



The future awaits

*An overview of the
VN Futures project*

In this issue: VN Council election results, apprenticeships update, new registration regulations, training practice numbers, Golden Jubilee Award winner, language testing, new Day-one Skills List, qualification visits, Schedule 3 session, BVNA Congress preview, microchipping guidance, VN Futures update, meet the team.

VN Council election results

Welcoming two new faces

Two new candidates were elected to VN Council in this year's elections, which saw 10.9% of the profession casting a vote.

Six candidates stood in this year's elections – Stacey Bullock, Racheal Marshall, Wendy Nevins, Matthew Rendle, Samantha Thompson and Helen Tottey. Those elected were Matthew Rendle with 547 votes and Racheal Marshall with 537 votes.

“Many congratulations to the two brand new members of VN Council.”

The number of veterinary nurses who voted in this year's elections increased from last year (1,435 compared to 1,379) although the turnout was slightly lower than last year when 11% of the profession cast votes. The average turnout for VN Council elections over the past 10 years is 8.8%.

Liz Cox, Chair of VN Council, said: “Many congratulations to the two brand new members of VN Council – I look forward to working with them over the coming years and seeing what they can bring to help drive the profession forward.”



Matthew Rendle and Racheal Marshall

Both the successful candidates will take up their positions at RCVS Day – our Annual General Meeting and Awards Day – on Friday 15 July 2016 at the Royal Institute of British Architects.

The candidates in the VN Council elections were invited to produce a short video in which they answered questions put to them by fellow veterinary nurses. These videos received around 800 views and are still available to watch on our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos).

The 2016 VN Council elections were run on our behalf by Electoral Reform Services.

Upcoming Trailblazers meeting

Draft apprenticeship scheme

The Apprenticeship Trailblazer group will meet on 24 May to review the draft Veterinary Nurse Standard for apprenticeships. The group, comprising representatives from RCVS, employers, awarding organisations and training centres, has been working to simplify veterinary nursing apprenticeships in accordance with the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills' Trailblazer Programme, launched in 2015.

The Standard is expected to make every successful apprentice eligible for registration with us by the end of their apprenticeship period, and will therefore incorporate our Day-one Competences and Day-one Skills.

Once the group confirms the draft Standard it will be opened up for consultation with the profession.

Latest training practice numbers

Overall increase in TP numbers

As of 4 March 2016 there were a total of 2,372 AVN Training Practices in the UK, compared to 2,155 at the beginning of 2015.

While this increase is good news, there still remains quite a wide disparity in TP availability over different regions. For example, while there are 58 TPs for 81 student VNs in Northern Ireland, there are only 195 TPs for 479 student VNs in East of England.

We always welcome more practices to apply for Training Practice status. Practices can apply by contacting their nearest college delivering veterinary nurse training. A list of TPs can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/tpolist

New registration regulations for VNs

Changes clarify entry requirements

The College's regulations for veterinary nurses in relation to education and training have been changed to clarify the number of training hours we expect student VNs to undertake before they can join the Register.

The changes have been made to the Veterinary Nursing Registration Rules 2014 to put into effect decisions already made by VN Council concerning training hours. The requirement that student veterinary nurses must have undertaken a full-time period of 60 weeks' practical training at an approved training practice has been dropped as this was found to be in breach of HMRC's National Minimum Wage Regulations regarding unpaid work. Under these regulations unpaid workers, which some student veterinary nurses are, can only work unpaid for a maximum of one year.

The regulations have also been amended to reduce the amount of practical placement hours that must be undertaken from 2,100 to 1,800 hours. This was to ensure compliance with the new Day-one Skills List (see page 5).

New rules on using VN title

Changes to Code

We would like to remind individuals and practices of recent changes to our *Code of Professional Conduct* which says that veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses must not hold out others as veterinary nurses unless appropriately registered with us.

Under these rules veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses should not be referring to student veterinary nurses as 'veterinary nurses' and should be clearly indicating that they are students to clients.

Furthermore, both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses should not hold out themselves or others as having expertise they cannot substantiate and must not hold out others as specialists or advanced practitioners unless appropriately listed with us.

To read the *Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses* in full, visit www.rcvs.org.uk/vncode



Monitoring VN educators

Update on visits to VN accreditation bodies

Since April 2015, staff from our Veterinary Nursing Department have visited 16 institutions providing veterinary nursing training, including those already accredited and those in the middle of their application process.

The visits to accredited awarding organisations and higher education institutions were all routine aspects of a rolling five-year assessment cycle. The visits complement the bodies' annual self-reporting, in which they must list any areas of non-compliance identified in the last RCVS visit and report any areas of weakness.

All the bodies retained their accreditation, though several were found to have high risk areas. These included such concerns as inconsistencies in moderation of assessed work, reliance on student veterinary nurses to find placements, and inadequate progress in delivering agreed-upon changes.

We also visited four bodies currently applying for accreditation status, as well as the three institutions that are currently qualified to confer the RCVS Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (DipAVN). The four bodies still in the middle of their application to provide veterinary nursing training were seen to be making good progress, and the ones offering the DipAVN all retained their accreditation status.

“All the bodies retained their accreditation, though several were found to have high risk areas.”

For more information on accreditation, please visit our website: www.rcvs.org.uk/education/approving-veterinary-nursing-qualifications

A worthy recipient

Golden Jubilee Award goes to Wigan VN

We are delighted to announce that the winner of this year's Golden Jubilee Award is Wigan-based veterinary nurse, Louise O'Dwyer, in recognition of her contribution to the profession, particularly in the field of outreach.

Louise, the fifth recipient of the award, has long been a pioneer in the field of veterinary nursing and, over the course of her career, she has been the first veterinary nurse clinical director within the CVS Group



and the first UK veterinary nurse to be voted on to the Academy of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Technicians' Board.

As her accomplishments suggest, Louise has led a varied career, lecturing around the world and volunteering for several years at the Bella Moss Foundation. She has also worked on a variety of BSAVA Committees, contributed to over 35 journal and magazine articles in the UK, USA and Canada, written three nursing textbooks, and contributed chapters to numerous textbooks in the UK and US.

Kathryn Latimer, a fellow veterinary nurse who nominated her for the award, said: "I feel Louise is a shining example of everything the Golden Jubilee Award encompasses – she has demonstrated exceptional abilities as a leader, not only to veterinary nurses, but to veterinary surgeons... [and] has demonstrated personal commitment to her personal education, and therefore to patient care, by pursuing a remarkable range of qualifications."

Louise herself says: "Nursing is about making your mark, about being there for your patients, and for me that's what my career has been about. It's a bit of a cliché, but we really are the voice of our patients, and so when people ask me 'why do you spend so much

English please!

Language testing to come into force

The College is now in the final stages of implementing new procedures to introduce language testing for overseas-qualified veterinary nurses where we have 'serious and concrete doubts' about an applicant's ability to communicate in the English language.

The changes follow amendments to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 to allow the Registrar to decline to register a veterinary surgeon where we have 'serious and concrete doubts' about their language ability. The law was amended following the introduction of the new Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive. RCVS Council agreed that the implementation of language testing procedures should proceed simultaneously for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, and at its meeting on 3 May VN Council agreed to implement the new procedures for all overseas-qualified VNs, regardless of which overseas country they qualified in.

Under the proposals, overseas applicants will be required to self-certify that their English language ability is sufficient to work as a veterinary nurse in the UK, and provide appropriate evidence to support their claim. Should the College have 'serious and concrete doubts' at this stage, during any required examination, or

"The implementation of language testing procedures should proceed simultaneously for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses."

during their visit to the College to sign the register, the RCVS Registrar will have the right to suspend the candidate's registration until they have passed IELTS level 7, undertaken a formal 'Period of Adaptation', or spent an appropriate period of time working in a role or roles with English as the main language.

New Day-one Skills List is approved

Changes from this September

At its May meeting, VN Council approved a new **Day-one Skills List, which will better reflect the clinical and professional skills needed for veterinary nurses when they enter practice as registered professionals.**

Day-one Skills are a key aspect of student VNs' assessment, allowing them to demonstrate their competences across a range of areas. The new List and accompanying guidance was developed by a Working Party that was set up to update the skills so that they better reflect the reality of veterinary nurses' duties in clinical practice. This will ensure that newly qualified veterinary nurses all have safe and effective clinical skills, as well as a secure understanding of their responsibilities.

The Working Party comprised representatives from VN Education Committee, clinical practice and industry. They updated the list by drawing on their own knowledge and experience, as well as responses from an open consultation in 2015 which had invited veterinary professionals to contribute their thoughts on how the List could be improved.

Some of the principal changes include a reduction in practical placement hours from 2,100 to 1,800; an increased emphasis on the behavioural and emotional needs of patients; and the creation of a new type of behaviour tool to help student veterinary nurses assess their own professional conduct.

Julie Dugmore, Head of Veterinary Nursing at the College, says: "The new Skills List has been created with a focus on veterinary nurses' clinical skills, emphasising those procedures that can be delegated to the profession under Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act.

"We developed it over the course of many months and greatly benefited from feedback from veterinary nurses, veterinary surgeons, and other members of the veterinary team. The resulting list is more relevant and efficient, directly addressing the clinical skills that veterinary nurses actually use in practice. All skills may be gained in relation to the care of either horses (or other equines) or small animals, which should include dogs, cats and exotic species."

The new List will come into force from September 2016, after which we will expect all providers of veterinary nursing education to calibrate their curricula accordingly. The full Skills List can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library

time with getting extra qualifications?', it's really about making sure I'm better able to help my patients.

"As I get older it's also about educating the next generation of veterinary nurses, helping to train them to do the same and to spread our knowledge and training. Our training is something British vet nurses can really be proud of, and it's humbling to receive this award when I know just how many other dedicated, passionate vet nurses are out there, but I am truly grateful that the RCVS, and my colleagues, think that I am a worthy recipient."

"Nursing is about making your mark, about being there for your patients, and for me that's what my career has been about."

She will be presented with the Golden Jubilee Award at RCVS Day, Friday 15 July, our Annual General Meeting and Awards Day. This year it will take place at the Royal Institute of British Architects.

A limited number of tickets will be available for members and veterinary nurses in early June – please see www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-events/rcvs-day



The College and Defra now await confirmation from the European Commission that the new procedures are compliant with the Directive. In the meantime, issues regarding prospective applicants' English language skills will be assessed on a case by case basis by the Registrar and, if necessary, action will be taken in line with the proposed procedures.

A day in the life of a Qualifications Officer

Training Practices and Centres – how does evaluation work?

Training Practices (TPs) play an important role in a student veterinary nurse's training. They can be a student veterinary nurse's second home for over two years, and the support and training they provide ensures that new veterinary nurses have the vocational training and clinical experience required to meet their Day-one Competences.

The RCVS visits each centre and two of their associated training practices every five years to ensure they are supporting their veterinary nurses to a consistently high standard. The TPs are checked against the measures of training as outlined in our TP Handbook (available from www.rcvs.org.uk/publications) making sure that each practice has appropriate resources, provides enough support to students, operates fair and valid assessment systems, and operates robust quality assurance.

We normally conduct two such visits over the course of a day, visiting the TP's associated centre the day afterwards. While each of these visits will be different, a recent visit to a TP in Kent by Lily Lipman, our Qualifications Officer and a veterinary nurse herself, showcases a fairly typical day.

When she first arrived at the practice Lily was greeted by the RVN training coordinator, who led Lily through the sea of patients to a side room where binders and documents lay in wait, full of data and information on how the practice organises its relationship with the students and the nearby college offering veterinary nursing training.

Before Lily delved into the binders, however, she asked if she could have a tour of the practice. As well as providing a view of the facilities and resources, a tour lets Lily assess the student veterinary nurses' environment and ask some routine questions such as: who holds keys to the drug cabinets; what kind of rota system do they use; where do they keep their records, and so on.

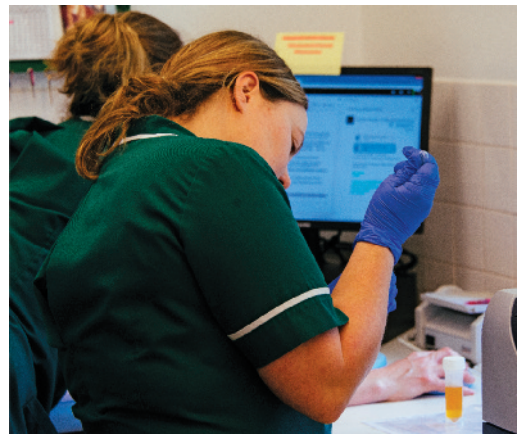
As the training coordinator took her around the premises she told Lily how the practice had been specially designed in the 1990s so that it now had a custom-built ultrasound room, separate scrub room, dental suite, and a cattery, not to mention an equine clinic. The set-up seemed to work well for the patients

and Lily was also told that each day the practice performs about two or three soft tissue operations and two orthopaedic surgeries, while they normally see about one exotic patient per week.

“Visiting the TPs and centres is a really valuable way for the RCVS to get an on-the-ground view of the practices, and see how they each operate and support the student veterinary nurses.”

After the tour, they returned to the quietly-waiting room full of binders. This part of a visit allows Lily to peruse the documents and ask any questions that may come up, whether that's about the CPD certificates, the Memorandum of Understanding that each practice has with the training college, or the contracts that they have with the student veterinary nurses.

After that, all that was left was for Lily to ask for a private chat with one of the four student veterinary nurses (she always asks in advance so that the student isn't surprised by a sudden call to duty). This part of a visit allows the student to talk in confidence about their experience with the TP, and their college, and raise any concerns or suggestions. In this case the student described a training experience with plenty of support,





Lily reviews paperwork during her TP visit

and a team that would go that extra mile by testing her on the whiteboard in the operations room. She said she was happy with her training and her course, and was feeling confident about her exams in a couple of weeks.

After that, Lily's visit was very nearly complete. She asked a final few questions of the training coordinator, including a request to see the students' NPLs, and then she said her goodbyes.

The centre visit

When Lily visits a TP she always keeps the next day's visit to their partner centre in mind, as they are the ones who must ensure that student veterinary nurses complete the requisite amount of training which includes 1,800 hours in clinical placement/employment. They are also responsible for training all students to meet the RCVS Day-one Competences and Day-one Skills for veterinary nurses, and providing adequate access to placements (or employment) at a practice.

Lily will typically arrive at the Centre around 9.30am, where she's greeted by the course manager. The manager will then give a presentation on the design of

the course and the institution as a whole, before taking Lily on a site tour of the facilities and resources.

Then the documentation audit begins: this covers a whole host of areas, such as having consistent CPD policy and records; compiling all the Memoranda of Understanding between the centre and their TPs; providing evidence of practical teaching and the minimum amount of guided learning hours; and exhibiting an example of teaching materials and formative assessment.

Lily will then meet with some of the student veterinary nurses themselves. Much like her meeting with the students at the TPs, these meetings allow for the students to provide some confidential feedback, and give Lily a better sense of the atmosphere and progression of the students.

Lily's final piece of work at the end of the day is to compile the feedback and send it through to the Principal and Head of Centre. If there are any outstanding actions, this is where she'll include them, along with a reasonable deadline.

These combined visits are crucial in allowing Lily to assess what kind of training the student veterinary nurses are receiving. It is only by visiting the TPs and the centres together that she can gain a truly holistic view of the student nurses' experiences and learn how their training can be further improved.

Lily says: "Visiting the TPs and centres is a really valuable way for the RCVS to get an on-the-ground view of the practices, and see how they each operate and support the student veterinary nurses. It's a very satisfying part of my job, and it's wonderful to see how the centres just keep improving over the years."



BSAVA session on Schedule 3

Profession asked for suggestions on reviewing the rules

At the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress in early April we held a special workshop with veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons to discuss ways in which we could change or amend Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.

Following our campaign to give legal protection to the title 'veterinary nurse', the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) offered to work with us to find alternative ways of strengthening the veterinary nursing profession.

Most significantly, Defra suggested a full review of Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act; this is the part of the Act that allows veterinary surgeons to delegate medical treatment and minor acts of veterinary surgery to veterinary nurses. We hope that



this will include expanding the role of veterinary nurses in assisting with anaesthesia, as agreed by RCVS Council in November 2015. It might also include changing the language and guidance on Schedule 3 to give veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses more confidence in delegating and undertaking Schedule 3 activities respectively.

The session at BSAVA Congress was one of several pieces of research we are currently undertaking, linked to the VN Futures project (see page 10), to better understand how Schedule 3 could be enhanced. Later this year we plan to establish a working party to form a settled view on how Schedule 3 might be reformed, before entering into further discussions with Defra later in 2016.

Ben Myring, our Senior Policy and Public Affairs Officer, led the BSAVA session along with Liz Cox, Chair of VN Council, and Julie Dugmore, Head of Veterinary Nursing. He said: "We were pleased with the outcome of the workshop, in which different break-out groups helped to give us lots of insight into the evolving role of veterinary nurses, how practices can get the most out of their veterinary nurses and their ideas on how the profession can move forward.

"Although we might not be able to go ahead with every idea and proposal we do want people to think big and imaginatively and all of the feedback will be put to the Working Party for further consideration."

Those with views on how Schedule 3 can be reformed are encouraged to write to Ben Myring on b.myring@rcvs.org.uk

BVNA Congress 2016

What we're up to

Registration is now open for this year's British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) Congress, which takes place from 7 to 9 October, where we will be holding a series of talks and promoting the Practice Standards Scheme.

The Congress is held in Telford, Shropshire, where there will be a whole host of speakers including Liz Cox, Chair of VN Council, and Julie Dugmore, our Head of Veterinary Nursing. Their talks over the course of the Congress will discuss the next steps for VN Futures following the publication of the VN Futures Action Plan in July (see page 10), including: enhancing the value of the veterinary nurse; training, development and career

progression; patient-centred practice; One-Health; and a review of Schedule 3.

Other speakers will include this year's Golden Jubilee Award winner, Louise O'Dwyer, who will be giving several lectures on anaesthesia, and last year's winner, Dot Creighton, with a lecture titled: 'Step up and step out!'.

If you are attending the Congress please feel free to visit us on stand B7 where we will have plenty of literature to browse about a range of different topics. Our staff will also be on hand to answer any questions you may have and will be promoting the Practice Standards Scheme.

Compulsory microchipping

College issues professional guidance

We have recently produced new guidance for veterinary nurses on the compulsory microchipping regulations for dogs in England, Scotland and Wales.

Each nation has published separate sets of regulations, but they all oblige keepers of dogs to microchip animals over the age of eight weeks, if they have not done so already. The expectation is that puppies will be microchipped before they are eight weeks old.

Furthermore, each set of regulations includes a 'health' exemption from the general obligation to microchip, stipulations as to who can implant microchips in dogs, an obligation to report adverse reactions to microchipping and details of various offences in relation to the regulations.

Ahead of the obligation for animal owners to have their dogs microchipped coming into force we updated the chapter of supporting guidance to our *Code of Professional Conduct* to provide further advice to members of the profession on the regulations (www.rcvs.org.uk/microchipping).

Laura McClintock, our Standards and Advisory Manager, said: "We recommend that veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses familiarise themselves with the regulations applicable in their part of the UK

as, despite broad similarities, there are some very slight differences to be mindful of.

"For example, each set of regulations has slightly different stipulations as to what details should be recorded on a database and the health exemptions are worded slightly differently.

"The RCVS Standards Committee has also advised that a veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse who discovers that a dog has not been microchipped will not be obliged to report this to the authorities. However, they may wish to advise the dog owner of the regulations and encourage them to comply."

Before the regulations came into force the College, along with the BVA and BVNA, had negotiated with Defra to allow veterinary nurses, under the direction of a veterinary surgeon, to implant microchips without having to attend an additional training course. The ability to successfully implant a microchip has also been added to the Day-one Skills List meaning that we expect veterinary nurses to be able to do so by the time they enter practice.

Any veterinary nurses in need of further advice about the supporting guidance can contact our Standards and Advice Team on 020 7202 0789 or profcon@rcvs.org.uk

New 'Fitness to Practise' guide is now available

Guide details professional expectations of vet nurses

We have recently published a new guide for student veterinary nurses to introduce them to issues surrounding fitness to practise.

The guide, entitled *Fitness to Practise – A Guide for UK Providers of Veterinary Nursing Education and Student Veterinary Nurses*, provides guidance for training providers on recognising and addressing fitness to practise concerns, and also sets out broad principles of fitness to practise that student veterinary nurses should follow, and that training providers should expect and uphold.

The guide was produced by a Working Party of the RCVS, representatives from the BVNA and a variety of training providers. While each training provider will have its own specific guidelines and procedures in place for dealing with fitness to practise cases, we

encourage training providers to have regard to this guidance as an example of good practice.

Kathy Kissick, Vice-Chair of VN Council, says: "I am delighted with the completion of the student veterinary nurse fitness to practise guide, and with how much input we received from veterinary nurse educational institutions throughout the process. This guide provides student veterinary nurses and educators with clear guidelines and procedures, establishing professional standards throughout training and helping all training providers to prepare their veterinary nursing students for the rigours of professional life."

The guide can be downloaded from www.rcvs.org.uk/publications



The future is bright

BVNA and RCVS help galvanise the profession with VN Futures

Over the course of the past few months the College has been busy with an unprecedented level of engagement with the veterinary nursing profession as part of its VN Futures initiative, to try and gauge the issues facing the profession and how these might be tackled within the next five years.

The initiative grew directly out of the Vet Futures project and its report, published in November 2015. One of the recommendations in this report was that veterinary nurse leaders should develop a report and recommendations of their own. This was cemented by a joint meeting between members of our VN Council and the British Veterinary Nursing Association's Council (pictured) in which it was decided that a VN Futures project should be launched.



“The profession at large seems to be recognising that it can do more to promote the role of the veterinary nurse to animal owners as people who can provide care and advice.”

This launch took place in February 2016 when we also announced the VN Futures Action Group, which would be leading the project. Since then the Action Group members have been involved in a constant process of engagement with the profession, including face-to-face evening meetings throughout March, April and May, emails and social media.

The overall aim has been to find out, from the profession itself, some of the most pressing issues facing it, while also seeking out opportunities which can effect change for the profession.

Liz Cox, Chair of VN Council, has led many of the evening sessions. She commented: “So far we have been very pleased with the number of people who have turned out for the meetings and it has been a good mix

“Some of the key themes that have emerged include enhancing the value of the VN and using them to their potential.”

of practising veterinary nurses, like me, and those who work in the training and education sector.

“While some of the perennial issues around salary, career structure, professional respect and other such issues have arisen, I have been mostly struck by the positivity of these sessions. There is clearly a willingness, desire and belief for change to happen and the profession at large seems to be recognising that it can do more to promote the role of the veterinary nurse to animal owners as people who can provide care and advice.”

“It has been great to see the profession finding its voice through these events and turning up with lots of positive comments on how things can change for the better.”

Julie Dugmore, Head of Veterinary Nursing at the College, added: “It has been great to see the profession finding its voice through these events and turning up with lots of positive comments on how things can change for the better. As a member of the Action Group I look forward to turning all of these ideas and comments into positive actions which will drive the profession forward.

“Some of the key themes that have emerged include enhancing the value of the VN and using them to their potential; One health; training, development and career pathways; VN-centred practices; and entering the profession.

“If you have been unable to make it to any of the events you are still very welcome to contribute to the debates by emailing me on j.dugmore@rcvs.org.uk. We want to hear from a pool of people as wide



VNFUTURES

and representative as possible, so I would love to hear your thoughts.”

Upcoming events

The next two VN Futures related events will be taking place at our next two Regional Question Times which will feature discussion streams related to the initiative, led by Liz Cox.

The first Question Time takes place at the Nottingham Belfry Hotel on Tuesday 17 May, while the second takes place on Tuesday 31 May at the SSE SWALEC Stadium in Cardiff. Both events are free to attend and will start with a buffet supper at 6.30pm. The VN Futures discussion stream will take up the first half of the meeting, which is expected to finish around 9.30pm to 10pm.

Please visit <http://rcvs.eventbrite> to book a place at either event.



Blogs and discussions

For those who are interested in debating and discussion we have also recently started a blog page on the VN Futures section of the Vet Futures website (www.vetfutures.org.uk/vnfutures). Over the coming months this will feature blogs from Action Group members and beyond tackling some of the issues facing the profession.

The first blog is from Helen Ballantyne, who is both a veterinary nurse and a human medical nurse, who argues that, while veterinary nurses have always been strong advocates for animal welfare and patient care, they have not always advocated for the profession in such a strong way.

She posts several reasons why this might be the case including it being seen, historically, as a ‘subservient’ role, the fact that the vast majority of the profession are women, the profession’s relatively young age, busyness, and the fact that veterinary nurses may not

necessarily know where to turn for advocacy. However, she also notes that this is starting to change and that, increasingly, the profession is finding its voice.

Any veterinary nurses, or other members of the practice team, who wish to comment on the blog can do so by visiting www.vetfutures.org.uk/vnfutures where there is also a poll asking whether veterinary nurses are strong advocates for the profession.

Vet Futures Summit

The culmination of all the work of the VN Futures project and its Action Group will come at the Vet Futures Summit, which takes place on Monday 4 July at the Royal Veterinary College in Camden.

The event will see the launch of the VN Futures Action Plan, which will give a roadmap to how the profession can meet some of its ambitions within the next five years. The Vet Futures Action Plan will also be launched at the same event and will look at how to turn the Vet Futures Report’s 34 recommendations into concrete actions by 2030.

Anyone is welcome to attend the event (subject to space limitations) and tickets can be purchased for £20 from vetfuturesummit.eventbrite.co.uk

VN Action Group members

- Helen Ballantyne RVN
- Liz Cox RVN, VN Council Chair
- Julie Dugmore RVN, RCVS Head of Veterinary Nursing
- Sue Gregory MRCVS, Professor of Veterinary Nursing at the Royal Veterinary College
- Daniel Hogan RVN, Vet Futures lead for VN-related issues
- Sam Morgan RVN, BVNA President
- Renay Rickard RVN, President of the Veterinary Practice Managers Association
- Marie Rippingdale REVN, VN Council member
- Stephanie Writer-Davies, President of the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons
- Nimisha Patel RVN, BVNA student representative

Meet the new team member

Nimrah Saleem, Veterinary Nursing Enrolment Officer



What is your role at the RCVS?

Most of my colleagues here at the RCVS call me Nim and I really felt welcomed and at home here from when I started at the very beginning of March. My main role at the RCVS is to help those at the start of their training and development into veterinary nursing.

What does that role entail?

I offer careers advice to those looking to become a veterinary nurse and, of course, my main responsibility is enrolling those who are looking to become a student veterinary nurse from UK colleges and universities. My role requires having a lot of attention to detail as we get many enrolment forms coming to the RCVS and all of the information then needs to be checked and eventually leads to accounts being created for the student veterinary nurses on our system and the Nursing Progress Log (NPL) if need be.

What is your background?

I recently graduated from university with a Modern History BA and am a very big history geek! I have a background of working with charities, having worked with 'Save the Children' in their supporter finance and income team and also with the charity 'The Challenge – NCS'. And of course, I love animals – my favourite being rabbits!

Who does what...

Julie Dugmore

Head of Veterinary Nursing

Annette Amato

Deputy Head of Veterinary Nursing,
Secretary to VN Council

Vicky Hedges

RCVS examinations

Chloe Baxter

Initial VN registrations

Claire O'Leary

Centre approvals and monitoring,
ACOVENE support

Joseph Cummins (maternity cover)

Examinations, Diploma in Advanced
Veterinary Nursing, overseas
registration applications

Nimrah Saleem

Student enrolments and careers

Lily Lipman

Accreditation and quality
monitoring for VN qualifications

Jenny Soreskog-Turp

Continuing professional
development and Professional
Development Record

Catherine Phillips

DipAVN External Quality Assurer

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