Veterinary Nurses Council
Agenda for meeting to be held on Tuesday 31 January 2017 at 2.00pm

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of interest

3. Minutes of meeting held on 4 October 2016  
   Paper attached

4. Matters arising
   a. Schedule 3 review  
   b. Any other matters arising (not listed below)  
   Oral report

5. Update on operational matters  
   Oral report

Matters for decision by VN Council and reports from Committees

6. ENQA
   a. Update on progress  
   Oral report
   b. Appeals procedure  
   Paper attached

7. VN Education Committee
   Minutes of meeting held on 21 November 2016  
   Paper attached

Matters of note

8. Reports from Committees
   a. Practice Standards Group  
   Oral report
   b. Standards Committee  
   Oral report
   c. VN Preliminary Investigation Committee  
   Paper attached
   d. VN Disciplinary Committee  
   Paper attached
9. **VN Register report**  
Registrations and removals  
Paper attached

10. **VN Futures**  
Oral report

11. **Communications report**  
Oral report

12. **Any other business**

13. **Date of next meeting**  
Tuesday 2 May 2017 at 11.00am

Annette Amato  
Deputy Head of Veterinary Nursing  
January 2017  
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Meeting</strong></th>
<th>Veterinary Nurses Council</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>31 January 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Minutes of meeting of VN Council held on 4 October 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classification</strong></td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Summary</strong></td>
<td>Minutes of the previous meeting of VN Council held on 4 October 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Decisions required</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
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<td><strong>Attachments</strong></td>
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| **Author**  | Annette Amato  
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Veterinary Nurses Council
Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2016

Members: Mrs Victoria Aspinall
Mrs Lucy Bellwood
Miss Alison Carr
Dr Niall Connell - Vice-Chair
Mrs Elizabeth Cox - Chair
Mr Dominic Dyer
* Mrs Andrea Jeffery
Mrs Racheal Marshall
Miss Hilary Orpet - Vice-Chair
Professor Susan Proctor
Mr Matthew Rendle
* Miss Amber Richards
Miss Marie Rippingale
Mr Peter Robinson
Colonel Neil Smith

*absent

In attendance: Mrs Annette Amato - Committee Secretary
Mr Luke Bishop - Senior Communications Officer
Mrs Julie Dugmore - Director of Veterinary Nursing
Ms Eleanor Ferguson - Registrar
Mrs Victoria Hedges - Examinations Manager
Mrs Lily Lipman - Qualifications Manager
Ms Lizzie Lockett - Director of Strategic Communications
Mrs Corrie McCann - Director of Operations.
Ms Laura McClintock - Advisory Solicitor
Mr Anthony Roberts - Director of Leadership and Innovation
Mrs Jenny Soreskog-Turp - CPD Officer
Dr Christopher Tufnell - RCVS President

Apologies for absence and welcome to new members

1. The Chair welcomed the two new elected members of Council, Mrs Racheal Marshall and Mr Matthew Rendle.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Andrea Jeffery and Miss Amber Richards. Mrs Jeffery had provided comments on some items in the agenda which the Chair would report at
the relevant points in the discussion.

**Declarations of interest**

3. Mrs Jeffery reported that she will be taking up the appointment of external examiner for the College of West Anglia. Her appointment as external examiner to the Royal Veterinary College has come to an end.

**Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2016**

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2016 were accepted as a correct record.

**Matters arising**

5. **VN Registration Rules.** The Chair reported that the changes to the Registration Rules agreed at the May meeting had been ratified by RCVS Council in June. A further amendment to the Rules, to remove the requirement for all licence to practise qualifications to include a specified minimum number of guided learning hours, had been agreed by VN Council by correspondence following a recommendation from the meeting of the VN Education Committee in June, and this amendment had been approved by RCVS Council at its meeting on 29 September.

6. **English Language testing.** The procedures approved at the previous meeting for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses had now been accepted, and would be adopted for all overseas-qualified applicants to the VN register.

7. **Schedule 3 Review.** The Chair confirmed that the first meeting of the working party took place on 5 September and work had now commenced. The Working Party had drawn up proposals for a consultation of the professions, and VN Council will be kept informed of progress.

**Update on operational matters**

8. The Chief Executive reported that the RCVS is now in the last three months of the three-year strategic plan, and by the end of the year we will have completed thirty four of the thirty five actions which were agreed. The one outstanding item is the review of the standard of proof in disciplinary proceedings. This would be carried out in 2017 at the same time as the review of the operation of the Legislative Reform Order.

9. Key activities since the last meeting were as follows:

10. **Alternative Dispute Resolution Scheme.** The next stage of the scheme had been launched, and already there were four cases due to go through the scheme, subject to the agreement of the veterinary surgeons.

11. **Fellowships.** The first group of new fellowships would be conferred at a celebration at the Royal Institution on 19 October, which would be attended by new and existing Fellows.
12. **Governance.** The groundwork for governance reform of the College had been laid, and it was hoped that there would not be delays as a result of the Brexit decision.

13. It was confirmed, in response to a query, that the RCVS was working closely with BVA and other bodies to present a united voice on Brexit issues, and working closely with Defra. It was added that the RCVS has a very good relationship with the profession in other European countries.

14. **VN and Vet Futures.** There had been tremendous progress with both the Vet Futures and VN Futures projects. The VN Futures in particular has achieved a great deal in the short time since its launch.

15. **New Strategic Plan.** The new Strategic Plan had been in development over the last eighteen months. Five pillars had been identified: a just culture; leadership and innovation; becoming a first rate regulator; global issues; the service agenda.

16. **Senior Team.** There had been a number of changes to the Senior team at the College. Eleanor Ferguson had been appointed Registrar, Lizzie Lockett as Deputy CEO and Anthony Roberts as Director of Leadership and Innovation. Julie Dugmore and Christine Warman had been re-titled Director of Veterinary Nursing and Director of Education respectively.

**VN Education Committee**

17. **Membership of Education Committee.** The Director of Veterinary Nursing reported the current membership of the Committee as set out in its terms of reference, and sought Council’s approval to the appointment of two new members to replace members who had retired. Council agreed to the appointment of Sarah Frost RVN as the Further Education provider, to replace Dr Jenny Watkins. Hilary Orpet would replace Elizabeth Figg as one of the six VN Council representatives on the Committee.

18. **Minutes of meeting held on 27 June 2016.** Council received and noted the report from the meeting of the VN Education Committee (VNEC) held on 27 June 2016. The Chair drew attention to a few points in the report, on behalf of Mrs Jeffery, the Chair of the Committee.

19. The process for enrolment of new students was running smoothly and an enrolment administrator had been appointed to assist during the busy period. In June, there were 13,670 registered veterinary nurses, including 241 who had qualified overseas and 834 with an HE qualification.

20. It is disappointing to note that there continue to be cases where students have submitted record of training documents with forged training practice principal or head of centre signatures as part of their application to register. These are always investigated fully by the Registrar before registration can take place. In response to a query, it was confirmed that it may be possible for registration applications to be made online in the future, although the timeline for this was not yet known.
21. The updated Day One Skills list and new professional behaviour assessment framework are now embedded within the Nursing Progress Log ready for issue to the new cohorts of students. This work was completed one week ahead of schedule and has been very positively received.

22. The question of whether a list of RCVS pre-approved external examiners might be made available to colleges had been discussed with the Registrar, as agreed at the previous meeting. However, it had been felt that this would not be suitable, but enhanced guidance will be issued on the criteria for appointment of external examiners.

23. The Committee had recommended that the requirement for all licence to practise qualifications to include a specified minimum number of guided learning hours should be removed from the VN Registration Rules. This had been taken forward by correspondence as reported in para. 5 above and the Rules had now been amended.

**European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)**

24. The Qualifications Manager presented a paper setting out the background for ENQA, and the rationale for the RCVS application for ENQA accreditation. The RCVS Education Committee had accepted a recommendation from the Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC) that the RCVS should apply for membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) the umbrella organisation which represents quality assurance organisations from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) member states. The PQSC had also agreed that any application would need to encompass both veterinary and veterinary nursing accreditation procedures.

25. There are several changes that will be required to current accreditation procedures in order to comply with ENQA standards. The initial proposed changes were outlined in the paper. It was added that further incremental changes will be passed through Veterinary Nurses Council, PQSC and RCVS Education Committee as the application evolves. The timeline has been agreed by the PQSC, and the RCVS Education and Veterinary Nursing departments are working together on the application paperwork.

26. VN Council was requested to make several decisions in respect of dealing with the application process. The Chair reminded Council that recommendation of two veterinary nurse critics for the application process had already been made when the allocation of VNC members to various committees and working groups had been made in the summer. Dr Connell and Miss Orpet had agreed to act as “critical friends” for this process.

27. Council approved the amended post–visitation feedback forms which had been developed to meet the ENQA accreditation requirements. It was agreed that these should also include a question on the positive aspects of the visit.

28. There was some discussion as to the appropriate criteria and process for the appointment of a student panel member for accreditation visits. It was agreed that the student member should not be from the institution being visited. It was suggested, and generally agreed, that a recent
graduate would be more appropriate, as had been agreed for the veterinary school visitations, as they would have had complete but very recent experience of the process.

29. It was noted that the PQSC and RCVS Education Committee were to be the bodies delegated to take the detailed decisions on the ENQA process for veterinary education, and there were some queries on the role of the audit and risk committee. Col. Smith said that he would feed back concerns to the PQSC about the level of detail required.

30. At the conclusion of the discussion, the initial decision of VN Council was that it should also devolve the making of decisions on the ENQA process to its VN Education Committee. However, at its afternoon session, this decision was raised again by the Chair and the Director of Veterinary Nursing, and it was pointed out that ENQA will be overseeing the regulator of qualifications rather than the colleges providing the qualifications, and VN Council may be the more appropriate body in this case. It was also pointed out that to defer ENQA decisions to VN Education Committee, which meets some seven weeks after VNC, will have a significant impact on the proposed timeline. Council was therefore urged to review its decision and retain oversight of the ENQA process. It was then agreed that this should be reconsidered in light of further details to be provided by the Director of Veterinary Nursing, by email correspondence.

31. Afternote: Following email correspondence, VN Council has reviewed its original decision and has agreed to retain oversight of the ENQA process, rather than devolving this to its Education Committee.

CPD Consultation

32. The CPD Officer presented a paper setting out the findings and outcomes of the CPD consultation, with a summary of the discussion and recommendations from the CPD Working Party and the Operational Board. A further report would be made to RCVS Council in November.

33. It was noted that there had been over 3,000 respondents, approximately 30% of whom had been veterinary nurses. The full report and responses, numbering some 1,000 pages, were available to any VNC members who wished to see it. There had been positive comments on aspects of the proposals, especially if the recording process is easy and not too time consuming, but the main concerns from both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses were in relation to the reflection part of the CPD cycle and the additional amount of time that may be required. There seemed to be confusion and misunderstanding on the meaning of the term ‘reflection’. It was reported that the working group had met in September and had discussed these concerns. The group had felt that the proposals should be taken forward and the concerns could be addressed by clarification in a FAQ document.

34. In the subsequent discussion, members expressed surprise that one of the groups of VNs most resistant to the introduction of a reflective stage were newly qualified VNs, who would be accustomed to reflection as part of their assessment process, although it was suggested that this in itself may be part of the problem, in that they had “had enough”. It was suggested, however, that while reflection in education may be an administrative burden, reflection in a
practice situation could be quite different and could be embedded in the practice strategy.

35. It was generally agreed that the term ‘reflection’ may be misunderstood and off-putting and that there may be merit in the use of alternative terms such as ‘evaluation’ or ‘review’. It was also commented that bearing in mind that only 8% of the comments received were completely in support of the proposals, and that only 10% of the professions had responded to the consultation, considerable work would be needed in promoting and explaining the proposals, with a staged introduction. A suggestion was made by one member that an App would be a useful development, to include examples of reflection. It was agreed that this would be popular.

36. The President commented that although there had been some negative comments, it was important to move forward, and the paper put to RCVS Council in June had been very well evidenced. It was pointed out that the challenge to the RCVS is to lead, and to convince the professions of the merits and value to both the professions and their clients.

37. Council agreed to all the recommendations included in the paper. It was felt that the number of hours required for relection should not be prescribed, but kept flexible and recorded as part of the overall CPD hours.

**CPD Review Group**

38. Mr Rendle reported that he had attended the CPD Review Group as one of the VN Council representatives. There had been a useful discussion on how to deal with non-compliance, and how this would feed into the disciplinary process. It had also been stressed that the professions should be encouraged to keep their contact details up to date.

39. The CPD Officer reported that the 2016 audit of veterinary nurses’ CPD had now been completed and the results would be reported to the VN Education Committee in November. The first disciplinary case for a VN who was non-compliant with CPD submission requirements was due to take place in October.

**Reports from Committees**

**Practice Standards Group (PSG)**

40. The Director of Leadership and Innovation provided a brief review of the first year of the new practice standards scheme after its relaunch in November 2015. The new scheme provides a greater focus on how practices use their resources to create a positive outcome for patients and clients, and enables practices to distinguish the areas in which they excel through the awards system, which provides a pathway for improvement.

41. A major area of change had been the recruitment exercise for assessors, with a thorough training and appraisal system now in place, providing consistency throughout. PSS visits focus on advice and guidance rather than what may be wrong. The new IT system, which should be ready to introduce towards the end of the year, will allow practices to upload documents in
advance of the visit. The feedback so far on the new scheme and the assessors has been excellent and the awards scheme is well liked, with even those practices gaining the outstanding awards commenting that the system has improved their service. The number of applications has increased by 25% in the last year. The first awards reception will take place at the BVNA congress at the end of the week.

42. The Chair, as an end user, fully endorsed the positive comments on the scheme.

**Standards Committee**

43. Mrs Bellwood reported on a number of items discussed at the recent Standards Committee meeting.

44. **Review of guidance notes.** The Committee has reviewed and approved revised guidance on clinical and client records. The updated guidance now covers key areas such as dealing with amendments or additions to records; dealing with factual inaccuracies and client disputes; access to and provision of records; retention and storage of records.

45. **Feline renal transplants.** In April 2016, Standards Committee approved new guidance on feline renal transplantation procedures following lengthy discussions as well as consideration of evidence presented by the Science Advisory Panel. The new guidance was subsequently reported to RCVS Council in June 2016. The overall decision was that it was only considered ethically and legally acceptable to transplant a kidney from a dead animal and that living and pre-euthanasia cats were not acceptable transplant animals. Standards Committee agreed recipient welfare should be covered and approved additional guidance. This includes requirements for active lifelong care for the recipient.

46. **Telemedicine.** Standards Committee has committed to running a consultation on the subject of telemedicine, and will be gathering feedback from the profession and the public in order to develop new professional standards and guidance on this emerging area of practice. The paperwork will now be finalised with the Committee and the consultation launched in due course.

47. **Veterinary fees.** The Vet Futures project is now at the ‘Action Plan’ stage and one of the actions is to do some work around communicating veterinary fees and values and develop communications materials to explain veterinary fees and value to the general public. Standards Committee considered whether we can do more via the supporting guidance to help veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses manage client expectations with regards to veterinary fees.

**VN Preliminary Investigation Committee**

48. The Report from the Chairman of the RVN PI Committee on the activity of the Committee since the last VN Council meeting was noted. This included a chart showing all the RVN concerns registered between 1 April 2011 and 6 September 2016, a total of 167 in this period which is low in comparison to the concerns submitted in respect of veterinary surgeons. The Registrar
highlighted the number of concerns registered for veterinary nurses since May 2016 (fifteen) which is a very low figure.

49. It was noted that the first veterinary nurse case in relation to non-submission of CPD records will be considered by the Disciplinary Committee in due course.

**VN Futures**

50. The Chair reported that the VN Futures report was launched at the Vet Futures summit on 4 July, as well as a very useful animation. All RVNs have been emailed the report. Council members were encouraged to share the information as widely as possible. There has been very good press coverage, although it has been clear from some comments that the full VN Futures report has not been read, with a preference to accessing press articles instead.

51. The VN Futures action day on 6 September was very well attended and some action groups are already in place and starting work, with joint projects involving NHS and interest expressed by the SVE (Société des Veterinaires Suisses). Invitations have been received from the various veterinary congresses to promote and discuss the project, and there are plans to meet with the BVNA at the weekend to hold further discussions. The Chair stressed the need for VN Council members to remain engaged, to take the project forward.

**VN Council Strategy plan**

52. The Director of Veterinary Nursing tabled the Strategy Plan which was agreed in February 2015, showing the targets achieved by October 2015 and October 2016, updated following the VN Futures action planning day in September. It was noted that many of the actions have now been completed, and some have been incorporated into the VN Futures ambitions and will be taken forward by others.

**Communications report and RCVS Strategic Plan**

53. The Director of Strategic Communications reported on a number of recent and forthcoming activities.

54. **BVNA Congress.** The RCVS would have a stand at the BVNA Congress from 7 – 9 October, and the focus would be on the new Practice Standards Scheme and the VN Futures project.

55. **London Vet Show.** The London Vet show at the Excel centre would take place on 17 and 18 November. The focus at the RCVS stand would be on mental health and wellbeing.

56. **Publications.** *RCVS News* would be published after RCVS Council in November. Thoughts were being given to paring this down, and publishing hard copies less frequently in the future, together with the online RCVS e-News. The next edition of *VN Education* would be issued in December.

57. **Regional Question Time.** The next RQT event would take place in Winchester on 24
November. As always, any VN Council members in the area were very welcome to attend.

58. **Mind Matters Initiative (MMI).** The series of mental health awareness training sessions organised in conjunction with BSAVA had proved very popular, and the feedback had been excellent. The SPVS/MMI Wellbeing Awards for practices, launched at the BSAVA Congress, was being promoted and the awards would be made at the January SPVS/VPMA Congress.

59. **Countryfile.** The RCVS had exhibited at the first Countyfile live event at Blenheim Palace in August. Activities were held to promote the new Find a Vet search tool and the new practice Standards Scheme, as well as the provision of careers advice for prospective veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons. The RCVS stand had proved very popular, with young visitors to the stand being able to don a surgical hat, mask and gown and try their hand at “surgery” using excellent models devised by the VN Examinations Manager.

60. **Vet Futures.** The first meeting of the Vet Futures Project Board since the summit in July would take place on 14 October, and VN volunteers would be sought for relevant action groups.

61. **RCVS Strategic Plan.** The first draft of the RCVS strategic plan for the next three years had been presented at the Council meeting on 29 September, and been had circulated to VN Council members for comments. Council members were asked to provide their comments by the end of the week. A final draft would go to Council on 10 November for sign off.

**Meeting with BVNA Officers**

62. The Chair reported that an informal meeting had taken place with the BVNA President and Senior Vice-President after the VN Council meeting in May. There continues to be a close working relationship with the BVNA, with collaboration continuing on the VN Futures project.

**Any other business**

63. There were no other items raised.

**Date of next meeting**

64. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 31 January 2017 at 11.00am.
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>31 January 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>RCVS visitation appeal procedure</td>
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<td>Classification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>If a visited veterinary nurse education provider questions the formal outcomes of the accreditation process, there is no system in place for that decision to be challenged. Part of the requirement for ENQA accreditation is that the organisation has an appeal procedure in place and attached is a proposed policy that has been largely adapted from the one that EAEVE currently uses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decisions required</td>
<td>To approve or amend the attached RCVS visitation appeal procedure.</td>
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<td>Attachments</td>
<td>Draft RCVS Visitation appeal procedure</td>
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<td>Author</td>
<td>Lily Lipman</td>
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DRAFT RCVS Visitation Appeal Procedure

Scope of Appeals

1. This appeals procedure applies where an institution questions the formal outcomes of the accreditation process, where it can:
   • demonstrate that the outcome is not based on sound evidence, and/or
   • that published standards have not been correctly applied and/or
   • that published processes have not been consistently implemented.

2. No appeal will be entertained in respect of the individual judgement(s) made by the visiting team and contained within the visitation report.

Definition of terms

3. “formal outcome of the accreditation process” means the category of accreditation into which the institution has been placed and/or the period of accreditation that has been granted

“published standards” means the standards contained within the version of the “RCVS standards and procedures for the accreditation of veterinary degrees” that applies to the visit in question

“published processes” means the processes contained within the version of the “RCVS standards and procedures for the accreditation of veterinary degrees” that applies to the visit in question

Lodging of an appeal

4. An institution must inform the registrar, of its intention to appeal not later than two weeks from receipt by email of the letter confirming the formal outcome of the accreditation process. The appeal must then be made in writing by the Dean or Head of School no later than six weeks from receipt by e-mail of the letter confirming the formal outcome of the accreditation process.

Initial consideration of appeals

5. The first stage of the appeal process will involve reconsideration of the report and decision, together with the argued basis for the appeal, by VNEC at their next scheduled meeting. The visitors of the relevant visitation team may be asked to participate in the reconsideration process. The appeal may be accepted or dismissed. If accepted, VN Education Committee will re-consider its original decision and may decide to amend it. It should be noted that acceptance of the appeal may not necessarily result in a change to the original decision.

6. An appeal will only be dismissed on one or more of the following grounds:
   • It relates to the individual judgements made by the visiting team
   • It gives insufficient information to enable any judgement to be made
   • It is frivolous, vexatious or relates to a minor irregularity in the conduct of the accreditation process
- It is unnecessary because deficiencies in the accreditation process have already been acknowledged and appropriate action taken

7. If an appeal is dismissed for want of sufficient information to enable any judgment to be made, the institution may renew the appeal by sending to the registrar further information as directed by VN Education Committee. The renewed appeal will then be treated as a new appeal, even if the time period for lodging an appeal has passed; but if the new appeal is again dismissed for want of sufficient information, the dismissal will be final.

8. If the appeal is dismissed on any of the grounds mentioned, the institution may nevertheless elect to have the appeal considered by the Visitation Appeals Panel. The institution must pay a fee of £1500 to cover the expenses of the panel, but this will be refunded if the appeal is upheld.

Visitation Appeals Panel

9. The appointment of the panel is coordinated by the registrar. One member should be appointed from the VN Council officer team (e.g. current Chair or Vice-Chair), one member from VN Council and one member should be nominated from the list of RCVS visitors. The meeting will normally be held within two months of receipt of the request by the appellant institution for consideration of the appeal by an appeals panel.

10. At least one panel member must have expertise relating to the sector under dispute. The panel will select its own Chair. All three members must sign a declaration confirming that they have no conflict of interest with the appellant institution and a statement to indicate that they will strictly adhere to the "RCVS AO/HEI Standards" as well as the "Policy on managing potential conflicts of interest for visitation team members".

11. The appellant institution will be provided with copies of any information, apart from legal advice, which is made available to the appeals panel and will be given a reasonable opportunity to comment and make any further representations before the panel considers the appeal.

12. The appellant institution has the right to nominate an observer to attend the meeting of the panel. An observer may respond to questions from the panel; however they will not have voting rights when it comes to decision making. The Chair of the visit team may also be requested to attend the meeting as an observer to assist with any points of clarification.

13. The proceedings of an appeals panel will take place in camera and will remain confidential after the conclusion of the appeal.

14. The appeals panel may:
   a. uphold the appeal and direct VN Education Committee to reconsider its decision
   b. uphold the appeal, but confirm that the decision should remain unchanged
   c. dismiss the appeal
15. Once the panel has reached a decision, by majority vote, its Chair will inform the registrar of its decision by submitting an adjudicating statement, including its reasoning. The registrar will arrange for the outcomes of the appeal to be communicated to the appellant institution, VN Education Committee and VN Council.

16. The decision of the panel shall be conclusive for all purposes.

17. Until the end of the appeal process, the visitation report will not be published and the appellant institution holds its current accreditation status.

**Independent Review**

1. Following the appeal, if the appellant institution raises, in writing, concerns about the process by which it was handled and asks for an independent review, the registrar will appoint a suitable person from another professional body to review the way in which the appeal was dealt with and provide a written report. If the report supports the concerns raised by the appellant institution, the appeal will be reconsidered as if it were a new appeal.
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<td>Deputy Head of Veterinary Nursing</td>
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Veterinary Nurse Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2016

Members:  
Mrs Victoria Aspinall - VN Council veterinary surgeon  
* Mrs Talitha Cartmell - Employer representative  
Mrs Susan Howarth - HE programme provider  
* Mrs Andrea Jeffery - VN Council veterinary nurse (Chair)  
Dr Elizabeth Mossop - Independent educationalist  
Miss Hilary Orpet - VN Council veterinary nurse (in the chair)  
Mrs Sarah Parkhouse - FE programme provider  
Professor Susan Proctor - VN Council lay member  
Mr Peter Robinson - VN Council veterinary surgeon  

In attendance:  
Mrs Annette Amato - Committee Secretary  
Mr Luke Bishop - Senior Communications Officer  
Mrs Elizabeth Cox - Chair, VN Council  
Mrs Julie Dugmore - Director of Veterinary Nursing  
Mrs Victoria Hedges - Examinations Manager  
Mrs Lily Lipman - Qualifications Manager  
Mrs Jenny Soreskog-Turp - Senior Education Officer  

*absent

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Talitha Cartmell and Mrs Andrea Jeffery. Mrs Jeffery had sent comments on some of the agenda items which were brought into the discussion at the relevant time. The meeting was chaired by Miss Hilary Orpet (Vice-Chair, VN Council). The Chair welcomed Mrs Parkhouse to her first meeting as the FE programme provider. It was also Miss Orpet's first meeting as a member of the VNEC, as a VN Council representative.

Declarations of interest

2. Miss Orpet declared that she is senior lecturer in Veterinary Nursing at the Royal Veterinary College. Miss Orpet had recently been approached by the Royal Agricultural University to be the external examiner for the veterinary nursing programme at Askham Bryan college.

3. Mrs Jeffery had reported that she has taken up the role of external examiner for Anglia Ruskin University, and is no longer the external examiner for the RVC Graduate Diploma. Mrs Howarth declared that she had recently been appointed as the external examiner for the RVC Graduate Diploma.
Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee held on 27 June 2016

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2016, which had previously been circulated and submitted to VN Council in October, were accepted as a correct record. It was noted that there had not been the opportunity to carry out the necessary research on the use of blended and e-learning and this item would be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

Operational update

5. The Director of Veterinary Nursing updated the Committee on a number of developments since the previous meeting:

6. **Student enrolments.** The student enrolment process has been going well. An enrolment administrator was employed in August to provide support during the busy autumn period, and due to the improved processes no further support is now needed. A total of 763 students had been enrolled by the date of the meeting, which represents a considerable increase on the numbers in the previous year. As a result of the series of regional meetings involving centre administrators, the centres are now providing improved documentation and student identification. This has contributed significantly to the smooth enrolment process.

7. **Nursing Progress log (NPL).** The updated Day One Skills list and new professional behaviour assessment framework are now embedded within the Nursing Progress Log. This work was completed one week ahead of schedule and the revised NPL is being made available to all newly enrolled students. A training session for centre staff who deal with the training of clinical coaches will be delivered on 30 January 2017 at the RCVS.

8. The next development to be introduced to the NPL will be the inclusion of a functionality to record and calculate the placement time in practice, after which the list of proposed improvements arising from the review will be worked through. Any improved functionality will change across the board for all NPL users, but only newly enrolled students will receive the updated Day One Skills and behaviour framework.

9. **Apprenticeships.** There have been many discussions in recent months with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) regarding the new apprenticeship programme and how veterinary nursing will fit into the new BIS structure. Discussions are still ongoing.

10. **VN Handbooks.** The revised versions of the handbooks for Awarding Organisations (AOs) and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Centres and Training Practices are unfortunately not yet on the website. The amendments will be made within the VN department as soon as the necessary software has been received, which it is hoped will be in the very near future.

11. **VN Futures.** A meeting is being arranged with SPVS, BVNA and other stakeholders to take forward the actions from the VN futures report, and an update will be sent to all those who have engaged with the project so far. The joint “One Health” project involving the British Lung Foundation, the British Thoracic Society and the Royal College of Nursing is already well underway and a meeting is planned for 8 December. The first meeting to discuss Schedule 3
took place in September and a survey of the professions is being planned.

12. A regional question time event for veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons will be held in Winchester on 24 November.

13. **Vetnet.** The 2017 Vetnet conference will take place in Cambridge on 22 and 23 September 2017, and AOs and HEIs will be notified of this date.

**Standards for training and education**

14. **Accreditation visits.** The Qualifications Manager presented a paper setting out proposals for the creation of a panel of visitors, separate from the Education Committee, to be involved in accreditation and validation events of AOs/HEIs. The current process is that these events are conducted by the RCVS Qualifications Manager accompanied by a member of the VN Education Committee (VNEC), or a member of VN Council (VNC).

15. In order to maintain a degree of separation between the functions of the visiting team on the one hand, and the decision making role of RCVS committees on the other, it is proposed that these events be attended by an externally selected panel member. This will reduce conflicts of interest, widen the pool of expertise (particularly for further education accreditation meetings) and bring VN accreditation formats more in line with veterinary school accreditation activities.

16. The Committee was invited to approve the draft chapter for inclusion in the revised version of the AO/HEI handbook, setting out full information on the process for appointment of visitors and the composition of the visitor team, to include a student representative and an external panel member.

17. It was commented by one member that the proposed system did not quite align with that for veterinary school visitations, but it was pointed out that the VN accredited qualifications include both FE and HE provision. As the VNEC has only one FE representative there is need for a wider pool of visitors who can be called on to avoid any conflict of interest. It was also noted that the European veterinary organisations EAEVE and ACOVENE use a pool of visitors, and the RCVS Education Department is also moving in that direction for veterinary school visitations.

18. It was confirmed that the RCVS would provide full training for the visitors and that the payment rates for travel and loss of earnings would be the same as those made for VNC or VNEC members. It was agreed that the documentation should clarify the length and frequency of accreditation visits. The Committee confirmed its full agreement with the proposals and approved the process as set out in the paper. The Chair of VNC added that VNC had agreed, in connection with the RCVS application for the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) accreditation, that a recent graduate would be more appropriate than a student as a member of the panel, as had been agreed for the veterinary school visitations, as they would have had complete but very recent experience of the whole process.

19. **Approval of AO/HEI external examiners.** The Committee noted the current list of external
examiners for all accredited qualifications and agreed the appointment of the new external examiner for Anglia Ruskin university. All AOs/HEIs with an external examiner whose appointment was due to end in 2016 would be sent a reminder at the beginning of December. In response to a query on the amount of clinical CPD required for external examiners, it was confirmed that each university has its own criteria. The Director of Veterinary Nursing would consult the Registrar on the level of guidance which can or should be given by the RCVS. It was confirmed that the RCVS accepts the external examiners appointed by the veterinary schools without providing detailed additional requirements.

20. **Approval of AO/HEI external examiners’ guidance notes.** At its previous meeting, the Committee had discussed and approved revised guidance notes for external examiners which contained changes to strengthen the guidance in terms of minimum qualification level, the period of time an external examiner could be employed after ceasing to be involved in the active training of veterinary nurses and the need for the external examiner to have access to practical examinations as well as the Day One Skills logs.

21. The Qualifications Manager confirmed that she had discussed with the Registrar, as requested at the previous meeting, the proposals that the RCVS should be provided with an examiner’s CV and CPD for approval before confirming the appointment, and the suggestion that the RCVS might provide a list of pre-approved external examiners, available to all AOs and HEIs, to overcome the potential problems. The Registrar had felt that it was not appropriate for the RCVS to act, in effect, as a selection panel when this was not the case, and it had therefore been agreed that the wording in the handbook, as agreed at the previous meeting, should not change. However, it was proposed instead to revise the wording in the memorandum of understanding to strengthen the request by the RCVS that the examiner details be notified in advance before confirming the appointment. In discussion on this proposal, it was suggested that the RCVS should have access to the procedures for appointing an external examiner and audit the AO/HEI against that procedure. If issues are flagged up at this stage, the RCVS may need to suggest that the AO/HEI consider reviewing their procedures.

22. **Day One and Year One Skills.** The Director of Veterinary Nursing reported that the first meeting of the working group to develop a list of Year One Skills had taken place. It had been identified that there was a need for support and guidance, in order to enable the veterinary nurse to develop as a professional. A list of optional skills was being considered. It was noted that this was very much a work in progress at this stage.

23. **ACOVENE update.** The Director of Veterinary Nursing reported that there had been no further visits to the RCVS by ACOVENE since the previous meeting and therefore nothing specific to report. The schedule of RCVS AO/HEI accreditation visits had been provided to ACOVENE so that their audit activity could be planned. The next ACOVENE board meeting would take place in Porto in March 2017. In response to a query, it was confirmed that it was hoped that the Brexit decision would have no effect on the ACOVENE affiliation.

**VN Licence to practise qualifications**

**New / provisionally accredited AOs / HEIs**
24. The Qualifications Manager presented an update report on new and provisionally accredited AOs and HEIs offering awards leading to a licence to practise qualification in veterinary nursing.

25. **University of South Wales.** The College holds provisional accreditation for the FdSc in veterinary nursing and will be newly delivering the City & Guilds level 3 Diploma. A quality audit of the provision will be performed in 2017.

26. **University of Wales.** There was no new audit activity to report.

27. **Easton & Otley College.** This college currently delivers the City & Guilds level 3 Diploma. The RCVS will attend an accreditation event with the University of East Anglia in March 2017, for the provision of a FdSc in Veterinary Nursing to be delivered at Easton & Otley College.

28. **Vetskill.** There was nothing further to report in respect of the application from this Awarding Organisation.

29. **Oxford Brookes University /Solihull College.** The college currently runs a non-licence to practise FdSc which incorporates the RCVS DipAVN. An accreditation event for a proposed new course will be attended by the RCVS in February 2017.

30. **Royal Agricultural University (RAU).** Mrs Aspinall declared a conflict of interest, as the current external examiner for the RAU FdSc in Veterinary Nursing, and left the meeting for the discussion of this item. Miss Orpet stated that she had recently been approached to apply for the position when the current EA’s term of office came to an end.

31. At its previous meeting, the Committee had agreed that the accreditation status should remain as provisional until June 2017. If full approval could not be granted in 2017, subsequent cohorts would be required to sit the RCVS pre-registration examinations. The university had been advised that offers should not be made to candidates applying to start in September 2017, until the position was clear. The Examinations Manager presented a report on the progress of RAU and its delivery sites in addressing the non-compliances identified during audit activity since the last meeting, including a comprehensive list of each action, the progress to date and detailed comments and concerns in certain areas. The Committee discussed this report in full and considered whether sufficient information had been provided to advise the university that they could continue working towards full accreditation.

32. Although the Committee appreciated that a comprehensive response had been received against each of the actions, there were considerable concerns with some of the supporting documentation and a number of deficiencies were noted. In view of these concerns it was agreed that in order to reduce the risk to future students the university should be advised not to recruit onto the FdSc in Veterinary Nursing in 2017.

33. It was further agreed that RAU should be required to submit a detailed recovery plan outlining how they will ensure that the RCVS accreditation standards are met in full, to be submitted by 6
March 2017 for consideration at the March meeting of the Committee. The Committee expected significant progress to be made by March 2017. It was further agreed that if the accreditation standards have not been met in full by June 2017 terminal accreditation would be applied. The University should also be advised that consideration and support should be given to current students to ensure that they are not disadvantaged.

AO / HEI monitoring reports

34. **Routine monitoring reports.** The Qualifications Officer presented a summary report of the auditing activity undertaken for established AOs and HEIs since the last meeting. The risk assessments for some, where there had been a change in the risk banding, were noted. In response to a query regarding routine monitoring carried out by the RCVS, it was confirmed that the amount of advance notice given of items requested for both desk-based audits and visits is specified in the handbook. The Director of Veterinary Nursing undertook to check the processes for request of data for these audits, including sample selection and timing deadlines.

35. **City & Guilds.** The Qualifications Manager reported that there had recently been a very positive meeting with City & Guilds at which the memorandum of understanding between the AO and its centres had been discussed. The Director of Veterinary Nursing added that she was confident that the current restructuring within City & Guilds would result in steps being taken to address outstanding actions, and that regular update meetings would continue to take place.

36. **Central Qualifications.** The Examinations Manager confirmed that as noted at the last meeting, she had requested further information and statistics on the examination system, which CQ had been happy to provide. This was discussed, and it was agreed that no further information on the examinations would be required at present. It was suggested that all examination candidates should be asked to provide qualitative feedback after the examinations.

37. **University of Bristol.** At its meeting in March 2016, the Committee had discussed the practical examination delivered by the University of Bristol for the BSc(Hons) Veterinary Nursing and Bioveterinary Science, and had asked the university to provide written policies and procedures detailing the design, delivery and quality assurance of all the practical examinations, to include the evidence basis used for each aspect.

38. The University had provided proposals for a new examination assessment which it intended to deliver in 2018. These were submitted to the Committee together with extracts from correspondence with the independent expert employed by the University.

39. The Committee accepted that the University’s aim was to produce an exam which is trying to replicate real patient care, in a holistic patient centred rather than task based approach, but it was suggested that this aim may be better achieved through work based assessments such as Directly Observed Procedural Skills (DOPS). It was felt the areas listed in the proposal did not cover all elements of the RCVS Day One Skills. It was agreed that the proposal is interesting and the Committee confirmed that they were open to new and innovative ways to deliver an
objective practical examination, but with the current information it was not possible to visualise what the final examination would look like, and more details should provided.

40. The Committee suggested that the University should continue to work on the proposal with the consultants and provide the final concept in time for the meeting in March 2017.

Training practice and student numbers

41. The Committee noted a paper showing the current numbers of approved training practices offering clinical training and work experience to student veterinary nurses, including details of TP and student numbers by region. It was agreed that information should be obtained and circulated to the Committee on the number of PSS practices above core standards which are not already TPs. This information would also be useful for the working groups in the VN Futures project.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

42. The Committee noted the initial summary of results from the 2016 CPD audit, which had been the seventh annual audit of a sample of veterinary nurses’ CPD records. As in previous years, different groups of nurses had been requested to provide or allow access to their CPD records for audit, including a sample of 8% of nurses who have been registered for a period of at least three years without a break, a group who submitted a return in 2015 but fell short of the overall requirement, a group who had failed to respond to requests to submit their records in 2015, and a group who had been registered for a period of three years without a break and had confirmed that they were not compliant with the requirement when making their annual renewal.

43. The overall response rate for the audit was 94%, although the response rate for the group of non responders from 2015 was low (59%). It was confirmed that these nurses are contacted individually by the professional conduct department. It was also noted that a full Disciplinary Committee would be held in December for a RVN who has not responded to requests to submit CPD records over several years.

44. A further detailed breakdown would be provided for the Committee at its next meeting.

Post Registration Qualifications

DipAVN monitoring report

45. It was noted that there had been no new auditing activity of the current DipAVN providers since the last meeting. Solihull College has recently communicated its intention to cease the DipAVN provision, in its current format, to concentrate on the development of a new licence to practise FdSc in Veterinary Nursing. Statistics on the number of RVNs who achieved a DipAVN from 2011 to 2016 were provided. 280 RVNs have enrolled, of these 218 have achieved the Diploma and 62 remain enrolled.
DipAVN Working Party

46. The Qualifications Manager provided the minutes of the meeting of the DipAVN Working Party held on 22 July 2016, together with a draft framework showing the levels of entry onto the framework for nurses with Level 3, 5 and 6 qualifications, and what they must achieve to attain the next level. This was provided for the information of the Committee at this stage. It had been agreed that a specialist development group would be formed to mould the rudimentary components of the initial DipAVN working party into a framework that is coherent within the context of the VN Futures findings.

Items for publication

47. The next edition of the VN Education newsletter would include information on the changes to the accreditation panels for AO/HEI visits, the Year-one Skills survey, TP numbers and the annual audit of CPD. The next edition of VN Education would be produced for issue in December.

Any other business

48. No other items were raised.

Date of future meetings

49. The dates for the meetings to be held in 2017 were confirmed as follows: Monday 27 March, Monday 17 July, Monday 11 December. All meetings to start at 11.00am.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Veterinary Nurses Council &amp; Council</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>31 January 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>RVN PI Committee Chairperson’s Report to VN Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>This report sets out the work of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) Preliminary Investigation (PI) Committee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decisions required</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>Attachments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>Michael Hepper</td>
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<td>Barrister/Chief Investigator</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:m.hepper@rcvs.org.uk">m.hepper@rcvs.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>Eleanor Ferguson</td>
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<td>Solicitor/Registrar</td>
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Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Chairman’s report to VN Council 31 January 2017

Introduction

Since the last Report to VN Council there have been three meetings of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee (25 October 2016, 6 December 2016 and 10 January 2017).

RVN Concerns received / registered

Between 6 September 2016 and 9 January 2017 there were five new Concerns received against RVNs. Of these five new Concerns, four are currently under investigation by the Case Examiners Group (a veterinary and lay member on RVN PIC and a Case Manager). One Concern was closed by the Case Examiners Group as there was no arguable case.

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

The total number of new cases considered by the Committee between October 2016 and January 2017 was two. Of these two cases, one case is referred to external solicitors for statements to be taken (when the statements have been completed these cases will be returned to the Committee for decision); one case is adjourned pending further investigations.

Ongoing Investigations:

The RVN PI Committee has six ongoing cases. Of these six ongoing cases, one case is adjourned pending the outcome of criminal court trial against an RVN. The Professional Conduct Department has been in communication with the Procurator Fiscal Department and has been informed that the trial date has now been fixed for 5 June 2017, with a procedural hearing scheduled for 2 May 2017. The outcome shall be reported in a future Report to VN Council.
Health Concerns

There are currently no RVNs on the RCVS Health Protocol.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

Since the last report the RVN PI Committee has not referred any new cases to the RVN Disciplinary Committee. The RVN Disciplinary Hearing held in December 2016 resulted in the RVN's name being suspended from the Register for 2 months. The next RVN Disciplinary Hearing is listed for 6 – 15 February 2017 and the outcome will be included in a future Report to VN Council.

MDH/11/01/2017
<table>
<thead>
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<th><strong>Meeting</strong></th>
<th>Veterinary Nurses Council</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>31 January 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>VN Disciplinary Committee Report to VN Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classification</strong></td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary</strong></td>
<td>Update of Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decisions required</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Author**  | Chloe Newbold  
               Clerk to the Disciplinary Committee  
               Tel: 020 7202 0729  
               Email: c.newbold@rcvs.org.uk |
Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee Hearings since the last Council Meeting on 04 October 2016

1. Since the October 2016 Council Meeting, the Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee have met once in relation to charges against a Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN).

2. At the Disciplinary Committee’s annual training in October, the Committee decided to dispense with gowns for all future cases.

3. The College have decided to expand the pool of Legal Assessors for both the Disciplinary Committee and Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee. An advert has been posted on the website and the interview process will take place in February with the successful candidates expected to start mid-year.

Samantha Giles RVN

4. The VN DC met on 15 and 16 December 2017 to consider an allegation against Miss Samantha Giles RVN. The allegation was that between 1 August 2012 and 21 June 2016, Miss Giles failed to respond adequately or at all to reasonable requests from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to provide information with regards to CPD.

5. From the outset, Miss Giles accepted the facts of the case and the Committee concluded that she was guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect stating:

   ‘Your Regulatory body is dependent on all veterinary nurses to respond promptly and truthfully to all reasonable requests made of them for evidence that they have so complied with their continuous training obligations. Without such co-operation the policing of the system cannot work. That is what we consider to be the gravamen of your failures.’

   ‘We consider that you have no legitimate excuse for not complying with those reasonable requests which were made of you by the College or at least some of them…Accordingly, given the importance of compliance with the Code requirements for CPD training and prompt and truthful responses to the reasonable requests for confirmation of your compliance therewith, we have no hesitation in arriving at the conclusion that your admitted conduct amounts to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.’

6. On deciding sanction, the Committee stated:
'It is a matter of great importance that your regulatory body should be able to ascertain whether or not you have complied with your CPD obligations. It is a matter of great importance precisely because members of the public need to be able to repose confidence in the fact that all veterinary nurses have met these training obligations and that their animals can be left safely in the custody and care of those who hold themselves out as properly qualified, experienced and up-to-date practitioners.'

'In the result that mitigation has persuaded us that we would be acting consistently with our public duty by imposing a period of suspension of 2 months.

'In imposing that sanction we have noted the evidence as to your professional competence and your other professional qualities. The Committee trusts, therefore, that once you have served your period of suspension you will return to the profession which you say you love.'

7. The full findings can be found on the RCVS website: http://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/giles-samantha-december-2016-findings-on-sanction/

Upcoming Hearings

1. There is currently one Inquiry hearing listed before the Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee on the following dates:

   • 06-15 February 2017

2. At present, there are no other cases that have been referred to the VN DC.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Veterinary Nurses Council</th>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>VN Register Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>This paper gives the number of registered veterinary nurses as at 18 January 2017, as well as the number of new registrations and removals for 2016. Figures for the previous three years are also included. The figures for 2016 also show the qualification route of the new registrants (UK Further Education, UK Higher Education and Overseas qualification).</td>
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<td>Decisions required</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>Attachments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Annette Amato</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Deputy Head of Veterinary Nursing</td>
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Veterinary Nurses Register

a. Number of registered VNs

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<th>20/01/2016</th>
<th>22/01/2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Registered Veterinary Nurses</td>
<td>14337</td>
<td>13164</td>
<td>11381</td>
<td>10277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Listed Veterinary Nurses</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>959</td>
<td>1052</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Nurses removed for non-payment of annual fee (annually – carried out in early January)</td>
<td>247 (17 restored to register by 18/01/2016)</td>
<td>688 (173 restored to register by 20/01/2016)</td>
<td>302 RVN</td>
<td>430 RVN</td>
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<td></td>
<td>60 VN</td>
<td>63 VN</td>
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b. Number of admissions to the register

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<th>2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>UK Further Education qualification</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK Higher Education qualification</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overseas qualification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total registrations</td>
<td>1209</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>1054</td>
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