

## Veterinary nurses – true professionals!

### College campaigns for legal protection of VN title

**RCVS Council member Professor the Lord Trees has submitted a Private Members' Bill to the House of Lords which, if successful, would legally protect the title 'veterinary nurse'.**

The 'Veterinary Nurses (Protection of Title) Bill' was entered into the House of Lords ballot on Tuesday 19 May, and received its first reading in the House on 10 June. Though the Bill was not drawn high in the ballot, we remain hopeful that it will receive a second reading later in the year, meaning that the Bill would be debated in the Lords and the Commons and, if approved by both Houses, would become law.

The move to protect the title 'veterinary nurse' follows on from the introduction of our new Royal Charter in February, which formalised the regulation of veterinary nurses.

#### What the Bill would do

Drawn up at our request, the Bill would prohibit use of the title 'veterinary nurse' for any person whose name is not on our Register of Veterinary Nurses. Any non-registered person who used the title veterinary nurse or a name, title or description that implied they were on the Register would be guilty of an offence and may be fined or convicted under the Veterinary Surgeons Act.

Lord Trees commented: "If we can get Parliamentary time then I am confident that the Bill will receive total cross-party support. It would mark the final brick in the wall of creating a fully-fledged, recognised and protected veterinary nursing profession. This is what the veterinary nursing profession merits and the public deserve." We will continue to work with Lord Trees to lobby parliamentarians to support the Bill, but in the meantime, we would encourage all veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons to back our campaign to protect the title and raise awareness of the issue amongst their clients.

#### Our campaign

At the start of VN Awareness Month in May, we launched a short film to explain the role, training and professionalism of veterinary nurses, and calling for their title to be protected. The film has been a huge hit on social media, having been viewed nearly 90,000 times and receiving nearly 10,000 interactions. What's more, our campaign webpage has signed up over 2,600 supporters since the start of May and over 700 people have taken part in our online poll.

Kathy Kissick RVN, Chair of VN Council, welcomed the new video, saying: "It's important the public understand that veterinary nurses are not 'junior vets' but that they complement the work of veterinary surgeons and enhance animal health and welfare in different ways.

"I would encourage all veterinary nurses, as well as vets and others in veterinary practice, to share this video on social media and with their clients so that they can find out more about the profession and understand how crucial it is that we secure protection of the title.

"Having untrained and unqualified people calling themselves veterinary nurses is not only misleading but potentially detrimental to animal health and welfare."

#### How you can help

Please view and share our film on social media, and visit our campaign webpage at [www.rcvs.org.uk/vntitle](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/vntitle) to register your support. We will soon update this page with template letters to make it easy for supporters to write to their MPs to ask for their help, and will also shortly be launching a formal petition to the government to request that they help to change the law to protect the title 'veterinary nurse'.

*"It's important the public understand that veterinary nurses are not 'junior vets'."*



**In this issue:** New Council members, Code changes, vaccination clinics and 24/7, CEO update, governance consultation, Honours nominations, VN Golden Jubilee Award, EU language testing, Fellowship changes, advice service extended, Vet Futures, RCVS Day, TB testing, client confidentiality, Mind Matters, Doctor title form, PSS Assessor vacancies, key skills for Specialists, CPD rule changes, Advanced Practitioner, events and conferences, Annual Report, webinars, ADR report, DC and PIC reports, EBVM online resource.

# Five new faces

## Turnouts rise in elections that featured campaign videos for first time

**The results of the 2015 RCVS Council and Veterinary Nurses (VN) Council elections saw two existing members and four new members elected to RCVS Council (including three women and three men), and one existing member and one new member elected to VN Council.**

Current members Niall Connell and Lynne Hill were returned to two of the six available seats on RCVS Council, with 2,575 votes and 1,889 votes respectively (the four other current members of Council eligible for re-election will all be retiring this year). Peter Robinson (2,308 votes) was elected again, having previously served on Council in 2013/14, and joining Council for the first time will be Timothy Greet (2,550 votes), Joanna Dyer (2,383 votes) and Katherine Richards (1,905 votes). The two available places on VN Council were taken by new member Lucy Bellwood (914 votes) and existing member and Vice-Chair, Elizabeth Cox (630 votes).

Turnouts in both elections rose this year, with 4,838 veterinary surgeons (18.1%) and 1,379 veterinary nurses (11%) voting, which compares to 4,137 (16.1%) and 1,157 (10%) in 2014. These

represent the highest numbers of vets and VNs ever to vote in RCVS elections, although there are increasing numbers of vets and veterinary nurses on the Registers. Average turnouts over the past ten years are 17.4% (4,051 veterinary voters) and 9% (833 VN voters).

***"We have an excellent mix of people joining Council, who will be able to bring a diverse range of skills and experience to Council discussions and activities."***

RCVS Registrar Gordon Hockey, commented: "My sincere thanks to all those who stood for election this year and to all those who voted, and many congratulations to the successful candidates. Once again we have an excellent mix of people joining Council, who will be able to bring a diverse range of skills and experience to Council discussions and activities. I very much look forward to welcoming them to Council at our AGM in July."

Chair of VN Council Kathy Kissick, said: "It's encouraging that voter numbers have risen slightly in this year's election, especially in such an auspicious year where the introduction of the new Royal Charter for the RCVS means that we are now formally regulated by the College and recognised as true professionals in our own right. My congratulations to both Lucy and Liz on their success."

In addition to their usual written biographies and manifesto statements, all candidates produced a 'Quiz the candidates' video this year, where they answered questions put to them directly by fellow members of the professions. Available to watch via the College's website and YouTube channel, all 14 videos received over 3,500 views in total by the voting deadline.

Once again veterinary surgeons and VNs could cast their votes by post or online, with the former remaining the more popular method. A higher proportion of veterinary surgeons (30%) voted online than did veterinary nurses (23%).

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



Newly elected: Tim Greet FRCVS, Jo Dyer MRCVS, Peter Robinson MRCVS, Kate Richards MRCVS and Lucy Bellwood RVN

## Proper name

### Changes to Code strengthen title protection

**RCVS Council and VN Council have both approved changes to the respective Code of Professional Conduct for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses to strengthen the proper use of titles in practice.**

At its June meeting, Council approved a recommendation from Standards Committee to amend the *Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons* to clarify that only those who are listed as RCVS Specialists should promote themselves as a 'specialist' or similar such expression; and that only those listed as Advanced Practitioners may describe themselves as such. Veterinary surgeons should also not hold out

themselves or others to be veterinary nurses, unless appropriately registered with the RCVS.

At its May meeting, VN Council had approved a similar change to the *VN Code*, to clarify that veterinary nurses must not: hold out themselves or others as having expertise they cannot substantiate; hold out others as Specialists or Advanced Practitioners unless appropriately listed with the RCVS; or, hold out others as veterinary nurses unless appropriately registered with the RCVS.

These changes have already been implemented in the online Codes, and most will take effect immediately. However, the *Code* change regarding specialist titles will not be enforced until after

March 2016, to allow time for veterinary surgeons to apply to join the list of RCVS Specialists.

Applications for RCVS Specialist status should be made by 4 September 2015 and European specialists can benefit from a 50% reduction in listing fee. Further information is available on our website at [www.rcvs.org.uk/specialists](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/specialists).

The *Code* changes have been accompanied by changes to Chapter 23 of the supporting guidance ('Advertising and publicity'), which gives detailed guidance on the use of the specialist title in the context of advertising and referrals, among other topics.

## Fees frozen again

### Fee increase likely in 2017/18

**A**t its June meeting, RCVS Council decided that the annual renewal fees for both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses should be frozen for yet another year, the sixth year running that there have been no fee increases.

It seems the big freeze has begun to thaw, however, as the decision to maintain fees at their 2011/12 levels was carried by just a single vote. President Stuart Reid noted that the mood of Council suggested renewal fees should probably be raised for 2017/18, in order to ensure the College maintained sufficient financial reserves for future generations.

For UK-practising veterinary surgeons the 2016 renewal fee, which was last increased in 2011, remains at £299. For veterinary nurses the renewal fee, unchanged since 2010, will be £61 again next year.

## Vaccination clinics and emergency cover

### No change to 24/7 obligations

**I**n April, our Standards Committee reviewed the current 24/7 guidance relating to those practices offering 'limited services', including vaccination clinics, but decided to make no change.

Therefore, the supporting guidance to the Code remains that veterinary surgeons 'working in vaccination clinics must make provision for 24-hour emergency cover for the period in which adverse reactions might arise.'

However, the Committee did consider the available evidence in relation to the typical timings for a Vaccine Associated Adverse Reactions (VAAEs) and the four major periods when these are likely to happen, these being:

- 5–60 minutes post vaccination – very serious events (death or anaphylaxis)
- 1–12 hours post-vaccination – serious events
- 12–24 hours post vaccination – moderate events
- More than 24 hours

The Committee was mindful of having guidance for each different type of limited service provider and was agreed that vaccination clinics must offer 24-hour emergency cover for the animals they see. It was noted that in many cases the client will not necessarily have another veterinary surgeon they can contact should they need to. This highlights the importance of vaccination clinics (and other limited service providers) making provision for 24-hour cover, i.e. by subcontracting to other service providers if needs be, and providing the client with the relevant contact details. In an emergency situation, owners are often panicked and distressed and they need to know who they can contact.

Taking into account this evidence, the Committee's view was that, generally, there should be a minimum of 24 hours of emergency cover for the period in which moderate and serious events are likely to occur, with a caveat relating to species and vaccine. On balance, however, the Committee felt that the wording of the existing guidance was sufficient. Veterinary surgeons are still expected to exercise professional judgement and it is recognised that, in some cases, longer periods of cover may be necessary.



It's nice when a plan comes together...

## Nick Stace, Chief Executive

### Strategic Plan update

**T**he front page of *Veterinary Times* on 1 June bore the headline 'Staff back RCVS as great workplace'. This reflected our coming 30th in the top 50 Best Workplace Awards (medium-sized category), run by the Great Place to Work Institute (see page 4), beating the likes of Coca Cola, Office Angels and General Mills.

This was pleasing news in itself, but it was also particularly great to see that headline in print, because one of the exercises carried out back in 2013, as we put together our 2014-6 Strategic Plan, was imagining the headlines we would like to see on the front page of the vet press in three years' time: the RCVS being a great place to work was one of them.

### Clarity of vision

The moral of this story is that when you have a specific goal in mind, and especially when you can articulate and visualise how it might look in print, it has a much greater chance of being met.

This is why our Strategic Plan is full of very specific goals, which were developed out of a process that involved staff, Council and, through the First Rate Regulator Project, the profession and public at large. Some organisations shy away from specific objectives – it's too easy to be called on them if they are not met. But plans without bite are inevitably left on the shelf to gather dust.

And so I would like to reassure you that, 18 months into our current three-year plan, we have either met, or are on target to meet, the majority of our objectives. The list of actions yet to be tackled is manageable, and one which we may yet add to before 2016 is out.

### Complaints progress

But don't just take my word for it. In addition to the excellent headline in the *Veterinary Times*, a further testimonial to our hard work could be seen in the *Veterinary Record* recently (30 May 2015). Here, veterinary surgeon John Dinsdale was kind enough to praise our Professional Conduct Team, specifically highlighting the positive changes that have been made in our concerns-handling process and improvements in communications. This work has been part of our Strategic Plan objective to 'reduce the time it takes for a complaint to be concluded in a fair and transparent manner'. Mr Dinsdale also commented positively on our trial of an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process, another of our Strategic Plan objectives.

A third piece of recent external validation came in the form of the independent Chair of our Audit and Risk Committee, Liz Butler, giving our current IT projects, which include an upgrade of our database, a new online Practice Standards system and a new IT system for our Professional Conduct work, a clean bill of health.

You can find a full report on our Strategic Plan progress in my CEO Update to Council, available online as part of the June Council paper bundle ([www.rcvs.org.uk/council-june15](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/council-june15)).

We will soon be starting the process of developing our 2017-19 Strategic Plan, and I will continue to push for sharp, meaningful objectives of the kind that you can sum up in a positive headline. Of course, by being specific you could set yourself up to fail, but it is better to fail to reach a stretching goal than meet a feeble one. Of course, to set yourself stretching goals and meet them is even better!

Watch my post-Council videos at [www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos](http://www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos), read my blog at [www.nickstaceblogs.org](http://www.nickstaceblogs.org), or follow me on @nickstacetweets.



# Governance – have your say

## Consultation due over summer

**O**ver the coming months, the profession and the public will have their chance to comment on proposals for reform of our governance, as the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is set to consult on the matter.

At its June meeting, RCVS Council considered a draft consultation developed by Defra. It agreed that the Panel of Council members tasked with working on governance reform thus far should help Defra to fine-tune the proposals before the consultation is published.

Council discussion regarding governance took place in two sections, the first in open session focused on the general issues, and a second, in committee, looked in more detail at the wording of the proposed consultation. This arrangement met Defra's wishes regarding confidentiality of the proposals until the consultation is published.

The proposed direction of travel aims to enable a smaller Council to meet more frequently and to ensure that lay people and veterinary nurses are formal members of Council. It also addresses the 'escalator effect' with regard to veterinary school appointees: the current legislation requires two new appointees for each UK vet school offering an approved degree, while also saying that elected vets should remain in the majority – thus giving the uncapped potential for Council to continue to increase in size.

Most importantly, and described by President Stuart Reid as "the biggest prize in the process", the proposed legislative reform order to enable these changes would include built-in flexibility, making it easier for future generations to maintain a structure that is fit for purpose.

A range of questions was raised, including around the desirability of a three-year term for the President; whether vet school appointees should be limited to just one from the Veterinary Schools Council; and whether the proposed size of Council would offer a large enough pool from which to draw committee members. It was agreed that such questions should remain to be addressed as part of the consultation process.

It is envisaged that Defra will consult over summer, and a special meeting of RCVS Council will take place on 29 September, in committee, to discuss the findings.

## Education, education, delegation

At its June meeting, RCVS Council agreed that all decisions regarding the approval of veterinary degrees, in the UK and abroad, will be delegated to the Education Committee.

# It's grrreat!

## College receives staff satisfaction accolade

**T**he RCVS has been recognised as one of the country's best workplaces following a staff engagement survey conducted last year in which the vast majority of staff said it was a great place to work.

We were ranked number 30 in the medium (50 to 499 employees) category at the Best Workplaces Awards ceremony held in May and hosted by BBC newsreader Huw Edwards.

The awards are run by the Great Place to Work Institute, an organisation that works with a wide

variety of small, medium and large businesses and organisations in conducting comprehensive annual surveys of staff engagement.

In last year's survey 91% of College staff gave a positive answer to the question "Taking everything into account; I would say this is a great place to work", compared to 52% agreeing with this statement in 2013.

You can read more about the staff engagement process and the awards in a blog posted by our CEO at [www.nickstaceblogs.org](http://www.nickstaceblogs.org).



# It would be an honour

## Nomination period now open for RCVS honours

**D**o you know someone who has gone beyond the call of duty in their dedication to veterinary medicine and science, who has made an outstanding contribution in their field and who is an excellent ambassador for the profession? If so, please make sure to nominate them for one of two honours.

Nominations are now open for 2016 for the RCVS Queen's Medal and Honorary Associateship.

The first Queen's Medal was bestowed in 2014 to Des Thompson and is the highest honour that can be awarded to a veterinary surgeon, recognising particularly distinguished careers and outstanding achievements.

At RCVS Day in July this year the Medal will be awarded to Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior, a former President of both the RCVS and Royal Society of Medicine and the first veterinary surgeon to be made a Life Peer of the House of Lords.

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

Please visit [www.rcvs.org.uk/honours](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/honours) to find out more about each and download a nomination form. These forms should be completed and returned to us no later than Friday, 11 September 2015. 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 RCVS Council at its November 2015 meeting. Nominators and individuals who have been successful will be notified in November and the results made public at Council next March. The honours will be awarded at RCVS Day in July 2016.

# Spotlight on Dot

## Winner of VN Golden Jubilee Award

**A** veterinary nurse who pioneered awareness-raising for the profession has been announced as the recipient of this year's Veterinary Nursing Golden Jubilee Award in recognition of outstanding contribution to the profession.

Dot Creighton (pictured) is a former President of the British Veterinary Nursing Association (from 2003 to 2004) and, during her presidential year, she devised the concept of VN Awareness Day as a way of making animal owners and local communities more aware of veterinary nurses and what they do. This subsequently developed into an awareness week and now National VN Awareness Month, which takes place every May.

Commenting on Dot's accolade, Kathy Kissick, Chair of VN Council, said: "Dot has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the veterinary nurse both within the profession and with the general public. She has always supported the student veterinary nurse in training and leads by example at all times inspiring nurses to stay in or return to practice even when life changes their circumstances.

"Dot is an inspiration to many, many nurses and always commits 100% to the welfare of the animals

in her care and to her clients. I congratulate her on achieving this award."

The VN Golden Jubilee Award was launched in 2011 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our first veterinary nurse training scheme. Nominees can be veterinary nurses, veterinary surgeons or lay people who have made an outstanding contribution to the VN profession.

***"Dot has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the veterinary nurse both within the profession and with the general public."***

Dot was nominated for the Award by fellow veterinary nurse Lindsey Raven-Emrich who praised her "enthusiasm and input" to the profession, adding that she really "couldn't think of a better member of the nursing community to receive this award."

Dot, who is currently working in practice in Essex, said she was delighted to win the award at such a crucial time for the profession. She added: "It



couldn't be a more exciting time to train to be a veterinary nurse – we have a robust training scheme, we are pushing and advancing the boundaries of veterinary nursing practice, we are seeing veterinary nurses branch out into different fields of clinical practice and, most importantly, the new Royal Charter officially recognises veterinary nursing as a regulated profession."

The Award will be given to Dot at this year's RCVS Day – the College's Annual General Meeting and Awards Day – which takes place on Friday 10 July (see page 8).

# Mind your language

## Go ahead for consultation on language testing for EU registrants

**A**t its June meeting in Edinburgh, RCVS Council agreed to proceed with plans to consult on the introduction of language testing for applicants to the Register of Veterinary Surgeons who qualified elsewhere in the European Union. The tests would only apply where we have 'serious and concrete doubts' about a veterinary surgeon's English language ability.

Every year, around half of all new veterinary surgeon registrants with the RCVS come from overseas, and the majority of these are from other EU or EEA countries. These individuals fall within the scope of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (MRPQ) Directive, which applies to all EU nationals wishing to practise in a regulated profession in another member state. At present, we have no power to test the language skills of these individuals. This means that even if it is clear there is an issue with an applicant's language skills, the Registrar has no power to refuse their registration or to require him or her to undertake language courses in order to ensure they can practise safely in the UK.

Last year, a revised version of the MRPQ Directive came into force, which makes a number of important changes to the mobility of professionals across Europe, including clarifying and reinforcing the role of competent authorities such as the

RCVS. One of these changes is that language testing is expressly permitted, but only where serious concerns have been identified.

The Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966 does not empower the Registrar to bar someone from registering on the basis of language ability, so a Statutory Instrument (SI) will be necessary before language testing can be implemented.

Were the SI to be implemented, during the registration process applicants would be asked a series of questions concerning their language qualifications, experience and general ability to use the English language; this would effectively be a process of self-certification. If the applicant answered negatively to all four questions then they would have to pass an appropriate language test before registering, or delay their application while they improve their language skills.

The proposed amendments to the VSA as regards language testing must be the subject of formal consultation by Defra, which is expected to be held during summer 2015. The consultation results will inform our work with Defra to determine whether to proceed with implementation and, if so, to develop the most appropriate system of language testing. We would intend to implement language testing for veterinary nurses in parallel with any changes for veterinary surgeons.

# Jolly good, fellows

## Changes to RCVS Fellowship

**A**t its meeting this month, Council approved significant changes to the entry routes to the RCVS Fellowship in an effort to open up our highest award level to a greater part of the profession, including those in clinical practice.

The key change to the routes to entry was the closing, to new applicants, of the current route to Fellowship by thesis, which was judged to be unsustainable on quality-assurance grounds. Instead we will be encouraging individuals who wish to achieve a high-level qualification to look at existing doctoral programmes. Furthermore, we will also be discontinuing the current Honorary Fellowship route.

The changes will come into effect from 1 August 2015. However, all those who have joined the Fellowship either by thesis or by Honorary Fellowship will retain their FRCVS/HonFRCVS status.

From that date the routes to entry will be changed to Meritorious Contribution to the Veterinary Profession, Meritorious Contribution to Knowledge and Meritorious Contribution to Clinical Practice.

As a result of Council's decision we will now be setting up an interim Fellowship Board and credentials panel which will take forward the proposals and will seek applicants for the revised Fellowship.



# Taking the high road

## Council hits Edinburgh

**F**or the first time in living memory – and possibly in the history of the College – RCVS Council met outside of London on Friday 5 June, at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh.

The Council meeting itself was just one of a series of events that took place over a two-day period, others included a visit to Edinburgh vet school for some Council members; a meeting of our Operational Board; an afternoon meeting with local stakeholders; an evening supper where Council members were addressed by the CVO for Scotland, Sheila Voas; a breakfast meeting with local vets and nurses as part of our Vet Futures roadshow; and a tour of the Scottish Parliament, where the Council meeting itself took place.

"It was a pleasure to be in Scotland for this historic meeting – taking Council to the membership is an ambition now realised and I am sure the first of many," comments President Stuart Reid. "It was important for us to find a venue for our Council meeting that was independent of the Scottish vet schools, and the Scottish Parliament was ideal. It was also terrific meet with stakeholders and to hear from Sheila Voas about her role as CVO in Scotland."

Guests at the stakeholder meeting included representatives from organisations such as Food Standards Scotland, One Kind, British Horse Society Scotland, the Highlands and Islands Veterinary Services Scheme, Scotland's Rural College, Glasgow Veterinary School and Moredun. Topics raised included 24-hour cover in remote areas, how best to co-ordinate veterinary activities in Scotland, the importance of improving careers advice to vets, abiding by horse passport rules and the leadership role of the RCVS. We will consider how best to take forward these issues over the coming months.

The Council meeting was also a first in that members went without gowns. A straw poll at the end of the meeting showed mixed feelings about continuing with this – and the President suggested it was an issue for incoming President Bradley Viner to take forward.



# Evening all!

## RCVS advice team trials extended hours



**S**ince early June, our Professional Standards Advice Team have been trialling extended operating hours, meaning that a member of staff will be available to answer calls about our *Code of Professional Conduct* and its supporting guidance until 7pm on weekdays.

The trial will last for three months during which calls will be taken between 9.15am and 7pm, Monday to Friday. The closing time of 7pm was decided by our Standards Committee because research conducted by both the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons and the College determined that this is the average closing time for UK veterinary practices.

On average, our Professional Conduct Department deals with 7,500 calls a year (which includes calls from veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses looking for advice about professional responsibilities and standards), as well as around 2,000 written requests which are dealt with exclusively by the Professional Standards Advice Team.

Laura McClintock, Standards and Advisory Manager, says: "The aim of the trial is to determine if the profession would take advantage of these extended hours and, therefore, if our team should permanently extend its operating hours to provide a better service to the profession.

"However, it must be remembered that this is not an emergency service but an extension to our standard service; advice during the extended hours will not necessarily be any more immediate than at any other time during the day, because it may need further research or input from members of the Standards Committee.

"Prior to launching the trial we also liaised with ten other UK healthcare and professional regulators and found that our current professional advice service compared favourably to others and that we were providing a more extensive service than many."

The team aims to provide clear, concise and consistent advice to help veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses understand their professional responsibilities and support compliance with the *Code*. It also clearly distinguishes between professional requirements, legal requirements and suggested good practice and may offer suggestions about how professional responsibilities can be applied in practice.

However, there are some areas on which the team is unable to offer guidance. For example, it cannot offer clinical advice or advice on legal matters such as employment law, maternity rights, or contractual or civil disputes.

Advice is also available for members of the public, for example, to help animal owners understand what they can expect from their veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses.

To contact the team, call 020 7202 0789 or, alternatively, email [profcon@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:profcon@rcvs.org.uk).

# ADR trial update

## Over 40 cases now resolved

**O**ur alternative dispute resolution (ADR) trial continues to grow apace with 61 cases having now been referred to the Ombudsman Services, the independent complaint resolution service which administers the trial.

The trial, which was launched in November 2014 and will run for a whole year, is the first step towards developing a consumer redress system to resolve those complaints raised by members of the public that do not meet our threshold of serious professional misconduct.

Recommendations have now been issued in relation to 44 of the 61 cases. Of these, Ombudsman

Services has asked the veterinary surgeon about whom the concern has been raised to make goodwill payments in seven cases. In 27 cases, Ombudsman Services has determined that the veterinary surgeon need take no further action and, in one case, has recommended that the client pay the outstanding fees.

It is important to note that the trial is voluntary and both parties must agree to participate. Furthermore, recommendations made by Ombudsman Services are not binding on either party.

A final report on the trial will be presented to RCVS Council in November.

# Fast forward

## The latest from our Vet Futures project

**In the last issue of RCVS News we included a flyer promoting a series of regional roadshows as part of our Vet Futures project, jointly powered with the BVA. At the time of writing we have completed all but one of these, and have met with around 250 vets, nurses and practice managers at BSAVA Congress in Birmingham, and in Belfast, Exeter, Cambridge, Manchester and Edinburgh, with Swansea to follow on 17 June.**

The events were designed to let members of the veterinary team have their say on what issues they felt would be key by 2030, as well as develop some creative thinking around potential challenges the profession might face. In later meetings, once some goals had started to crystallise, the conversation moved on to how these might be met. The engagement and participation at the meetings has been fantastic, with some excellent insights being generated.

By the time we reached our latter couple of meetings, our independent researchers had distilled information from a range of evidence-gathering activities, such as a literature review, qualitative research, a survey of BVA members and an omnibus survey of the general public (see below), and generated a series of seven potential workstreams for discussion. These included a

focus on a better quality of veterinary life; the role of vets in global health; the role of vets in animal welfare; speaking with one voice; developing diverse and rewarding career paths; finding new ways to add value for clients; and developing sustainable business models

***“Throughout the Vet Futures project we have been listening closely to the hopes and fears of the veterinary profession.”***

These will be considered further by a meeting of the wider Vet Futures Group on 14 July, before the process of report and writing begins in earnest. A draft report will be considered by the respective boards of BVA and RCVS in September, then an update and discussion will be held at the Council meetings of both organisations, before the report is launched at the BVA Congress at the London Vet Show in November.

### Public confidence

One of the early findings of the project had been a somewhat under-confident veterinary profession and so we asked questions about trust in the profession as part of a national opinion poll carried out by ICM.

The survey of more than 2,000 members of the public found that 94% trusted the veterinary profession ‘generally’ or ‘completely’. This puts veterinary surgeons above GPs, dentists and head teachers in terms of how well the key professions are trusted in Great Britain, and third overall in terms of trust, just behind opticians, who attracted a 95% trust rating, and pharmacists, who took the top position with 97%.

The survey also found that 78% of people using veterinary services were satisfied or very satisfied with the level of service they receive, putting vets in the middle of the field ranging from 87% of people satisfied with the service they receive from pharmacists to 55% satisfied with the service from accountants.

Finally, the survey found that 70% of those who use veterinary services rated the value for money offered by their veterinary practice as fair, good or excellent.

***“The results are extremely encouraging; particularly in relation to how well the public trusts members of the profession.”***

Commenting on the findings President Stuart Reid said: “Throughout the Vet Futures project we have been listening closely to the hopes and fears of the veterinary profession and heard a lot about how veterinary surgeons and nurses perceive themselves. To complete the picture, RCVS and BVA felt it was essential that we also gain a deeper understanding of how the general public perceives the veterinary profession.

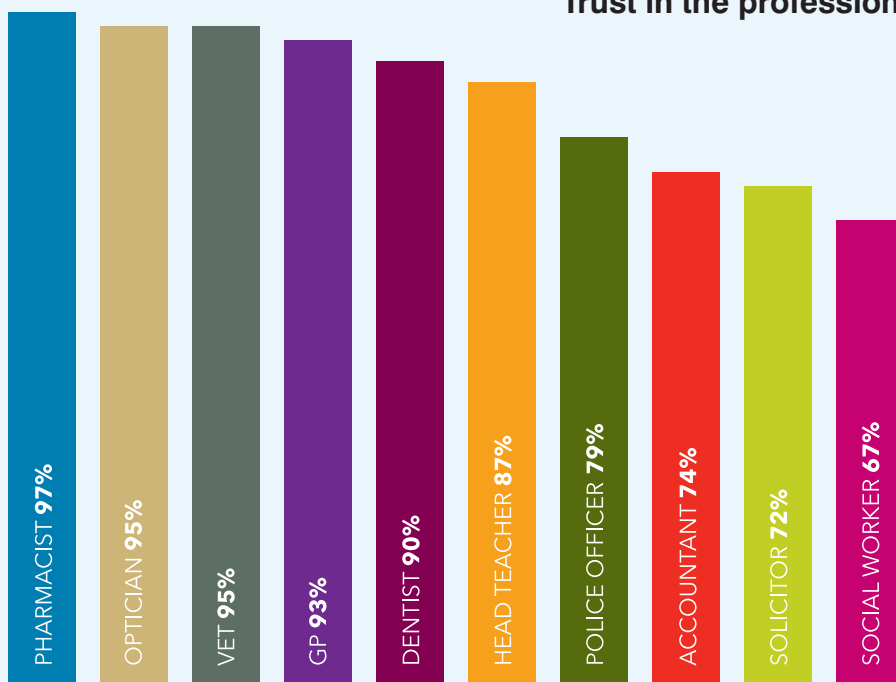
“The results are extremely encouraging; particularly in relation to how well the public trusts members of the profession, including both animal owners and non-animal owners.

“But it is also clear that there is more to be done in relation to public perceptions of value for money. We will explore these issues further as the Vet Futures project progresses and we are keen to hear ideas from all members of the veterinary team.”

### Competition time

It's not too late to share your ideas for the future of the profession. We will soon be launching an essay competition, with a prize of an all-expenses-paid trip to the London Vet Show at Olympia (19–20 November). For more details about the competition, and how to submit your entry, please visit [www.vetfutures.org.uk/essaycomp](http://www.vetfutures.org.uk/essaycomp).

## Trust in the professions



Percentage of public who said they 'generally' or 'completely' trusted the profession



# Honours and awards: join us at RCVS Day

**Royal College Day 2015 – Annual General Meeting and Awards Presentation**



**All veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses are warmly invited to attend this year's RCVS Day, to be held on Friday 10 July, at One Great George Street, London.**

As his last official engagement of the year, RCVS President Professor Stuart Reid will chair the Annual General Meeting and welcome new members to Council and the Veterinary Nurses Council, before handing over the reins to Dr Bradley Viner, who will formally take up his office as President for 2015-2016.

## Awards

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 Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior as the recipient of the RCVS Queen's Medal – the most prestigious honour that the RCVS can bestow upon a veterinary surgeon (see *RCVS News* March 2015, page 4).

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:

- Alistair McLaren Lawrie BVMS MRCVS, general practitioner and contributor to animal welfare in Scotland
- Professor Donald Francis Kelly BVSc MA PhD FRCPATH DipIECVP MRCVS, veterinary pathologist
- Gordon Nicholson Henderson BSc MRCVS, whose career has been in veterinary marketing

We are pleased to announce that Honorary Associateships will be presented to:

- Dr Michael James Francis
- Catherine Anne Phillips
- Phillip Sketchley

And a Fellowship will be presented to:

- Dr Cheryl Lynn Scudamore BVSc PhD FRCPATH MRCVS



## Guest speaker

We are delighted to announce that Professor Will Hueston will be our guest speaker, addressing the topic of professional leadership in veterinary medicine, science and policy.

Professor Hueston holds a joint professorship in the University of Minnesota's (UMN) College of Veterinary Medicine and the School of Public Health. In 2001, he created the university's Center for Animal Health and Food Safety, which he led for seven years before being named UMN's endowed chair for Global Food Systems Leadership and executive director of the Global Initiative for Food Systems Leadership.

Working between the College of Veterinary Medicine and School of Public Health, Dr Hueston catalysed the development of a dynamic portfolio of public health educational programmes for veterinarians.

Professor Hueston is the director and principal investigator of UMN's innovative Food Policy Research Center (FPRC), a unique, multidisciplinary partnership involving co-investigators from UMN's College of Veterinary Medicine, School of Public Health, College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, Extension, and Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

He also serves as director of an Office of International Education (OIE) Collaborating Center for Veterinary Services Capacity Building, one of four centres worldwide that focus on strengthening the veterinary capacity of countries to control the spread of transboundary diseases and zoonoses in order to fully participate in global trade of animals and animal products.

In 2013, Professor Hueston was awarded the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) Senator John Melcher DVM Leadership in Public Policy Award.

## Book your place now

To book your place at RCVS Day 2015, please contact Emma Lockley, on [e.lockley@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:e.lockley@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)

## 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 2014\*
3. Questions
4. Council elections: new members and retirements
6. Date of next AGM: Friday 8 July 2016

Meeting of the RCVS Council

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

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

### 11.00am

Presentation of Awards

7. Presentation of Queen's Medal Award
8. Presentation of Honorary Associateships
9. Presentation of Honorary Fellowships by Election
10. Presentation of Fellowship
11. Presentation of Diplomas
12. Declaration for Registered 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 Will Hueston DVM on the topic of professional leadership in veterinary medicine, science and policy

### 12.45pm Drinks

### 13.00pm Lunch

\* The RCVS Annual Report and Financial Statements 2014 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 minutes from RCVS Day 2014, held at One Great George Street, London, can be found at [www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-events/rcvs-day/](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-events/rcvs-day/)



# How can vets help break the cycle of human and animal violence?

**Making connections can save lives**



**Freda Scott-Park, Chair of the Links Group, explains that working together with medical colleagues is the key.**

**T**he Links Group came into existence after a conference called 'Forging the Link' in 2001. This symposium brought the concept of the link between animal and human abuse into the veterinary conscience – a notion that was unfamiliar to many vets in practice. Much has been achieved over the past 14 years, not least that veterinary surgeons are now well aware that animal abuse occurs; it is strange to relate that at the time of the conference, many vets did not see, or perhaps did not recognise, animal abuse. Even fewer vets understood that beyond deliberate cruelty to an animal in a household, there was the potential for abuse of a vulnerable human. This situation is perfectly encapsulated in this quotation (used with permission): in any violent household...

***"When animals are abused, people are at risk; when people are abused, animals are at risk."***  
[The American Humane Association (AHA)]

One of the strengths of the Links Group is that it has brought together both veterinary and human healthcare professionals, as well as the police and animal welfare agencies. Both 'veterinary' and 'human' members have learned much from each other over the years and the 'humans' have come to value the AHA quotation because many of them see animals when they visit troubled households to tackle allegations of domestic or child abuse.



As a result of the liaison with vets through the Links Group there is now a question about 'animals in the house' in the form used to investigate violent incidents, which means that the animal's welfare is also safeguarded.

***"One of the strengths of the Links Group is that it has brought together both veterinary and human healthcare professionals, as well as the police and animal welfare agencies."***

The Links Group has continued to campaign for greater awareness of the issues facing vets in practice. Ignorance of animal abuse is less of a challenge, because Paula Boyden of the Links Group, supported by MSD Animal Health, has lectured to final-year veterinary students in most, but not all, of our schools. However, it is evident that members of the veterinary team find cruelty cases difficult to deal with and, increasingly, are also being faced with people who have been abused. As trusted individuals, veterinary staff may find themselves in a situation where they receive a disclosure about a violent incident (either the animal or human). Vets often do not know exactly what to do – an uncomfortable situation for highly trained professionals.

To that end, the Links Group, in collaboration with multiple partners including the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the British Veterinary Association, the Animal Welfare Foundation and Medics Against Violence, has prepared guidance documents for the profession, available at the end of June 2015. A training course that helps build self-assurance has also been developed so that vets feel confident when tackling suspected abuse and have the ability to direct a victim towards seeking help.

The training course stresses that vets are not expected to be experts in recognising abuse, emphasising that the injured animal is the direct concern of the veterinary surgeon, but provides guidance on how to act appropriately. Eventually the training will be made available online so that it is easily accessed by all members of the veterinary team.

***"Eventually the training will be made available online so that it is easily accessed by all members of the veterinary team."***

Veterinary surgeons and ancillary practice staff are an essential part of the team required to break the cycle of violence, and collaborative working and cross-reporting are becoming easier. The independent crime-fighting charity, Crimestoppers, is concurrently launching a pocket-card for vets; as part of a new initiative, the charity will now gather evidence about violence towards animals since it is recognised that if a perpetrator has abused either a human or an animal, he/she is likely to do it again. Colleagues working with vulnerable children and adults have welcomed the participation of members of the veterinary team; we have much to be proud of but also there is so much more we can achieve together.



**The Links Group is a committed multi-agency interest group that promotes the welfare and safety of vulnerable children, animals and adults so that they are free from violence and abuse. For more information, please see [www.thelinksgroup.org.uk](http://www.thelinksgroup.org.uk). For recent changes to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct in relation to this area, please see page 11.**

# Responsible leaders

## Guidance on team accountability

**A** drive to reinforce the accountability of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses (VNs) in leadership roles has led to a title change and significant amendments to chapter 17 of our supporting guidance: formerly 'Veterinary team and business', now 'Veterinary teams and leaders'.

The changes were made at the April meeting of our Standards Committee and were, in turn, endorsed by Council in June. The Committee was keen to reinforce the accountability of vets and VNs who, for example, manage other members of the team and set practice policies and protocols.

It has long been expected that any local policies and protocols will allow professional members of staff to practise in accordance with our *Code of Professional Conduct*. The amended guidance reinforces this by clearly stating that in the case of complaints and concerns relating to adherence to a policy or protocol that contravenes the *Code*, the vet or VN responsible for that policy or protocol will be at least as accountable as the vet or nurse who followed it.

The amended guidance also reinforces the responsibilities of 'the appointed senior veterinary surgeon' in a large corporate organisation or charity.

Many of the sentiments expressed in the previous iteration of the chapter remain in the amended one, but it is hoped that the new structure and additions will better promote the responsibilities of vets and VNs at different levels within their practice or organisation, confirming that all vets and VNs, whether they are involved in clinical work or not, are expected to comply with the *Code* and its supporting guidance.

# When the chips are down

## Microchipping guidelines

**N**ew Defra microchipping guidelines in England make it compulsory to report adverse reactions to microchips (including migration from the site of implantation) or the failure of a microchip. Whilst Defra have said that they would not enforce this regulation through the courts, or seek to impose fines, we have now amended our supporting guidance to say that vets and VNs should report microchip adverse reactions and failures to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate.

Further information about the Microchip Adverse Event Reporting Scheme is available from the VMD's Pharmacovigilance Unit on 01932 338427 and reports can be submitted online at [www.vmd.defra.gov.uk](http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk).

# TB testing

## Responsibilities of vets working under new process

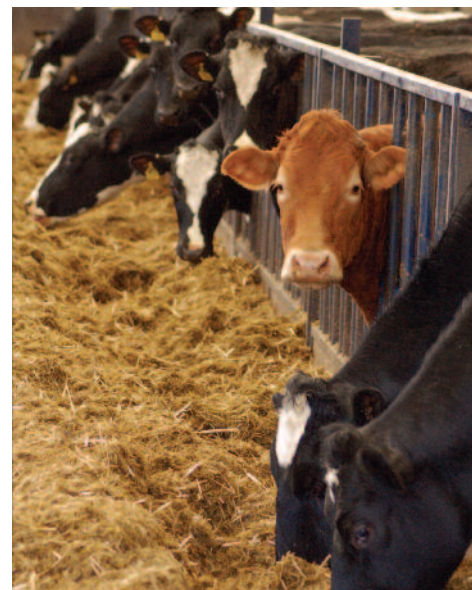
**T**he Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has implemented a new regime to modernise its relationship with suppliers of veterinary services in order to ensure effective delivery of animal health and welfare policies. The Veterinary Delivery Partnership Programme has awarded contracts to Delivery Partners to supply a package of veterinary services including tuberculin testing for TB in cattle and other government-funded services. This sits alongside a new approach for training and authorising veterinary surgeons to perform this work as Official Veterinarians (OVs). There is more information about the new training and qualification on the commercial supplier's website: [www.improve-ov.com](http://www.improve-ov.com).

At its April meeting, Standards Committee met with representatives from APHA and the British Veterinary Association (BVA) to discuss the working relationship that will be required following the introduction of these new contracts, specifically in relation to the professional standards of veterinary surgeons involved with the new TB testing regime. Our existing guidance on communication is clear that veterinary surgeons should liaise with colleagues where more than one veterinary surgeon has responsibility for the care of a group of animals. Where different veterinary surgeons are treating the same animal, or group of animals, each should keep the other informed of any relevant clinical information, so as to avoid any danger that might arise from conflicting advice, or adverse reactions arising from unsuitable combinations of medicines. During discussions it was accepted and recognised that this existing guidance applies to all veterinary surgeons working in this area and in their different roles, which includes OVs or vets working for APHA.

The BVA has informed us that it is also aiming to provide advice and guidance proactively to its

members on issues arising from the new arrangements. It acknowledges that there is relevant guidance in the *Code* and supporting guidance already, but it is keen to know more about the issues that veterinary surgeons are facing on the ground and to develop scenario based guidance accordingly. Standards Committee has offered to contribute to any guidance developed by the BVA.

Finally, we understand that APHA will shortly email all OVs with the new *Policy for Authorisation of Official Veterinarians in Great Britain*, which replaces the *Memorandum of Conditions of Appointment*. The Policy sets out the working relationship between APHA, which acts on behalf of the relevant Ministers in England, Scotland and Wales, and vets who seek to carry out tasks on behalf of those Ministers but who are not employees of government.



# Controlled drugs update

## New Home Office rules on controlled drugs

**A**s of 1 July 2015, veterinary surgeons will be required to include their RCVS membership number on prescriptions made for Schedule 2 and 3 controlled drugs. This is due to amendments to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations in regards to controlled drugs.

Another change is the rescheduling of ketamine to a Schedule 2 controlled drug, with effect from 30 November 2015. Current RCVS advice is to treat ketamine as a Schedule 2 controlled drug (storing it in the controlled drugs cabinet and recording its use in an informal register) but, as of November, this will become a legal requirement.

We would encourage vets to refresh their memory on the current legislative requirements for controlled drugs, for example, from Veterinary Medicines Guidance Note 20 – [www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/pdf/vmgn/VMGNote20.pdf](http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/pdf/vmgn/VMGNote20.pdf).

Furthermore, there will be a requirement to use a specified form for the requisitioning of Schedule 2 and 3 controlled drugs which will come into force on 30 November 2015.

A Home Office circular with the full details of all the changes is available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/circular-0192015-a-change-to-the-misuse-of-drugs-regulations-2001](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/circular-0192015-a-change-to-the-misuse-of-drugs-regulations-2001).



# A question of confidentiality

## Welfare concern guidance

**C**lient confidentiality is a well-established principle, but the duty is not absolute and there may be some circumstances in which information can be disclosed.

In order to help members of the profession make decisions in relation to disclosing data, the Standards Committee, at its April meeting, approved revisions to chapter 14 of our supporting guidance ('Client confidentiality'). Building on the previous guidance, the amendments aim to help practitioners in a variety of scenarios where disclosure of confidential information to third parties may be considered due to concerns that animal welfare or the public interest is compromised.

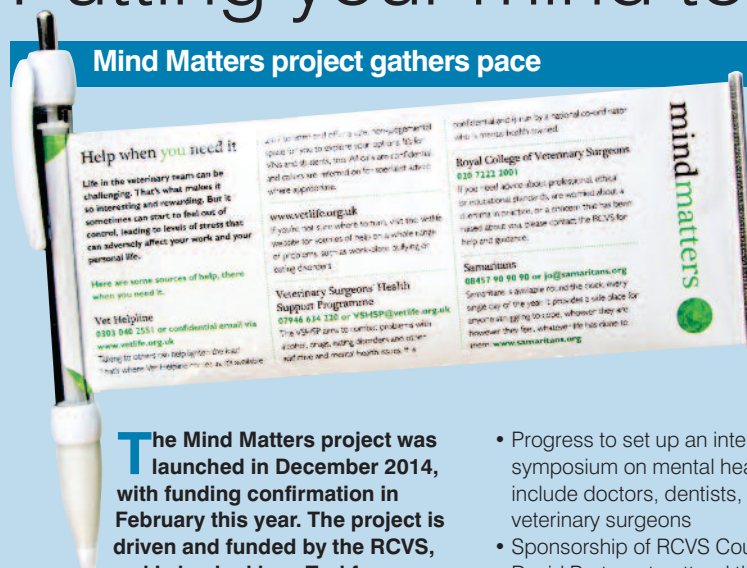
The existing guidance on dealing with animal welfare concerns has been updated, and there is now expanded guidance on what to do where child or domestic abuse is suspected. Veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses are not expected to be experts in recognising abuse, but they can use their professional judgement to determine whether the appropriate authorities should be informed. The guidance provides advice on what to do in such situations, and highlights sources of further information, including the Links Groups guidance 'Recognising abuse in humans and animals: guidance for the veterinary team' ([www.thelinksgroup.org.uk](http://www.thelinksgroup.org.uk)).

There is also new guidance on disclosing confidential information in the public interest where it is likely to help the police or other enforcement agencies in the prevention, detection or prosecution of a crime. This type of information is usually requested under Section 29 of the Data Protection Act 1998. The new guidance explains what 'Section 29' requests are and offers practical advice on what to do when faced with such requests, including reference to the guidance provided by the Information Commissioner's Office: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).



# Putting your mind to it

## Mind Matters project gathers pace



**T**he Mind Matters project was launched in December 2014, with funding confirmation in February this year. The project is driven and funded by the RCVS, and is backed by a Taskforce comprising representatives from a wide range of veterinary bodies, including those for nurses, students and practice managers.

### Our aims

The project aims to make a real difference to those suffering from stress and mental ill health within the veterinary team by:

- Reducing the stigma associated with mental illness
- Helping to develop a culture where help-seeking is accepted
- Improving access to sources of appropriate help
- Better equipping those within the profession to spot signs of mental ill health in their colleagues and to signpost to appropriate sources of help
- Helping to reduce the incidence of stress and mental health conditions within the veterinary profession
- Facilitating the sharing of best practice in terms of interventions and support, at home and overseas, within and outside the profession.

### What's been happening?

We have been busy raising awareness of the issues at events such as VPMA/SPVS Congress, BSAVA Congress, the Highlands and Islands Veterinary Service Scheme event, and meetings with veterinary nurse training awarding organisations and colleges.

The project will soon have its own web presence, where you will be able to find out about latest activities and events, but, in the meantime, here is an outline of some of our current activities:

- Commissioning a play to help raise awareness of the need to communicate and seek help around mental health issues, which will be shown to vet students

- Progress to set up an inter-professional symposium on mental health issues to include doctors, dentists, pharmacists and veterinary surgeons
- Sponsorship of RCVS Council member David Bartram to attend the first international conference on mental health issues in the profession
- Circulation of Vet Helpline stickers to every vet and nurse in the country via RCVS News in March
- Production and distribution of a 'banner' pen (pictured) that highlights sources of help
- Progress with trialling a course to help people better spot signs of mental ill-health and stress in colleagues and understand how to talk to them and how to point them to sources of professional help
- Starting to produce a series of case studies with vets and nurses who have experienced mental ill-health, sought help and been able to return to work
- Supporting a range of researchers looking at different aspects of the issues by allowing them access to appropriate data
- Working with SPVS/VPMA to develop a Mind Matters stream for their 2016 Congress
- Planning a symposium for those involved in mental health research in the veterinary profession to help map where there may be gaps in our knowledge
- Reinvigorating an international network of those involved in the field of veterinary mental health on a global basis
- Evaluating our funding contribution to the upgraded Vet Helpline, which enabled all calls to be answered by a person rather than an answering machine.

mind matters

### How you can help

If you would like to contribute to the project, either as a case study subject, or by offering us space in a newsletter or at an event to raise awareness of the issues, please contact Lizzie Lockett on [L.lockett@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:L.lockett@rcvs.org.uk).



# Register removals

## Still time to update details

**O**n 1 June, we removed the names of some 372 veterinary surgeons from the Register for non-payment of the annual renewal fee.

The fee was officially due by the end of March, although the very final date on which it could be paid was 31 May. We have published a list of the names on our website ([www.rcvs.org.uk/registration](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/registration)) and would encourage practices to check that their staff members do not appear there. If any person who has been removed from the Register performs an act of veterinary surgery they will be doing so illegally.

Veterinary surgeons who have paid their annual renewal fee but who have yet to complete the annual renewal process by confirming their registration details, confirming they have met our requirement for continuing professional development of 105 hours over a three-year period, and declaring any convictions, cautions or adverse findings, should do so by the end of July.

To confirm this information and complete your renewal, please email [registration@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:registration@rcvs.org.uk).

# Making the appropriate checks

## Checking registration status

**W**e would like to remind all practices to check the registration status of new or prospective staff (both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses) to ensure that they are registered and that they are in the correct registration category.

We would also recommend that practices perform annual registration checks for their existing veterinary and VN staff, in case they have been removed from the Register for not paying their renewal fee. For veterinary surgeons, checks should be carried out in June; for veterinary nurses the checks should be made in January.

If an unregistered member of staff carries out an act of veterinary surgery, they would do so illegally, and employing unregistered staff could also invalidate a practice's professional indemnity insurance.

The easiest way to make registration checks is to use our online 'Check the Register' search tool on [www.rcvs.org.uk/checkregister](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/checkregister). You can also contact our Registration Department on 020 7202 0707 or [registration@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:registration@rcvs.org.uk).

# Changing circumstances?

## Let us know about practice changes

**P**lease remember to let us know about any changes to your practice premises – for example, if you are opening a new branch or moving premises, if you are closing a veterinary practice premises or if your existing premises have come under new management.

Veterinary surgeons may only supply a veterinary medicinal product (excluding AVM-GSL products) from veterinary practice premises listed on the Register of Veterinary Practice Premises (RVPP), which we hold on behalf of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate. This includes premises which are part of the Practice Standards Scheme. It is therefore a legal requirement to keep us informed of change.

RVPP registration and removal forms are available to download from our website ([www.rcvs.org.uk/rvpp](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/rvpp)),

where you can also find further information about the Register. Alternatively, you can contact our Registration Department on 020 7202 0707 or [rvpp@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:rvpp@rcvs.org.uk) if you wish to discuss any of the above.



# Form a doctorly queue

## Courtesy title can be applied for online

**V**eterinary surgeons who wish to use the courtesy title 'Dr/Doctor' can now change their title on the Register via an online form.

If you would like to change your title, please log in to the My Account area ([www.rcvs.org.uk/login](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/login)) of our website where the form can be accessed. Usernames and passwords for the My Account area were sent to all veterinary surgeons in February as part of the annual renewal process.

Once the form is completed, email confirmation will be sent to you and the changes should take effect immediately in the My Account area. However, it may take up to 24 hours before the title appears on your Register entry.

Use of 'Dr/Doctor' as a courtesy title was approved by RCVS Council at its March meeting, following a public consultation which garnered more than 11,000 responses. The majority of these were in favour of the change.

We would like to remind veterinary surgeons that use of the title is optional and if you choose to use 'Dr/Doctor' you should do so in conjunction with your name and either the descriptor 'veterinary surgeon' or the postnominal letters 'MRCVS'. This ensures that you do not inadvertently mislead the public by suggesting or implying that you hold a human medical qualification or a PhD.



# Meet the Committee Chair: Jo Price

## Chair of the Education Committee

Professor Jo Price from the University of Bristol will take over the reins of the Education Committee in July when the current Chair, Chris Tufnell, steps down to become RCVS Vice-President. Here, Jo talks about her new role and what she hopes to achieve.

### What made you want to take on the role as Chair of the Committee?

Education is at the heart of the College's mission, and so it is a privilege for me to have been offered the opportunity to Chair the Education Committee (EC). I wanted to take on the role as I am passionate about veterinary education and have thoroughly enjoyed being a member of EC for the last five years, serving under two outstanding Chairs, Stuart Reid and Chris Tufnell. I am familiar with EC's terms of reference and way of working and therefore feel I am now well placed to be able to take on the role as Chair.

My 'day job' has also given me significant experience of chairing committees and I can bring this expertise to the role. The most nerve-racking aspect was standing for election to the position by Council, as the last time I stood for election was when I was a student (to join the bar committee!). I have now gained some insight into how politicians feel! I am very much looking forward to working with Christine Warman [RCVS Head of Education] and her excellent team in the Education Department, and to joining the College's Operational Board, as this will enable me to play my part in helping it meet its ambitious targets and progress towards becoming a First Rate Regulator.

***“Primary care is at the heart of our profession and its value must be promoted at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.”***

### What makes the work of the Committee useful to the rest of the profession?

It is relevant because education and learning are life-long processes, whether someone works in primary care practice, in a specialist referral hospital or in academia. Professional education no longer stops when the degree certificate is handed out; it extends throughout the 'veterinarian life cycle' – from the time someone enters veterinary school to when they retire.

### What are the Committee's main priorities for the coming year?

As with any Committee, much of EC's work is in progress. In the next year, we will start to refine the

Year-One Competences and ensure that we provide the profession with clear information on CPD requirements with a long-term aim of achieving full compliance. Over time, developing an outcomes-based approach for CPD will be important, and to achieve this we will share best practice with other professional organisations. Engaging in effective CPD is key to obtaining Advanced Practitioner status and we must ensure that the application process is fit for purpose so that the numbers on the list continue to increase.

***“I spent several years in first-opinion practice and so understand what life is like outside my 'ivory tower' and at the coal-face.”***

Another initiative recently approved by EC is a new designation in Veterinary Primary Care, and I hope that it becomes an aspiration of most practitioners to obtain a qualification in this area. I appreciate that I am perceived as being a typical academic, but I spent several years in first-opinion practice and so understand what life is like outside my 'ivory tower' and at the coal-face. Primary care is at the heart of our profession and its value must be promoted at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Primary care practitioners also have a critical role to play in evidence-based veterinary medicine.

Last, but of course not least, EC has responsibility for setting and and monitoring the standards for veterinary education. Day-One Competences and accreditation standards have recently been revised – both very significant pieces of work. Going forward, we will take a look at extra-

mural studies provision and how we can ensure it is sustainable, and we will continue to ensure that all RCVS-accredited schools achieve the highest standards of veterinary education and recruit high quality applicants who can cope with the challenge of working in a changing profession. We will also continue to stay at the heart of discussions around international accreditation.

There is therefore much on the 'to do' list, but I am very much looking forward to my new role and to working with other committee members. Some are 'old hands' but we also have some new members – I've no doubt they will all keep me on my toes!





## New VN guides

### Information for TPs and centres

**We have published a new set of handbooks providing information about our role as a regulator for all those providing veterinary nurse (VN) training and qualifications.**

There are three handbooks in total, aimed at awarding organisations and higher education institutions, centres and colleges delivering VN qualifications on behalf of awarding organisations and training practices respectively.

Each handbook contains information covering all aspects of the regulation of VN education, including our accreditation process, approval criteria, visitation teams and day-one skills and competences, among other topics.

***“We want to provide as much guidance and advice to new and prospective awarding organisations and higher education institutions as possible.”***

Julie Dugmore, our Head of Veterinary Nursing, explains: “Prior to the publication of these handbooks, all this information existed in various different documents spread across our website. We want to provide as much guidance and advice to new and prospective awarding organisations and higher education institutions as possible in terms of our processes and regulatory requirements, so we thought it would be a good idea to collate all this information in one, easy-to-find place.”

The three handbooks, which also include sections on the Veterinary Surgeons Act and international VN accreditation, are available to download from [www.rcvs.org.uk/publications](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/publications).



## Visitations update

### National and international accreditation

**In the coming months and years we have a busy schedule of veterinary school accreditation visits in the pipeline – both in the UK and worldwide. These visits ensure that veterinary degrees offered in each school continue to meet our criteria, as well as UK and European legislative requirements.**

In November 2015, RCVS Council member Professor Stephen May will co-chair a visit to the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies in Edinburgh along with Deborah Kochevar from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Representatives from the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) and the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) will also attend.

In March 2016, David Wadsworth MRCVS, one of our PSS Inspectors, will be chairing an RCVS visitation to the School of Veterinary Science at the University of Liverpool.

International visitations will take up much of the rest of the year with joint visits to Murdoch University and the University of Adelaide in Australia planned for July and October 2016, respectively. In November 2016, we will also be undertaking a full RCVS visit to the School of Veterinary Medicine at St George's University on the Caribbean island of Grenada in order to determine if we should recognise the degree.

On the home front, the initial accreditation visitation for the new veterinary degree at the University of Surrey's School of Veterinary Medicine is planned for 2017. Details are to be confirmed.

## Opening doors with key skills

### Professional skill requirements for Specialists

**Potential applicants for RCVS Specialist status will now be expected to demonstrate that they meet professional key skill requirements in areas such as professional reasoning and decision-making, protecting animal and public health, emergency care, veterinary ethics and communication.**

The recommendation was made by the Specialist Subcommittee, and approved by the Education Committee in May, in order to bring Specialists into line with Advanced Practitioners who are expected to provide evidence of having developed their professional key skills if these were not explicitly included within their qualification.

In order to demonstrate professional key skills, referees supporting a prospective Specialist's application will have to complete a questionnaire

attesting to their applicant's use of these skills in practice.

More information about Specialist status, including an information pack, application form, the referee questionnaire and associated guidance, can be found at [www.rcvs.org.uk/education/specialist-status](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/education/specialist-status).



## PDP for overseas graduates

### Clarifying current rules

**At its May meeting, the Education Committee clarified the rules on overseas graduates practising in the UK and the Professional Development Phase (PDP).**

All UK veterinary graduates are expected to undertake the PDP, a period of self-assessment that provides a structure for them to develop their confidence and competence in clinical practice.

In February, the Committee decided to introduce a three-year requirement for graduates to complete the PDP – previously the PDP was not time-bound, although most graduates complete it in around 18 months. However, the Committee noted that overseas graduates practising in the UK did not

have to undertake the PDP provided they have just one year's clinical experience before applying to register with the RCVS. Committee members felt this was unfair and decided to review the rules at the May meeting.

Following the clarification of the rules, overseas graduates who have completed up to one year of clinical work must complete the PDP in order to ensure that they meet our Year-One Competences. Those overseas graduates who have between a year and three years' clinical experience will be asked to confirm that they meet our Year-One Competences. If they are not able to confirm this they will be asked to undertake the PDP.



# More time to advance

## Applications for AP status

**V**eterinary surgeons have extra time this year to apply for Advanced Practitioner status – the middle tier accreditation for those who wish to demonstrate knowledge and skills beyond the initial veterinary degree.

Applications for the status can be made from Friday 12 June 2015 with the deadline for this year being Friday 30 October. In 2014, when we launched the status, the application process ran from the beginning of September until the end of November. In total, 640 veterinary surgeons applied, with a total of 574 having been admitted to the List of Advanced Practitioners so far.

Successful applications received in June and July will be considered by the Advanced Practitioner Panel and ratified by the Education Committee in October this year, which may result in an earlier listing for applicants. Applications received in August, September and October will be ratified at the Committee's February 2016 meeting.

This year, veterinary surgeons will be able to make an application for the status through our online 'My Account' area ([www.rcvs.org.uk/login](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/login)). The application fee is £80 and we are now able to take payment online as well.

If you are interested in applying, please read the Advanced Practitioner Applicant Guidance Notes ([www.rcvs.org.uk/advanced](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/advanced)), which contain the eligibility criteria, the list of current designations, eligible qualifications, fee information and other guidance.

# VN clinical skills review

## Consultation on 'day-one' skills underway

**W**e are undertaking a complete review of our 'day-one' clinical skills for the practical training of veterinary nurses (VNs) and have launched a consultation on the proposed new skills list.

One of the benchmarks we use to set minimum standards for the content of VN licence to practise qualifications, the RCVS day-one skills were originally set by the veterinary industry via RCVS Awards and adopted by VN Council in 2011. Veterinary nurses must demonstrate proficiency in the listed skills and procedures in order to show they are competent, ie that they meet RCVS day-one competences.

Given the wide variety of veterinary practice settings to which student veterinary nurses are exposed, it is important that we, as the industry regulator, define the required day-one skills and ensure that these align with the required day-one competences. We need to review the skills list to ensure consistency, that it reflects current practice, and that it only includes those skills deemed necessary for registration purposes. A clearer focus on safe and effective clinical skills would support our primary regulatory role, that of protecting animal welfare and the public interest.

Our consultation sets out the proposed day-one skills, grouped according to the corresponding day-one competences, and asks for feedback on their relevance, accuracy and completeness. You can access the consultation via [www.rcvs.org.uk/consultations](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/consultations) and the deadline for responses is 5pm on 27 July 2015.



# Done it? Document it!

## Undocumented CPD allowance to be phased out

**A**t its May meeting, the Education Committee decided to re-think the current ten-hour annual continuing professional development (CPD) allowance for undocumented ad hoc private study.

As of 1 January 2016, this allowance will end as Committee members felt that all CPD, including private study, should be properly documented and that, furthermore, private study extends across a range of different types of learning. For example, it could include reading, preparing for a seminar or presentation, preparing for mentoring and so on.

Chris Tufnell, Chair of the Education Committee, comments: "We would like to stress that it is the 'undocumented' element that Committee members are unhappy with. The Committee believes that self-study, including private reading, is a very useful form of CPD for many vets but that there was no reason why it should not be documented like any other type of CPD activity.

"We also felt that removing the undocumented element outright would clear up some of the uncertainty around the allowance, as some members of the profession were under the impression that private study, even if it was documented, could only be classed within that category."

***"The Committee believes that self-study, including private reading, is a very useful form of CPD for many vets but that there was no reason why it should not be documented like any other type of CPD activity."***

As a result of the Committee's decision the Education Department will also be reviewing the information that is currently available on

our website for both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses regarding what counts as CPD, as some uncertainty still appears to exist. The aim is to give greater clarity as to what can be logged and to give more and clearer examples in each category. Information about CPD for veterinary surgeons can be found at [www.rcvs.org.uk/cpd](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/cpd); for veterinary nurses, it is [www.rcvs.org.uk/vncpd](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/vncpd).

We are also in the process of looking for 'CPD Champions' – veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses who can act as ambassadors to the rest of the profession as to the positive impact of undertaking CPD and how it aids all areas of practice life, from clinical skills and competence to customer service and client relationships.

If you are interested in becoming a CPD Champion and would like more information, please contact Jenny Soreskog-Turp, CPD Officer, on [j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk).

# Alternative dispute resolution trial

## Four case studies to illustrate how the ADR trial is progressing

**O**ur alternative dispute resolution (ADR) trial was launched in November 2014 and is due to run for a year, in conjunction with the not-for-profit complaints resolution organisation Ombudsman Services (OS). In addition to our update on the trial on page six, we've set out some case studies below to give a flavour of how the trial is shaping up.

### Mrs King and her dog, Ace

#### Category of complaint

- Negligence
- Misdiagnosis/Inadequate treatment

#### Complaint

Mrs King took her dog, Ace, for emergency treatment at her veterinary practice, Full House Vets, following a dog attack in her local park, but ended up feeling that the treatment Ace received there was inadequate. She felt that a bandage applied to Ace's leg was too tight, causing the circulation to be cut off and the dog to have a fit.

Mrs King alleged that Jack, the veterinary surgeon, and Elizabeth, the veterinary nurse, did not treat her with courtesy. At the same time, Jack and Elizabeth made a complaint to the practice partners stating that Mrs King was abusive and aggressive during the consultation.

The allegation that Mrs King was aggressive was only addressed with her some 12 weeks after the incident and after Ace had been fully treated and the bill had been paid.

Mrs King felt aggrieved by this allegation and asked for it to be withdrawn. She also wanted an apology from Full House Vets for the allegation made against her.

#### Review

- OS was unable to establish whether Mrs King had been aggressive and abusive during the consultation.
- OS was able to establish that the treatment provided to Ace at the consultation was appropriate.
- OS established that the bandage applied to the Ace's leg would not have caused him to fit.
  - OS established that the Full House Vets had not committed any shortfalls in customer services.

#### Final Decision

OS found that no remedy or award was required.

### Roger and his rabbit, Jessica

#### Category of complaint

- Negligence
- Misdiagnosis/Inadequate treatment

#### What happened?

Roger took his rabbit, Jessica, to the local veterinary practice for a routine operation and expected to collect her later the same day. When he returned later that afternoon, it was evident that Jessica had lost the use of her hind legs. She was also urinating when held.

Bob the vet examined Jessica and concluded her symptoms indicated a parasite. Bob prescribed antibiotics for Jessica and discharged her.

Roger was concerned about Jessica overnight and took her back to the practice the next day for a further check up. Radiographs confirmed that Jessica had a serious spinal injury that she was unlikely to recover from. Reluctantly, Roger and Bob agreed that euthanasia was the kindest option.

Bob the vet accepted that the injury had occurred while Jessica was at the surgery but was unable to explain how it occurred. To resolve the dispute, Bob had offered a goodwill gesture of £25 and to cremate the rabbit. Roger declined this offer.

#### Review

- OS was unable to establish the cause of Jessica's injury but was concerned that this occurred while she was in the care of the surgery and went unnoticed.
- OS was also concerned that the Bob the vet had discharged Jessica without further observation or examination.

#### Final Decision

OS recommended that Bob the vet should:

- apologise to Roger for the upset that might have been caused by allowing Jessica to return home;
- refund all the costs associated with Jessica's operation and subsequent treatments;
- offer to cremate Jessica's body and return the ashes, without any further charges, if this was still required; and,
- make a goodwill payment to Roger in the region of £50 and £100.



### Natalie and her dog, Barnsley

#### Category of complaint

- Misdiagnosis
- Customer service

#### What happened?

Natalie noticed her dog, Barnsley, was in pain when she walked him, so she took him to the local practice whereupon the attendant veterinary surgeon, Chris, diagnosed a grazed paw. Natalie maintained that Chris failed to examine Barnsley properly, and noticed that the dog was in agony overnight and that his paw became very swollen.

Natalie decided to take Barnsley to a veterinary hospital the next day where he was x-rayed, and a double fracture of the right toe was diagnosed.

Natalie insisted that Chris misdiagnosed her dog's injury and missed the fractured bone, causing Barnsley extra hours of agony and stress.

#### Review

- Chris had prescribed painkilling medication on the first visit and was unable to find any evidence of a fracture, though he did state that the dog's foot was bruised and swollen. He advised Natalie to return Barnsley's limping persisted.
- On the second visit, Chris found Barnsley to be in too much pain to perform an examination. He therefore recommended that Barnsley be re-examined if the pain still showed after a few days of rest and recuperation. A separate vet, Chloe, offered the same advice.
- On a second visit to Chloe the vet, a radiograph was taken and a successful diagnosis was made after Chloe noticed swelling.
- Chris admitted that on the date of the first visit, the surgery had been particularly busy, but as Chloe had also made this diagnosis, it was not considered unreasonable.

#### Resolution

During OS's investigation, it contacted both Natalie and Chris. OS failed to find evidence that Chris had inappropriately treated the Barnsley or misdiagnosed the issue. Chris had already offered a refund of his fees as a goodwill gesture. OS decided this was a generous offer and asked Chris to maintain it.

#### Final decision

OS recommended that the offer to refund the veterinary fees be maintained.



**NB** The names of the parties have been changed to protect their identities. Recommendations made by the OS are not binding on either party.



# PSS Assessors wanted!

## Still time to apply for 18 new positions

**H**aving announced the recruitment process for new Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) Assessors last month, ahead of the Scheme's relaunch in November this year, there is still time to apply.

We are looking to recruit 18 experienced veterinary surgeons as Assessors who will work directly with RCVS-accredited practices to help them comply with the Scheme and maintain the highest possible standards of veterinary care.

Successful candidates will be expected to actively assess and inspect veterinary practices at the different PSS accreditation levels – core, general practice and hospital – to encourage continuous improvement; they will work proactively with practice teams to ensure that the Scheme's standards are understood and being worked towards. We are aiming to recruit Assessors from across the UK who have experience in small animal, equine and/or farm animal practice.



The recruitment process is being handled by Thewlis Graham Associates. Those interested in applying should contact them for a confidential discussion on 020 7850 4781. The deadline for applications is Monday, 29 June 2015. Further information about the role, including the candidate brief and application form, is available via our website ([www.rcvs.org.uk/workforus](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/workforus)).

## Learn more about the revised Scheme

### Talks and workshops ahead of November launch

**A**head of the launch of the revised Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) this November, there will be a number of talks and events outlining the upcoming changes and how they will benefit practices in the PSS.

On **Friday 26 June**, Pam Mosedale (pictured), Veterinary Advisor and Assessor Coordinator for the PSS, will be giving an update on the

revised Scheme at the VetsNorth Conference at the Renaissance Manchester City Centre Hotel. The talk takes place at 3.15pm as part of a programme of lectures and discussions organised by the British Veterinary Hospitals Association. More information can be found on the VetsNorth website at [www.vetsnorth.com](http://www.vetsnorth.com).

On **Thursday 24 September**, we will be partnering with the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS) and the Veterinary Practice Managers Association (VPMA) for a one-day briefing on the revised Scheme which will be hosted by Jacqui Molyneux, Chair of the Practice Standards Group, and Adi Nell, Senior Partner at Medivet and a past-president of SPVS. Jacqui and Adi will provide an overview of the main changes to the PSS, highlighting the key benefits including a designated IT system, a trained and professional inspectorate and the additional 'Awards' available to practices. Delegates will also have the opportunity to quiz the speakers on all aspects of the Scheme and its requirements and discuss its merits with other delegates.

The event takes place at the Village Hotel in Solihull between 10am and 4.30pm. For more information, and to book your place, please call Charlotte Lodge on 01453 872731 or visit the SPVS/VPMA events website on <http://vpma-spvs-events.co.uk/cpd-2015/practice-standards-scheme-update/>



## Mrs Eden and her dog, Churchill

### Category of complaint

- Negligence
- Misdiagnosis/Inadequate treatment

### Complaint

Mrs Eden took her dog, Churchill, to her usual practice, Heath Vets, for vaccinations and an annual check up. During the examination appointment, Churchill was unhappy and struggled when held.

Shortly after returning home with Churchill, Mrs Eden stated that his back became painful and he was unable to jump up on the furniture as normal. She believed that the injury had been caused during the vaccination appointment.

When Churchill was returned to Heath Vets, he was placed on anti-inflammatory medication and rested. Despite this treatment, his condition deteriorated and, following investigations, a 'slipped disc' was diagnosed.

Mrs Eden felt that the advice given regarding the success of further treatment was negative and made to put the dog to sleep.

Mrs Eden believed that the veterinary surgeon, Harry Wilson, did not provide the appropriate advice regarding the options available for treatment and the success of that treatment. She was unhappy that when she made a request for the clinical records and x-rays in order to obtain a second opinion, that the practice manager, Margaret, withheld the x-rays and there was a delay in receiving them.

### Review

- OS is not able to determine that vet Harry Wilson caused the dog's injury. The diagnosis was for a degenerative disease with an associated slipped disc and, as such, the disc could have slipped during the course of the pet's normal activities. Mrs Eden also did not report any noticeable difference in the dog's behaviour when leaving the Heath Vets.
- OS was able to establish that Mrs Eden had been given all correct options for Churchill's treatment when making her decision.
- OS established that there was a shortfall

Practice Manager Margaret's customer service due to the delay in releasing the clinical records.

### Final Decision

OS recommended that Heath Vets should:

- send a letter of apology for the shortfall in customer service; and,
- make a goodwill payment in the sum of £30 to acknowledge that shortfall.





# We weren't fired!

## The Apprentice flavour to LPS

**W**ith a stand right next to one where *The Apprentice* contenders were trying to sell some kind of cat toy, we seemed to be subject to more than even the usual mayhem at the London Pet Show (ExCel, 9–10 May) this year!

Yet between dodging Karen Brady and Claude Littner, camera crews and star-struck members of the public, we found plenty of opportunity to help explain the role of the College in setting, upholding and advancing veterinary standards.

As ever, careers information – for both budding veterinary surgeons and nurses – proved popular, as did the demonstrations of veterinary nursing skills carried out by our resident RVNs Victoria Hedges and Lily Lipman (otherwise known as Examinations Manager and Qualifications Manager respectively). Don't worry, we used an animatronic cat....

In fact, there was a distinctly veterinary nursing theme to the stand this year, as the event coincided with National Veterinary Nursing Awareness Month. We showed our new animation, which aims to raise awareness of the role and skills of a registered veterinary nurse, and calls for support for our campaign to protect the title 'veterinary nurse' (see cover). On going to press, the video had been viewed over 83,000 times on Facebook and over 5,000 times on YouTube.

Before we showed people the animation, we asked for their views about what an RVN can do, how long it takes to qualify and whether they felt the title should be protected.

Of the 144 visitors taking part in the survey, of which 92% were pet owners, and 87% had attended a practice in the last 12 months, the following summarises the results (the figures in brackets exclude the 29 people who had worked in a veterinary practice):

- 88% (85%) felt they had seen a VN in their practice, with 54% (44%) of them feeling they knew if the nurse was registered
- In terms of what a nurse can do, 96% (95%) correctly understood they can offer advice on worming, flea treatment and diet; 78% (76%) understood they could administer injections; only 44% (37%) felt that VNs could carry out minor surgery; 75% (72%) believed a VN could perform dental hygiene (although not all understood the term and some explanation was needed at the time); 31% (23%) wrongly believed that VNs could perform tooth extractions; and, 58% (57%) felt that VNs could administer drugs to cause general anaesthesia
- Given a choice of two, three, four or five years' training being required to become a VN, the majority plumped for three years
- 97% (97%) felt that only those with appropriate training and qualifications should be allowed to call themselves veterinary nurse.

# More free learning

## Webinars to catch live or on demand

**O**ur programme of free webinars, hosted by the Webinar Vet, now includes the following to listen again, available at [www.rcvs.org.uk/webinars](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/webinars):

- 'Don't let complaints get you down: common concerns raised about veterinary professionals and how to avoid them', presented by Eleanor Ferguson, Head of Professional Conduct, and Jerry Davies, Chair of the Preliminary Investigation Committee
- 'Continuing Professional Development (CPD): the importance of lifelong learning', presented by Kit Sturgess, RCVS Council member, and Liz Cox, VN Council Vice-Chair

By the time *RCVS News* hits your doormats, these will be joined by a webinar to be presented live at 8pm on 9 June: 'Practice Standards Review: the next steps', presented by Practice Standards Group Chair, Jacqui Molyneux, and PSS Veterinary Adviser & Assessor Coordinator Pam Mosedale.

If there are any topics on which you would like to see a webinar produced, please let Ben Myring know, on [b.myring@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:b.myring@rcvs.org.uk).



# Who's who?

## New leaflet demystifies the practice team

**T**aking your pet to the vet can be a stressful time for many owners, and while they may not always understand who is helping and advising them, many do not like ask. Meanwhile, vets and nurses don't always take the time to introduce themselves and explain their role.

So we have produced a new leaflet outlining who's who in the veterinary team, including veterinary surgeons, Advanced Practitioners, Specialists, veterinary students, registered veterinary nurses and student nurses. The leaflets were a hit at the London Pet Show. If you would like some to display in your waiting room, please contact Lizzie Lockett on [l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk).



# Shaping up for the future

## Vet wins smart watch in congress competition

**N**orth Yorkshire-based veterinary surgeon Carla Balnave was the highly skilled and dextrous winner of our 'Shape the future' game at BSAVA Congress in April, completing the wooden shape-sorter puzzle in a record time of 15.34 seconds and receiving a Sony smart watch for her efforts!

Intended simply to promote the Vet Futures initiative (see page 7) and to encourage delegates to think how they would like the future of the veterinary professions to take shape, the puzzle – normally the preserve of toddlers – proved a big hit and produced some highly competitive encounters, not least between the Chief Veterinary Officers of Northern Ireland (Robert Huey) and Scotland (Sheila Voas)!



Carla said: "I decided to have a go at the College's 'Shape the future' game because I'm a sucker for a competition and I'm very competitive! I think I have my 15-month-old son and his shape-sorter to thank for my success!"

"I think the Vet Futures project is a good idea," added Carla. "It's important that, as a profession, we have goals and global aspirations for the direction in which we want the profession to go, and getting the opinions of individuals within the profession is key to achieving that. We need to make sure that it continues to be a profession that attracts new blood to it, but at the same time looks after the people who are already in it, so that the advancement in science for the improved welfare of animals is sustained."

# Out and about in autumn

## Where you can find us

**T**here are plenty of chances to catch us at events this autumn – do come and say hello, and bring your questions for the team.

In short...

- On 4–6 September, we will be attending the British Small Animal Veterinary Association Scottish Congress, at Herriot-Watt, Edinburgh
- On 9–11 October we will be back to Telford for the British Veterinary Nursing Association Congress
- On 19–20 November, it's time for the London Vet Show at Olympia

### Time for Telford

At BVNA Congress, we will be sharing the stage with BVNA Officers for an opportunity to update delegates on our latest activities and take their questions. Liz Cox, incoming Chair of VN Council, and Julie Dugmore, Head of Veterinary Nursing, will be joined by Fiona Andrew, BVNA President, and Sam Morgan, BVNA President Elect. Last year's joint Question Time was well attended and provided thought-provoking questions, so we hope to build on that success this year. Just before the Q&A there will be a chance for RVNs who have

not yet done so to make their professional declaration. So, join us at 11.45–12.45 on Saturday 10 October in the Coalport Suite.

### Olympian event

The Business Theatre at the London Vet Show will host the launch of our new Practice Standards Scheme, at 8.30–9.15 on Friday 20 November. Come and share some breakfast with us, and hear how your practice can achieve one of our new Awards.

Friday will also see Neil Smith, Chair of the Mind Matters Initiative, give a talk entitled 'Too much, too young: mental health and wellbeing in the veterinary profession and beyond,' as part of the BVA Congress.

And if that wasn't a busy enough day, our Vet Futures Report and Action Plan will also be launched on the Friday, marking the 'end of the beginning' of this project, and outlining streams of activity that will be taken forward.

We will also soon be agreeing dates and venues for our next series of Regional Question Times – keep your eye on *RCVS e-News* for more details.

# Reporting in

## Annual Report 2014 now available

**T**he *RCVS Annual Report and Financial Statements 2014* is now available to download from our website: [www.rcvs.org.uk/publications](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/publications).

For the second year, our accounts have been formatted according to SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities).

As well as the usual auditor's report and accounting information, the Annual Report also includes an overview of progress against our three-year strategic plan (2014–16), outlining activities such

as the granting of our new Royal Charter, the launch of the Advanced Practitioner List, the review of our 24/7 emergency cover guidance, and the instigation of our Service Charter.

In their introduction to the Report, President Stuart Reid and CEO Nick Stace thank Council members and staff for the role they have played in delivering these achievements: "It's a great feeling to work somewhere where everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver the best service they possibly can. So we would like to pay tribute to all of the staff and Council members who made 2014 such a historic year for the College."



# Overseas CPD goes north

## Manchester dates prove popular

**I**n May, we took our Overseas CPD Course to Manchester, responding to a call for a location more accessible for practitioners in the North than our previous London-based dates.

The event is organised jointly by the RCVS, the BVA and the Veterinary Defence Society (VDS), and we were very happy with the turn-out of 46 delegates for day one, which comprised a series of sessions around practising in the UK, and about 20 for day two, a masterclass in communications delivered by the VDS.

Delegates attending had graduated from 24 different countries, including Iran, South Korea, India and Uganda, as well as many European countries, with a mix of experience in practice, but generally less than two years. Some were not yet registered with the RCVS but planning to work in the UK soon.

The purpose of the course was to ensure that overseas graduates practising in the UK are better equipped to deal with differences in practice, professional approach and culture.

Feedback was positive, including comments such as:

- Brilliant, thanks for giving me this opportunity
- A good eye-opener to see the expectations of veterinary practice in the UK
- Fantastic informative day, all vital information and I will definitely feel more confident now entering my first UK job
- I wish I'd done this course the first week I came to the UK
- I will recommend this course to all my overseas graduate friends
- Having read some disciplinary cases I was scared of the RCVS and hearing Gordon Hockey was a relief

The next Overseas CPD Course will be held at the RCVS in London on 30 September and 1 October. As before, day one will be free, and day two, the communications masterclass, will be charged at £160.

You can sign up for the event online at: [www.rcvs.org.uk/overseascpd](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/overseascpd) – don't delay, we were oversubscribed for day two this time!

# Report to Council, June 2015

## PIC Chair Jerry Davies



**S**ince the last Report to Council there have been four Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) meetings in February, March, April and May. Of the 26 new cases considered by the Committee during this period, one was closed; five were closed with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon; two were held open; 12 were referred for further investigation; and six were referred to solicitors for formal statements to be taken.

**No cases were referred to the RCVS Health Protocol.**

The PIC is also investigating 48 ongoing cases and has referred four veterinary surgeons to the Disciplinary Committee (DC).

### Health and Performance Protocols

There are 14 veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Health Protocol. One who had been engaging with the Health Protocol was discharged on retirement and moved to the non-practising category of registration. Another who was on the Health Protocol for some time has had the number of visits reduced as a result of progress made.

Four veterinary surgeons are either under assessment or currently on the Performance Protocol.

### Case reports

Two cases are reported to Council and the profession:

#### *Conflict of interest*

The PIC considered a matter relating to the vetting of a horse and the declaration of any conflict of interest on a pre-purchase examination (PPE) certificate that was signed by the attending veterinary surgeon. The veterinary surgeon completed the certificate on the basis that he had been the attending veterinary surgeon for the animal to provide vaccinations, and that he knew the vendor. He did not, however, disclose to the purchaser that in fact his wife had been a part-owner of the horse until shortly before the date of the vetting.

Although it was accepted that, technically, the veterinary surgeon had completed the PPE certificate correctly, the Committee was concerned that in focussing on the specifics of the PPE form requirements, the overriding duty of a veterinary surgeon to inform clients of any conflicts of interest had got lost and that such an omission detracted from the public's trust in the profession. After consideration, the case was held open for two years, meaning that the matter could be revisited if similar concerns come to light in the future. The veterinary surgeon was formally advised as to the importance of being open and honest with clients and avoiding conflicts of interest [*Code of Professional Conduct*, paragraph 2.2].

#### *Keeping clinical records*

The PIC considered a matter in which a complainant had raised concerns some two years after the incident, as she had suffered health problems and had been unable to raise the matter earlier. Her concerns related to her cat, which was being treated for anaemia over a period of days. She had concerns (among other issues) that she had specifically asked the veterinary surgeon to carry out a blood transfusion and that he had agreed to do so, but this had not happened and the cat had died.

In a letter to the complainant, the veterinary surgeon had stated that there had been no donor available, which the complainant disputed as she owned a number of other cats. The veterinary surgeon's recollection was that he had not carried out the transfusion as the client had not been able to afford it. This was strongly disputed by the complainant.

After consideration, the PIC found that the reasons for not having carried out the procedure could not be established and that any failure to do so could not amount to serious professional misconduct in any event. The PIC noted, however, that had the clinical records created at the time provided a detailed account of the veterinary surgeon's reasoning and the discussions held with the client, then the matter could have been resolved much more quickly. The Committee decided to close the case, formally advising the veterinary surgeon as to the importance of keeping detailed and accurate contemporaneous clinical records [*Code of Professional Conduct*, paragraph 2.5].

## VN PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE

# Report to VN Council, May 2015

## VNPIC Chair Lynne Hill



**S**ince the last Report to Council there has been one meeting of the Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (VNPIC) in February. As there was no new business and no new cases, the Chairman cancelled the VNPIC meeting scheduled for April. Between January and April, five new concerns were received which are all under investigation by the Case Examiners Group.

### New cases

During the same period, the VNPIC has considered one new case and referred it to the College's solicitors for statements to be taken from relevant witnesses.

### Ongoing investigations

The VNPIC has three ongoing cases, two of which are adjourning pending the outcome of criminal court trials against the respective RVNs.

### Health Protocol

There are currently two RVNs on the RCVS Health Protocol. In the last Report to Council there was one RVN being considered for the Health Protocol but signed undertakings were awaited. This RVN has since voluntarily removed her name from the RVN Register and therefore falls outside RCVS jurisdiction. The RVN's registration details have been noted and the Chief Investigator will be informed if the RVN applies for her name to be restored onto the Register.

### Referral to VN Disciplinary Committee

Since the last report, the VNPIC has not referred any new cases to the VN Disciplinary Committee.

The full reports are available at [www.rcvs.org.uk](http://www.rcvs.org.uk).



## Mr Nicholas Robert William Horniman

### **Inquiry concerning: charges relating to pet insurance fraud and dishonestly altering clinical records**

#### **DC decision: case dismissed**

#### **Registration status: name remains on Register**

On Friday, 24 April 2015, the Disciplinary Committee (DC) dismissed a charge against a veterinary surgeon from Cinderford, Gloucestershire, which alleged he was guilty of pet insurance fraud, along with one of his clients, and of dishonestly altering clinical records.

The inquiry into Nicholas Robert William Horniman MRCVS took place between Monday 20 and Friday 24 April 2015 to hear a charge that, between December 1 2008 and June 30 2014, in relation to Cassy, a Labrador retriever belonging to Jayne Bowkett, he:

- (i) suggested to Mrs Bowkett that she take out an insurance policy for the dog using owner's details that were different from those used for its current insurance policy;
- (ii) dishonestly arranged for or allowed practice records for the dog in the name of Bowkett to be discontinued and separate records to be started in the name Griffiths; and,
- (iii) dishonestly maintained practice records for the dog as if she were different from the one for which previous practice records had been maintained.

The DC heard that Cassy, who had previously been diagnosed with hip dysplasia, had been registered with Pets Barn Veterinary Group in Gloucestershire in May 2008 when Mr Horniman was the Principal and owner of the three-practice group. Cassy was treated at the Cinderford branch of the practice where she received regular prescriptions for her condition.

At some point in 2008/2009, Mrs Bowkett had relayed concerns to Mr Horniman that her current pet insurance policy needed to be renewed, that the renewed policy would not cover Cassy's existing hip problems and that she would be unable to pay for any future operations herself. It was alleged that, in response to Mrs Bowkett's concerns, Mr Horniman told her that they could take Cassy off the practice computer and put her back on under a different insurance policy in a different name.

Mrs Bowkett took out a policy with Petplan, beginning on 13 August 2009, using her father's details instead of her own. It was alleged that Mr Horniman then arranged for new practice records to be set up in the name 'Cassy Griffiths'. These new records were first used substantively in May 2010 when Cassy returned to the practice with hip problems, following which two separate records were maintained for the dog under 'Cassy Bowkett' and 'Cassy Griffiths'.

In August 2010, Dariusz Drozd MRCVS, a vet who had treated Cassy several times, had been told by

Mrs Bowkett that the dog had two separate records. He told the DC that he queried this with Mr Horniman who suggested that it was a mistake and that they 'RIP' the name Cassy Bowkett. Mr Drozd disagreed on this course of action but was told by Mr Horniman to 'leave it to me' and the records were then changed to say that Cassy Bowkett had died.

Mrs Bowkett alleged that, at some point in 2011, Mr Horniman explained to her that it would no longer be possible to claim for treatment for Cassy's hip dysplasia under the Petplan policy in her father's name. However, the policy remained active, and was transferred into Mrs Bowkett's name upon her father's death.

### ***"In coming to its conclusion... the Committee is faced with conflicting evidence..."***

In July 2011, Cassy Griffiths was seen by Jennifer Jones MRCVS, a part-time locum vet at the Cinderford practice, who told the DC that she was puzzled about why there were very few clinical records relating to the animal. A receptionist explained to her that there were two sets of records for the same dog and that Mr Horniman had instructed her to mark the original pet as having been euthanased and close its records and create a second new record for the dog. Ms Jones tendered her resignation shortly afterwards citing concerns that a pet had been "reincarnated to ensure continued income from insurance claims". In November 2011 Ms Jones submitted a formal complaint to the RCVS.

During the course of the hearing the DC heard evidence from Mrs Bowkett, Mr Drozd and Ms Jones, amongst others.

In giving evidence, Mrs Bowkett admitted that she had knowingly engaged in fraud but maintained that at all times she had acted with the knowledge and on the advice of Mr Horniman. However, the DC found that she was unable to remember any relevant material dates and was unclear about the chronology of events. It was suggested on several occasions that she was lying to the DC, which she denied. However, the DC believed that she took no responsibility for her own fraudulent actions but merely blamed Mr Horniman and that she had a strong motive to engage in the insurance fraud.

In regards to the evidence given by Mr Drozd the DC noted that he did not record his suspicions of possible fraud, that he continued to treat Cassy Griffiths after he raised his concerns, and that he appeared to have accepted Mr Horniman's assurance that he had dealt with the issue.

The DC found that Ms Jones was correct in her suspicions that there was only one dog. However, it felt she offered no evidence to support her suspicion that this was part of Mr Horniman's 'scheme to maximise income for the practice' as she alleged in her witness statement.

The DC also heard oral evidence from and on behalf of Mr Horniman who categorically denied suggesting to Mrs Bowkett that she commit insurance fraud and attempting to cover this up through the maintenance of two separate records. He maintained that it was not until Ms Jones voiced her concerns that he realised that Cassy Bowkett and Cassy Griffiths were the same dog.

The DC voiced a number of concerns about Mr Horniman's actions and behaviour and, at times, found his evidence to be unsatisfactory. For example, the DC found it difficult to understand why 'alarm bells' did not ring that he was dealing with only one dog when he prescribed medication for two almost identical dogs in May 2010 when only one was presented for examination. It also queried why, when he became aware that the insurance policy for Cassy Griffiths was fraudulent, practice records were not updated and no attempt was made to contact Petplan to inform them of this, as is clearly advised by the RCVS *Code of Professional Conduct*.

Furthermore, the DC was concerned that, in his correspondence with the RCVS, he was less than transparent, candid and honest. The DC considered this to be unacceptable behaviour from a professional in dealings with investigations undertaken by the regulatory body.

In making its judgment, the DC had to make a decision on whose account it felt to be more reliable in regards to the first element of the charge.

Professor Noreen Burrows, chairing the DC and speaking on its behalf, said: "In coming to its conclusion ... the Committee is faced with conflicting evidence from Mrs Bowkett, who is an admitted fraudster, admits to acting dishonestly and to lying to Petplan. This is in contrast to the evidence from the Respondent, who is of good character, had an unblemished personal record over 23 years and is supported by impressive character references."

The DC found the evidence of Mrs Bowkett to be "vague, lacking in clarity and inconsistent with the facts" and therefore rejected her evidence concerning the first element of the charge. In regards to the second element of the charge, the DC was not satisfied that Mr Horniman had arranged for or allowed the records to be changed as was alleged. In regards to the third element it found that, since it had already rejected the charge that Mr Horniman suggested to Mrs Bowkett that she embark upon insurance fraud, it was unlikely that Mr Horniman would have acted dishonestly in the manner alleged.

Professor Burrows added: "In the light of the above findings, all charges against the Respondent are dismissed."

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

# Windows on the profession

## A brief history of our stained glass glories

In the reception of Belgravia House there is a display that contains the coats of arms of the original veterinary schools and of the universities with veterinary schools. In the Members' Room there is a stained glass representation of the RCVS coat of arms, which was once part of a much larger window. Veterinary historian Bruce Vivash Jones and RCVS Knowledge Librarian Clare Boulton explain their origins.

**T**he story of this stained glass begins in 1884, when the College decided to knock down its existing building in Red Lion Square and erect a new home on the same site. This new building was to be a 'fitting for the home of the veterinary profession' and, as such, tenders were invited for stained glass windows in the Council Chamber facing onto Red Lion Square. However, money was tight, and the building opened on 6 April 1886 with plain glass.

The idea of having 'coloured' windows must have appealed to sections of the profession as the Central Veterinary Medical Society offered to pay for stained glass in the central of the three windows. Practitioners HL Simpson and JF Simpson (prominent members of the Royal Counties Veterinary Medical Association) jointly offered another. These windows were installed in time for the AGM in May 1886.

That same month an editorial in *The Veterinary Journal* reminded 'societies and individuals that there is much yet to be done in the way of furnishing, fitting and embellishment of their building, and that now is a good opportunity for their assistance'. Perhaps that was a plea aimed at the issue of the final window in the Council Chamber?

If so, it seems to have worked, as the following year the Norfolk and Eastern Counties, Western Counties and Lincolnshire Veterinary Medical Associations agreed to jointly fund the final stained glass window. They presented the design to Council on 3 April 1888. The window would show: "a veterinary surgeon examining a horse, which was made to appear as jaded as possible, to carry out the idea of a sick animal. After the stable-master's explanation about the animal, the veterinary surgeon appears to be cautioning him for the future, telling him never to leave till tomorrow what might be done today. There was a

Latin inscription under the subject to that effect. In the background a shepherd was seen driving a flock of sheep for the veterinary surgeon to examine. The subject was surrounded by an oval interlaced with the monograms of the counties by which the window was presented."

Finally the three windows were complete, and they disappear from the records until 1941, when they are mentioned in reports of damage caused by the bombing of Red Lion Square in the final month of the Blitz. The damage was so serious that they had to be removed and replaced by plain glass. It was not until 1953, following the payment of war damage compensation, that the windows were repaired and returned.

The 1953 Annual Report also records that the idea of adding the "armorial bearings of the universities having veterinary schools and of the veterinary colleges which have their own bearings" in the windows at the opposite end of the building, overlooking Yorkshire Grey Yard, was being considered.

It was hoped that these would be paid for by "the universities and colleges concerned or by the alumni thereof". There is no record of when this happened but the six university coats of arms must have been added before 1960, when the College vacated the Red Lion Square Building, as they are mentioned in discussions in March 1962 about the fitting out of the new building in Belgrave Square: a representative from Goddard and Gibbs [a leading stained glass studio where the windows were being stored] reports that it was not practicable to include the main windows in the new building but it would be possible to "incorporate one panel of the Royal College coat of arms [see photo] and the six existing panels of the coats of arms of the universities in the window at the garden end of the large room on the first floor".

This was agreed and these sections of glass, with the addition of the coats of arms of "the 'Royal Sign Manual' veterinary schools under the old one portal system" (Royal Veterinary College, Royal (Dick) Veterinary School, Glasgow Veterinary College and the Veterinary College of Ireland) plus Trinity College, Dublin, and University College, Dublin, were installed in the Historical Library in Belgrave Square. It is this stained glass that can now be found in Belgravia House.

The question of what happened to the rest of the three larger windows remains a mystery. Minutes of 1962/63 record discussions of possible homes, including a new student hostel been built at RVC's Hawkshead Campus. These all fell through. The final mention of them in the official records is in October 1963, when Registrar WGR Oates reports that he has written again to the associations who presented the windows to see if they have views on their future.



To see more images of the windows, visit Clare Boulton's blog on the topic, at [www.rcvsknowledgelibraryblog.org](http://www.rcvsknowledgelibraryblog.org).



# EBVM online resource

New resource to be launched at EBVM Skills Day 2015

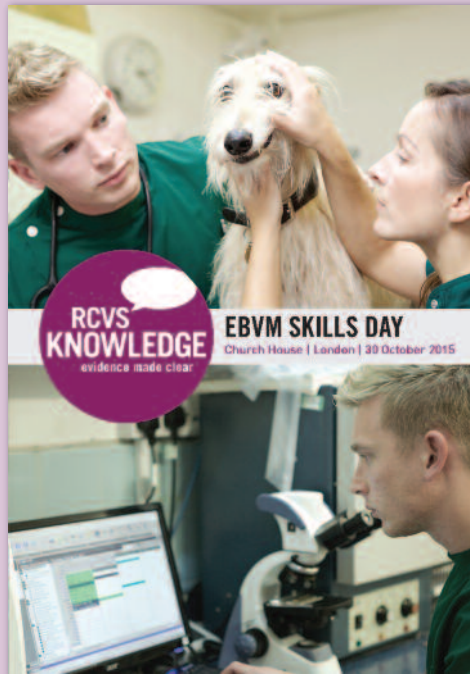
**A** groundbreaking online evidence-based veterinary medicine (EBVM) resource, jointly produced by 12 universities, will be presented at our EBVM Skills Day 2015, a one-day continuing professional development seminar taking place on 30 October 2015 at Church House, London.

A dozen European and North American universities are pooling their knowledge and experience to build the online learning and teaching resource for evidence-based veterinary practice. Funded by an RCVS Knowledge Target Grant, this major international collaboration will allow practitioners to learn more about EBVM for free at their own pace.

***"We are thrilled to have the opportunity to lead on such a worthwhile project in an emerging field that has already proved essential to our profession."***

Two of the project leads, Kristen Reyher from the University of Bristol and Marnie Brennan from the University of Nottingham, will present the new online resource to the veterinary community at the Skills Day.

Dr Reyher says: "We are thrilled to have the opportunity to lead on such a worthwhile project in



an emerging field that has already proved essential to our profession.

"As a global group, we are passionate about being involved in larger, long-term projects to push EBVM further into the consciousness of the profession, and believe this project moves us one

step closer by bringing together key stakeholders and building an excellent fit-for-purpose resource."

The organisations collaborating on the project are: University of Bristol, University of Nottingham, University of Cambridge, Royal Veterinary College, University of Agricultural Sciences & Veterinary Medicine Bucharest, University of Berlin, University of Edinburgh, University of Georgia, University of Glasgow, University of Guelph, University of Liverpool, and University of Prince Edward Island.

Tickets for the EBVM Skills Day are £170, including VAT and lunch, with group discounts available. To view the programme and purchase tickets, please visit [www.rcvsknowledge.org/events](http://www.rcvsknowledge.org/events).

## EBVM Skills Day 2015

Sponsorship and exhibition opportunities available for suppliers, practices, consultants & advisors. For more information, contact our fundraising team:

Marcus Pugh | [marcus@rcvsknowledge.org](mailto:marcus@rcvsknowledge.org)  
Sarah Gilmour | [sarah@rcvsknowledge.org](mailto:sarah@rcvsknowledge.org)

# Knowledge Groups on the rise

Groups producing Knowledge Summaries across wide variety of subjects

**O**ver 100 veterinary professionals from across the world have begun working together in Knowledge Groups on specific areas of veterinary health, producing summaries of the best available evidence for frequent clinical questions. The Knowledge Summaries will be published online for practitioners to access in clinical settings.

***"We've had 360 signups to the Knowledge Groups so far which is hugely encouraging."***

An initiative from the EBVM Network (an international collective of people interested in supporting and furthering evidence-based veterinary practice), there are now 46 Knowledge Groups working together on topics such as emergency and critical care, anaesthesia and pain control, obesity and nutrition, and practice-based research. The groups prioritise clinical questions

in their chosen area, identify gaps in knowledge, review evidence and summarise their findings into Knowledge Summaries. These summaries can then be used by practitioners at the point of care, to inform clinical decision-making.

Laura Jackisch, who is co-ordinating the Knowledge Groups, says that with the EBVM Network reaching 800 members in 42 countries, Knowledge Groups are the next stage of disseminating evidence-based knowledge and support.

"We've had 360 signups to the Knowledge Groups so far which is hugely encouraging. Two years ago our Target Grants programme characterised the veterinary caseload, ranking presenting complaints by frequency. The work of Knowledge Groups will build on this to provide practitioners with evidence summaries for the most useful questions in practice."

Laura adds: "This work is vital to evidence-based veterinary practice and will be supported by an

online publishing platform and international CPD events such as the EBVM Skills Day."

To get involved in Knowledge Groups:

- Sign-up to the EBVM Network at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/EBVM\\_Network](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/EBVM_Network)
- Sign-up to specific Knowledge Groups at [www.bit.ly/knowledgetgroups](http://www.bit.ly/knowledgetgroups)

## STOP PRESS

### RCVS Council backs open-access evidence resource

RCVS Council has approved two years' funding for us to develop a Knowledge Summaries website, allowing us to waive the usual open access submission fees so that practising veterinary professionals can contribute to the project.

# 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 The Professionals**  
Our campaign to protect VN title

**2 Hi-fives for new five**  
Welcome to new RCVS Council members

**Use your proper name please**  
Code changes to protect titles

**3 Injection of sense**  
Vaccination clinics and 24/7

**On track and then some**  
CEO update on Strategic Plan

**4 Direction of travel**  
Defra to consult on governance changes

**Fully engaged**  
College ranks in staff satisfaction survey

**5 Awareness accolade**  
VN Golden Jubilee Award winner

**Poodle translate**  
Language testing for EU vets?

**6 Making history**  
First Council meeting outside London

**Evening calls**  
Advice service open until 7pm

**7 Back to Vet Future**  
Update on joint RCVS/BVA project

**8 Hueston, we have lift off!**  
RCVS Day guest speaker

**9 Revealing connections**  
Links between animal and human abuse

**10 New TB regime**  
OV responsibilities

**Accountability at the top**  
New guidance on responsibility in leadership roles

**11 Confidentiality and abuse concerns**  
New guidance on disclosing client info

**Getting our brains in gear**  
Mind Matters project shaping up

**12 Forms to fill**  
Online form for Dr status

**Check, check and check again**  
Ensuring staff are registered

**13 What Price education?**  
Interview with new Education Committee chair

**14 Special skills**  
Professional skills for Specialists

**Handy books**  
Publications for TPs and VN trainers

**15 Documentary evidence**  
New rules on CPD

**Apply yourself!**  
Advanced Practitioner application period opens

**16 Finding solutions**  
ADR case studies

**17 Applications welcome!**  
PSS Assessor recruitment

**PSS up and coming**  
Talks and workshops on new Scheme

**18 Public outreach**  
Talking about our role at London Pet Show

**Free and convenient**  
Listen again to recent webinars

**Meet the team**  
New leaflet on practice staff

**19 Autumnal activities**  
Upcoming events and conferences

**Oasis of learning**  
CPD event in Manchester

**Looking back, going forwards**  
Annual Report published

**20 Case load**  
PIC report on two recent cases

**VN investigations**  
VN PIC report

**21 DC hearing**  
Committee dismisses charges against Nicholas Horniman MRCVS relating to pet insurance fraud and dishonestly altering clinical records

**22 A window into the past**  
The story of our stained glass

**23 Breaking new ground**  
Online EBVM resource launching soon

**Pooling knowledge**  
The growth of 'Knowledge Groups'

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### 2015

**29 June**  
PSS Assessor application deadline

**10 July**  
RCVS Day

**4 – 6 September**  
BSAVA Scottish Congress

**11 September**  
Honours nominations deadline

**29 September**  
Special meeting of RCVS Council

**30 September – 1 October**  
Overseas CPD event

**6 October**  
VN Council

**9 – 11 October**  
BVNA Congress

**30 October**  
EBVM Skills Day  
Deadline for Advanced Practitioner applications

**5 November**  
RCVS Council

**19 – 20 November**  
London Vet Show and new Practice Standards Scheme launch

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