

In the driving seat of reform

New governance layout from July

From July this year, the governance of the RCVS is going to look very different for two reasons.

First, after several years of work, on 17 January 2013, the biggest single change to veterinary legislation in nearly half a century occurred, when the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Minister David Heath signed the legislative reform order (LRO) that will reconstitute our disciplinary committees separately from Council, and ensure the independence of those who adjudicate on complaints.

Secondly, at its March meeting, Council agreed to establish a new Operational Board that will manage oversight of organisational activities, with strategic issues and significant policy discussions being taken by Council.

These changes begin to move the RCVS into a more modern regulatory and governance environment and although the road to reform does not end here, the scale of these changes cannot be overstated.

The LRO comes into force on 6 April and the first changes to the Preliminary Investigation (PIC) and Disciplinary (DC) Committees will happen on RCVS Day (5 July). It brings us into line with modern regulatory practice, by ensuring that the same group of people are not responsible for setting the rules, investigating complaints and adjudication, and by bringing lay people formally into PIC.

It will allow us to increase the pool of people available to investigate complaints and sit on disciplinary hearings, and therefore reduce the onerous workload of the individual Committee members.

We are grateful to the British Veterinary Association for the support that it gave to the LRO, and for the hard work and tenacity of the team at Defra and in the College, who ensured the safe passage of the Order through a minefield of checks and balances prior to it being laid before Parliament.

The recruitment process for the independent committee members is underway, and over 160 applications have been received, split

roughly two-thirds to one-third in terms of lay and veterinary candidates.

The Selection Committee comprises Chairman Sir Michael Buckley, Christopher Laurence and Dr Joan Martin. The decisions of the Selection Committee will be ratified at the June 2013 meeting of Council.

The first external members will then join the PIC and DC from July 2013. After a two-year transition period, members of the RCVS Council will become ineligible for membership of these committees.

“Although the road to reform does not end here, the scale of these changes cannot be overstated.”

New governance structure

The Operational Board will be chaired by the CEO and will include the President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, the Registrar and the Chairmen of the Committees, including VN Council. The new structure will provide for more effective oversight, clearer roles, better lines of communication and more appropriate decision making.

Council will retain responsibility for setting the three-year strategic plan, setting budgets, the management of risk and for significant areas of policy, leaving the Operational Board to make sure the work is done to prepare the plan and budget and oversee and provide greater scrutiny to the work of the organisation. Council will elect members of the Operational Board, with the exception of the CEO and Registrar, who will remain Council appointees.

While it is important that we implement these changes successfully first, we are constantly looking at how we can improve who we are and how we operate. The First Rate Regulator project (see CEO overview on page 3) will help provide a road map for the next wave of reforms to sweep through the RCVS.



In this issue: VPPR fee reduction, new VP, CEO overview, VNC Officers, fees due, new Trust Executive Director, new customer focus, election time, AMR communiqué, top ten medicines poster change, convictions disclosure, ethics review, pet crematoria, circus advice, PSS badges, EMS guidance, Day One Competences review, PDR, CPD measures, congresses and events, DC hearings.

VPPR fee reduction

Fee drop from £40 to £34

We're pleased to announce that the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) has agreed to our request for a 15 per cent reduction in the joining/re-registration fee for the inclusion of practice premises on the Register of Veterinary Practice Premises (RVPP), which we hold on its behalf.

The fee will reduce from £40 to £34, and is due by 1 April for the year ahead. For Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) practices, we will shortly send out invoices for the PSS fee, which includes the cost of the RVPP.

Veterinary surgeons may only supply veterinary medicines from registered premises, and we write to all practices that do not renew their RVPP entry. Practice premises that do not pay their registration fees in any year are recorded as inactive, and their details are then provided to the VMD.

If you are unsure whether your practice's premises are registered for this year, or have any other query about practice premises registration, please contact the Registration Department (020 7202 0707 or membership@rcvs.org.uk).

Share Jones lecturer selected

Biennial award approved

The 2013 RCVS Share Jones Lectureship will be bestowed upon Professor Dr Christoph Mülling, who will be invited to give a free lecture for vets, veterinary nurses and the wider public. Professor Mülling is Professor of Veterinary Anatomy at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Leipzig, and Director of the Institute of Veterinary Anatomy, Leipzig, Germany. His interests include teaching and research on the structure and function of the normal and diseased claw and hoof.

The RCVS Share Jones Lectureship is a prestigious, biennial award made to a lecturer who has achieved special eminence in veterinary anatomy. Its recipients give a public lecture related in the widest sense to this subject. The 2013 lecture is likely to be arranged for October.

Recent lectures have included 'Who says you can't be big and nimble? The fragility of giant land animals,' given in 2011 by Professor John Hutchinson, whose expertise includes the anatomy and locomotion of dinosaurs and crocodiles; and 'Sex and Regeneration: Lessons from Nature,' a study of deer antlers presented by Professor Jo Price. Although this year's topic is yet to be finalised, we expect it will be similarly inspirational.

Ticket arrangements, venue and date for this year's lecture will be announced in due course.

Stuart Reid elected Vice-President

New Officer team member seeks to broaden engagement with RCVS

Professor Stuart Reid, the son of a veterinary surgeon and Principal of the Royal Veterinary College, was elected Vice-President of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons at the March meeting of RCVS Council.

"It is an honour and privilege to be nominated for the Officer team," says Stuart. "Having grown up in a veterinary household, the profession, and practice in particular, has been part of my life from as far back as I can remember. The opportunity to serve in a leadership role at a time when the profession at large faces so many challenges and our organisation itself is undergoing such fundamental change is as exciting as it is potentially daunting."

"Having grown up in a veterinary household, the profession, and practice in particular, has been part of my life from as far back as I can remember."

Stuart graduated from the University of Glasgow in 1987 and began his career in practice in Aberdeenshire, before returning to graduate studies at his *alma mater*. Completing his PhD in 1992, his research interests developed in the application of quantitative epidemiological techniques to diseases of both animals and humans and he was appointed to a joint Chair at the Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde in 1996. Having worked in Africa, Australia and the USA, Stuart became Dean of Glasgow's School of Veterinary Medicine in 2005, before moving to London as Principal of the Royal Veterinary College in 2011. He has been a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh since 2001.

He is an RCVS Specialist in veterinary epidemiology, and a diplomate and the first elected President of the European College of Veterinary Public Health. He has served on numerous committees, including the Scottish Science Advisory Committee and Veterinary Products Committee, and chairs the Trustees of the Donkey Sanctuary. He has been awarded the Petplan Charitable Trust Scientific Award, the Wooldridge Memorial Lecture and the McCall Lecture.

Stuart joined RCVS Council in 2005 and has served on a variety of Committees, including as Chairman of both the Education Policy and Specialisation Committee and the Veterinary Legislation Working Party; he has also served on six different accreditation visitation teams in the UK and overseas.

Admitting to being a mediocre but enthusiastic rugby player and now a significantly worse blues guitarist, Stuart comments: "The College's role as a regulator and standard bearer is at the core of all our activities and I hope that I will be able to bring a comparative view from the profession elsewhere in the world, at the same time as helping us retain the professional continuum from science base to clinical practice."

"We must broaden awareness in the profession and the public of the work the College does and seek greater engagement at every level. It will only be through reaching out that we can be a Council and a profession that reflect the society and

communities we serve, fit for purpose and fit for practice in everything we do," he adds.





VN Council Officer team

Kathy Kissick to continue as chair

Kathy Kissick (pictured) will remain Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) Chairman for the next College year – from July 2013 – and Liz Branscombe will continue as Vice-Chairman, following unanimous agreement at the VNC's February meeting.

The appointment of the second Vice-Chairman – traditionally a veterinary surgeon – has been deferred until May, when the full composition of VN Council for next year, including those appointed from RCVS Council, will be known.

Liz Branscombe will also continue as Financial Liaison Officer.

Bloomin' lovely

Brightening up for mental health

On Monday 21 January, our staff donned colourful clothes to support 'Blooming Monday' an initiative from Mental Health UK (MHUK) to raise awareness of mental health issues.

The third Monday in January is traditionally known as 'Blue Monday' as it is associated with high levels of depression. The aim of Blooming Monday was to encourage people to ditch their dark work clothes and brighten up, with some colourful attire.

MHUK hoped that the initiative would raise money for vital research, as well as help reduce the stigma attached to mental illness.

Given the high stress and suicide rates within the profession, the day had an especial resonance for the College. Our participation, and that of other veterinary organisations, was encouraged by Ann Owen and Pam Mosedale, veterinary surgeons backing the campaign.



We're on the 'first-rate' road to reform

Six-month progress report

Nick Stace, Chief Executive

A lot has happened since my first overview column, in the November issue of RCVS News. It's been a busy four months, and has involved asking questions, listening to views and absorbing a lot of new information – as well as knocking down a few walls... both literal and metaphorical.

Although much of what has been achieved during this period can be described as 'business as usual', and staff have been busy delivering that, there has also been a lot of hard work carried out around three key themes, as I explained to Council at its March meeting. These are:

- 'Building solid foundations', focusing on governance, the working environment (which is where the knocking down of walls in Belgravia House has come in!), leadership, IT infrastructure, staff engagement and customer experience;
- 'Becoming a first-rate regulator', which includes activities flowing from that initiative, together with developing the Practice Standards Scheme and changes required by the legislative reform order; and,
- 'Being ambitious about our future', including the process of developing the three-year strategic plan.

First-Rate Regulator project

In November, I announced our First-Rate Regulator project, and I am pleased to say that the first phase of this, around evidence gathering, is almost complete. Nearly 5,000 vets, veterinary nurses (VNs) and practice managers, and 20 per cent of public complainants over the last two years, have responded to our questionnaires, and we have also carried out interviews with RCVS and VN Council members, staff and stakeholder organisations. Analysis with how the RCVS compares with over 20 other similar organisations is also now complete.

The next phase will consider measures to build on the positives and to recommend change around shortcomings.

The road to reform will take time and will be uncomfortable. Exposing the good, the bad and the indifferent in what we do and how we do it is important if we are to remain relevant to the profession and the public, and to be seen to take seriously the concerns that

people have. It will also be important for the Executive team and the Council to work together on the reform programme with the explicit aim of becoming a first-rate regulator.

There will be a special open meeting of Council in June to discuss the recommended plans in detail.

Staff engagement survey

A first-rate regulator must have first-rate staff, and those organisations that perform well also have a high level of staff engagement. This is one area that we can improve upon, as the results of a recent staff engagement survey show.

The confidential online survey, which took place from 22 October to 5 November 2012 and was carried out by independent specialists Survey Solutions, achieved an excellent 96% response rate.

The results showed an overall 'engagement score' of 59, which compared badly with the average score for the top ten organisations, at 81, but favourably against the average for the bottom ten, at 45. So, there is plenty of room for improvement, but these results also reflect a difficult year of change for staff.

I was delighted to see that positive scores were achieved around staff understanding of the RCVS; job satisfaction and feeling of empowerment; team relationships; advocacy, pride and commitment; and, diversity and fair dealing.

Meanwhile, areas for improvement included change management; leadership; reward; working across departments; the relationship between Council and staff; workload and working environment; and, internal communications.

Staff have been keen to share their views, and it will now be critical that the Executive team returns this trust by making positive changes. We have already made plans around four areas of activity: professional development, leadership/structure, work environment and internal communications.

These results should be seen as the starting point on a journey towards improvement within the organisation, so that we can motivate and retain our team of excellent staff, who will be so critical to our success as a first-rate regulator.

Make NPM your pet project

"Your pets and you: companions for life" is the theme of this year's National Pet Month, which runs from 1 April to 6 May. Veterinary practices round the country are invited by the organisers to host events promoting responsible pet ownership and supporting local pet charities. For details see www.nationalpetmonth.org.uk.

Peak performance

New expanded guidance on the Performance Protocol will shortly be published online. The guidance, which takes the form of Q&A, was developed by a Working Party tasked with considering the practical implementation of the Protocol.

Fees please

Retention fees now due

It's getting towards 31 March – the deadline for veterinary surgeons to pay their retention fees.

Please try to pay them in good time – it costs you an extra £35 if the payment is received after 1 April and, worse, those whose fees remain unpaid after 31 May are removed and pay significant fees to be restored.

Vets also need to confirm or update their registration details annually as part of renewing their registration. Although the deadline for this is 30 September, you may find it convenient to do this at the same time as making fee payments.

UK- and overseas-practising members need to confirm additionally that they have met the continuing professional development (CPD) requirements (see page 15). Renewals can be made either online or via the form included with the annual renewal notice, regardless of how you choose to pay.

Fees can be paid through our website, by cheque, direct debit (which will need to have been set up in advance) or bank transfer. Particularly relevant if you are making a payment on someone else's behalf, is to remember to put the vet's name and Register number on the back of the cheque or as a bank transfer reference. We process over 22,000 registrations every year and need to know to whom each payment relates.

If you have set up a direct debit, we generally aim to take the payment on 31 March. As this will be a Sunday this year, we'll take the payment as soon as possible afterwards. To set up a bank transfer (which can be from your bank account online, telephone banking, or a branch, depending what your bank offers), our account details are available by telephoning the Finance Department (020 7202 0723). We're sorry, but payments cannot be taken over the phone.

A veterinary surgeon's registration acts as a licence to practise and those removed from the Register may not practise unless they have been restored.

Royle welcome to new Trust Executive Director

Nick Royle will lead Trust's EBVM ambitions

The RCVS Charitable Trust has appointed its first Executive Director, Nick Royle, who will head the charity as it becomes a leading advocate for evidence-based veterinary medicine (EBVM).

At its meeting on 6 March 2013, the Board agreed a new strategy for the Trust, which will put at its heart the development of an EBVM resource for the veterinary profession, both in the UK and globally.

The Trust aims to develop a resource that will be based on the principles of The Cochrane Collaboration for human medicine. The Cochrane Collaboration is an international consortium of scientific and medical experts who conduct systematic data reviews of medical evidence that is, following peer review, deposited in The Cochrane Library and made available as a key reference to healthcare providers, policy-makers and patients.

Nick Royle, who led The Cochrane Collaboration for nine years, is the perfect choice to take the Trust forward in this new direction.

"We are delighted that Nick Royle will be joining the Trust in the newly-created role of Executive Director," says Jill Nute, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. "We are excited about the Trust's new objective of providing a unique resource that gives veterinary professionals the best evidence on which to base their decisions."

"Nick's experience at The Cochrane Collaboration ideally suits him to take charge of this ambition and make it happen."

Due to take up his role on 2 April 2013, Nick says: "I'm really excited to be joining the Trust at the start of this important development. My previous

experience at Cochrane will be a great help, but I'm under no illusions that veterinary medicine presents additional and unique challenges."

Further information about the Trust's plans to develop as an EBVM champion will be available in due course.

"Nick's experience at The Cochrane Collaboration ideally suits him to take charge of this ambition and make it happen."



VNC celebrates outstanding contributions

Nominees sought for Golden Jubilee award

Those who make an outstanding contribution to the veterinary nursing profession are recognised through the annual VN Council Golden Jubilee award – and we need to know who they are!

This award is decided annually by VN Council in May, and veterinary nurses, veterinary surgeons and lay people can be nominated.

"We are looking for those who have helped shape the VN profession," says Kathy Kissick, VN Council Chairman. "This award recognises those who have

really made a difference and who can truly be described as exceptional."

Any veterinary nurse or veterinary surgeon can make a nomination, and they need to be supported with detailed evidence for VN Council to consider. Nomination forms are available from the RCVS website (www.rcvs.org.uk/goldenjubilee), and need to be received by 1 May.

The VN Council Golden Jubilee award was instigated in 2011 to celebrate the first 50 years of veterinary nurse training. Its 2012 recipient was Sue Badger.

Customers in focus

New Customer Experience Manager joins the team

We welcome Nicola South to the College as Customer Experience Manager. This is a new role created with the aim of improving the customer journey for vets, veterinary nurses and the public in their dealings with us.

Nicola joins us from Orbit Group Ltd, where she was Service Excellence Advisor for the East and South Region.

"I'm extremely excited and proud to be joining the staff at the RCVS, and at such a significant time, just as the First-Rate Regulator initiative is underway, which will lead to a change of focus in how we deliver our services to meet all of our customers' needs," says Nicola. "My arrival has been met by a staff made up of extremely dedicated and passionate individuals, and I'm really looking forward to working as a team to deliver an improved customer experience for everyone."

CEO Nick Stace says: "Nicola brings to the College a wealth of customer service experience gained from the hotel and tourism industries. Improving our customer service delivery is a

priority, and I am delighted to have Nicola on board who will help to champion these improvements across the organisation."



Hustle up and vote!

Election hustings on 19 March at 7pm and available to listen again

Ballot papers, candidate manifestos and voting instructions have been winging their way to vets and veterinary nurses for the 2013 RCVS Council and Veterinary Nurse Council (VN Council) elections.

These elections take place annually to select vets and VNs to sit on the respective Councils, with a proportion of seats on both Councils becoming eligible for election each year. Those elected are expected to help regulate their profession in the interest of the public.

This year, 13 candidates, five of whom are current Council members, will contest the six available seats on RCVS Council. Four candidates are contesting the two available places on VN Council, including one existing member.

For the first time this year, we are holding an online hustings for RCVS Council candidates to allow voters to put their questions to them directly. This will be run as a free, live webinar by The Webinar Vet and will take place on Tuesday, 19 March at 7pm, so if you're reading this before then, do please register to listen at www.thewebinarvet.com/rcvs.

If it's already happened, don't worry, you can listen again to what the candidates had to say by visiting the above web address and clicking on the candidate's name. These will be available right up to the voting deadline.

Given the high numbers of candidates, it won't be possible to have a debate, but candidates will be allocated three minutes to introduce themselves, and to answer up to three questions submitted in advance by the profession. Any last-minute questions should be submitted when registering for the webinar, or can be emailed to Ian Holloway (i.holloway@rcvs.org.uk). Please ensure your question relates to the role of the RCVS and that of Council members (see www.rcvs.org.uk/about), and let us know if you wish it to remain anonymous.

Votes in both elections may be cast online, by text message or by post, and must be received by **5pm on Friday, 26 April 2013**. To ensure independence, the elections are being administered by Electoral Reform Services.

Celebrating a pioneer

A two-day event will celebrate the life and work of Aleen Cust (1868-1937), the first female veterinary surgeon in Britain and Ireland.

On 4 and 5 May, Hodson Bay Hotel, in Athlone, Ireland, will play host to 'Women in veterinary medicine: Aleen Cust, Pioneer', organised by a team of five veterinary surgeons who come from, or currently practise in, the area where Aleen Cust worked.

The event includes a panel discussion on 'Feminisation of the veterinary profession, the practical implications,' in which President Jacqui Molyneux will take part.

For more information, and to register, visit: <http://conference.eventplus.ie>.



No longer on the cards

VN cards discontinued

At its February meeting, the Veterinary Nurses Council voted to discontinue issuing registered and listed veterinary nurse identification cards.

To date, the cards have been issued on payment of the annual listing/registration fee. However, feedback suggests that potential employers do not ask to see these cards and, in any event, they are quickly out of date.

It was felt that suggesting employers and members of the public use the 'Check the Registers' tool on the RCVS website to see if an individual is properly registered would be more effective.



Top ten medicines no longer popular

OFT agrees to change in waiting room poster

From March, practices will no longer have to include information on a poster in their waiting rooms to tell clients what the top ten medicines they supply are, and their costs.

The requirement for the poster was brought in following the Competition Commission investigation into veterinary medicine sales in 2005, as part of a range of measures. Some of the responsibilities were enforced via the RCVS as an alternative to legislation under the Fair Trading Act, to ensure that clients had access to sufficient information to be able to decide where to obtain veterinary prescriptions and medicines.

“We have also been mindful of the fact that the ways in which consumers access information has changed radically.”

The poster, which was outlined in the *Guide to Professional Conduct*, and subsequently the Code, had to include information about prescriptions and repeat prescriptions, together

with the ‘ten relevant veterinary medicinal products most commonly prescribed during a recent and typical three-month period’.

Having seen how this has worked in practice, we have been keen to push for change because it was felt that the list could be confusing to clients.

How ‘most commonly prescribed’ has been calculated has often varied – for example, by price, volume, number of prescriptions, etc – and, in addition, different formulations, brands or pack sizes of the same active ingredient could cause confusion.

We have also been mindful of the fact that the ways in which consumers access information has changed radically over the last seven years or so, with internet searches becoming more prevalent.

These factors conspired to make the list less meaningful as a tool that allowed consumers to shop around. It is thus hoped that the removal of the list will reduce potential misunderstanding among the public.



Following discussion with the RCVS towards the end of 2012, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT), has agreed that the requirement be dropped.

This change will initially be for a six-month period, during which time we will monitor the situation. If there is no appreciable level of complaint from the public to either the College or OFT, the change will become permanent.

The other requirements of supporting guidance Chapter 10 – Fair Trading Requirements remain unchanged (www.rcvs.org.uk/fairtrading), and the OFT recommends that the notice advising clients that they can obtain a prescription from the practice be made even more prominent.

In addition, it remains important that veterinary surgeons communicate medicines prices clearly to their clients and other callers, and that invoices itemise individual products supplied (www.rcvs.org.uk/medicines).

Registers for sale

Hard copies of the 2012 Register of Members can be bought from www.rcvs.org.uk/publications for £25 (£40 for non-members). Please note that the Register of Members no longer includes phone numbers. Meanwhile, the status of any vet or VN can be checked via our online ‘Check the Registers’ feature.

New moves

We would like to pass our congratulations to past RCVS Council member Professor Andrea Nolan, who has been appointed Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Edinburgh Napier University, with effect from July 2013.

Professor Nolan was a Glasgow-appointed Council member from 1999 to 2007, when her activities included chairing the Education Committee.

Meanwhile, former Head of the Department of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Cambridge, Professor Duncan Maskell, has stepped down as a Cambridge-appointed Council member, and takes up the post of Head of Biological Sciences within the University. A new appointee will be announced in due course.

Think globally on AMR

Post-symposium communiqué advises policy-makers

As well as pursuing all reasonable measures to reduce emergence and proliferation of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in the UK, our national strategies need to consider measures to reduce, identify and deal with imported problems, be they in humans, food or animals. That is the advice in a communiqué issued by the organising committee of a recent symposium on antimicrobial resistance.

The symposium, entitled ‘Antimicrobial resistance in human and veterinary medicine: one medicine, one problem?’ brought together researchers, practitioners and policy makers from both the human and veterinary medical fields to explore the evidence base for antimicrobial resistance.

The communiqué summarises the key findings of the event and stresses the importance of AMR being seen as a global issue, by saying: “In an increasingly connected world, it is evident that any measures need to tackle global use [of antibiotics].”

The event was held at the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) on 2 October 2012, and was jointly organised by the RCP, the RCVS and the Royal College of Pathologists, in association with

the Health Protection Agency, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate and the British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy.

“The symposium was a very constructive and successful event. Not only were there medics and vets talking in the same room, they were in broad agreement about the key issues. Now we need to carry these messages to the politicians in Britain and in Europe, and the communiqué is the start of that process,” says Professor the Lord Trees, who jointly organised the event with Dr Bharat Patel of the Health Protection Agency.

“We need to carry these messages to the politicians in Britain and in Europe.”

The communiqué can be downloaded from www.rcvs.org.uk/amr, together with the programme and presentations from the event.

The organisers of the event would like to acknowledge generous financial support from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, the RCVS Charitable Trust, the Wellcome Trust and the British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy.

Entitled to protection

Progress towards 'veterinary nurse' title legislation

At its March meeting, RCVS Council gave the go ahead for the College to present formal proposals for a framework for the statutory regulation of veterinary nurses (VNs) to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), and to seek legislation to protect the title 'veterinary nurse'.

Prior to the meeting, we had instructed Leading Counsel to draft a short piece of legislation to illustrate how proposals that had previously been approved by Council at its November 2012 meeting could be brought onto the statute book in a simple and efficient fashion, and to show that such proposals would provide a sound footing for the regulation of the VN profession.

"This would prevent those found guilty of serious professional misconduct from performing Schedule 3 activities under the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA)."

The proposals are based upon the work of the RCVS Veterinary Nurses Legislation Working Party (VN LWP) and would introduce a regulatory regime under the umbrella of the RCVS, which would protect the title 'veterinary nurse' and ensure that veterinary nurses who are struck off the RCVS Register of Veterinary Nurses are also struck off the List.

This would prevent those found guilty of serious professional misconduct from performing Schedule 3 activities under the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA).



VN LWP Chairman, Hilary Orpet, says: "This is another major step forward for the veterinary nursing profession. After 18 months of hard work we now have a draft Bill for the regulation of veterinary nurses that we are preparing to present to Government. I am excited by what the coming months will hold and to think where the profession could be in the next few years."

At the March meeting of RCVS Council, Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens (pictured) confirmed that Defra is supportive of this move, saying that the Department looked forward to hearing from the College in due course.

We will meet Defra officials over the coming months to discuss how they might be able to support us in seeking legislation, and whether there would be a likelihood of Ministerial support for Government-sponsored legislation



No tears shred over de-clutter

On time and on budget

We've been chucking out our clutter as part of a refurbishment to make Belgravia House a more pleasant and effective working environment.

So far, some 600 sacks of rubbish have been recycled, binned or shredded, and a further 800 boxes of reference materials have been archived off site.

Ten vanloads of furniture have been taken away for recycling, and internal partition walls have been removed to make offices open-plan and allow informal meeting spaces – glass pods – to be installed on each floor of offices.

A second phase to the project will mean that visitors will be met in a new and more welcoming reception area, which will be better linked to the RCVS Charitable Trust.

The majority of the costs for the refurbishment are being met through loss-of-light compensation arising from flats being built across the road adjacent to the College.

Disclosure of convictions

New declaration required from 2014 and advice line available over summer

From next year, veterinary surgeons will be required to disclose any criminal convictions, cautions or adverse findings made against them since April 2006, as will those wishing to join the Register.

The requirement was included in the *Code of Professional Conduct* launched last year, but was not implemented immediately.

At its March meeting, Council decided that veterinary surgeons will have to make an annual declaration as part of the renewal of their registration, starting in March 2014. Disclosures will be accepted on a voluntary basis before then.

The measure is being introduced to safeguard the welfare of animals and of the public, and brings the profession into line with other healthcare regulators.

The *Code* (5.3) says: "Veterinary surgeons, and those applying to be registered as veterinary

surgeons, must disclose to the RCVS any caution or conviction, including absolute and conditional discharges and spent convictions, or adverse finding which may affect registration, whether in the UK or overseas (except for minor offences excluded from disclosure by the RCVS)."

'Adverse finding' means any such:

- within veterinary school or university fitness to practise procedures, in the UK or overseas (applicants to the Register only)
- of any other healthcare regulator in the UK or overseas; and,
- of any other veterinary regulator overseas.

Convictions that may affect fitness to practise will be referred to the Preliminary Investigation Committee, although it is to be stressed that not all convictions will fall into this category. Traffic offences dealt with via a fixed penalty do not need to be disclosed.

Veterinary nurses have had to make a similar declaration since their Register was introduced, in 2007, although this does not currently extend to spent convictions. The Veterinary Nurses Council is yet to decide if it wishes to apply the new arrangements for veterinary surgeons to registered veterinary nurses.

Although this move is in the public interest, we are keen that it does not cause undue stress to the profession. An advice line will be set up over the summer for veterinary surgeons who may have convictions and wish to discuss them ahead of the disclosure period. There will also be guidance available in future issues of *RCVS News* and on the website, laying out the process in detail.

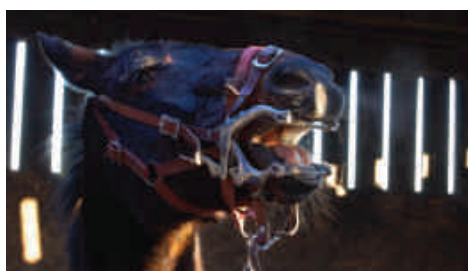
Anyone who has concerns in the meantime should contact the Professional Conduct team on 020 7202 0789.

Like pulling teeth?

BEVA seeks to clarify permitted procedures for EDTs

The British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) is concerned that there is confusion surrounding the role of Equine Dental Technicians (EDTs). To aid understanding, BEVA has worked with EDT representative organisations to develop three categories of dental procedures, which have since been accepted by the RCVS (see box).

Category one and two procedures may be undertaken by an EDT, providing they have an appropriate qualification from the British Association of Equine Dental Technicians or the Worldwide Association of Equine Dentistry (although, until such time as there is a relevant exemption order under the Veterinary Surgeons Act, there is no legal basis for EDTs to undertake category two procedures). Category three procedures may only be undertaken by a veterinary surgeon. More detail of procedures and their categories is available at www.beva.org.uk/_uploads/documents//EquineDentalprocedures.pdf.



The RCVS Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) has advised that, despite the absence of an Exemption Order to the Veterinary Surgeons Act, providing certain criteria are met (available on www.rcvs.org.uk), it could not determine any public interest in taking action against veterinary surgeons who worked in conjunction with EDTs, performing procedures in categories 1 and 2 only.

Keith Chandler, BEVA President comments: "It is important that vets, whether working in equine-only practice or just treating horses occasionally, know

what procedures may be performed by suitably qualified EDTs, because if vets direct or supervise non-vets performing acts of veterinary surgery, the vet is responsible. Vets should always check with the EDT what they propose to do before sedating the horse or administering other medications.

The PIC further wishes to remind veterinary surgeons of their additional obligations in relation to 24-hour emergency cover and supersession when they work with EDTs or carry out dental procedures themselves.

Category one (EDTs or vets)	Category two (EDTs or vets)	Category three (vets only)
Manually rasp teeth	Remove wolf teeth (erupted and non-displaced) under direct and continuous veterinary supervision	Remove cheek teeth or incisor teeth (unless only held in place by negligible periodontal fragments)
<i>"If vets direct or supervise non-vets performing acts of veterinary surgery, the vet is responsible."</i>	Use motorised instruments to reduce overgrown teeth and sharp points only	Administer/prescribe medicines of any type including oral sedatives or local anaesthetic
	Remove palpably loose teeth/dental fragments which are held in place by negligible periodontal fragments only	Enter any sensitive tissue other than that directly connected to wolf teeth
		Widen diastema
		Take/interpret radiographs; endodontics; trephining etc

Disciplinary measures

What a de-registered VN can do

The first Disciplinary Committee hearing into a registered veterinary nurse (RVN) was held in January (see page 21). Following this case, there has been some confusion amongst the veterinary team about the difference between the List and the non-statutory Register, and over what an RVN removed from the Register can do.

The List principally relates to the delegation of 'Schedule 3 tasks' (ie the giving of medical treatment, and minor surgery that does not enter the body cavity) to a person who is properly qualified and listed with the RCVS.

The Register is in effect a subset of the List. Nurses on the Register additionally agree to be accountable for their professional practice, abide by the *Code of Professional Conduct* and keep their skills and knowledge up to date, by means of continuing professional development.

This means that if a nurse is removed from the Register for serious professional misconduct, they remain on the statutory List and are thus legally allowed to have Schedule 3 tasks delegated to

them. However, the new *Code of Professional Conduct* for vets states that "veterinary surgeons must ensure that tasks are delegated only to those who have the appropriate competence and registration".

The supporting guidance (section 18.8) says that:

"Veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses when supervising veterinary nurses undertaking Schedule 3 procedures, should confirm that their names are currently on the List of Veterinary Nurses (which incorporates the Register of Veterinary Nurses) maintained by the RCVS and **have not been removed from the Register of Veterinary Nurses by direction of the RVN Disciplinary Committee.**"

Anyone can use the 'Check the Registers' search tool on our website to find out if a VN who is on the List has been removed from the Register for serious professional misconduct. They will be categorised as 'DC removal - listed veterinary nurse'; they will also be identified in the hard copy of the List/Register.

We are seeking new legislation to phase out the List and give the Register a statutory footing; this will resolve the fact that veterinary nurses cannot at present be removed from the List for serious professional misconduct. We also hope that the statutory Register and accompanying legislation will protect the title 'veterinary nurse'.



Removal of an RVN from the Register for non-payment of fees is entirely separate from the disciplinary system.

If removed for non-payment, an RVN is also removed from the List, but can reapply to join the Register at any time. Any RVN who has been de-registered for five years or more must undertake a 17-week period of Supervised Practice (PSP), during which time they refresh clinical skills and regain confidence, before returning to full registration. This restriction does not apply to Listed VNs, ie those who have not joined the Register, regardless of the duration of their break in listing.

What to expect when you're expecting

Registration and CPD advice

We have had a spate of questions recently from veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses about maternity leave. So we thought it might be useful to run through some common areas of confusion.

Veterinary surgeons

Registration

Vets working in the UK who are going on maternity leave or similarly extended periods away from practice can choose to declare themselves 'non-practising,' to come off the Register, or to remain on it as a UK-practising vet. Cost may be a factor in this decision-making, and which option works out cheapest depends on how long a vet stops practising for.

It costs nothing for a vet to change their registration from 'UK-practising' to 'non-practising', or to request removal from the Register. Depending how far through the year the request is made, some of the retention fee may also be credited to your account or refunded, as appropriate. For vets listed as 'non-practising,' the retention fee is currently £49, compared with £299 for 'UK-practising'.

To revert from 'non-practising' to 'UK-practising' requires completion of the appropriate form and, for changes between April and September, payment of an additional fee – currently £125. There is no additional charge for changing after 1 October.

To return to the Register after voluntary removal means paying a restoration fee (currently £75) plus a proportion of the annual retention fee.

However, continuing professional development (CPD) and 'keeping in touch days' also need

consideration, as vets registered as 'non-practising,' and those who are off the Register, cannot legally practise any veterinary surgery. Most indemnity insurance policies would also be invalidated by a vet practising when registered as 'non-practising' or not registered.

More information and forms to change registration can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/registration.

Continuing professional development

There are no CPD requirements for vets registered as non-practising, or those off the Register, but they will need to catch up once they change their registration back to 'practising', or return to the Register. CPD is calculated over a three-year period to give vets the flexibility to do this.

Vets can also undertake and include on their CPD record some activities carried out while off the Register or registered as 'non-practising,' provided that they do not involve clinical or practical activities. For example, attending webinars or lectures, or observing practice, is perfectly legal.

Keeping in touch days

'Keeping in touch days' are a Government initiative that allows mothers to return to work for a certain number of days without losing their maternity benefits. Although vets registered as non-practising, or who are not on the Register, cannot practise veterinary surgery during these days, they could, for example, attend practice meetings.

Veterinary nurses

For veterinary nurses (VNs) and registered veterinary nurses (RVNs) the choice is to come off or remain on the List or Register respectively. The current annual retention fee for VNs and RVNs is £61, and there are no fee refunds for those removing themselves from the List or Register. To restore to the List or Register means paying a £48 restoration fee, and the annual retention fee of £61.

However, VNs and RVNs cannot carry out any delegated veterinary treatments or surgical procedures if they are not on the List or Register; this includes clinical work undertaken during keeping in touch days or when undertaking CPD. (For information about Schedule 3 work, see Section 18 of the supporting guidance to the *Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses*.)

There are no CPD requirements for RVNs while they are off the Register. For those staying on the Register, CPD is calculated over a three-year period so there is flexibility for nurses to catch up once they return to work. Non-clinical CPD can be carried out during a break in registration, so a study day or webinar undertaken during maternity leave still counts.

VNs who are off the Register for more than five years need to undertake a Period of Supervised Practice (PSP) before re-joining. The PSP has a £73 registration fee and involves at least 17 weeks (565 hours) of mentoring and supervision from an experienced RVN or vet, usually within a training practice. For details, see www.rcvs.org.uk/psp/guidance.



Reporting Caesars

Kennel Club reminds vets to report caesarean sections

In January 2012, the Kennel Club (KC) amended its rules to make it a condition of registration, or continued registration, that an owner consents to the reporting to the KC of any caesarean section performed on KC-registered bitches in the same way as surgical procedures altering the natural conformation of a dog (announced in RCVS News, November 2010).

However, the KC reports that, in the 12 months since, it has received comparatively few reports of such procedures directly from veterinary surgeons. In 2012, 3,564 caesareans were reported by breeders, although only 3% of these were also reported by veterinary surgeons. In the same period, 328 surgical procedures

altering natural conformation were reported by breeders, with only 30 of these reports also coming from the profession.

The KC is concerned that the profession may remain largely unaware of the changes to its rules, and wishes to remind veterinary surgeons that an owner's KC registration automatically permits them to report, with no further consent required from the owner. (We would advise you to inform your clients that reports will be made, to avoid any misunderstanding.)

The KC says it uses the information received from veterinary surgeons to restrict the registration of litters from bitches that have already had caesarean operations and, in so doing, hopes to promote dog welfare.



Horse passport responsibilities

Defra reminder of food chain role



The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has asked us to remind you of your legal responsibilities under the Horse Passports Regulations 2009, specifically in relation to the key role that veterinary surgeons play in preventing horses that have been treated with certain medicines, such as phenylbutazone, entering the food chain.

Full details of these responsibilities are available in a Defra leaflet at www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/pdf/leaflet_horses.pdf but in summary they are:

- ensuring that the horse is accompanied by its passport and the passport matches the horse being treated;
- checking the food chain status of the animal;
- when prescribing certain medicines, signing the animal out of the food chain by completing and signing part II of section IX of the passport, and invalidating Part III of section IX;
- entering in part III of section IX details of the medicines administered; and,
- informing the keeper of any withdrawal periods.

Defra also asked veterinary surgeons to remind their clients that it is an offence for keepers to administer certain medicines to other animals themselves.

A form is available from the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) website for you to use if the horse passport is not available, but emergency treatment is required (www.beva.org.uk/_uploads/documents/emergency-treatment-form-no-passport-2011.pdf).

Mark Bowen, Chair of BEVA's Health and Medicines Committee, comments: "The number of horses entering the human food chain from the UK has doubled since 2009 and is no longer an insignificant minority of horses. All vets should be checking horse passports and only dispensing sensible quantities of this drug, and its prodrug suxibuzone."

Defra also wished to remind the profession that failure to meet these responsibilities could result in a £5,000 fine, and that, if positive results are found, it is determined to ensure that those responsible will be called to account where follow-up investigations show that veterinary surgeons have not followed the rules.

Pet crematoria: visit recommended

Advice for those contracting with, or recommending, crematoria

The case in November 2012 of a pet crematorium owner convicted of fraud has highlighted the need for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses to check that services recommended to clients are properly licensed and adequate, and that they offer the service that they claim to do, for example, regarding individual cremations.

Although the College is not aware that such cases of fraud are widespread, the pet crematoria industry is regulated only as far as complying with trading standards legislation and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' regulations on the disposal of dead animals. The cremation of loved animals is a sensitive issue, and it would be sensible for a vet or VN to visit any crematoria they recommend to clients.

The College and the British Veterinary Association met in December 2012 with industry representatives who expressed concern about the issue of 'distress sales,' and we would like to remind readers of our existing guidance about fair trading requirements, fees, and communication and informed consent in the *Code of Professional Conduct* (sections 2.3 and 6.4, and supporting guidance sections 9.7, 11.1, 11.11, and 12.15) and the *Practice Standards Manual* (sections 9.15 and 9.16).

Although giving clients too much detail about the cremation process can be unnecessarily painful and distressing, clients do need information appropriate to making an informed decision, and should also feel free to make other arrangements for their animals.

When the circus comes to town

Defra publishes guidance for vets on circus wild animal welfare regulations

With new regulations to protect the welfare of wild animals in travelling circuses coming into force on 20 January, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has issued additional guidance for veterinary surgeons.

The Welfare of Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (England) Regulations 2012 are made under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and make it an offence to operate a travelling circus containing wild animals in England without a valid licence. 'Wild animals' are defined in similar terms to the Zoo Licensing Act, and details of their care must be planned for and recorded.

"No specific additional qualifications are required for the role of lead vet."

Defra states that veterinary surgeons have a key role to play in this, either as 'lead vet' for a circus under their care, or as an attending vet if a circus travelling through the practice area requests a

visit for their wild animals. It is particularly important that circuses are provided with documentary evidence of veterinary attendance and actions, as this will be checked at regular compliance inspections. Effective communication between the attending vet and the lead vet is essential to ensure continuity of care.

The RCVS Code of Professional Conduct requires all veterinary surgeons to keep within their own area of competence. No specific additional qualifications are required for the role of lead vet because the number and type of licensed animals involved in a travelling circus could range from a few individuals similar to familiar domesticated species, to multiple exotic species.

It is the individual veterinary surgeon's responsibility to ensure that their level of competence is appropriate after considering the stock held by the circus that approaches them, and to maintain this level of competence. Veterinary surgeons involved in this area of work should also bear in mind RCVS supporting guidance chapter 2 (Veterinary care), chapter 3 (24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief) and chapter 5 (Communication between professional colleagues) – see www.rcvs.org.uk/vetcode.

The Defra guidance can be found at www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/circuses.



Ethics under review

Practice-based research guidance

New guidance is available on ethical review for veterinary surgeons carrying out practice-based research.

The report was published by a Working Party led by the College and the British Veterinary Association (BVA), which comprised representatives and experts from a range of veterinary organisations and research establishments.

The report aims to assist vets who are carrying out practice-based research but who may not have access to the ethical review structure of a university or institute.

It explains the difference between clinical practice and clinical research, then focuses on clinical research that does not require Home Office authorisation under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) (authorisation includes mandatory ethical review).

The Working Party believes that "ethical review for all such [non-ASPA] research is advised".

The report recommends that would-be researchers develop relationships with veterinary institutes so as to be able to submit research proposals to their ethical review committees.

It also recommends that the RCVS considers establishing its own ethical review committee, and that the RCVS Recognised Veterinary Practice Committee be enlarged and better promoted to the profession.

"Practice-based research is to be encouraged, and is becoming increasingly common and sophisticated," says Professor the Lord Trees, who chaired the group. "However, it's not easy for those in practice to access ethical review support. We hope this report will enable practice-based research to be conducted to the best standards and to protect animals, the public and practitioners themselves."

The report can be downloaded from the RCVS website (www.rcvs.org.uk/publications).

N Ireland bans tail docking

Following the ban on tail docking of dogs in Northern Ireland, which came into effect on 1 January 2013, we have updated our supporting guidance to the *RCVS Code of Professional Conduct* (chapter 27, paras 27.49 – 27.52, www.rcvs.org.uk/miscellaneous).



Clare Tapsfield-Wright

Advisory Committee Chairman

Clare Tapsfield-Wright has practised in Yorkshire since 1978, when she qualified from the Glasgow School of Veterinary Medicine. She started out in mixed practice before moving to small animal work, and is now a partner at West Mount Vets Ltd.

Clare was elected to the RCVS Council in 2006, and became Chairman of Advisory Committee in 2010.

What does Advisory Committee do?

We provide advice and guidance on professional conduct, largely through the supporting guidance to the *Code*, to both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, in all walks of the professions. We meet three times a year and produce reports for RCVS Council to help decision-making about professional standards and related issues raised by, for example, the Preliminary Investigation Committee, VN Council and members of both professions and the public.

How does the Committee decide its focus?

Our work depends on current challenges, as well as the more routine reviewing of the *Codes of Professional Conduct*, and the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS). Items are brought to our attention as they arise and the supporting guidance for the *Code* is updated throughout the year.

What are your Committee's main priorities this year?

We will be involved in additional guidance about the disclosure of criminal convictions, likely to be introduced for 2014, and guidance for veterinary students on fitness to practise. We are also reviewing other guidance, following the introduction of the new *Codes*.

The supporting guidance for microchipping will also be reviewed in the light of Government plans for it to become compulsory. The Practice Standards Group will feed back to the Advisory Committee as the PSS is reviewed (see page 12).

The Office of Fair Trading has also listened to concerns about the usefulness of requiring practices to display a price list for the top ten medicines and we have negotiated their agreement to drop it for a period of time, while monitoring any feedback (see page 6).

As a practising vet, what makes guidance useful?

Every practising vet and student should make him or herself familiar with the guidance on the RCVS website that supports the *Code of Professional Conduct*. It is an invaluable resource that is very relevant to day-to-day work in a veterinary practice, and represents the distillation of years of accumulated knowledge. It gives advice on what is expected of a professional person in their dealings both with colleagues and the public, and is a real source of help on topics such as the rules of certification, referral to other vets and responsible use of antimicrobials.



Know your Code

Delegation decisions

Section 4.2 of the Code says "Veterinary surgeons must ensure that tasks are delegated only to those who have the appropriate competence and registration."

This is supported by guidance on the treatment of animals by unqualified persons, which considers the legal position with regard to delegation of veterinary treatment to non-veterinary surgeons, such as physiotherapists, chiropractors and osteopaths. This guidance provides that:

19.12 The Veterinary Surgery (Exemptions) Order 1962 allows for the treatment of animals by physiotherapy, provided that the animal has first been seen by a veterinary surgeon who has diagnosed the condition and decided that it should be treated by physiotherapy under his/her direction.

19.13 'Physiotherapy' is interpreted as including all kinds of manipulative therapy. It therefore includes osteopathy and chiropractic but would not, for example, include acupuncture or aromatherapy.

When delegating treatment, the level of experience and qualification of the individual ought to be carefully considered. Whether the individual is regulated is also a relevant consideration, particularly whether the regulation includes a system to hold the individual accountable for their professional practice.

Clients will quite rightly assume that any recommendation or delegation made by their veterinary surgeon will have been carefully considered, to ensure that animal health and welfare is to the fore.

Code of Professional
Conduct for
Veterinary Surgeons

Badges of honour

New, free lapel badges for accredited practices

To help accredited practices promote their accreditation status to their clients, we have produced some smart enamel lapel badges for practice staff to wear, and will be enclosing some free samples with the next fee notice in the spring.

We hope that the badges will be worn with justifiable pride by all members of the practice team in view of the substantial achievement of becoming an



RCVS-accredited practice, and might become a talking point with clients, too, providing them with further reassurance of the standards they can expect to see at that practice.

We will send five free badges to every accredited principal practice (that's around 7,500 badges!), together with details of how more can be ordered if required (see www.rcvs.org.uk/psspromotion).

Badges will cost no more than a pound each (to cover production, postage and administration costs), with a quantity discount available for larger orders.

Mandatory Core for all?

Practice Standards Group reviews Concept Note responses

In the future, all practices may be inspected to Core Standards, and a modular approach may allow those at General Practice and Hospital level to progress their accreditation, under new proposals being considered by the Practice Standards Group (PSG).

At its meeting on 28 January, the PSG, which includes representatives from all of the key veterinary and veterinary nursing organisations, considered the responses submitted to the recent Concept Note on the future of the Scheme (see *RCVS News* November 2012) and discussed the way forward.

Around 50 responses were received, and the PSG is grateful to those who took the time and trouble to respond.

There was preliminary support from the PSG for the proposition that Core Standards ultimately become part of the regulatory framework of the RCVS, as a proactive regulator.

There was also support for a change in the format of the Scheme to provide more flexibility, to emphasise standards of care and to provide a pathway for practices to improve.

It was considered that this would best be achieved through a graded system, where each category (General Practice or Hospital) would consist of mandatory requirements plus additional optional standards, and the accreditation achieved (which may take the form of gold, silver or bronze) would depend on the percentage of additional requirements met.

The PSG felt that this would assist in changing the perception that Hospital status was the only progression possible for a General Practice. It was also considered that where practices focus on limited services there should be a mechanism to accredit what is being done, though a similar system of grading.

The PSG also supported the introduction of a discussion forum for practices in the Scheme to share ideas and problems.

Members of the PSG will develop these proposals and a paper will be put to the Advisory Committee in due course.

Final proposals will be put out for consultation to the profession and the public before being adopted.

Putting faces to names

PSG and inspector biogs online

Have you ever wanted to know a little bit more about the people who run the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS), or even the PSS inspectors who come to scrutinise your practice from top to toe? Well, now you can.

We have recently published photos and biographies of all PSS inspectors and all members of the Practice Standards Group (PSG) – the

steering committee that runs the Scheme, comprising representatives of the main UK veterinary organisations. You can read these at www.rcvs.org.uk/pss.

Perhaps first on your list should be Lorna Francis (pictured), who was recently approved as Chief Inspector by the PSG, having first been nominated by her peers on the PSS inspectorate. Congratulations Lorna!



Get the best from EMS

Helping students and practices benefit from EMS placements

Veterinary practices across the country are generous with their time and willingness to host veterinary students on extra-mural studies (EMS) placements that form an essential element of their education. It is on these placements that veterinary students consolidate what they learn at university, gaining vital experience of animal handling and clinical skills in a 'real world' environment.

The RCVS and universities offer guidance for veterinary practices, recognising that those taking part do so as volunteers. Students are expected to prepare ahead and to check that the practice is aware of the guidance (it can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/ems). Students are also encouraged to take out British Veterinary Association student membership, which provides free personal accident and personal liability cover; professional liability should be covered by practices' professional liability insurance. It's also important for practices to identify a primary contact so that the student knows who they need to liaise with about the placement both beforehand, and while they are there.

Clear objectives

Students should arrive at their placement with a set of objectives, and it is helpful if these can be discussed with the practice at the start, so any changes can be discussed if they are not realistic. The Day One Competences can be used as a reference point if alternatives are needed. During EMS, students can legally examine animals under the direction of a veterinary surgeon, administer treatment under the supervision of a vet, and perform surgical operations only under the direct and continuous supervision of a veterinary surgeon – ie a vet who is present and giving the student their undivided personal attention.

However, all of these activities can only be done if the veterinary surgeon is confident that the student is capable of a particular task, which will depend both on the individual and on what stage they are at in their course. A summary of the syllabus for each university is available from www.rcvs.org.uk/ems, but it's important to note that each student will be at a different stage in their learning, depending on the time of the placement, and which rotations they have already completed at university.

EMS is categorised as either pre-clinical (sometimes called 'animal husbandry') or clinical, and there are slightly different objectives appropriate to each type. Pre-clinical EMS is usually undertaken in the early years of the veterinary course and is primarily designed to expand the student's experience of working with healthy animals; clinical EMS usually starts from the end of the third year onwards. However, the structure of some courses is changing, and traditional pre-clinical subjects are increasingly being integrated

with clinical studies, which makes it all the more important to check where a student is up to on their course, what their previous experience has been, and what they are expecting to get out of the placement.

Clinical phase

During the clinical phase, we recommend that students undertake around six weeks of preparatory or introductory EMS, which they are encouraged to split between different placements. At this point, their practical skills may be limited, so it is an opportunity for them to see how different types of practice operate and be introduced, for example, to record-keeping, communication across the veterinary team, stock-keeping and basic equipment preparation. Some students may be able to help with clinical cases, but practices need to be alert to the limits of their practical skills and clinical competence. Later this year, we will be introducing the Student Experience Log, which will be part of the RCVS Professional Development Record (see page 15). This is intended to be used as a running record of practical and clinical experience gained not only on EMS but also on university clinical rotations. The Student Experience Log will help students to set their learning objectives and enable university tutors to check how the student's experience is building up and what gaps need to be filled, which in turn will help to ensure that EMS placements can focus on those areas where further practice is needed.

"We encourage students to select a 'base practice' that they can get to know and return to at several points during EMS."

Flexibility

Our guidelines on EMS are very flexible and do not specify how many weeks need to be spent on each species or in different types of practice. This is left to the university to determine, taking account of the structure of the course, together with the student's own learning needs and career objectives. After their preparatory EMS, we encourage students to select a 'base practice' that they can get to know and return to at several points during EMS, rather than doing multiple short-term placements, which can be unsatisfying for both parties. Returning to a base practice over a couple of years helps the practice to become familiar with the student's developing level of competence, as well as helping the student to become familiar with the way that practice works. Over time, the student can then become more of 'a useful pair of hands' in the practice. The onus is on the student to make the most of the placements they undertake and, given the flexibility in the guidelines, there is little excuse for a student not



taking an interest in any particular placement – a criticism that we sometimes hear from practices, and communicate to students.

Raising concerns

Most placements are unproblematic, but, if problems do occur, the practice should discuss these as soon as possible with the student. If this does not help, they can contact the student's EMS co-ordinator. In particular, if there are serious concerns about a student, then the university's EMS co-ordinator needs to know quickly. Practices also need to fill in the student feedback form from the university – this is important to help guide the student's future development.

Practices that take on students say that they like having them, and that they bring new ideas and enthusiasm with them. Vets also often tell us that, as they themselves benefited from EMS, they want to help the next generation.

Many students use our Find a Vet online search tool (www.findavet.org.uk) to look for practices willing to offer EMS placements, but it's possible that we don't have all such practices flagged up. If your practice offers EMS placements, or is willing to do so, please check that your entry is up to date. If you need to make any changes, please let our Registration team know on membership@rcvs.org.uk, or 020 7202 0707.

Diploma exam dates

The Diploma written examinations will be held at the RCVS, Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF, on **Tuesday 9 July 2013**.

Dates for clinical oral and practical examinations will be published and notified separately.

Specialist status

Specialist annual fees are due on 1 July 2013.

Specialists who first listed in 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009 are required to reapply by **Friday 16 August 2013**.

The deadline for new applications is **Friday 6 September 2013**.

Fellowship

The deadline for currently registered Fellowship candidates to submit their reports to the Committee is **Thursday 1 August 2013**.

The RCVS Diploma of Fellowship is the College's oldest and most prestigious award. It is awarded following examination of a thesis, or following examination of a collection of the candidate's work to assess their 'meritorious contributions to learning' over a period of 15 years.

The subject of a thesis may cover any topic provided it relates to an 'aspect of the art or science of veterinary medicine, whether clinical, experimental or otherwise, or may relate to the general development of the veterinary profession'. The work must demonstrate originality and significantly advance knowledge of the subject.

Further information about application procedures may be found on the RCVS website at www.rcvs.org.uk/fellowship – or by contacting Janet Etheridge in the Education Department – j.etheridge@rcvs.org.uk.

The project presents...

Vector project conference date

In August, the Vector (Veterinary European Clinical Training and Assessment Record) project team will be holding a final one-day open conference in Finland to launch the new web-based veterinary nurse student experience log and a training package for clinical mentors.

Although the system has been developed to support VN programmes, it is very flexible and would work well with any education programme that involves gaining vital skills in a work environment. So, if you offer either veterinary or veterinary nursing education programmes, this conference could be of interest.

"There will be plenty of opportunity to explore the many issues surrounding clinic-based placements, ensuring that vet and VN students get the best out of this very valuable experience," says Vector Project Leader and RCVS Head of Veterinary Nursing, Libby Earle.

"We'll be explaining our development process and the benefits the pilot experience log has already brought to the project schools. And there will be opportunity to try out the system and consider how it may benefit your college or university."

The conference is free to attend, and will be held in Helsinki on Thursday 29 August. If you are interested, please contact the project team for more information, on info@vector.org or 020 7202 0788.



Ten years since Day One

Day One Competences review



A little over ten years ago we confirmed the 'Day One Competences,' which define the level to be expected of new veterinary graduates at the point they first qualify.

These competences have since been adopted across Europe, through the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), and in countries such as Australia.

To make sure these competences remain valid, we are in the process of reviewing them. This review will seek to ensure they reflect current and likely future expectations, and is being undertaken by a Working Party chaired by Council Member David Catlow (pictured). The Working Party will report to the Education Policy and Specialisation Committee, and includes representatives from the veterinary schools and the British Veterinary Association (BVA), and a recent veterinary graduate.

During April and May 2013, views will be sought from members of the veterinary profession via an online questionnaire. Please look out for your chance to get involved, on our website and in the veterinary press.

New VN publication

Focus on quality assurance of qualifications

In January, we launched a new title for those involved with veterinary nurse education and training.

The newsletter – *VN Education* – replaces *VN Standard*, the publication from RCVS Awards, our awarding body. It focuses on the regulatory aspects of all veterinary nurse education, including both vocational and undergraduate training.

"The new title marks a change in focus, as we wind down the RCVS awarding body and withdraw from awarding vocational qualifications," explains Libby Earle, RCVS Head of Veterinary Nursing.

"Our core focus is now the quality assurance of all those qualifications leading to registration with the RCVS, and *VN Education* aims to keep people up to date on regulatory and quality assurance issues."

VN Education will be issued three times a year to those involved in VN education. The first issue was distributed in January and can be downloaded from www.rcvs.org.uk/publications.



Is your CPD record online yet?

Join the thousands using our online PDR

It's almost a year since we introduced the Professional Development Record (PDR) for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, and over 2,000 vets and almost 1,300 VNs have signed up for the online continuing professional development (CPD) record module.

We've tried to make the PDR as useful and user-friendly as possible – and have been pleased by the very positive feedback from these early users.

Linzi Nuttall RVN visited the RCVS stand at the joint Veterinary Practice Management Association/Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons Congress in January. "My experience of using the PDR has been a very successful one and, as I have been audited twice by the RCVS in the last six years, I was delighted and relieved when the RCVS VN Department directed me to an easy method of electronically recording my CPD activities," said Linzi.

"I appreciate the importance of CPD for RVNs, as professionals, and knew I had completed the required number of hours, but could never find the cards that I had recorded this on. Panic and chaos would ensue as I attempted to remember which courses I had attended and when. Now I input the information on the PDR immediately following CPD activities thus eliminating the search to find that 'safe place' where I'd put my CPD Record Card," she adds.

New PDP

New veterinary graduates working in practice must also undertake the Professional Development Phase (PDP) – approximately a year of structured practice experience that counts as their CPD, and helps their transition from a newly-graduated 'Day One' competent vet into one with 'Year One' competences. The PDP recording system has now been brought into the PDR and, so far, 597 of the 819 vets from the 'Class of 2012' have signed up.

The PDP can be completed for small animal, farm or equine practice, or a combination, with each area covering the skills and procedures relevant to different types of practice. Overseas-qualified vets registering in the UK are encouraged to use the PDP to ease their transition into practice here. Any vet who has qualified outside the UK and who has less than a year's clinical experience before they register as a member of the RCVS, must sign up for the PDP once they start work in clinical practice.

Student vets and VNs have not been forgotten either: the Nursing Progress Log was developed back in 2010 to record practical training, experience and assessment for VN students; and, a Student Experience Log for vet students is expected to be added to the vet PDR later this year. This will let vet students record experience gained on clinical rotations and extra-mural studies placements and help university tutors keep track of what a student has done.

For more information, or to sign up to the PDR or PDP, see www.rcvs.org.uk/vetpdr (for vets) or www.rcvs.org.uk/vnpdr (for VNs).



Getting tougher on CPD

New measures in place

Last year, only 67% of UK-practising vets and 70% of their overseas-practising counterparts confirmed they had met their continuing professional development (CPD) targets. For RVNs, the figure was 77%.

New measures are being brought in to improve this rate, in the interests of protecting animal health and welfare.

Under the *Codes of Professional Conduct* all practising vets and all registered veterinary nurses (RVNs) must confirm annually that they have complied with RCVS requirements for CPD.

Vets and RVNs must complete 105 hours and 45 hours respectively over a rolling three-year period, to ensure that they have maintained and developed knowledge, skills and competence relevant to their professional practice.

These requirements apply to everyone registered as a practising vet or RVN, whether working full or part time, in academia, clinical practice or industry.

We will now start to monitor CPD more closely, and will be more proactive with vets and RVNs who have not confirmed their CPD.

As the CPD requirement is set over three years, and the *Codes* only came into effect in 2012, this will be done in stages to give people time to catch up. Initially, we will write to those who have not confirmed their CPD to remind them of the requirements and offer guidance.

People will be given time to prepare a CPD development plan, which can be recorded in our online Professional Development Record (PDR). These individuals may later be asked to give the RCVS access to their full online PDR records.

From 2015 onwards, those who have no reasonable explanation for not fulfilling CPD requirements may be referred to the Preliminary Investigation Committee.

"There is a lot of flexibility built into the requirements for CPD," says Freda Andrews, Head of Education. "The online CPD record includes 22 different types of activity that can count towards your hours, and you don't necessarily have to attend expensive external courses in order to comply. I'd strongly advise anyone who thinks they may be falling short in their hours to look at the guidance again."

As well as ideas for CPD activities, the PDR provides an area to plan future development, which those behind with their hours can use to show they are rectifying any deficiencies. There is a calendar to keep track of dates for future events and activities. The PDR also provides a convenient place to keep together electronic documents and files related to CPD, such as a reading diary, case reports and other notes. (For more information see www.rcvs.org.uk/vetpdr or www.rcvs.org.uk/vnpdr.)

Visitations: home and away

A busy visitation schedule ensures graduate competence

A visitation team will be heading to the Glasgow School of Veterinary Medicine at the end of April.

This will be the first joint international visitation in the UK, combining accreditation from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), RCVS, the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) and the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), with an observer also attending from the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC).

The visit will be co-chaired by RCVS Council member Lynne Hill and Dr Frederik Derkson from Michigan State University.

Away matches

Meanwhile, in March, Council members Professor Jo Price and Dr Barry Johnson will join an AVBC to visit the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Veterinary Science.

May will see Council member Jill Nute, and Professor John Innes, heading to Pretoria as part of a SAVC visitation.

Finally, in May, Lynne Hill will join an AVBC visitation to a new veterinary school in Adelaide.

At its March 7 meeting, Council agreed to continue to recognise the BVSc veterinary science degree of the University of Sydney.

Untangle yourself at BSAVA Congress

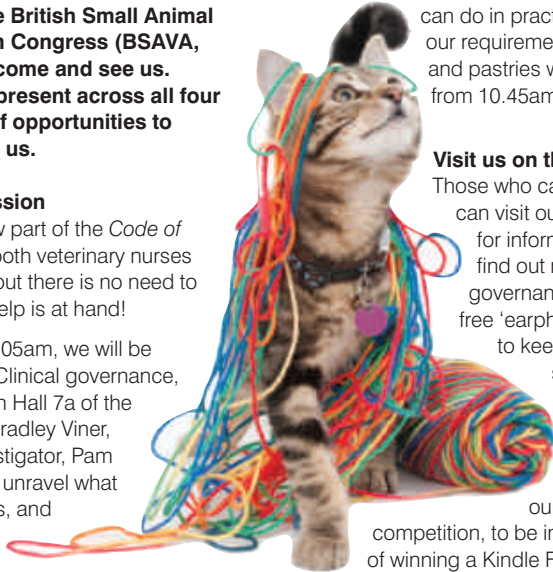
Our theme this year is unravelling clinical governance

If you're heading to the British Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress (BSAVA, Birmingham, 4-7 April) come and see us. The RCVS team will be present across all four days, offering a range of opportunities to discuss any issues with us.

Clinical governance session

Clinical governance is now part of the *Code of Professional Conduct* for both veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons, but there is no need to get in a tangle about it – help is at hand!

On Saturday 6 April, at 11.05am, we will be running a session called 'Clinical governance, how is it relevant to me?' in Hall 7a of the ICC. RCVS Treasurer, Dr Bradley Viner, and RCVS Veterinary Investigator, Pam Mosedale, will help you to unravel what clinical governance means, and give some practical examples of what you



can do in practice to meet our requirement. Coffee and pastries will be available from 10.45am.

Visit us on the stand

Those who can't make the talk can visit our stand (NIA, 106) for information and advice, find out more about clinical governance and collect a free 'earphone un-tangler' to keep the relevant supporting guidance URL close at hand. You can also have a go at our 'untangle it' competition, to be in with a chance of winning a Kindle Fire.

In addition, why not watch a demo of our new online continuing professional development (CPD) recording system, the Professional Development Record, so that you can start recording your BSAVA CPD right away.

Meet a PSS inspector

If you're thinking of joining the Practice Standards Scheme, need help with an upcoming inspection or want to ensure you're meeting the new *Code of Professional Conduct* requirement and practising to Core Standards, we are offering free one-to-one, 45-minute appointments with a PSS Inspector at BSAVA. These will follow the successful format that we run as part of our Regional Question Times.

Places are limited, on a first-come, first-served basis, and will be available at various times and dates across Congress. For further information, or to book a session, please contact Fiona Harcourt on f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk.

Second stakeholder open day

Engaging with owner groups

Following the success of our first stakeholder open day last May, we aim to hold a second event on 13 June.

Last year's event saw a broad mix of delegates from the animal-owning world, including journalists and representatives from animal charities, other regulators and animal-owner organisations, gather at the College for a 'myth-busting' day that explored the real role of the College and how we operate.

Delegates also had the opportunity to role-play being members of the Disciplinary Committee, and find out how tough such decision-making can be.

The event was well received, with comments such as:

- It was a massive step in the right direction... further days can only serve to improve the relationship the RCVS has with other pet service providers and break down misconceptions that may have built up over time.
- Everyone was very friendly, helpful and approachable. A far cry from what I thought would be the case!
- Well organised and good to see the RCVS being open and engaging with stakeholders.

This year's session will update delegates on our recent activities and what they mean for the public, such as the legislative reform order and the push for statutory recognition of the title 'veterinary nurse'.

It will also give us the opportunity to canvas proposals for change that will come out of the First-Rate Regulator project, to see how well these are perceived to meet the needs of the public and animal owners.

Support for overseas registrants

New course dates announced

On 18-19 June, we are teaming up with the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and the Veterinary Defence Society (VDS) to offer another two-day continuing professional development course specifically for overseas graduates practising, or considering practising, in the UK.

This follows the first such event, in November 2012, which was well received.

The concept was born out of the recognition that overseas graduates need additional support to get to grips with working in a country where there may be different professional practices, legal frameworks and cultural norms. Communications issues are also tackled, in a popular role-playing format.

The first of the two days will cover:

- An overview of the UK veterinary profession
- What it means to be a professional, developing skills and maintaining professional standards
- Identifying the right job and making it yours
- The support available when problems occur, and tips on avoiding pitfalls in practice
- Tips from an overseas vet who has succeeded

The second day is a masterclass in communications, using role-playing, led by the VDS.

Numbers for the event, which will be held at the BVA in London, are capped at 20, making it a personal and interactive experience.

For more information, and to register, please visit www.bva.co.uk. A further event will be held on 27-28 November 2013.

Regent's Park return

RCVS Day – diary date

RCVS Day 2013 – our Annual General Meeting and Presentation of Awards – will be returning to the Royal College of Physicians, Regent's Park, on Friday 5 July.

All veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses are welcome to attend, and the presentation of awards will include Honorary Fellowships and Associateships, and vet and VN Diplomas. RCVS President Jacqui Molyneux will give a review of her year, welcome new members to Council and VN Council, and formally introduce the new President for 2013-2014.

The day starts at 10am, followed by a talk from our guest speaker, Andy Stringer, Director of Veterinary Programmes at international animal charity, SPANA.

Lunch will be served at 1pm. Further details will be in our June issue of *RCVS News* and our special publication *RCVS Day*, and tickets can be reserved by contacting Fiona Harcourt on f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk.



Durham-bound

President to host meeting with members on home ground

Durham will be the location of our next Regional Question Time, on Wednesday 15 May, at Bowburn Hall. The meeting is free to attend, and could count for up to three hours' continuing professional development.

Local vets and veterinary nurses will receive personal invitations to the evening meeting, but all those working in the veterinary profession are welcome to attend and put their questions to members of the RCVS Officer team and Veterinary Nurses Council.

The evening begins at 6.30pm with a chance to relax and catch up with colleagues over a drink and a bite to eat. RCVS President, Jacqui Molyneux, who practises locally, near Consett, will then give a short overview of our latest developments, before taking questions from the

floor. The evening is expected to finish at approximately 10pm.

At a recent Question Time meeting in Oxford, subjects raised by guests included new vet schools, the oversupply of vets/undersupply of VNs, microchipping and the role of the vet, horse passports and certification, proposed changes to the Practice Standards Scheme and non-stunned slaughter.

"We will be running a free Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) 'surgery', offering private appointments with a PSS Inspector."

Also in Durham, we will be running a free Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) 'surgery', offering private appointments with a PSS Inspector. If you're thinking of joining the Scheme, need help with an upcoming inspection or want to ensure you're meeting the new *Code of Professional Conduct* requirement and practising to Core Standards, book your place now.

Free 45-minute sessions are available between 12 noon and 5pm on Wednesday 15 May (places are limited, and on a first-come, first-served basis).

For further details, or to book a place at Question Time or a PSS surgery, please contact Fiona Harcourt on f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk or 020 7202 0773.



London Pet Show appearance

Meeting pet owners, as a proactive regulator

This year, for the first time, we will have a stand at the London Pet Show (Earls Court Two, 11-12 May).

Although we regulate the profession in the public interest, contact with individual animal owners can be difficult to achieve, due to the sheer number of them, and the fact that, in the main, the public do not think about regulation unless there is an issue.

However, the College has a role to play in offering proactive advice to animal owners, which may avoid a problem arising in the future. For example, around 24-hour

emergency cover, and advising owners to ensure they are registered with a practice and understand its 24/7 provisions ahead of an emergency.

We are also keen to promote the Practice Standards Scheme, and online tools such as 'Check the Registers' and 'Find a Vet'.

Based on calls and emails we receive from the public, typical topics we also may be called to advise on will include why veterinary surgeons request consultations for certain repeat prescriptions, the jurisdiction of the College (ie we cannot consider fees) and the role of the veterinary nurse.

We also hope there may be some budding vets and veterinary nurses present, who can benefit from our careers materials.

This is a first step for us in reaching out to the public via an event like this, and is an important part of our aim of being an approachable, proactive regulator.

Meanwhile, our stand is sandwiched between 'small furies' and 'reptiles' so we hope we don't get caught up in the middle of a snack.

For more information about the event, visit: www.londonpetshow.co.uk.



Congress competition winners

Rebecca Lindon RVN from Hertfordshire, was the lucky winner of our competition at the London Vet Show 2012 (15-16 November at Olympia).

Rebecca visited our stand and correctly answered three questions about record-makers, and breakers – linking to our new online CPD record system – to win a £50 iTunes voucher.

Rebecca commented: "I found the show really informative and exciting. Everyone at the RCVS stand was very helpful and friendly and it was great to learn about the online CPD record and how to fill it in, making it easier to keep track of my CPD."

Over 200 veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and other practice staff entered the competition, the answers for which are as follows:

1. Record-breaking racehorse Kauto Star retired in October. Out of 41 races, he won 23.
2. Veterinary surgeons and registered veterinary nurses are expected to complete and record an average of 35 hours and 15 hours of continuing professional development per year, respectively.
3. A Norfolk Terrier from Dover was recently crowned 'Westminster Dog of the Year'. The dog's name was Star.

VPMA/SPVS winner

Congratulations also to Ben Everett, Regional Manager (NW Region) at Goddard Veterinary Group, who was the lucky winner of a luxury food hamper, having entered the exhibition delegate competition at the Veterinary Business and Management Congress, 24-26 January 2013, at Heythrop Park, near Oxford.

Ben correctly answered 'The Professional Development Record' to the question 'What is the RCVS's new, free online CPD recording system called?'.

The RCVS stand at the event was busy, with questions on a range of topics, many of which we have also answered in this issue of *RCVS News*, in case you didn't make the event.

For example, registration categories when on maternity leave (see page 9), what happens when a VN is removed from the Register (see page 8) and the future of the Practice Standards Scheme (see page 12).

The team also gave out free 'Make your CPD count' calculators, printed with the URL of our online Professional Development Record (www.rcvs-pdr.org.uk or www.vnpdr.org.uk), which is designed to support veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses in planning and recording their continuing professional development.



Report to Council March 2013

PI Committee Chairman Jill Nute

Since the last Report to Council there have been three Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) meetings, in November, December and January, during which 32 new complaints have been considered.

Of these, two were closed; 13 were closed with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon (including two with strong advice); three were held open; six referred to the veterinary investigators for visits and interviews (including one potential health case); four were adjourned pending the outcome of criminal proceedings; and, four cases were referred to solicitors for formal statements to be taken. In addition, the PIC is investigating 41 ongoing complaints.

Health Protocol and Performance Protocol

Three new complaints are being investigated under the RCVS Health Protocol, bringing to 16 the total number of cases considered under the Protocol since its introduction, 12 of which are ongoing. The PIC is currently investigating one case under the RCVS Performance Protocol, which includes the consideration of undertakings.

Referrals to the Disciplinary Committee

Three complaints have been newly referred to the Disciplinary Committee (DC), bringing to nine the total number of cases currently listed or waiting to be listed for DC hearings.

Veterinary Investigators

Since the last report, the four Veterinary Investigators and the Senior Case Manager have carried out 13 announced, four unannounced and seven health visits. In addition, they are assisting four police forces with investigations relating to allegations of fraud by misrepresentation, the treatment of animals by unqualified persons and practising veterinary surgery when unregistered. They are also liaising with Defra investigators and Trading Standards with two ongoing investigations.

Cases reported to Council

One of the cases reported to Council highlights the positive result of a case 'held open' and the ongoing cooperation between the respondent veterinary surgeon and the PIC. The original complaint related to post-operative complications following a neutering procedure, and involved a visit to both the veterinary surgeon and the complainant by a Veterinary Investigator and the Senior Case Manager. Whilst the original complaint was closed with advice to the veterinary surgeon, the visit identified numerous deficiencies where the practice was failing to comply with the equivalent of the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme Core Standards, as required under the *RCVS Code of Professional Conduct*.

The PIC raised an RCVS complaint against the veterinary surgeon in respect of these deficiencies. The veterinary surgeon was informed of the faults identified for immediate attention and the case was held open to allow these to be rectified. A further visit revealed that the veterinary surgeon had worked very hard to rectify the deficiencies and comply with advice, including a new computerised clinical records system and addressing the security of controlled drugs and firearms. The PIC was very pleased to learn of the implemented improvements, which it wished to see continue, so requested a further unannounced visit to monitor progress.

Other cases reported to Council include communicating the cost of out-of-hours cover and breaching client confidentiality.

General advice on continuity of care

Due to a number of complaints regarding animals being transported between practices, or from the primary practice to an out-of-hour service provider, the profession is reminded of RCVS guidance on continuity of care in the *Code of Professional Conduct* at www.rcvs.org.uk/vetcare, paragraphs 2.6 to 2.12.

The full report is available at www.rcvs.org.uk/pic

Mr Joseph Holmes

Inquiry concerning: application for restoration to the Register

DC decision: application refused

Registration status: name removed from Register on 5 March 2012

On 22 February 2013, the Disciplinary Committee (DC) refused an application for restoration to the RCVS Register by Joseph Holmes, who was struck off in 2011 for serious professional misconduct associated with surgery he had carried out on a dog and two cats.

At a two-week DC hearing that concluded on 14 January 2011, two separate complaints had been considered against Mr Holmes, formerly of Waltham Veterinary Clinic, Grimsby. These involved a total of 31 charges, of which 28 were found to amount to serious professional misconduct.

"Mr Holmes showed deficiencies in his knowledge in respect of analgesia and surgical skills."

Mr Holmes was found to have advised on and undertaken surgical procedures without sufficient clinical grounds or consideration of alternative treatment options; failed to obtain the informed consent of his clients; undertaken procedures outside his area of competence; failed to refer or discuss the option of referral to a specialist; and, failed to provide his patients with adequate pain relief.

The then-DC directed Mr Holmes' name be removed from the Register, whereupon he appealed to the Privy Council, who dismissed his appeal on 22 December 2011, concluding that removal from the Register "was the only disposal which could properly reflect the primary need to

Dr Gary Samuel

Inquiry concerning: fitness to practise following convictions for threatening behaviour, theft and assault

DC decision: remove name from Register

Registration status: has until 22 March 2013 to appeal decision, otherwise name to be removed from Register on 23 March 2013

On 19 February 2013, the Disciplinary Committee (DC) directed that a Leeds-based veterinary surgeon, whose convictions for threatening behaviour, theft and assault made him unfit to practise, should be removed from the Register.

At the outset of the two-day hearing, Dr Gary Samuel admitted his convictions. These related

Mr John Wilson

Inquiry concerning: carrying out tuberculin testing in cattle not strictly in accordance with Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratory Agency standard operating procedures.

DC decision: reprimand

Registration status: name remains on Register

On 27 February 2013, the Disciplinary Committee (DC) reprimanded a veterinary surgeon for submitting a certificate of Clinical Inspection for Veterinary Inspectors ('TB52') for tuberculin tests he had undertaken on cattle, despite knowing that he had not fully complied with the standard operating procedures (SOP) for these tests.

At the outset of the three-day hearing, John Wilson admitted that, when acting as an Official Veterinarian (OV) he had not carried out tuberculin tests on cattle at a Wiltshire farm on 19 May 2011 strictly in accordance with the SOP required by the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA), an executive agency of Defra.

The admitted shortcomings were that on 19 May, the second day of testing, Mr Wilson had failed to confirm the identity of all the animals; failed to inspect the animals digitally; and, had not measured the fold of skin at the injection site of all the animals. The College argued that this was contrary to the directions of the AHVLA and, in subsequently signing the TB52 certificate, he was either dishonest or should have known that the certification was incorrect.

Mr Wilson admitted that he ought to have known the certification was incorrect but denied dishonesty, because he believed that he had conducted the test in a satisfactory manner and had correctly identified all the reactors in the herd.

Mr Wilson was a veterinary surgeon of over 40 years' experience and unblemished record, and

the DC found his account of events to be accurate and honest. He said the farm involved was unprepared and test arrangements were chaotic, with poor handling facilities, and he would have been concerned for the safety of the animals and their handlers if he had complied fully with the SOP. He had advised the farmer to delay the test but his advice was rejected.

The DC accepted that the testing had been carried out under exceptional and difficult circumstances. It noted that Mr Wilson had identified a reactor and taken appropriate actions, knowing that the outcome would be the quarantining of the whole herd. He had made no financial or other gain, other than the nominal fee charged for the work.

Although failing to comply with the SOP fell short of what was expected of a veterinary surgeon, because of these circumstances, and as he had acted in what he considered to be the best interests of the animals and personnel, these actions did not amount to serious professional misconduct.

The DC found that, even allowing for these difficulties and concerns, in signing the TB52 certificate a few days later, without any qualification, Mr Wilson ought to have known that it was incorrect, and his actions fell far short of the standards expected of the veterinary profession. They did not, however, find that he had been dishonest.

The DC stressed the importance attached to accurate and reliable certification, in maintaining the confidence of the public and the profession, and in ensuring animal welfare.

"The Committee is aware, as confirmed by AHVLA, that this is a single, isolated event and the first offence in some 40 years of the Respondent working as a LVI [local veterinary inspector] or OV," said Professor Lees, chairing and speaking on behalf of the committee, adding: "After considering all the mitigating factors... and, given the exceptional circumstances of this specific case, the decision of the Committee is to reprimand Mr Wilson."

serve both the interests of animal welfare and the reputation of the veterinary profession".

At the hearing in February, the DC considered several factors in relation to Mr Holmes' application for restoration. Although Mr Holmes gave assurances that he accepted the findings of the original hearing, this contrasted completely to the robust way in which he had challenged all of these at that hearing and the majority in his appeal.

Mr Holmes had been off the Register for only 12 months – just over the minimum period before an application for restoral was permitted.

In refusing the application, the DC made a number of findings. It considered the application to be premature, given the seriousness of the original findings, and was not satisfied that Mr Holmes truly appreciated their seriousness. It was unimpressed with the CPD he produced, considering that there was no evidence of clinical reasoning and decision making, and further noted that he had made only limited efforts to observe the functioning and working of a modern first-opinion practice employing several people. Finally, it also believed that Mr Holmes showed deficiencies in his knowledge in respect of analgesia and surgical skills, and was not satisfied that animal welfare would not be compromised in future, should he be returned to the Register.

The DC accepted at face value Mr Holmes' statement that he had not worked as a veterinary surgeon whilst de-registered, and accepted that removal from the Register had had a profound effect on Mr Holmes and his family, including the sale of his practice. It noted that Mr Holmes produced only the testimonials previously submitted to the Privy Council, which were of limited scope.

"Having regard to all the factors set out above, the Committee regrets that it is not satisfied that the Applicant is fit to be restored to the Register," said Professor Peter Lees, chairing and speaking on behalf of the Committee, adding: "Accordingly, the application is refused."

to his actions near his property in Cardiff on 10 July 2011, and were received at Cardiff Magistrates' Court on 22 November 2011. The DC was asked to decide if these convictions made Dr Samuel unfit to practise veterinary surgery, and to decide upon any sanction.

"Dr Samuel's conduct at the time was 'reckless', and he had since displayed very limited insight into his behaviour."

The facts of the offences, as set out at the magistrates' court by the prosecution, were that Dr Samuel took a camera and memory card from a neighbour who was taking photographs of construction works behind his property. In doing so, he grabbed the neighbour from behind,

twisting her arm, and later threatened her and her partner with a large piece of wood.

Although Dr Samuel wrote to the College saying he had pleaded guilty to the charges, he also denied some of the offences charged, suggesting that it was the neighbour who had been abusive towards him.

The DC allowed the possibility that Dr Samuel was provoked by the taking of photographs and may have been subjected to offensive abuse by the neighbour, and considered that he acted impulsively and lost control of his actions. However, the convictions were for serious offences: the assault resulted in injury to the victim; the threatening behaviour involved a risk of injury to the victim and her partner; and, the theft involved dishonesty.

Dr Samuel's conduct at the time was "reckless", and he had since displayed very limited insight into his behaviour.

"The Committee considers that the offences of which the Respondent was convicted, and to which he pleaded guilty, were serious, as is reflected in the suspended sentences, community service orders, fines, restrictions and penalties imposed by the court," said Professor Peter Lees, chairing and speaking on behalf of the Committee.

"The Committee accepts that this is not a case in which the welfare of animals has been put at risk, but takes the view that a serious sanction is required in order to uphold the reputation of the veterinary profession, and public confidence in it, and to uphold proper standards of conduct and behaviour on the part of its members."

The DC directed Dr Samuel's name should be removed from the Register.

Mr Przemyslaw Pawel Bogdanowicz

Inquiry concerning: dishonesty – not euthanasing a cat when agreed with owners to do so

DC decision: three-month suspension

Registration status: name suspended from Register between 14 January and 14 April 2013 inclusive

On 11 December 2012, the Disciplinary Committee (DC) suspended from the Register for three months a veterinary surgeon, formerly practising in Thrapston, for not carrying out or arranging the euthanasia of a cat, and for dishonesty in his subsequent account of events.

At the outset of the two-day hearing, Przemyslaw Bogdanowicz admitted all the parts of the charge, which related to events occurring around 24 June 2011, whilst he was working at Best Friends Veterinary Group, Thrapston. The DC was asked to decide if Mr Bogdanowicz's actions amounted to serious professional misconduct and to decide upon any sanction.

Mr Bogdanowicz had been requested by the owners of Jason, a 14-year-old Maine Coon

cat, to undertake euthanasia, rather than further treatment following abdominal surgery. Unknown to Jason's owners, Mr Bogdanowicz instead allowed a registered veterinary nurse to take the cat home, from where it subsequently escaped. Mr Bogdanowicz then colluded in an attempt made by the veterinary nurse to cover up what had occurred and only told the truth when discrepancies in the nurse's story were challenged by the practice.

"The Committee considers that it would perform a disservice to the community at large to direct a lengthy suspension of Mr Bogdanowicz's name from the Register."

In mitigation, the DC was satisfied Mr Bogdanowicz's decision not to put the cat to sleep was taken without full reflection on the consequences of the decision. It was also satisfied that there was no evidence of injury to Jason and no payment had been sought or made for putting the cat to sleep.

He had apologised to the cat's owners and was truthful to the College after the complaint was made.

Mr Bogdanowicz had an otherwise unblemished career and produced impressive testimonials from his clients as evidence of the high regard in which he was held. However, the DC also found that despite having had several occasions to tell his employers the truth, Mr Bogdanowicz had done so only after inconsistencies were revealed in the account of the veterinary nurse. By not asking for the cat to be brought back for a post-operative check, Mr Bogdanowicz had also abdicated his own professional responsibilities.

"The Committee considers that it is unlikely that Mr Bogdanowicz will put himself in a similar position again. Having heard his evidence, it has formed the view that he has learnt his lesson from these proceedings," said Ms Judith Webb, chairing and speaking on behalf of the DC, adding: "The Committee considers that it would perform a disservice to the community at large to direct a lengthy suspension of Mr Bogdanowicz's name from the Register."

The DC directed that Mr Bogdanowicz's name be suspended from the Register for three months.

Ms Marie-Louise Schlemm

Inquiry concerning: treatment of a dog and professional/personal relationship with dog's owner

DC decision: severe reprimand and warning as to future conduct

Registration status: name remains on Register

On 27 November 2012, the Disciplinary Committee (DC) severely reprimanded and warned as to her future conduct a Brighton-based veterinary surgeon who failed to maintain a proper boundary between her professional and personal relationships with a client.

The eight charges considered at the seven-day hearing involved Marie-Louise Schlemm's treatment of Ratszy, a 16-year-old Jack Russell with chronic renal failure, and her relationship with the dog's owner, Ms B, who suffered from mental illness, during May 2010.

At that time, Ms Schlemm was employed by Coastway Veterinary Group in Brighton to work for its out-of-hours veterinary services, Vetcall, to which Ratszy had been referred by the PDSA.

The College alleged that Ms Schlemm deliberately misled Ms B as to the condition and prognosis of Ratszy, removed the dog without Ms B's consent, and behaved unprofessionally and inappropriately in her dealings with Ms B.

Other allegations were that she had suggested Ms B tell the PDSA a fabricated story in order that she might see the dog again; made an offer that

Ms B and Ratszy could come and stay with her at her home; required Ms B to attend a supermarket car park at 12.30am to collect Ratszy; and, took money from Ms B other than for the purposes of legitimate veterinary treatment.

The DC found both Ms Schlemm and Ms B to be truthful and honest witnesses, and that Ms B's recollection was given to the best of her ability. However, where recollections differed, it relied on contemporaneously prepared clinical records to find that Ms Schlemm did not mislead Ms B to the effect that the dog was not dying.

"In light of the serious nature of its findings, the Committee does not consider it appropriate to take no further action."

Although recognising that Ms Schlemm's actions were misguided, the DC found that the dog was not taken without consent. Furthermore, the Committee said in making the offer that Ms B and Ratszy might come and stay with her, Ms Schlemm was wholly misguided and had blurred the distinction between personal and professional activities.

By this time, she was aware Ms B suffered from mental illness and so should have allowed the mental health services to take control of the situation. Similarly, she should not have required Ms B to meet in a car park to collect Ratszy,

behaviour the Committee described as bizarre and which had compromised Ratszy's welfare.

Although the DC gave Ms Schlemm the benefit of the doubt as to whether money taken was, in fact, to pay for alternative therapy for Ms B, she did not deal with the matter openly and it was a clear breach of trust to both Ms B and Vetcall.

In mitigation, the Committee was satisfied that Ms Schlemm now had a genuine insight into her lack of judgement in her relationship with Ms B, had reflected on the decision of the Committee and fully accepted the "utter stupidity" of her actions. She had also attended courses on teamwork and managing client relationships, and had established good working relationships in a new practice.

"While the Committee has accepted that Ms Schlemm was motivated by good intentions towards Ms B and Ratszy, she breached the trust of both of Ms B and Vetcall in the way in which she behaved [and] acted in a misguided way in dealing with a vulnerable client, who was suffering from mental illness," said Professor Peter Lees, chairing and speaking on behalf of the Committee.

"In light of the serious nature of its findings, the Committee does not consider it appropriate to take no further action," he said, adding: "The Committee has concluded that Ms Schlemm should be severely reprimanded for her conduct and given a warning as to her future conduct [and] reminds the profession of the importance of maintaining a proper boundary between the professional and personal relationships of client and veterinary surgeon."



Report to Council March 2013

RVN PI Committee Chairman Lynne Hill

Since the last Report to VN Council in October there have been two Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVNPIC) meetings, in November and January.

New and ongoing complaints

During this period, the RCVS received nine new complaints, four of which were closed and five remained under investigation. Six existing complaints were considered by Case Examiners, four of which were closed, one was referred to the RVNPIC and one required further investigations.

The RVNPIC considered three new complaints, closing two with advice to the RVNs involved and holding open one. Two ongoing complaints under investigation have been referred for an investigation visit and a health-related visit.

Bogus Registered Veterinary Nurses

The Senior Case Manager is currently liaising with the police regarding two alleged cases of fraudulent representation, ie purporting to be an RVN.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee:

Over the course of the last four RVNPIC meetings, the Committee referred two complaints to the Registered Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee (RVNDC). One case was heard by the RVNDC in January (see report below) and the other is to be listed for a hearing, potentially in April 2013.

General advice to the veterinary nursing profession

Approximately 19% of the total number of complaints received against RVNs relates to poor communications. The veterinary nursing profession must be mindful of the provisions set out in the *Code of Professional Conduct*:

'Veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses should seek to ensure that what both they and clients are saying is heard and understood on both sides, and encourage clients to take a full part in any discussion. Veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses should use language appropriate for the client and explain any clinical or technical terminology that may not be understood. Usually, the veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse will have to be able to speak the English language to an appropriate standard...'

The full report is available at www.rcvs.org.uk.

Ms Tracy Nicholl

Inquiry concerning: dishonesty and failure to maintain accurate case records

RVNDC decision: remove name from Register

Registration status: name transferred to VN List on 14 February 2013

On 11 January 2013, the Registered Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee (RVNDC) removed from the Register for dishonesty an Armagh-based registered veterinary nurse who had entered details of four injections into clinical records when she had no reasonable basis for doing so.

During the four-day hearing, the RVNDC considered two alternative charges against Tracy Nicholl (née Wilson) relating to her actions on 3 February 2011, whilst employed by O'Reilly & Fee veterinary surgery, Armagh.

Ms Nicholl was alleged by the College to have administered Dolethal, a pink liquid containing pentobarbitone and used for euthanasia, to a dog called Butch, without being directed to do so. It was also alleged that she had made dishonest entries into the dog's clinical records, or had administered drugs without a veterinary surgeon's prescription. Ms Nicholl was alleged to have administered the Dolethal via a fluid bag and giving set on the morning of 3 February, which she denied.

"It is in the wider public interest and to protect the reputation of the veterinary nursing profession that the Respondent's name should be removed from the Register."

The RVNDC found that, although a veterinary surgeon believed that she saw pink fluid in the line, uncertainties in the surrounding circumstances made the Committee unable to be sure the line contained pink liquid. Expert and forensic evidence revealed Butch had received Dolethal, but not the route of administration or the timing. Therefore the RVNDC could not be sure Ms Nicholl administered the Dolethal and dismissed this charge.

However, the RVNDC found that Ms Nicholl did enter on Butch's clinical records that four drugs had been injected, when she had neither administered them nor been told that the drugs had been administered. Although she denied making the entries in evidence submitted to the hearing, in evidence from an interview with the College on 11 July 2011, she had admitted this and her initials were on the record entries.

The RVNDC noted these injections would be chargeable, and was satisfied the public would regard making these incorrect entries as dishonest. As Ms Nicholl was a highly experienced senior nurse who also lectured to veterinary nursing students, the Committee was sure she knew she was acting dishonestly. Further, she had breached her responsibilities to clients by failing to maintain accurate case records, and the entries raised potential animal welfare issues.

In mitigation, her actions affected no animal's actual welfare, and there was no evidence that Ms Nicholl had made any financial gain or repeated her conduct.

"In addition to the fact that the charge involved dishonesty, there were a number of other aggravating features," said Ms Judith Webb, chairing and speaking on behalf of the RVNDC.

"The Respondent has not demonstrated any recognition of the seriousness of the record entry allegation, specifically the importance of keeping proper records... It is in the wider public interest and to protect the reputation of the veterinary nursing profession that the Respondent's name should be removed from the Register."

Full details of disciplinary hearings are available at www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary.

His name will be remembered...

Founder of first veterinary scientific periodical

In the latest of our series looking at the history of the RCVS, veterinary historian Bruce Vivash-Jones and RCVS Charitable Trust Librarian Clare Boulton consider William Percivall, founder of the first veterinary scientific periodical.

“His name will be remembered, as long as the profession lasts.” These were the words of Sir Frederick Smith, our leading veterinary historian, writing about William Percivall (1792-1854).

Yet, today, the name of William Percivall is virtually unknown.

However, his legacy was his life's work, which is embodied in his books, held in the Library's Historical Collection.

“His books all broke new ground, they were not compilations, they were based on original observations and research.”

The College has a copy of an etching, so we can see what he looked like, and a contemporary described him as handsome and “a distinguished looking man”. The only son of John Percivall, a senior army veterinary surgeon, William entered the Veterinary College in 1809 and obtained his Diploma in 1812. In the next year he was commissioned and serving in the Peninsular War, and later the Waterloo Campaign. In 1816, the army was reduced, he was put on half-pay and entered St Thomas's Hospital, qualifying in medicine and surgery in 1819.

Deciding against a medical career, he joined his father at The Woolwich Hospital, then, in 1827 was appointed veterinary surgeon to the 1st Life Guards, in which he served until his death in 1854.

Percivall avoided public speaking and shunned the limelight. But he could write, with a freedom from obscurity and “a gift of expression and pure English”; his books all broke new ground, they were not compilations, they were based on original observations and research. Percivall made his intention clear, prefacing his first book with the text: “Those who seek truth only freely expose their principles to the test, and are pleased to have them examined”.

Percivall's books were the result of his own studies and research. He started with *A Series of Elementary Lectures on the Veterinary Art* in three

parts (1823-26), but they were far from elementary. Comprising 78 lectures in 1,438 pages packed with information, they present an original and excellent account of 19th century practice.

This was followed by the first British systematic equine anatomy text, *The anatomy of the horse* (1832), and then his masterwork, *Hippopathology* (1834), in four volumes, which took 18 years of research and writing: the description of symptoms is as good now as it was then. Finally, he wrote an original work on the mechanics of equine locomotion, *Twelve lectures on the form and action of the horse* (1850).

Percivall's other great achievement was to launch, in 1828, the first scientific veterinary periodical, *The Veterinarian*, described as “a herald of reform”. He used it to publish his own, and others', clinical and scientific observations, and also as a platform to bring about change at the London College.

Percivall also served on RCVS Council (1844-54) and was critical of “the same old Council elected over and over again” (although he sat for a decade himself...).

His achievements in progressing veterinary knowledge were prodigious, but he did not get any formal recognition: no doubt because he upset the ‘establishment’ in the Veterinary College and Royal College.

Sadly, a final crushing blow came in 1854, when he, the most obvious candidate, was passed over for the post of Principal Veterinary Surgeon in the Army. The probable reason was that his health was failing – in fact, he died just four months later – however, it must have been a great disappointment.

William Percivall should be remembered: he took the first steps in creating credible veterinary literature for the benefit of the whole profession.



Building bridges between academia and industry

Trust-supported event brings experts together

Leading figures from academia and industry teamed up at an RCVS Charitable Trust-supported symposium to encourage the setting of a common research strategy.

Entitled 'Veterinary Research across Industry and Academia: Cooperation Strategies,' the event aimed to encourage the development of a strategy to ensure that the academic and industrial elements of the veterinary science spectrum came closer together to identify common goals and clearer, more efficient ways of working together. This is very important if veterinary science is going to remain competitive on the world stage, both academically and economically. There are potentially huge rewards from bridging the knowledge gap between the two sides.

"Academia is frequently the source-point of fundamental research, which then reaches its full potential through applications developed by the veterinary industry," says Professor Duncan Maskell, who was Chairman of the RCVS Research Subcommittee at the time of the event. "Academia can therefore provide valuable insight regarding the future directions of veterinary research, and

can inform industry partners of emerging scientific trends and hot-topics. Meanwhile, industry can enlighten academia on the actual needs of the market and suggest opportunities for expansion."

The symposium also sought to help key players in veterinary research to learn more about funding opportunities open to industry-academia joint ventures. These are increasingly prioritised by funding bodies, and feature in a number of EU-funded initiatives. Delegates attending included the Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales, representatives from funding agencies and most of the major pharmaceutical companies, and the Directors of Research and Heads of the seven UK veterinary schools.

The event took place on 10 January at the RCVS in London, and was supported by the RCVS Charitable Trust, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

A communiqué of the main outcomes will be published shortly.

In October 2012, the Trust hosted in a symposium exploring evidence-based veterinary medicine (RCVS News, November 2012, page 23). Audio recordings from this symposium are available online at <http://bit.ly/ZLhZg6>.

Parvo: a real name-changer

Trust hosts nomenclature workshop

A rose may be a rose, no matter what you call it, but the gradual evolution of 'parvovirus' has stretched the constraints of a more scientific nomenclature to create headaches for veterinary practitioners and researchers.

Classifications by the International Committee for the Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV) reach only to the species level (feline panleukopenia virus), with 'canine' parvovirus being below this level and out of ICTV consideration.

Names used throughout the scientific literature have developed in an uncontrolled fashion, and the use of 'feline' and 'canine' as descriptors has become problematic, since it is now clear that cats can get both types of virus. A further problem is the alphabet of antigenic variants (2a, 2b, 2c), which has created uncertainty over the efficacy of vaccine types 2 and 2b.

To cut through these knots, in November the RCVS Charitable Trust hosted a Carnivore Parvovirus

Nomenclature Workshop, led by Dr Alan Radford (University of Liverpool) and Professor Colin Parrish (Cornell), and supported by key pharmaceutical companies (Merial, MSD Animal Health, Pfizer and Virbac).

This brought together opinion leaders chosen for their specific expertise and to represent the global scientific community for discussions on what is known about current carnivore parvovirus diversity and evolution, and how these changes affect the way that the virus is presented in veterinary practice. A consensus was reached which will be used as the basis of an academic paper that will be available to all. It is envisaged that this paper will include an international recommendation for a future carnivore parvovirus nomenclature.

The workshop was hosted in connection with the RCVS Charitable Trust Grant Alumni Association, of which Dr Radford is a member. Former Trust grant beneficiaries are eligible to join the alumni association – for details, please email Ashley Doorly (a.doorly@rcvstrust.org.uk).

Bag a mug

Frames, mugs and pens available

If you're looking for a veterinary-related gift, have a look at the new items in the RCVS Charitable Trust's online shop. There are stripy china mugs bearing the RCVS and RCVS Charitable Trust logos, presentation-boxed Cross pens engraved with the RCVS coat of arms, and oak frames suitable for any A4 certificate. These and more can be found at <http://trust.rcvs.org.uk/shop>.



Online support for new vets

Open educational resources project

A collection of free resources to help new veterinary graduates find their feet in the workplace will shortly be online, thanks in part to the RCVS Charitable Trust.

Called 'open educational resources' (OERs) the collection covers aspects of veterinary life about which new vets say that they would like more information. The resources themselves range from TED talks about handling mistakes, to videoed refreshers for clinical procedures.

"Over 200 veterinary surgeons helped us by telling us what information and support they would have welcomed when they started out," says Clare Boulton, RCVS Charitable Trust Librarian. "We have used the feedback they gave in our survey, at veterinary congresses and in focus groups, to put together and evaluate a veterinary toolkit of resources useful to new vets."

The project received £25,000 funding from the Higher Education Academy/JISC, and is a collaborative venture between the Trust, the RCVS, the Veterinary Benevolent Fund, the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons and three of the veterinary schools. The resulting veterinary toolkit will be launched and promoted later this year.

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 full.

1 New road layout ahead

Governance changes and LRO implementation.

2 Pound savers

Premises Register fees reduced.

The bones of it

Prof Dr Christoph Mülling is Share Jones anatomy lecturer.

Reid all about it

Prof Stuart Reid elected as Vice-President.

3 Steady hands

Kathy Kissick and Liz Branscombe will continue as VNC Officers.

Road trip

CEO update on our journey towards first-rate regulation.

4 Cough-up time

Vet fees are due by 31 March.

Royle appointment

Nick Royle will take Trust in new EBVM direction.

Golden chance

We seek your nominations for the VNC Golden Jubilee award.

5 Customer Queen

Nicola South joins as Customer Experience Manager.

Question those candidates

Voting is now open for both elections. Vets can question candidates via a webinar hustings.

Cards folded

VN registration/listing cards to be discontinued.

6 Post-poster era

'Top ten medicines' poster no longer required.

AMR knows no borders

Seminar organisers advise global strategy to target AMR.

7 Title working

Legislation to protect title 'VN' moves closer.

Courage of convictions

Conviction disclosure will be introduced in 2014.

8 VN de-registration

We outline what removal from the VN Register signifies.

9 Great expectations

Guidance on registration and CPD for those on maternity leave.

10 No ifs, no butes

Don't forget Horse Passport Regulations.

Roll up, roll up

Defra advice for those involved with circuses.

Being sure of the service

We recommend you visit the crematorium you use.

11 Advice to meet you

We introduce you to Clare Tapsfield-Wright, Advisory Committee Chairman.

The only way is ethics

New guidance for practice-based researchers is published.

12 Withers PSS?

An update on plans for development of the Scheme.

Bag a badge

RCVS-accredited practice badges coming your way.

13 Setting expectations

We help you help students get the best out of EMS.

14 Finnish Finish

Vectar's end-of-project conference is on 29 August in Helsinki.

Back to Day One

We review Day One Competences.

15 PDR, PDQ

The online Professional Development Record is the speedy way to record your CPD.

CPD hard cop

We outline tougher measures for those who do not meet CPD targets.

16 Tongue-tied on clinical governance?

Visit BSAVA Congress and we'll help untangle you.

Foreign exchange of advice

A second RCVS/BVA/VDS course for overseas graduates will take place in June.

Triple royal whammy

Royal College Day's at the Royal College of Physicians on Regent's Park.

17 Land of the Prince Bishops

Durham's our venue for 15 May.

Doing a Doolittle

We are talking to the animals, and their owners, at London Pet Show.

18 Not open and shut

PIC report outlines success of a case 'held open'.

DC hearings

Mr J Holmes' application for restoration to the Register refused; Dr G Samuel removed from Register following convictions for threatening behaviour, theft and assault; Mr Wilson reprimanded for not carrying out bTB test in accordance with SOPs; Mr PP Bogdanowicz suspended for dishonesty regarding cat euthanasia; Ms M-L Schlemm severely reprimanded and given warning as to future conduct over treatment of a dog and professional/personal relationship with dog's owner; and, Ms T Nicholl removed from VN Register for dishonesty and failure to maintain accurate case records.

21 Communication, communication, communication

RVN PIC report: nearly 20% of RVN complaints relate to poor communication.

22 The first Veterinarian

We celebrate William Percivall, founder of the first veterinary scientific periodical.

23 Joining forces

Report on event that brought academics and industry together.

What's in a name?

Trust hosts workshop considering parvovirus nomenclature.

Support report

An update on our OER project for new vets.

Presenting our presents

Need a vet-related gift? Visit the Trust shop.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2013

31 March

Retention fees due

1 April

Premises registration and PSS fees due

1 April

National Pet Month starts

4-7 April

See us at BSAVA Congress

26 April

Your vote must be in by 5pm

1 May

VN Golden Jubilee award deadline

15 May

Regional Question Time: Durham

11-12 May

We'll be at the London Pet Show

5-6 June

Council meeting

13 June

Stakeholder open day

1 July

Specialist fees due

5 July

RCVS Day

9 July

Diploma examinations

1 August

Fellowship application deadline



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Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF

E rcvsnews@rcvs.org.uk | T 020 7222 2001 | F 020 7222 2004 | www.rcvs.org.uk

RCVS SETTING VETERINARY STANDARDS