

# RCVS REVIEW

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS: PART 1

2013

Informed from  
every angle



# RCVS REVIEW 2013

1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013

Patron: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



**6**

## **Corporate Strategy**

We have an ambition to become a first-rate regulator, and specialist health policy researcher, Sally Williams, is helping us to get there. She gives an overview of our evidence base for change.



**8**

## **Professional Conduct**

A new legislative reform order will ensure independence of our disciplinary committees. It was the result of a long period of consultation, review and hard work, as Defra's Richard Drummond explains.



**10**

## **Communications**

We regulate in the public interest. But does the public know? We held our first stakeholder open day in May 2012, and busted some myths about our role, as equine journalist Katy Islip recounts.

## Contents

4 President's Introduction

18 Councils Membership

5 CEO's Overview

19 Permanent Staff

6–17 Key Activities



12

### RCVS Charitable Trust

The Trust aims to become a leading advocate for evidence-based veterinary medicine – a role it is in a unique position to take on, according to Martin Whiting, who teaches veterinary ethics and law.



14

### Veterinary Nursing

Veterinary nursing lecturer Claire Bloor loves our new Professional Development Record, which helps VNs and vets record their CPD online. Find out more about how it helps users to plan, record and reflect.



16

### Education

Regular visitations to the UK veterinary schools help us ensure that graduates meet Day One Competences. It's important that the visitation teams include practising vets, as David Black explains.

# A period of great change

At the start of this reporting year, it became obvious that we were at the beginning of a period of great reform, not least of which was due to the appointment of our first ever CEO. Looking back, it is amazing how much has been achieved in such a short time.

The long-awaited legislative reform order came into force in April 2013, which means that members of the Preliminary Investigation and Disciplinary Committees will no longer be members of the RCVS Council (after a period of transition). Following external recruitment, the transformation will begin at the beginning of the new presidential year, in July.

Council itself has also undergone reform. A new Audit and Risk Committee was set up in 2012, and now provides oversight of Council affairs. The Council committee structure will change in July 2013, and a new Operational Board, consisting of the Officers and major Committee chairs, will take more responsibility for running the College. This will leave the Council to debate the more strategic issues that affect the profession.

Council has been working throughout the year on the introduction of Advanced Practitioners, to fill the gap between General Practitioners and Specialists. Criteria are currently being developed and the scheme should be available within the next College year.

After consultation with the profession, the Practice Standards Scheme is being modernised to encompass standards of our care of animals, as well as the equipment and buildings we use to do this. I hope that a modular, more flexible approach will encourage most practices to join the Scheme.

The RCVS Charitable Trust is also undergoing a period of reform, and I am delighted that the Trustees have decided to embrace evidence-based veterinary medicine and to make this the Trust's major focus, ably led by its new Executive Director, Nick Royle. This can only benefit the profession and the animals we serve.

The number of registered veterinary nurses has continued to steadily climb over the last few years, with more training places being made available. Having an RVN in every small animal practice remains a College ambition.

While all these plans and reforms have been taking shape, our actual building in Horseferry Road has also been transformed. Many internal walls have been taken down and the staff now

***"It's amazing how much has been achieved in such a short time."***

have a much more open, modern working environment, where they can actually see their colleagues! Throughout all this, the staff have continued with 'business as usual' in such an efficient way that I think most people contacting the College will not have had an inkling of the huge upheavals occurring. In fact, with the appointment of a Customer Experience Manager, I hope people will have seen an even more friendly and helpful attitude emerging.

At this year's elections we had the highest turnout for years. My only regret is that there were no women candidates. I have set up a small working party to explore the reasons for this and to see how we can remedy it next year.

So, this has been an exciting and innovative year for the College. I would encourage you to read this *RCVS Review* so that you can learn a bit more about some of our key activities – we aim to keep you informed, from every angle.

I think the next few years will see a continuation of these positive changes, which should ensure that we have a Royal College of which we can all be proud.



**Jacqui Molyneux**  
President



# Tough on the few...

This is my first *RCVS Review*, and it provides me with an opportunity to say what I have found in my first six months, and to give a flavour of the direction in which we are heading over the next few years.

Having been established since 1844, it is true to say that the RCVS has a proud history of setting, upholding and raising veterinary standards. It has done so in a way that is appropriate for the times in which it has operated. In 1844, the RCVS challenged the Royal Veterinary College to increase its standards, the degree having reduced in length (and quality) to three months! Today, of course, we continue to set and uphold standards in education as well as in clinical practice, and we do so in ways that are fitting with the times. You can read about our visitation process, for example, on page 16.

***“To coin a sound-bite, we will be tough on a few, but supportive of the many.”***

The Practice Standards Scheme (PSS), introduced in 2005, is a good example of where we responded to the need for self-regulation to play a critical role in helping to raise standards in practices, and, increasingly, practices are now using PSS to differentiate themselves. Over the last few years there has also been an ever-growing need for practitioners to keep their skills and knowledge up to date, which is why we have introduced the Professional Development Record, to allow vets and VNs to record and reflect on their continuing professional development online (see page 14).

This need for practitioners to have access to the most relevant and current knowledge is also behind the RCVS Charitable Trust's move to

become a hub of knowledge for evidence-based veterinary medicine – see page 12.

The RCVS has always expected high standards from the profession, in the noble aim, if not always so clearly articulated vision, that animals in the UK have the best veterinary care in the world. To do this has required us to change as well. Recently, we have introduced the Health and Performance Protocols, and we have also created an independent disciplinary process, following the recent legislative reform order – about which you can read more on page 8.

Meanwhile, the First Rate Regulator initiative, which I launched in November 2012, provides a platform for the next programme of reforms. On page 6, you can hear from the researcher who developed the evidence base for the recommendations that Council will shortly consider.

The next phase of change will focus on the service agenda – improving the standards we meet in terms of how we interact with the profession and the public, the time it takes to process complaints and the support and advice we can provide. Our first open day for animal owner representatives (see page 10) was a good example of how we are trying to improve how we communicate with the public.

Developing our Royal College role in helping the profession raise standards will be a central theme. We will also look at ways that we can be more proactive in what we do, including piloting a whistleblowers' line. To coin a sound-bite, we will be tough on a few, but supportive of the many.

The same principles we ask of the profession, of continuous development and of challenging ourselves to be better, will be at the forefront

of every change we bring about to ourselves. As a monopoly provider, the onus is on us to be as vigilant as we can be about improving our own standards for the way we operate.

I have found an organisation and a profession that not only realise that they need to continuously improve, but also relish the opportunity to do so.



**Nick Stace**  
Chief Executive and Secretary





# First rate research

**This year we embarked on an in-depth assessment of what we do well and where we could do better, with the ambition of becoming a first-rate regulator. Specialist health policy researcher Sally Williams explains the evidence base she gathered for us, and gives her analysis of the challenges ahead.**

My interest in professional regulation started at university, when I studied the evolution of the barber surgeons into the modern medical profession. I later worked at Which?, where I looked at the consumer experience of those who come into contact with the General Medical Council (GMC) – particularly the expectations of those who make a complaint about a doctor.

Professional regulation now runs through much of the work that I do, from serving as a member of the GMC's Quality Scrutiny Group, which helps to ensure that the standards set for the education and training of doctors are being adhered to, through to sitting on the Nursing and Midwifery Council's Fitness to Practise Committee as a lay panellist, to researching projects such as the First Rate Regulator initiative for the RCVS.

My team set out to build a 360-degree picture of how the College is viewed, by talking to veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses – we had a 20% response rate, at the top end of what I expect for this kind of survey – as well as staff, and Council and Veterinary Nurses Council members. We ran a survey with those who had complained about a veterinary surgeon in the last two years, and backed this up with some in-depth interviews. We also interviewed representatives from 12 stakeholder

organisations, including the British Veterinary Association, the Kennel Club, the National Farmers' Union and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. This was complemented by a benchmarking report on best practice within the UK healthcare regulators and some international veterinary statutory bodies.

Although the veterinary profession shares many commonalities with human healthcare, I had no fixed ideas about what the research would reveal. The biggest single finding was confusion about the role of the RCVS: is it a regulator or a Royal College? If an organisation without a guaranteed income confronted such a lack of clarity about its identity, it would be unlikely to survive, so I feel that developing clarity around a core purpose is critical.

Over the last decade, all of the healthcare professions have separated professional regulation from representation and professional leadership. An increase in independent input into their governance has also become the norm, with a governing body of 10-12 people being typical, more akin to the agile and efficient boards within successful corporate enterprises.

Other recommendations coming out of the RCVS research relate to improving customer

service levels and looking at additional powers around fitness to practise. I understand that RCVS Council will consider a full list of recommendations at a public meeting in June.

This has been a major research exercise and has set a useful benchmark against which the RCVS can address issues such as clarity of role, customer service and its fitness for purpose. Going forward, it will make sense for ongoing monitoring to take place into the effectiveness of any changes that arise from this research.

Much of the impetus for change in the healthcare sector came from external pressure – from the public or the government. For the RCVS, I have seen a huge appetite for change from Council members and staff alike – it feels like an exciting time for the College. External stakeholder bodies are also keen for change and want to be part of this. Staff expressed some feelings of unsettlement, but that's to be expected when structures that have been in place for a long time are under scrutiny. But from what I have seen, there is a strong team at the College who will rise to the challenge.



To find out more, watch Sally's video at [www.youtube.com/RCVSvideos](http://www.youtube.com/RCVSvideos)

*"I feel that developing clarity around a core purpose is critical."*



Other registration-related activities include:

- Registering 76 overseas veterinary surgeons to provide services for international Olympic equestrian teams
- Securing a reduction in the Veterinary Practice Premises fee, from £40 to £34
- Accrediting 2,700 premises under the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS), accounting for 52% of all registered premises; a further 90 new applications are being processed
- Continuing to host PSS Surgeries three times a year at Regional Question Times – during this reporting year, in Glasgow, Oxford and Durham
- Producing RCVS-accredited practice badges to help promote PSS membership
- Undertaking a consultation around the future of the PSS, and developing proposals for a more modular system, with emphasis on behaviours and outcomes
- Appointing a new Customer Experience Manager / Head of Registration, with expertise in customer service delivery
- Sending members acknowledgments to confirm when we have updated their personal records
- Collecting feedback from members so that areas for improvement and staff training can be easily identified; training staff in areas of customer service, to ensure that vets and VNs receive a service that is helpful, professional and flexible
- Producing an RCVS Pocket Guide on registration renewal, to help demystify the process.



# Legitimate changes

**In April 2013, a legislative reform order (LRO) came into force, which means that members of our disciplinary committees will no longer be drawn from Council. Richard Drummond FRCVS, Head of Division at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) with responsibility for liaison with the veterinary profession, explains what the change means for the profession and the public.**

Up until now, members of the RCVS Preliminary Investigation (PIC) and Disciplinary Committees (DC) have been drawn from Council, as have members of the Advisory Committee. This means that individuals from the same group – RCVS Council – have been responsible for setting the 'rules', investigating complaints relating to them, and final adjudication. Although this may have seemed fine in the 1960s, when the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) was made, it has increasingly been seen as lacking impartiality and in need of modernisation. The set-up also slowed down the resolution of complaints, as there was a limited pool of 12 individuals to sit for disciplinary hearings.

***“It was terrific to finally see the LRO reaching the Statute Book this spring.”***

The College had therefore been pushing for some time for new legislation to allow the PIC and DC to be constituted independently from Council – and also to formally introduce more lay membership of both committees. There was

also a drive for change coming from the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee, which identified back in 2008 that steps should be taken to modernise the College's disciplinary process.

An LRO is a relatively new legal tool which suited our needs because it allows a straightforward statutory change to be made without the need for major reform of the VSA. This was the first LRO that I had worked on and, although it's a relatively short piece of legislation,

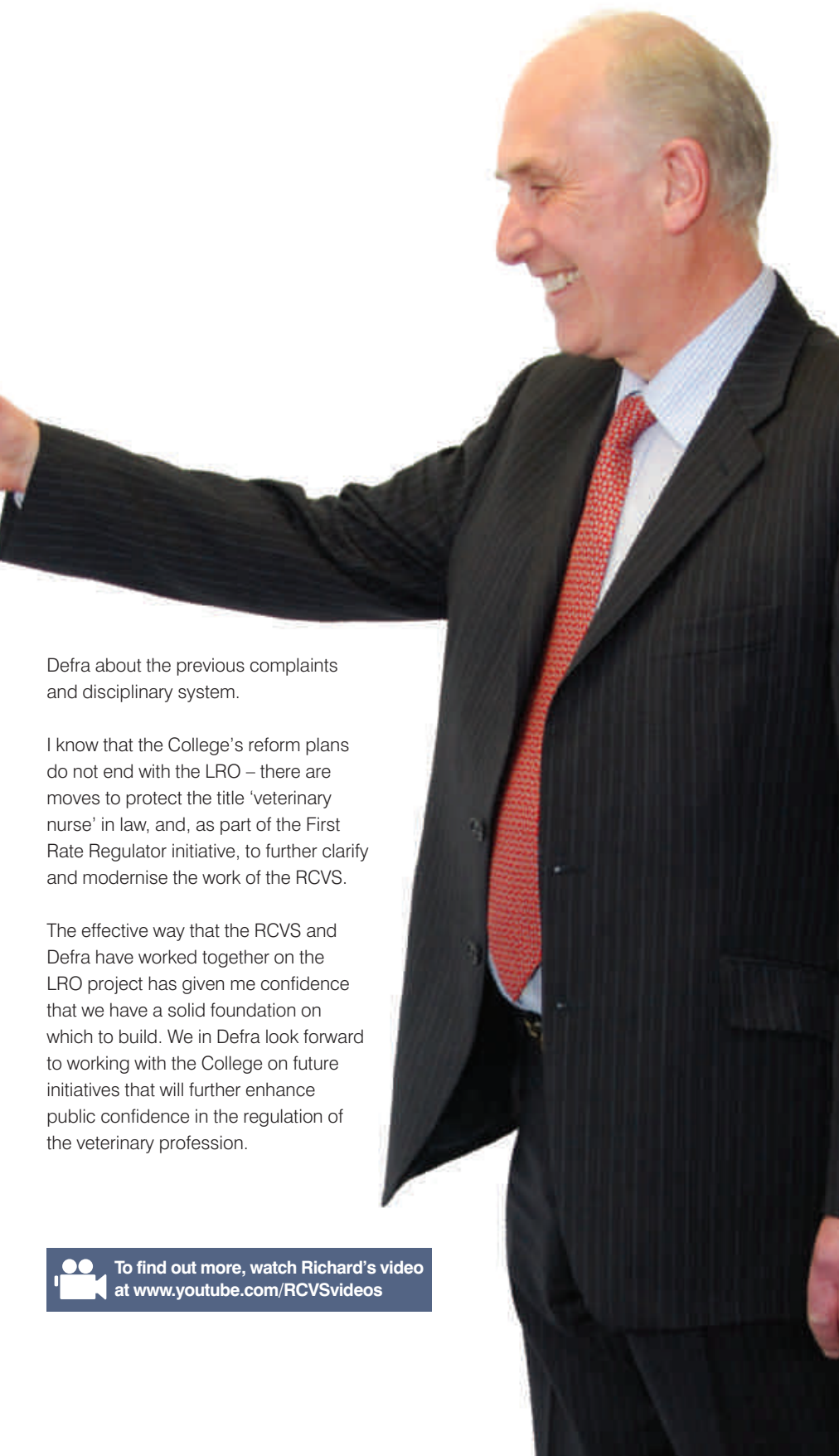
the process was complex, with many layers of consultation and scrutiny. A project team comprising representatives from Defra and the RCVS was set up and has worked very well together, although we all had a steep learning curve. The fact that we at Nobel House and the RCVS team at Belgravia House are a few minutes' walk from each other helped a lot – it was great to be able to get round a table and come up with solutions to challenges as and when they arose.

Although the project took about three years from concept to delivery, it was a demanding timetable. So, following many meetings and complicated planning charts, it was terrific to finally see the LRO reaching the Statute Book this spring!

The first tranche of new committee members will be in place from July this year, and the profession and the public should soon start to see regulation that is faster, more independent and which benefits from the contribution of more lay members. I'm confident that in due course the new arrangements, and the fitness to practise regulation introduced through the College's Health and Performance Protocols, will address the rather negative comments that we had sometimes received at







Defra about the previous complaints and disciplinary system.

I know that the College's reform plans do not end with the LRO – there are moves to protect the title 'veterinary nurse' in law, and, as part of the First Rate Regulator initiative, to further clarify and modernise the work of the RCVS.

The effective way that the RCVS and Defra have worked together on the LRO project has given me confidence that we have a solid foundation on which to build. We in Defra look forward to working with the College on future initiatives that will further enhance public confidence in the regulation of the veterinary profession.



To find out more, watch Richard's video at [www.youtube.com/RCVSVideos](http://www.youtube.com/RCVSVideos)

Other complaints- and advice-related activities include:

- Carrying out 82 visits to veterinary practices, including four which related to health cases under the new Health Protocol, and two which related to review cases
- Solicitors investigating complaints taking 94 formal witness statements
- 33 hearing days by the Disciplinary Committee, hearing cases and applications for restoration
- Undertaking 29 reviews for complainants unhappy with the RCVS decision to close their complaint
- Handling 789 complaints and 1,657 requests for advice
- Handling our first disciplinary hearing for a registered veterinary nurse (RVN), under the system introduced in 2011; and handling 27 complaints against RVNs
- Introducing additional guidance around the Performance Protocol, to enhance the profession's understanding
- Launching an online PDF-maker tool for the *Code of Professional Conduct* and supporting guidance
- Reaching agreement with the Office of Fair Trading that the 'top ten medicines' poster can be dropped for a trial six-month period
- Developing a *Code of Professional Conduct* app that allows the Code and supporting guidance to be viewed and searched even when offline.



# Myth busting

**We may regulate in the public interest, but it's sometimes hard to interest the public in regulation. Our first stakeholder open day, last May, aimed to gather those who influence animal owners – including representatives of associations, charities and related regulators, and journalists – and bust some myths about our role. Writer for *Your Horse* magazine, Katy Islip, recounts the day.**

I didn't know a huge amount about the role of the RCVS before I attended the open day – in fact, I thought it was more of a representative body for the veterinary profession.

I suspect many of our readers are in the same boat: veterinary regulation isn't really something you think about until an issue crops up – most of the time people are happy with their vet, and trust their advice and recommendations, so it was really interesting to find out more about how the RCVS regulates veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses.

Coming down to the RCVS was a real eye-opener for me – I didn't realise how much went on behind the scenes. It was great to meet members of the College and staff, and get a better insight into what the RCVS does – and why.

One of the most interesting parts of the day was when we were asked to role-play being members of the Disciplinary Committee. We were given anonymised papers from a past case and asked to deliberate and come up with our verdict. I was surprised by the amount of detail the evidence went into – it really is a robust process, and I can see why it takes a long time. Our group included a mixture of vets, lay people like me and others

involved in the animal health industry. Our range of views was quite diverse, and although I did empathise with the personal side of the evidence presented, I was one of those keen to be more stringent with the vet in question! When we made our final judgement, it was good to find it was along the lines of what the real committee decided to do.

***“Veterinary regulation isn't really something you think about until an issue crops up.”***

I was pleased to hear that lay people are involved in the disciplinary panel in 'real life', too. Although there'll be aspects of best veterinary practice that those within the profession need to decide on, it's useful to have a fresh pair of eyes and another perspective. I think animal owners would take comfort from the fact there's a range of people involved in the process, which would help ensure a just and fair outcome that puts animal welfare first.

Another interesting aspect of the day was learning about veterinary nurse regulation, and that there is no statutory protection of the title. I was really surprised by this – and I think a lot

of our readers would be. I'd assumed that someone calling themselves a veterinary nurse would be qualified in X, Y and Z, and be regulated, like a veterinary surgeon. It's good that the RCVS is pushing to change this, especially for those veterinary nurses who have studied hard and have many qualifications to back up their hands-on experience. Hopefully it will help increase respect for the veterinary nursing profession too, and the vital work veterinary nurses do in caring for animals.

All in all the day was very useful, and gave me a real appreciation of the work of the RCVS, which will help me when considering veterinary issues in *Your Horse* in future. It was also really good to make some veterinary contacts to follow up for features, and to feed into future advice we can give our readers. I appreciate it's hard for the RCVS to reach out to animal owners but anything that can be done to make its activities clearer to the public is great, and the open day definitely helped. I'd certainly attend another!



To find out more, watch Katy's video at [www.youtube.com/RCVSvideos](https://www.youtube.com/RCVSvideos)





Other communications-related activities include:

- Hosting our first webinar-style hustings event, as part of promotion for the Council elections, which garnered the highest voter turnout for ten years – the hustings were viewed over 500 times
- Running our first Virtual Question Time, with twice as many delegates as a traditional meeting, at a quarter of the cost
- Attending congresses, hosting three Regional Question Times, two Meet the RCVS Days, student meetings and RCVS Day
- Running two educational webinars with The Webinar Vet – on Practice Standards and core standards as part of the *Code of Professional Conduct*
- Posting 114 items of Latest News, together with press releases, features and columns
- Running a joint Royal Colleges seminar on antimicrobial resistance
- Launching a blog for CEO Nick Stace ([www.nickstaceblogs.org](http://www.nickstaceblogs.org))
- Responding to eight consultations, and maintaining links with parliamentarians
- Adding 1,704 followers to our Twitter account (@RCVS\_UK), reaching a total of 3,397 at the end of the reporting year
- Working with the British Veterinary Association and the Veterinary Defence Society to develop a CPD course to support overseas graduates working in the UK
- Producing our first video to accompany the *RCVS Review*





# Evidently sensible

**The RCVS Charitable Trust aims to become a leading advocate for evidence-based veterinary medicine (EBVM), under new Executive Director Nick Royle. To this end, it held a ground-breaking symposium on the subject in October 2012, as delegate Martin Whiting MRCVS, who teaches veterinary ethics and law at the Royal Veterinary College, explains.**

I have a particular interest in EBVM for two reasons. First, I teach veterinary undergraduates about professional standards, which includes ensuring public confidence in the profession. EBVM feeds into this in many ways: the public expect the treatment to which they are agreeing to be efficacious, appropriate and up to date, and for the veterinary surgeon to have valid reasons for their proposed actions; they expect the vet to answer their questions with expert opinion based upon current understanding; and, most importantly, informed consent is vital to the relationship between the vet and the client – and achieving this is difficult in the absence of a strong evidence base for any recommended options.

Second, I am part of the VeNom Coding Group, which seeks to ensure that, when gathering the data needed for EBVM, we all use the same terminology, and that synonyms and colloquial phrases can all be related back to the standard term. This allows computer systems to report back to databases, such as VetCompass, which in turn allows researchers to process the data more easily.

We cannot progress without understanding the past in detail, understanding the evidence that is already out there, and taking account of the latest developments and what they mean

for our current practices. And we cannot bring the client into the discussion about the future for their animals without being able to inform them fully. Put simply, I believe that EBVM is the future of the profession.

So I'm sold on the need for EBVM, but it's still quite a new concept in the profession. The Trust's symposium was excellent. It gathered researchers, animal charities and those in practice together in the same room, as each play key roles in the success of EBVM. But they are distinct audiences, with different remits and requirements, which meant that, previously, communication could be a challenge.

The event discussed how to gather the best evidence and how researchers could process it, plus how to feed it back to the profession in clinical practice. This last part is critical, as it is the practitioners who have to apply the outcomes of EBVM and pass the information to the client in an understandable form. It was an excellent networking opportunity to help improve this communication between academics and clinicians.

It's great news that the Trust is looking to establish itself as a Cochrane-style resource for the profession. The Cochrane Collaboration continues to be the world leader in human EBM

and it's fantastic that the Trust now has its former leader, Nick Royle, at the helm.

The profession will surely benefit from his experience and expertise – not least to make sure we learn from any teething problems on the human side. In addition, we need to keep in mind the 'One Health, One Medicine' agenda, and Nick is ideally suited to bridge the gap between human and veterinary research.

For an EBVM resource to be fully utilised, it needs an independent hub. All research establishments, universities and practices will have their own remits and research goals, and, although they remain objective, there does need to be a central, external and independent organisation to collate and distribute the information between all parties. The Trust is in a unique position to achieve this.

Creating an EBVM resource for the veterinary profession will be neither an easy nor a cheap endeavour. But considering the experience that Nick Royle brings, the huge enthusiasm and energy of the team at the Trust – demonstrated at the symposium – and the genuine drive from the profession, it is certainly possible.

 To find out more, watch Martin's video at [www.youtube.com/RCVSvideos](http://www.youtube.com/RCVSvideos)

***“It is the practitioners who have to apply the outcomes of EBVM and pass the information to the client.”***



Other Trust-related activities include:

- Facilitating a symposium linked to our 2008 Golden Jubilee research grant ‘Veterinary Pathogen Genomics – One Genome for every 50 Years of the RCVS Trust’, which revealed the latest technologies developing in the field, and their potential applications
- Awarding eight grants, to the value of £11,521, for the facilitation of, or attendance at, events with a broad veterinary reach, including the Joint Symposium on Antimicrobial Resistance, the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons Final-Year Seminar, a training day for Vet Helpline volunteers, bursaries for the British Science Festival 2012 and the Veterinary Biomedical and Pharma Sciences Congress 2012
- Awarding four Spencer-Hill Equipment Grants, to the value of £4,600
- Being lead partner on an HEA/JISC-funded project looking at open educational resources for new graduates
- Making our paintings available on the BBC’s *Your paintings* website
- Welcoming 194 new Library members
- Joining Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, where we fall into the top 10% most-followed UK-based veterinary organisations; publishing the Advancing Animal Health blog, which showcases the work of our grant-holders, and a Trust Library blog.





# Record making

**In spring 2012, we introduced the Professional Development Record (PDR) for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses. It includes an online continuing professional development (CPD) record, which allows users to plan, record and reflect on their CPD. Claire Bloor RVN, Veterinary Nursing Lecturer at Myerscough College, explains its benefits.**

I started using the PDR in summer 2012 – not long after it was launched. I love doing CPD, in fact, I've done about 2,000 hours over the last three-year period – a bit more than the 45 hours required by the RCVS! A lot of those hours come from my work towards a professional doctorate, but I also do a variety of other things, such as attending congresses and completing webinars.

The PDR is easy to navigate and helps me to keep track of all of my CPD. The calendar and planning tools also help me keep on top of what's coming up next. Probably the most important benefit for me is that it's so convenient to use. I can record CPD as and when I do it – at work or at home, or even on the move via my phone – without having to run around looking for my hard copy RCVS CPD Record Card, which invariably goes astray. It's also useful to be able to upload documents and CPD certificates to the PDR, so everything is kept in one place.

This year, using the PDR has been integrated into the appraisal process for veterinary nursing teaching staff at Myerscough, which is excellent. I just need to share the front page of my record with my manager, by email or as a printed screenshot, and she can quickly see what I have achieved that year.

I teach undergraduate veterinary nurses and encourage them to think about the CPD they will focus on once they qualify, and using the PDR to record and reflect on this. Although some may feel that, once qualified, they never want to do any more studying, it's important that we encourage them into the mindset of lifelong learning.

***“I hope my students remain as passionate about CPD as I am.”***

I also encourage the registered veterinary nurses who are studying towards their RCVS Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing to use the PDR. Although for these nurses the Diploma will account for most of their CPD, people have been surprised by all the different types of CPD listed on the PDR – it has made them realise that a lot of what they already do can count as CPD, providing it is properly planned and documented. For example, I can count the weekends that I work in an emergency services clinic as CPD, as it helps me to keep my clinical knowledge current for my main role as lecturer.

Along with following the *Code of Professional Conduct*, keeping our skills and knowledge up to date is one of the professional obligations

that registered veterinary nurses sign up to: it's important that we do this. I am also keen to see legal protection for the title 'veterinary nurse', so that only those who are properly qualified can call themselves this. I am sure we all know of unqualified people holding veterinary nursing roles, and it's not fair on those who have worked hard to achieve the qualification – let alone for those who entrust their animals to these people.

The legal protection that the RCVS is pushing for would also mean that a veterinary nurse removed from the Register would not be able to stay on the unregulated List and carry out 'Schedule 3' tasks under the Veterinary Surgeons Act. I think it is absolutely wrong that this can happen now.

VN regulation and CPD is a subject that raises passions within the profession, even at undergraduate level – we had a lively debate on the importance of statutory regulation for VNs in one of my ethics lectures recently. I hope my students remain as passionate about CPD as I am, once they qualify.



To find out more, watch Claire's video at [www.youtube.com/RCVSvideos](http://www.youtube.com/RCVSvideos)



Other VN-related activities include:

- Provisionally approving City & Guilds to award a Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing
- Provisionally approving Anglia Ruskin University to award an FdSc in veterinary nursing and the Scottish Qualifications Authority to award an HND in veterinary nursing
- Developing a pre-registration examination for nurses holding certain UK or overseas veterinary nursing qualifications
- Fully approving graduate qualifications in veterinary nursing at Edinburgh Napier University
- Securing acceptance of our interim Vector project report, which means that we now qualify for the next release of project funding
- Launching a new title, *VN Education*, for those involved in training and education.

And, via RCVS Awards:

- Awarding the first RCVS Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing certificate, in August 2012
- Holding practical examinations for 1,024 candidates, and theory examinations for 3,500
- Delivering the final NVQ Level 2 examination
- Carrying out 139 centre and training practice (TP) visits
- Approving 132 brand new TPs, bringing the total to 1,770.



# Visiting rights

**Each year we carry out a visitation to one of the UK veterinary schools to ensure that the graduates are achieving their Day One Competences. David Black MRCVS, Managing Director of both the Paragon Veterinary Group in Cumbria, and of XLVets, explains his role on two recent visits.**

I first got involved with the educational side of the RCVS in 2007, when I joined the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee, under the chairmanship of Barry Johnson. That gave me a real insight into the process that the College undertakes to ensure that those qualifications leading to registration are producing graduates of the right calibre.

The key to that process is the visitation, where a team goes to each of the vet schools every seven years or so to review in detail self-evaluation reports that the schools produce prior to the visit. I joined my first visitation, to the Royal Veterinary College, in 2010, and also visited the University of Liverpool in November 2012.

The purpose of the visits is to scrutinise the reports, by talking to those involved in teaching and research, the students and practices that take students on extra-mural studies (EMS) and employ graduates, and also to look at the facilities. It's a surprisingly intense week, with the team carrying on well into the night, but there is a great team spirit, and everyone does their share. The level of detail in the reports is immense, and I was impressed with the hard work of the vet school teams in terms of pulling it together. At the end of the week, the visitation team presents the executive summary of our report to the Dean of the School or the Vice-

Chancellor of the University, so there is a lot of midnight oil burned.

The visitation team typically consists of eight people, and includes members of RCVS Council and an RCVS facilitator, experts in a mixture of areas, including preclinical and clinical, and a student – I was there from the production animal side. It's vitally important that practising veterinary surgeons are involved in the process. We are buying the 'product' after all!

The Liverpool visitation was the first to be carried out jointly with the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), and there was also a representative from the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council. Although there is no statutory approval process for vet schools in Europe, the majority of the schools volunteer to be inspected by EAEVE, and a joint visitation saves the vet school from multiple disruptions.

The complexity of material taught in the undergraduate syllabus has increased dramatically since I was a student in Edinburgh in the 80s, while access to clinical material becomes more challenging. So the role of EMS in preparing students for practice is more important than ever. But the increasing number of students is putting greater pressure on

practices to fill this gap, especially mixed rural practices. Most of us do it out of goodwill – and we definitely get some benefit in terms of learning from students about the latest research and techniques – but I worry that this may become unsustainable in the long term. Most vets are not trained to be trainers, after all. But without EMS, the move to practice for many new graduates would be too much of a sudden step up, rather than what we strive for now, which is a continual learning curve.

There is a great deal that the vet schools can learn from those in practice, and vice versa – which is why it's so important that there are vets from the 'coal face' involved with the visitation teams. It's not just a rubber-stamping exercise from the RCVS, but the future of the next generation of veterinary surgeons really is at stake.



To find out more, watch David's video at [www.youtube.com/RCVSvideos](http://www.youtube.com/RCVSvideos)

***“It’s vitally important that practising veterinary surgeons are involved in the process.”***



Other Education-related activities include:

- Carrying out a full visitation to the University of Liverpool, jointly with EAEVE, sending two visitors on the joint international AVMA/AVBC/RCVS visit to Sydney in June 2012 and two on the joint international visit to Melbourne in March 2013
- Signing up 685 new graduates for the Professional Development Phase (PDP): 2,310 recent graduates have now completed their PDP since it was launched in 2007
- Achieving 1,180 enrolled candidates for the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP) as at 31 March 2013, by which date 129 vets had passed the full CertAVP, and there had been 2,465 module passes
- Adding 38 new RCVS Specialists to the List during the year, and re-accrediting 55
- Awarding two new Diplomas of Fellowship and seven RCVS Diplomas
- Setting up a Day One Competences Working Party to ensure the competences continue to meet the needs of modern practice
- Securing Council agreement for all of the recommendations from the Specialisation Working Party, then developing mechanisms to implement them, including work towards the establishment of the new ‘Advanced Practitioner’ status
- Starting a major review of the RCVS Fellowship
- Launching the first module of the new Professional Development Record, the online CPD record, in April 2012, followed by the new PDP module in August 2012.





## RCVS COUNCIL

6 July 2012 – 5 July 2013

RCVS Council comprises 24 elected members, two appointees from each of the seven UK veterinary schools and four persons appointed by the Privy Council, as specified in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.

| Elected Members   | Appointed Members   |
|---|---|
| Christopher Barker MRCVS  | David Argyle MRCVS (E)  |
| Amanda Boag MRCVS   | Karen Braithwaite (N)   |
| David Catlow MRCVS  | Noreen Burrows (G)  |
| Beverley Cottrell MRCVS   | Ewan Cameron MRCVS (G)  |
| Sheila Crispin FRCVS  | Susan Dawson MRCVS (Lv)   |
| Jerry Davies MRCVS  | Gary England FRCVS (N)  |
| Mark Elliott MRCVS  | Caroline Freedman (E)   |
| Catherine Goldie MRCVS  | Michael Herrtage MRCVS (C)  |
| Chris Gray MRCVS  | Andrea Jeffery RVN (B)  |
| Lynne Hill MRCVS  | Peter Lees (Ln)   |
| Peter Jinman MRCVS  | Duncan Maskell (C)  |
| Barry Johnson MRCVS   | Tim Nuttall MRCVS (Lv)  |
| Stephen May FRCVS   | Joanna Price MRCVS (B)  |
| Jacqui Molyneux MRCVS   | Stuart Reid MRCVS (Ln)  |
| Bob Moore MRCVS   |   |
| Jill Nute MRCVS   | <b>Privy Council Appointed Members</b>                              |
| Bob Partridge MRCVS   | Richard Davis   |
| Christine Shield MRCVS  | Nigel Gibbens MRCVS   |
| Neil Smith MRCVS  | Rachel Jennings   |
| Richard Stephenson MRCVS  | Judith Webb   |
| Clare Tapsfield-Wright MRCVS  |   |
| Sandy Trees MRCVS   | <b>Notes:</b> Duncan Maskell resigned from Council in January 2013. |
| Chris Tufnell MRCVS   |   |
| Bradley Viner MRCVS   |   |
|   |   |
| <b>Note:</b> Universities: B = Bristol, C = Cambridge, E = Edinburgh, G = Glasgow, Lv = Liverpool, Ln = London, N = Nottingham. |   |

## VN COUNCIL

6 July 2012 – 5 July 2013

VN Council comprises eight elected veterinary nurses, six appointed veterinary surgeons (including three from RCVS Council) and two lay members.

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| <b>Elected Members</b>        |
| Elizabeth Branscombe RVN      |
| Elizabeth Cox RVN             |
| Elizabeth Figg REVN           |
| Louise Glysen RVN             |
| Andrea Jeffery RVN            |
| Katherine Kissick RVN         |
| Suzanne May RVN               |
| Hilary Orpet RVN              |
|                               |
| <b>Appointed Members</b>      |
| Elizabeth Armitage-Chan MRCVS |
| Victoria Aspinall MRCVS       |
| Anthony Birbeck               |
| Richard Hooker MRCVS          |
| Jill Nute MRCVS               |
| Neil Smith MRCVS              |
| Penelope Swindlehurst         |
| Bradley Viner MRCVS           |



PERMANENT STAFF

As at 31 March 2013

|                  |                     |                     |                       |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Annette Amato    | Janet Etheridge     | Ben Jones           | Vivienne Pankhurst    |
| Freda Andrews    | Lesley Evans        | Rita Jorge          | Stephanie Platt       |
| Duncan Ash       | Eleanor Ferguson    | Lo Kei Kwok         | Thelma Rees           |
| Clare Boulton    | Richard Foster      | Lizzie Lockett      | Alison Rengert        |
| Gabriella Braun  | Jeff Gill           | Emma Lockley        | Anthony Roberts       |
| Dorothy Brereton | Andrew Grainger     | Corrie McCann       | Nicola South          |
| Paulette Brown   | Fiona Harcourt      | Laura McClintock    | Nick Stace            |
| Mike Byrne       | Jenny Harris        | Priya Mehta         | Liz Troman            |
| Lauren Charnley  | Victoria Hedges     | Alicia Menendez-    | Danielle van den Berg |
| Helen Cook       | Natalie Heppenstall | Buick               | Natalie Watkins       |
| Britta Crawford  | Michael Hepper      | Claire Millington   | Martyn Webster        |
| Sophie Dicks     | Gordon Hockey       | Christopher Murdoch | Sue Whall             |
| Ashley Doorly    | Ian Holloway        | Ben Myring          | Tom Winters           |
| Myai Du          | Judith Hylton       | Sandra Neary        |                       |
| Julie Dugmore    | Christine James     | Jordan Nicholls     |                       |
| Libby Earle      | Anne Jerney         | Marilyn Pablo       |                       |

Special thanks to all those who agreed to be featured in this *RCVS Review*, for giving up their time and for their patience; thank you also to those who allowed us to take photographs on their premises.

Photography: Ian Holloway, RCVS.

Design: ocean 020 7061 6314

[www.ocean-design.com](http://www.ocean-design.com)



Printed by an ISO 14001 certified printer using 100% vegetable-based inks on a totally chlorine-free FSC certified stock [www.sterlingsolutions.co.uk](http://www.sterlingsolutions.co.uk)

