



RCVS NEWS / FEBRUARY 2020

*Text-only version of
RCVS News email*

RCVS publishes professions-wide survey reports

At the beginning of the month we published a snapshot of the current state and opinions of the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions when it released the reports of the 2019 surveys of the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions. The surveys – sent to all members of the respective professions – ask a wide variety of questions on demographics, work status, type of work undertaken, type of organisation worked for, wellbeing, views on the professions, continuing professional development (CPD) and views on the RCVS. The full reports, as well as summaries of the findings in infographic form, can be found on our Publications page.

https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/?utm_source=Informz&utm_medium=Referral&utm_campaign=RCVS

RCVS and VN Councils election candidates for 2020 announced

The RCVS is today (Monday 10 February) announcing the candidates standing in the 2020 RCVS Council and Veterinary Nurses (VN) Council elections.

This is the first time that VN Council has held an election since 2017 – there was no 2018 election due to governance changes and there were too few candidates in 2019 – and a record 13 registered veterinary nurses have put themselves forward to compete for the two available places. These are:

Samantha Anderson RVN
Jessica Beckett RVN
Kirsten Cavill RVN
Rebecca Clark RVN
Dorothy Creighton RVN
Lindsey Anne Dodd RVN
Emma Foreman RVN
Racheal Marshall RVN (incumbent)
Megan Oakey RVN
Susannah Phillips RVN
Matthew Rendle RVN (incumbent)
Claire Roberts RVN
Cathy Woodlands RVN

For this year's RCVS Council election, eight veterinary surgeons have put themselves forward to compete for the three available places. These are:

John Davies MRCVS
Dr Melissa Donald MRCVS (incumbent)
Dr Tom Lonsdale MRCVS
Professor Stephen May FRCVS (incumbent)
Dr Kate Richards MRCVS
Peter Robinson MRCVS
Dr Richard Stephenson MRCVS
Dr Christopher (Kit) Sturgess FRCVS (incumbent)

Both the RCVS and VN Councils elections are due to start in the week commencing Monday 16 March when the ballot papers and candidates' details and manifestos will be posted and emailed to all members of both professions who are eligible to vote.

The voting materials will be sent by Civica Election Services (formerly Electoral Reform Services) which is running the election on behalf of the RCVS and the emails will contain a unique security code for each member of the electorate as well as a link to a secure voting website. All votes, whether postal or online, must be cast by 5pm on Friday 24 April 2020.

Prior to the launch of the election the RCVS has uploaded each of the candidates' biographies and election statements on to its website. The statements for RCVS Council candidates can be found on its 2020 election webpage and those for VN Council candidates can be found on the equivalent webpage.

As with previous years, the RCVS is also inviting members of both professions to get a better idea of why each candidate is standing by taking part in 'Quiz the candidates' and submitting a question which will then be put directly to the candidates. Each candidate for both elections will be invited to choose two questions to answer from all those received, and produce a video recording of their answers.

Recordings will be published on the RCVS website and YouTube channel on the week the election commences. Please note – only one question can be asked by each person and any questions that are deemed offensive, inappropriate, misleading, libellous or otherwise unlawful will, at our discretion, not be distributed amongst the candidates.

Vets should email their question to vetvote20@rcvs.org.uk or send it to our Twitter account @theRCVS using the hashtag #vetvote20 by midday on Friday 28 February 2020. Veterinary nurses should email their question to vnvote20@rcvs.org.uk or tweet to our Twitter account using the hashtag #vnvote20.

Eleanor Ferguson, RCVS Registrar and Returning Officer for both elections, said: "After two years without an election for VN Council

it is fantastic to see that a record number of veterinary nurses have put themselves forward as candidates. It demonstrates that there is a desire amongst the profession to engage with VN Council and the important issues it decides on around veterinary nursing education, continuing professional development and registration. It is also the first year that the number of veterinary nurse candidates has outnumbered the number of vets standing for RCVS Council.

"We look forward to launching both elections next month and hope to see record turnouts in both elections. In the meantime please make sure to engage with the process and scrutinise the candidates and their views by submitting a question about an issue of interest to you."

CPD / College releases new 1CPD demonstration video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Gwww44pBbQ>

Plowright Prize open for nominations

A new award recognising individuals who have made significant contributions to the eradication of infectious diseases has been launched by RCVS Knowledge, in memory of eminent veterinary virologist Walter Plowright and his wife, Dorothy Plowright.

Every two years, the Plowright Prize will offer £75,000 to recognise an individual working in Europe or the Commonwealth who has made a significant impact on the control, management and eradication of infectious diseases of animals. Eligible activity must demonstrate animal, humanitarian or economic benefit. The prize money is intended to support the individual's ongoing work in the field.

Potential recipients of the prize include veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and research scientists. Awardees may be working in a research setting, in academia, in practice or in other related sectors. Individuals must be nominated for the award, and the prize is not open to organisations.

Nominations are now invited for the inaugural prize, and must be received by 31st March 2020.

Executive Director of RCVS Knowledge Chris Gush said:

"We are honoured to be launching the Plowright Prize in memory of one of the world's most exceptional veterinary surgeons and scientists, and in celebration of decades of dedication to an area of substantial societal significance.

"It is our belief that this prestigious international prize will help stimulate further research and improvement activities, including supporting the development of expertise in the area of infectious disease within the veterinary profession."

Walter Plowright (1923-2010) was an acclaimed veterinary scientist whose major breakthrough in the battle against rinderpest – the tissue culture rinderpest vaccine (TCRV) – provided the key to eliminating the disease. In the year of Walter's death, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations officially announced the complete eradication of the disease, only the second such feat in human history, alongside smallpox.

The story behind the profession's eradication of rinderpest, commonly known as cattle plague, can be read in RCVS Knowledge's publication Evidence-Based Veterinary Medicine Matters.

In 2023, the prize will celebrate 100 years since Walter Plowright's birth with a special award of £100,000 to that year's winner.

Full criteria for the Plowright Prize can be found on the RCVS Knowledge website. Please note nominations for this year's award must be received by 31st March 2020.

Image: Rickettsia typhi bacteria, courtesy of CDC/AFIP

Surrey Fellows on Tour event a roaring success

On Tuesday 18 February 2020, the RCVS Fellowship held a 'Fellows on Tour' evening event at Surrey Veterinary School where veterinary students were treated to interesting stories and anecdotes about the world of veterinary research.

The event was organised by Professor Nick Bacon, Professor of Surgical Oncology at the University of Surrey's School of Veterinary Medicine and past Chair of the Fellowship Board, and in conjunction with Surrey University's Veterinary Society. It was held with the aim of inspiring the next generation as to where a veterinary degree can take them and the impact they can make, while simultaneously increasing the accessibility of the Fellowship.

The Fellowship is the learned society of the RCVS aimed at veterinary surgeons whose activities demonstrate excellence in veterinary endeavours and who have distinguished themselves on account of their ongoing commitment to using their experience and knowledge to enhance the profession further.

Professor Bacon introduced the evening, which was attended by over 100 students, with a short talk about the Fellowship and Fellows on Tour. A range of speakers then spoke to the students, highlighting to students that becoming a Fellow is achievable and inspiring the next generation of UK veterinary leaders.

The speakers, who shared their exciting scientific research, were:

Dick Sibley with a talk entitled 'What to do with a downer cow other than shoot it' explaining injury prevention methods in cattle, and how this can positively impact farming.

Andrew Knight with a talk entitled 'Hammerhead sharks and sea turtles; globe-trotting adventures in animal welfare' depicting his exciting experiences throughout his career in animal welfare, from swimming with turtles and hammerhead sharks in the Caribbean to researching Jack the Ripper.

Anita Patel with a talk entitled 'We can make a difference in the wider world' detailing the history and developments in her esteemed career in dermatology. Anita also lectures throughout Africa and provides online dermatology support to vets in Kenya through the Kenya Veterinary Dermatology Study Group that she helped to start up.

David Harwood with a talk entitled 'Goats – history and folklore!' describing the impact goats have had on folklore throughout history, and what that can tell us about the animals in present day. One of David's main tips is that goats have a sense of facial recognition, so anyone wishing to treat a goat should approach it with a smiling face.

Jack Reece with a talk entitled 'Veterinary Adventures in India' illustrating how taking some time away from being a cattle vet led to a new adventure spent in India treating street dogs and ultimately publishing papers on rabies control that led to him receiving a Fellowship.

Reflecting on the success of the day, Professor Bacon says: "It was a great pleasure to get involved with the 'Fellows on Tour 2020' event held at the University of Surrey. This was the second time we have held it at Surrey, and the huge turn-out was testament to the interesting topics on offer showcasing the wonderfully varied ways we as vets can contribute to the profession, the scientific community and the wider world.

"Many thanks to the Head of School Chris Proudman FRCVS for supporting this initiative for the benefit of the students. The engagement of the Surrey VetSoc was also key in making it a great success. Thanks to all our speakers – they delivered passionate, interesting and inspiring talks. Roll on the next one."

ViVet to hold marketing masterclass for veterinary professionals

We will be holding a workshop event next month which aims to help veterinary innovators develop marketing tools and techniques for their products and services.

The 'Turning ideas into innovation: Marketing masterclass' takes place on Tuesday 24 March 2020 from 10am to 5pm at the RCVS offices in Belgravia House and will be hosted by Daniel Johnson, a consultant in marketing and growth.

Anthony Roberts, RCVS Director of Leadership and Innovation, said: "Marketing is about so much more than just promoting and raising awareness of your product. It is the process through which you identify your customers, develop and deliver products they value, and build lasting relationships. Daniel is an expert in this field and will provide those attending with the tools and techniques needed to turn ideas into innovations, create value from your product or service and turn it into something that people will pay to receive.

"This course will be relevant for veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and any other members of the practice team at all stages of their innovation journey – from those who have the kernel of an idea, to those who want to grow their business and change minds."

During the course of the workshop attendees will learn:

- The principles of marketing and how to apply them in your business
- How to identify and understand the needs of your target market
- How to capture and communicate the value of your innovation
- How to create messages that resonate with your audience
- How to develop a brand and ensure lasting customer relationships
- How to pitch your innovation to investors
- How to develop a marketing strategy

Attendees will also be provided with tools and templates to take home and use to grow their business, a half-an-hour post event follow-up call with Daniel Johnson to answer any questions that may arise after the event, and copies of the presentations from the day. Tickets to the event can be purchased via the event's dedicated Eventbrite page.

RCVS looking for vets to help shape the future of support for new grads

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is looking for general practitioners to join one of two working groups to shape a new programme to support veterinary graduates into life in practice.

The aim of the programme, which will replace the current Professional Development Phase (PDP), is to ensure that veterinary graduates are fully supported in their new role and able to progress from day one competencies into confident and capable independent practitioners.

This new programme builds on the results of the Graduate Outcomes Consultation, a wide-ranging consultation which reported in 2019 to gather the views of the profession with regards to day one competencies, the PDP, extra-mural studies and clinical education for general practice.

The proposal for the new programme took on board the findings from the Graduate Outcomes consultation which found that the profession felt that support mechanisms for new graduates needed to be strengthened. The proposal to develop this new programme of support was approved by RCVS Council in January.

The first of the two working groups is the EPA Working Group, which is tasked with assisting the development of a bank of Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs). EPAs describe the everyday professional tasks carried out by vets in practice, covering a wide range of areas of clinical and professional practice which graduates and their mentors can access to build into their own e-portfolio.

The second working group is the Mentor Working Group, which will assist in shaping the role of the mentor in the new programme and create a training package for workplace mentors.

“It is incredibly important for us to have input from veterinary surgeons who are working in general practice as they are well positioned to comment on how the development programme can effectively support graduates on a day to day basis,” says Sue Paterson, Chair of our Education Committee.

The College is looking for veterinary surgeons working in practice and who have an interest in helping new graduates gain the best possible experience to join as members of these new working groups. It would be beneficial for applicants to have experience with mentoring and/or workplace training.

Successful applicants would be required to visit us for three half-day meetings over the period of a year and we would cover travel and subsistence expenses. There would be an additional time commitment to review and feedback on material via email.

Those general practitioners who are interested in applying should email Britta Crawford, our Education Manager, via b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk giving a brief description of their current position and why they feel they would be an asset to the working group. The closing date for applications is 6 March 2020.

2019 audits see significant improvement in CPD compliance rates

The rates of compliance with our requirements on continuing professional development (CPD) have seen a significant increase for both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses according to the results of recent audits.

We carry out an audit of CPD for both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses on an annual basis to gauge if members of professions are undertaking the number of hours required by their respective Codes of Professional Conduct which is 35 hours per annum for vets and 15 hours per annum for vet nurses.

Last year a cohort of 1,010 veterinary surgeons responded to the CPD audit, which took place in September 2019J, and included a random sample of 658 vets sourced from across all UK postcode areas. The audit found that 820 (or 81%) of respondents met the annual requirement – a 13% increase from the 2018 audit. This followed a decline in compliance rates from 82% in 2014 to just 68% in 2018.

For veterinary nurses, a cohort of 1,077 responded to the request for their CPD records, which took place in June 2019 and which also included a random sample of 761 veterinary nurses sourced from across all UK postcode areas. The audit found that 854 (or 79%) respondents were compliant with the annual CPD requirement – a 7% increase on last year's compliance rate and the highest compliance rate yet from a veterinary nursing CPD audit.

Speaking on the results Dr Linda Prescott-Clements, our Director of Education, commented: "It is fantastic to see that this year's results demonstrate a significant increase in CPD compliance rates after a number of years in decline for vets and a largely static rate for veterinary nurses and I hope that it is part of a long-term trend towards the professions recognising the value of keeping their clinical and non-clinical skills up-to-date.

"This year we have made a number of changes that should make CPD compliance even easier now, including a clearer and simpler annual CPD requirement of 35 hours for vets and 15 hours for vet nurses, and the 1CPD platform and app which can be signed into through the My Account area and provides the professions with the ability to record, plan and reflect on their CPD."

Further information about the changes to the College's CPD policy and the 1CPD platform can be found on our CPD 2020 webpage. The 1CPD app can be downloaded through the Apple App Store, Google Play and via the RCVS website.

Applications open for second round of Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grant

Applications are now open for the 2020 RCVS Mind Matters Initiative (MMI) Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grant, named for an elected RCVS Council member who tragically passed away in 2017.

This is the second year of a five-year commitment in which the £20,000 grant will be awarded, to fund research that focuses on mental health and wellbeing within the veterinary professions, including areas such as prevention, diagnosis, intervention and treatment.

"We were very impressed with the range and number of proposals last year and we are looking forward to seeing what this year's applicants will propose. We know that incidents of mental ill-health are disproportionately high in the veterinary professions and mental wellbeing research specific to the veterinary professions is incredibly important for identifying gaps in provisions and outreach, and developing interventions that can support every member of the veterinary team," says Lizzie Lockett, RCVS CEO and MMI Director.

"We are encouraging anyone interested in applying for this grant to start considering topics they want to explore and that they think could contribute to the growing evidence-base on veterinary mental health."

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) was awarded the inaugural grant and Dr Kate Stephen (pictured right with Sarah's mother and sister), a Behavioural Scientist at SRUC's Epidemiology Research Unit, is leading the project, which aims to identify how better to promote job satisfaction and to break the cycle of negative thoughts and poor mental wellbeing identified amongst farm vets.

On being awarded the grant, Kate said: "It was an honour to win the first year of the Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grant. The grant has made it possible to find out directly from vets about what gives them most satisfaction about their work and how they cope with the challenges. It has been interesting to hear about experiences of large animal practice and we are grateful to all the vets who have participated so far. We hope, in the next stage of the project, to collate their advice and to develop and test an intervention that they have recommended. Ultimately, we hope that this will be of benefit to livestock vets around the UK."

Applications for the grant are welcome from individuals at all stages of their research careers, including those who have not previously been published. Researchers must be affiliated with a university and ethical approval must be in place.

Applicants should submit a proposal relating to any aspect of mental health or wellbeing in the veterinary professions. Proposals should be a maximum of 3,000 words and include aims, methods, ethical considerations, proposed timelines, and a bibliography. Any academic literature referred to within proposals must be accurately referenced.

The successful applicant will be informed in May, with the recipient receiving their award at Royal College Day, which takes place in London, on Friday 10 July 2020. They will then be invited to present their research findings at a future Mind Matters Initiative Research Symposium.

Applicants should send their research proposal to Rachel Pascoe, Mind Matters Initiative Officer, at r.pascoe@rcvs.org.uk by 5pm on Thursday 30 April.

For those who would like further guidance on completing their grant applications, the RCVS Knowledge team will be providing a workshop this year on Thursday 27 February. Those interested in attending must register with Rachel by Thursday 20 February. Guidance on how to prepare a research proposal can also be found on the Economic and Social Research Council's website.

More information on the Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grant can be found on the Mind Matters website.

RCVS Fellowship Day 2020 - open to all!

Date:

Friday 2nd October 2020

Opening times:

09:30 - 18.00

Venue:

The Royal Institution of Great Britain, 21 Albermarle Street, London, W1S 4BS

Details

RCVS Fellowship Day 2020 is open to all members of the RCVS and will take place on Friday, 2 October at The Royal Institution of Great Britain, London.

Whether you are already a Fellow, about to become a Fellow or curious to know more about the RCVS Fellowship, you are warmly invited to join us for RCVS Fellowship Day in what promises to be a fascinating and insightful day.

We will be welcoming the fifth cohort of Fellows to be awarded under the RCVS Fellowship initiative, presenting a fascinating full-day programme of veterinary and non-veterinary speakers, and providing a forum for FRCVS and MRCVS to meet and exchange their views and ideas.

Keynote Speaker

To be announced.

Fellows in Focus Session

We are inviting Fellows to participate in the Fellows in Focus session to give a 10-minute talk on an interesting topic of their choice. If you wish to be considered for this please complete the online form.

The deadline for submissions is Monday 14 August and Fellows will be notified by Monday 21 August 2020.

Attendee registration will open soon. For further information about the day please visit the Fellowship webpage.

Requirements for handling of controlled drugs and medicines

A reminder from the RCVS and VMD of the requirements for handling of controlled drugs and medicines

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) have the joint responsibility for ensuring that all registered veterinary practice premises in the UK are inspected and comply with their legal obligations under the VMRs.

Working together, both the RCVS and VMD have pinpointed some common issues found during practice inspections around controlled drugs – with inspections frequently finding issues with:

record keeping of controlled drugs;
broach dates for controlled drugs; and
storage temperatures of medicines.

This joint feature from the RCVS and VMD is intended to support veterinary surgeons and registered veterinary nurses to better understand their responsibilities under the VMR in these areas – so that they can meet their important legal and professional responsibilities under this legislation.

In summary – this feature covers:

What are controlled drugs?

What are the requirements around CD record keeping?

Discrepancies and reporting suspicious activity – what to do

Broach dates – making sure medicine hasn't surpassed its shelf-life

What are the correct storage temperatures for medicines?

T28 waste exemption

What are controlled drugs (CDs)?

Veterinary professionals who are involved in prescribing, supplying, recording, storing, disposing or destroying CDs are required to comply with the law on misuse of drugs and veterinary medicines.

Controlled drugs are listed in Schedules 1 to 5 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 (MDR) - which categorises the drugs based on therapeutic usefulness and potential harm caused by misuse.

Schedule 2 CDs include veterinary medicines that are subject to the most restrictions. This is because they are highly addictive and may be subject to abuse. Their use is strictly controlled, including special requirements for prescription, storage, destruction and record keeping. Examples of Schedule 2 CDs include methadone, fentanyl, and ketamine.

Schedule 3 CDs include barbiturates and some benzodiazepines. While less rigorously controlled than Schedule 2 CDs, they are subject to special prescription writing requirements. Some, such as Buprenorphine, are also subject to special storage requirements. Examples of Schedule 3 CDs include tramadol, gabapentin, and pregabalin. Schedule 3 CDs are exempt from safe custody requirements, however, the RCVS advises that all Schedule 3 CDs should be stored in a CD cabinet.

CDs in Schedule 4 are divided into two parts. Part one contains most of the benzodiazepines and part two contains the anabolic and androgenic steroids. There are no special controls for Schedule 4 CDs.

Schedule 5 CDs include preparations containing substances such as codeine or morphine, which are used in such low strength that they present little or no risk of misuse. There are no special controls for Schedule 5 CDs. The only authorised Schedule 5 veterinary medicine is Pardale-V.

What are the requirements around CD record keeping?

In 36% of PSS assessments, assessors found that there were issues around recording of CDs, often with inadequate record keeping. This issue has also been identified during VMD inspections, largely because the CD register format was incorrect.

The MDR sets out strict record keeping requirements for CDs, including key requirements that the CDs register must:

be either a computerised system that does not allow entries to be deleted or edited once made or a bound book, which does not include any form of loose leaf register or card index;

not have cancellations, obliterations or alterations;
ensure corrections are made by a signed and dated entry in the margin or at the bottom of the page. The correction author must bracket the mistake and then make a footnote at the bottom of the page detailing the mistake. The running balance is then corrected as necessary;
be kept at the premises to which they relate and be available for inspection at any time. A separate register must be kept for each set of premises; and
be kept for a minimum of 2 years after the date of the last entry.
Receipt and administration of Schedule 2 CDs must be recorded in the register. CDs in Schedules 3, 4 and 5 do not need to be recorded in the register.

The register should record the supplier of the CD and the quantity received. Following supply/administration, the quantity should be recorded as well as client details, animal details, the prescribing vet's name, and a running balance of each CD. The VMD has produced an example CD register which can be found on the GOV.UK website.

The register can be maintained by a suitably trained person - ideally a registered veterinary nurse. However, ultimate responsibility will remain with the veterinary surgeon. This means that the vet does not have to be the one to sign the CD register and a suitably trained person can instead write in their name. However, it is strongly advised that the name of a vet is also recorded against every entry.

The CD register should be regularly audited to ensure that entries in the register and stock of CDs can be reconciled. Where a practice is a member of PSS, an assessor will expect to see evidence of weekly, full audits.

Discrepancies and reporting suspicious activity – what to do:

The RCVS advises that there should be a procedure in place for dealing with discrepancies, which details the arrangements for investigating and reporting. The balances in the CD register should always tally with the quantities of CDs in the CD cabinet. If they do not, the discrepancy must be reported to the appointed senior veterinary surgeon and steps must be taken to investigate and resolve the matter. It is important for veterinary surgeons to store CDs securely and appropriately in a suitable cabinet to prevent unauthorised access. All cabinets must comply with the Misuse of Drugs (Safe Custody) Regulations 1973.

The practice may wish to consider reporting a discrepancy to the local police or Controlled Drugs Liaison Officer in line with the practice's policy for reporting incidents. If there are concerns that a veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse is involved in suspected theft, the RCVS should be notified as well as the police.

Vet practices are potential targets for thieves because controlled drugs, which can be subject to abuse, are often stored on the premises. To prevent crime we encourage you to report any suspicious activity to the police. This can be any incident, event, individual or circumstance that seems unusual or out of place. An example of suspicious activity could include an individual, not registered as a client, coming into your practice to request a CD or suspicious vehicles parked in or around your business premises. Please do not put yourself at any risk to obtain information, but if you have any concerns about a person or a vehicle, please report this to the police.

More information on CDs can be found within the RCVS Controlled Drugs Guidance, along with VMD guidance on controlled drugs and veterinary medicines.

Broach dates – making sure medicine hasn't surpassed its shelf-life

It is an offence under the VMR to supply or administer an out of date or expired medicine. This applies to all veterinary medicinal products, including CDs.

All multi-dose injectables will have an "in use shelf-life" that tells the user how long the vial can be used for, after it has first been broached. It is an offence under the VMR to use a medicine for longer than this period. Multi-dose vials should be marked with the date of first opening, or the date of expiry, and any medicine left in the vial after the specified time must be discarded/denatured. If the medicine is a Schedule 2 CD, denaturing must be independently witnessed.

What are the correct storage temperatures for medicines?

In 47% of PSS assessments, assessors found that there was lack of evidence of temperature monitoring for medicines.

Medicines need to be stored at the correct temperature in accordance with the Summary of Product Characteristics.

Where medicines are to be stored at ambient room temperature, the temperature should be kept between 8°C and 25°C and should be monitored. This is especially important where the outside temperature is particularly high or low.

Medicines such as vaccines and insulin need to be refrigerated between 2°C and 8°C. They should only be removed from the refrigerator for immediate use.

Fridge temperatures should be monitored daily, ideally by the same person, and the results logged, or if monitored by using an electronic data logger these should be alarmed, the alarm checked daily to make sure it has stayed within range and the data downloaded weekly.

A written standard operating procedure should be in place, detailing the actions to be taken should the temperatures fluctuate outside the recommended limits.

T28 waste exemption

The Environment Agency have advised that pharmacies and veterinary surgeons should apply for a T28 exemption certificate as it enables them to comply with the requirements of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 by denaturing controlled drugs prior to their disposal. Veterinary surgeons can apply online free of charge.

Further guidance on the T28 Exemption for England is available, as well as information for Wales.

In Scotland, the destruction and disposal of CDs are subject to the Waste Management Licensing (Scotland) Regulations 2011. Veterinary surgeons and pharmacists are required to register with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) under the regulations to enable them to comply with the requirements of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 by denaturing CDs prior to their disposal. Further details can be found on the SEPA website (see guidance under paragraph 39).

Further guidance on exemption or waste management licences for Northern Ireland can be found on the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs website and on the legislation.gov.uk website. Alternatively, you can contact the Northern Ireland Environment Agency for information.

Breaking barriers to quality improvement: major study outlines roadmap

A large-scale study led by RCVS Knowledge and carried out by RAND Europe has for the first time shed light on the current position of quality improvement (QI) within the veterinary professions, and culminated in a six-point roadmap to industry advancement.

Among the top-level findings was that although 96% of respondents agreed that QI improves veterinary care, a lack of time, know-how and organisational support – among other barriers – are preventing professionals from engaging with quality improvement. 60% were able to spend no more than three days on quality improvement activity in the previous year, while 11% spent no time at all on QI. As such, there is a significant discrepancy between what veterinary teams believe they should be doing and what they are actually able to do in practice.

Continuous quality improvement: a roadmap for the veterinary professions, a 16-page summary of the full report, outlines an image of the future in which QI is fully embraced by the sector. In a future that places increased value on continuous improvement, the research suggests:

Outcomes would be measured sector-wide, helping to identify what works well, and what does not, with the overall aim of raising the standards of care.

There would be fewer unwarranted variations in treatment, thanks to guidelines based on the best available evidence.

Teams would work together more closely and unite in a reflective learning culture: discussing areas for improvement with openness and understanding rather than discipline and blame.

Teams would have a 'safe haven' in this competitive environment for sharing and anonymising data acquired through benchmarking, auditing and rapid learning cycles.

Organisations would have the opportunity to improve value, by reducing poor patient outcomes and wasted resources.

Clients would be reassured that their practice measures the quality of care for their animals.

The research suggests achieving these aims will require evolution – rather than a revolution – of the professions, given the activity in these areas that is already taking place in some quarters of the veterinary industry.

Chris Gush, Executive Director of RCVS Knowledge, said:

"We are proud to reveal this research today, which provides a clear picture for the first time of the use of quality improvement in the veterinary sector.

"The resounding agreement from colleagues across the professions that quality improvement enhances veterinary care confirms that the time is now to embrace the opportunities QI presents for safer, more efficient and improved outcomes for patients – aims that we know drive veterinary professionals in their work every day.

"We acknowledge this will require leadership support and great commitment. Our six-point roadmap is designed to make the process of fully embracing a culture of improvement as collaborative and time-efficient as possible – and through our ever-growing suite of resources, we are committed to supporting our colleagues at practice-level as they continue or embark on their QI journey."

Pam Mosedale, Chair of the RCVS Knowledge Quality Improvement Advisory Board, said:

"I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this valuable research, especially the hundreds of veterinary team members who shared their insights with us.

"For me, a key takeaway from the findings is that we are all striving to do our best in a high-pressure environment, and it is incumbent upon every single one of us to find new ways to support each other to do this.

"Quality improvement is one such way we can help ourselves and our colleagues to perform consistently at our best, which is why RCVS Knowledge will continue to encourage the whole sector to get more engaged with QI."

The study's findings and recommendations are based on views from across the breadth of the professions, gathered during the course of 2019. A national survey, focus groups, interviews with animal caregivers and an in-depth literature review gave the research team substantial insight into the state of play of veterinary quality improvement, complemented by last May's 'National Summit for Supporting Quality Improvement in Veterinary Care', which attracted more than 50 industry leaders.

“The RAND Europe team has been impressed by the commitment of the veterinary sector to embed good quality improvement practices into their work with the aim of achieving better outcomes for animals and wider public benefits,” said Head of Evaluation Tom Ling.

“Our study demonstrates the high level of enthusiasm for this. We also found that while there are things that can be learned from elsewhere – the NHS in particular – increasing use of quality improvement in the veterinary world will need to be tailored to the particular challenges and opportunities facing vets. These include new technologies, professional development, changing public expectations, and evolving business models.

“The future is always uncertain but I am sure that the veterinary sector is well placed to implement a coherent and sustainable strategy that will see quality improvement processes steadily create even better services for animals and their owners. Our report, commissioned by RCVS Knowledge, should help in this important task.”

The research brief and the full report, *Assessing the landscape and future actions for quality improvement in the veterinary sector* – the insights, expectations and aspirations of the profession, can be downloaded from our dedicated webpage.

Events

RCVS Council – March 2020

Thursday 5 March 2020, RCVS, Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF

BSAVA Congress 2020

Thursday 2 – Sunday 5 April 2020, The ICC and Arena, Birmingham B1 2EA

RCVS Council – April 2020

Thursday 16 April 2020, RCVS, Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF

VN Council – May 2020

Wednesday 6 May 2020, RCVS, Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF

Privy Council dismisses appeal against 2018 Disciplinary Committee decision

The Privy Council has dismissed an appeal lodged against the RCVS Disciplinary Committee's decision in May 2018 that Dr Horia Elefterescu should be removed from the Register.

Following a seven day hearing, the Committee had found Dr Elefterescu guilty of serious professional misconduct in relation to a number of charges which covered issues such as dishonesty, poor record-keeping, and failure to carry out adequate clinical examinations. The full charges and findings of the RCVS Disciplinary Committee can be found on our disciplinary webpage.

The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council ("the Board") held the appeal hearing on 17 October 2019 with three Justices of the Supreme Court - Lord Kerr, Lord Carnwath and Lord Kitchin – comprising the Board.

The basis of the appeal to the Privy Council was that the Committee's findings on the facts of the case were flawed, with his counsel saying that Dr Elefterescu 'strenuously disputes the findings by the Committee of his dishonesty and lack of professional competence and submits that there is no adequate basis for them in the evidence'.

Furthermore, his counsel told the Board that the Disciplinary Committee's sanction failed to take into account mitigating factors and that the decision to remove Dr Elefterescu from the Register was disproportionate.

In relation to the appeal against the Disciplinary Committee's findings on the facts, the Board, which published its judgment on the appeal hearing on 10 February 2020, was not persuaded by any of the arguments put forward on behalf of Dr Elefterescu. These arguments included that the RCVS had failed to call relevant witnesses and had failed to make Dr Elefterescu aware of the significance of some evidential matters, disclosed to him.

In respect of the sanction, the Board was also unpersuaded by the arguments put forward by Dr Elefterescu's counsel, namely that it was too harsh in its assessment of aggravating factors, did not give adequate weight to mitigating factors, and that it failed to distinguish lack of competence from misconduct.

In its judgment on the arguments put forward by Dr Elefterescu's counsel, the Board said: "It is the opinion of the Board that these criticisms are not well founded. The Committee considered with care Dr Elefterescu's proven and admitted conduct in relation to each of the charges and whether it fell below or far below the standard to be expected. It is to be noted in this regard that a number of the charges which were either admitted or upheld were not the subject of any challenge on this appeal.

"Overall, the Committee found that Dr Elefterescu's clinical failures were very serious, involved failures in the basics of animal care, resulted in animal suffering and involved widespread breaches of the respondent's [RCVS] code of professional conduct. It also expressed particular concern about its findings of dishonesty, and rightly so. That conduct was, in its view, 'at the top end' of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect. What is more, Dr Elefterescu had a lack of insight into his failings and a wholly unjustified confidence in his abilities which constituted an ongoing risk to animal welfare.

"These were findings which the Committee was clearly entitled to make and, in the light of them, the Board is firmly of the view that the decision of the Committee to direct the removal of Dr Elefterescu's name from the Register cannot be impeached. The Board rejects the criticisms made of the Committee's reasoning and the conclusions to which it came. The direction that Dr Elefterescu's name must be removed from the Register was appropriate and proportionate."

The Judicial Committee's full findings are available to download.