

Veterinary Nurses Council

Wednesday 18 September 2024 at 10.30am at the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

Agenda

	Classification ¹	Rationale ²
1. Welcome to new members	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2. Apologies for absence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3. Declarations of interest	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
4. Obituaries	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
5. Minutes		
5.01 Minutes of meeting held on 28 February 2024	Unclassified	n/a
5.02 Minutes of meeting held on 22 May 2024		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1,2,3,4
6. Matters arising	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
7. CEO update	Unclassified	n/a
Matters for decision by VN Council and reports from Committees (unclassified items)		
8. VN Education Committee		
8.01 Minutes of meeting held on 20 June 2024	Unclassified	n/a
8.02 Minutes of meeting held on 14 August 2024	Unclassified	n/a
9. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)		
9.01 Minutes of CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee held on 25 June 2024	Unclassified	n/a

	9.02 Terms of Reference for CPD and VetGDP Engagement group and CPD and VetGDP Compliance subcommittee	Unclassified	n/a
10.	Reports from RCVS Committees		
	10.01 VN Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
	10.02 Standards Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
	10.03 Advancement of the Professions Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
	10.04 VN Disciplinary Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
11.	VN Futures update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
12.	Communications report	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
13.	Any other business (unclassified)	Oral report Unclassified	
14.	Date of next meeting Wednesday 15 November 2023 (remote)		
Confidential and private items (closed session)			
15.	Draft budget for 2025	Confidential	1,4
16.	VN Education Committee confidential items		
	16.01 Confidential items from meeting of 20 June 2024	Confidential	2,3,4
	16.02 Confidential items from meeting of 14 August 2024	Confidential	2,3,4
17.	Risk Register		
	17.01 Update on changes since the previous meeting	Confidential	1,2,3,4
	17.02 Items identified from the meeting to add to Risk Register	Oral report	
18.	Legislative reform	Oral report	
19.	Items for RCVS Committees	Oral report	

20. **Any other business (confidential items)**

Oral report

21. **Reflective session**

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

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 others2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation3. To protect commercially sensitive information4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
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Veterinary Nurses' Council – Terms of Reference

1. The Veterinary Nurses' Council shall consist of the following members:
 - a. Six veterinary nurses practising or living wholly or mainly in the United Kingdom, elected by ballot of all veterinary nurses, conducted substantially in accordance with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Council Election Scheme 1967 (as amended), with the necessary adaptations;
 - b. Two veterinary nurses to be appointed by the Veterinary Nurses' Council;
 - c. Two veterinary surgeons, to be appointed by the Veterinary Nurses' Council in consultation with RCVS Council;
 - d. Four lay members to be appointed by the Veterinary Nurses' Council.
2. The term of office of elected and appointed members of the Veterinary Nurses' Council shall be three years in each case, and one-third of the elected members shall retire in rotation each year, being eligible for re-election if still qualified to serve. A member elected or appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall serve the unexpired portion of the predecessor's term of office.
3. Members of the Veterinary Nurses' Council shall serve a maximum of three successive terms and after which they will be eligible to re-stand for election or be re-appointed after a gap of two years.
4. The quorum for meetings of the Veterinary Nurses' Council shall be seven members, which must include four veterinary nurse members, one veterinary surgeon member and one lay member.
5. The Chair and up to two Vice-Chairs of the Veterinary Nurses' Council shall be elected by the Veterinary Nurses' Council, by secret ballot. The Chair will be either an elected or appointed veterinary nurse. The election of the Chair shall be confirmed by the RCVS Council.
6. The term of office of the Chair shall usually be three years and Vice-Chair(s) shall serve for either one or three years, with the outgoing Chair normally serving one year as Vice-Chair.
7. The Veterinary Nurses Council was established in 2002 and the Supplementary Royal Charter confirms its functions shall encompass the regulation of the profession of veterinary nurses.
8. The Veterinary Nurses' Council shall, in addition to those functions specified in the Supplemental Royal Charter:
 - a. Set standards for the training and education of persons wishing to be entered into the Register;
 - b. Set requirements in relation to the registration of veterinary nurses;
 - c. Set standards for the conduct of veterinary nurses;

- d. Maintain the register of veterinary nurses;
 - e. Recommend to the Finance and Resources Committee a budget and levels of fees to be charged; and,
 - f. Recommend to the Council amendments to the rules relating to the registration, conduct and discipline of veterinary nurses.
9. In exercising its functions, the Veterinary Nurses' Council may delegate responsibility for matters related to veterinary nurse education, both licence to practise and post registration awards, to the Veterinary Nurse Education Committee.
10. The Veterinary Nurses' Council shall ensure that the welfare of animals and good veterinary practice are central to its work.

Summary

Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	18 September 2024
Title	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council held on 28 February 2024
Summary	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 28 February 2024 – revised with additional point included in para.22 (point 4)
Decisions required	To approve the revised unclassified minutes
Attachments	none
Author	Annette Amato Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk 020 7222 0713

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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Veterinary Nurses Council

Minutes of the meeting held at the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN, on Wednesday 28 February 2024

Members:

Mrs Belinda Andrews-Jones	Chair
Miss Jessica Beckett	
Miss Linda Belton	Officer Team observer (non-voting)
Mrs Anita Bickerdike	
Miss Alison Carr	
Mrs Susan Howarth	Vice-Chair
Mr Tim Hutchinson	
Mrs Katherine Kissick	
Mrs Donna Lewis*	
Mr Matthew Rendle	Vice-Chair
Ms Stephanie Richardson	
Mr Simon Williams	
Miss Holly Witchell	
Professor James Wood*	

*Denotes absent

^Denotes remote

In attendance:

Mrs Annette Amato	Committee Secretary
Mr Luke Bishop	Media and Publications Manager
Mrs Julie Dugmore	Director of Veterinary Nursing
Miss Shirley Gibbins	VN Qualifications Lead
Mrs Tash Goodwin Roberts^	Veterinary Nursing and UK Graduation Lead (open session only)
Ms Abi Hanson	Media and Publications Officer
Mrs Victoria Hedges	VN Examinations Quality Lead
Ms Lizzie Lockett	Chief Executive
Mrs Jill Macdonald	VN Futures Project Lead
Mr Ben Myring	Policy and Public Affairs Manager

Guests: (open session only)

Mr Josh Loeb	BVA Publications
Ms Charlotte Lai	Student observer
Miss Lacey Pitcher	VN Times

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence had been received from Donna Lewis and James Wood.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

Obituaries

3. No written obituaries had been received. Council, staff and guests stood to observe a minute's silence for all members of the professions who had passed away since the last meeting.

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023 were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

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

CEO update

6. Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) had been provided with a paper from the CEO that offered a summary of activity against the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, as submitted to RCVS Council 18 January 2024. The CEO drew attention to further activities that had taken place since the report had been completed.
7. The RCVS had now moved premises to another WeWork co-working office, following the closure of the Cursor building, and the digital and services teams had done a wonderful job in carrying out the move as seamlessly as possible. The new premises at Waterhouse Square were just a few minutes away from the former workspace, and it was hoped that the RCVS would remain there until the permanent headquarters at Hardwick Street were ready later in the year. The Employer's Requirement document (brief for those tendering for design and build work) for Hardwick Street was currently being drawn up to provide the full details of the works required.
8. Another major project being undertaken was the update to the Customer Relation Management system (CRM), which was currently in the discovery phase, involving a series of workshops. The Chief Digital Officer would be happy to provide an update on the project to VN Council if required.
9. The RCVS had received the highest number of nominations (14) for the VN Golden Jubilee award since it was introduced in 2011. A paper with details of the recommendation of the Nominations Committee for the 2024 recipient would be considered in the confidential session of the meeting.
10. The annual fee renewal process for veterinary nurses had gone well.

11. Since the previous meeting of VNC, the second meeting of the Public Advisory Group (PAG) had taken place to continue to develop advice for animal owners, to be placed on the RCVS website, on how to get the best out of interactions with vets and veterinary nurses in the practice. The third meeting would be held towards the end of March.
12. The Mandatory Practice Regulation Working Group had been formed, with Jessica Beckett and Anita Bickerdike from VNC joining the group, as well as Belinda Andrews-Jones in her capacity as Chair of the Practice Standards Committee. The group also included vets and veterinary nurses from other areas and external stakeholders including the British Veterinary Association (BVA). The date for the first meeting would shortly be set.
13. The 2024 Surveys of the Veterinary and Veterinary Nurse Professions had recently closed, and the initial analysis would prioritise workforce-related data.
14. The process of developing the new Strategic Plan was now underway. The first section of work would involve gathering data and ideas, followed by refining and prioritising the ideas, and ensuring the necessary legal framework was in place. Committees and VNC would be invited to participate in the process at their May meetings. Actions were still ongoing in the last year of the current plan.

VN Council – Governance reform

15. The Policy and Public Affairs Manager presented a paper on the reform of Veterinary Nurses Council governance, which had been developed based on discussions by VNC at its November meeting. The paper outlined a number of detailed options for the reform of VNC's governance, in tandem with the discussions on governance of RCVS Council.
19. At its November meeting, VNC had indicated its preferences on a number of key questions related to the reform of its governance. It had agreed that:
 - a) There should be a greater use of independent appointment rather than election.
 - b) There should be a move towards closer parity between professional and lay members of VNC.
 - c) Options to reduce the size of VNC should be considered.

The paper set out specific models based on these areas on which decisions could be made, which would ultimately lead to the choice of a single model by VNC to put forward for recommendation.
20. It was noted that the proposed reform models did not include a mix of appointed and elected members. RCVS Council had made the decision in principle to replace elected members with appointed members, and the paper suggested that it would therefore arguably be inappropriate for RCVS Council to continue to have veterinary nurse members who had been originally elected to VNC. For the purposes of the paper the assumption had been made that all members would be appointed. One member queried this assumption and urged that the consultation document should include the options for some elected members as well as appointed members.
21. There was further discussion around the points covered in the paper, with views expressed and reiterated around the main subject areas. Points made included:

22. **Appointments**

- Engagement with the current election system was very poor, with misconceptions about the role. It was felt that the appointment system would help to achieve better engagement, as the criteria would be clear. Applicants would be aware of what would be expected of them, whereas the election process was for a general role.
- If the move towards appointed rather than elected members was publicised correctly, with the rationale for different areas of representation being clearly explained, it was felt that this would not be viewed negatively by the profession.
- The appointment system would help to clarify the profession's vision of what was expected, and increase engagement, by pointing out the value of bringing a range of skills and experiences to the table. Clear communication would be key.
- As noted in para 20, one member urged that an election process should be retained, commenting that as the RCVS was a Royal College as well as a regulator, elections formed a vital part of college function. As vets and nurses are required to be members of the RCVS in order to practise, some elections should be maintained as the only democratic process available to them.
- The importance of targeting the correct skills and experience was reiterated by many members, and to publicise widely and encourage applications. The wording would need to ensure that all relevant groups were targeted. The appointment criteria and role requirements would need to be very clearly set out.
- Council should be very much involved in working out the skills that were needed.
- The DoVN reassured Council that the previous appointment process for the two current appointed RVN members had been rigorous. Posts had been advertised, with clear criteria. There had been 23 applicants. The process had been conducted independently.

23. **Size.** It was noted that regulatory boards usually consisted of 10-12 members, with the most recent model (for social workers) having only six members. The current membership of VNC was 14 members. Comments on size and balance of members (professional and lay) included:

- The size needed to be sufficient that all members could be fully engaged, and their skills and experience could be utilised. If this could be achieved the size could be reduced.
- The size needed to be such that all bases of the profession were covered.
- It was important that any regulatory body should be diverse, including both occupational and locational diversity. The Council size needed to be sufficient to ensure this diverse representation and proper discussion, bearing in mind that full attendance at each meeting cannot be guaranteed.
- If the size of Council was reduced with a consequent reduction in the number of professionals, there was a concern that in order to maintain VN numbers, the number of

vets would be reduced from two to one. However, as VNC also had an RCVS Council Officer team observer, and VNC worked in a collaborative way, there would still be the veterinary surgeon input and perspective.

- If the number of members was reduced, as pointed out in previous discussions, the relevant expertise required for specific projects could be provided through subcommittees and working groups.

24. At the conclusion of the discussion Council voted on the following questions:

- On the question of whether to introduce lay parity (50% of the membership being lay, and 50% professional) – seven votes in favour, four votes against.
- On the question of whether the number of veterinary surgeons on VNC should be reduced from two to one (plus one RCVS Council observer) – nine votes in favour, one vote against, one abstention.
- On the number of members of VNC:
 - To retain the number of members at 14 – no votes
 - To reduce the size to a 12-member Council – ten votes in favour, one abstention
 - There was no support for the remaining option of a ten-member Council

25. It was therefore agreed to recommend the following model to RCVS Council as set out in the discussion paper:

Option 5: Lay parity with five veterinary nurses, one veterinary surgeon, six lay members.

26. It was confirmed that RCVS Council would review the recommendations, which would then be included with the consultation on proposed governance changes for RCVS Council.

Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC)

27. Susan Howarth, Chair of the VNEC, presented the minutes of the meeting of the VNEC held on 11 December 2023 and highlighted a few key points.

28. The Committee had been updated on the review of the *Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training*, initiated by Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC). It was reported to VNC that the review group, chaired by Simon Williams, had held its initial meeting in early 2024. A consultation on the new draft framework had been launched on 22 February 2024, with all members of the veterinary team being invited to comment. The consultation survey was available on the RCVS website and would close on 3 April 2024. Feedback would be provided to the next meeting of VNC.

29. The Educator Forums which had been planned for autumn 2023 had been postponed for staffing reasons and would be likely to take place in spring 2024.

30. The Committee had reviewed accreditation reports and had agreed the following:

- **University of South Wales** - Full accreditation for five years for University of South Wales FdSc in Veterinary Nursing.
 - **Aberystwyth University** - Provisional accreditation for the Aberystwyth University FdSc Veterinary Nursing.
 - **Lantra Awards** - Change of status from Provisional accreditation to Full accreditation for the following programmes:
 - Lantra Awards Level 3 Work Based Diploma in Veterinary Nursing - Small Animal
 - Lantra Awards Level 3 Work Based Diploma in Veterinary Nursing - Equine
31. The Committee had been provided with many reports on quality monitoring and action plan monitoring carried out by the VN Qualifications team.
32. The VN Examinations Quality Lead had provided an update on the agreement with TestReach to deliver the pre-registration knowledge examination, and the first examinations would be delivered in March 2024.
33. The review by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) on the Subject Benchmark Statements for Veterinary Nursing had now been completed. The revised Benchmark statements would be issued in April 2024 and would incorporate the level 7 (postgraduate) qualifications for the first time.

Reports from RCVS Committees

Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

24. Council noted the report of the work of the RVN PIC since the last report in November 2023.

Standards Committee

25. Matthew Rendle provided a brief update on items discussed by the Standards Committee meeting held on 14 February 2024. Discussions had taken place around maintaining professional boundaries and relationships with clients and other professionals. The Committee had reviewed the case studies that had been under development over the past year and had agreed these would be put on hold in their current form for the time being, although the material was likely to be used in a different format in future publications. The Committee had been updated on the work which had been carried out with the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) on the 'Under care' guidance which had now been incorporated into the supporting guidance to the *RCVS Code of Professional Conduct*.

Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

26. Matthew Rendle reported on matters covered at the APC meeting which had taken place the previous day, at Battersea Cat and Dogs' Home. There had been interesting discussions on

measuring impact and the use of metrics, and how to maximise the output of the committee, which was very diverse, including stakeholders from many different areas.

VN Disciplinary Committee

27. There had been no meetings of the VN Disciplinary Committee since the last VN Council meeting.

Policy and Public Affairs update

28. The Policy and Public Affairs Manager provided a brief update.
29. The initial analysis of the Surveys of the Veterinary and Veterinary Nurse Professions 2024 was still in progress, and an early draft summary was likely to be available in a few weeks, with the full report being published in a few months' time.
30. It was confirmed that the survey had been open for six weeks and was now closed. Several reminder emails had been issued, although there had initially been some technical issues with certain email providers. There was disappointment at the reported lower proportion of responses than the previous survey, and suggestions were made as to why this might have been the case. It was commented that the survey had been easy to complete and had flowed well.

Communications report

31. The Media and Publications Manager reported on recent veterinary nursing related activities.
32. The Veterinary Nurses Council election period would run from mid-March to Friday 26 April. There were three candidates standing for the two places. The profession had been invited to submit questions for the candidates by the end of the month, and each candidate would be invited to answer two questions of their choice, to be included with their election profiles.
33. As previously mentioned by the VNEC Chair, the consultation on the revised VN Standards Framework had been launched on 22 February, and this would continue to be promoted in *RCVS News* and social media. There had been 330 responses to date.
34. Forthcoming work of the Comms team would include the promotion of the VN Futures roadshow, which was due to be discussed in the afternoon workshop of VNC. The next edition of the *VN Education* e-newsletter was under development and would be issued in early April.
35. The next Veterinary Nurses Day would take place on 28 June 2024 in Edinburgh, to welcome newly qualified VNs to the Register.
36. There would be a session at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress in March, on the veterinary nursing profession, past present and future.
37. The written report of the Mind Matters Symposium 2023 had been published earlier in the day, as well as the accompanying videos.

VN Register report

38. Council noted a report showing statistics on the total number of registered veterinary nurses, including the number of new registrations annually for the calendar years 2018 – 2023, and removals in January 2024 for non-payment of the annual fee. Data was also provided for the number of student enrolments for the past six academic years, and the number of those enrolling for a Period of Supervised Practice, having been unregistered for a period of five years or more.
39. It was subsequently reported that an adjustment was required to the breakdown of the figure for new registrations in 2023. The overall figure remained unchanged. There had been 1,684 new registrations, of which 1,045 were by the UK Further Education route, 558 by the UK Higher Education route, 81 with an overseas qualification. The amended paper would be included in the VNC papers on the RCVS website, and in the BoardEffect documentation for VN Council. The number of new registrations, with the breakdown of admission route, would also be included in the *RCVS Facts* publication.

Any other business (unclassified)

40. No items were raised.

Date of next meeting

41. Wednesday 22 May 2024. This would be a remote meeting starting at 10.00am.

Summary

Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	18 September 2024
Title	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council held on 22 May 2024
Summary	Minutes of meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) held on 22 May 2024
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix
Attachments	Classified appendix (confidential)
Author	Annette Amato Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk 020 7222 0713

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1,2,3,4

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Veterinary Nurses Council

Minutes of the meeting held online via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 22 May 2024

Members:

Mrs Belinda Andrews-Jones	Chair
Miss Jessica Beckett*	
Miss Linda Belton	Officer Team observer (non-voting)
Mrs Anita Bickerdike*	
Miss Alison Carr	
Mrs Susan Howarth	Vice-Chair
Mr Tim Hutchinson	
Mrs Katherine Kissick	
Mrs Donna Lewis	
Mr Matthew Rendle*	Vice-Chair
Ms Stephanie Richardson	
Mr Simon Williams	
Miss Holly Witchell	
Professor James Wood	

*Denotes absent

In attendance:

Mrs Annette Amato	Committee Secretary
Mr Luke Bishop	Media and Publications Manager
Mrs Julie Dugmore	Director of Veterinary Nursing
Ms Eleanor Ferguson	Registrar
Miss Shirley Gibbins	VN Qualifications Lead
Ms Abi Hanson	Media and Publications Officer
Mrs Victoria Hedges	VN Examinations Quality Lead
Ms Lizzie Lockett	Chief Executive
Mr Ben Myring	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
Mrs Charlotte Rodia	RCVS Academy

Guests: (open session only)

Mr Josh Loeb	BVA Publications
Miss Lacey Pitcher	VN Times

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence had been received from Jessica Beckett, Anita Bickerdike and Matthew

Rendle.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

Obituaries

3. No written obituaries had been received. Council observed a minute's silence for all members of the professions who had passed away since the last meeting.

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2024

4. Council had had the opportunity to comment electronically on the unclassified minutes and classified appendix and these were before Council for approval.
5. Regarding the section of the minutes on Veterinary Nurses Council governance reform, it was noted that a comment made in the discussion had been missed (at page 6 of the unclassified minutes). In para 22 an additional point should be included, as follows:
 - As noted in para 20, one member urged that an election process should be retained, commenting that as the RCVS was a Royal College as well as a regulator, elections formed a vital part of college function. As vets and nurses are required to be members of the RCVS in order to practise, some elections should be maintained as the only democratic process available to them.
6. Council approved the unclassified minutes and classified appendix of the meeting held on 28 February, with the exception of section 22 (page 6 of the unclassified minutes). The amended 28 February minutes would be circulated for approval.

Matters arising

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

CEO update

8. The CEO provided an oral update on operational matters and recent activities since the previous meeting.
9. The results of the VN Council and RCVS Council elections had been announced in early May. Susan Howarth had been re-elected to VN Council and Kirsty Young would join in July. The three new members elected to RCVS Council were Zara Kennedy, Sinead Bennett and David Barrett.
10. The College had been delighted to be told that his Majesty King Charles had been confirmed as our new patron.

11. Sadly, the Registrar, Eleanor Ferguson, would be leaving the College in the summer, although would continue her involvement in the current legislative reform work. There would, of course, be the opportunity to thank Eleanor properly at RCVS Day in July for all that she had done for the College.
12. The process of approving a design and build company for the work to be carried out to the new RCVS premises in Hardwick Street was almost complete. This had of necessity been a long process to ensure that everything was right. It was likely that the staff would be in the temporary workspace until the end of the year.
13. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) had not yet reported on their decision in terms of the output of their recent consultation on the veterinary sector, and whether they would go forward to the market investigation stage. The decision was expected before the end of May, and in anticipation that the investigation would go forward, a working group was to be set up to co-ordinate activities. The composition of the group was currently being considered.
14. The first meeting of the new Mandatory Practice Regulation Working Group had taken place in April. The group would be developing the details of how the College would propose to regulate veterinary practices on a statutory basis in the future. The working group was chaired by the RCVS President and included the VNC Chair, who was also Chair of the Practice Standards Group, as well as veterinary, veterinary nursing, lay and external representatives. External input would also include representation from the General Pharmaceutical Council and NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland. The group would make recommendations through Standards Committee to RCVS Council.
15. The Veterinary Clinical Careers Pathways project had held its first meeting in March. This was a project that had been led by the veterinary education team, working closely with the Director of Veterinary Nursing. This would have a significant impact on veterinary nursing and involved veterinary nursing input into all the workstreams, to ensure alignment with any potential enhanced and advanced practitioner roles for veterinary nurses.
16. Earlier in the week there had been a roundtable meeting on AI and how its use might be regulated going forward. There had been delegates from a range of areas within the professions including the veterinary associations, large and small practices as well as regulators from outside the profession. There had been a detailed discussion, and the next step would be to co-ordinate activities through the various committee structures, which would be a wide-ranging piece of work.
16. The development of the next Strategy Plan was ongoing, and a discussion had been scheduled on this topic for later in the meeting.

Review of the RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training

17. The RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training (the Standards) had been reviewed based on collated feedback from users and consultation with all stakeholders.

18. The current Standards had initially been agreed in 2019, with a small-scale review in 2021, which had resulted in some minor amendments. The review had taken place in line with the policy that these would be reviewed and consulted on every five years. Proposed amendments following the review had been considered and agreed by the task and finish working group. The Chair of the working group, Simon Williams, presented the report.
19. The working group had held its first meeting on 15 January 2024 and had agreed draft proposals on areas for improvement. This had been followed by a six-week consultation to give stakeholders an opportunity to provide constructive and specific feedback on the proposals. The initial review of responses had been conducted by the Director of Veterinary Nursing (DoVN) and the Qualifications Lead (QL), following which the working group had reviewed, discussed and agreed the suggested amendments. There had been 504 responses received, with further thoughts from two organisations, and feedback in the main had been overwhelmingly positive.
20. Council was provided with the report, together with the:
 - collated responses
 - summary of changes (including working group discussion where a suggestion had required detailed discussion)
 - proposed revised Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training.
21. The QL responded to a request for a summary of the general tone of the comments, which had been included in full, in Annex 1 to the paper. There had been 504 responses in total, and these had been grouped standard by standard, with 10 – 15 responses for each standard. One individual had submitted a consistently negative commentary which had been general, rather than relating to individual standards. The great majority of comments had been simple positive comments indicating acceptance, others had made some helpful suggestions, which had been considered and taken on board. No individual standard had a significant disapproval rate.
22. The DoVN added that in the cases where there had been confusion, this was due to a misunderstanding that the document was the curriculum or the Day One Skills.
23. Council thanked those involved in the review, which had been a major piece of work, and agreed unanimously to accept the proposed amendments to the *RCVS Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training*, and to their implementation from September 2024. Full guidance would now be developed to accompany the Standards and requirements.

Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC)

24. Susan Howarth, VNEC Chair, presented the unclassified sections of the minutes of two meetings of the VNEC, and highlighted a few items.
25. **Meeting held on 14 February 2024.**
The committee had agreed to full accreditation for a period of five years for the following programmes delivered by Harper Adams University:
 - BSc Veterinary Nursing
 - BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing

- BSc Veterinary Nursing with Companion Animal Behaviour
- BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing with Companion Animal Behaviour
- BSc Veterinary Nursing with Small Animal Rehabilitation
- BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing with Small Animal Rehabilitation

26. VNEC had agreed changes to the accredited programme for the FdSc Veterinary Nursing awarded by the Royal Veterinary College. A programme change for the Royal Veterinary College's Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN) had also been accepted.
27. Three applicants had been approved as educator representatives for the accreditation panels for the licence to practise programmes (Higher and Further Education) and additionally in one case, the CertAVN panel.
28. The committee had noted that the current round of pre-accreditation support visits to Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) was nearly complete, with 18 support visits having taken place since the introduction of the package. The support package had led to a significant improvement in compliance with the Standards and was now mandatory for all new provision.

Meeting held on 16 April 2024.

29. The following accreditation decisions had been taken:

Edinburgh Napier University – a one-year extension for the accreditation of the BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing programme.

Hartpury University - Full accreditation for five years for the following programmes:

- BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing
- BSc (Hons) Equine Veterinary Nursing
- BSc Veterinary Nursing
- BSc Equine Veterinary Nursing
- Diploma in Professional Studies in Veterinary Nursing
- Diploma in Professional Studies in Equine Veterinary Nursing

Harper Adams University – Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing – full accreditation for five years for the following programmes:

- Graduate/Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing - Anaesthesia
- Graduate/Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing – Analgesia and Pain Management
- Graduate/Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing – Surgical Nursing
- Graduate/Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing – Oncology
- Graduate/Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing – Exotics, Zoo and Wildlife
- Graduate/Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing – Rehabilitation
- Graduate/Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing – Behaviour

30. The committee had considered and agreed proposed changes to the Pre-registration knowledge examination, to make this more streamlined and to better align the assessment outcomes to the title of each paper.
31. A minor change to the accredited programme for the FdSc Veterinary Nursing delivered by Nottingham Trent University had been accepted.
32. The committee had discussed a paper presented by the Education Quality Improvement Manager on meeting the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) standard relating to thematic analysis and had made some suggestions on this issue.
33. The VN team had provided a review and analysis of the annual self-assessment reports submitted by the Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs), together with the allocation of risk rating for each AEI, and the committee had noted the approach taken in the allocation of each risk rating.
34. As with all VNEC meetings, the committee had been provided with many update reports on the quality monitoring activities undertaken by the VN team.
- 35.. Council unanimously agreed to ratify the VNEC minutes of 14 February and 16 April 2024, and to endorse the decisions taken.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

36. Stephanie Richardson presented the Minutes of the meeting of the CPD Policy and Compliance Subcommittee held on 15 April 2024.
37. The main areas of discussion had been around the CPD comms plan and the promoting of awareness of the CPD policy, as well as how to reflect. There had been discussion regarding a misunderstanding regarding the policy on pausing CPD due to health issues. The subcommittee had felt that the individual in question had not been fully aware of the flexibility of the policy, and had agreed that the College needed to continue to promote awareness regarding the option to request pauses in CPD in certain circumstances, the ease of using 1CPD and the wide range of activities that can count as CPD.
38. Regarding compliance, the subcommittee had felt that it was not supportive or compassionate to allow registered members not to do CPD. The RCVS needed to ensure that each member remained a competent professional and kept up to date, which included CPD compliance. It was a privilege to be part of regulated profession and the committee had felt that there should be more comms around this topic, to be considered as part of wider strategic discussions at RCVS Council.
39. The issue of compliance was due to be discussed more in depth later in the meeting. It was noted that the subcommittee had recommended that the RVNs that had been monitored in 2023 and had been non-compliant in both 2022 and 2023 should be referred to the Professional Conduct department. Discussions were taking place internally on the next step in this process.

40. A comment was made suggesting taking CPD back to basics - the fact that members are improving and learning new things, post-graduation, and have developed professionally, means that they must have been carrying out CPD. Recording of CPD can be a simple matter of taking a moment to pause and reflect, whereas it was felt that a culture had been built up over the years of reliance or misunderstanding that CPD needs to be provided by external courses.
41. A query was raised as to whether there was any data on the demographics of the serial non-compliers, and whether different groups might be targeted in different ways. It was confirmed that this had been discussed and the data was available to the subcommittee.
42. It was also suggested that some targeted communications could take place around the RCVS Academy's CPD Record and Reflect course.

Report on registration of veterinary nurses educated outside the UK

43. **Annual update report.** The Examinations Quality Lead (EQL) presented the report summarising the applications for registration and assessment of qualifications from nurses educated outside the UK, covering the period between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, with figures for the previous year shown for comparison.
44. Council's attention was drawn to trends in the current reporting year. There had been an increase in applications from nurses educated in Australia and New Zealand intending to sit the Pre-registration examination. Applications from nurses educated in Hong Kong had decreased, although the overall number of registrations from Hong Kong had increased due to nurses who had their qualifications assessed in the previous reporting period passing the examinations. Applications from the Republic of Ireland had been static.
45. In total, 90 VNs educated outside the UK entered the Register during the reporting period. As of 31 March there were 568 nurses educated outside the UK on the Register - approximately 2.4% of all RVNs on that date.
46. **Submission of syllabus.** Council was reminded that veterinary nurses educated outside the UK have their qualification and experience checked to ensure that their education is similar on level and content to the minimum level expected in the UK. There was a list of qualifications that had been assessed on a number of occasions and had been accepted. Applicants whose qualification was not on this list were required to map their syllabus to the Day One Skills and Competences for Veterinary Nurses. When a qualification had been assessed and was considered to have general coverage, the applicant was required to pass the Pre-registration examination, which comprised an OSCE (practical assessment) and a MCQ examination comprising three papers, one of which covered questions relating health and safety, and the Code of Professional Conduct. Most applicants with an ACOVENE (Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education in Europe) accredited qualification were accepted to register without further assessment.
47. Council was provided with a table showing the list of qualifications that are currently 'accepted' without further submission of syllabus, and those for which VNC was asked to consider removing the syllabus requirement, with the rationale for the proposed changes. On the basis of the

information provided, Council agreed unanimously to remove the syllabus submission requirement for applicants with the following qualifications:

- Veterinary assistant/Paraveterinary 97590 – The Netherlands
- Veterinary assistant/Paraveterinary 22238 – The Netherlands

48. It was confirmed that these applicants would still need to submit an application and to pass the Pre-registration examination, and that spot checks of applications would be conducted.
49. **Code of Professional Conduct (CoPC).** For the last 10 years, applicants had been required to demonstrate their knowledge of the Code of Professional Conduct prior to entering the register, initially by attendance at a monthly talk and more recently being required to complete a module within the RCVS Academy. Council was asked to consider a proposal that because one of the papers in the Pre-registration theory examination focused on the CoPC, applicants who had passed this examination should be exempted from completing the module.
50. The module would remain, and applicants would be signposted to this and other courses to assist with their preparation for the examination, so it was likely that applicants in any case would have completed the module before sitting the examination. ACOVENE-accredited applicants who did not sit the examinations would still be required to complete the CoPC module.
51. A concern was expressed that if candidates were not required to complete the Academy module before sitting the examination, the pass rates might drop. The EQL confirmed that this could be monitored as it is possible to see who has engaged with the Academy course and whether it had affected the pass rates. This could be reported back to the VNEC.
52. On the basis of the information provided, Council agreed unanimously that candidates who had passed the pre-registration theory examination should be exempted from completing the Academy CoPC module.

Report on temporary student enrolments

53. Council noted a paper setting out information on the number of temporary enrolments from student nurses educated outside the UK, working or on placement for a short period in the UK as part of their training, for a maximum of twelve weeks.

Reports from RCVS Committees

Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

54. Council noted the annual report of the RVN PIC Committee that had been circulated with the agenda. Unfortunately, the Chair of the Committee was not available to present the report, but any questions would be relayed back to the Chair.
55. A member commented that there had been a significant increase in the number of concerns raised over the year, being a 25% increase on the highest number in recent years. It was suggested that this should be monitored going forward, and if there continued to be an increase, further analysis

should be carried out.

56. The Registrar commented that although there had been an increase, the number of concerns tended to vary year on year and was low compared with the number for veterinary surgeons. It was also noted that the cases that had been referred to the Disciplinary Committee had tended to be around convictions, which generally came under a different category and issues that were the subject of convictions would not be matters covered by the guidance.

Standards Committee

57. The Registrar reported on items that had been covered in the recent meeting of the Standards Committee.
58. The committee had discussed items that had been highlighted in the CMA review, particularly themes in relation to consumer freedom of choice, prescription charges, referrals, incentives, fees and conflicts. The committee had felt that although there was guidance on these matters included within the Code of Professional Conduct (CoPC) supporting guidance, this was spread out over various areas and that it would be useful and helpful to the professions if consumer-related matters were also to be included within one additional chapter of the guidance, without removing these from the existing sections. Work had therefore been put in hand and would be further discussed at the committee's next meeting in early June.
59. Work was ongoing around contextualised care and its meaning, particularly with an emphasis on professionals using their judgement.
60. New legislation was due to come into force in England on 10 June on the compulsory microchipping of cats. The existing guidance on microchipping covered dogs, and the legislation relating to cats would be similar, with a requirement for all cats over 20 weeks old to be microchipped, with provision for health exemption. The committee had discussed in some detail the differences with cats and had added some extra wording into the guidance to cover potentially stray cats being presented for euthanasia.

Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

61. The Chair reported briefly on items covered at the recent meeting of the APC. There had been a useful presentation and discussion around the use of content of learning materials and trigger warnings.
62. Updates had been provided from the different workstreams. The neurodiversity stakeholder meeting was due to take place on 14 June. There had been a very good response to the disability and chronic illness survey. The results were currently being collated and should be reported later in the month.
63. It was reported that the RCVS Academy course on unconscious bias had already had a good uptake.

64. The Sarah Brown Mental Health Research grant had come to its end, with the last recipient receiving the award on 23 April. The College was looking to launch a new research grant for the future.
65. The first session of the VN Futures events on the future of team-based veterinary healthcare – VN Vision – had been held in Belfast on 8 May, attended by the DoVN with the VNC Chair, and Simon Williams. The DoVN added that this had been a version of the event that had been run for VNC at its February meeting. The event had been very well attended, with a lot of engagement, and some of the themes emerging had been very similar to those arising from the VN Council session. The information gathered was being themed to take forward to the forthcoming meetings. The next in-person meeting would take place in Edinburgh in June, and some online versions were also being planned, specifically to include equine nurses and educators in the work. The Chair and Simon Williams both added that this had been a very positive and worthwhile event with excellent feedback.

RVN Disciplinary Committee

66. The Chair reported that following a new procedure agreed for 2024 onwards, the RVN Disciplinary Committee reports summarising recent hearings were now loaded into the VN Council workroom Library and would no longer be included in the papers in the Board pack. Full hearing details were also available on the RCVS website.

Communications report

67. The Media and Publications Manager provided an overview of recent VN-related activities in the Comms Department.
68. The RCVS had recently published a Veterinary Nursing Awareness Month themed leadership interview with Betsy Malamah-Thomas RVN, in her role of Nursing and Clinical Support Manager at the Queen Mother Hospital for Animals. Council members were encouraged to look at this on the social media channels, and to share with friends and family on their social media networks.
69. The RCVS website now had a VN Returners web page <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/vn-welcome-back/>, which had recently gone live. This was a specific resource for RVNs returning to the profession after a significant break. Starting in June, emails would be sent out to all new returners from the previous six months, highlighting the resources available to them.
70. As mentioned by the Chair, the disability and chronic illness survey was due to be published shortly – this was likely to later in the summer, and the media plan, including interviews with some of the responders, was being worked on.
71. Planning was in the final stages for Royal College Day on 5 July and the Communications Department was promoting honours and awards winners across our social media channels. This would include the Golden Jubilee Award recipient, Andrea Jeffery. The guest speaker would be Professor Susan Jebb, current Chair of the Food Standards Agency, speaking on the role of vets in the food system. Full details of Royal College Day would be released shortly.

- 72. The next Veterinary Nurses Day to celebrate newly qualified veterinary nurses and those achieving advanced qualifications, would take place in Edinburgh on Friday 28 June.
- 73. The VN Vision events mentioned by the Chair were being promoted, the next event due to take place in Edinburgh on 26 June.

Policy and Public Affairs update

- 74. The Policy and Public Affairs Manager reported on a couple of items.
- 75. **Governance Reform.** The consultation on governance reform for both RCVS and VN Council was due to launch at the BVA Live Vet Show on 7 June, by which point the communications would be in place. The policy section of the website was being reconstructed to include the consultation, along with a “paddle – swim – dive” approach to communications, to enable members to go into as much detail as they wished before completing the consultation. There would be various communications to vets and veterinary nurses periodically throughout the consultation period, which would run for six weeks.
- 76. The consultation responses would be analysed by an external company linked to the Institute of Regulation. Reports would be submitted to the RCVS initially in draft stage by early October, ready for the final report with appropriate covering paper to come to RCVS Council and VN Council at their November meetings.
- 77. **Veterinary Surgeons Act.** There had been some useful meetings with Lord Douglas-Miller, the RCVS relevant minister in the House of Lords, in connection with taking forward a new Veterinary Surgeons Act. It was anticipated that there would be a working group involving other key stakeholders as well as the RCVS, and this was expected to take place regardless of the outcome of any future election. Further information would be reported back when available.

VN Council membership

- 78. **VN Council election 2024.** Council was pleased to note, as reported by the CEO, that Susan Howarth had been re-elected, and Kirsty Young had been elected, both for a three-year term, and looked forward to welcoming Kirsty at the AGM in July.
- 79. **Appointed Veterinary Nurses.** The Chair also reported that both she and Katherine Kissick had been re-appointed to VNC.
- 80. **Appointed Lay member:** Jessica Franklin would be joining Council as the new lay member, with effect from the AGM in July.
- 81. **Retiring members.** The Chair reported that this would be the last Council meeting for Donna Lewis and Alison Carr.
- 82. Donna had served a three-year term after being elected to VN Council in 2021. In her time on VN

Council she had served on the CPD Policy and Compliance Subcommittee where her experience as an assessor and clinical coach who places a strong value on continuing education had been invaluable.

83. Alison Carr was first appointed as a lay member of VN Council in 2013, bringing her vast experience of working for a wide variety of professional bodies and regulators, including as former Chief Executive of the Architects Registration Board. In her time on VN Council she had represented it on the fitness to practise working group, the CPD group, the examinations appeals committee and was also heavily involved in the review of VN education standards in 2019 where she made a significant and valued contribution.
84. Council echoed the Chair's thanks to both Alison and Donna.
85. The Chair also expressed a massive thanks to Eleanor Ferguson for all her support and guidance to VN Council and to the veterinary nursing profession over many years, and the impact she had made.
86. Alison Carr expressed her thanks to all those she had worked with over her time on VNC and remarked on the huge changes that had been made in the RCVS and VN Councils over that time, all positive and going in a really strong direction, commenting particularly on the strength of the partnership between the Chief Executive and the Registrar. Alison added that the RCVS did a fantastic job in maintaining standards, whilst maintaining a strong ethical core as well as being a compassionate regulator, which was much needed in the world at the moment and urged that this should continue.

Any other business (unclassified)

87. There was no other business.

Date of next meeting

88. The next meeting would be held in person, on Wednesday 18 September 2024, at a venue to be confirmed.

Summary	
Meeting	RCVS Council Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	11 September 2024 18 September 2024
Title	CEO update, including progress against Strategic Plan
Summary	This paper offers a summary of activity against the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan
Decisions required	To note; questions welcomed
Attachments	None
Author	Lizzie Lockett CEO l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification	Rationales
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

CEO update, including progress against Strategic Plan

Background

1. The RCVS Strategic Plan 2020-2024 was approved at the RCVS Council meeting in January 2020 and came into immediate effect. The full report, including all of the narrative, together with case studies from the previous plan's successes, can be found here:
<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/rcvs-strategic-plan-2020-2024/>
2. At its meeting in July 2020, the Officer Team felt it appropriate that an update be given to Council three times a year – in September, January and June – and information about a specific action can be made available to any Council member on request in between times. For each action, responsibilities, recent activities and next steps have been identified in the following table, alongside a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating, to show progress compared to what was anticipated at this point in the Strategic Plan's implementation.
3. Work to develop a new strategic plan is under way.
4. Alongside those changes noted in the Strategic Plan table to follow, since the June 2024 Council meeting, we have also:
 - a. Launched our 'good governance' consultation – due to report to Council in November
 - b. Published our Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2023
 - c. Admitted new members to the register from the UK veterinary and veterinary nursing schools, with in-person ceremonies
 - d. Hosted an event on support for neurodivergent students on veterinary placements
 - e. Celebrated the contribution of our retiring Registrar, Eleanor Ferguson
 - f. Launched a new Academy Course to help veterinary professionals understand our concerns process, and a new course for VetGDP peer reviewers
 - g. Hosted RCVS Day, including our awards programme
 - h. Admitted 48 new Fellows, with gender parity, and announced our new Fellowship Board Chair, Dr Niall Connell
 - i. Published our landmark research on supporting those with chronic illnesses and disabilities
 - j. Responded to the CMA's Issues Statement
 - k. Launched our new Mind Matters grants programme
 - l. Published the report of our AI roundtable
 - m. Continued our series of Veterinary Clinical Career Pathways stakeholder focus groups
 - n. Continued our series of Veterinary Nursing Vision workshops
 - o. Launched an evidence-based compassion-focused therapy course via Mind Matters

A: Clarity

Ambition: to ensure that we have clarity of purpose and that our internal and external stakeholders and service-users understand our role in the world. We will endeavour to become a proactive regulator that remains a step ahead, even in the face of constant change and uncertainty. We will listen widely, consult meaningfully, make confident decisions, then communicate with clarity, appreciating that the final outcome may not suit everyone.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
1. Continue, via the work of the Veterinary Legislation Working Party (LWP) and other groups, to review the regulatory landscape to ensure we develop world-leading, robust standards and approaches that are grounded in evidence and risk-based, in order to safeguard animal health and welfare, and public health, and maintain trust in the veterinary professions.	Exec Office/ Ed/VN		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion around governance took place at January 2024 Council meeting. A consultation ran 10 June – 22 July, following a launch event at BVA Live. Responses are currently being analysed by an external agency. Results and paper for decision due to be brought to November 2024 Council meeting. • CMA inquiry mentions out of date regulatory framework. July 2024 discussion with CVOs and deputy CVOs to remind them about importance of new legislation (they continue to be supportive), and brief them on the governance reform consultation. Letters written to new Ministers calling for new legislation – meeting arranged with Baroness Hayman (relevant Minister in the House of Lords) in September 2024. • Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) agreed the formation of a new Working Group on Mandatory Practice Regulation in November 2023; its first meeting was held on 15 April, with the second scheduled for 23 September. • Launched a comprehensive new online training programme for accreditation panel members via RCVS Academy, with positive initial feedback. Panel member feedback following new accreditation processes also positive. A 'lessons learnt' document was shared with Education and Audit and Risk Committees to ensure we continue on a journey of quality improvement. • Work continues with Defra to consider how current regulations on the Statutory Membership Exam can be updated to make the exam more accessible and flexible. • Following VN support meetings, there have been eight successful accreditations. • Launched the External Examiners (EEs) course providing standardised training, for both educational and RCVS requirements, for those responsible for reviewing veterinary nursing programmes.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
2. Ensure that we are addressing what matters to our stakeholders and that we horizon-scan for issues that are beyond the scope of our immediate view. For example, regulation of new technologies, regulation of practices, review of our concerns and disciplinary process, and regulation of the wider veterinary team and the environment in which they work.	APC/ LWP/ PICDCL /EC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Fellowship Science Advisory Panel (FSAP) Working Party is investigating whether and how animal behavioural medicine should be regulated; its final meeting is expected before the end of 2024. • The new concerns process has been launched and the website has been updated. • The new Charter Case Committee (CCC) was launched on 25 August 2023. • New plans for Extra Mural Studies (EMS) have been published and communicated. New policy now approved by Education Committee (EC) for implementation in autumn 2024. The new policy has been the subject of widespread communication and engagement. • Work on Reasonable Adjustments continues, with the aim of developing co-created principles with the veterinary schools. Research to inform the process ongoing. We aim to have a draft available for consideration by Council by the end of 2024. • Disability and Chronic Illness survey has now been published. • Neurodiversity and clinical placements stakeholder day was hosted in June with excellent feedback from all who attended. This is part of a longer term initiative that cuts across AP, VN and Education and will result in various publications and outputs such as Academy content. • VCCP project is progressing. The three workstreams are 1) Development of Specialty training for GPs; 2) Definition of roles; and, 3) Development of flexible routes to specialisation. Two stakeholder meetings have taken place in London (May) and Edinburgh (June). A further two are planned in Cardiff (Oct) and Belfast (Nov). We have also scheduled several online lunchtime sessions for specific stakeholder groups, to ensure those who cannot get time away from practice to attend in-person events can contribute to this work, including sessions for independent, remote and rural, student, new graduate and early career vets, APs, Specialists, equine and farm vets. • Roundtable on regulation of use of AI on 20 May; report now published and workstreams underway. • An online stakeholder briefing was held on 13 March 2024 to update numerous veterinary and veterinary nursing organisations on a range of RCVS initiatives. • VN Futures sponsored online and in-person events (VN Vision), yielding valuable and insightful data on how RVNs and SVN's see, or would like to see their profession evolving, which will inform future projects.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
3. Review whether we can take a more proactive role around breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act involving unqualified individuals, or courses that purport to lead to registration but do not, both through education to end-users of veterinary services, and working more actively to support those wishing to raise concerns with the relevant authorities.	Legal		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following approval at the March 2023 meeting of Council, the 12-month trial of a protocol for the private prosecution of breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act was launched on 1 April. This work is now reported via the PIC/Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee. At its June meeting, RCVS Council agreed to move the protocol to a permanent footing.
4. Work with our partners overseas to ensure that the UK remains relevant in the veterinary world post-EU exit, including sharing knowledge, marketing our standards and services, and building an engaged diaspora of members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MsRCVS) and registered veterinary nurses (RVNs). Ensure there is a global element to all that we do, and that our international members feel engaged and included.	APC/ FVE/ EC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue improving engagement with overseas members and run a regular blog in RCVS News from overseas-practising members. Work ongoing to develop more permanent solution to loss of mutual recognition of professional qualifications. Council has approved direct approaches to some schools. EAEVE has agreed for RCVS to attend its accreditations as an observer, to facilitate RCVS accreditation, should a school wish this. Continuing strong relations with International Accreditors Working Group (IAWG), Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, Mind Matters International, American Association of Veterinary State Boards, American Veterinary Medical Association and International Veterinary Regulators Network (IVRN), with attendance/ presentation at in-person meetings during the year. IAWG meetings held online over two days in July 24. Interest shown in a Mind Matters International research event – timing and resourcing TBC. Work ongoing regarding environmentally sustainable approach to joint international accreditations involving visitors trained in the standards and processes of more than one agency – pilot underway with AVBC. Initial conversation held with the Veterinary Council of Zambia to see how we could support their regulatory development – contact via Veterinary Medicines Directorate. Involved in ESNO (for European specialist nurses) discussions on workforce shortages and retention, culminating in a report to the European Commission. Revised Accreditation Committee of Veterinary Nurse Education (ACOVENE) Standards published March 2024. Involved with AAVMC development of 'Team-based Veterinary Healthcare competences. Promotion of VN initiatives at the first International Congress ATAV for Veterinary Technicians in Rimini, Italy.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending the North American Veterinary Community's (NAVC) Vet Nurse and Teach HiVE event in Anaheim in November to deliver the VN Vision outcomes (see A2). • Academy course developed for overseas vets / VNs applying to register launched. • There are opportunities to promote and 'sell' some of our initiatives overseas, but UK work takes priority during this busy time. Trademarking is being considered. • CEO joined FVE taskforce on development of European Veterinary Foundation, which met in person in December 2023, work ongoing, also taskforce to celebrate FVE's 50th anniversary, in 2025.
Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
5. Build a closer relationship between the College, the professions and the public by continuing our outreach programme. Review how we gain input from stakeholders at all levels, including the development of an improved process for seeking input from members of the public.	APC/ Comms/ Exec		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing work with Public Advisory Group members on development of animal owner advice and to discuss issues raised by the CMA, which fed into development of response to CMA issues statement • Chronic Illness and Disability Survey has now been published. • Fellowship elections have taken place, with a new Chair. We will now be electing a Vice-Chair and recruiting FSAP members. A number of projects for FSAP have been identified, and Fellowship Day will be used to refine these. Current topics include disease preparedness and disaster relief. • New set of Fellows on Tour events at UK veterinary schools being planned. • Stakeholder meeting took place on 13 March to bring groups up to date on current College priorities and seek input to the strategic plan. • Series of one-to-one interviews with representatives from around 20 stakeholder organisations have taken place and output will help inform the new strategic plan. The findings were discussed by the Officer Team at their planning day in August. • Joint meeting with RCVA and BVA Officers took place in March to discuss whether we move to Vet Futures 2 – positive discussions although likely workload for both organisations regarding CMA may put this on hold in the short term. • MMI talks continue, following a successful event at the Titanic Vet Show, ECVIM and VetNet, are planned for the autumn. CEO also speaking at Canmore Trust interprofessional event on mental health in November. • New research webinars continue to be popular, showcasing outputs from MMI grant awardees. • New MMI Grant programme now launched. • Reinstated the VN Educator forums to update on RCVS policies and procedures, such as the updated Standards Framework and discuss topics such as academic integrity.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
6. Establish clarity around a data-sharing commitment, and ensure that our views, our data & our insights are shared regularly in an easy-to-search way, for example, easy-to-find FAQ on key issues, insights gained from concerns & complaints data, and self-service facts and figures about the professions. Make available accessible & anonymised versions of the data we hold to all stakeholders to enable them to generate value and insights for the sector.	FRC/ Digital/ Policy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop dashboard on key metrics – parameters agreed at January meeting of Council, was due for first report in June 2024 but other work pressures mean this is delayed. Data management system (CRM) review project ongoing – Discovery phase now complete and we have moved into the development phase. Paper on access to Register for third-party software approved by FRC at May 2024 meeting.
7. Plan and implement a cycle of review and improvement for our educational standards and processes, to ensure we continue to take a leadership role with our international partners.	Ed Cttee/ VN Ed Cttee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCVS Academy for accreditation panellists launched, initial feedback positive. Veterinary Clinical Career Pathway workstreams underway. VN support meetings now include assessment and examination specific support. A review of the accreditation standards for the post registration Cert AVN will commence in autumn 2024. Review of the Veterinary Nurse Apprenticeship Standard will commence autumn 2024. A review of the veterinary Day One Competences is underway.
8. Ensure clarity of appeal across all the areas where we make decisions, modernising where appropriate; where appeal is unavailable, clearly justify.	Legal services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration appeals process has been considered by Registration Committee and approved by Council at its June meeting. Appeal process for Statutory Membership Examination to be considered. Review and revise VN accreditation appeals process.

B: Compassion

Ambition: to be a compassionate upstream regulator and a supportive Royal College by ensuring that high standards continue to be met while working in an empathetic way that respects all of our stakeholders and service-users as individuals. We will recognise that a compassionate approach involves helping members of the veterinary team build the skills and knowledge they need to meet our standards, which is ultimately in the interests of animal health and welfare.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
1. Endeavour to ensure that the College is seen as approachable, helpful, fair and accessible to all.	All		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report of web content review now received, and work underway to update key areas of website with consideration being given to information accuracy, content design, language style, accessibility, diversity and inclusion and search engine optimisation (SEO). See also A5 above ref engagement. Review of appeals processes ongoing, see A8 above. Continue with VN support package, see A7 above. Have supported refugees through the Statutory Membership Examination process and the first one has now passed and has registered with us. New Research Manager now in post and reports from Surveys of the Professions to be published in autumn.
2. Enable our teams to deliver compassionate regulation by providing structures, training and support to ensure they can help vets and nurses meet the standards required in a compassionate way, and take ownership and communicate clearly when things don't go to plan. Recognising that, in order to achieve this, our team members must also feel well supported and that they are compassionately treated.	People		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement discussions underway with employees to explore new methods of feedback to understand levels of employee engagement. New Staff Network Group – Alliance for Inclusion (AFI) set up, and current focus is on mentoring and an inclusive book club. Also, AFI to deliver a session at the staff away day on September 5 to promote inclusion. Online staff learning hub due to launch, to provide employees with a range of learning options plus additional learning material. prepared in conjunction with Academy colleagues and external providers. Updated L&D policy with more rigorous assessment of monies agreed and better understating of learning outcomes for performance improvement. Requests for funding increasing given there is now a clearer focus on funding requests and impact for learners. Thematic review of data from exit interviews presented to Senior Team on a quarterly basis with managers able to take responsibility for improvements. Ongoing, next update due early September. Growth mindset group in place to encourage different ways of thinking remains strong and positive, with personal development being the main focus Manager Charter developed to support new and existing managers, next steps of this work to be discussed with wider manager group. To be shared in drop-in sessions for leaders due to start end of August for discussion and how to use the charter in the future.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional mental health and wellbeing support introduced via MyMynd, with positive initial feedback, Masterclasses to take place in September, for managers only initially, onboarding sessions for new starters also to take place in September. In-depth recruitment training took place in June for managers to aid decision making and strengthen competence on inclusive recruitment / competency questioning. Phase I completed, with excellent feedback, new materials building on what was already in place introduced. Phase II to take place late September for remaining managers. Wellbeing calendar launched, to focus employees' minds on specific events or activity to support health and mindset. Data gathering for most popular topics to start early September, with quarterly advanced planning.
Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
3. Review our concerns process through the eyes of each of our stakeholder and service-user groups to ensure that it is fair, forward-thinking and compassionate, and set out a programme of quality improvement.	ProfCon MMI		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of ProfCon Investigation Support Service; article May 2023 RCVS News and flagging to VetLife for appropriate signposting. Registrar took part in 'myth-busting' ref complaints at BVA Live & SPVS. Further conversations with VetSupport NI and in order to further promote this service updates / information have been communicated to MEG, associations and other large groups. Public Advisory Group will support us developing more compassionate approach for animal owners. Academy courses on our concerns system, resolving complaints in practice, and Complaints: communication, confidence and compassion, now available. Reviewing work of the Australian Health Practitioners Regulatory Authority Working Group on minimising distress for practitioners involved in a regulatory process, to see where we can learn from best practice.
4. Help our regulated professionals to meet the standards expected of them by their peers, the public and society at large by launching the RCVS Academy, which will house a range of online educational tools to help veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and other potential associates of the College understand what is expected of them in terms of meeting standards, and to support them acquiring relevant knowledge and staying up to date in a creative, accessible and inspiring way.	Exec ALL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Academy courses being launched regularly; over 15,500 learners have accessed the Academy since launch (June 2022); regular contact with advisory panel of vets and nurses ensures content is relevant. Development of the EMS information 'hub' ongoing, to provide an engaging online area accessible for the three main stakeholder groups, students, providers and school staff. Will focus on 'what good looks like' and include the 'difficult' challenges such as how to empower students to deal with inappropriate behaviours on placement, and support for schools with those difficult conversations when exploring concerns raised and students and addressing issues with providers. VN Educator forum meetings have been reinstated beginning June 2024 and will focus on providing regulatory updates to VN educators (see A5).

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
5. Continue to support the mental health and wellbeing of members of the veterinary team, and our College staff, through the Mind Matters Initiative under its workstreams of 'prevent, protect and support' (see www.vetmindmatters.org), and also help veterinary professionals to take account of the mental health of those with whom they come into contact.	APC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Chair Louise Allum now in post. Outgoing Chair Kate Richards supporting in ambassador role. • Speaking at ECVIM, VetNet and Canmore Trust interprofessional event. • 2025 themes being refined with moral injury, women's health and rural mental health being prioritised. • New grant programme now launched, with a smaller grant also now available. Increased support for applicants and clear direction of topics in alignment with the MMI strategy. Good attendance and feedback at the research webinars, aimed at improving interaction with the grant awardees and to support dissemination. • Heavily subsidised MHFA courses well attended, three more planned for this year. • Preparation for MMI Symposium 2025 is now underway. Abstracts will be open from 10 October 2024. • New course on civility being designed in collaboration with the Academy and leading experts (based on the Civility Guide launched earlier this year by Aberdeen). Aiming to launch by January 2025. • Continuing to be members of the Worshipful Company of Farmers Rural Health and Wellbeing Forum, contributing a veterinary voice. • New training course looking at key 'transitions' being designed for pilot.
6. Continue to foster a reflective learning culture amongst members of the veterinary team, so that they can continue to grow and develop in a supportive, no-blame environment.	APC Ed Cttee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective CPD and use of 1CPD app now mandatory – communications and promotion have taken place and will continue. • Evaluation of VetGDP Adviser e-learning highly positive. • Discussions remain ongoing with NHS regarding relaunch of Edward Jenner Leadership MOOC. • New video profiling vet nurse leadership has been launched, and more will be available this year and next. • Insight from the Disability and Chronic Illness Survey will inform the plans for leadership and management CPD, combined with a campaign soon to be launched on reasonable adjustments within the workplace. • New unconscious bias course launched via the Academy, has had good feedback, and all Fellowship Assessors completed prior to Fellowship assessments. This will be mandatory for all assessing the new MMI grants. It remains open to all vets and nurses. • Parallel work on growth mindset within the staff team.

C: Courage

Ambition: we will have the courage to take a leadership role within the professions, to ensure that the pervading culture is healthy, sustainable, inclusive, innovative and respectful; through this, will develop confident veterinary professionals.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
1. Continue to seek culture change within the wider professions around help-seeking behaviour to support both mental and physical health, learning culture, leadership, innovation, sustainability and diversity.	DIG MMI APC Education		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See B5 for MMI and B6 for learning culture. • VN version of religious clothing document launched. • Joint APC / EC / VN Council project has started to produce guidance for EMS, intra-mural rotations (IMR) providers and wider workplaces on supporting those with neurodiversity. • Fellowship Science Advisory Panel project on Net Zero practice moving forward with Chairs appointed to the Medicine WG and the Surgery WG. • Sustainability is a key aspect of Hardwick Street refurbishment project. • Continued engagement with UKHACC as the only veterinary voice in that group. Significant efforts to demonstrate the UK approach to welfare and AMR and progress that has been made • ViVet strategy under review at present. • AI roundtable took place on 20 May, report now published and workstreams underway. • Paper on learning culture in VetGDP published in <i>Journal of Veterinary Medical Education</i>. • Poster presentation on BAME Recommendations and Religious Clothing Guidance at July Association for the Study of Medical Education EDI event, re-organised in-person conference took place in spring 2024. • VetGDP for returners now launched to help people to return to veterinary work following a career break, planning promotional push. • Chronic illness survey published (more detail above). • Student specific report on disability and chronic illness will be published soon. • 'Reasonable adjustments' campaign imminent, this will help support and educate line managers and employers on what is reasonable and support those who are asking support to engage in this process. • Continued membership of MEG DIG to share learnings and support communication. • 'RVN – Starting Out' course, designed to support the transition from student to registered nurse, launched May 2023, currently being updated. • Nurse Returner course developed and launched Sept 2023.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'RCVS & Me' course for student vet nurses and tutors with an introduction to the RCVS, its purpose and how it can support students, launched September 2024. • Menopause tool kit launched as part of VN Futures (VNF). • Flexible working toolkit being developed as part of VNF. • President's Christmas donation given to WP charity and awareness raised as part of communication of this.
Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
2. Celebrate the art as well as the science of veterinary medicine and ensure that wider professional skills are properly and credibly supported.	APC RCVSK Education		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to honours process made and record number of nominations received for 2024 round - tweaks due to be made to 2025 process based on feedback from Nominations Subcommittee. • New building will include history and future of veterinary practice – thought to be given to commissioning new items for historic collection. • Education for school-age children planned for new building to encourage better understanding of veterinary profession from a younger age and potentially encourage applications to vet school from a wider pool. • Increased number of women applicants, and then successful applications for Fellowship reported in 2024. The new marking rubric has been well received by the assessors, as well as mandatory unconscious bias training and updated guidance. Further refinement of the process continues. We are pleased to welcome 48 new Fellows this year, a trend that will hopefully continue. • Fellowship Day themes will look at disease preparedness, species introduction and disaster relief, with the aim of practical materials to be developed where appropriate which will be free for the professions to access. • Fellowship student competition has been growing, this year will see a new pre Fellowship Day networking evening for students with Fellows and a chance to present their research. The top three students will continue to have a session at Fellowship Day. • New Fellowship categories have brought in a wider diversity of Fellows, whose expertise on the art and science of veterinary medicine needs to be harnessed. Wider skills continue to be championed through the CertAVP and the new vet school standards, and is a key consideration for the Veterinary Clinical Careers Pathway project, including speciality training for GPs.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
3. Work with other stakeholders to retain skills and talent within the professions, by developing return-to-work options that build confidence in those who have had a career break, for whatever reason.	<i>Education MMI ViVet Academy Exec</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability and chronic illness survey, combined with the Survey of the Profession, gives insight into some of the challenges with recruitment, retention and return and what support might be helpful to the professions Workforce Action Plan outlines range of actions ref retention Webinars with the wider profession have now taken place – see A2. The Diversity and Inclusion Group (DIG) developing inclusive recruitment toolkit to support organisations from job description thorough to induction, which should impact on recruitment and retention. VetGDP is available for those returning to the profession. Compulsory for those away from the profession for more than five years, optional for those away for a shorter period. Now covered in VetGDP coms. Work ongoing to understand 3Rs activities within the government / public health veterinary sector and develop an action plan based on gap analysis. Nurse Return course available on Academy for all nurses returning to the Register. Compulsory for those off the Register for five years or more.
4. Ensure a pathway for career progression for vets and nurses via postgraduate/post-qualification accreditations and qualifications – to meet the needs of vets and nurses at all stages of their careers.	<i>Education VN</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fifth provider of CertAVN approved. There are now 24 Cert AVN programmes available covering both clinical and non-clinical areas of focus. As outlined at A2 above, the VCCP workstreams started in January and progressing well. Substantial stakeholder engagement involved. VN career progression linked to LWP proposals (see A1). Proposals under development for the Advanced Practitioner role for VNs Pilot for second stage of VN Prescriber research complete, and changes agreed for full survey, and selection of sample. Next step sign off final questionnaire and related documents/coms. Survey will be open for approx three weeks; expected by end of the year. Actions within Workforce Action Plan also consider fulfilling careers. VNF sponsored events (VN Vision) underway throughout 2024 (See A2)
5. Develop extra-mural studies (EMS) and work experience opportunities at the College, together with more opportunities for veterinary professionals and members of the public to become engaged with the work of the regulator at first hand and gain an understanding of its complexities.	<i>Comms APC</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop modules for Academy to better explain our key functions. Successful EMS placement programme, jointly with Veterinary Policy Research Foundation, ongoing. Officers will attend a range of freshers' weeks and careers fairs at the vet schools. VN school induction weeks also attended. Regional Question Time took place in June in Birmingham and more planned. Opportunities for vets and VNs to join various working groups put out to application.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
6. Create an innovation funding pot to enable the professions to help solve regulation and professional standards issues that matter to them.	<i>Exec FRC</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bursary scheme to be launched for 2025. Consideration of challenge prize on hold due to other priorities. It will also be important to ensure the professions have the right skills and approach to innovation in order to maximise the opportunity. Something in relation to AI a likely possibility.
7. Continue to develop the Fellowship into a learned society that reflects the varied achievements of the veterinary profession; encourages the advancement of standards; and, develops public awareness of veterinary medicine and science, for example, via the development of a Fellow on the Public Understanding of Veterinary Science.	<i>Fellows APC</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fellowship Day keynote speaker booked, two interactive sessions planned (disease preparedness and disaster relief). Student competition open, and a new networking evening (online) to enable more students to benefit from Fellowship interaction being planned for November. Elections completed for Chair, now elections for Vice-Chair and applications for FSAP membership open. New Academy course on unconscious bias and training for Fellowship assessors has been completed by all assessors. Fellowship spokesperson list to be created, to identify individuals who can be media trained and give views on relevant topics (NB care to be taken not to conflict with regulatory role). Next steps on sustainability will be worked upon following feedback from Fellowship Day session and others such as LVS. This will be in collaboration with RCVS Knowledge as the evidence gap is a significant element that needs resolution to enable people to make confident decisions. Sustainability consensus statement now approved by APC and can be used by Fellowship for sustainability activities.
8. Review new ways of reaching consensus and driving change within our leadership and governance structure.	<i>Exec Officers</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction carried out with new Council members. Reflection sessions at Council meetings to discuss how effectively business was conducted continue. Workshop sessions to be planned with external speakers on board effectiveness. Chairs training took place in September 2023; other training sessions in the pipeline including on finance and media training.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
9. Work with the BVA and the BVNA to evaluate the success of the first action plans for Vet Futures and VN Futures respectively, assess whether the ambitions remain relevant, and develop new action plans accordingly. Work with the FVE to support the delivery of Vet Futures Europe.	Exec		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion took place with BVA in March regarding 'Vet Futures 2' – appetite for collaboration but resourcing may be limiting factor. • VN Futures 'VN Vision' events planned for 2024 to reengage with the profession, horizon scan and consider current challenges and future opportunities. Events so far held in NI, Scotland, Shropshire and online. Wales, Derby and London in the planning stages. Educator and equine specific sessions held. (see A2) • VNF sessions on 'impact change' and having difficult conversations at BVNA Congress 2024. • Defra hosting meeting to discuss future of the profession with key stakeholders. • CMA process likely to have impact on future of the professions. • RCVS Strategy Plan process for 2025 onwards underway.

D: Confidence

Ambition: in order to deliver our Strategic Plan, we must not only have the mandate that is secured by the Veterinary Surgeons Act and our Royal Charter, but also the confidence to succeed that will be brought by the right underpinning – the governance, people, finance, communications and IT structures that are crucial to our success.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
1. Review the bedding-in of the 2018 Legislative Reform Order to ensure that our Council and committee structure is efficient, effective, and transparent, and provides the right level of strategic oversight coupled with skills-based input to allow the College to function to the best of its abilities.	Officers Exec		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoping for informal review - although this may be superseded by work considering new governance structure as part of legislative changes (meanwhile, second five-year review for the LRO that separated PIC and DC from Council underway with Defra). Governance Manual in progress. Action plan to resolve gaps vs Charity Code being worked through by Senior Team and reviewed by Audit and Risk Committee. Consultation on governance launched in June 2024 and will report to Council in November 2024.
2. Review the structure of all of our groups operating below committee level, to ensure the right mix of skills are available to tackle the tasks at hand and that each group has clear membership, purpose, principles, time-frame and sense of what success will look like.	FRC Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills were considered as part of Council Culture project and Officers agreed in August 2024 that the governance survey would be carried out again in January to identify learning needs. Annual review of delegation scheme now routine and all groups now have ToR and greater clarity. New paper templates under development, along with training for secretariats. Each Committee considers its 'child' groups (subcommittees, working groups etc) as part of the review at the end of each presidential year.
3. Develop and embed a meaningful dashboard to help ensure that appetite for risk is clear, risk is managed and any early warning signs are addressed.	ARC FRC Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk process well embedded and praised by ARC for its effectiveness. Annual Business Continuity Planning meeting takes place and changes are made to the plan in response – next meeting due September. Work ongoing on risk dashboard and assurance map, reviewed by Audit and Risk Committee. Greater visibility of Corporate Risk Register now available to Council, with annual risk workshop.
4. Collate and review our member and service-user feedback on an ongoing basis, against key performance indicators, and work with RCVS Knowledge to employ a quality improvement and innovation methodology to ensure we are providing services that meet the needs of our audiences and society at large.	Ops Head of I&E		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper on 'vital signs' agreed at January 2024 meeting of Council. Was due for first report June 2024 but delayed due to other commitments. Process for reviewing / analysing all complaints about RCVS, regardless of area of work, remains ongoing. Research and initial framework completed. Developed end-of-case survey with the Professional Conduct team. This has been in place for around two years as an ongoing service-user feedback tool.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Services team now well established and looking to extend its remit. Team currently covers calls for Finance, Registration & Membership. Cross-trained on Reception and now Reception overflow in place. Vet and VN exit survey data now being gathered. Zero tolerance for abuse of our staff statement now on the website. Members' views gathered as part of the 2024 Surveys of the Professions, report under development.
Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
5. Put in place a People Strategy that develops our talent, diversity, leadership and culture, across the staff team, Council and committee members, examiners, assessors and all others who work on behalf of the College.	Exec People		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data dashboard completed to highlight People data to include diversity and gender information, shortly to be shared with ST. Career progression framework under review to provide clarity of movement across the organisation. Update of staff induction, probation and notice processes in progress, majority of the policies are complete with some minor adjustments based on feedback being updated. Induction is now managed monthly, with less requirement of colleagues to support; more enhancements in progress. Review of payroll and people systems underway, to reduce repetition and administration, provide a better service to managers and improve the experience for new recruits. This is a major project and will not start until 2025 Regular learning sessions rolled out for all managers on major changes to employment legislation, plans underway for further work regarding sexual harassment in the workplace – legal changes due in Oct 24. Further sessions due early October due to new legislation. New career web page review under construction to better promote career opportunities externally. Work on intranet ongoing. Skills Share Week (SSW) delivered as a direct result of 2023 Staff Away Day discussion, feedback very positive; 2024 SSW plans underway. Trialling a series of drop-in sessions in August/Sept to offer managers an outlet to share their challenges as a leader of people and explore the learning options to support their growth as managers. New maternity policy launched with enhanced pay arrangements. Roundtable meetings to invite parents-to-be and parents to share ideas for work/family balance, and other challenges they experience. Finance training due to be delivered in October by Wingate, on four aspects of financial management and planning. 2024 Staff Away Day due to take place on 5 September, under the theme 'better together'.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
6. Ensure our financial systems are customer-focused, fraud-resistant and efficient, and improve communication and clarity over where money is spent and its impact.	FRC Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure database upgrade includes a flexible customer interface. Fraud policy to be refreshed. Polices for financial processes being refreshed.
7. Develop and implement a technology strategy that puts digital first, is collaborative, and focuses on simplification and convergence.	Exec Digital FRC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Platforms for NPL, PDR and Stanley (PSS) purchased late spring 2023. CRM review project with Smart Impact now underway. New website Project Board in place and tender process has identified two front runners for the contract. Due diligence process underway.
8. Purchase a new property that aims to serve the needs of the College for the next twenty years, while not putting an undue future financial commitment on our members.	Estates Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HS now free of tenants; finalising dilapidations agreement. Levy Real Estate appointed and acting as project managers for the works. Peldon Rose appointed as design and build company. Hardwick Street now turned over to them and weekly update meetings taking place. Staff Technical Group set up and responsible for ensuring building infrastructure, kit and layout meet the current and future needs, within agreed budgets.
9. Put in place a communications strategy that will focus on clarifying what we are, and what we are not, and be stronger about calling out those who seek to undermine the College; own our shortcomings and be clear about where and how we will change; and be bolder about celebrating our successes and our unique contribution to animal health and welfare, and public health. Empower our wider team to become communications ambassadors for the College.	Comms		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications priorities for this Presidential year discussed by Officers at the August planning meeting. Web content review report received and work underway across key sections of website to update content in line with report's recommendations. Language/Content Style Guide near completion, to be followed by familiarisation training for staff. Brand development review ongoing, to be aligned with new building presentation and next Strategic Plan. Website review ongoing – see above

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
10. Develop and implement a corporate social responsibility strategy that befits an organisation that works in the public interest.	FRC Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental impact of new building under consideration, plus how it can help us integrate into, and support, community, eg, working with local schools. • Work ongoing with UK Health Alliance on Climate Change (UKHACC). • APC has signed off sustainability and biodiversity consensus statement. • New webpage being built to showcase internal and external sustainability information. • Next edition of internal Green Team 'Green Zine' due in September in line with Zero Waste Week. • Regular reviews of investment portfolio to ensure it aligns with our values. • Push to encourage staff to make more use of volunteering days to support social responsibility of the organisation. • Evaluating accreditation options that cover economic, ethical, environmental and social responsibilities for the new building (we secured Investors in the Environment (iE) Bronze for another year in 2023). • Consideration of carbon off-setting line in future budgets. • Sustainability considered for VN Pre-Registration Examinations. Reduction of single-use items, reuse, repurpose or recycle where possible. • Events strategy – eg around merchandise and give-aways – reflects environmental policy.

Summary

Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	18 September 2024
Title	Minutes of meeting of VN Education Committee held on 20 June 2024
Summary	Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee held on 20 June 2024
Decisions required	To approve
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Appendix	Confidential	2,3,4

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

Veterinary Nurse Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2024 held remotely via Teams

Members:

Mrs Sarah Batt-Williams	HE veterinary nursing provider
Miss Julia Cox*	Employer representative
Mrs Sarah Holman	FE veterinary nursing provider
Mrs Susan Howarth	VN Council veterinary nurse (Chair)
Miss Sophia Hoyland*	HE student representative
Miss Betsy Malamah-Thomas	Employer representative
Mrs Sarah Parkhouse	FE veterinary nursing provider
Mrs Sarah Reynolds-Golding	HE independent regulatory expert (Deputy Chair)
Mrs Perdi Welsh	Post-registration veterinary nurse provider
Miss Leigh Willson	FE student representative

*absent

In attendance:

Mrs Annette Amato	Committee Secretary
Mrs Jasmine Curtis	Qualifications Assessor
Miss Shirley Gibbins	Qualifications Lead (QL)
Miss Abigayle Gomez	Senior Qualifications Officer
Mr Matthew Hall	Qualifications Assessor
Mrs Victoria Hedges	VN Examinations Quality Lead (VNEQL)
Ms Tori Thornton	Qualifications Assessor
Mrs Kirsty Williams	Education Quality Improvement Manager (EQIM)

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Julia Cox and Sophia Hoyland. The Director of Veterinary Nursing also sent her apologies.

Declarations of interest

2. Sarah Reynolds-Golding – External Examiner for Coventry University.

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) 16 April 2024

3. The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2024 as a correct record.

Matters arising

4. There were no matters arising from the previous minutes other than those which were covered throughout the agenda.

Veterinary Nursing update

5. The Chair provided an update from the Director of Veterinary Nursing (DoVN) on recent activities and issues of note:
6. **Committee membership.** This would be the last meeting for Sarah Parkhouse, Leigh Willson and Sophia Hoyland, and the Lay member from Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC), Sarah Fox, had resigned in May due to a conflict of interest. The DoVN, echoed by the committee, wished to say a huge thank you to them for their input to the work of the committee. Their experience, support, guidance and consideration of topics discussed had been invaluable.
7. New members would be welcomed to the committee at the next meeting, including two student representatives, one Further Education (FE) independent expert, a FE educator and an employer.
8. **VN Vision.** The VN Vision event held in Northern Ireland on 8 May had been well attended. Delegates had been very engaged, with the topics and themes emerging being in line with those identified in the discussion in VNC and the Veterinary Management Group (VMG) congress in April 2024. Further VN vision events would shortly be held in Edinburgh and Shropshire, with potentially some online options to follow.
9. **VN Events.** The next Veterinary Nurses Day would be held on 28 June, in Edinburgh, with Richard Casey, CEO of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association, as the guest speaker.
10. The first VN Educator meeting had been held in Shropshire the previous week. The agenda had included RCVS updates and a session on Artificial Intelligence (AI). The meeting had been well attended, with good engagement, and there had been several requests for the AI session to be run at some delivery sites. The next meeting was booked to take place in Edinburgh on 27 June, and others would be organised later in the year.
11. The Neurodiversity event took place on 14 June and had been well attended both in-person and online. There had been excellent engagement, especially from the students. The themes arising had included the need for clear communication and, broad guidelines and specific information (including videos) of what to expect from placements – items which would benefit all students, not just the neurodiverse.
12. **Standards.** The Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training had been ratified by VNC in May and the accompanying guidance had now been completed. The guidance was in line with information provided during the support visits and the

document had been through final proofreading, prior to release. The QL confirmed that the basic pdf version would be issued immediately to those institutions due to undergo accreditation in the Autumn, and the comms department would then develop a version for publication on the website in the next couple of months.

13. **Applications for registration.** There had been no applications for registration with reduced clinical placement hours since the last VNEC meeting.
14. **AI Roundtable.** The RCVS AI Roundtable event to consider how AI use in the veterinary sector might best be regulated to optimise positive outcomes and minimise risk, had taken place on 20 May, and would be followed by an internal meeting on 11 July to look at the next steps.
15. **Practice Standards.** The Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) review was continuing, as was the work on mandatory practice standards.
16. **International veterinary nursing events.** Both the DoVN and the Qualifications Lead had been flying the flag internationally. The DoVN and QL had attended the first inaugural Association of Veterinary Technicians (ATVE) Conference in Rimini at the end of May, with the DoVN presenting two sessions, one on veterinary nursing in the UK and routes to registration and the other on ACOVENE (Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education) and the importance of accreditation. This had been the first standalone veterinary nursing conference in Europe. The QL had attended the European Specialist Nurses Organisation (ESNO), presenting on quality improvement and early warning scores. Both congresses had been very successful and the DoVN and QL continued to engage actively with ESNO, having had several further online meetings.

Matters for decision

Licence to practise qualifications

Re-accreditations

17. The committee reviewed and discussed reports and action plans and action plans and took the following decisions:
18. **Coventry University**
Full accreditation for five years for the Coventry University veterinary nursing degree programmes:
 - FdSc Veterinary Nursing
 - BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing
19. **Middlesex University**
Full accreditation for five years for the following programmes:
 - BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing

- BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing with Foundation Year

Programme changes

20. The committee considered and agreed proposed programme changes for the following:
21. **Central Qualifications (CQ)**
Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing, Small Animal and Equine pathways.
22. **Hartpury University**
- BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing
 - BSc (Hons) Equine Veterinary Nursing
 - BSc Veterinary Nursing
 - BSc Equine Veterinary Nursing

Matters for note

Licence to practise qualifications

Pre-accreditation support

23. The Qualifications Lead (QL) provided an update report on the current status of the pre-accreditation support package for Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) and was pleased to report that the current round of pre-accreditation support had been completed.
24. The VN Examinations Quality Lead (VNEQL) had carried out assessment specific support sessions for those AEIs which had not previously had this opportunity. These had also all been completed, and the feedback had been very good. Going forward, the QL and VNEQL were now in a position to offer remote and ad hoc support to AEIs where required.

Action plan monitoring accreditation/re-accreditation

25. Full oral updates were provided on the action plan monitoring for the following Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs):
- Aberystwyth University
 - Coventry University
 - Nottingham Trent University
 - University of Greenwich (Plumpton College)
 - University of South Wales
 - Central Qualifications

Quality monitoring activities

26. The Committee was presented with papers setting out the Quality Monitoring Activities undertaken for the following AEIs:

- Central Qualifications
- VetSkill Limited
- Anglia Ruskin University
- Nottingham Trent University
- University of Central Lancashire
- Wrexham University

Action plan quality monitoring

27. Oral updates were provided on the monitoring of action plans and future planned actions for the following AEIs:
- Royal Agricultural University (Plumpton College)
 - Central Qualifications
 - Lantra Awards
 - VetSkill Limited

Post registration qualifications

Matters for note

Quality monitoring

28. The committee noted papers setting out the auditing activities carried out for the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN) provision at the following universities:
- Hartpury University
 - University of Glasgow

Pre-registration examination

29. The VNEQL reported that the first pre-registration theory examination had been held in March 2024, and the committee noted the minutes of the examination board where the results were ratified.
30. Five candidates sat the examination, all of whom passed. Remote live invigilation had been used, and as this was the first time that the examination had been delivered by the contractor Testreach, three members of staff also sat the examination in order to test the system. The examination had also acted as the trial for delivery of the theory part of the statutory membership examination for overseas educated veterinary surgeons and had been able to iron out teething problems before a much larger group of candidates sat the examination.
31. The board had agreed the pass mark for each of the papers which was set using the Angoff method of standard setting. In response to a question about trends, the VNEQL said that it was not possible with the small number of candidates to see whether there were any specific areas where candidates' knowledge was lacking.

32. The Board had been informed about the changes to the examination agreed by VNEC at its previous meeting.
33. The next examination would be held at the end of July, with around 20 candidates. Candidates would be in several different time zones. Three candidates would attend the RCVS premises to sit the examination and would be invigilated by RCVS staff, as they did not have access to computers.

Items for publication

34. The new Standards and guidance would be published on the website towards the end of August, and work was starting on preparing content for the next issue of *VN Education* in October.

Any other business

35. The Chair reiterated the thanks of the Committee to those members for whom this was the last meeting.
36. **RCVS Academy.**
- The QL reported that the RCVS Academy had recently launched its External Examiner course and wished to place on record thanks to Sarah Reynolds-Golding for all the time and effort which she had put in to assisting with the development of this course, for which the Academy was hugely grateful.
 - The DoVN was continuing her work with the Professional Conduct department on a student specific course related to the Code of Professional Conduct.
 - A meeting was scheduled for the following week with the Academy Manager to discuss possible future courses. Any suggestions from committee members for would be welcomed.
 - The VN Futures manager reported that the VN Starting Out course had been reviewed based on feedback and amendments had been made.
37. There was some general discussion on the access to the external examiner course, as the Committee felt it would be valuable as a development opportunity for those wishing to become external examiners. The QL agreed to discuss this suggestion with the Academy Manager.

Date of next meeting

Meeting dates 2024

38. The remaining meeting dates for 2024 were confirmed as follows:

- Wednesday 14 August
- Tuesday 15 October
- Thursday 12 December

These would be remote meetings starting at 9.30am.

Summary

Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	18 September 2024
Title	Minutes of meeting of VN Education Committee held on 14 August 2024
Summary	Minutes of the meeting of Veterinary Nurse Education Committee held on 14 August 2024
Decisions required	To approve
Attachments	Annex A – VN Preregistration Board Terms of Reference Classified appendix (Confidential)
Author	Annette Amato Committee Secretary a.amato@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0713

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a
Appendix	Confidential	2,3,4

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

Veterinary Nurse Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 August 2024 held remotely via Teams

Members:	Mrs Sarah Batt-Williams	HE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Donna Cotton	Employer representative
	Ms Lisa Grainger	VN Council lay member
	* Mrs Sarah Holman	FE veterinary nursing provider
	Mrs Susan Howarth	VN Council veterinary nurse (Chair)
	Ms Helen King	FE Independent regulatory expert
	Miss Georgina Larkin	Student representative – FE sector
	Miss Betsy Malamah-Thomas	Employer representative
	* Mrs Sarah Reynolds-Golding	HE independent regulatory expert
	Miss Marie Rippingale	FE veterinary nursing provider
	* Miss Gemma Thirkettle	Student representative – HE sector
	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 Lead (QL)
	Miss Abigayle Gomez	Senior Qualifications Officer
	Mrs Victoria Hedges	VN Examinations Quality Lead (VNEQL)
	Ms Tori Thornton	Qualifications Assessor

Apologies for absence

- The committee and staff introduced themselves, and welcomed four new members: Lisa Grainger, Helen King, Georgina Larkin and Marie Rippingale. Donna Cotton was re-joining the committee after a break in her term of office. Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Holman, Sarah Reynolds-Golding and Gemma Thirkettle.

Declarations of interest

- Declarations of interest relevant to items on the agenda:
 Susan Howarth – Harper Adams University
 Marie Rippingale – Central Qualifications OSCE examiner; involved in delivery of Central Qualifications veterinary nursing qualification.

Helen King – works for an Awarding Organisation (AO) which has some delivery sites in common with the AOs delivering veterinary nursing qualifications, although in different subject areas.

Georgina Larkin – enrolled as student on VetSkill qualification.

3. The Chair confirmed that if it was felt that there was a direct conflict for any items, the individual would be asked to leave the meeting at the appropriate point.

Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee (VNEC) 20 June 2024

4. The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2024 as a correct record.

Matters arising

5. There were no matters arising from the previous minutes other than those which were covered throughout the agenda.

Operational update

6. The Director of Veterinary Nursing (DoVN) provided an update on recent activities and issues of note:
7. **Veterinary Nursing team and recruitment.** A fixed term contract had been offered for the role of Examinations Assessor, to provide cover until the full time appointee was able to commence the role. Recruitment was also underway to replace a Qualifications Assessor.
8. The VN team had held a Strategy Awayday at Battersea Cats and Dogs Home, the previous week, which had included an excellent presentation from a member of the Battersea team around impact and evaluation which would be used by the VN team in future project planning. The team had also had a presentation on the VN Vision work and had discussed the future of the profession from a team perspective and had also looked at the current RCVS Strategy and considered input to the development of the new RCVS and team strategy plans from 2025.
9. **Publications.** Preparation was well in hand for the October issue of the *VN Education* publication, with most of the articles already having been written. This would cover many of the items reported at the last meeting including international work, the educational forums, new RCVS Academy courses, and the neurodiversity event among other items.
10. **VN Vision.** The DoVN amplified on this initiative for the benefit of the new members of the committee, explaining that this was an initiative set up by VN Futures, a collaborative RCVS and British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) project which had been launched in 2015, looking at the profession as a whole, setting out the ambitions for the future. A report had been produced with six ambitions and 31 actions, that had been addressed in full or in part over the last few years. However, the landscape had changed significantly since 2020,

and the VN Vision initiative included a series of events to gain as many views and perspectives as possible on the future of the veterinary nursing profession. Events had taken place so far with VN Council, VN Education Committee and at the Veterinary Management Group conference, and in a number of regions of the country. Further in-person events were planned for the autumn in Wales and London and Derbyshire. An online event had been held for educators and further online events were being planned, to include equine veterinary nursing.

11. The DoVN and the VN Futures Manager had been invited to speak at the North American Veterinary Community's (NAVC) VetNurse and Tech HiVE conference in California in November, to present the VN Vision work being carried out, and to talk about the past, present and future of veterinary nursing within the UK context.
12. **Veterinary Nurses Day.** The next Veterinary Nurses Day would take place on 10 December 2024, in Bristol. The keynote speaker, as at the previous event, would be Richard Casey, CEO of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association.
13. **Standards.** The accompanying guidance on the Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training, which had been ratified by VNC in May, had now been completed. The pdf version of the Standards had been issued to all those institutions due to undergo accreditation in the Autumn, and the comms department was finalising the online version, for publication on the website shortly.
14. **Applications for registration – special consideration.** It was clarified that student nurses who had completed their qualification but had been unable to meet the requirement for 1,800 clinical placement hours due to the restrictions in place during the Covid pandemic, were able to apply for special consideration of their registration application, which would be reviewed on a case by case basis. There had been no applications for registration with reduced clinical placement hours since the last VNEC meeting, but the special consideration opportunity would remain in place until it was known that no further students would have been affected.
15. A query was raised as to whether the special consideration regarding the 1,800 hour requirement would be extended to other groups, such as those who graduate with a veterinary nursing degree and then struggle to complete the practical hours in order to register. The DoVN confirmed that the current requirement was part of the Veterinary Nursing Registration Rules, which were last reviewed in 2017. The Rules were due for review, and the decision regarding hours would be a matter for VN Council. It was suggested by committee members that for a number of reasons including inclusivity and financial, it would be appropriate for this to be reviewed, as well as the current total hours training time requirement of 2,990 hours. The QL added that from an evidence point of view, it had been surprising that so few students had come forward during the Covid pandemic requesting consideration in respect of the 1,800 hours. It seemed that students had needed that time to undertake the complexities of the Day One Skills, although some universities had mandated 1,800 hours in any event. These items would all be taken into account when the Rules were reviewed.

16. **Apprenticeship Levy.** The Employer Trailblazer group had achieved sign-off from the Secretary of State to increase the Apprenticeship Levy from £15,000 to £17,000 in time for commencement of the September courses. The Trailblazer group would be reviewing the Standards and the End Point Assessment, starting in the Autumn, and the RCVS would be involved in the review.
17. **Oxford Brookes University.** It was reported that the final cohort of students at Oxford Brookes University, which had been on Terminal accreditation, had all now passed the VN pre-registration examination and the programme had terminated.

Report from RCVS Education Committee

18. The Chair reported that she had been a member of the RCVS Education Committee for a number of years, and had been able to contribute to the discussions from a VN perspective, and to feed back to the DoVN on common issues. Going forward, a standing item would be included on the Veterinary Nurse Education Committee (VNEC) agenda to feed back from the RCVS Education Committee.

Matters for decision

Licence to practise qualifications

Programme changes

19. The committee discussed and agreed proposed programme changes to the following:
20. **University of Bristol**
BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing and Companion Animal Behaviour programme.
21. **Harper Adams University**
 - BSc Veterinary Nursing
 - BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing
 - BSc Veterinary Nursing with Companion Animal Behaviour
 - BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing with Companion Animal Behaviour
 - BSc Veterinary Nursing with Small Animal Rehabilitation
 - BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing with Small Animal Rehabilitation

VN Pre-registration Examination

VN Pre-registration Examination Board

22. The VN Examinations Quality Lead introduced a paper proposing a change to the VN Pre-registration Examination Board Terms of Reference, to increase the board from six to eight members. The current composition of the board had been agreed in 2020, when there had

normally been three meetings a year. With the introduction of the theory examination there were now up to six meetings a year, and it had become more difficult to gather enough members together to allow decisions to be made.

23. The proposal was to increase the board by two members, by introducing educators onto the board. Details were provided of two educators who had expressed an interest in joining the board. The committee was also required to nominate a chair from its membership. The Chair should be available for most meetings, but the two Chief examiners would deputise should they not be available. The paper included a chart showing how the proposals would work.
24. The DoVN reassured the committee that funds had been allocated in the budget to allow for the increase in frequency of meetings and numbers on the Board.
25. In response to a query regarding the wording in the terms of reference indicating that only some UK educated students were required to sit the Pre-registration examination, the VNEQL clarified that not all programmes with provisional or terminal accreditation had the requirement stipulated by VNEC that their students should sit the preregistration examination before being permitted to apply to register. The decision on this requirement was made by VNEC for each institution on a case by case basis. The Chair added that sanctions may be imposed by the committee on institutions for a variety of reasons, not necessarily related to the examinations. If the committee considered that the examinations from that institution were appropriate and met the standards, its students would not be required to sit the pre-registration examination in addition to the institution's own examinations.
26. It was agreed that the wording of the terms of reference should be amplified to provide an explanation of this point and should be linked to the explanation of the different accreditation statuses detailed on the RCVS website. It should also be made clear that the requirement to sit the examination related to the status of the institution, and all the students attending an institution with these sanctions would be required to sit the examination.
27. The committee agreed the following:
 - The proposed revised Terms of Reference, subject to the explanation of which groups of students were required to sit the pre-registration examination. (Attached at Annex A)
 - The increase in members of the Board from six to eight, and the appointment of the educator members.
 - The appointment of Donna Cotton to chair the Examination Board.

Matters for note

Licence to practise qualifications

Pre-accreditation support

28. The Qualifications Lead (QL) explained the background to the introduction of the pre-accreditation support package for Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs) and presented a report which provided an overview of the current status and the meetings which had been planned for the current year. All AEIs had now undertaken the support package, with the exception of one AEI which had declined the offer (due to difficulty in synchronising with the institution's own accreditation processes), and additional support visits had been undertaken with two institutions at their request, for which a fee had been paid.
29. It was confirmed that the VN Examinations Quality Lead (VNEQL) was no longer involved in the accreditation visits and was now therefore contributing to the support process. Assessment specific support had been provided to all AEIs which had already been accredited or reaccredited.
30. The paper also set out a full update demonstrating the impact of the support package, programme by programme, comparing the accreditation decisions taken in the last three academic years with the previous accreditation decisions, taken before the implementation of the support package. This demonstrated a clear trend of improving compliance across provision. Six programmes had undergone accreditation in the academic year 2023/2024, all of which had been successfully accredited. No events had been cancelled or postponed and no programmes had been awarded accreditation for a shorter period.
31. It was noted that the approach taken by the RCVS had been commended by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) at the RCVS accreditation event in May 2023, and the QL hoped to present an overview of the project and the outcomes to the European Quality Assurance forum in November 2024.
32. The response to the support package had been, and continues to be, overwhelmingly positive. An update would be included in the *VN Education* publication. The guidance on the revised Standards had also been significantly rewritten and Helen King was thanked for her very helpful input into the guidance from a FE perspective.
33. The committee commented that this was an excellent way to support centres and clearly saved the RCVS and the organisations time, and costs, in the long run. The visits had also helped to develop good working relationships. It was noted that the RCVS education department intended to follow a similar approach in supporting universities delivering the veterinary accreditation standards.

Action plan monitoring accreditation/re-accreditation

34. Oral updates were provided on the action plan monitoring for the following:
 - Aberystwyth University
 - Coventry University
 - Nottingham Trent University
 - University of Greenwich (Plumpton College)

- Central Qualifications

Quality Monitoring activities

35. The Committee was provided with papers detailing the quality monitoring activities and the actions which had been identified, for the following Accredited Education Institutions (AEIs):
- University Centre Askham Bryan
 - Central Qualifications
 - Lantra Awards
 - VetSkill Limited
36. The QL clarified that progress reviews were normally conducted in the first year following an accreditation visit, and were intended to provide support and follow up on the accreditation visit. These would not normally generate new actions.
37. It was commented by a new committee member that in each summary report, it would have been helpful if the initial summary page had included links or pointers to the relevant page in the full report. The DoVN agreed that this would be reviewed by the team and the Education Quality Improvement Manager, in order to signpost the key points at the start of the report.

Action plan quality monitoring

38. Oral updates were provided on the monitoring of action plans and future planned actions for the following AEIs:
- Anglia Ruskin University
 - Nottingham Trent University
 - University of Central Lancashire
 - Wrexham University
 - Central Qualifications
 - Lantra Awards
 - VetSkill Limited

External Examiner update

39. The committee noted the annual update paper detailing all current External Examiner (EE) appointments for licence to practise and post-registration qualifications. The Chair clarified the criteria set by the RCVS for external examiners, in particular for the licence to practise qualifications, which are sometimes additional to the institution's own requirements. The DoVN added that a course had been developed by the QL with the RCVS Academy specifically for External Examiners (EEs), covering the RCVS requirements and the roles and responsibilities of the EE towards the RCVS. This had been quality assured by Sarah Reynolds-Golding, the independent HE expert on the committee, and had now been launched. The course was also available on the RCVS Academy to any RVN or MRCVS, as requested at the previous meeting of the committee.

Post Registration qualifications

40. **Harper Adams University.** A brief oral update was provided on the action plan quality monitoring for the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (CertAVN) provision at Harper Adams University.

VN Pre-Registration Examination Board

41. The VNEQL presented the report of the Pre-registration Examination Board which had met on 15 July 2024 to consider the results of the Pre-registration OSCE held on 24 and 25 June 2024.
42. Thirty-seven candidates had sat the examination. Twelve candidates were UK trained students and twenty-five candidates were educated outside the UK. Twenty-nine candidates passed the examination, giving a pass rate of 78% overall passed and eleven failed.
43. In response to a query, it was confirmed that some demographic data can be collected, however with the small numbers involved and the entry criteria for the examination, it can be difficult to provide a meaningful analysis of this information.

Items for publication

44. It was noted that there would be an item in *VN Education* about the Pre-registration examination and forthcoming dates, as well as the update on the pre-accreditation support package mentioned earlier in the meeting. The QL confirmed that the web version of the Standards and guidance would be online in early September.

Any other business

45. The QL confirmed that an Academy course was under development, to replace the former Standards handbook, which covered the accreditation methodology and protocols. This course was initially aimed at VN accreditation panel members, to cover the training and standardisation delivered across the year by the QL. The course will include detail and insight into the Standards, as well as the processes and procedures followed for VN accreditations. As the course content has been developed, the value to the wider VN educational landscape has become clear, and thus the course will be expanded to include quality monitoring detail and processes, risk considerations, training practice processes and the Committee decision process.
46. The meeting was joined by the Education Quality Improvement Manager, who explained her role to the new committee members.

Meeting dates 2024

47. The remaining meeting dates for 2024 were confirmed as follows:
- Tuesday 15 October

- Thursday 12 December
Meetings would be remote, starting at 9.30am

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

Veterinary Nursing Pre-Registration Examination Board

Terms of Reference

The Veterinary Nursing Pre-registration Examination Board, under the direction of the VN Education Committee (VNEC), is responsible for the management of the VN Pre-registration Examinations. The examinations are held up to six times a year, three Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) and three Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) Examinations.

Individuals educated outside the UK applying to enter the RCVS Register of Veterinary Nurses are required to pass the pre-registration examination. Applicants educated in an ACOVENE accredited institution may be exempted from the examination.

In addition, VNEC may direct that the pre-registration examination must be passed by students attending an RCVS accredited Approved Education Institution (AEI). This will normally be considered where the AEI has provisional, terminal or probationary accreditation status.

The duties of the Board are outlined along with their frequency below.

Periodically

- a. oversee the integrity of the examination process, including setting the examination rules
- b. oversee amendments to the design, delivery and quality assurance of the examination
- c. approve the examination blueprint to ensure that the RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and other points of reference are adequately covered within the examination
- d. assist in the selection of Chief Examiner(s)
- e. assist in the selection of item writers to contribute to the item bank
- f. consider the content and administration of the examination, recommending to VNEC modifications when required
- g. agree the process for setting the cut score

Annually

- h. approve the selection of examiners
- i. oversee the appropriateness of examination administrative and quality assurance arrangements
- j. approve the examination guidance to be used by candidates and examiners
- k. review the standard setting of questions and confirm that they have been applied correctly
- l. agree examination dates and venues
- m. provide advice to the VNEC on matters relating to examination integrity and quality
- n. make recommendations for on-going examination improvement

After each examination (via teleconference)

- o. receive reports on the conduct of the examination
- p. consider and approve the examination results before publication
- q. consider recommendations following investigations into examination malpractice
- r. consider recommendations for mitigation and refund of examination fees
- s. review the pass mark along with the results

Relationships and accountability

The Examination Board shall have responsibility for all matters relating to the VN Pre-registration Examination(s).

The minutes of the Board shall be presented to VNEC by the Examinations Quality Lead or VN Examinations Assessor.

Membership

The Examination Board shall be appointed by VNEC. Appointments are made by invitation to ensure that the correct depth and breadth of expertise required. The board shall be made up of the following:

- a. Chair (1) (Member of VNEC) with knowledge and experience of assessment delivery
- b. Chief Examiner (1) for practical examinations
- c. Chief Examiner (1) for theory examinations
- d. Examiners (2)
- e. VN educators (3) with knowledge and experience of assessment

Two deputy chairs will be appointed. These posts will normally be held by the Chief Examiners.

There may be some cross over of the committee, for example a member of VNEC may also be a VN educator and therefore more than one member of VNEC may be on the Board. The minimum number of board members shall be eight.

Members of staff who will be in attendance

Examinations Quality Lead
Examinations Assessor (Secretary to the Board)
Examinations Administrator

Members of the Board are appointed for an initial term of three years. Members may be re-appointed for a number of terms at the discretion of the VNEC.

Frequency of meetings

The Board shall normally meet three weeks after each examination. It is envisaged that the Board will hold at least one face-to-face meeting per year to agree arrangements for the following year's examinations. This meeting is likely to be held after the June/July examination.

Other meetings will normally be held three weeks after the examination via teleconference or a web-based meeting platform. Additional work may be required between meetings.

Business may be conducted electronically at the discretion of the Chair.

Quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the board shall be not less than 50% of members including the presence of the Chair or Deputy Chair. Members may be personally present, or able to take part through live teleconference.

Conflict of interest and confidentiality

Should any board member find that they have a conflict of interest in any business of the Board they must so declare that conflict and excuse themselves from that part of the meeting.

Fees and expenses

Members of the board who are also examiners and educators may claim the examiner fee at the normal hourly rate for preparing for and attending the meeting.

Members of VNEC may claim loss of earnings in the normal way.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	18 September 2024
Title	Minutes of the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee meeting held on the 25 June 2024
Summary	Minutes of the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee meeting held on the 25 June 2024
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk 020 7202 0701

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

¹ Classifications explained	
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CPD Policy and Compliance sub-committee Notes of the meeting held on 25 June 2024

Present:

Linda Ford	Chair
Jessica Beckett	
Claire Bloor	
*Danny Chamber	
Donna Lewis	
Stephen May	
Stephanie Richardson	
*Alison Reid	
Holly Witchell	
James Wood	

*absent

In attendance:	Joanne Stetzel	Head of Marketing and Digital Communications
	Jenny Soreskog-Turp	Lead for Postgraduate Education
	Rebecca Smith	Education Officer

Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that Mr Chambers and Ms Reid had sent their apologies.

Minutes of the meeting on the 15 April 2024

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2024 were received and approved as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising

3. Most actions from previous meeting were covered by the agenda. Regarding the possibility of with-holding letters of good standing for non-compliant registrants, the committee heard that advice had been sought from the Registrar who explained that it is not possible to refuse to issue a letter of good standing to non-compliant members unless they have been through the Disciplinary Committee. The committee raised an alternative suggestion that RCVS could instead review the wording of the letter to state if they are CPD compliant.

Action: Education team to explore whether RCVS could review wording of letter of good standing

4. The committee received an update as to progress by the Education team in referring non-compliant members who received communications over the last year to the Professional Conduct team.

Comms Update and 1CPD Data Report

5. The committee received the data report about the demographics of non-compliant members.
6. Ms Stetzel provided an update about how the comms plan has affected compliance rates. The data demonstrates that members are aware of 1CPD and that they know they must record their CPD on the 1CPD platform. The data shows that most members are aware of the reflection requirement, however, there is still some confusion around how to reflect on CPD.
7. The data report showed that the comms campaign did fulfil its objectives of promoting CPD and reflection using 1CPD, however, there are some opportunities to encourage a better level of compliance, and a better understanding around the reflection requirement.
8. There was a suggestion that we need to continue to raise more awareness around what members are allowed to record, especially informal CPD, and further awareness of different approaches to record and reflect using 1CPD.
9. There was a further suggestion that we should promote informal CPD and workplace based learning as there are research to show that formal CPD is often the less beneficial than interactive CPD that is directly related to your area of work.
10. It was acknowledged that as part of the comms campaign there have been several messages on social media about what counts as CPD and the tools within 1CPD for four years, so continuing this approach may not be very effective. There was a comment that this would be especially ineffective for members who are not digitally engaged.
11. There was a suggestion that further messaging around what counts as CPD and the tools within the 1CPD platform could be done within the 1CPD platform instead.

1CPD Reminders

12. There were discussions around the automatic reminders that are sent out through 1CPD to remind members to record their activities and some members felt that the email reminders were sent out too early in the year, and that some members feel there are too many reminders.
13. The group agreed that changing the timing of the email reminders to a later point in the year would be beneficial. It was suggested that the first email reminder should be sent out in May, and then to increase the frequency of email reminders as the CPD year progresses.

Action: Education Department to liaise with developers regarding timing of reminders

14. The group agreed that members should not be able to opt out of email alerts related to non-compliance. There was some support for the suggestion that members could opt out of more general CPD reminders, however, overall it was felt that the general CPD reminders were having a positive effect on CPD compliance and it was therefore decided that members should not be able to opt out of any CPD reminder emails.
15. In light of recent feedback received from members, the group was asked to review whether email communications sent to members about CPD should be more formal, and more customised to each member.
16. The group agreed that it was not possible to send individually personalised email communications about CPD to every member, given the resources that this would require. The group discussed the possibility of changing the formatting of the emails, however, it was decided that it would be best to maintain the current format.
17. There was a discussion about the possibility of posting letters to members who appear to be digitally disengaged. It was agreed that posting letters to members who have not engaged with the 1CPD platform would be effective.

Action: Education team to explore the logistics around posting letters to members who have not engaged with the 1CPD platform.

18. There was a discussion around how best to reach members who are non-compliant for a previous CPD year, and members who have not engaged with CPD in the current CPD year. It was suggested that members who are non-compliant for a previous CPD year should receive communications that have a more serious tone, and members who have not engaged for the current CPD year should receive communications that are more light touch.
19. It was suggested that the possible level of segmentation within email communications should be explored with the IT team, i.e. if a member has recorded enough CPD hours but has not reflected, they could receive a specific message about completing their reflections.

Action: Comms team to discuss the possible level of segmentation in email communications with the IT team.

Committee Update

20. Ms Soreskog-Turp announced that there would be some restructuring of some of the committees, including those who oversee the work in the areas of CPD and VetGDP. It has been decided that CPD compliance and VetGDP compliance should be overseen by the same committee, so a new committee will be formed. Therefore, this would be the last meeting for the CPD Policy and Compliance Subcommittee. The group were thanked for their commitment and engagement.

AOB

21. There was no other business to discuss.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	18 September 2024
Title	Terms of Reference for CPD and VetGDP Engagement group and CPD and VetGDP Compliance subcommittee
Summary	The paper describes the changes to the CPD and VetGDP committee structure and includes the terms of reference (ToR) for each committee.
Attachment	Annex A: ToR - CPD and VetGDP Engagement group Annex B – ToR - CPD and VetGDP Compliance subcommittee
Decisions required	VN Council is asked to approve the terms of reference for new committees.
Author	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper/Annex	Unclassified	N/A

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Introduction

1. Continual professional development (CPD) and the Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) are both managed by the postgraduate education team at the RCVS. Both the CPD and VetGDP requirements are mandatory as per the code of conduct.
2. Previously there was one committee that looked after each area: CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee and VetGDP subcommittee and the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee reported to VN Council.

Changes to the Committee structure

3. The CPD and VetGDP subcommittees were discussing many of the same issues such as compliance and engagement and after discussions with the professional conduct department it was suggested that we should have one committee that is responsible for compliance and a separate committee responsible for policy and engagement. Terms of reference for each committee will be reviewed and approved by Education Committee and VN Council.
4. The new CPD and VetGDP Compliance subcommittee will be chaired by Dr Sue Paterson and as the committee will handle confidential information, therefore the members of the committee are either on RCVS or VN Council. The subcommittee will be responsible for:
 - Develop and keep under review the RCVS CPD and VetGDP non-compliance policies and procedures
 - Monitor compliance with CPD and VetGDP
 - Decide on exemptions from the VetGDP
 - Oversee any applications from veterinary surgeons or veterinary nurses to pause CPD.
 - Monitor and agree actions for CPD and VetGDP non-compliance cases
 - Decide when cases of non-compliance should be referred to the Professional Conduct Department.
5. The new CPD and VetGDP engagement group will a committee with external members which will be chaired by Dr Olivia Cook and membership will include one appointed RVN, two appointed VetGDP peer-reviewers and an RVN, a VS and one new graduate appointed through applications from the profession. The group will be responsible for:
 - Monitor and make recommendations for updates to the VetGDP and CPD policies and guidance documents
 - Receive and consider periodic quality assurance reports and to advise action where appropriate
 - Monitor and review ways to improve engagement with VetGDP and CPD.
 - Monitor and review ways to improve engagement with 1CPD and the VetGDP e-portfolio.
 - Review and consider the communication plans for CPD and VetGDP.

- Oversee updates of the VetGDP Adviser and VetGDP peer-review training and guidance.

Decision

6. VN Council is asked to approve the Terms of Reference for CPD and VetGDP Compliance subcommittee and the CPD and VetGDP engagement group.

Annex A**VetGDP and CPD Engagement Group****Terms of Reference**

1. VetGDP and CPD Engagement Group will report to Education Committee and Veterinary Nursing Council.
2. VetGDP and CPD Engagement Group is responsible for monitoring and reviewing policies and the overall engagement with CPD and VetGDP. It will:
 - Monitor and make recommendations for updates to the VetGDP and CPD policies and guidance documents
 - Receive and consider periodic quality assurance reports and to advise action where appropriate
 - Monitor and review ways to improve engagement with VetGDP and CPD.
 - Monitor and review ways to improve engagement with 1CPD and the VetGDP e-portfolio.
 - Review and consider the communication plans for CPD and VetGDP.
 - Oversee updates of the VetGDP Adviser and VetGDP peer-review training and guidance.

Membership

1. The group will consist of:
 - a) One RCVS council member as chair of the group
 - b) One appointed veterinary nurse
 - c) One RVN, one MRCVS and one new graduate appointed through applications from the profession.
 - d) Two VetGDP peer-reviewers
2. The subcommittee has seven members in total with a with a quorum of 50%
3. The length of service would normally be 3 years, however this is not prescriptive and longer terms can be allowed for continuity or consistency of the group membership.

Meetings

4. The group will meet at least twice a year. Meeting will be held virtually except for any exceptional circumstances when face to face meetings will be more beneficial.

Annex B**VetGDP and CPD Compliance Subcommittee****Terms of Reference**

1. VetGDP and CPD Compliance Subcommittee will report to Education Committee and Veterinary Nursing Council.
2. The subcommittee is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the RCVS CPD and VetGDP compliance policies and make recommendations for changes to Education Committee and VN Council.
3. The subcommittee is responsible for the CPD/VetGDP non-compliance policies and procedures, and to make decisions on whether or not to refer individual cases of non-compliance or non-response to the Professional Conduct Department. The subcommittee will:
 - Develop and keep under review the RCVS CPD and VetGDP non-compliance policies and procedures
 - Monitor compliance with CPD and VetGDP
 - Decide on exemptions from the VetGDP
 - Oversee any applications from veterinary surgeons or veterinary nurses to pause CPD.
 - Monitor and agree actions for CPD and VetGDP non-compliance cases
 - Decide when cases of non-compliance should be referred to the Professional Conduct Department.

Membership

4. The subcommittee will consist of:
 - e) One veterinary nurse and one lay member nominated by the Veterinary Nurses Council
 - f) Three veterinary surgeons and two lay members nominated by RCVS council.
5. The subcommittee has eight members in total with a with a quorum of 50% and at least one veterinary surgeon or one veterinary nurse must attend each meeting.
6. The length of service would normally be 3 years, however this is not prescriptive and longer terms can be allowed for continuity or consistency of the Subcommittee membership.

Meetings

7. The subcommittee will meet at least twice a year. Meeting will be held virtually except for any exceptional circumstances when face to face meetings will be more beneficial.

Summary	
Meeting	Veterinary Nurses Council
Date	18 September 2024
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 / Secretary to the RVN PIC 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	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

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Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to VN Council

Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Veterinary Nurses Council, there have been three meetings of the Stage 2 VNPIC which took place on 28 May, 9 July and 20 August 2024. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 1 October 2024.

RVN Concerns received / registered.

2. Between 10 May and 3 September 2024, there were 26 new concerns registered in relation to RVNs. Of these 26 new concerns:
 - Seven cases were closed by the Stage 1 VNPIC.
 - Eighteen cases are currently under investigation by the Stage 1 VNPIC
 - One case was referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee following referral to Stage 2 VNPIC.

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. There have been four new cases considered by the Stage 2 VNPIC between 10 May and 3 September 2024. Of these, one case was referred to external solicitors for formal statements to be taken from relevant witnesses; two cases were closed with formal advice issued to the Respondent and one case was referred to the VN Disciplinary Committee.

Ongoing Investigations

4. Eleven concerns involving seven veterinary nurses are currently under investigation by the Stage 2 VNPIC, and these will be returned to the Committee for a decision in due course.

Health Concerns

5. There are currently no RVNs 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, one case has been to the VN Disciplinary Committee. The hearing dates will be confirmed in due course.

Disciplinary Hearings

8. Since the last report, one disciplinary hearing has taken place in relation to a veterinary nurse. At the outset of the hearing the Respondent made an application to adjourn the hearing while undertaking to voluntarily remove herself from the Register, to never seek to reapply to join the Register and to supply a witness statement in respect of a separate RCVS investigation into the conduct of a veterinary surgeon. The Disciplinary Committee decided to accede to the application and accept the Respondent's undertakings.