.
24. The VN Examinations Quality Lead (VNEQL) presented a paper setting out the points previously agreed, and three options for consideration. All three options contained 200

questions, with a differing number of papers and sections. The different options, together with the pros and cons, were set out in considerable detail.

25. The VNEQL explained the current situation in regard to computer based testing and online proctoring of examinations, and the related costings.
26. Following a full discussion, the Committee agreed the details as outlined in Annex A. The examinations team would work on developing the detail of the examination and incorporate the details into the candidate handbook. Prospective candidates had been made aware of the introduction of the knowledge examination for the past two years. The examination would be introduced for any applicant with effect from October 2023.

### Matters for note

#### Licence to practise qualifications

27. **Pre-accreditation support**  
The Qualifications Lead (QL) provided a detailed report on the current status of the pre-accreditation support package for Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) and meetings which had been planned for the current year. Fifteen institutions had now undertaken the support and four institutions with current provision were still due to receive a support visit. Two new providers had also contacted the RCVS regarding potential delivery of veterinary nursing provision.
28. The paper also set out information demonstrating the impact of the support package, programme by programme, comparing the accreditation decisions taken in the current academic year with the previous accreditation decisions, taken before the implementation of the support package. The response to the support package had been overwhelmingly positive, with good feedback provided by AEIs which had already undertaken the in-person visits. The support visits are encouraging the AEIs to review their own compliance and customise the suggested evidence examples in order to demonstrate their specific approaches.
29. The Committee agreed that this provided a positive endorsement of the RCVS approach and the work of the VN team. The EQIM added that this had also been recognised by ENQA. ENQA had been impressed by the rapid response, so this had also been externally validated as good practice. Qualitative feedback collected after the events by the EQIM had been positive.
30. It was noted that a number of educator meetings were planned for the Autumn, to maintain the communication channels.

#### Action plan monitoring accreditation/re-accreditation

31. Oral updates were provided on the action plan monitoring for the following:
  - Central Qualifications

- University of Glasgow
- University of Bristol
- University Centre Askham Bryan
- Nottingham Trent University
- Coventry University
- Harper Adams University

### Quality Monitoring activities

32. The Committee was provided with papers setting out full updates on quality monitoring activities and the actions which had been taken, for the following Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) and centres:
- Northumberland College
  - Solihull College and University Centre
  - SRUC Oatridge
  - University of London / Royal Veterinary College
  - University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN)

### Action plan quality monitoring - quality assurance

33. Oral updates were provided on the monitoring of action plans and future planned actions for the following AEIs and centres:
- College of West Anglia
  - Goddard Veterinary Nursing College
  - Lantra Awards
  - LITE Limited
  - Royal Agricultural University / Plumpton College
  - South Staffordshire College
  - University of Plymouth
  - University of Portsmouth
  - Wrexham Glyndwr University
  - Central Qualifications
  - Nottingham Trent University
  - University of Chester

### VN Pre-Registration Examination Board Minutes

34. The VNEQL presented the report of the Pre-registration Examination Board which had met on 21 July 2023 to consider the results of OSCEs held on 30 June to 2 July 2023.
35. Forty-nine candidates had entered the examination. Eighteen candidates were UK trained students and thirty were educated outside the UK. Thirty-seven passed and eleven failed.
36. At the most recent examinations all gloves, aprons, cardboard, and plastic had been recycled, and the VNEQL had submitted a paper to be included in the Investors in Environment (IIE) report. The RCVS had retained the IIE Bronze award for the second

consecutive year. The recycling process would be carried forward into all future examinations and would become more streamlined in the process.

37. The next examination would be held in November 2023, with a maximum limit of 40 candidates. The dates for 2024 which had been agreed were:
- 2-4 February 2024 maximum 60 candidates
  - 21-23 June 2024 maximum 60 candidates
  - 9-10 November 2024 maximum 40 candidates

### UCU Strike Action

38. The Committee noted a paper which provided overview of the University and College Union (UCU) strike action which may impact VN provision, and the mitigations in place. According to the communications received, no VN provision was impacted by the strike action at present. The VN Department would continue to liaise with the AElS regarding ongoing strike action, however, there currently appeared to be no cause for concern.

### Items for publication

39. Future publications would include information on the dates for Veterinary Nurses Days in 2024, and the revised accreditation fees.

### Any other business

40. The Chair noted that this would have been the last meeting as a member of the Committee for Professor Liz Mossop, who was unable to attend. Liz had been a member of VNEC, as the independent educationalist, since its first meeting in March 2013, and had contributed hugely to the work of the Committee for over ten years. Liz had also chaired the Pre-registration exam Board from its start, for several years. The Committee wished to record its thanks for her significant contribution, support and wise advice over the years.
41. It was reported that the development of an online enrolment process for the CertAVN was in progress.
42. The Committee reiterated its thanks for the new cover sheet summary format for accreditation and auditing reports, which had been immensely helpful. This would be continued for future meetings.

### Meeting dates 2023

43. The remaining meeting dates for 2023 were confirmed as follows:
- Thursday 12 October
  - Monday 11 December
- Meetings would be remote, starting at 9.30am

Annex A

**Pre-registration Knowledge examination**

Number of sections	<p>Examination delivered in three sections.</p> <p>Section 1 Preparing to deliver patient care.</p> <p>Section 2a Application of patient care</p> <p>Section 2b Being an accountable professional within veterinary practice.</p> <p>Section 2a and 2b will be in separate sections of the same examination paper.</p>
Number of Questions	<p>Section 1- 100</p> <p>Section 2a - 65</p> <p>Section 2b – 35</p> <p>Total number of questions = 200</p>
Total testing time based on 1 minute 20 seconds per question rounded up to the nearest 5 minutes	<p>Section 1- 2 hours 15 minutes</p> <p>Section 2a - 1 hour 30 minutes</p> <p>Section 2b – 50 minutes</p> <p>Total testing time for Section 2 - 2 hours 20 minutes.</p> <p>Total testing time 4 hours 35 minutes</p>
Delivery	<p>All sections to be sat in same examination window – Section 1 will be in one session on one day with sections 2a and 2b being combined into one examination paper. Sections 2a and 2b must both be passed –No compensation permitted between sections 2a and 2b. The examination fee to be £250.00</p> <p>Candidates who fail one or more sections will be permitted to re-sit the failed section(s) at the next examination window. The examination fee for re-sit examinations to be the same £250.00, regardless of the number of sections to be taken.</p>



<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	13 September 2023
Title	Minutes from the meeting of the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee held on 14 July 2023
Summary	Minutes from the meeting of the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee held on 14 July 2023
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education <a href="mailto:j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk">j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0701

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

**<sup>1</sup>Classifications 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.

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ol>

## CPD Policy and Compliance sub-committee Notes of the meeting held on 14 July 2023

**Present:** Linda Ford Chair  
 Jessica Beckett  
 Abbie Calow  
 Donna Lewis  
 Stephen May  
 Stephanie Richardson  
 Alison Reid  
 James Wood

**In attendance:** Julie Dugmore Director of Veterinary Nursing  
 Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education  
 Rebecca Smith Education Officer

### Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that Ms Roberts and Ms Bloor had sent their apologies. It was noted that it was Ms Roberts and Dr Calow's last meeting and they were thanked for their valuable contribution to the work of the committee.

### Minutes of the meeting on the 13 March 2023

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2023 were received and approved as a true and accurate record.

### Matters arising

3. All actions from previous meeting were covered by the agenda.

### 1CPD Data

4. The committee received and noted the 1CPD data report.
5. The committee were pleased to see increased number of 1CPD users and that CPD compliance for 2022 was around 90% for both veterinary surgeons and nurses that were using 1CPD. The committee felt that the positive news of increased compliance should be

highlighted in communication to members in order to show anyone not using 1CPD or not recording enough CPD that a large majority are meeting the requirement.

**Action: Update CPD Comms plan to highlight increased number of CPD compliant vets/RVNs.**

6. There were some concerns with how data was being presented in regard to reasons that members were non-compliant, leading to a misunderstanding amongst the committee as to the level and nature of non-compliance amongst those who are entitled to a reduced requirement due to reasons of parental leave etc. The committee asked that the data could be presented more clearly with correct data labels in order to get an accurate picture of reasons for not meeting the CPD requirement. A request was also made to remove from the data those who were exempt due to their non-practising status.

**Action: Education Department to update 1CPD data report format**

7. The committee discussed CPD while on parental leave and felt that it was important that vets and nurses are aware of their options regarding their CPD obligation, as they can change to non-practising register or temporarily remove their name from the register, but also that they can pause their CPD and count 'keeping in touch' (KIT) days towards the requirement. The committee felt that we should work with the registration department to review any financial disadvantages to changing status. Committee member AC agreed to work with the staff team to capture her feedback in respect of her own experience of parental leave to inform improvements to the process.

**Action: Update CPD Comms plan re options for parental leave**

**Action: Staff team to engage with Abbie Callow to address opportunities to improve the process and information provided for those on parental leave.**

The committee also discussed the use of terminology such as maternity and paternity and requested that the education department work with colleagues in registration and comms to ensure consistent use of the term 'parental leave' to ensure inclusivity.

**Action: terminology to be reviewed and updated.**

### **1CPD Development work**

8. The Committee received the paper about 1CPD development work and noted the priorities for development over the next few months.
9. The committee were concerned that 1CPD app was still not available for newer android phones but reassured that new upgrade had been built and testing was taken place so the upgrade would take place in the next few weeks.
10. Once the app has been updated further updates such as not counting hours of CPD until they have been reflected upon would be implemented and the committee discussed how that should be communicated to the professions.

11. The committee felt that it was an important function that would help the committee enforce the CPD requirement and thought it was important that comms explained that the new function was there to support users so that they could clearly see what learning they had reflected upon and what activities were still outstanding. The committee asked to be emailed details of the comms plan for raising awareness of the changes in 1CPD.

**Action: Comms plan for introducing the new 1CPD functionality to be emailed to committee**

12. The committee noted that once the current development priorities have been completed the RCVS IT development team would continue to work with other projects in the college however given other college wide priorities it was unlikely that further work and updates to 1CPD would take place in next 24 months. The committee were keen to ensure that technical issues or delays to the release of new functionality did not become a cause of non-compliance. The committee requested that the list of 1CPD development priorities and their status on the overall IT priority list, including anticipated delivery schedule, be a standing item on the committee agenda. If the committee becomes concerned that delays are having an adverse impact on members' CPD compliance the matter would be referred to Education Committee and Council with a recommendation for further investment to enable additional resourcing to allow delivery of the CPD functionality without compromise to other important initiatives.

**Action: Development schedule & priority status to be standing item on agenda**

### 1CPD Exemptions

13. The committee received and noted the three applications for 1CPD exemptions.
14. The first application had previously been circulated via email but committee felt it would be beneficial to discuss it in the meeting. They felt that in cases such as this it would be useful to have a limited licence as the vet was only practising in a very limited capacity and thought it would be useful insight to inform the Advancement of the profession committee (APC) that legislative work also had an impact on CPD compliance. The committee was satisfied that the vet had a legitimate reason for being unable to use 1CPD due to a disability and granted her an exemption.
15. In the second case a lot of information had been submitted in order to evidence the veterinary surgeon's inability to use computers and although the committee is not reviewing the vet from a fitness to practice point of view, they felt that they were unable to make a decision on the application until the Registrar had reviewed the information provided and advised the committee that granting an exemption would not cause a risk with regard to fitness to practise. Furthermore, the committee felt it would be useful to obtain clarity from the Registrar as to how to handle situations where evidence provided to the committee in support of an exemption application contained information pertaining to the registrant's fitness to practise.
16. The committee supported the Chair's proposal to introduce a declaration to the exemption application form asking the applicant to declare that the matters relevant to their request for an exemption did not affect their fitness to practise.

17. It was agreed that this suggestion, together with the request for guidance, be referred to the Registrar and if helpful the Chair would meet with the Registrar to discuss the committees' concerns.

**Action: Education department to refer the committees' queries and suggestion re a declaration to the Registrar for further guidance and arrange a meeting with the Chair if needed.**

**Action: Education Department to share the Registrars response by email to allow the committee to consider this case in light of the guidance received regarding fitness to practise implications.**

18. The third case involved a vet who claimed that they were digitally excluded because they were not using computer or other technical devices at all. The committee felt that as this vet was working in a clinical practice and had a supportive team to support them, they could get help from a colleague to update their 1CPD record and did not feel that they meet the requirement of being digitally excluded. The committee requested that the applicant be encouraged to obtain support from colleagues to use the app.

**Action: Education Department to update members of the outcomes of the applications**

#### **VetGDP update**

19. The committee was informed that the VetGDP subcommittee wanted to make changes to the VetGDP policy and enforce an 18-month deadline to complete the programme and change the number of CPD hours that graduates could claim when they complete VetGDP. Education Committee had made the decision that VetGDP should count as 35 hours of CPD, so the decision to change the policy would lie with Education Committee. The CPD committee was asked to support this request. The committee felt that they could not make a decision until they had further information including a rationale for the change in policy.

**Action VetGDP committee to provide rationale for the request to revise the CPD recognition given to the completion of VetGDP.**

#### **Any other business**

20. There were no other items of business to discuss.

#### **Follow up of non-compliant members**

*Alison Reid left the meeting for this item*

21. The committee received a report detailing the follow up of non-compliant members. The committee agreed with all recommendations in the report and felt that the non-compliant cases should be referred to the professional conduct department.

22. There are over 3000 members that are not using 1CPD, or have recorded just a few hours in 2022. They have been contacted via email but not responded to any communication. Further talks with the Registrar about next steps are planned and the committee will be updated about any progress.

### **Next Meeting**

23. Dates for the next meeting dates will be circulated to the committee.

**Action Education Department to circulate Meeting dates.**

Jenny Soreskog-Turp

July 2023

[j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk)

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	13 September 2023
Title	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee 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 Professional Conduct Officer / Secretary to the RVN PIC <a href="mailto:s.neary@rcvs.org.uk">s.neary@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0730</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct <a href="mailto:g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk">g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7202 0740</p>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a



**<sup>1</sup>Classifications 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.

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ol>

# 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 16 May, 27 June, and 8 August 2023. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 19 September.

### RVN Concerns received / registered.

2. Between 19 April and 30 August 2023, there were 13 new concerns relating to RVNs. Of these 13 new concerns:
  - One case was closed by the Stage 1 PIC.
  - Twelve are currently under investigation by a Case Manager, Veterinary Nurse, Veterinary surgeon, and a lay member (Stage 1 PIC).

### RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. There has been one new case considered by the RVN PIC between 19 April and 30 August 2023. A decision on this case was adjourned pending further investigation. At the meeting on 16 May, the Committee referred an ongoing case to the Disciplinary Committee. At the meeting on 27 June, the Committee decided to close one ongoing case and referred another ongoing case to the Disciplinary Committee. At the meeting on 8 August, the Committee considered an ongoing case which it decided to close with formal advice to the Respondent RVN.

### Ongoing Investigations

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

### Health Concerns

5. There are currently no RVNs 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, two cases have been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee and the hearing dates will be confirmed in due course.

### **Disciplinary Hearings**

8. A disciplinary hearing took place between 31 July and 3 August 2023 in relation to Melanie Herdman. The Disciplinary Committee found that Miss Herdman's actions amounted to serious professional misconduct and decided that Miss Herdman's registration should be suspended for a period of three months.

### **Operational Matters**

9. An online training session for PIC members in relation to the new Charter Case Committee took place on 18 July. On 22 August, a face-to-face training afternoon took place for PIC members which covered the new guidance for 'Under care'.
10. The RVN PIC has recently welcomed Kelly Tillet RVN and Jane Downes MRCVS whose terms began in July 2023.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	13 September 2023
Title	Disciplinary Committee Report
Summary	Update of RVN Disciplinary Committee
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Yemisi Yusuph Disciplinary Committee Clerk Tel: 020 7202 0729 Email: y.yusuph@rcvs.org.uk

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

**<sup>1</sup>Classifications 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.

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ol>

## Report of the RVN Disciplinary Committee

### Hearings

#### Melanie Herdman RVN

1. The RVN Committee met between Monday 31 July – Thursday 3 August to hear the Inquiry into Miss Herdman.
2. The Inquiry was in relation to three charges against her.
3. The first charge related to an intention to supply diazepam and/or tramadol for use by a friend. The second charge related to supplying diazepam and/or tramadol and/or gabapentin. The third charge related to providing advice on the dosages of diazepam and/or tramadol and/or gabapentin.
4. The full charges can be found here: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/herdman-melanie-july-2023-charges/>
5. Miss Herdman was not present at the hearing and was unrepresented, but the Committee determined that it was appropriate to proceed in her absence as she had been formally notified, was aware that the hearing was taking place and her absence was voluntary.
6. The first thing the Committee did was establish whether the facts of the case were found proved.
7. From the outset of the hearing Miss Herdman indicated her pleas to the charges, and admitted her intention to supply diazepam and/or tramadol and that she had provided advice on the dosages. She also admitted that she had supplied diazepam but strongly denied that she had supplied tramadol and/or gabapentin. Taking all the evidence into account (including messages sent by Miss Herdman and her admissions), the Committee found proven the charges in relation to the intent to supply and the advice on dosages. The Committee also found proven the charge in relation to the supply of diazepam, but found not proved the charge relating to the supply of tramadol and gabapentin for several reasons, including the fact that the messages sent by Miss Herdman did not point unequivocally to her actually supplying each of the drugs to which she referred. It should be noted that there was no suggestion that the diazepam was stolen from her place of work.
8. The Committee then went on to establish whether there had been serious professional misconduct.
9. The Committee found that Miss Herdman's actions had breached paragraphs 1.5 and 6.5 of the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses. In the Committee's judgment there were also a number of aggravating features of Miss Herdman's conduct, including that she was not qualified or authorised to prescribe medication to animals, let alone to human beings and that, in providing a controlled drug to a person who was already taking various painkilling medications, she had acted recklessly. In finding that Miss Herdman's actions amounted to serious professional misconduct, the Committee noted that, in addition to the obvious risk to the health of her friend, a reasonable and fully informed member of the public would be very

concerned to learn that a veterinary nurse had supplied a controlled drug to a friend for their personal use.

10. Lastly the Committee went on to consider the appropriate sanction to impose on Miss Herdman.
11. The Chair in this case Paul Morris, stated: *“Drawing all the material together, and considering the matter as a whole, the Committee had to impose a proportionate sanction for an isolated incident of serious professional misconduct which arose out of a misguided attempt to help a friend. The conduct in question was entirely out of keeping with Miss Herdman’s usual practice and there is no real risk that it will be repeated”*
12. The Committee concluded that the most appropriate sanction to impose on Miss Herdman was to enforce a 3 month suspension of her registration.
13. The full Committee decision can be found here: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/herdman-melanie-july-2023-decision-of-the-disciplinary/>