

Veterinary Nurses Council

Wednesday 17 November 2021 at 10.00am at the RCVS, Belgravia House,
Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF

Agenda	Classification ¹	Rationale ²
1. Apologies for absence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2. Declarations of interest	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3. Obituaries	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
4. Minutes of meeting held on 15 September 2021		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1,2,3,4
5. Matters arising	Oral report	n/a
6. CEO update	Unclassified	n/a
Matters for decision by VN Council and reports from Committees (unclassified items)		
7. VN Education Committee		
Minutes of meeting held on 13 October 2021	Unclassified	n/a
8. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)		
2021 Audit of RVN CPD - Report	Unclassified	
9. Reports from RCVS Committees		
9.01 VN Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
9.02 Standards Committee	Oral report	
9.03 RVN Disciplinary Committee	Unclassified	n/a

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|-----|---|-----------------------------|-----|
| 10. | Policy and Public Affairs update | Oral report
Unclassified | n/a |
| 11. | Communications report | Oral report
Unclassified | n/a |
| 12. | Any other business (unclassified) | Unclassified | |
| 13. | Date of next meeting
Wednesday 9 February 2022 at 10.30am | | |

Confidential and private items (closed session)

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------|----------------|
| 14. | VN Education Committee confidential items
Confidential items from meeting of 13 September 2021 | Confidential | 2,3,4 |
| 15. | Refugee support proposal | Confidential | 1 |
| 16. | Risk Register
16.01 Risk Register Summary.
16.02 Any items arising from the current meeting to be added to the Risk Register | Confidential | 1,2,3,4 |
| 17. | Items for RCVS Committees | Oral report | |
| 18. | Any other business (confidential items) | Oral report | |

Annette Amato
Secretary, VN Council
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¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
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Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	17 November 2021
Title	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 15 September 2021
Summary	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 15 September 2021
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1,2,3,4

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Veterinary Nurses Council

Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 15 September 2021

Members:	Mrs Belinda Andrews-Jones	-	Vice-Chair
	Miss Alison Carr		
	Dr Niall Connell	-	Officer Team observer (non voting)
	Ms Elizabeth Cox		
	Miss Jane Davidson		
	Mr Dominic Dyer		
	Ms Sarah Fox		
	Mrs Susan Howarth		
	Mrs Katherine Kissick		
	Mrs Donna Lewis		
	Mr Matthew Rendle	-	Chair
	Dr Katherine Richards		
	Ms Stephanie Richardson		
Mrs Claire Roberts			
In attendance:	Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
	Mr Luke Bishop	-	Media and Publications Manager
	Dr Niall Connell	-	RCVS Officer observer
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Ms Eleanor Ferguson	-	Registrar
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	-	Qualifications Manager
	Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	Examinations Manager
	Mr Robert Hewes	-	Head of Insight and Engagement
	Ms Lizzie Lockett	-	Chief Executive
	Mr Ben Myring	-	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
Guests:	Fallon Pfeifer	-	Veterinary student observer

Apologies for absence

1. There were no apologies for absence.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

Obituaries

3. No written obituaries had been received. Council was encouraged to have a moment of reflection after the meeting, for all members of the professions who had passed since the last meeting, and for the on-going difficulties resulting from the current pandemic.

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2021

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2021 were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

5. There were no matters arising on the previous Minutes.

CEO update

6. Council noted the CEO's update report, which provided a summary of activity against the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan.
7. The CEO added that the staff team had worked hard on numerous activities over the past year and were making headway on many strategic projects.
8. One item that had not been covered in the update report was the issues relating to the workforce shortages, which had been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic and Brexit. This was affecting both the professions, although more so for veterinary surgeons post-Brexit. The RCVS was currently carrying out research, gathering data on those leaving and joining the professions and working patterns, focusing on the three Rs – Retention, Recruitment and Return. The College was looking into introducing a support system for veterinary surgeons returning to practice after a break, equivalent to the Period of Supervised Practice scheme for veterinary nurses. It was also important to look at ways in which veterinary nurses could be encouraged to return to the profession.
9. The College was looking into English Language testing requirements and mutual recognition of veterinary degrees for overseas qualified veterinary surgeons.
10. A Workforce Summit was planned for late autumn, which would be held under the ViVet banner and research was underway to support the discussions. In the meantime, supportive messages would be sent out to all members of the veterinary team, acknowledging the difficult times and reiterating the need to do their best and to document issues.
11. The report of the outcome of the survey on the impact of the Covid pandemic would be published within the next few weeks.
12. The Chair thanked the Senior Team for all their hard work and support during these challenging times. In response to a query on any areas where help and support was required, the CEO

confirmed that a flexible approach was currently being taken regarding homeworking for staff, and additional staff members were being recruited to ensure the strategic requirements could be met.

13. Work on the review of Council culture would involve the establishment a number of small working parties, with which the VN Council members of RCVS Council were currently involved. At the next stage there would be the opportunity for feedback on certain areas from VN Council, and the CEO would keep VNC informed.

Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC)

14. Susan Howarth, Chair of the VNEC, presented the minutes of the two meetings of the VNEC held since the last meeting of Council, and highlighted the following points:
 15. **VNEC Meeting of 25 June 2021.** The Committee had welcomed a new member, as approved by VN Council, with specialist knowledge of post-registration qualifications. An additional member of staff had joined the quality assurance team, with a focus on Higher Education (HE) qualifications. It was intended to recommence in-person visits and accreditations in the autumn.
 16. The Committee had agreed the following accreditation, reaccreditation and change in accreditation status:

Lantra Awards – provisional accreditation for the following:

 - Lantra Awards Level 3 Work Based Diploma in Veterinary Nursing - Small Animal
 - Lantra Awards Level 3 Work Based Diploma in Veterinary Nursing – Equine

Lantra Awards is a large provider of Further Education Awards, and as the majority of veterinary nurse students are educated through the further education route, it was encouraging to have a new Awarding Organisation accredited for this sector.
 17. University of Portsmouth – reaccreditation for the FdSc Veterinary Nursing Science.
 18. The University of Glasgow – a change in accreditation status to full accreditation for the following programmes had been agreed, following Chair's action:
 - Scottish BSc in Veterinary Nursing
 - Scottish BSc(Hons) in Veterinary Nursing
 19. Full reports had also been made on the various ongoing monitoring activities of the department.
 20. The Committee had approved an amended version of the RCVS Post-registration Framework for Veterinary Nursing, which incorporated minor amendments based on feedback from providers and accreditation visitors, following its implementation in June 2019.
- VNEC Meeting of 4 August 2021**
21. The Committee had been presented with a new risk-banding matrix summarising the review of self-assessment reports submitted by Awarding Organisations, Higher Education Institutions and

- Delivery Centres. This had been very helpful and the format would be continued for the future.
22. The Committee had received the report of the Pre-registration Examination Board following the examinations held in June. The Board had commended the examinations team for delivering the examination under very challenging circumstances.
 23. The Committee had noted the annual statistical report detailing student numbers at different stages being educated through the Higher Education and Further Education routes.

E-Certificate for newly registered Veterinary Nurses

24. The Head of Insight and Engagement presented a paper setting out a proposal to issue e-certificates to newly registered VNs on a trial basis. Following a successful trial of an e-certificate for a ring-fenced group of veterinary surgeons between March 2020 and January 2021, the e-certificate had now been introduced to all newly registered veterinary surgeons as part of the standard registration process. Registrants could access their certificate at any time through their MyAccount, and were offered a physical copy certificate, free of charge, if they wished.
25. Council was asked to consider a proposal to provide registration e-certificates to newly registered veterinary nurses from 1 November 2021, for a period of three to four months, followed by a survey to gather feedback to measure the success of the trial, make changes or improvements and consider a permanent implementation of the e-certificate for veterinary nurses. Veterinary nurses would be able to request a physical copy of the certificate, free of charge, in line with the process for veterinary surgeons. The benefits of the e-certificate would include reduced impact on the environment, a saving in human resources to produce them, and cost savings in production and postage. Certificates were always accessible and could not be lost, with the individual being able to print off a copy at any time or share a PDF with an employer.
26. Council was in agreement that the proposals were sensible and in line with other organisations. In response to a concern that there may be a risk that nurses no longer on the Register may use this as a proof of registration, it was clarified that this would be no different from the current paper certificate, which was issued at the point of first registration and had no end date, and was not a proof that the individual was currently on the Register. Employers were always encouraged to check the online Register tool (Find a Vet Nurse) or contact the Registration department for up-to-date information. It was also noted that consideration may be given in the future to providing a confirmation of annual renewal.
27. The proposals set out in the paper were approved.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

28. The Lead for Postgraduate Education introduced the main points from the minutes of the CPD Policy Working Party and the CPD Compliance Panel. The main focus in the past year had been the provision of support for the professions either to use 1CPD or the outcomes-based CPD model. A number of workshops had been held and had been very successful, and further workshops would be held in the autumn. All those not currently using 1CPD were being contacted

and offered a support session. It was noted that 88% of RVNs were currently using 1CPD.

Reports from RCVS Committees

Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

29. Council noted the report of the work of the RVN PIC since May 2021.

Standards Committee

30. Claire Roberts provided a brief update on unclassified items from the Standards Committee meeting held on 13 September.
31. The Committee had been asked to provide comments by email on a consultation by Defra on the government's proposed changes to the rules governing the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets into Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales). The key proposed measures included increasing the minimum age at which dogs could be brought into Great Britain, prohibiting the commercial and non-commercial movement into Great Britain of dogs with cropped ears and docked tails, and prohibiting the commercial and non-commercial movement of heavily pregnant dams (female dog) into Great Britain.
32. A member raised some concerns that the points on the pet importation consultation could raise issues for rescue centres trying to import to Great Britain. Council agreed that this concern should be brought back to Standards Committee as this consultation is bound to generate further debate.

Policy and Public Affairs update

33. The Policy and Public Affairs Manager provided a brief update.
34. RCVS Council had approved the full set of Legislation Working Party recommendations, including those affecting the veterinary-led team, regulation of allied professionals, protection of title, flexibility in delegation and expanding the role of veterinary nurses in anaesthesia. The recommendations would now be taken to government. A meeting had already taken place with the UK Chief Veterinary Officer, and further meetings with MPs were planned. It was confirmed that a summary would be published on the website in the next few weeks.
35. The first stage of research work on retention and recruitment within the professions was already in train. This was a major project which would be ongoing for some time. The preliminary report would feed into a number of workshops on the subject of the three Rs – Retention, Recruitment and Return.
36. The Environment and Sustainability Working Party was reaching the final stages of its work both on internal RCVS policy and external policy. Good progress had been made. A Practice Standards Scheme project on these issues was in the pipeline, and the RCVS was also seeking accreditation under the Investors in the Environment (IiE) scheme.

Communications report

37. The Media and Publications Manager provided an overview of recent VN-related activities in the Comms Department.
38. A number of activities to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the veterinary nursing profession had already taken place and were going well, with very good interaction and engagement on social media. Further activity would take place at the forthcoming BVNA Congress. Other topics which would be covered at the BVNA Congress were the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing, the VN Futures report and Mind Matters sessions on student mental health.
39. The next Veterinary Nurses Evening to welcome newly qualified veterinary nurses to the profession would take place on 21 October. A press release and invitation would be issued shortly.
40. The interim VN Futures report was being finalised and copies would be available at BVNA Congress.
41. There would be a Mind Matters student veterinary nurse wellbeing forum on 3 November. This would be publicised shortly and was aimed at students and early-career veterinary nurses. Information based on research conducted by the Mind Matters team would be published shortly and the Chair confirmed that this issue would be brought back to VN Council for full discussion when the full report was available.
42. The Comms department was working with the VN Team on plans for the review of the Day One Skills and Day One Competences.
43. Information was shortly to be issued to the professions with reminders on delegation to RVNs and Schedule 3 procedures, with pointers to the SUPERB poster and the case studies on the RCVS website.
44. The RCVS President and VNC Chair had recorded welcome videos that had been sent out to all veterinary schools and VN educators for new VN and veterinary students.

Any other business (unclassified)

45. There was no other business raised.

Date of next meeting

46. Wednesday 17 November 2021, to be held at the RCVS.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	17 November 2021
Title	Minutes of meeting of VN Education Committee held on 13 October 2021
Summary	Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee held on 13 October 2021
Decisions required	To approve
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

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Veterinary Nurse Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2021

Members:	Mrs Donna Cotton	-	Employer representative
	Miss Julia Cox	-	Employer representative
	Ms Sarah Fox	-	VN Council lay member
	Mrs Sarah Holman	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Susan Howarth	-	VN Council veterinary nurse (Chair)
	Miss Carla Husband	-	HE student representative
	Mrs Caroline McCormick-Clarke	-	FE student representative
	Professor Elizabeth Mossop	-	Independent educationalist
	* Mrs Sarah Parkhouse	-	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Sarah Reynolds-Golding	-	HE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Perdi Welsh	-	Post-registration veterinary nurse provider

*absent

In attendance:	Mrs Annette Amato	-	Committee Secretary
	Mrs Jasmine Curtis	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Mrs Julie Dugmore	-	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Miss Shirley Gibbins	-	Qualifications Manager
	Mrs Victoria Hedges	-	Examinations Manager
	Mrs Tori Page	-	Qualifications Assessor
	Miss Sian Tanner	-	Qualifications Co-ordinator

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Parkhouse.

Declarations of interest

2. The following members declared an interest relating to items on the agenda and left the meeting for the discussion relating to these items:
 - Sarah Reynolds-Golding – External Examiner for Coventry University; Colleague of potential accreditation visitor; Training provider for VetSkill students
 - Sarah Holman – Plumpton College curriculum manager (Royal Agricultural University accredited)
 - Perdi Welsh – Royal Veterinary College – Course Director for Post-registration courses

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) held on 4 August 2021

3. The Committee accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 4 August 2021 as a correct record, subject to an amendment to the declarations of interest. Perdi Welsh should have been noted as Course Director for post-registration courses at the Royal Veterinary College, not External Examiner as stated in the minutes.

Matters arising on the Minutes

4. There were no matters arising.

Veterinary Nursing update

5. The Director of Veterinary Nursing updated the Committee on recent developments and activities.
6. **Review of Day One Competences (DOC), Day One Skills (DOS), and Professional Behaviours.** The meetings with educators had taken place, and the consultation was now being finalised with the Comms team. The consultation would take place in November, with a view to review of comments by the Working Party and submission of a final paper to VNC at its meeting in February 2022, hopefully for ratification with the introduction of the revised DOC, DOS and Professional Behaviours in September 2022.
7. **Student enrolment.** The new online system for enrolments was on track for implementation in January 2022. An information and demonstration session for centres had been held in July, with a final session planned for December. A handbook was being developed to support the process.
8. A temporary staff member had been taken on to support the Enrolments Officer during the busy period, and enrolments were being processed in a timely manner. There had been 562 applications since 1 August.
9. **Registration applications.** The RCVS was continuing to receive some applications to register from students who had completed their registrable qualification, but had been unable to complete the 1,800 required practice training hours due to the effect of the Covid pandemic. These were being looked at on a case by case basis, according to the agreed temporary guidance.
10. **VN Futures.** Phase 1 of the VN Futures Project was now complete, and the interim report had been compiled and published on the website. The report highlighted the work that had been completed so far, and identified some of the areas to be covered in Phase 2. There had been two successful sessions on VN Futures at the BVNA Congress.

VN Licence to practise qualifications

Changes to accreditation status

11. **Accredited Education Institution (AEI) Minimum Cohort Numbers.** The Examinations Manager presented a paper outlining the issues faced by AEIs with small cohorts, in relation to determining the validity and reliability of examinations. Information was provided on the AEIs which had achieved full accreditation since 2012, together with the cohort sizes and their accreditation status, and on provisionally accredited AEIs for which a decision would be required in the future.
12. It was noted that the RCVS has not previously stipulated minimum cohort sizes, although at accreditation and quality monitoring events, checks are made to ensure that the available resources are suitable for the proposed, current and future cohort numbers. The VN Accreditation Standards require that there are mechanisms in place to determine that there is a high degree of validity and robustness within assessments, which can be difficult to determine when cohort numbers are low. Research papers indicate that data from between 30 and 200 candidates is needed to obtain a reasonable statistical analysis. Other mechanisms such as pre-testing, which can be carried out in a number of ways, are sometimes used.
13. The Committee was asked to consider the following options:
 - a. To set minimum cohort numbers for all AEIs regardless of their accreditation status.
 - b. To set minimum cohort numbers for Provisionally Accredited AEIs only.
 - c. To allow AEIs to continue to set their own minimum cohort numbers.
14. The Committee acknowledged that this was a difficult issue. It was pointed out that in some circumstances, a small number of students in a cohort can provide a positive student experience. Concern was expressed that in areas of the country where there are low student numbers, setting minimum cohort sizes may potentially risk the loss of student training in the area. It was also suggested that if a minimum cohort size was suggested, this would have an impact on the practice placements available, and may put other areas of the provision at risk.
15. It was also suggested that even with larger cohorts, there is no guarantee that the appropriate specialist software would be available or that the numbers would be large enough to ensure valid analysis. The onus should be on the institution to ensure that the correct mechanisms are in place and to demonstrate this to the RCVS. Other suggestions made in the discussion were that AEIs might be able to share multiple choice question banks and the associated statistical analysis.
16. The Committee was in agreement that there should be no requirement for a minimum cohort number and that small cohort numbers did not necessarily lead to lower quality. It was, however, important that AEIs should be able to demonstrate how they intended to meet the Standards at a very early stage. It was confirmed that this is a requirement within the Notification of Intent document and is always a topic discussed at accreditation events. Support and guidance is provided by the RCVS throughout. The main difficulty identified was to have to make a decision to move from provisional to full

accreditation, in some cases on the basis of only a very small number of students. It was pointed out, however, that the decision to move to full accreditation is not based solely on assessments, but includes other factors.

17. The Director of Veterinary Nursing confirmed that the handbook currently being developed to accompany the standards framework should be helpful to AElS, and the RCVS would ensure that a robust section was included on assessments.

Programme changes

18. **Royal Veterinary College.** The Committee considered a paper setting out a proposed minor change, together with the action plan, relating to assessment for one module of the FdSc Veterinary Nursing. The proposed change would maintain compliance with the Standards, and was accepted.
19. **University of Chester.** The Committee considered a paper setting out proposed changes to practical assessment across a number of modules within the BSc(hons) Veterinary Nursing programme, proposed with the intention of reducing student stress and improving the student experience. The actions identified were noted. The Committee accepted the proposed change.

Accreditation visitor approval

20. The Committee considered the completed person specification with CPD and curriculum vitae for a Higher Education accreditation visitor, and agreed that this should be approved.

Action plan monitoring accreditation/re-accreditation

21. The Committee was provided with oral updates from members of the qualifications team on the action plan monitoring for the following Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs):
- Lantra Awards
 - Nottingham Trent University
 - University of Portsmouth
 - University of South Wales

Quality Monitoring activities

22. The Committee was provided with papers setting out full updates on quality monitoring activities and the actions which had been taken, for the following universities and centres:
- Chestergates Veterinary Training Centre
 - University of Plymouth
 - City & Guilds
 - City & Guilds (VetSkill)
 - Coventry University

- Oxford Brookes University
- Royal Agricultural University
- University of Bristol

23. The Committee had a general discussion arising on the report from one organisation, and what guidance might be given regarding the assessment strategy. The Director of Veterinary Nursing suggested that this might be a suitable topic for the Education forum which is facilitated by the BVNA, and general guidance on best practice would also be included in the handbook which is currently being developed to accompany the accreditation standards. It was agreed that further detailed specific requirements should not be provided at this stage.

Action plan quality monitoring - quality assurance

24. Full oral reports were provided on the monitoring of action plans and future planned actions for the following AElS and centres:
- Harriet Ellis
 - Hartpury University
 - North Highland College
 - North West Regional College
 - University of Chester
 - University of Glasgow
 - University of Portsmouth

External Examiners

25. The Committee noted the current list of external examiners for VN Licence to Practise qualifications, together with an update provided by two centres on recruitment for new appointments.

Post-registration qualifications

Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN) Action plan monitoring – Accreditation/Reaccreditation

26. **University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN).** The Qualifications Manager reported that UCLAN had met all actions possible at this stage in the programme, with one long term action to meet next year.
27. **Royal Veterinary College.** All CertAVN actions had now been met.

Items for publication

28. There were no specific items identified for publication arising from the meeting.

Any other business

29. The Chair commented that it would be useful to continue to encourage educators to discuss the potential setting up of a VN Schools Council in the future.

Meeting dates

30. The remaining meeting date for 2021 was confirmed as follows:

- Thursday 16 December

31. Meeting dates for 2022:

- Wednesday 16 February
- Thursday 14 April
- Thursday 16 June – in person, all day meeting
- Wednesday 10 August
- Wednesday 12 October
- Tuesday 13 December

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	17 November 2021
Title	RVN CPD Audit 2021
Summary	This paper provides the analysis of the 2021 audit of CPD records of veterinary nurses.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Annex A – CPD Audit Data
Author	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0701

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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Background

1. The CPD requirement for registered veterinary nurses (RVNs) is 15 hours per calendar year but due to Covid-19 it was reduced to 11 hours for 2020.
2. The aim of the audit is to enable the College to evaluate compliance with the requirement, raising awareness of the obligations set out in the Code of Professional Conduct and providing a picture of the average uptake across the profession.
3. Due to Covid-19 the CPD audit was cancelled in 2020 and only cases of non-compliance were followed up.

Procedure

4. The audit included the following four groups of RVNs:
 - a) **Group 1.** A sample of 10% of RVNs who have been registered for a period of at least three years without a break
 - b) **Group 2.** RVNs who were included in a previous audit but did not meet the requirement.
 - c) **Group 3.** RVNs who, despite reminders, failed to respond to the request to submit their CPD records in the previous audit.
 - d) **Group 4.** RVNs who confirmed that they were not compliant with the CPD requirement at last year's annual renewal.
5. Nurses were asked for their CPD records for 2020 either by confirming that were using 1CPD or send a scanned copy of their CPD records.

Outcomes of the audit

6. Please see Annex A for a full report of the results.
7. Responses were received from 1247 veterinary nurses (91%):
 - a. 1145 RVNs whose records show that they are compliant with the CPD requirement (92 % of respondents).
 - b. 100 RVNs whose records show that they are not currently compliant with the CPD requirement (8%).
8. 129 RVNs have not responded to either the initial request for their records or to the subsequent reminders.
9. 96% of respondents are using 1CPD, 3% other formats of CPD Records and 2% provided no records at all.

10. The breakdown of CPD hours by age groups shows that compliance is higher for the youngest group (97%), followed by the 28-32- and 53-57-year-olds. Non-compliance is highest in the oldest age group amongst 58-81-year-olds (24%), while most other age groups have a non-compliance between 8-14%.
11. The breakdown of CPD hours by the number of years on the register show that compliance is highest in the group that have been 3-6 years on the register (94%) but all groups have a high rate of compliance with more than 85%.

Non-compliance

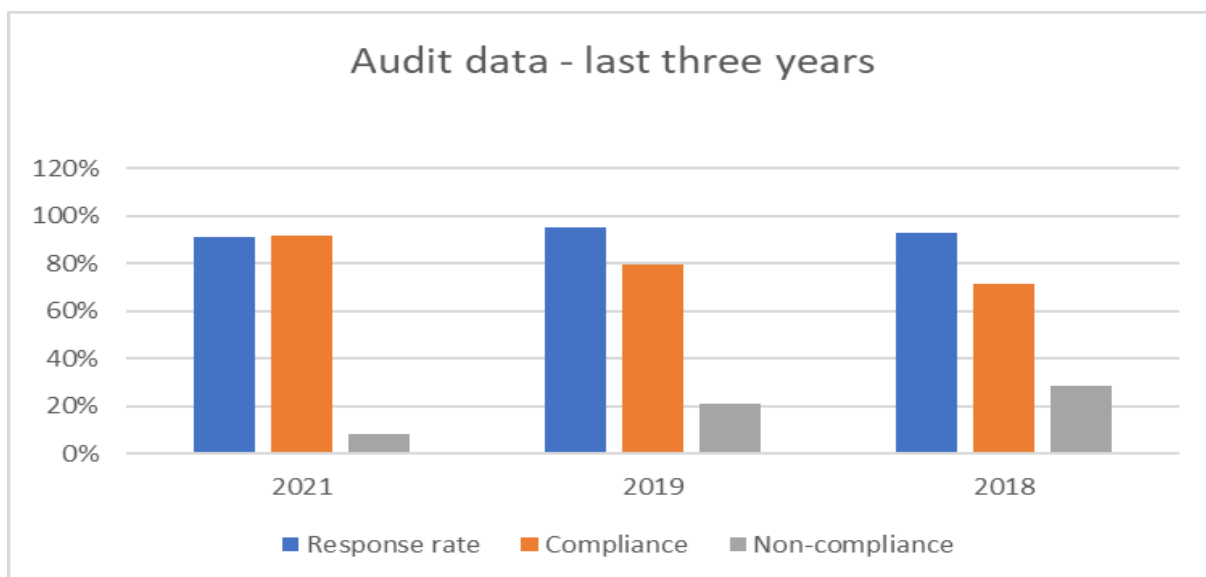
12. 100 RVNs were not compliant with CPD requirement, 33% did not give any reason for being non-compliant. The main reasons for non-compliance were (the numbers in brackets are the percentage from the 2019 audit)
 - a. Family commitments 24% (15%)
 - b. Illness 15% (14%)
 - c. Time/opportunity 10 % (6%)
 - d. Parental leave 7% (24%)
 - e. Will send records 6% (-)
 - f. Leaving the profession 3% (-)
 - g. No Records 2% (5%)
 - h. Not working 1% (-)
13. This is the first year since starting the CPD audit that parental leave has not been the top reason for non-compliance which may be due to the pandemic or the new annual CPD requirement which allows RVNs to apply to pause their CPD for up to 6 months.
14. Any RVN that did not reach the CPD requirement will be included in next year's audit. VN Council has previously decided that any RVN that has been included in three audits but are still non-compliant should be referred to the CPD Compliance Panel, which means that 14 RVNs will be referred from this year's audit.
15. RVNs that were non-compliant, recorded an average of 4 hours in 2020 compared to 32 hours for compliant RVNs.

Non-Respondents

16. 129 (9%) RVNs did not respond to any communication from the RCVS regarding their CPD, which is slightly higher than previous years (5% and 7%).
17. 22 RVNs have been included in at least three audits and not responded to this year's request so will therefore be referred to the CPD Compliance Panel.

Annex A

	Included in sample	Responded		Compliant		Non-compliant (NC)	
Total 2021	1376	1247	91%	1145	92%	100	8%
Total 2019	1129	1077	95%	854	79%	223	21%
Total 2018	1016	939	93%	672	72%	267	28%
Total 2017	857	792	92%	575	73%	217	27%
Total 2016	627	591	94%	420	71%	171	29%
Total 2015	798	739	93%	574	78%	165	22%
Total 2014	814	718	88%	556	77%	162	23%



	Included in sample	Responded		Compliant		Non-compliant (NC)	
Group 1	1204	1120	93%	1076	96%	44	4%
Group 2	8	8	100%	4	50%	4	50%
Group 3	37	17	46%	7	41%	10	59%
Group 4	127	102	80%	56	55%	46	45%
Total	1376	1247	91%	1143	92%	104	8%

Records received		
1CPD	1192	96%
Email	35	3%
No records	20	2%

Non-compliance
Reasons

2021			2019		
Family Commitments	24	24%	Parental leave	53	24%
Illness	15	15%	Family Commitments	32	15%
No Time Opportunity	10	10%	Illness	30	14%
Parental leave	7	7%	No Time Opportunity	13	6%
Will send records	6	6%	Lost records	12	5%
Leaving the profession	3	3%	Remove name from register	12	5%
No Records	2	2%	Not working	8	4%
Not working	1	1%	No reason	60	27%
No reason	33	33%			

CPD Breakdown by years on the register

		NC	NC	C	C
03-06	652	36	6%	616	94%
07-12	214	23	11%	191	89%
13-19	218	27	12%	191	88%
20-30	126	11	9%	115	91%
31-53	37	5	14%	32	86%

CPD Breakdown by age

	Total	NC	NC	C	C
22-27	250	8	3%	242	97%
28-32	337	19	6%	318	94%
33-37	238	19	8%	219	92%
38-42	178	23	13%	155	87%
43-47	175	22	13%	153	87%
48-52	69	10	14%	59	86%
53-57	35	2	6%	33	94%
58-74	29	7	24%	22	76%

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	17 November 2021
Title	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to VN Council
Summary	This report sets out the work of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Sandra Neary Professional Conduct Officer s.neary@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0730</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0740</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to VN Council

Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Veterinary Nurses Council, there has been one meeting of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee, which took place on 21 September. The meeting scheduled to take place on 2 November was cancelled, as no new cases were referred, and no decisions were required on the ongoing cases. The next meeting is due to take place on 14 December 2021.

RVN Concerns received / registered

2. Between 1 September and 8 November, there were 10 new concerns relating to RVNs. Of these 10 new concerns:
 - All are currently under investigation by the Case Examiner Group (a veterinary nurse and lay member on RVN PIC and a Case Manager).

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. One new concern has been considered by the RVN PIC between 1 September 2021 and 8 November 2021. This case closed with advice issued to the RVN.

Ongoing Investigations

4. Two concerns are currently under investigation, and these will be returned to the RVN PIC for a decision in due course.

Health Concerns

5. One RVN is currently being managed in the context of the RCVS Health Protocol.

Performance Concerns

6. There are currently no RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Performance Protocol.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

7. Since the last report, the RVN PIC has referred one case to the RVN Disciplinary Committee. A hearing date has yet to be confirmed.

Disciplinary Hearings

8. Since the last report, no Disciplinary hearings have taken place in respect of RVNs.

Operational matters

9. Training sessions for all PIC members and staff took place on 30 June and 22 September covering a range of issues and case studies, including conflicts of interest and the use of formal advice to respondents. A further training session is to take place on 19 November.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	17 November 2021
Title	RVN Disciplinary Committee Report to VN Council
Summary	Update of Disciplinary Committee since the last VN Council meeting held on 12 May 2021
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Yemisi Yusuph Clerk to the Disciplinary Committee Tel: 020 7202 0729 Email: y.yusuph@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
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Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee Hearings since the Council Meeting on 12 May 2021

Background

1. Since the Veterinary Nurse Council Meeting on 12 May 2021, the Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee have met once to hear an Inquiry in relation to a Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN).

Hearings

Laura Benson RVN

1. Between Monday 14 and Thursday 17 June, the Committee met to hear the Inquiry into Laura Benson RVN, which involved six charges against her.
2. The charges were in related to her conduct in which she took **items from her veterinary practice without paying for them and for asking a colleague to dishonestly input one of her pet's clinical details against the records of another one of her pets, which was also registered at the practice.**
3. At the outset of the hearing, Ms Benson admitted to charges 1,2,3,4 and 6 of the allegations and the Committee accepted these admissions. The Committee considered evidence from Ms Benson's colleagues including witness statements, written testimonial and clinical records for her animals.
4. When asked about taking items from the practice, Ms Benson explained that she did not intend to take items without paying for them and that she had not realised how much she had taken. She also explained that she had paid back in full what she owed to the practice. The Committee considered that Ms Benson's conduct had involved a degree of premeditation as she had repeatedly taken items over an extended period. They also considered that there had been a potential risk of injury to animals resulting from Ms Benson's request to incorrectly write up her animal's veterinary records.
5. The defence attested that no actual harm had come to any animal because of Ms Benson's actions and that she previously had an unblemished career in veterinary nursing. She had also admitted most of the charges against her and paid for the items she had taken in full.
6. The Committee found Ms Benson guilty of serious professional misconduct and in deciding on sanction, the Committee considered all the evidence before it and the submissions from both parties. The Committee decided that a nine-month suspension from the Register was the most appropriate sanction and was one that best took the public, and Ms Benson's, interest into account.
7. The Committee stated in its decision that *" the Committee accepted that Ms Benson had developing insight in making her admissions and we give her credit for her long unblemished career. She admitted to a large part of the allegation, expressed remorse for her actions and*

has repaid the practice. We have also heard a number of positive testimonials which spoke positively of Ms Benson's recent conduct"

8. The Committee's full decision on finding of facts and misconduct can be found here: [Decision on Facts and on Disgraceful Conduct in a Professional Respect - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
9. When making its decision sanction, the Committed considered all matters and concluded that the appropriate and proportionate sanction, was to suspend Ms Benson's registration for nine months.
10. The full decision on sanction can be found here: [Decision on Sanction, Benson, Laura - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

Upcoming DCs

11. There is one RVN case waiting to be listed. The Clerk is currently working on this.