

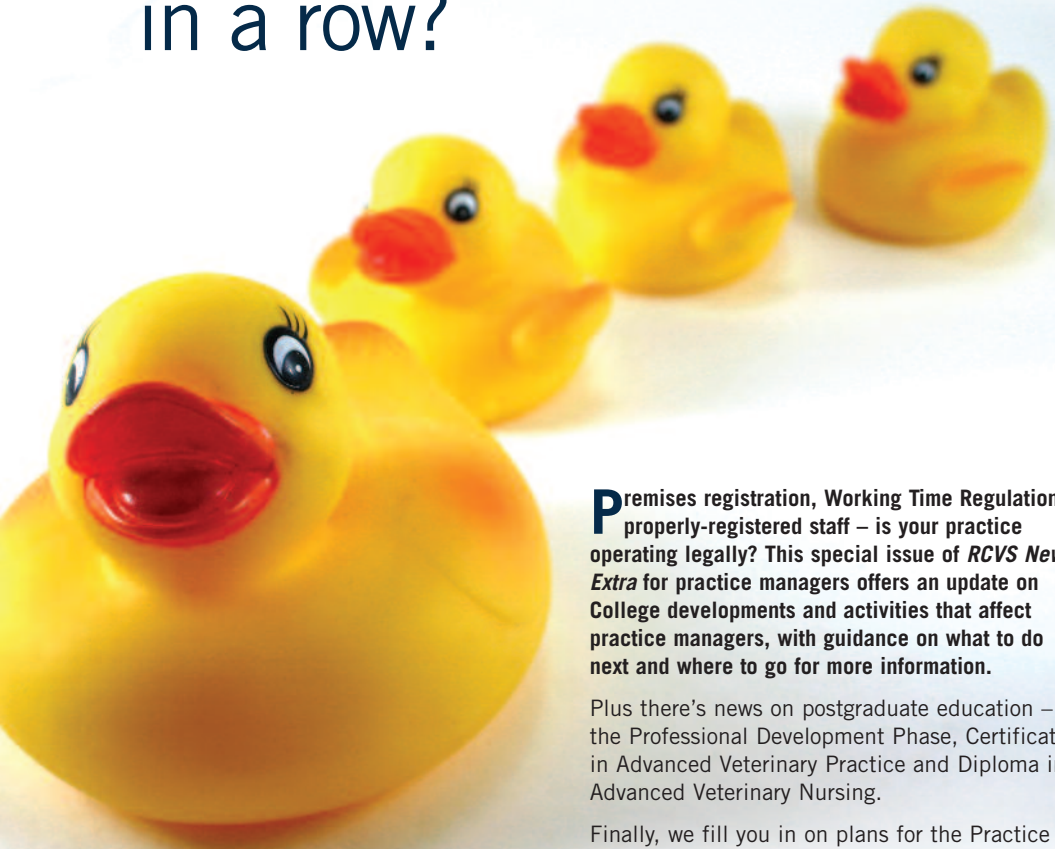
# R C V S   N E W S

A SPECIAL REPORT FROM THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS

FEBRUARY 2009



## Got all your ducks in a row?



**P**remises registration, Working Time Regulations, properly-registered staff – is your practice operating legally? This special issue of *RCVS News Extra* for practice managers offers an update on College developments and activities that affect practice managers, with guidance on what to do next and where to go for more information.

Plus there's news on postgraduate education – the Professional Development Phase, Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice and Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing.

Finally, we fill you in on plans for the Practice Standards Scheme and where you can meet us to discuss issues in person.

We hope you find it useful!

# People, places, qualifications

Here's a round-up of our recent activities



**A**ccording to our *Survey of the Veterinary Profession 2006*, 40% of practices have a practice manager. I am sure the figure has risen since, as more practices recognise the benefits of an in-house expert to manage the business side of the practice.

We encourage veterinary surgeons to focus on management areas as part of the new modular Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP) - the compulsory Professional Key Skills unit includes topics such as human resources, financial and business planning, training and marketing. But a dedicated practice manager remains a vital asset.

Practice managers come in all shapes and sizes, including vets, veterinary nurses and non-clinical staff who have developed their role from within practice, to those bringing specialist expertise from outside, many of whom have worked beyond the veterinary field.

## Round up

As the regulatory body for veterinary surgeons and, increasingly, veterinary nurses, the RCVS has regular dialogue with vets and VNs through our publications, *RCVS News* and *VN Standard*, our annual report and mailings throughout the year, not to mention our frequently-updated website and regular communications via the press.

***"We cover a range of topics, from the launch of the Register of Veterinary Practice Premises to progress on the PDP and VN regulation."***

However, while we hope that veterinary colleagues pass on relevant information to their practice managers, we thought it might be worthwhile to produce a round-up of recent RCVS activities that affect the practice as a whole - responsibility for which may fall to the practice manager. So, this special issue of *RCVS News Extra* will be circulated directly to practice managers. We cover a range of topics, from the launch of the Register of Veterinary

Practice Premises to progress on the Professional Development Phase and VN regulation: I hope you find the information useful.

## Find out more

There are lots of opportunities to find out more. RCVSonline ([www.rcvs.org.uk](http://www.rcvs.org.uk)) contains a wealth of information on all of the topics included in this newsletter. Or you can contact the relevant departmental heads directly - see the back page for details. We also regularly hit the road with our Regional Question Time meetings - all members of the practice team are welcome to attend. The next meeting will be held near Kidderminster on 26 March, and will be preceded by one of our Practice Standards Workshops, where those on the Scheme, or those interested in joining, can sign up for a free session with myself or one of the Scheme inspectors. If you live near Kidderminster, more information will be coming your way soon. We will also be going to my home patch of Cornwall on 18 June - venue to be confirmed.

## Meet the team

In addition, practice managers are very welcome to attend our Meet the RCVS Days, when we offer a small group the opportunity to see what goes on behind the scenes at Belgravia House and to meet the Officer team and Heads of Department. The next events will be held on 16 March and 9 June. Lunch is laid on and we pay reasonable travel expenses, so if you have questions on any of the issues covered in this publication, or would like to find out more about what we do at the College, please contact Fiona Harcourt to register your interest in a place: [f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk) or 020 7202 0773.

I look forward to seeing some of you at one of our events or in the College soon!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill Nute". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Jill Nute**  
RCVS President

# Legal medicines supply

## Are your premises registered?

**By 1 April 2009, all veterinary practice premises from which medicines are to be supplied need to be registered with the RCVS. This is to enable the UK government to fulfil its obligations under European law to maintain and improve traceability of, and accountability for, veterinary medicines. We have agreed to take on the Register on behalf of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate – it makes sense, as we already hold a lot of information about practices, making it more cost-effective for us to do this than another organisation starting from scratch.**

We have sent a registration form to all practice premises that are listed with us as either RCVS-accredited under the Practice Standards Scheme, or as part of the voluntary *Directory of Veterinary Practices*. For others, a form is available on request from our Registration Dept – [premisesregister@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:premisesregister@rcvs.org.uk) or **020 7202 0744/07** or to download from RCVSonline.

A payment of £40 per premises is due annually, although those already paying annual fees under the Practice Standards Scheme do not have to pay. Neither are PSS-accredited and candidate premises subject to the VMD's four-yearly inspection, which carries a charge of £250. So, if your practice is not already on the

Scheme, it might be worth considering: for not a great deal of extra outlay, you can become part of a Scheme that ensures the practice is up to standard across a wide range of areas, not just medicines.

Practices also need to keep a record of other places where medicines are stored, so these can be considered during an inspection – such as vets' homes or cars, or perhaps a charity premises from which veterinary work is carried out and where medicines are stored. Some of these may need to be registered in their own right. If you are unsure, please call us for guidance.

***“Practices also need to keep a record of other places where medicines are stored, so these can be considered during an inspection.”***

The Register will be published online and updated quarterly. It will be an offence under the Veterinary Medicines Regulations for veterinary surgeons to supply medicines from unregistered practice premises. On the plus side, from 1 April it will be possible for SQPs to supply certain categories of medicine from veterinary practice premises that have been registered with us, whereas previously those premises would have to have been separately registered with the VMD expressly for the purposes of SQPs working from there.

For more info, application forms and FAQ, visit: [www.rcvs.org.uk/premisesregister](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/premisesregister)

- If you are going to BSAVA this year, join our master class “An Inspector Calls...” for detailed advice on meeting both the PSS and the VMD medicines inspections. The session takes place from 10am on Saturday 4 April and attendance is by free ticket – contact Fiona Harcourt on [f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk) to reserve your place.

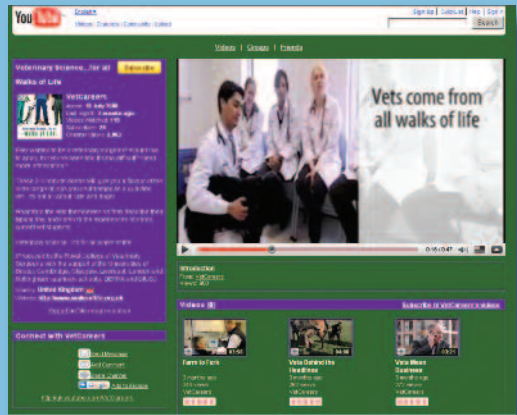


# For all Walks of Life...

## Encouraging applicants to vet schools

**A**re you involved with organising work experience for school students? Or helping out at local careers events? Stuck for careers materials? Then help is at hand! Together with the veterinary schools and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, we secured matched funding from the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills to develop new careers materials to showcase the range of opportunities for veterinary graduates, and also to encourage groups currently under-represented in the profession – namely boys, those from the ethnic minorities and those from lower socioeconomic groups – to consider applying to veterinary school. The aim is to ensure that the profession does not miss out on potentially excellent vets who may be put off by the current profile of the profession – which is predominantly middle-class, 98% white and increasingly female-dominated (nearly 80% of first-year vet students were women this year).

We produced a brochure, DVD and interactive website under the banner of 'Veterinary science... for all walks of life', and sent a copy of the brochure and DVD to every school and sixth-form college in the UK last year. A copy of the brochure has also been sent to all



veterinary practices, but if you missed yours, or you would like more copies of either the brochure or DVD, please contact us at [info@walksoflife.org.uk](mailto:info@walksoflife.org.uk). You can also view the DVD modules via [www.walksoflife.org.uk](http://www.walksoflife.org.uk) or on [www.youtube.com/vetcareers](http://www.youtube.com/vetcareers). The materials are aimed at 14-18 year olds – not our regular audience – and we would appreciate any feedback you might have from school students and their parents or teachers.

## Advanced qualifications

**E**nsuring a good career progression for the vets and veterinary nurses in your team is a key way of reducing staff attrition, and offering support for those considering furthering their qualifications can play a part in this.

For vets, our Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP) has been specifically designed to allow better access for those working in clinical practice. It's modular in approach, which means that if candidates' clinical interests change, they don't have to throw the baby out with the bathwater and start all over again. The final Certificate will list all of the modules achieved, acting as a useful reference tool when interviewing job applicants, too.

The enrolment period has also been doubled, to ten years, which makes the qualification more feasible to obtain for those who might anticipate a career break.

Modules can be used in three ways: as stand-alone CPD, which can later be converted to a Certificate if the candidate is enrolled with the RCVS (making it cost-effective for the practice paying for CPD – you can kill two birds with one stone); towards a CertAVP; or, if specific modules are completed, towards a CertAVP in a named area such as Small Animal Practice or Diagnostic Imaging.

Module assessment – and in some cases, the courses that support the modules – are available from RCVS-accredited universities. Over 80 modules are now available: for the full range, visit [www.rcvs.org.uk/modcerts](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/modcerts). Vets graduating since 2007 must have completed their PDP before they can enrol with the RCVS.

Meanwhile, a similar modular structure is available to veterinary nurses wishing to study for their Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing

# EMS: we want your views

## Review of EMS launched

**A**t our recent Regional Question Time meeting in Cardiff, there was some discussion about the future of Extra-Mural Studies. Our Junior Vice-President, Professor Sandy Trees, called it 'the jewel in our veterinary educational crown' and there was general agreement that although communication between practices and vet schools could be better, EMS was valuable for both students and the practices that support them.

Having said that, things can always be improved, and mounting student debt, new models of teaching at veterinary schools and the increasing importance of the veterinary schools' first-opinion practices mean that it's time for a thorough review of the role EMS plays within the undergraduate veterinary degree. We have set up a Working Group to look at this, under the chairmanship of Past-President Barry Johnson. The Group would welcome input from anyone involved with EMS. We know that practice managers are often involved in the co-ordination of EMS, so if you have views on strengths and weaknesses in the system; problems and possible solutions; what should be retained and what could change, please let us know by contacting Freda Andrews, Head of Education at [education@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:education@rcvs.org.uk) by 16 February 2009.

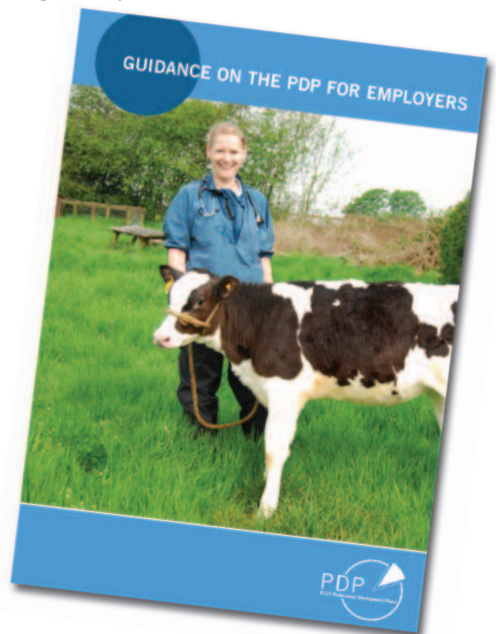
(DipAVN), which, like the CertAVP, includes both core modules and optional modules. For the DipAVN, core modules include law, ethics and professional practice. Before enrolling, VNs need to have at least one year's clinical experience. More information is available on RCVSONline: [www.rcvs.org.uk/dipavn](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/dipavn)



# Professional Development Phase

## Get your grads signed up!

**T**he Professional Development Phase (PDP), our online tool to help new graduates consolidate their theoretical knowledge into practice-based skills, has entered its second compulsory year. All new graduates need to complete the PDP during their first year in practice, regardless of where they have graduated. So far, 65% of the 2008 cohort of UK graduates have signed up. The onus is on graduates to contact us for their password ([pdp@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:pdp@rcvs.org.uk)) but we would appreciate support from practice managers to ensure any new graduates in their charge have joined the PDP.



We provide new graduates with information about the PDP during their final year at vet school and on graduation. We have also recently published a 24-page guide for employers (above), which can be downloaded from [www.rcvs.org.uk/pdp](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/pdp) or is available in hard copy on request from our Education Department (see back page for contact details). If you are unsure as to the role of the practice in PDP – in terms of mentoring, appraisals and sign-off – it could be a useful read.

To view a demo of the PDP, visit <http://pdp.rcvs.org.uk> and choose 'preview'.

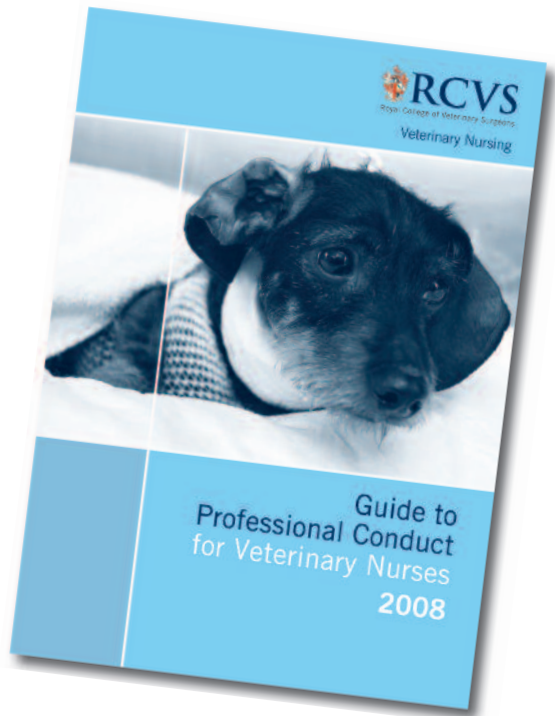
# Are your VNs registered?

**O**ver 5,700 veterinary nurses have now registered with us, and are abiding by the *RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses* and completing their CPD (an average of 45 hours over three years). In 2010, we will introduce a disciplinary system for veterinary nurses that will mirror that for veterinary surgeons (and VNs will sit on the committees involved).

Once the disciplinary system is in place, charges could be brought against VNs on exactly the same basis as for vets, that is, if found guilty of fraudulent registration, criminal convictions which render him or her unfit to practise as a veterinary nurse, or allegations of disgraceful professional conduct.

Veterinary nurse regulation reflects the growing stature of the VN profession and Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs) signal that they are prepared to account for their professional practice, which sends a strong message to the public and their colleagues. If your veterinary nurses have not yet registered, please encourage them to do so!

More information is available at:  
[www.rcvs.org.uk/vnregister](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/vnregister)



## Checking up

**O**ccasionally, we hear about people applying for – and in some cases securing – full-time or locum posts as veterinary surgeons or veterinary nurses without holding the relevant qualifications and registrations. In considerably less time than it takes to make a cup of tea, you can check online to see if your candidates or potential locums are properly registered. Look at [www.rcvs.org.uk/checkregister](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/checkregister) for vets or [www.rcvs.org.uk/vnlist](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/vnlist) for veterinary nurses.

It is also worth pointing out that unregistered veterinary surgeons should not be employed to carry out Schedule 3 veterinary nursing activities. This has happened recently, particularly with overseas-qualified members who do not always appreciate the UK systems. Schedule 3 procedures amount to the practice of veterinary surgery, which in UK law can only be undertaken by a veterinary surgeon or certain other categories of people who are specifically

authorised by the Veterinary Surgeons Act, such as Listed/Registered VNs.

***“Unregistered veterinary surgeons should not be employed to carry out Schedule 3 veterinary nursing activities.”***

The other part of the equation is making sure that job titles in practice reflect qualifications and registration status. This is a particular issue with veterinary nurses, where we have come across ‘Head Nurse’ badges on staff who are neither qualified nor Listed/Registered as veterinary nurses. Job titles should reflect the experience, qualification and legal status that a member of the public might expect from that person. In particular, unqualified nursing staff should be referred to as ‘Veterinary Nursing Assistants’.

# 24/7 – watch this space

**S**ome of your veterinary colleagues may have been contacted on our behalf by Cognition Market Intelligence in the autumn of last year to find out about how your practice tackles 24/7 emergency cover. We were particularly interested to find out how well practices were managing to balance the professional need to offer 24/7 cover with the legal requirements of the Working Time Regulations, which include 11-hour rest periods, a maximum 48-hour week and minimum break periods and holidays. Home visits were also considered.

The results of survey are the subject of discussion by our 24/7 Working Party and our Advisory Committee. If any significant changes are envisaged to the current guidance, a consultation with the profession and the public is envisaged, so there will be time for you and your colleagues to have a say.



In the meantime, if you need a reminder of the current 24-hour emergency cover guidance, it can be downloaded from [www.rcvs.org.uk/guide](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/guide) - see annex a. We would also urge practices to take legal advice to ensure they are complying with the Working Time Regulations.

---

## PSS – standards review underway

### Give us your ideas about future standards

**W**e received twice as many applications to join our voluntary Practice Standards Scheme in 2008 than in the previous year. More and more practices are recognising the benefits of being able to say to the profession and the public that they meet our rigorous standards.

When the Scheme was launched in 2005, we committed to not changing the standards for the first five years, unless this was required by a change in legislation. The Practice Standards Group, which comprises representatives from all of the key veterinary groups, including VPMA, is now working through a process of reviewing the

Standards, with the aim of rolling out the revised set in 2010. It's important that they remain up to date and relevant to current veterinary practice.

***“If you are in an accredited practice and wish to stay up to date with developments on the Scheme, sign up to our Practice Standards e-newsletter.”***

Practice managers are heavily involved in the implementation and maintenance of practice standards. If you are on the Scheme, or considering joining, and have any comments on the existing standards or recommendations for new areas for consideration, please let your VPMA representative, Carole Clarke, know ([secretariat@vpma.co.uk](mailto:secretariat@vpma.co.uk)).

If you are in an accredited practice and wish to stay up to date with developments on the Scheme, sign up to our Practice Standards e-newsletter, launched in January, by emailing your name and practice to [practicestandards@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:practicestandards@rcvs.org.uk), quoting 'e-news' in the email header.



# You never call...

Got a question? We're here to help

We're a regulatory body. We strike people off. That's what we are often known for – but it's not all that we do! If you have questions about any aspect of our activities, do contact us.

There's a team of 60 people working at Belgravia House and we are here to help you as much as we can.



Department	For questions on...	Contact details
<b>Communications</b>	Media, policy, government and public relations, events, publications, corporate communications and RCVSonline	020 7202 0725 communications@rcvs.org.uk
<b>Corporate Services</b>	IT systems, purchase of publications, data rental	020 7202 0762 publications@rcvs.org.uk
<b>Education</b>	Undergraduate degree accreditation and university visitations, postgraduate qualifications (PDP, CPD, Certificates, Diplomas, Fellowships, Specialists), Statutory Membership Examination	020 7202 0791 education@rcvs.org.uk
<b>Executive Office</b>	Matters relating to the President, Registrar and RCVS Council	020 7202 0761 registrar@rcvs.org.uk
<b>Facilities Management</b>	Room booking and catering	020 7202 0726 facilitiesteam@rcvs.org.uk
<b>Finance</b>	All financial matters, including fees for practices, members and VNs	020 7202 0723 finance@rcvs.org.uk
<b>Professional Conduct</b>	Complaints, preliminary investigation and disciplinary issues, <i>Guides</i> , requests for advice and Practice Standards Scheme policy	020 7202 0789 profcon@rcvs.org.uk
<b>RCVS Trust Library</b>	Book loans, database searches, historical collections, information services	020 7202 0752 library@rcvstrust.org.uk
<b>RCVS Trust</b>	Grants, donations and fundraising	020 7202 0741 info@rcvstrust.org.uk
<b>Registration</b>	Membership and registration - vets, VNs (for first registration contact the VN Dept, below) and premises – Practice Standards administration	020 7202 0739 membership@rcvs.org.uk
<b>Veterinary Nursing</b>	VN training and examinations, first registration (otherwise contact the Registration Dept), regulation and VN Council	020 7202 0788 vetnursing@rcvs.org.uk



PEFC/16-33-240

Printed by an ISO 14001-accredited printer using 100% vegetable-based inks on a totally chlorine-free PEFC-accredited stock [www.sterlingsolutions.co.uk](http://www.sterlingsolutions.co.uk)

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons,  
Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road,  
London SW1P 2AF | [www.rcvs.org.uk](http://www.rcvs.org.uk)



**RCVS**  
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons