

## Ringling the on-call changes

### New guidance on emergency out-of-hours care

***“We really wanted to be open to the views of the profession and the public from the start.”***

**N**ew supporting guidance to the *Code of Professional Conduct* will place a greater emphasis on owners' legal responsibilities for their animals, as well as an obligation on veterinary surgeons to provide more information to clients about their out-of-hours emergency service. It will also provide guidance to assist and empower vets to decline to attend an animal away from the practice when unnecessary or unsafe.

The change follows RCVS Council's agreement in principle on recommendations that flowed from the Standards Committee's comprehensive review of 24/7 emergency care. The review was triggered by a number of issues, including the profession's response to the Chikosi Disciplinary Hearing of June 2013.

The recommendations were developed out of a detailed process of evidence gathering, which included 656 pages of views submitted to the College, 2,801 signatures to a petition on home visits, a three-day select-committee-style hearing where representatives from 15 organisations and a further 10 individuals gave their views, a snapshot of responses from 1,062 vets taking part in the RCVS Survey of the Professions, and an online survey of 1,250 animal owners.

#### Robust approach

At its 5 June meeting, Council praised the work, which had been carried out under the guidance of Standards Committee Chair Clare Tapsfield-Wright, and agreed that draft changes to the supporting guidance to the *Code of Professional Conduct* should be refined and signed off by the Standards Committee and published over the next couple of months.

Clare commented: “This process was not carried out as a typical consultation, with proposals being issued for consideration: we really wanted to be open to the views of the profession and the public from the start.

“We found that the profession did not wish to remove the 24/7 requirement, but there was a lot of frustration and concern, particularly around safety, home visits, who should be seen, outsourcing and contingency planning.

“The Standards Committee looked in detail at all of these issues and I am pleased to have Council's support for the general direction of our proposals. We will now review some changes to the wording of the new guidance, to improve clarity, and publish it as soon as possible.”

#### New model

President Neil Smith said: “I am delighted with the way this process has been carried out. No doubt the outcome will not please everyone, but these changes are based on robust evidence.

“The approach taken by the Standards Committee forms a useful model that could be adapted to address other such issues that we may face in the future.”

The presentation given to Council on 5 June can be downloaded from the our website at [www.rcvs.org.uk/247update](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/247update).



**In this issue:** new Treasurer, Queen's Medal winner, Charter progress, Tour de France preparation, CEO Overview, new VN Vice-Chair, fees frozen again, election results, Fellowship consultation, Service Charter, postnoms reprieve, Golden Jubilee winner, advice and guidance, registration rules, Advanced Practitioner Q&A, the history of CPD, RCVS Day information, EMS survey results, visitation update, VN job opportunity, events round up, PIC update, DC hearings, Knowledge launch.

# Postnominals won't all go

## Call for further consideration

**A**t its 5 June 2014 meeting, Council agreed to overturn a decision made in June 2012, when it opted to remove all postgraduate postnominals from the RCVS Register of Veterinary Surgeons, and look again at which qualifications should be included.

The original decision was made as part of a package of proposals to help clarify postgraduate skills and knowledge, in particular to help explain the difference between an accredited status and a qualification achieved at a particular point in time, and also to address the proliferation of qualifications that are included (and requested to be included) in the Register.

***"Although the requirements for clarity remain, Council listened to the unhappiness amongst members of the profession and has agreed to put the brakes on the original decision."***

The proposals also included the introduction of Advanced Practitioner status, as a level of skills and knowledge sitting between general practitioner and RCVS Specialist – the introduction of which is unaffected by this change.

A paper will come to a future meeting of Council with proposals about which qualifications will be included in the Register, and also the List/Register of Veterinary Nurses. Plans will also be developed to ensure greater clarity around postgraduate qualifications and status for both the public and the profession.

"Although the requirements for clarity remain, Council listened to the unhappiness amongst members of the profession and has agreed to put the brakes on the original decision," says CEO Nick Stace.

"I think this was the right choice. It is important that we recognise the tremendous efforts that the members of profession go to in order to further their skills and knowledge."

The papers considered by Council on 5 June can be downloaded from the RCVS website at [www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/rcvs-council/council-meetings/5-june-2014/](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/rcvs-council/council-meetings/5-june-2014/) and the minutes from the meeting will be available in due course.

# New Treasurer appointed

## Amanda Boag will take up post next month



**A**manda Boag (pictured), has been appointed as the new Treasurer, to replace Dr Bradley Viner, who was elected as the new (junior) Vice-President in March. Both will take up their new posts at RCVS Day in July.

Amanda is a Clinical Director at Vets Now and was first elected to Council for a four-year term in

2012. As Treasurer she will be responsible for maintaining an overview of the organisation's affairs, ensuring its financial viability and that proper financial records and procedures are maintained.

"I am very honoured to have been appointed Treasurer for the RCVS and am looking forward to working closely with other Council members and the Belgravia House team," says Amanda.

"I would particularly like to thank my predecessor Bradley Viner for the excellent work he has done over the past four years. This has been a period of great change for the College and during his tenure he has done a huge amount of work to support the improvements in governance, including standardising the way that the College's accounts are reported.

"Our finances are currently in a healthy state despite no increase in the annual renewal fee for several years. I am now looking forward to building on his legacy and ensuring the finances remain healthy allowing us to move forward with the organisation's Strategic Plan."

# Royal recognition

## Des Thompson is first ever recipient of RCVS Queen's Medal

**A**distinguished veterinary surgeon from Northern Ireland has been chosen as the first ever recipient of our new Queen's Medal, which recognises an outstanding contribution to the veterinary profession and is the highest honour that the College can bestow.

Des Thompson OBE, from Belfast, received two separate nominations for the award – one from John Hill, Chairman of Veterinary Northern Ireland, and the other from Anna Judson, a Council member of the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS).

***"What is clear from both of his nominations is the respect and admiration that the veterinary community in Northern Ireland, and beyond, has for him, and his commitment to representing the interests of the profession."***

Speaking of receiving the award, Mr Thompson commented: "To say I was surprised to hear that I had won the Queen's Medal would be the understatement of the year. I am humbled and honoured that my colleagues should consider me worthy of this prestigious award."

Both nominations cite Mr Thompson's decades of dedication to the profession, which has seen him

serve as President of the RCVS, the British Small Animal Veterinary Association, SPVS and the Northern Ireland Veterinary Association, among other organisations. In addition, he has been Chairman of Veterinary Northern Ireland, a trustee of the RCVS Trust (now RCVS Knowledge) and a Council member of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe.



RCVS President Colonel Neil Smith commented: "I am extremely pleased to announce Des Thompson as the first recipient of this very prestigious award. What is clear from both of his nominations is the respect and admiration that the veterinary community in Northern Ireland, and beyond, has for him, and his commitment to representing the interests of the profession, as demonstrated by his prodigious number of past-presidencies as well as the number of professional awards he has to his name."

Des Thompson's achievement will be recognised by the President at RCVS Day – the Annual General Meeting of the RCVS – on Friday 11 July.

See page 6 for details of how to make a nomination for the 2015 Queen's Medal.



# New Vice-Chair for VN Council

## Liz Cox takes up post in July

**The RCVS Veterinary Nurses Council has elected Liz Cox as one of its two new Vice-Chairs, effective from RCVS Day on 11 July.**

Liz Cox, who was voted onto Council in 2011, will take over from Liz Branscombe, who was Chair of VN Council from 2009 to 2011, prior to becoming Vice-Chair.

Traditionally, the second Vice-Chair is one of the veterinary surgeons appointed to VN Council by RCVS Council. Current Vice-Chair in this capacity, Christine Shield, will step down in July, and was thanked by VN Council members for her contribution to governance of the VN profession at its May meeting.

The replacement Vice-Chair will be appointed by RCVS Council in July.

Meanwhile, Kathy Kissick will remain as Chair for the twelve months from July.



# Fees frozen for fifth year

## Fees held again

**For the fifth year in a row RCVS Council has decided not to increase the annual renewal fees for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses.**

The decision to keep the fees for 2015 at £299 for UK-practising veterinary surgeons and £61 for veterinary nurses means that, taking into account inflation, the renewal fee has in effect been reduced since 2010. If the Retail Price Index were applied the current veterinary surgeons UK-practising renewal fee would be just over £340.

Furthermore, the annual renewal fee for veterinary surgeons is less than that of other statutory regulators, including the General Medical Council and General Dental Council.



Council was able to agree to freeze the fees for another year due to the fact that the College has substantial reserves. However, in future, the criteria for setting fees will take into account likely expenditure, level of reserves, growth in membership and inflation.

# Listening and responding



## Post-Council update

## Nick Stace, Chief Executive

**Three themes have linked our recent activities: delivering on our change agenda; listening and responding; and ensuring value for money.**

They say that "Trust comes on foot and leaves on horseback," and in the long process of rebuilding the trust of the profession in its College, it is vital that we are seen to deliver on our plans. I am therefore delighted that we have made excellent progress on many of our three-year Strategic Plan objectives and are delivering change at a pace that's a credit to Council and our team.

### Charter progress

At its June meeting, Council heard progress on the new Charter (see page 5), which it has now approved and will go to the AGM on 11 July. Professor Stephen May, who led the development of the Charter proposals, said: "The new Charter declares and clarifies the holistic nature of our role as Royal College and regulator." Once in place (providing it receives Privy Council approval), it will help to give focus and clarity to our activities across the board.

Plans were also approved to trial a new alternative dispute resolution (ADR) service before the end of the year. The service will give an independent route for the handling of those complaints that do not meet the threshold for serious professional misconduct but which have some substance (see page 8 for more details).

Meanwhile, we have also been working on the development of a new Service Charter, which clearly articulates the level of service we aim to provide to all of our customers – including the profession, the public and other stakeholders. I am sure we won't get it right every time, right away, but we now have standards to live up to. Do please let me know how you think we are doing, I would be delighted to hear your views.

### Ears to the ground

On the subject of listening, this is something we continue to spend a great deal of time doing. In fact, at our forthcoming staff

training day we have a former hostage negotiator coming to talk to the team about the importance of really listening and getting to the nub of someone's issue.

The Strategic Plan was built on a foundation of listening to what the profession and public needed from us, as part of the First Rate Regulator initiative. Meanwhile, the results of how we listened to the profession and the public on 24/7 can be seen on our front page. We have also recently concluded our four-yearly Survey of the Professions, and the reports will be published towards the end of July.

### Postnoms

A robust discussion was held at the June Council meeting on the subject of which postnominals should be included in the Register. We had not been planning to have this discussion two years after making a decision: the strength of feeling in the profession put the issue back on the agenda.

In the event, Council agreed that a paper should come to a future meeting outlining how the issues leading to the 2012 decision to remove postgraduate postnominals can be addressed in alternative ways.

However, listening and responding does not always mean agreeing. The College has been around since 1844 and we are here for the long term. The issues we address are complex and require proper consideration, so we must fight shy of knee-jerk reactions to petitions and outcries on Twitter.

Finally, to fees, which will remain frozen for a fifth consecutive year. Our fees continue to be lower than most regulators' and we offer real value for money. Not forgetting the fact that, as a Royal College that also regulates, you are getting two for the price of one!

So, given all these changes (and that we are making them without increasing retention fees), I hope that the profession will see we are a changed and reformed organisation that has its best interests – and those of the public – at heart.

My full CEO update can be read at [www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/rcvs-council/council-meetings/5-june-2014/](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/rcvs-council/council-meetings/5-june-2014/), together with other Council papers. You can read a more informal slant on things via my blog at [www.nickstaceblogs.org](http://www.nickstaceblogs.org), which includes links to my regular post-Council video updates; or follow me on Twitter: @nickstacetweets.



## Our survey said...

### Results in, report due end of July

**M**any thanks to all those of you who completed our Surveys of the Professions during April. Around 6,800 veterinary surgeons and nearly 5,500 veterinary nurses and student VNs took part in their respective surveys – which, given they were rather lengthy, was an excellent result.

The surveys, carried out for us by the Institute for Employment Studies, were part of a series that has been carried out every four years since 1998, and provide information on where and how the veterinary team is working, and views on issues facing the profession. The data are used to answer questions from stakeholders and the media, and to inform College policy and future activities.

Of those who responded:

- 46% of vets and 60% of VNs would choose their careers again
- 33% of vets work in practices that contract with dedicated out-of-hours providers (this excludes those who work in such practices)
- The three most common forms of CPD for both vets and VNs are undocumented private study, lectures by external providers and webinars
- Facebook is the top social networking site used by vets and VNs for professional purposes
- 21% of VNs and 51% of vets do not have an 11-hour rest period every day, although 94% and 85% respectively do have at least two days' rest every 14 days

An early cut of the results on a set of 24/7 questions also fed into the Standards Committee's review of our guidance.

A full report of each survey, including comparisons across the two and with previous surveys, will be available online towards the end of July ([www.rcvs.org.uk/publications](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/publications)).

Meanwhile, the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe is carrying out a similar survey across Europe; our UK data will feed into this exercise.

### PDP – the inside track

New graduates and their employers: please join RCVS Postgraduate Dean Jill Hubbard for a free webinar outlining the Professional Development Phase, to be hosted by The Webinar Vet at 8.30pm on Tuesday 24 June. Visit [www.thewebinarvet.com](http://www.thewebinarvet.com) to sign up.

### Email – just for you?

We are increasingly trying to send out communications via email, to speed things up and reduce our environmental footprint. Please make sure the email address that we hold for you is up to date, and also one that only reaches you and is not shared by others in your practice. Please contact our Registration Team if you are not sure which address we hold for you, on [membership@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:membership@rcvs.org.uk).

## A balanced result

### Equal numbers of new and existing candidates elected to Councils

**We** were delighted to announce the results of the RCVS Council and VN Council elections at the end of April, which this year saw an even split of new faces elected and existing members reinstated to both Councils.

Re-elected to three of the six seats available on RCVS Council were current President Neil Smith (1,687 votes), incoming Standards Committee Chairman David Catlow (1,656) and Vice-President Jacqui Molyneux (1,304); and, from RCVS Day on 11 July 2014, they will be joined by new members David Bartram (1,674), Susan Paterson (1,496) and Mandisa Greene (1,296).

***"It's encouraging that voter numbers are still the third highest in the last ten years."***

The two available places on VN Council were taken by existing member Hilary Orpet (611 votes) and new member Amber Richards (371).

Of particular note, following the all-male list of candidates for the 2013 RCVS Council elections and the record number of women standing in 2014, half of the successful RCVS Council candidates this year were women, two of whom were elected for the first time.

Unfortunately, overall turnouts in both elections fell, with 4,137 (16.1%) veterinary surgeons and 1,157

(10%) veterinary nurses voting. These figures compare with 4,661 (18.8%) and 1,329 (12.5%) last year, and ten-year averages of 3,927 (17.4%) and 869 (9.9%), respectively.

Commenting on the results, RCVS Registrar Gordon Hockey, said: "It was always going to be tough to beat last year's record turnout, even with a record number of candidates standing this year, but it's encouraging that voter numbers are still the third highest in the last ten years.

"I'm very much looking forward to working with our three new RCVS Council members whilst, at the same time, delighted that the profession has returned three existing members to their seats, enabling them to continue their work for the College."

Chair of VN Council, Kathy Kissick, said: "Many congratulations to Hilary, who has been returned to the VN Council for the third time running, and to Amber, who I'm looking forward to welcoming to VN Council in July. Hilary's experience and Amber's fresh input will, I'm sure, combine to provide an excellent contribution to our ongoing work."

Vets and VNs could cast their votes by post or online, with the former remaining the more popular method. Online voting increased this year, however, with 32% of veterinary voters and 25% of VN voters visiting our new election microsites, compared to 29% and 17%, respectively, voting online in 2013.

Both elections were run on behalf of the RCVS by Electoral Reform Services.



Newly elected: (top row) David Bartram MRCVS, Susan Paterson MRCVS, (bottom row) Mandisa Greene MRCVS and Amber Richards RVN

# Charter gets go-ahead

## Final approval sought at July AGM

**F**ollowing agreement by Council on 5 June, we will ask for final endorsement of our Charter proposals from the profession at our AGM on 11 July.

The draft Charter clarifies our role and identity, and reinforces the regulation of veterinary nurses and the Practice Standards Scheme. It also sets out the College's objects, to "set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest".

***"If approved at the AGM, the revised draft Charter will go to the Privy Council for its consideration, with the aim that the new Charter will be in force by next spring."***

Our proposals were put out to consultation in December 2013, and have subsequently been amended to reflect constructive input from the professions, including from the British Veterinary Association and British Veterinary Nursing Association. These changes mainly consist of amendments to wording to add clarity and emphasis.



In addition, the revised draft means that the description of any new class of 'associate' member of the College would need to be approved by the Privy Council, rather than by RCVS Council alone.

If approved at the AGM, the revised draft Charter will go to the Privy Council for its consideration, with the aim that the new Charter will be in force by next spring.

The full text of the Charter can be found at [www.rcvs.org.uk/newcharter](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/newcharter).

For more details about the AGM (part of RCVS Day), including how to apply for tickets, please turn to page 15.

# Tour de France – are you ready?

## Road closures planned

**A**re you ready for road closures during the Tour de France?

The largest annual sporting event in the world, the Tour will spend three days in the UK this year (5-7 July), with up to one million spectators per day.

The route is as follows:

- Saturday 5 July: a 120-mile leg from Leeds to Harrogate, via the Yorkshire Dales National Park
- Sunday 6 July: riders will go from York to Sheffield, before travelling by car to Cambridge ready for the start of day three
- Monday 7 July: the day starts in Cambridge, with the race entering London through Epping Forest and a sprint finish along The Mall

As might be expected with such a large-scale event, there will be considerable road closures – a minimum of eight hours is anticipated for each part of the route.

Although most clients are likely to be sympathetic to the disruption if warned in advance, there will always be emergencies, so we advise practices to publicise the relevant road closures where they can and help clients and their colleagues plan alternative routes where possible.

Please see

<http://letour.yorkshire.com/business> for more information about the affected roads.

# Proposals for a future Fellowship

## Please complete our online consultation survey

**T**here is still time to complete our online survey asking for views on our proposals for the future of the RCVS Fellowship.

Responses to the consultation must be received by Friday 4 July and, at the time of publication, we have garnered over 70 responses but would welcome many more.

Under the proposals we would develop the Fellowship into a learned society, with new routes to entry to enable more veterinary surgeons to join.

The two current routes to entry – Fellowship by Thesis and Meritorious Contributions to Learning – would be changed to Meritorious Contribution to the Veterinary Profession; Meritorious Contribution to Knowledge; and Meritorious Contribution to Clinical Practice.

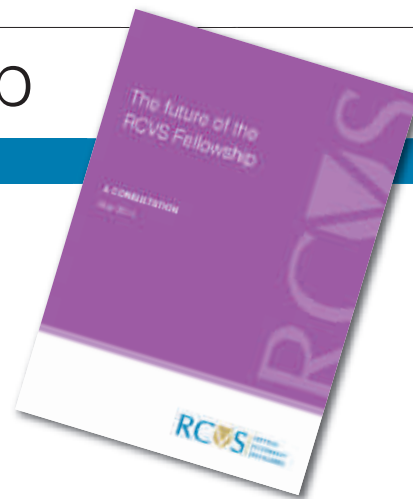
Professor Gary England chaired the Fellowship Working Party that was set up in 2013 and developed the proposals in consultation with current Fellows. He explains: "For many veterinary surgeons, becoming a Fellow is considered the ultimate goal of their careers. However, currently, just one per cent of the practising profession are Fellows.

"By widening the routes to Fellowship we want to enable a greater range of veterinary surgeons representing all facets of the profession, including those involved in clinical practice, to have a realistic chance of becoming a Fellow if their contribution to practice and the profession warrants it.

"The aim is that the size of the Fellowship would increase to around five per cent of the practising profession, making it more dynamic and enabling the College to make far more of the collective knowledge and experience than it currently does, to help advance veterinary science, possibly through the structure of the College's charitable partner, RCVS Knowledge."

The proposed changes would not affect the status of current Fellows, who would continue as Fellows under the current terms. Similarly, although the proposals suggest that the award of Honorary Fellowship by the RCVS should be discontinued, all existing Honorary Fellows would retain their titles.

Full details of the College's proposals for the future of the Fellowship are in the consultation



paper, which can be downloaded from [www.rcvs.org.uk/newfellowship](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/newfellowship). Hard copies of the document are also available upon request.

If you wish to participate in the consultation you can either complete an online survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/rcvsfellowship](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/rcvsfellowship) or fill out the questionnaire included in the consultation paper.

Queries about the proposals, and requests for hard copy documents, should be directed to our Education Department on 020 7202 0791 or [education@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:education@rcvs.org.uk).





### Commemoration of service and sacrifice

On 2 May, President Colonel Neil Smith attended the opening of a memorial to commemorate the service and sacrifice of officers and soldiers of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps. The memorial was unveiled by Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal, at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

## Recognising outstanding achievement

### Honours nominations now open

**If you know someone whose achievements are outstanding and who has worked above and beyond the call of duty in the fields of veterinary medicine or science, or related areas, now is your chance to put them forward for one of our honours.**

Nominations are now open for 2015 for three of our honours: the Queen's Medal, Honorary Associateship and Honorary Fellowship.

The first Queen's Medal was bestowed in 2014 (see page 2) as the highest honour that we can award to a veterinary surgeon, and it will now become an annual award to recognise particularly distinguished careers and outstanding achievements.

The Honorary Associateship is conferred to a small number of non-members of the RCVS each year in recognition of a special contribution to the veterinary field.

The Honorary Fellowship recognises members of the RCVS who have made an outstanding contribution to the profession, for example, in veterinary medicine, education, clinical practice

or politics. No more than three Honorary Fellowships are bestowed each year.

Please visit [www.rcvs.org.uk/honours](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/honours) to find out more about each and download a nomination form. Nomination forms should be completed and returned to the RCVS no later than Friday

### **"Nominations are now open for 2015 for three of our honours."**

12 September 2014. For further details on how to make a nomination, or to request a form, please contact Peris Dean, Executive Secretary, on [p.dean@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:p.dean@rcvs.org.uk) or 020 7202 0761.

All nominations will be considered by the Operational Board and then by Council at its November 2014 meeting. Nominators and individuals who have been successful will be notified in November and the results made public at the March 2015 meeting of RCVS Council. The honours will be awarded at RCVS Day in July 2015.

## All hail Hayley

### Edinburgh VN given top professional award

**A veterinary nurse who is dedicated to improving animal welfare and veterinary care both in the UK and abroad is this year's recipient of our VN Golden Jubilee Award, in honour of her exceptional contribution to the profession.**

Hayley Walters (pictured), an Anaesthesia and Welfare Veterinary Nurse who works at the University of Edinburgh Hospital for Small Animals and the Jeanne Marchig International Centre for Animal Welfare Education (JMICAWE) at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, was nominated for the award for her contribution to animal welfare through her teaching, clinical and international outreach work.

As well as assisting with anaesthesia at the hospital she is also responsible for training both veterinary surgeon and veterinary nurse students in all aspects of animal welfare, handling and pain management. Furthermore, her work with the JMICAWE entails sharing her veterinary nursing and animal welfare education skills with partners across the world and has taken her to places as diverse as Bosnia-Herzegovina and India.

Kathy Kissick, Chair of VN Council, was on the panel of VN Council members that chose to give Hayley the award. She comments: "We had six high-calibre and impressive nominations for the Golden Jubilee Award this year and Hayley was chosen because of her extensive work above and beyond her normal role as a registered veterinary nurse [RVN] with regard to animal welfare in the

UK and internationally. She clearly demonstrates a gold standard ambassadorial role for the RVN."

The VN Golden Jubilee Award will be given to Hayley at RCVS Day on 11 July.

Speaking of the honour, Hayley commented: "I am incredibly thrilled to be receiving this award and would like to thank my colleagues who nominated me. It comes at such a lovely time, too, as this year I have been in veterinary nursing for half my life as I started when I was 18 and have turned 36. If I was given the choice to go back and choose all over again I would still choose veterinary nursing in a heartbeat."

**"We must never stop caring, never stop learning and never stop trying to make a difference for every animal that comes into our lives."**

"Veterinary nurses are very well placed to improve patient experience not only when they are being treated, but also after the patients leave, through the education of animal owners. We must never stop caring, never stop learning and never stop trying to make a difference for every animal that comes into our lives. I am very grateful for this honour and would like to thank the RCVS for awarding it to me."

The VN Golden Jubilee Award was launched in 2011 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the

first training course for veterinary nurses. The previous award winners were Jean Turner in 2011 and Sue Badger in 2012.

For more information about the award and the Golden Jubilee, please visit [www.rcvs.org.uk/goldenjubilee](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/goldenjubilee).



# Completing the registration process

## Please confirm your CPD and declare any convictions

**As of 1 June we have removed some 333 veterinary surgeons from our Register for non-payment of their annual renewal fee – the final date for payment was 31 May. However, there are still vets who, despite having paid their fees on time, have not fully completed the process by confirming they have met our continuing professional development (CPD) requirement.**

Under our *Code of Professional Conduct* we stipulate that veterinary surgeons should complete a minimum of 105 hours of CPD over a three-year period in order to demonstrate they are maintaining and improving their professional competence. If you fail to confirm you have fulfilled this requirement you are technically in breach of the Code and we may request to see your records as part of our annual monitoring of CPD compliance. Please contact our Registration Department on the details below to complete this step of your renewal process.

As of this year, veterinary surgeons are also expected to declare any convictions, cautions and adverse findings since 1 January 2006 – or lack

thereof – before the registration process can be completed. A convictions disclosure form and a document explaining our protocol on handling declared convictions can be found at [www.rcvs.org.uk/convictions](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/convictions). You can also call our helpline on 07818 113 056 from Monday to Friday, 11am to 4pm.

A full list of those veterinary surgeons who have been removed from the Register for non-payment can be found at

[www.rcvs.org.uk/vetremovals2014](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/vetremovals2014). We encourage employers to check that the veterinary surgeons they employ remain on the Register using our online 'Check the Register' tool. It is illegal under the Veterinary Surgeons Act to practise veterinary surgery in the UK if your name is not on the Register.

To restore your name to the Register you will need to complete a Restoration Form and pay the registration fee for the appropriate membership category, together with the additional restoration fee of £299. The form can be downloaded from [www.rcvs.org.uk/registration](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/registration).

If you have any questions about completing the renewal process, please contact our Registration Department on 020 7202 0707 or [membership@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:membership@rcvs.org.uk).



# New registration rules in pipeline

## Proposals due for November Council

**We are currently working on new registration regulations to replace the present ones, which date from 2010. The main aim will be to give practising members the option of supplying their home address for publication in the Register rather than a work address: a lot of members have said they would prefer this.**

There will be no change in the level of registration or renewal fees, but one change relating to renewal fees is envisaged. At the moment, registrants who change their fee category between 1 April and 31 October because they have stopped practising in the UK, or stopped practising altogether, may qualify for a refund. Paying refunds involves administration, which increases costs, yet the refund cheques are often

not presented. The proposal is to make a credit rather than paying a refund in these cases. The amount credited will be deducted from the following year's retention fees. Anyone who comes off the Register altogether with a credit still outstanding will be refunded the amount owed.

There are other detailed changes to be made, and it is hoped that the new regulations will be a lot simpler and more user-friendly than the present ones. RCVS Council makes the regulations, but they have to be approved by the Government, in the form of the Privy Council. The proposals are currently being discussed with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which will advise the Privy Council, and the aim is for Council to make the new regulations in November 2014.

# Service Charter imminent

## How we aim to treat you

**You know the adage about cobblers' children having the worst-heeled shoes? Well, it's an irony that's true in all walks of life, and as a standards-setting body we have not always been clear about our own standards – particularly in terms of service.**

But the metaphorical nails and awls have been out and we will shortly be publishing the standards you can expect from us, by way of a Service Charter.

The Service Charter outlines how we aim to treat our customers – which means anyone who requires a service from us, including veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and members of the public.

Our customers can expect:

- A helpful and well-informed service with attention to detail
- A named individual to deal with their enquiry
- A response to verbal enquiries the same or next working day, and written enquiries within one week
- To be kept informed
- For us to say sorry when we are wrong, and put it right where we can
- For us to use customers' feedback to improve, or to remove unnecessary rules

If you find that we fall short of these aims, we would like to hear about it, so that we can continue to improve: please contact CEO Nick Stace on [nick@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:nick@rcvs.org.uk).

# A new and improved Find a Vet

## Search tool to be streamlined

**We will soon make some significant improvements to our online Find a Vet search tool ([www.findavet.org.uk](http://www.findavet.org.uk)), which is used by animal owners to find a practice that is appropriate to them.**

We will only include practice premises that are open to the public – this includes both referral clinics and ambulatory practices. Premises that are licensed for veterinary medicines but are not open to the public for the treatment of animals – for example, greyhound stadiums, racecourses and zoos – will be removed from Find a Vet.

Last year we wrote to all practice premises eligible to be listed on Find a Vet asking them to confirm or update the information that we hold. We received an excellent response but have still not yet heard from some practices: we will contact these by email and letter to remind them to get in touch. Ultimately, if we do not hear from these practices, we will remove them from Find a Vet.

To confirm or update your details, or for more information about listing, please contact us on [findavet@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:findavet@rcvs.org.uk) or 020 7202 0707.

# Helping to resolve disputes

## Six-month trial approved for alternative dispute resolution service

**R**CVS Council has given the go ahead for a six-month trial of an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) service, in order to establish how best we might be able to handle the large majority of concerns raised with us that we currently have no statutory power to investigate.

We have often been criticised over the years for failing to help consumers of veterinary services who are unhappy with the service they have received. However, we are restricted by the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) to dealing only with concerns about serious professional conduct and fitness to practise, and, even if these investigations lead to proceedings, this will not of itself help the complainant.

In its 2008 report on the case for reforming the VSA, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee of the House of Commons noted that the overwhelming majority of complaints we receive were sifted out during the investigation process and that 'allowing such a large number of complaints each year to be dismissed in this way inevitably harms the reputation of the veterinary profession'.

Whilst such limitations are not unusual amongst UK regulators, modernised legislation in human healthcare regulation provides alternative arrangements for service users, without them having to personally fund legal proceedings, arbitration or mediation. Furthermore, upcoming EU legislation, whilst not binding the RCVS directly, is creating the expectation that consumers and traders will have access to arrangements to help resolve disputes.

Whereas the VSA and our current Charter do not provide for the resolution of such disputes, the



express powers in our proposed new Charter will include 'facilitating the resolution of disputes between registered persons and their clients'. Council has therefore agreed that the trial should be conducted using Ombudsman Services ([www.ombudsman-services.org](http://www.ombudsman-services.org)) – an organisation that provides an independent, impartial and cost-effective means of resolving disputes outside the courts – and based on the following lines:

- Conciliation rather than arbitration
- Limited to small animals
- Limited to 150 cases, as identified by the RCVS
- Costs not to exceed £120,000

We hope the trial will help us to determine the level of satisfactory outcomes; levels of veterinary surgeon cooperation; whether complainants feel they have been helped; the speed of case resolution; and, whether an arm's length scheme is advantageous.

Following Council's approval, the Operational Board will now draw up a detailed plan, with the aim of launching the trial before the end of the year and hopefully reporting back to Council in June 2015.

# Improving our complaints process

## New procedures aim to improve efficiency and user experience for all

**F**ollowing recommendations arising from the First Rate Regulator initiative in 2013, which sought the views of members of the profession and the public, we will be introducing a simpler and more efficient complaints procedure from July 2014.

The principal objectives of these changes will be to reduce the time taken to conclude a complaint in a fair and transparent manner; to improve communication with veterinary surgeons/registered veterinary nurses (RVNs) and complainants; to introduce an online complaints-tracking system; and, to set a baseline for satisfaction among the public and the profession and establish the most appropriate way to measure this. Further detail about ten key changes is set out on the left and more information will be available on our website soon.

The revised procedures represent a cultural shift in the way we investigate complaints, with more resources and formality directed towards serious cases, and less serious cases being dealt with more quickly and informally.

We will also be changing the language surrounding the complaints process, such that we will consider 'concerns' raised against vets and

RVNs and, if there is an arguable case against, then 'cases' will be considered by the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) and, if appropriate, referred to the Disciplinary Committee (DC). It will help us to set and meet the expectations of all involved.

***"The revised procedures represent a cultural shift in the way we investigate complaints."***

The new procedures have been discussed and broadly accepted by both the PIC and RVNPIC, and by Council at its recent meeting. The overall reaction of the Veterinary Defence Society has also been positive, particularly regarding speedier resolution of cases and the proposed change in language and method of investigation as a means to reduce the 'fear factor' of the process.

We will be adding simpler forms and clearer explanation for both animal owners and vets/RVNs to the website over the next few weeks, and beginning the development of an online concern-tracking system in the autumn, ready for launch in 2015.

### Ten steps to improvement

1. **Simpler three-stage structure** comprising a new, initial assessment and investigation stage; further investigation by PIC; and, referral to DC.
2. **Small teams of three** to initially manage concerns, to make process more agile and flexible.
3. **Appropriate investigations as soon as possible** to either resolve concerns quickly or enable the PIC to make a quicker decision.
4. **Improved contact**, including phone calls to discuss case and establish a point of contact, and 'plain English' correspondence.
5. **Case managers to help manage expectations** where possible by indicating likely outcome.
6. **Implement service standards**, including acknowledgement within two days, phone call within two weeks, initial assessment/investigation within 12 weeks; any PIC consideration within 24 weeks; and, any DC listing within 12 months. Feedback will also be sought.
7. **Internal controls** to help meet service standards and allocate extra resources if necessary.
8. **Fast-track serious cases** to PIC, eg dishonesty, false certification, and serious convictions.
9. **Current older cases** to be brought into new procedures as soon as possible.
10. **Improve communication** of, and information about, the new procedures.



# Handle with care

## We highlight the risks of the use and supply of fentanyl patches

**We recently received a concern from a member about the off-licence use of fentanyl patches and the supply of these to clients in particular. Fentanyl is a very powerful opiate, which can provide highly effective pain relief after orthopaedic operations. Its use also carries significant risks, as fentanyl can cause respiratory depression, particularly in small children. There is also a risk to the patient and other household pets should they lick or ingest the patch.**

There are now two veterinary licensed fentanyl products – Recuvrya and Fentadon – both of which are POM-V Schedule 2 controlled drugs. Recuvrya is a transdermal solution licensed for use in dogs for control of significant post-operative pain. You must use personal protective equipment when applying this and you cannot order the product without first watching a short training video. Fentadon is an injectable solution licensed for use in dogs, again for the control of significant post-operative pain and also intra-operative analgesia.

Whichever product you use, you should be particularly mindful of the risks of this powerful

analgesic. Ideally, Recuvrya and fentanyl patches should not be used if there are small children in the client's household. You should also consider the risks of ingestion by other animals.

It is vital that you obtain your client's informed consent, which must include an explanation of the risks. If you decide to use a fentanyl patch, inform your client what to do if the patch comes off and how to dispose of it safely. Further information about the risks and best practice can be found in the BSAVA's client information leaflet – *Fentanyl patches*, June 2011.



## No longer taxing

As of this April the annual renewal fee for registered and listed veterinary nurses is now classed as a tax-deductible expense.

HM Revenue and Customs has amended the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 following an application from the College to recognise that the renewal fee is a professional subscription and that VNs should therefore be able to claim income tax relief on it. The annual renewal fee for veterinary surgeons is already classed as tax deductible.

For more information about claiming income tax relief on expenses, including professional subscriptions, please visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/incometax/tax-allow-ees.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/incometax/tax-allow-ees.htm)



**HM Revenue  
& Customs**

# Code and guidance updates

## Details of the latest changes to our Code of Conduct and supporting guidance

**At its last meeting in May, the Standards Committee approved a number of changes to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct and supporting guidance. Here's a short summary of the key changes, as well as information about how to find this on our website.**

### Specialists and Advanced Practitioners

In 2012, the Committee approved, in principle, amendments to the Code and supporting guidance regarding use of the term 'specialist' to describe a veterinary surgeon's expertise. This followed the recommendations of the Specialisation Working Party, as approved by RCVS Council, pending implementation of the final mechanisms to accredit Advanced Practitioners. The mechanisms are now in place and, as a result, the Code and supporting guidance have been updated accordingly.

In brief, this means that veterinary surgeons must not hold out themselves, or others, as having expertise they cannot substantiate, or call themselves or others a 'specialist', or similar expression that implies specialist standing, unless they have been accredited as specialists, where to do so would be misleading or misrepresentative.

- Code: paragraph 3.5
- Supporting guidance: chapter 1, [www.rcvs.org.uk/referrals](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/referrals); chapter 11, [www.rcvs.org.uk/consent](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/consent); and chapter 23, [www.rcvs.org.uk/advertising](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/advertising)

### Animal insurance

Recent RCVS disciplinary cases, as well as discussions with the Association of British Insurers, have highlighted how the profession can be exposed to allegations of fraud and dishonesty when submitting insurance claims. As a result, we have introduced a new chapter of supporting guidance to provide more advice in this area.

The new chapter is designed to give the profession more guidance on how to handle insurance claims professionally and seeks to protect the veterinary surgeon, the client and the insurer. There is more information about the need for integrity and honesty when dealing with this line of work; the risks involved where clients are asked to sign blank insurance forms for ongoing treatment; the provision of information to the client; the need to retain copies of claim forms; and, dealing with conflicts of interest, for example, where the vet is treating their own animals, or those of family or close friends.

- Supporting guidance: chapter 9, [www.rcvs.org.uk/fees](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/fees)

### Vaccination record cards

Over the past year, we have received a number of queries from members of the profession about their responsibilities when completing vaccination record cards. We have heard reports that a number of veterinary surgeons have found themselves in the position of being asked to provide a follow-up vaccination to a patient who is

accompanied by a signed, but otherwise blank, vaccination card, ie a card that does not identify the patient.

We have provided new guidance which confirms that the vaccination record card held by the animal owner may be considered part of the clinical record and may be signed by a veterinary surgeon or a veterinary nurse. There is also advice that covers situations where the animal is presented to a different veterinary surgeon for a subsequent vaccination. This states that, to be useful, the vaccination record should be such as to allow the veterinary surgeon to identify the animal, if necessary, following any additional reasonable enquiries. The guidance is also clear that veterinary surgeons should not sign blank vaccination record cards.

- Supporting guidance: chapter 13, [www.rcvs.org.uk/records](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/records)

### Removal of microchips

Our current guidance on the removal of microchips states that a microchip must only be removed where this can be clinically justified. New guidance has now been added which states that given the potential implications should a microchip fail on entry to the UK (for example, time in quarantine at the cost of the owner) veterinary surgeons should encourage their clients to have their pet's microchip checked before travel.

- Supporting guidance: chapter 14, [www.rcvs.org.uk/confidentiality](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/confidentiality)

# Advanced Practitioner: key questions answered

**'Middle tier' accreditation will launch this autumn**

Later this year we will be launching our Advanced Practitioner status, which represents a 'middle tier' accreditation between the initial veterinary degree and Specialist status. Here we answer some of the key questions about the status and how it will work.

## Why has the RCVS introduced the Advanced Practitioner status?

With an increasing variety of postgraduate and other qualifications available for vets, we wanted to make the various levels of expertise available within the profession clearer for the public. RCVS Specialist accreditation already provides this for those who have been trained to Diploma level, but now Advanced Practitioner accreditation is available for significant numbers of vets who have qualified at Certificate level through a number of qualification routes. Advanced Practitioner status will provide a clear indication to members of both the profession and the public of those veterinary surgeons who have been accredited at postgraduate certificate level by the RCVS and who have demonstrated knowledge and experience in their area of practice, and possess a range of key professional skills. Advanced Practitioners will also have shown that they continue to be up-to-date in their chosen field, and five-yearly re-accreditation will ensure that they are undertaking more than our minimum requirements for CPD.

## Why should I apply for Advanced Practitioner status?

RCVS Advanced Practitioner status will give a clear message to your clients and colleagues that not only do you hold a further qualification in your clinical area, but you have also committed to voluntary re-accreditation by your professional body. It will show that you take your professional

development seriously and that you are committed to continuing to apply best evidence-based practice and clinical governance in your field.

## How will the list of Advanced Practitioners be published?

The list of Advanced Practitioners, together with the list of Specialists, will be published in the RCVS Register of Veterinary Surgeons and online. Advanced Practitioner status will also be indicated on the veterinary surgeons' records on the online 'Check the Register' tool and will be searchable via 'Find a Vet'. We will also be publicising and explaining Advanced Practitioner and Specialist status to the public and the profession later in 2015, once the first list of Advanced Practitioners is published.

## Who is eligible to apply for Advanced Practitioner status?

Only practising members of the RCVS with at least five years' experience can apply for accreditation. Members who are on the Non-Practising List are not eligible to apply.

## What qualifications do you need?

At the date of your application you must hold one of the following qualifications:

Either

- a) RCVS Certificates
  - either the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP) with a designation
  - or one of the non-modular RCVS Certificates awarded up to 2012

Or

- b) Other postgraduate clinical qualifications awarded by universities/ or other recognised awarding bodies at Level 7 in the UK Framework of Higher Education Qualifications (for example, the Nottingham Trent University/BSAVA postgraduate certificate). Such qualifications must equate to at least 60 UK credits (or 30 ECTS – European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) – of which 40 credits, or two-thirds, are in the clinical area applied for

Or

- c) A relevant postgraduate master's degree – other acceptable qualifications will be added to the list, as and when they are approved.

If you hold another qualification not listed above, please contact the RCVS Education Department for advice on your eligibility.

As stated in the feature opposite, we consider it important that those who are accredited as Advanced Practitioners present evidence of further study in the key areas of professional development, such as are included in the 'A' module ('Foundations of Advanced Veterinary Practice') of the CertAVP, or other equivalent modules.

If your qualification does not explicitly include such elements, there will be an initial three-year window during which you may be admitted to the list (subject to the approval of other criteria). After you have been accredited, you will then have the five-year period up to your next application for re-accreditation to undertake CPD in those areas, or complete a professional development module. We will be providing further guidance in due course on how you could provide evidence of meeting this requirement.

***"Advanced Practitioners will have shown that they continue to be up-to-date in their chosen field."***

## What are the CPD requirements?

Before you apply, we recommend that you should have undertaken a minimum of 250 hours of CPD over the previous five years. Of this, around 125 hours should have been in your chosen designated field. However, as this is a new system, we will be flexible when considering initial applications, provided applicants have comprehensive CPD records covering at least the RCVS minimum requirements of 35 hours per year on average. Once accepted on to the list, you will need to undertake at least 250 hours of CPD over the five-year period of accreditation, with 125 hours of this CPD being in your designated field. Those applying for multiple designations will be expected to have undertaken an extra 125 hours per additional designation.

## What are the current designations available for Advanced Practitioner status?

A list of the current accepted designations is included in the *Advanced Practitioner Applicant Guidance Notes* that can be downloaded from [www.rcvs.org.uk/advanced](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/advanced).

However, this list is not exhaustive and may be updated from time to time if new designations are recognised. If you wish to apply for a designation that is not listed you will need to propose a title that is appropriate to your qualification. All proposed new designations would need to be





# Advancing veterinary practice and professional development

## Importance of CertAVP 'A' modules for Advanced Practitioner status

**O**ur new Advanced Practitioner status aims to encourage veterinary surgeons who have demonstrated knowledge and experience beyond their initial veterinary degree to seek accreditation to confirm they are still current in their field and practising at a level beyond the minimum required for registration.

While demonstrating advanced clinical skills in an area of the practitioner's choosing is essential for Advanced Practitioner applicants, we also consider it important that they can demonstrate evidence of further study in professional skills, which are of relevance whichever area of practice they work in.

The primary way in which potential Advanced Practitioners can gain this knowledge is through the 'A' module of the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP), which lays the foundation for the expanded knowledge and skills required.

For example, the module develops practitioners' thinking around how the *RCVS Code of Professional Conduct* should apply to their practice, and also focuses on a number of transferable skills, such as decision-making, clinical reasoning, communication and research, which help practitioners take their professional practice to a higher level.

Study areas covered by the 'A' module include emergency care, animal and public health protection, and the principles of professional reasoning and decision-making. The promotion of personal and professional development, lifelong learning and transferable skills are overarching themes of the module, as these are considered an essential underpinning to advanced veterinary practice.

One of those who is currently doing the module is Katherine Baldwin, who graduated in 2010 and is currently working towards her CertAVP at the Royal Veterinary College (pictured). She says that she was initially unsure as to how the module would relate to her everyday practice life as a veterinary surgeon at a Cambridgeshire veterinary hospital, but she is now starting to find it invaluable.

"I was keen to complete this module in as little time as possible, although, as I progressed, topics that initially appeared irrelevant and a little tedious began to interest me.

"Whilst working through the essay titles I was surprised how relevant the topics became to everyday practice and how it has allowed me to fill in gaps in my knowledge in areas such as legislation and control of prescription medicines; health and safety; and the control of exotic disease.

"Furthermore it has allowed me to reflect on my own personal development as a veterinary surgeon since graduation and highlighted the areas of client care I can improve on, as well as making me recognise and formalise my approach to self-directed learning."

She adds: "My motivation for embarking upon the CertAVP was my interest in small animal medicine and my desire to improve my knowledge and practice to a higher level. So far the 'A' module has been an effective learning experience and a stepping stone towards my aspiration of attaining Advanced Practitioner status."

See our Advanced Practitioner Q & A (left) for more details on how the CertAVP – and the 'A' module in particular – relate to the new status.

For more information about the CertAVP, including a breakdown of the module subjects and frequently asked questions, please visit [www.rcvs.org.uk/certavp](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/certavp).



approved by our Education Committee before they can be added to the list. However, whilst we are prepared to consider new designations, we will be seeking to avoid unnecessary proliferation.

### How much does it cost?

The fee for applying for Advanced Practitioner status is £50. Advanced Practitioners will also need to pay an annual fee to remain on the list. This will become payable a year after initial accreditation. We have yet to confirm the annual renewal fee, although we aim to keep this in line with the fee for Specialist accreditation. (The current Specialist renewal fee is £110 by Direct Debit, or £122 for those paying by cash, but it is possible that these fees could be reduced.)

### When and how can I apply?

Applications for the first listing will be taken in autumn 2014. We are developing an online application process, which we are hoping will be user-friendly and accessible. If you are thinking of applying for accreditation, we'd encourage you to start preparations now by using the online Professional Development Record to bring your CPD record up to date. You can backdate entries if necessary, and add notes to expand on any otherwise cryptic entries!

### When will the list of Advanced Practitioners be published?

We aim to publish the first list in the spring of 2015, alongside the updated list of Specialists. There will be further opportunities in 2015 to apply, and we may eventually produce more than one list each year.

### Further contact

For more information about Advanced Practitioner status, please visit [www.rcvs.org.uk/advanced](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/advanced), or contact the Education Department, on 020 7202 0791 or [ap@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:ap@rcvs.org.uk).





# Parental responsibilities

## CPD requirements for those on extended leave

**A common query we receive from both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses is about how parental leave will affect their registration status and whether they are still expected to fulfil the RCVS requirement for continuing professional development (CPD). Here we look at the options that are open for those on parental or any other form of leave:**

### Your CPD options

The CPD requirement for vets who are registered as 'UK-practising' or 'practising outside the UK' is 105 hours over a three-year period and this remains the case for those who are on parental or any other extended period of leave if they remain on the Register as 'practising'. Likewise, the CPD requirement for Registered Veterinary Nurses, or for Listed VNs who are working in PSS-accredited practices, is 45 hours over a three-year period.

Many of those who have taken a career break, whether to raise children or for other reasons, worry about how they will find the time and money to fulfil the requirement. However, it must be remembered that CPD can comprise a variety of activities – many of which do not involve attending expensive external courses, and which can be spread over a number of years.

For example, reading veterinary journals and publications, watching or listening to free webinars, and other forms of distance learning can all count as CPD, provided you can account for how they have added to your professional competence and helped you keep up-to-date. A list of appropriate CPD activities for both vets and VNs can be found at [www.rcvs.org.uk/cpd](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/cpd).

It is also worth noting that the CPD requirement for both vets and VNs is over a rolling three-year period and so if you are not able to put in many hours of CPD in one year you can catch up in the

next. The important thing is that anyone who is on the practising Register must be able to account for how they are keeping their competence up-to-date.

Using our online Professional Development Record (PDR) – which is available to both vets and VNs – is particularly advantageous as it is an easy way of recording CPD while away from everyday practice and allows users to plan their future activities by creating learning and development plans.

If you need advice and guidance on CPD, please contact our Education Department on 020 7202 0791 or [cpd@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:cpd@rcvs.org.uk).

***“When ready to return to practice the vet MUST change their registration status back to ‘UK-practising’ or they will not legally be able to practise veterinary surgery.”***

### Changing registration status

Vets and VNs on extended leave who are not undertaking any veterinary work and who feel that they are unable to comply with our CPD requirements do have the option of changing their registration status.

Veterinary surgeons can choose to change their registration status temporarily to 'non-practising' for the remainder of their leave. It costs nothing to change registration status and those on the non-practising Register pay a reduced annual renewal fee of £49. Alternatively, they can voluntarily remove themselves from the Register for a period, but would then need to pay an additional restoration fee when they returned.

When ready to return to practice the vet MUST change their registration status back to 'UK-



practising' or they will not legally be able to practise veterinary surgery. This is done by filling out a UK Practising Application Form and paying the appropriate fee – those who have been non-practising for more than a year may also have to produce a letter of good standing.

Veterinary nurses in the same situation do not have the option of changing their registration status to 'non-practising' and must come off the Register, or come off the List if they are working in a PSS-accredited practice.

As with vets, before returning to work veterinary nurses must apply to rejoin the Register or List in order to perform delegated veterinary work or surgical procedures (as defined in Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act). In order to rejoin the Register or List they must pay a restoration fee of £112 – inclusive of the annual renewal fee.

Veterinary nurses who are off the Register for more than five years will need to undertake a Period of Supervised Practice (PSP), which should last at least 595 hours whether full-time or part-time, before rejoining. Registering for the PSP costs £75 and it should be completed in one year. For details, please visit [www.rcvs.org.uk/psp/guidance](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/psp/guidance).

### Contacts

Veterinary surgeons who wish to enquire about changing registration status should contact our Registration Department on 020 7202 0707 or [membership@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:membership@rcvs.org.uk).

Veterinary nurses with any queries about coming off or rejoining the Register or List or undertaking the PSP should contact 020 7202 0706 or [regnurses@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:regnurses@rcvs.org.uk).

# Warning on bogus and unregistered practitioners

## Practices reminded to make checks before hiring staff

**Under the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) only registered veterinary surgeons can practise veterinary surgery in the UK and only registered or listed veterinary nurses can carry out limited veterinary surgery as defined by Schedule 3 of the Act.**

With this in mind, we are urging practices to make sure that appropriate and thorough identity and registration status checks are carried out before staff are hired – even if they are being employed through agencies.

We have recently dealt with two separate cases in which an unregistered veterinary surgeon and a bogus veterinary nurse with forged registration papers had obtained employment at practices

via locum agencies. With the cooperation of the locum agencies we reported both individuals to the police and they were subsequently convicted at criminal courts.

These two cases demonstrate the importance of proper registration checks before taking on staff and not relying on the word of third parties. This is highlighted in section 17 ('Veterinary team and business') of our supporting guidance in the *Code of Professional Conduct*, which says:

*17.1b Veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses who knowingly or carelessly permit anyone to practise veterinary surgery illegally may be liable to a charge of serious professional misconduct.*

*17.1c Veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses should ensure processes are in place to ensure that professional staff for whom they are responsible are registered, for example, by inspecting the original RCVS certificate of membership and checking with the RCVS.*

Practices should use our online 'Check the Register' tool ([www.rcvs.org.uk/registration](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/registration)) to check the registration status of any potential employees, and ensure they ask for photographic identification. They can also contact our Registration Department for confirmation. Enquiries about vets should be directed to 020 7202 0707 or [membership@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:membership@rcvs.org.uk). For VNs, please contact 020 7202 0706 or [regnurses@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:regnurses@rcvs.org.uk).

# The development of CPD

## The story of the first veterinary journals

Today, continuing professional development (CPD) is the essential practice lifeline, providing a drip-feed of new and updated knowledge. But for the first 35 years of the profession the majority of graduates had no means of contact with their colleagues, no transfer of knowledge and no news of advances or clinical experiences. Veterinary historian Bruce Vivash Jones and RCVS Knowledge Librarian Clare Boulton chart the development of CPD.

**O**n 1 January 1828, two periodicals for the profession appeared. Both were motivated by concerns about the London College: Principal Edward Coleman had failed to produce the College reports, as required by Charter, and teaching standards were seen to be unsatisfactory. The two publications, however, took very different approaches.

*The Veterinarian*, started by William Percivall, an Army officer, had a clear objective to be of benefit to the profession as a clinical and scientific journal as well as campaigning for changes at the College. Later, William Youatt took over the editorship. It was the first truly veterinary journal and was in print for 74 years.

The other, *The Farrier and Naturalist* (later *The Hippiatrist*), made a full frontal attack on Edward Coleman, with its primary objective to humiliate, bait and slander until he would be stung into taking proceedings: he did not. The sponsor and vitriolic editorial writer was a London practitioner, Bracy Clark, who, by December 1830, felt he had achieved his objective.

**“These periodicals were all due to the foresight and effort of their founder editors: financial gain was never an objective, the advancement of the profession was.”**

There were other so-called scandal-sheets between 1832 and 1837: *The Veterinary Examiner*, *The Sportsman and Veterinary Recorder* and *The Centaur* (again backed by Bracy Clark). All had axes to grind, mostly attacking Coleman and Youatt, and all were short lived.

Gradually the veterinary press settled down as both subscribers and contributors grew in number. The Royal Veterinary College produced the *Transactions of the Veterinary Medical Association*, containing good clinical papers, between 1837 and 1850. From 1858-1865, John Gamgee published *The Edinburgh Veterinary Review*. It was well written; he had great talent and ability but invariably started projects without the support to complete them.

1875-1888 were important years: three periodicals were launched, all by exceptional men – and all remain in print today. First was the eminently clinical *The Veterinary Journal* by George Fleming, a self-appointed educator of the profession; his dislike of John McFadyean resulted in some knockabout editorial content at times. McFadyean, however, introduced *The Journal of Comparative Pathology and Therapeutics* in 1888, the first English language veterinary research periodical, on which he put a personal stamp of quality and integrity, but, albeit in a more refined manner, could not resist a comment or two about Fleming!

Also in 1888 William Hunting started *The Veterinary Record*, a unique weekly periodical with a strong clinical base. Acquired in 1920 by what is now the British Veterinary Association, it was the vital factor in ensuring their success.

Two short-lived periodicals were *The Veterinary News* 1904-1920, a poor copy of the *Record*, and *The Veterinary Review* 1917-1920, started by Charnock Bradley, while composed entirely of excellent review papers, it could not survive the depression years.

These periodicals were all due to the foresight and effort of their founder editors: financial gain was never an objective, the advancement of the profession was. William Percivall and William Youatt led the way and George Fleming, John McFadyean and William Hunting were each able to build on their pioneering efforts – all were also men of significant influence in the growth and progression of the profession.

Mention must also be made of Bracy Clark. He was talented and inventive, a significant author, a horse-shoeing specialist, a gifted naturalist and a classical scholar who initially trained in medicine. He was, however, highly combative and with a vitriolic pen full of vituperation he alienated himself from the profession, he had few friends. He was not amiable but was intelligent and believed in 'knowledge', which was at the root of his attacks on Coleman.

Almost all these periodicals are held in the College's Historical Collection (no copies of one of them are known). Not only are they of intrinsic value, but they were where CPD began, they acted as the inspiration for, and reflected the aspirations of, the developing profession.





# Modern and modular

## Practice Standards Scheme review update

**In June 2013 RCVS Council gave approval to the development of a new structure for the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS). Over the past year the Practice Standards Group (PSG), together with RCVS staff, have been working hard to develop the foundations for the revised Scheme.**

Writing Groups, set up under the PSG, have already drafted 16 of the 19 new modules (leaving Out of Hours, Emergency Care pending the 24/7 review, and Government work pending clarification by the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency) that will form the basis for the new Scheme.

These modules cover all areas in the existing PSS Manual, but focus on behaviours and outcomes. The Group has also created a 'points' system for practices to qualify for additional awards that will allow for greater differentiation.

### ***"The flexibility of the modular approach is a fundamental advantage of the new Scheme."***

A detailed functional specification for a new IT system to support the new Scheme has also been developed, and an invitation to tender was undertaken in early 2014, with a supplier now selected. A similar tender exercise was carried out to appoint providers with relevant expertise in the recruitment and training of inspectors, again focusing on behaviours.

#### **What does the new Scheme aim to achieve?**

The proposals for the new Scheme have been designed to focus on all areas of the veterinary practice, including customer experience and those aspects that impact upon the veterinary care of animals. It emphasises outcome and behaviours and is not simply confined to considering the facilities and equipment at a particular practice. The Scheme provides a pathway for practices to improve and to demonstrate where they excel. This greater differentiation will provide additional opportunities for practices to market themselves. Finally, the new structure will be clear and understandable to both the public and the profession.

#### **What will the new Scheme look like?**

Under the latest proposals Core, General Practice and Veterinary Hospital categories will remain as the base groups, but potentially with new terminology. In addition, however, practices will be able to apply to be inspected for 'top-up' badges or awards.

Within each award practices would be designated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' on a points system. Earlier proposals to designate practices as 'Silver' or 'Gold' have been abandoned after communication with stakeholders and the public revealed that these categories created confusion and were understood to reflect how much practices would charge their clients.

Under the new proposal, similar to Ofsted, practices would be free to market their awards as they chose, whilst being required to display their full report showing the standards by which they have been judged. So, for example, a practice might be General Practice – Small Animal with an Outstanding Award in Client Experience.

The modules that have already been developed will be grouped together in a series of clusters, which in turn will form the basis for these badges or awards. Some modules will contribute to more than one cluster and, depending on the type of practice being accredited, the clusters will comprise different sets of modules. Moreover, not all clusters will necessarily be applicable to all types of practice. Practices must achieve a satisfactory standard within each of the applicable clusters in order to receive the base accreditation (Core, GP and Hospital).

Jacqui Molyneux, Chair of the Practice Standards Group, comments: "The flexibility of the modular approach is a fundamental advantage of the new Scheme, as it provides a clear pathway for practices to improve and it raises standards for patients by focusing on outcomes and behaviours. The proposed new Scheme also presents additional benefits to practices, including a professionally-trained inspectorate and designated IT system that will save practices and inspectors time."

#### **What next?**

On 5 June 2014, RCVS Council ratified the new structure of the Scheme. Work has subsequently begun to complete the remaining modules and to commission the development of the new IT system.

"I am delighted with the progress that we have made in reviewing the Scheme, but there is still much work to be done before its official launch in November 2015," says Jacqui. "Between now and then, we will be seeking opportunities to engage with public and the profession regarding the development of the Scheme, and will be launching a consultation exercise. I would urge members of the Scheme and the profession to check the RCVS website and publications for the latest updates."

# Liz Butler

## Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee

#### **What does the Audit and Risk Committee do?**

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) was established in late 2012 and has been carrying out its work for just over a year. We are a mix of RCVS Council members and three external members. Our role is to advise Council on financial controls, assurance, risk, governance and accounting policies.

#### **How does the Audit and Risk Committee decide its focus?**

Over the course of a year there are a number of 'must-dos', for example, we review the accounts and annual report, considering the accounting policies and bases for any matters of judgment. We receive the external auditor's report and we invariably question the senior management team and auditors on the issues identified during the audit.

We regularly review the Risk Register and have worked with Council and College management to refine and develop the system of risk management. This year we have encouraged the RCVS to adopt a new format to the accounts, one which is in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (as set by the Accounting Standards Board). This will enable the accounts to be more readily compared with those of other organisations, making them more transparent and in keeping with other regulators.

#### **What are the Audit and Risk Committee's main priorities over the next year?**

Using the Risk Register we will be assessing the areas of greatest risk to the College, the controls in place to mitigate risk and the assurances we can give to Council that risks are being well managed. We will also assess the quality of assurance that Council can expect to receive about risk mitigation. Also, after a very valuable visit to The University of Bristol, we will be seeking to visit another facet of the veterinary world in order to broaden our understanding of the issues facing the profession. If any readers would like to volunteer to host a visit, please get in touch with the College.

#### **What makes the work of the Audit and Risk Committee useful to the rest of the profession?**

Committee members are the critical friends of the RCVS, we, in particular the external members, are independent of all decision making in the College and bring a wide range of experience to our meetings. We are able to challenge all levels of the College structure to ensure that there is probity and good governance.

In this regard we are working directly for members to ensure that their College is well governed and accountable for the money spent.





# Time to celebrate! Join us at RCVS Day

## Royal College Day 2014 – Annual General Meeting and Awards Presentation



**All veterinary surgeons and listed/registered veterinary nurses are warmly invited to attend this year's RCVS Day, to be held on Friday 11 July, at One Great George Street, London.**

As his last official engagement of the year, RCVS President Col Neil Smith will chair the Annual General Meeting and welcome new members to Council and the Veterinary Nurses Council, before handing over the reins to Professor Stuart Reid, who will formally take up his office as President for 2014-2015.

### RCVS Awards 2014

RCVS Day is a chance to recognise and celebrate the achievements of our colleagues across the veterinary profession. Honorary Awards will be bestowed, and Fellowships and Diplomas awarded.

We will be celebrating the success of Des Thompson OBE as the first ever recipient of the RCVS Queen's Medal – the most prestigious honour that the RCVS can bestow upon a veterinary surgeon (see page 2).

The following Honorary Fellowships will also be bestowed, recognising outstanding individual achievements, above and beyond the call of duty, in the fields of veterinary medicine or science, or related areas:

- Mr Andrew Holliman BVSc BA MSc MRCVS, Veterinary Investigation Officer, AHVLA
- Professor Maxwell Murray BVMS PhD DVM FRCPATH FRSE MRCVS, Emeritus Professor of Veterinary Medicine and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow
- Mr Donald Rutty BVetMed FRCPATH DipToxRCPath MRCVS, now retired but who had a career in the pharmaceutical industry

We are pleased to announce that Fellowships will be presented to:

- Dr Alan Conley BVSc MSc PhD FRCVS, in the subject: Steriodogenesis and comparative reproductive endocrinology
- Professor Robert Hanna MVB BSc PhD FRCPATH FRCVS, in the subject: Studies on the functional morphology and biology of certain digenetic trematode parasites of domestic ruminants

### Guest speaker

We are delighted to announce that Professor Sarah Cleaveland BSc BA VetMB PhD MRCVS FRSE, Professor, Comparative Epidemiology, College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences, University of Glasgow, will be our guest speaker, talking about the nature and magnitude of zoonotic diseases and their prevention and control, and the role of vets in an international context. Her talk will be entitled 'International perspectives on zoonotic diseases: tackling complexity through collaboration'.

Professor Cleaveland is a veterinary epidemiologist based at the University of Glasgow. After qualifying from Cambridge University in 1988, she worked in practice before embarking on a research career, gaining her PhD from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Her research programme in Africa aims to understand the epidemiology of emerging and neglected tropical diseases, and to design disease control strategies to improve human, animal and ecosystem animal health.

She is a recipient of the BVA Trevor Blackburn Award and the BSAVA AJ Wight memorial prize for animal welfare, and is also a founding Director of the Alliance for Rabies Control, which spearheads the World Rabies Day campaigns.

### Book your place now

To book your place at RCVS Day 2014, please contact Fiona Harcourt, on [f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk) or 020 7202 0773.

Tickets are free and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Venue

One Great George Street  
Westminster, SW1P 3AA  
[www.onegreatgeorgestreet.com](http://www.onegreatgeorgestreet.com)

The minutes from RCVS Day 2013, held at the Royal College of Physicians, London, can be found at [www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-events/rcvs-day/](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-events/rcvs-day/)

## Programme

Coffee will be available from 9.30am to 11.00am

### 10.00am

Annual General Meeting

1. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting
2. Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2013\*
3. Motion to submit new Royal Charter for approval by Privy Council\*\*
4. Questions
5. Council elections: new members and retirements
6. Date of next AGM: Friday 10 July 2015

Meeting of the RCVS Council

7. Meeting to elect President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer

..... Coffee break .....

### 11.00am

Presentation of Awards

8. Celebration of first Queen's Medal Award
9. Presentation of Honorary Fellowship by Election
10. Presentation of Fellowships
11. Presentation of Diplomas
12. Declaration for Advanced Veterinary Nurses
13. Presentation of Diplomas in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (small animal)  
Presentation of Diplomas in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (equine)
14. Presentation of Veterinary Nursing Golden Jubilee Award
15. Presentation of books to the RCVS Knowledge Library from the British Small Animal Veterinary Association
16. Chief Executive & Secretary's address
17. President's address
18. Introduction of new President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer

### 12.00

Talk from Professor Sarah Cleaveland, University of Glasgow: 'International perspectives on zoonotic diseases: tackling complexity through collaboration'

**12.45pm** Drinks

**13.00pm** Lunch

\* The RCVS Annual Report and Financial Statements 2013 are available online at [www.rcvs.org.uk/publications](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/publications) and can be posted on request, please email [l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk)

\*\* The resolution and draft Charter are available online at [www.rcvs.org.uk/newcharter](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/newcharter) and can be posted, on request, please email [d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk) or 020 27202 0737.

# EMS survey results

## Majority of graduates say placements are 'essential'

**T**he results of a survey we conducted with recent graduates from UK veterinary schools has found that the vast majority consider extra-mural studies (EMS) to be an essential component of the veterinary degree.

The survey was launched earlier this year in order to help us build up a picture of how EMS placements are currently working and whether graduates felt that they had gained knowledge and experience from placements that they could not have learnt from their core studies. Some 287 veterinary graduates from 2012 and 2013 participated in the survey, the overwhelming majority of whom (95.6%) agreed that EMS was essential.

***"What is clear is that the current system is working well and that there is no need for an immediate review or urgent action."***

The majority of the recent graduates said that they had found EMS placements to be beneficial in terms of the variety of clinical skills, professional skills and working practices they encountered. The only area in which a large number of graduates (42.9%) said that they did not find EMS placements useful was in gaining experience of out-of-hours and weekend work.

Despite the overall positive results, however, a number of concerns about EMS were raised. Issues included variable quality of placements; significant numbers of respondents feeling they were not able to gain as much 'hands-on' experience from placements as they would like; costs of accommodation and travel; and a lack of farm/mixed animal practices for placements.

Other key findings included the fact that the vast majority of veterinary students identified and booked their own placements at EMS practices and that their placements were at the type of practice they were looking for.

Christine Warman, Head of Education, commented on the results: "We

launched this survey as an information-gathering exercise to see how EMS placements are currently working, following our last review of EMS in 2009 – and the results have certainly been very interesting.

"What is clear is that the current system is working well and that there is no need for an immediate review or urgent action. Most graduates found the experience gained on placements useful for their studies and consider that EMS sets them up well for their first job in practice.

"However, there are a number of issues that we will keep a watching brief over and we plan to repeat the survey every two years in order to monitor these."

The full results of the survey are available to view at [www.rcvs.org.uk/emssurvey2014](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/emssurvey2014). Detailed guidance on EMS placements for students, university staff and practices is also available at [www.rcvs.org.uk/ems](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/ems).

Any queries about EMS can be directed to our Education Department, on 020 7202 0791 or [education@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:education@rcvs.org.uk).



## Frequently asked questions about EMS

### What is EMS?

EMS placements are a key part of the undergraduate veterinary degree and students must complete a minimum of 38 weeks during their course. There are two main phases to EMS: the pre-clinical or animal husbandry phase and the clinical stage. The clinical stage is in turn structured around a short 'preparatory' stage of about six weeks and then a practical EMS phase comprising 20 weeks.

### What are the aims of EMS?

The main aim of EMS is to provide veterinary students with real-life work experience to complement their academic studies and help them gain proficiency in routine techniques and first-hand experience that will help them to develop as professionals. Among other things, students should develop animal-handling skills; an understanding of practice economics and management; and communication skills with colleagues and clients. They must also gain experience of the ethical and legal responsibilities of a veterinary surgeon and of working in a variety of different environments.

### What involvement does the RCVS have in the veterinary schools' EMS programmes?

As the regulator of veterinary education we are responsible for setting the overall policy for EMS and we monitor how this is implemented through our visitations to veterinary schools. However, we ultimately leave it up to each veterinary school as to how they run their EMS programmes.

### How do students find out about EMS placements?

Our online practice search tool Find a Vet ([www.findavet.org.uk](http://www.findavet.org.uk)) allows you to search specifically for practices that offer EMS placements. In addition, all veterinary schools have a list of EMS practices for their students.

### What accounts for the variable quality of placements and what recourse do students have if they aren't happy with their placement?

Many students report variable quality for their placements, and this could be down to a number of factors, such as a mismatch of expectations between the student and the EMS practice, and also students not adequately preparing for the placement. Our guidance states that students must take responsibility for preparing for their placements, and it's clear that the more they put in, the more they'll get out of it!

In circumstances where the student, or the EMS provider, does not believe the placement is working as well as it should, they should contact their school's EMS Coordinator and also complete an EMS feedback form. This will allow the veterinary schools to evaluate their EMS programmes and provide feedback to the student and/or the EMS practice as appropriate. The form and list of coordinators can be found at [www.rcvs.org.uk/ems](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/ems).

# Ready for a new challenge?

## Opportunity to join our VN team

**Are you a senior veterinary nurse or a veterinary surgeon with experience of veterinary nurse training and assessment?**

If you are also a good communicator and are interested in improving standards of VN training, we may have just the job for you.

An opportunity has arisen for a VN Qualifications Officer to join our Veterinary Nursing team. The post-holder will be required to:

- Provide development advice and support on regulatory requirements for licence to practise qualifications, the Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing and overseas qualifications
- Manage the accreditation of licence to practise qualifications
- Liaise with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Awarding Organisations (AOs) and their colleges and training practices
- Promote veterinary nursing as a career choice

We are looking for a listed or registered veterinary nurse, or a veterinary surgeon, with a minimum of five years' post-qualification experience, who can demonstrate relevant CPD.

The successful candidate would also need to:

- Hold a current quality assurance award
- Have significant and recent experience of VN training and assessment
- Possess excellent written and oral communication skills
- Be prepared to work flexibly and travel away from home with overnight stays, as necessary
- Be a car owner with a clean driving licence

The post will be primarily based at Belgravia House in London (two to three days per week) but will also require regular travel throughout the UK. The salary will be c.£32K per annum, together with excellent benefits.

A more detailed specification can be found at [www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/work-for-us](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/work-for-us).

To apply, please send a CV and covering letter to Lesley Evans, HR Director, RCVS, Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF or [personnel@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:personnel@rcvs.org.uk).

The closing date for applications is 30 June 2014.

# All phased out

## Old PDP website discontinued this autumn

**We would like to remind all vets who graduated before 2012 and who have yet to complete their Professional Development Phase (PDP) that they should finish it before 30 September this year.**

From this date, the old PDP website will become defunct and those who haven't finished will have to manually transfer their records over to the PDP component of our Professional Development Record.

Three reminder letters have been sent to pre-2012 graduates who have yet to complete the PDP – the most recent of which was issued this month.

If you are one of those concerned and feel you need more time to complete your PDP or need help transferring your records to the PDR, please contact Stephanie Platt, PDP Education Officer, on [s.platt@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:s.platt@rcvs.org.uk) or 020 7202 0736.

# A continuous learning process

## Please keep your CPD records up-to-date

**As reported in the March edition of RCVS News, later this year we will be starting more proactively to monitor vets' continuing professional development (CPD) records.**

A random sample of CPD records will be taken from vets who confirmed that they had met the minimum requirements for CPD when renewing their registration for 2014/15 and we will also be calling in the records of vets who failed to declare compliance. As in previous years, we will also be carrying out a CPD audit of registered veterinary nurses – including a random sample – in the autumn.

In order to build as clear a picture as possible of the type and amount of CPD being carried out by both vets and RVNs we need your records to be up-to-date, so please make sure that you are regularly logging your CPD activities and providing sufficient detail about why you engaged in your

chosen activity, what you learned and how you will apply this learning to professional life.

The easiest and most efficient way to do this is through the Professional Development Record (PDR) which allows you to upload supporting documents, write reflective notes and comments and set up learning and development plans, among other features. Otherwise, you can continue to use your CPD Record Card, which may be requested from you, together with any supporting documents, during the monitoring process.

For more information about the PDR, please visit [www.rcvs.org.uk/education](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/education) and follow the links to the relevant (vet or VN) section on CPD.

Alternatively, you can also download the RCVS CPD Record Card from the same section of the website, or request one from our Education Department on 020 7202 0791.

# Visitations update

## Nottingham recognition continued



**The University of Nottingham's veterinary degree has been given continued recognition after a follow-up visit to the school in March this year.**

The degree was initially recognised in 2011 and the follow-up visit was held

to make sure that the course has continued to progress as planned. This year's visit was chaired by Council member Professor Stephen May and the panel recommended that the degree should continue to be recognised until 2018, when it will be subject to another full visitation in line with the normal seven-year cycle. This recommendation was endorsed by the Education Committee in May.

The Education Committee also agreed to continue the recognition of the veterinary degree offered by the University of Pretoria in South Africa. This follows a visit to the university in May 2013, which included Professor John Innes from the University of Liverpool and then RCVS Council member Jill Nute.

The recognition of the degree is contingent on the university submitting annual reports to us, and allowing us to send a visitor to the follow-up visit in May 2015.

This November, RCVS Council member Professor Susan Dawson (pictured) will be chairing a joint visitation to the University of Bristol with representatives of the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) and the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council.

## Diploma exam dates

The Diploma written exams will be held at the RCVS, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF, on **8 July 2014**.

## Fellowship applications

The closing date for applications for the Diploma of Fellowship – by thesis or meritorious contribution to learning – is **1 August 2014**.

## Specialist status

RCVS Recognised Specialists who first listed in 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010 are required to reapply by **15 August 2014**.

The closing date for new applications is **5 September 2014**.

For more information about Diplomas, Fellowships or Specialist status, please contact [education@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:education@rcvs.org.uk).



# Anything to declare?

## Declarations at BVNA Congress

**Registered veterinary nurses who transferred from the List, registered before the new Code came in (May 2012) or who were not able to attend their registration ceremony will have the opportunity to make their declaration in public at the British Veterinary Nurses Association (BVNA) Congress this autumn (Telford, 10-12 October).**

Nurses will gather from 11.45-12.45 on Saturday 11 October for the ceremony, and there will also be the opportunity to ask question of VN Council representatives and senior RCVS staff members.

***"I have been taking the opportunity to ask 'seasoned' veterinary nurses to make their declarations in public whenever I can this year."***

Kathy Kissick, Chair of the Veterinary Nurses Council, commented: "I have been taking the opportunity to ask 'seasoned' veterinary nurses to make their declarations in public whenever I can this year, and so I was delighted when the BVNA offered us this wonderful chance to do so on a large scale. It's a moving experience and I would encourage as many people as possible to attend, even if you have already made your declaration."

## Free support for overseas graduates

### First day of CPD event now free

**For the last two years a CPD event tailored for overseas graduates practising, or considering practising, in the UK has been jointly run by the RCVS with the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and the Veterinary Defence Society (VDS).**

The next such course will be held on 10-11 September, and this time the first day will be free, so there's no excuse not to join us.

The two-day event comprises an initial day of talks and discussions covering topics such as an overview of the UK profession, what it means to be a professional, developing skills and maintaining professional standards, identifying the right job, support available when problems arise and tips from an overseas vet who has succeeded.

The second day, which will be charged for, is a masterclass in communications run by the VDS in a very effective role-playing format.

The event will be held at our offices in London. You can attend either day or both, as you wish. Please contact Fiona Harcourt on [f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk) for more information and to sign up.

# Where did the money go?

## News about SPANA's Ethiopian Equine Healthcare Workshop

**Our 2012 President's Christmas Box donation was made to SPANA – a charity that supports working animals around the world.**

We were delighted to receive an update from the charity about how the £5,000 festive donation had benefited equines in Ethiopia.

A four-day Equine Healthcare Workshop had been held, providing continuing professional development (CPD) to key staff from veterinary teaching institutions in Ethiopia – essentially teaching the teachers.



The 14 people attending were responsible for teaching the equine healthcare curricula at ten different veterinary teaching institutions in the country, and the CPD covered clinical examination, wound management, gastrointestinal medicine, respiratory disease, neurology, ophthalmology, orthopaedics, dermatology and infectious disease. Both theoretical and practical sessions were included.

"The level of enthusiasm and participation throughout the course was excellent, particularly from the younger members. For many, this was the first opportunity for them to meet their counterparts from other universities and it was a good opportunity for them to make contact and discuss cases and facilities," reports Rachael Conwell, a member of SPANA's veterinary subcommittee and one of the course tutors.

"On behalf of everyone at SPANA, I would like to thank the RCVS for funding this most productive visit to Ethiopia."

## London Vet Show – date for your diary

### Join us in November

**We will once again be exhibiting at Europe's largest veterinary exhibition – the London Vet Show – this year held on 20-21 November at Olympia's Grand Hall.**

Members of the team will be on stand C67, offering advice, information, a competition and giveaways. There will be over 200 speakers at the show, covering small and large animal and equine topics, giving delegates plenty of opportunities to add to their CPD hours.

The conference timetable is now available at [www.londonvetshow.co.uk](http://www.londonvetshow.co.uk), featuring a new British Veterinary Nursing Association advanced nursing programme and Royal Veterinary College equine stream, together with clinical theatres, and the British Veterinary Association (BVA) large animal stream, Careers Fair and Congress.

Tickets can be booked for £179 (+ VAT) (compared to the regular price of £219 + VAT) using code RCVS179, before 31 July at [www.londonvetshow.co.uk](http://www.londonvetshow.co.uk).

## SORP approach

### New format for annual report and accounts

**This year's Annual Report and Financial Statements is in a new format – we have switched to the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005), on the recommendation of our Audit and Risk Committee.**

The new format will give greater transparency and consistency to our financial reporting, and also make it easier to compare our figures with those of other similar organisations. It includes a more detailed narrative and extended notes.

*RCVS Review*, part one of our previous style of annual report, will no longer be published, although we will continue to produce *RCVS Facts* – which is full of useful data about the size and shape of the profession, including student numbers, membership by age and gender, and registration data.

As we make the transition to the new approach you will notice that we have two annual reports dated 2013. The one printed last year covered the 12 months to 31 March 2013, although the finances related to 2012. The report we have just published only covers financial information, all of which relates to 2013, so is also dated 2013.

The *Annual Report and Financial Statements 2013* can be downloaded from [www.rcvs.org.uk/publications](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/publications), where *RCVS Facts 2014* will also be published shortly.



# Ewloe high

## Excellent engagement at Regional Question Time

**The President, Chief Executive, Registrar and Chairman of the Veterinary Nurses Council, together with Council member Niall Connell, headed to Ewloe in North Wales on 22 May to take questions from a gathering of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses.**

The discussion was robust but constructive, and topics covered many of those that were due to be debated at the June Council meeting – 24/7, postnominals and alternative disputes resolution – as well as breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act,

standards of undergraduate education and how to improve engagement with our consultations.

See below for a summary of the night in Tweets.

Meanwhile, you can 'listen again' to our Virtual Question Time, hosted by The Webinar Vet on 15 April, at [www.thewebinarvet.com/webinar-category/rcvs-webinars](http://www.thewebinarvet.com/webinar-category/rcvs-webinars).

Dates and venues for the next series of Regional Question Times have yet to be fixed – keep an eye on RCVS e-News for more information.



## #RCVSrqt @RCVS\_UK 22 May

President Neil Smith welcomes guests to our Regional Question Time in Ewloe, North Wales. We'll be summarising Q&A over the evening #RCVSrqt

President encouraging delegates to respond to our consultation on proposals for new Fellowship: [www.rcvs.org.uk/newfellowship](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/newfellowship) #RCVSrqt

President explains complaints will be called 'concerns' in the 1st instance: less aggressive & better measurement of expectations #RCVSrqt

Q: under alternative disputes resolution, will RCVS be looking at negligence? A: yes may cover that & a vet panel will consider. #RCVSrqt

CEO outlines steps 2 speed up complaints-handling process: quicker ackmt, more phone contact, to Disc Cttee or close in 12 months #RCVSrqt

Q: can we learn from medics? A: we do, but they have bigger budgets & economies of scale. We have introduced changes cost-effectively #RCVSrqt

Prez asks if anyone doing CertAVP and if so, how finding it? A: 'hard work' was the answer! #RCVSrqt

Postnoms: several delegates feel easier to leave as is. Prez stresses never intention 2 remove, just not publish on Register #RCVSrqt

CEO Nick Stace: we don't set out to be popular but to do the right thing. When we get it wrong, we say so. #RCVSrqt

CEO: we find consultations get little response, meanwhile conspiracies get lots of coverage...how can we get more engagement? #RCVSrqt

Q: what if neighbouring practice puts OOH thro' 2 service 30miles away? Prez: you don't have 2 see clients reg w. another practice #RCVSrqt

Related q: what if animal welfare issue? Prez: no easy answer but use clinical judgment. Important to improve client comms on 24/7 #RCVSrqt

Q: RCVS role in prosecuting non-vets carrying out vet surgery? A: we can't prosecute but work w. police, Trading Standards & others #RCVSrqt

Q around reg of paraprofessionals eg foot trimmers. Prez: under new Charter there is opp for us to regulate others; some groups keen #RCVSrqt

Prez thanks everyone for coming & sharing views. We do listen, very valuable. #RCVSrqt

# An advanced win

## BSAVA competition winner announced

**A registered veterinary nurse was the winner of our competition held at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress in April, based around the theme of advancing veterinary standards.**

Donna Mace was one of the 440 people who took part in our 'Advance to Go' game, answering a question about the ways in which practices can promote their Practice Standards Scheme status.

The competition was promoting our new Advanced Practitioner status.

She says: "It was a nice surprise on a cold, wet day, to find out that I had won the competition. The members of staff on the RCVS stand were very helpful and answered a query I had about online CPD. Also, my colleagues decided not to enter the competition, so I feel rather smug!" For her efforts, Donna won a Kindle Fire.

# It's in the bag

## Educating pet owners at LPS

**"Setting veterinary standards. Protecting your pets." That was the message for visitors to our stand at the London Pet Show this year (Earls Court, 17–18 May) – and it was a literal 'take home' message, as it featured on our free bags-for-life.**



Around 500 people came to the stand to talk to us about how we set, maintain and advance veterinary standards, covering issues such as Practice Standards, 24-hour emergency care, vet and vet nursing careers and the complaints process.

You will be pleased to hear that the vast majority of visitors were very happy with the service provided by their veterinary teams – nearly all were multiple animal owners and were registered with a practice.

With May being National Veterinary Nursing Awareness Month, Victoria Hedges from our VN team took the opportunity to demonstrate to younger visitors some of the work carried out by VNs, including tube-feeding and bandaging. These tasks were carried out on Willow, our animatronic cat – who a few thought was real!

We also spent time talking to animal owners about 24/7 emergency cover, and encouraged them to talk to their practices about where emergency care can be accessed, explaining that it may not always be from their usual practice premises. We handed out fridge-magnets with space on the front to write down the phone number and location of their emergency care clinic, to underline the point. Any veterinary practice that would like a batch of these magnets to give to clients should contact Lizzie Lockett on [l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk).

A series of three videos was shot at the event by South West TV, explaining to owners about our role, Practice Standards and what VNs do – featuring the lively Willow! They can be viewed at [www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos](http://www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos).





# Report to Council June 2014

**PI Committee Chair Jerry Davies**

**S**ince the last Report to Council there have been three Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) meetings. During this period, 29 new concerns raised against veterinary surgeons have been considered, of which seven were closed; eight were closed with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon; two were held open; three were referred for further investigation; seven were referred to solicitors for formal statements to be taken; and, two were referred for consideration under the RCVS Health Protocol. The PIC is also investigating 41 ongoing cases and has referred two new ones to the Disciplinary Committee.

## Health and Performance Protocols

There are 13 veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Health and Performance Protocols. Of these, ten currently remain under long-term health and performance management.

## Professional Conduct Department

In the period since the last Council meeting (6 March 2014 to 14 May 2014), the total number of concerns registered was 172 (the total number of concerns registered between the same dates in 2013 was 155) and 184 concerns have been closed.

## Case Examiners

Between 6 March 2014 and 14 May 2014, 79 cases were progressed to Case Examiners. Of these, 50 were closed; five were referred to the PIC; and, eight required further investigations / visits. The remaining 16 cases are currently being considered.

## Veterinary Investigators

During the same period, the four Veterinary Investigators and the Senior Case Manager carried out ten announced visits, five unannounced visit (one being a joint visit with the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), one health-related visit and four review visits.

Two Veterinary Investigators and the Senior Case Manager have also assisted police and the VMD regarding a suspicious internet pharmacy, a bogus veterinary practice and a bogus veterinary surgeon. The bogus veterinary surgeon has since been convicted but failed to attend court for sentence so a warrant has been granted for his arrest.

In addition the Senior Case Manager continues to liaise with the police and trading standards regarding bogus veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, the treatment of animals by non-veterinary surgeons and an alleged bogus veterinary practice.

## Audit of closed complaints

Since the last report to Council, the PIC Chairman has audited eight of the 48 cases closed at the assessment stage and 15 of the 60 cases closed at the case examination stage. The Chair agreed with the original decisions to close these cases.

## Breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act

The RCVS has continued to assist the police and other authorities with a number of ongoing and new investigations. Since the last report, a veterinary surgeon who practised without being registered has been convicted and received a financial penalty and the Senior Investigator is currently liaising with police regarding a similar incident. The Senior Case Manager is also liaising with one police force about a non-veterinary surgeon administering intra-articular injections to several horses.

## New complaints investigation process

The launch of a new complaints investigation process, designed to improve efficiency and user experience, is scheduled for July 2014, pending Council approval in June. (See page 8 for further details.)

The full report is available at [www.rcvs.org.uk/pic](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/pic)

## Mr Joseph Holmes

**Inquiry concerning: application for restoration to the Register**

**DC decision: application accepted**

**Registration status: name restored to Register on 1 April 2014**

On the 19 March 2014, the RCVS Disciplinary Committee (DC) restored Joseph Lennox Holmes to the Register of Veterinary Surgeons, two years after he was originally struck off.

Mr Holmes was removed from the Register in February 2012 after the then Disciplinary Committee found him guilty of multiple charges of serious professional conduct at a hearing in January 2011. Mr Holmes lodged an appeal against this decision, which was heard and dismissed by the Privy Council in December 2011. He was removed from the Register thereafter.

The original charges related to two separate complaints; the first involved numerous charges in respect of Mr Holmes' treatment of a King Charles Spaniel between October 2007 and March 2008; the second, several charges in relation to his treatment of three cats in 2008.

The Committee found that the majority of the charges amounted to serious professional misconduct. In removing Mr Holmes from the Register, the Committee found that "aggravating





factors in both... cases included actual injuries to the animals... and a serious breach of the trust which Mr Holmes' clients had placed in him to make the welfare of the animals his primary consideration according to the standards to be expected of the profession".

***"The Committee has concluded that, in the course of genuine efforts to do what was necessary to address the deficiencies identified during the original Inquiry and at the last restoration hearing, the Applicant has at last understood the seriousness of his previous misconduct."***

In addition, the Committee cited ten further aggravating factors including lack of reference to continuing professional development (CPD) in clinical policies and practices; lack of reference to accepted practice; lack of appreciation of the importance of adequate pain relief when performing painful surgical procedures; reluctance to consider referral as an option; and lack of understanding about what information is required by a client to enable fully informed consent to be given.

Following the dismissal of Mr Holmes' appeal by the Privy Council, his first application for restoration was heard by the Disciplinary Committee in February 2013. The Committee was not satisfied that he was fit to be restored to the Register, citing the fact that his application was "premature" and that he had failed to truly appreciate the seriousness of the findings against him.

The Committee was also unimpressed with the efforts he had made to keep up-to-date with skills and developments in practice and with his CPD, noting in particular that he had made very limited attempts to observe the function and experience the culture of a modern first opinion practice.

However, in the recent two-day hearing, the Committee was satisfied that Mr Holmes was now fit to be restored to the Register. It heard that Mr Holmes had made a concerted effort to engage in CPD and bring his skills and knowledge up-to-date. During a period of observation at a veterinary practice, he had gained insight into modern practice and the need for veterinary general practitioners to be aware of the advantages in referring patients to specialists.

Professor Noreen Burrows, who chaired and spoke on behalf of the Disciplinary Committee, said: "The Committee has concluded that, in the course of genuine efforts to do what was necessary to address the deficiencies identified during the original Inquiry and at the last

restoration hearing, the Applicant has at last understood the seriousness of his previous misconduct and has learned new skills and, most importantly, to recognise his limitations from the extensive course of study, reflection, and other training that he has undertaken."

Furthermore, the Committee was satisfied that Mr Holmes had gained a proper understanding of the importance of securing the informed consent of his clients and building a relationship of trust with them and, in addition, recognising the importance of maintaining close relations with fellow professionals and engaging with CPD opportunities.

Additional factors considered when making the decision included: that he had been off the Register for two years; that, through self-improvement, he had equipped himself to treat animals appropriately; the impact that being removed from the Register had in both personal and financial terms; his conduct since being removed from the Register; and, a number of positive testimonials from previous clients and professional colleagues.

**Full details of disciplinary hearings are available at [www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary).**

## Privy Council overturns Disciplinary Committee decision

### Leeds-based vet Gary Samuel to remain on Register

**F**ollowing a successful appeal to the Privy Council, Leeds-based veterinary surgeon Dr Gary Samuel will not be removed from the RCVS Register.

The RCVS Disciplinary Committee (DC) had agreed the sanction following a hearing in February 2013 (RCVS News, March 2013, pages 18-19), at which it decided that Dr Samuel's conviction for theft, common assault and a public order offence at Cardiff Magistrates' Court (22 November 2011) made him unfit to practise veterinary surgery.

Dr Samuel appealed the DC's decision and the Privy Council heard the case on 26 March 2014, announcing its decision on 16 April.

Dr Samuel had been sentenced by Cardiff Magistrates' Court to concurrent terms of 28 days' imprisonment for theft and common assault and 12 weeks' imprisonment for the public order offence, all suspended for 12 months. He had also been ordered to carry out 140 hours' unpaid work and to pay compensation of £75 and costs of £625.

The charges related to an incident involving Dr Samuel and his neighbour, described by the Privy Council as "a spontaneous outburst in the course

of an angry quarrel between neighbours", for which it felt that the DC's sanction of removal from the Register was "disproportionately severe."

***"The DC followed too closely the verdict reached by the Magistrates' Court, and did not take mitigating circumstances sufficiently into account."***

The Privy Council considered the wider circumstances of the case and Dr Samuel's evidence, and concluded that: "In this case, if members of the public were told that the offences occurred in the context of an angry flare-up between neighbours...they might well think that this had little bearing on his fitness to practise as a veterinary surgeon."

The Privy Council also felt that, in making its decision, the DC followed too closely the verdict reached by the Magistrates' Court, and did not take mitigating circumstances sufficiently into account, including whether the attack by Dr Samuel on his neighbour had been provoked by racial abuse.

"It is apparent from the reasons given by the Committee, both on the question of fitness to practise and on the question of sanction, that it was considerably influenced by the fact that the magistrates imposed a suspended prison sentence," said Lord Toulson, delivering the Privy Council's judgment.

"Although Dr Samuel pleaded guilty to the theft of the camera and he was not entitled to go behind his plea, it is nevertheless difficult to understand on the evidence how the prosecution would have proved that there was an intent permanently to deprive [the victim] of it. In all the circumstances, it is hard to conceive that the court would have considered that the offences truly passed the custodial threshold for a person of good character, if it had not had the power to suspend the sentence..." had added.

The Privy Council considered Dr Samuel's conduct to be thoroughly reprehensible, but did not consider that it was in the public interest to remit the case to the Disciplinary Committee.

The Privy Council's judgment can be read in full on its website at: [www.jcpc.uk/decided-cases/docs/JCPC\\_2013\\_0030\\_Judgment.pdf](http://www.jcpc.uk/decided-cases/docs/JCPC_2013_0030_Judgment.pdf).

## Miss Kellie Price

### **Inquiry concerning: dishonest creation of prescriptions and fraudulent presentation of prescription to pharmacy**

### **RVNDC decision: suspend name from Register for nine months**

### **Registration status: has until 18 June 2014 to appeal decision, otherwise name to be suspended from Register on 19 June 2014 and restored on 19 March 2015**

On 19 May 2014, the Registered Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee (RVNDC) suspended Kellie Price RVN from the Register after she admitted dishonestly creating four prescriptions, one of which was then fraudulently presented to a pharmacy.

The Committee made the decision to suspend Miss Price for nine months after she accepted the allegation of serious professional misconduct against her.

The Committee heard that, on 6 January 2013, Miss Price, who did not attend the hearing and had no representation, while working at a veterinary practice in Kent, had dishonestly created a prescription for two inhalers. This prescription had been written and signed in the name of a locum

veterinary surgeon, Cristiana Tudini MRCVS, without her knowledge or consent. The false prescription was subsequently presented to a pharmacy for dispensing.

In addition, on 2 March 2013, Miss Price dishonestly created a further three prescriptions – one of which was written in the name of her colleague Cormac

***“The Committee is... satisfied that the respondent's conduct fell far short of the conduct to be expected of a registered veterinary nurse.”***

Higgins MRCVS, and two written in the name of Cristiana Tudini MRCVS, without either's knowledge or consent. All four false prescriptions had been made out for Miss Price's Jack Russell terrier.

Upon discovering the false prescriptions, Mr Higgins asked Miss Price for an explanation and subsequently suspended her from her position pending further investigation. However, after being interviewed by Mr Higgins, she resigned before any in-house disciplinary hearing could take place. The allegations were then reported to both the RCVS and the police, the latter giving Miss Price a formal caution in respect of the false prescription made on 6 January 2013.

In considering Miss Price's sanction, the RVN Disciplinary Committee took into account a number of aggravating and mitigating factors. In mitigation, it accepted Miss Price's explanation that, in the early hours of 6 January, she had suffered an asthma attack and that she had created the false prescription at work in a panic after realising her inhaler was empty and fearing a further asthma attack. The Committee also took into account a witness statement from Cormac Higgins MRCVS which described her as a “great nurse” and “good with patients and clients”.

However, the Committee also considered aggravating factors including Miss Price's dishonesty and the fact that she then made further false prescriptions in March, although these were not then presented to a pharmacy.

Professor Noreen Burrows, who chaired the RVN Disciplinary Committee and spoke on its behalf, commented: “The Committee is... satisfied that the admitted dishonesty amounts to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect [and] is satisfied that the respondent's conduct fell far short of the conduct to be expected of a registered veterinary nurse.”

On deciding the sanction she added: “Taking into account all of the circumstances, the Committee has concluded that the suspension of the Respondent's name from the Register for a period of nine months is the proportionate sanction in this case.”

## RVN PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE



# Report to Council, June 2014

## RVN PI Committee Chair Lynne Hill

### **Overview**

Between 1 April 2011 and 14 February 2014 there have been a total of 77 concerns raised about registered veterinary nurses (RVNs). Of these, 14 were raised under the notifiable occupation scheme or self-reported declaration of conviction; eight were raised by veterinary surgeons; 47 were raised by members of the public; two were raised by veterinary nurses; and, six were raised by the RCVS.

### **New concerns received**

Since the last Report to VN Council there have been two Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVNPIC) meetings. During this period, eight new concerns have been raised about RVNs. Of these, five have been closed at the Assessment Stage (no potential for serious professional misconduct), one is currently under ‘Assessment’ (consideration whether

there is ‘potential’ for a case against the RVN) and two are under ‘Enquiries’ (investigation).

### **New cases considered**

The RVNPIC has considered five cases during this period, of which the Committee has closed four (including one closed with strong advice and one where the Committee accepted the RVN's undertaking to remove her name from the Register) and referred one to the Professional Conduct Department for further investigation.

### **Ongoing investigations**

The RVNPIC is currently investigating two ongoing cases. One involves a criminal prosecution in Scotland and the Senior Case Manager is liaising with the Procurator Fiscal's (PF) Office; the other has been referred to Defra Investigations, which continue to liaise with the Senior Case Manager. The Committee has adjourned

these matters pending the outcome of the court hearing and the investigations.

### **Health Protocol**

One case continues to be handled under the RCVS Health Protocol. The RVN concerned has signed an undertaking not to practise.

### **Bogus registered veterinary nurse (conviction)**

The Senior Case Manager has been assisting Humberside Police regarding a suspected bogus veterinary surgeon and veterinary nurse team. The offenders have been arrested and appeared in the Crown Court. Having entered a guilty plea, they are now awaiting sentence.

### **Referrals to RVN Disciplinary Committee**

Since the last report, the RVNPIC has referred one new case to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

The full report is available on RCVSonline ([www.rcvs.org.uk](http://www.rcvs.org.uk)).

# A launch to new heights

## Special event to celebrate RCVS Knowledge rebrand

**O**n 21 May RCVS Knowledge opened its doors to members of the veterinary community for a launch party to celebrate its new logo and identity as an international charity focused on promoting evidence-based veterinary medicine (EBVM) and providing clear and accessible evidence to veterinary healthcare teams.

Our new direction runs across three main streams – the Historical Collection; the Library and Information Service; and our work to promote EBVM throughout the profession.

The launch gave us the opportunity to unveil our refurbished library, which, thanks to a generous donation in memory of Dr May Gwek Beng Lim, now provides a dynamic meeting and event space. A consultation with the practising veterinary community about their information needs is now underway, ensuring that the Library and Information Service will continue to provide the profession with timely evidence to help deliver high-quality veterinary care.

**“EBVM needs international collaboration to succeed in helping practitioners make better-informed decisions at the point of care.”**

Nick Royle, RCVS Knowledge Executive Director, said: “We were delighted with the attendance of a real cross-section of the profession, which emphasised how welcome our work is in the veterinary world. Guests included government representatives such as Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, veterinary charities, practitioners, and faculty and researchers from the veterinary schools.”

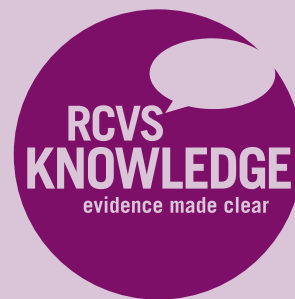
During the event Nick Royle also gave an update on the EBVM Network, which now has around 500 members from across the globe and will meet for the first time at the International EBVM Network Conference.

He added: “EBVM needs international collaboration to succeed in helping practitioners make better-informed decisions at the point of care, which is why our new logo is a globe-shape, with a speech bubble that represents an open dialogue on the needs of the profession – much like we had at our launch party.

“We hope that this event is only the beginning of getting people talking and making connections that will take evidence-based veterinary practice forward.”



Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, attending the launch event



## Preserving veterinary history

### Help digitisation project

**R**CVS Knowledge is the keeper of some 6,000 historic books, documents and manuscripts – an irreplaceable body of knowledge of hundreds of years of veterinary science.

To bring this unique and important collection to a wider audience – and to preserve it for future generations – on the 500th anniversary of the collection's earliest volume, *Libri de re rustica*, published in 1514, we are embarking on a major digitisation programme of these valuable documents.

A project of this scale will take a number of years to complete – and comes at significant cost. The specialist scanner we want will cost £10,000 alone. However, we also need to invest in other areas too, such as software, website development and training.

We want to start work this year. If you would like to support our digitisation project, you can donate online via [www.rcvsknowledge.org](http://www.rcvsknowledge.org), ring Marcus Pugh, Head of Fundraising, on 020 7227 3507, or call into Belgravia House. We would be delighted to see you!

## Get with the programme

### Preliminary speakers announced for EBVM Network Conference

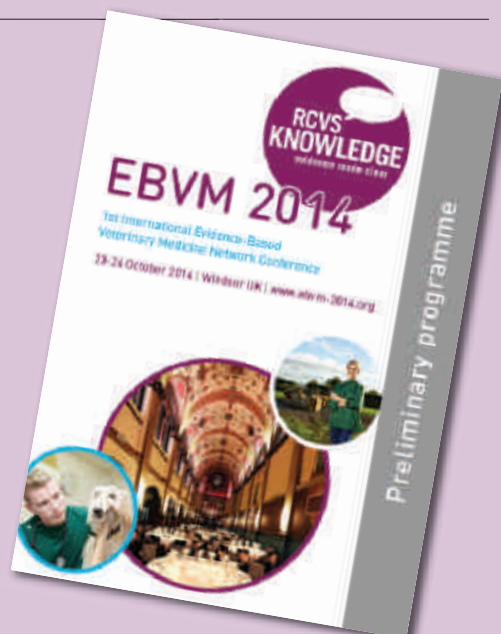
**R**CVS Knowledge is pleased to announce the preliminary programme for its 1st International Evidence-Based Veterinary Medicine Network Conference, which focuses on sharing pragmatic, affordable EBVM tools and solutions to help those in practice deliver evidence-based veterinary care.

The programme includes sessions such as ‘EBVM in the trenches: How can veterinary healthcare professionals implement EBVM in their day-to-day activities,’ by Brennen McKenzie, the Adobe Animal Hospital (USA), and Martin Brunet, a GP at an NHS practice; and ‘What’s happening already? EBVM efforts across the world,’ by Sandi Lefebvre, Banfield Pet Hospital (USA), and Douglas DeBoer, University of Wisconsin (USA).

You can find a conference insert in this issue of *RCVS News*, giving full details of the programme, which includes speakers from the US, UK and the rest of Europe, who have each been selected for their pioneering work in EBVM.

Dr Rita Jorge, Head of Research at RCVS Knowledge, explains: “Each of our speakers has practical, demonstrable experience of how evidence-based decisions can improve outcomes in veterinary treatment and we are hugely excited to have them all under one roof.”

Full details of the Conference, which takes place on 23 and 24 October 2014 at the Beaumont Estate near Windsor, can be found at [www.ebvm-2014.org](http://www.ebvm-2014.org).





# RCVS News at a glance...

Too busy to read the lot? Start here for important dates for your diary and story summaries, so you can decide what might be worth reading in through.

## 1 New guidance

Rules on 24/7 revised.

## 2 Postnom reprieve

Council overturns decision to remove postnominals from Register.

## Treasure Boag

New Treasurer for the College.

## Well Des-erved

First ever Queen's Medal recipient.

## 3 Responding and kind

How we are listening to the concerns of the profession.

## Changing chairs

New Vice-Chair for VN Council.

## On ice

Fees frozen for fifth year running.

## 4 Old and new

RCVS and VN Council election results.

## Picking your brains

Surveys of the Professions preliminary findings.

## 5 Nova Carta

New Royal Charter gets go-ahead.

## Moor de France

UK road closures for the Tour de France.

## Jolly good

Please respond to our Fellowship consultation.

## 6 In memoriam

President attends opening of RAVC memorial.

## Golden girl

Top VN award winner announced.

## Honour thy vets

Nomination period for honours now open.

## 7 At your service

New Service Charter for the College.

## New regs

New rules in the pipeline.

## Declare or beware

Complete registration by declaring CPD and convictions.

## Searching made easy

Find a Vet search improvements.

## 8 Timely intervention

Six-month trial period for alternative dispute resolution service.

## Concerning your complaint

Complaint-handling system made simpler and quicker.

## 9 Fentanyl warning

The risks of using and supplying the painkiller.

## New standards

Changes to our Code of Conduct and supporting guidance.

## 10 Q & AP

Key questions answered on Advanced Practitioner status.

## 11 A cert yourself

How CertAVP A module relates to Advanced Practitioner.

## 12 Be vigilant

Advice on being alert for bogus practitioners.

## Parental control

Your learning and registration options during parental leave.

## 13 The origins of CPD

The beginnings of veterinary CPD in the 19th century.

## 14 Point of PSS

Latest developments for Practice Standards Scheme.

## Risky business

Interview with Liz Butler, Chair of Audit and Risk Committee.

## 15 By George you're spoiling us!

What's on at RCVS Day, One Great George Street.

## 16 Student essentials

Results of our survey into EMS.

## 17 VN opportunity

New role in our veterinary nursing team.

## Always learning

Keep your CPD record up-to-date.

## Phase out again

Old PDP website will close in September.

## An inspector calls

Visitations update.

## 18 SPANA and their work

How our 2012 Christmas donation is being used.

## Showing up

We'll be at London Vet Show.

## A statement of facts

New format for Annual Report and Accounts.

## A good course

Free CPD event for overseas graduates.

## Declarations of pride

RVNs can make their declarations at BVNA Congress.

## 19 From high to Ewloe

Report of our Regional Question Time in North Wales.

## Doggie bag

Educating animal owners at the London Pet Show.

## 20 Into the breach

PIC reports on our work with police and VMD.

## DC hearing

Joseph Holmes restored to the Register after making concerted efforts to address previously identified deficiencies.

## 21 Privy Council decision

DC decision overturned to remove Dr Gary Samuel from the Register following convictions for theft and common assault.

## 22 RVN DC hearing

Kellie Price RVN suspended from Register for nine months after admitting dishonestly creating false prescriptions.

## RVN investigations

Latest update from RVN PIC.

## 23 Launch party

EBVM becomes Knowledge focus.

## Scan IT

Scanner appeal for Library digitisation project.

## Let's confer

Preliminary programme announced for EBVM Conference.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### 2014

#### 1 July

Specialist fees due

#### 4 July

Fellowship consultation deadline

#### 8 July

Diploma examinations

#### 11 July

RCVS Day

#### 1 August

Fellowship application deadline

#### 15 August

Specialist reapplication deadline

#### 12 September

Honours & Awards application deadline

#### 5 September

New Specialist application deadline

#### 10-11 September

Overseas graduates' CPD event

#### 30 September

Old PDP system turned off

#### 10-12 October

Join us at BVNA Congress

#### 6 November

RCVS Council meeting

#### 20-21 November

Join us at London Vet Show



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**RCVS** SETTING VETERINARY STANDARDS