

RCVS news

RCVS NEWS / AUGUST 2019

*Text-only version of
RCVS News email*

Our new CPD platform: volunteers needed!

At its March 2019 meeting, RCVS Council approved the roll-out, over the next two years, of a more outcomes-based model of CPD which will encourage veterinary professionals to engage in greater reflection on learning and development and how this impacts upon their professional practice.

To support this new approach, and in response to feedback from members piloting the new approach to CPD, Council also approved the development of a new CPD recording platform that is more intuitive and facilitates easy recording of CPD in real time. The new platform – which has the working title of 'One CPD', will integrate current applications into a new, unified, experience featuring both mobile and web interfaces. Once completed this new capability will be a 'one stop shop' CPD management solution for veterinary surgeons and nurses at all stages of their careers, including veterinary students and student veterinary nurses.

Richard Burley, our Chief Technology Officer, said: "We're excited to open up access to this powerful, next-generation, tool we've been building and welcome our members into an important phase of the development process. Testing with our members will be absolutely critical in delivering the very best experience possible for all those that use 'One CPD' in the future. Ease of use and truly valuable functionality are key deliverables for us and both these need the feedback of our members to perfect."

Dr Linda Prescott-Clements, our Director of Education, added: "The first stage of the development of the CPD recording platform is due to finish in October and so we are looking for a cohort of both veterinary surgeons and nurses who can spend a few months this autumn using the new platform to record and reflect on their CPD, in order to test out some of the new features which aim to make this process so much easier to do. We will consider their feedback carefully in order to improve the recording platform ready for launch in January 2020.

"The new 'One CPD' platform will ultimately replace the current Professional Development Record, and its use will become mandatory for recording CPD from January 2022.

"In addition to setting up the testing group, we are also looking to meet with key CPD providers for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses over the coming months to discuss our plans for outcomes-based CPD and the development of the recording platform in greater detail."

Veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses who wish to volunteer to take part in the testing for the CPD app, as well as CPD providers who want to discuss the our CPD policy plans, should contact Jenny Soreskog-Turp, our CPD Officer, on cpd@rcvs.org.uk or 020 7202 0701.

Pioneering vet and researcher to speak at Fellowship Day

Fellowship Day 2019 takes place at The Royal Institution on Friday 20 September when the RCVS will be welcoming its fourth cohort of 29 new Fellows who are joining the learned society under the initiative's three new routes to entry.

All Fellows of the RCVS have been invited to attend the occasion, which will showcase some of the best of veterinary science and endeavour, and have been encouraged to bring along a colleague or peer who might be interested in joining the Fellowship in the future.

This year's keynote speaker is Dr John (Iain) Glen MRCVS (pictured above) who will be delivering a presentation titled 'Try, try and try again: some personal reflections on the development of the anaesthetic propofol' about his ground-breaking work at the AstraZeneca anaesthetics research team in which he discovered and developed propofol. Listed by the World Health Organisation as an 'essential medicine', propofol is one of the most common anaesthetic drugs in use today.

For this work Dr Glen was awarded the Lasker-DeBakey Medical Research Award in 2018 which is given to medical researchers who make contributions to the understanding, diagnosis, treatment, cure or prevention of disease.

The event will also see the return of the 'Fellows of the Future' competition, which debuted last year, in which undergraduate and postgraduate veterinary students are invited to present a current or recent research project to Fellows in attendance. Each presentation will be judged by a panel and a prize will be awarded to the best presentation.

We are also inviting all RCVS Fellows to participate in 'Fellows in Focus' – an insight into the breadth and depth of knowledge and expertise within the Fellowship – in which they will have the opportunity to deliver a 10-minute talk on a topic of their choosing. Fellows can submit their proposed presentation topic using our dedicated webform as well as browse talks from previous years.

Anthony Roberts, our Director of Leadership and Innovation, said: "This is our fourth Fellowship Day and it is starting to become a major event in the veterinary calendar at which we celebrate the new cohort of Fellows, showcase the amazing and impactful work of the wider Fellowship and inspire the next generation of veterinary surgeons.

"We are delighted to welcome Dr Glen as our keynote speaker. He is a wonderful example of how veterinary knowledge, expertise and skill can not only benefit animals, but also have a wider application as well, in his case discovering a drug that has been used as an anaesthetic by millions worldwide.

"We also look forward once again to a range of interesting and eye-opening presentations from veterinary surgeons both established and new."

The full agenda for the day, which will be hosted by current Chair of the Fellowship Board Professor Nick Bacon, is available to view at our dedicated Fellowship Day webpage where there are also details on how to register and book tickets for the event.

Introduction to the UK veterinary professions - a key CPD course for overseas vets and VNs

Date:

Tuesday 29th to Wednesday 30th October 2019

Opening times:

9.00 - 16.30

Venue:

Brownsfield Suite, Crowne Plaza Manchester City Centre, Shudehill, Manchester, England M4 4AF

Details

This CPD course is organised for overseas veterinary surgeons and nurses and is an introduction to the UK veterinary professions.

Jointly organised by the RCVS and the Veterinary Defence Society (VDS), this two-day course provides overseas graduates with the key information and skills needed to practise in the UK, as well as helping them understand their legal duties as veterinary professionals.

Who can attend?

The course is aimed at overseas-qualified veterinary surgeons and nurses during their first 2 years of working in the UK, as well as those who are considering working here.

Day One - 'Working in UK veterinary practice: key information for vets and vet nurses'

The day is free to attend and lunch is provided.

Register for Day One

The day covers how the UK veterinary professions are organised, with information about jobs, employment rights and the support available if things go wrong.

Talks are given by representatives from the RCVS, VDS Training, BVA, British Veterinary Nursing Association and the Vetlife charity. The course also aims to help delegates understand their legal duties as a veterinary professional in the UK, which can vary significantly from their own country, along with expected standards of professional conduct.

Day Two - 'A master class in communication skills'

You can register for Day Two on the VDS Training site via the button below or contact VDS Training directly on info@vds-training.co.uk or 01565 743862. Day Two costs £180 inclusive of VAT per person - please note, payment must be made at the time of registering.

Register for Day Two

In small groups, delegates go through the challenges they may face in the consulting room and how to handle them in a role-play format.

Lunch and refreshments will be provided, please list any dietary requirements when you register.

'Precision veterinary medicine' the theme for second ViVet Innovation Symposium

The RCVS landmark innovation initiative ViVet will focus on how rapidly developing technology and data-driven practice will transform the veterinary professions and the care they provide for its second-ever Innovation Symposium this autumn.

The ViVet Innovation Symposium takes place on 1 October at The Lowry Theatre in Salford, Greater Manchester, and will see a number of guest speakers explore, with delegates, how artificial intelligence (AI), big data and genomics are and will be changing the profession by putting more information in the hands of the veterinary practitioner than ever before.

The ViVet programme grew out of the joint RCVS and British Veterinary Association (BVA) Vet Futures project which had, as one of its core aims, the establishment of a project to help encourage veterinary innovation and entrepreneurship and, through case studies and thought leadership, help the profession understand and thrive in the changing environment.

To this end, this year's keynote speaker will be Nancy Rademaker, an IT professional with first-hand experiences straight from the places where technology is shaping our future. She will cover the impact of digitization on customer behavior and how that affects the way organisations should interact with customers while giving insights into how the veterinary professions can prepare for and thrive in the future.

Nancy has over 20 years of experience in how technology is transforming society, working for different IT companies, amongst which five years for Microsoft in the Netherlands and Europe. She loves to share her passion for technology and combines that valuable inside information with her experience in training and education.

Other speakers confirmed for the day include:

Kathy Turner, Corporate Vice President and General Manager for IDEXX Laboratories' Europe, Middle East and Africa Companion Animal Commercial Operations who will be speaking about changing customer attitudes and preventative veterinary medicine.

Matthew Smith, Director of Business Development at Microsoft, who will be speaking about AI and agriculture.

Iain Maclaren, Senior Market Development Manager in Agrigenomics, Food and Consumer Genomics at Oxford Nanopore Technologies Ltd who will be speaking about low-cost and accessible genomic sequencing.

During the course of the event we will also be hosting the ViVet Student Veterinary Innovation Competition final, which sees three finalist teams going head to head presenting in front of a panel of industry professionals including BVA President Simon Doherty.

Anthony Roberts, RCVS Director of Leadership and Innovation, said: "Since our inaugural innovation symposium in 2017, innovation and technology adoption in the wider animal health and welfare sector has accelerated. In the longer term it is clear that technology will fundamentally change the role of the vet and how veterinary services are delivered.

"It is ViVet's role to ensure veterinary professionals can navigate this transition and remain at the centre of animal health and welfare. It does this by providing insights as to what the future could look like, and supporting veterinary professionals to develop the skills they need to take charge of and to shape that future, by leading innovation.

"This event provides an extraordinary opportunity for any vet or veterinary nurse who wants to understand how to adapt and use these new developments, learn about precision veterinary medicine, what it means for the future of veterinary care, and learn about new roles for vets being produced by these changes."

Tickets for the event can be secured through the Innovation Symposium's dedicated Eventbrite page with discounted tickets available for veterinary students and veterinary nurses.

More information about the ViVet project, as well as videos and reports from the 2017 Innovation Symposium at which the project was launched, can be found on the project's dedicated website.

MMI and BSAVA launch new emotional resilience courses

Our Mind Matters Initiative, in partnership with the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA), are launching new emotional resilience courses, with the first course taking place in November this year.

Titled 'Emotional Resilience for the Veterinary Team', the one-day courses are free to BSAVA members and are designed to equip participants with an understanding of the role emotional resilience plays in protecting our mental wellbeing.

"Emotional resilience is mainly a learned behaviour, however our level of resilience is not static, and we can take steps to increase our resilience and reduce our risk of developing mental health issues including clinical depression. This new programme is suitable for anyone who wishes to increase their own resilience and develop the ability to help others at work or at home," says RCVS Mind Matters Initiative Manager Lisa Quigley.

"It is important to note that building resilience, particularly within the veterinary professions, is not about telling people that they should 'put up' with bad work environments – we are aware that so many veterinary practices take steps to ensure supportive and positive work environments for their teams. It is instead about giving individuals the tools to support and enable them to cope with the challenges that the veterinary professions bring – and this is what these new courses aim to do."

BSAVA President Sue Paterson expands: "BSAVA has worked closely with RCVS and Mind Matters Initiative for several years and the new resilience courses are the next phase in this area of focus. It is essential to give all members of the veterinary practice the tools to develop resilience in themselves and to support each other and we are delighted BSAVA is able to provide these courses for our members and for the wider veterinary profession".

Part one of the course focuses on emotional resilience, particularly within the veterinary professions. Part two of the course focuses on the life skills of highly resilient people including listening, using strategy to solve problems, managing emotions, building social capital and knowing how to access help.

Mary Bannon, Programme Manager, from PIPS Programmes CIC, who are delivering the training, says of the course: "This workshop is designed for the whole practice team and encourages participants to work in groups. No personal disclosures are necessary during the course – although participants are very welcome to discuss private issues after the workshop. PIPS Programmes CIC are delighted to be part of this MMI/BSAVA initiative"

The courses are free to BSAVA members and cost £40.00 (including VAT) for non-members. Find out more and purchase tickets [here](#).

Voting opens for RCVS Fellowship Board Chair

Voting has now opened in the 2019 RCVS Fellowship Board election with Fellows invited to vote for their preferred candidate for Fellowship Chair.

There are four candidates standing in this year's elections:

Dr Robert Huey
Professor John Innes
Professor Liz Mossop
Professor Ian Ramsey

Fellows will shortly be emailed a secure link to the online voting form and candidates' details and manifestos. All votes must be cast by 5pm Thursday 5 September 2019.

Candidates' biographies and election statements have been published online.

"We have four fantastic candidates for Chair who collectively demonstrate the breadth of knowledge and experience the Fellowship encompasses. We urge every Fellow to read their candidate statement and to vote for the next Chair of the Fellowship at this critical juncture in its development," says our Director of Leadership and Innovation, Anthony Roberts.

"In addition to the election of a new Fellowship Board Chair, we are delighted to announce that the two Projects and Engagement Board Member roles have been filled by Tim Greet and Mary Fraser, as they were the two candidates who put themselves forward for the two available places."

In their capacity as Project and Engagement Board Members, they will contribute to consolidating the Fellowship's position as the learned society of the RCVS by working alongside other Fellowship Board members to determine the ongoing strategy and objectives of the Fellowship and ensuring it makes progress towards achieving these agreed goals.

Any Fellows that have not received an email with details as to how to vote should contact Oliver Glackin on fellowship@rcvs.org.uk

Blog

Diversity and inclusion in the veterinary professions

Niall Connell - RCVS President (2019 - 2020)

It's no secret that the veterinary professions are overwhelmingly white with a high proportion of people coming from more affluent socio-economic backgrounds. However, it's also no secret that this is not the background of the UK population at large and it has been increasingly recognised that it is beneficial for professions to reflect the ever-more-diverse society they serve.

In my first address as RCVS President, at Royal College Day this year, I mentioned that one of the key focuses of my presidency is increasing diversity and inclusion in the veterinary professions.

As this is an issue that I am both personally and professionally passionate about, I want to take this opportunity to expand on what this means, and what this looks like with regards to the RCVS.

So, what are diversity and inclusion?

Diversity, in its essence, is about empowering people and respecting what makes them different – whether this be their ethnicity, socio-economic background, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental health, or religion. It is about bringing together a range of people and ideas, informed by varying backgrounds, experiences and ways of life.

Inclusion is about putting in place the organisational and systemic conditions that enable a more diverse workforce. A significant shift, such as increasing diversity within a profession, does not just happen naturally and without intervention, and this is why it is so important that we and our partner organisations make a concerted effort to increase systemic inclusion.

Why are diversity and inclusion so important for the veterinary professions?

The population of the UK is becoming more diverse, as is the animal owning public.

As such, it is important that the veterinary professions reflect the wider society that they serve. This means that, ideally, diversity should be reflected not only in the makeup of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses but also in representative bodies, veterinary governance and other such groups. Not only could this result in improved and more relatable customer service, but it may also encourage more people to seek veterinary care for their animals where they may not have otherwise.

Diversity within professions also supports innovation and positive change, as there are an increased range of ideas and world views to foster new ideas. A profession that can tap into this varied and diverse breadth of knowledge and experience is better placed to develop new services and processes to meet diverse demographic needs. As we want to see the veterinary professions advance, we cannot neglect the crucial role diversity has to play in this evolution.

There is also a strong moral case for diversity – particularly with regards to equity. To achieve equity we either have to make changes to the system, or provide those who are disadvantaged with support to have an equal chance at succeeding. In the veterinary context this means making changes to reach out to and support groups who otherwise would not be able to consider the veterinary professions as a viable career option – due to ethnicity, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, physical or mental health condition, or other factors.

What role does the RCVS have to play in supporting diversity?

One of the key functions of the RCVS under our Royal Charter is to uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance veterinary medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest.

As increasing diversity would advance the professions and their ability to meet the interests of a diverse wider public, the RCVS has a responsibility under our Charter to focus on this area through key initiatives.

As the regulator for the professions, and with the Register of Veterinary Surgeons and Register of Veterinary Nurses, we are also well placed to harness the wealth of this data about the profession and take a lead role in researching the issue. For sustainable change to take place, it needs to be evidence-based – and having a good understanding of our professions through data is a crucial building block for this.

In addition to the above reasons, I believe that we all have a responsibility to improve diversity in the professions we are in and serve. We know that, as a society, we are not there yet with regards to sufficiently addressing systemic factors that contribute to inequity and a lack of diversity across many professions, including the veterinary professions. It is therefore, in my opinion, the responsibility of each and every one of us, including those at the RCVS, to strive to improve and increase diversity and inclusion.

So, what is the RCVS doing to address diversity and inclusion?

To ensure a focused approach to this important issue the RCVS has set up the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, which held its first meeting in April this year.

The Group aims to break down barriers with regards to selection, recruitment and retention to encourage more diversity within the professions – including, but not limited to, ethnic, socio-economic and sexual orientation diversity. This Group will be the driving force with regards to the RCVS' role in this.

To increase the diversity in the professions will require a significant shift as it is a multi-factorial and complex issue and it will take time to get it right. It is crucial that any initiatives and interventions we put in place to address the lack of diversity in the veterinary professions are underpinned by evidence. As such, I want to stress that this is a process – to have the greatest impact and mitigate the risks of unintended consequences, we want to ensure we make the right decisions regarding interventions from the start.

We know that we need to create a diverse workforce by encouraging people from different backgrounds into the professions – and that this starts from a young age.

We know that we need to ensure that there are systems in place to support a diverse profession – including a systemic commitment to listening to, and incorporating, different perspectives.

We know that we need to continue to strive to have diverse leaders in place throughout the professions. As I said in my first speech as RCVS President, quoting American activist for children's rights, Marian Wright Edelman, "It's hard to be what you can't see".

Our Diversity and Inclusion Working Group has been formed to further progress these aims and objectives – and this starts with better understanding the long-term structural, societal and cultural barriers to entering the veterinary professions. Without knowing exactly where we currently stand, we can't map out what we need to do to reach our goal of diverse professions.

With that being said, there are some more immediate actions we are looking to take in this space. For example – we are actively looking to share leadership journeys and stories from diverse leaders across the professions.

We are also looking to implement school outreach programmes – where diverse veterinary leaders will go into schools to encourage children from all walks of life to consider veterinary career options.

This is just the start.

Why now?

We have been talking about diversity for a few years and now, with the Working Group in place, we are in a strong position to work towards ensuring these changes are made effectively.

In an ideal world there would be diversity in the professions already – but we know that this is not the case. So why now? Because now is the best time.

There is a Chinese proverb which says 'The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The next best time is now'. Some people may think we're late to the party, but better now than never.

What's next?

The Diversity and Inclusion Working Group will continue to gather information to better understand where we are today and what we can do to improve diversity into the future. You can expect to see more and more information coming from the group as an evidence-based plan is drawn up and kicks into action. Watch this space!

Published on 15 August 2019

Blog

Jolyon Martin PhD

Dr Jolyon Martin is one of the founders of PetMedix, a Cambridge-based start-up taking the cutting edge of human medical science and using it to develop species-specific antibody therapies for dogs and cats. His PhD research underpins the company's technology, and he has presented his findings in the UK, USA, and China.

Life has a funny way of steering our course. As a researcher passionate about animal health, I needed to find a new PhD project at very short notice when, fortuitously, Professor Allan Bradley explained to me his plan to bring the latest human medical science to bear for companion animals. Allan pioneered the field of mouse transgenics and its use to develop therapeutic monoclonal antibodies – my PhD focused on applying this research to dogs. Fast-forward five years and here I am with PetMedix, working hard to develop therapeutic antibodies for dogs and cats.

I grew up surrounded by dogs and the importance of their health and wellbeing was ingrained from birth. My mother made up one of her cavaliers as a show champion just hours before giving birth to me, much to the surprise and confusion of the midwife-trained head judge. She always emphasised the importance of factoring in heart scores and syringomyelia test results into her breeding, much more than type or show results.

What are you most proud of and why?

Professionally, it has to be being a co-founder of PetMedix alongside the experienced and highly-successful serial entrepreneurs Allan Bradley and Tom Weaver. Our investors really believe in transforming animal health and we have an incredible team of scientists whose combined expertise is helping to bring this dream to fruition. Plus, it's great fun!

Personally, I was a ballroom dancer as a student and the proudest moment was captaining my university team to national champions as part of an undefeated season. The way everyone pulled together, both in training and competition, was incredible to be part of.

What innovation has got you to where you are today?

The species-specific monoclonal antibody approach of PetMedix relies on the cumulative efforts of many scientists over a number of decades, rather than on one single innovation. The entire process, from platform development through to drug discovery, relies on novel applications of methods and tools from molecular biology, genome engineering, immunology, artificial intelligence, and a range of other fields. This is partly why it hasn't been done before, in spite of the obvious need and huge potential benefits. The breadth of knowledge required to develop and apply the PetMedix platform is substantial, but by using this approach it will be possible to develop therapies with far greater health benefits to patients than antibodies developed by older, simpler approaches.

What innovation has the greatest opportunity to change the health and welfare of animals?

I do truly believe that therapeutic antibodies will have the same transformative effect on animal health as they have had in human medicine. There are more than 80 FDA-approved antibody therapeutics in human health, treating a wide range of diseases that are held in common with dogs and cats, and this is a real chance for veterinary medicine to benefit from three decades and billions of dollars of R&D effort in human pharma. We know what works; we just need to apply that now.

What changes do you see in the animal health industry, and how might they impact veterinary medicine?

There are two themes that come up consistently: the changing nature of our relationship with our pets, and the changing attitude within the industry towards innovation. There is a greater demand from owners for higher quality animal care – and a combination of young start-ups and industry giants are starting to address this. Beyond novel therapies, innovations in diagnostics (be it genetic testing or otherwise) and an increased focus on quality of life are driving things in a direction that can only stand to benefit the animal, and by extension their owners and the vet team who care for them.

What can we look forward to next from PetMedix?

We are at the research and development phase so are a little way off approved therapies, but are actively looking to engage with the veterinary community throughout the process.

PetMedix has also commissioned a survey of vets to find out where the real unmet needs are, and we are always happy to hear from vets throughout the industry so we can work together to improve pet health.

Events

RCVS Council September 2019

Thursday 5 September 2019, RCVS, Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2AF

WellVet Weekend

Friday 6 – Sunday 8 September 2019, Girton College, University of Cambridge, Huntingdon Rd, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0JG

Mind Matters Mental Health Awareness Training – Belfast

Tuesday 10 September 2019, Hilton Belfast, Lanyon Place, BT1 3LP

VN Council – September 2019

Wednesday 11 September 2019, RCVS, Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2AF

Fellowship Day 2019 (for both Members and Fellows of the RCVS)

Friday 20 September 2019, The Royal Institution, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1S 4BS

Mind Matters Initiative Research Symposium

Tuesday 24 September 2019, Church House, Deans Yard, Westminster, London SW1P 3NZ

ViVet Innovation Symposium 2019 – Precision Veterinary Medicine: A Vision for the Future

Tuesday 1 October, The Lowry Pier 8, The Quays, Salford M50 3AZ

RCVS Council – October 2019

Thursday 3 October, RCVS, Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF

Practice Standards Scheme Awards Ceremony

Friday 11 October, BVNA Congress, Beckbury Suite, Telford International Centre, St Quentin Gate, Telford TF3 4JH

Veterinary Nurses Day – October 2019

Thursday 17 October, Prince Albert Suite, ZSL London, Outer Circle, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY

Introduction to the UK veterinary professions – a key CPD course for overseas vets and VNs

Tuesday 29 to Wednesday 30 October, Brownsfield Suite, Crowne Plaza Manchester City Centre, Shudehill, Manchester M4 4AF

DC reprimands Midlands-based vet for alcohol-related incidents

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Disciplinary Committee has issued a reprimand and warning as to future conduct to a Midlands-based veterinary surgeon for serious professional misconduct in relation to drink driving convictions and being under the influence of alcohol whilst on duty as a veterinary surgeon.

The Disciplinary Committee hearing for Dr Lynn Jo Ann Davies MRCVS took place on Wednesday 7 August 2019 in relation to five charges against her, and was a resumed hearing of an inquiry which was originally adjourned on 23 January 2018 and thereafter on 30 July 2018. The decision was made, at both of the 2018 hearings, to postpone the final decision on sanction having regard to undertakings which the respondent was prepared to enter into.

The first two charges against Dr Davies related to convictions for drink driving on March 2014 and October 2015 for which she received driving bans for 17 months and 45 months respectively.

The third charge related to her breaching a number of undertakings she had entered into as part of the College's Health Protocol, including her consuming alcohol on four occasions between May 2015 and January 2016 and missing a pre-arranged appointment with a consultant psychiatrist appointed.

The fourth and fifth charges related to being under the influence of alcohol on three occasions while she was on duty as a veterinary surgeon in December 2016 which was also in breach of her undertakings under the Health Protocol.

At Dr Davies' first Disciplinary Committee hearing on 23 January 2018 she admitted all five charges against her and also accepted that her conduct was disgraceful conduct in a professional respect. The Committee accepted her admissions and found, with the exception of one allegation, that her conduct was disgraceful in a professional respect.

At the conclusion of its hearing on 23 January 2018 the Committee, having considered both aggravating and mitigating circumstances, decided to postpone its decision regarding sanction for six months on the basis of Dr Davies' entering into undertakings, including not to practise veterinary surgery and to remain abstinent from alcohol during the period of postponement and to undergo blood and hair tests for alcohol consumption every two months.

At the resumed hearing on 30 July 2018, Dr Davies' Counsel submitted on her behalf that she wished to return to practise and the Committee reviewed evidence that she provided to demonstrate she had complied with her undertakings.

However, the Committee retained concerns about her return to practise with regards to her ability to receive support from a mentor. The Committee therefore required Dr Davies to identify a veterinary surgeon who would agree to act as her mentor, noting that the mentor would have to be acceptable to the College as someone suitable to act in that capacity.

The Committee also required the continuation of the requirements for abstinence from alcohol and the programme of blood and hair testing.

A further requirement of the Committee was that Dr Davies should make a disclosure to any new employer of her appearances before the Committee in January 2018 and in July 2018 and of the decisions it made. The final requirement of the Committee was that the respondent should not accept a 'sole charge position' at any time during her employment during this next period of postponement of sanction. The Committee then directed that the hearing be postponed for a further 12 months.

On Wednesday 7 August 2019 the Disciplinary Committee resumed its inquiry. Dr Davies submitted documentary proof and medical records to demonstrate she had complied with all her undertakings given at the last hearing. The Committee also heard from Dr Davies' appointed veterinary mentor who provided a statement that concluded that she no longer needed monitoring or supervision.

The Committee then considered what sanction to impose on Dr Davies, having regard to the nature of the charges which she admitted at the original hearing and also considering the mitigating factors submitted by her Counsel.

Ian Green, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "The view of the Committee is that the respondent has to date overcome her addiction to alcohol and, given that her competence as a practising veterinary surgeon is not disputed, that she should therefore be permitted to return to her chosen profession. However, in the judgement of this

Committee the seriousness of the offences to which the Respondent has pleaded guilty means that a sanction of “No Further Action” cannot be justified.”

The Committee therefore decided that the most proportionate sanction was for Dr Davies to be reprimanded as to the conduct she admitted at previous hearings and that she be warned as to her future conduct.

“The respondent must understand that she has been given an opportunity to prove that, for the remainder of her time in practice, she can meet the high standards expected of all registered veterinary surgeons from both other practitioners and from members of the public who entrust the care and treatment of their animals to members of this profession,” added Ian Green.

Please note: this news story is published on behalf of the Disciplinary Committee with the aim of helping the public and profession understand the case and the Committee’s decision and it does not form part of the decision itself. The Committee’s full facts and findings are the only authoritative documentation.

DC suspends York-based vet for falsifying clinical records

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Disciplinary Committee has suspended a York-based veterinary surgeon from the Register for two months, for making dishonest entries in horse passports and subsequently making dishonest entries in the same horses' clinical records.

The Disciplinary Committee hearing for Dr Michael Richard Jones took place from Monday 19 August to Wednesday 21 August 2019 in relation to three charges against him.

The first and second charges were that, on 21 March 2018, Dr Jones made signed entries in the passports and made corresponding entries in clinical records of four horses indicating that he had administered an influenza vaccination booster to each horse on 15 March 2018 and in relation to another horse a tetanus booster, when in fact he had administered the vaccination boosters on 21 March 2018 and that, in relation to each entry, his conduct was misleading, dishonest and undermined the integrity of a vaccination process designed to promote animal welfare.

The third charge was that, on or around 21 March 2018, Dr Jones failed to make any entries in the clinical records for a horse in relation to an examination on 21 March 2018.

At the outset of the hearing Dr Jones admitted the facts in the first and second charges, and accepted that his actions were misleading, dishonest and that they undermined the integrity of a vaccination process which was designed to promote animal welfare.

With regards to the third charge, Dr Jones did not admit the charge explaining that he did not remember examining the horse on 21 March 2018 as alleged. However, the respondent disputed certain aspects of the written statements of the College's witnesses. In particular he wanted his conduct to be taken in the context of the pressures that he was working under on that day, primarily that he was in a stressed state having had to euthanase a valuable stallion at the conclusion of his previous client appointment.

In the light of Dr Jones' admissions to his conduct alleged in the first and second charges, the Committee found them proven.

Regarding the third charge, the Committee heard evidence from the horse's owner who said they were present during the examination taking place and the Committee was satisfied that the respondent did examine the horse on 21 March 2018 and that he had a duty to make a brief clinical note on the examination. As Dr Jones admitted that he made no such note, the Committee found the charge to have been proven to the requisite standard.

Having found the charges proven, the Committee then went on to consider whether or not Dr Jones' proven conduct amounted to serious professional misconduct. The Committee, having considered the aggravating and mitigating factors, found that Dr Jones' conduct as found proved in relation to both charges one and two, did constitute serious professional misconduct. However, with regards to charge three, the Committee accepted that the respondent simply forgot that he had examined the horse and, therefore, the Committee was not satisfied that the failure to compile a record entry covering the horse's examination constituted serious professional misconduct.

The Committee then considered what sanction to impose on Dr Jones in relation to the facts found proven in charges one and two. In doing so it took into account the 78 written testimonials and 4 character witnesses called on behalf of Dr Jones.

Ian Green, who chaired the Committee and spoke on its behalf, said: "The Committee's decision on sanction has been based on an acceptance that the respondent's conduct on this occasion was out-of-character, as the evidence of his character witnesses and the contents of the letters submitted in his support by his clients and other veterinary colleagues assert. The Committee also accepts that the respondent self-reported himself to his employer and to the College and has made a full and frank admission of his wrongdoing.

"Consideration was given to whether the sanction of a reprimand and/or warning as to future conduct would adequately reflect the gravity of the misconduct, however, after careful reflection it was concluded that such a sanction could not be justified. The reason is that acts of falsification involve acts of dishonesty by a professional person acting in a professional

capacity, and the gravity of the matter arises not simply from the dishonesty but also from the possible consequences of the false certification. It should be clearly understood by members of the veterinary profession that, in appropriate false certification cases, the sanction of removal from the Register is one which may well be imposed.”

The Committee therefore decided that suspending Dr Jones from the Register for two months would be the most appropriate sanction.

Dr Jones has 28 days from being informed in writing of the outcome of the hearing in which to make an appeal to the Privy Council.