



RCVS NEWS / JANUARY 2019

*Text-only version of  
RCVS News email*

# Pathway approved for further paraprofessional regulation

Earlier this month we launched one of our most ambitious consultations yet regarding the future of veterinary education and how the profession can better help support veterinary graduates through the transition into life in practice.

Launching at the London Vet Show with a call to be part of #TheBigPicture, our Graduate Outcomes Consultation asks for the views of all veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses, veterinary students and other members of the veterinary team on four key areas relating to how veterinary students are educated and trained, and how recent graduates are prepared and supported into life in practice:

Covering the four key areas of Day-One Competences, the Professional Development Phase, Extra-Mural Studies and clinical education for general practice, the consultation has generated much interest already, including over 450 completed responses so far, and 1,400+ further responses currently underway.

The consultation is being conducted on our behalf by the Work Psychology Group which emailed a unique link to the online consultation to all vets and vet nurses in mid-November. This personalised link means that you do not have to answer the survey in one sitting but can save your progress and return to it later.

Further background information about #GradOutcomes is available at [www.rcvs.org.uk/go](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/go), together with blogs, videos, competitions, social media tools and details of our weekly prize draw for a £100 book voucher.

If you want to be part of #TheBigPicture please make sure to tell us your views and encourage all your colleagues to do the same!

# Ethics Review Panel made permanent fixture by RCVS Council

The RCVS Ethics Review Panel has been made a permanent service provided by the College after RCVS Council members unanimously voted for it to become a permanent group reporting to the Standards Committee.

The Panel was started on a trial basis in July 2016, with the aim of providing a route for ethics review for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses conducting practice-based research who might not otherwise have access to an ethics review system in academia and industry.

Although the trial was only originally concerned with research projects related to small animals, over its course it was expanded to include equine and farm animal-based research as well, with members of the Panel representing a wide range of subject areas as well as veterinary nurse and lay representation.

Since July 2016, the Panel has received some 71 applications from practice-based researchers for ethics review, of which 23 have now been granted full approval from the members. Of the 71 applications received so far, 41 concerned research about dogs, seven about cats, four about farm animals, two about equids, five about other species, two related to social studies, three concerned both cats and dogs, and seven were unclassified.

Professor David Morton CBE, a veterinary ethicist, chairs the Panel and said: "We are delighted that the members of RCVS Council saw fit to establish the Ethics Review Panel on a permanent basis. Ethics should be a key consideration in any research project involving animals to ensure that the health and welfare of those involved in any study are a primary concern and that questions of 'ought we do this' are considered alongside 'can we do this'.

"As a veterinarian and ethicist it has been very gratifying for me that the Ethics Review Panel has been there to help guide researchers and help safeguard both animal health and welfare. It is also of benefit to the researchers as many veterinary journals now ask for evidence of ethics review and approval as a precondition of publishing papers."

Over the course of the two years since the pilot was launched, there has been a steady increase in the number of applications received by the Panel. The remaining applications that have not received full approval are currently under review to give the researchers guidance on how they can make their research more scientifically and ethically sound in the expectation that, with some amendments, it will be approved.

Dr Kate Richards, Chair of our Standards Committee, added: "The feedback received about the Panel suggests that it was an invaluable resource for practice-based vets and vet nurses who may not have access to the same resources as their colleagues working in the universities or for commercial companies. Comments from participants have also mentioned how vital this service was, and they were impressed that it was free as well.

"One thing we will be doing over the coming months is recruiting more panel members and also working to ensure that applications are acknowledged and processed in a more timely manner, as this is one area in which some of the feedback was quite critical. Not only will the Panel provide access to practice-based researchers but will ensure that their work will be eligible for publication and, often at the same time, adding to the evidence base for veterinary medicine."

Further details about the Ethics Review Panel, how to make an application and the process by which it makes determinations on applications can be found on the Panel's dedicated website.

Anyone who is potentially interested in becoming a Panel member is encouraged to contact our Advice and Standards Team for an initial discussion of the role on [ethics@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:ethics@rcvs.org.uk)

# RCVS and BVA call on vets to be restored to Shortage Occupation List

The RCVS and British Veterinary Association have once again joined forces to make a clear call for veterinary surgeons to be restored to the Shortage Occupation List as part of the UK's preparations for leaving the European Union.

The organisations made the joint submission to the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) as part of the MAC's review into the Shortage Occupation List which began in autumn 2018 and will report back in spring 2019. BVA and RCVS had previously made calls for the profession to be added to the list in 2017 when the MAC held a call for evidence on the impact of the UK's exit from the EU on various professions.

The latest joint submission is a development on this previous submission, focused on the need for the post-Brexit immigration system to recognise the issues affecting the veterinary workforce, which is already under-capacity, and reiterating its importance in areas such as public health, food safety, disease surveillance and control, education, research, clinical practice and animal welfare.

The submission details how the demand for veterinary services does not currently match supply and that the UK is therefore reliant on overseas registrants, particularly from the rest of the EU, who currently make up around 50% of new registrants in a given year.

The RCVS and BVA add that, in the post-Brexit immigration system, this reliance on overseas vets needs to be recognised by adding veterinary surgeons to the Shortage Occupation List, thus reducing the immigration requirements needed for overseas veterinary surgeons to live and work in the UK and streamlining the application process for employers.

Commenting on the submission Amanda Boag (pictured right), RCVS President, said: "We wanted to use this submission as an opportunity to reiterate the circumstances currently facing the profession, particularly in light of the uncertainties around the UK's exit from the EU and the impact this could have on the supply of veterinary workforce from the rest of the EU, which is crucially important in a number of areas.

"We need, therefore, for veterinary surgeons to be immediately added back to the list so that we can ensure that this flow of workforce continues and that animal health and welfare is protected.

"In the meantime we are continuing to work with BVA and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to look at how we can develop 'home-grown' veterinary capacity in the UK through expanding the UK veterinary education sector, increasing retention rates within the profession, and looking at how the veterinary team could be reformed to allow allied professionals, such as veterinary nurses, to take on extra tasks and free up veterinary time. However, these are all long-term projects and not quick fixes to the issues facing the profession."

As well as calling for a future immigration system to prioritise the veterinary profession, RCVS and BVA also recommend that veterinary employers be exempt from the Immigration Skills Charge to avoid additional barriers or burdens to the employment of overseas vets and recommend that there is no minimum earning cap for veterinary surgeons applying for work visas, on the basis that veterinary surgeons are 'skilled professionals who may choose to work in the UK for reasons other than remuneration'.

Simon Doherty, BVA President, commented: "It is in MAC's gift to reinstate vets on the Shortage Occupation List and this evidence makes a strong case for it to happen as quickly as possible. Vets deliver multiple benefits to animal health and welfare, public health and food safety, and they have a crucial role to play in future trade deals and keeping standards and confidence in UK exports high. The profession is also indebted to a high proportion of skilled EU vets who have chosen to make the UK their home and place of work.

"With this in mind, the future immigration system must be geared around preserving veterinary capacity rather than introducing new layers of bureaucracy or restrictions on flexible movement between roles. We have raised concerns that extending the Immigration Skills Charge to EU workers would hit some areas of the workforce disproportionately hard, particularly the abattoir industry where 95 per cent of Official Veterinarians hail from overseas.

"With uncertain times ahead and demand for some veterinary services predicted to spiral after Brexit, it has never been more pressing to take decisive action to safeguard against shortfalls in capacity and give a vital vote of confidence in the veterinary workforce."

To view the joint submission in full please visit our dedicated Brexit page.

# Vet Wellbeing Award winners 2018 announced

Three winners of the 2018 Vet Wellbeing Awards will be announced tomorrow [25 January 2019] at the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS) - Veterinary Management Group (VMG) Congress at Celtic Manor.

The Vet Wellbeing Awards, now entering their fourth year, are run by the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS) and our Mind Matters Initiative and were created to recognise those practices who understand the importance of motivating and engaging their teams and who can demonstrate their commitment to being a better place to work.

## Winners of the Vet Wellbeing Awards 2018

- Small Practice: Westpoint Farm Vets, Chelmsford
- Medium Practice: Beaumont Sainsbury Veterinary Hospital, Royal Veterinary College
- Large Practice: Drove Veterinary Hospital, Swindon

Nick Stuart (pictured right), speaking on behalf of SPVS, said he was delighted that awareness of the awards and engagement with them seemed to be rising year on year: "It is good to see so many practices making wellbeing a priority. Involving their teams in planning rotas, encouraging support through buddying and mentoring, and encouraging better communication through social events, charity involvement and effective meetings, are just some examples of how our winners stood out."

The awards will be presented at the opening ceremony of the SPVS/Veterinary Management Group (VMG) Congress on Friday 25th January at Celtic Manor.

Lizzie Lockett (pictured right), RCVS Chief Executive, said she was delighted that the awards appeared to show increasing attention to wellbeing in practice: "This year, it was harder than ever to choose our top three in each category as innovative wellbeing practices become more and more widespread. There are so many practices now doing great things to value and support their staff, which is fantastic to see."

The winners will then join a panel chaired by Emma Mamo, Head of Workplace Wellbeing at the mental health charity Mind, to share their innovative approaches to wellbeing in practice. The full results, together with details of the winning practices and highly commended entries, will be published on the Vet Wellbeing Awards website. This is part of the MMI stream at Congress, where other sessions will include 'The Role of the Line Manager in Workplace Mental Health' and 'Managing Emotions in Practice'.

VMG will join SPVS and MMI to run a series of four 'Wellbeing in Practice' training events across the country in March and September. Full details can also be found via the Vet Wellbeing Awards website. For Ami Sawran, Westpoint Farm Vets Chelmsford, winner of the small practice category, this sharing of examples of wellbeing between and within practices is what the awards are all about: "I looked at case studies of past winners on the awards' website and picked up new ideas, some of which were quick and easy to implement, others are still work in progress. Entering has been a very positive thing for the whole team as a great deal of collaborative reflection went into the process and we were pleasantly surprised by how much we were already doing; we just weren't calling it 'wellbeing'."

# RCVS pays tribute to Fellowship Day guest speaker

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) would like to pay tribute to Professor Martin Gore a renowned cancer expert who sadly passed away earlier this month.

Professor Gore (pictured right from the 2016 Fellowship Day), who was Professor of Cancer Medicine at the Institute of Cancer Research, was the guest speaker at our inaugural RCVS Fellowship Day in October 2016, delivering a talk focused on the 'academic and service provider divide' in human medicine.

Commenting on Professor Gore's death, Professor Nick Bacon, Chair of the Fellowship Board, said: "It is with great sadness that the Organising Committee and Board of the RCVS Fellowship learnt of the untimely and sudden passing of Professor Martin Gore CBE.

"Professor Gore, 67, was a pioneer of cancer care and research in the human field, especially ovarian, melanoma and renal cell carcinoma, and his work was recognised in 2015 when he was awarded The Royal Marsden's Lifetime Achievement Award by Prince William.

"It was for this reason, among many, that he was invited to be the Keynote Speaker at the Inaugural RCVS Fellowship Day in 2016, where he discussed the challenges of performing clinical research within a busy hospital.

"When Martin was invited to be the keynote speaker to what was at the time a 'relaunch' event, he accepted without hesitation and brought that enthusiasm and positive energy to his lecture at the Royal Institute. Having him involved and hearing him speak was such a privilege and honour. This is such unexpected and sad news and we are all thinking of his loved ones, his colleagues, his patients, and their families, to whom he was so many things."

# Contribute your views to European-wide veterinary survey

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is currently running VetSurvey2018, its second Europe-wide survey of the veterinary profession and is calling on UK-practising veterinary surgeons to respond with their views.

The purpose of the FVE survey is to provide information about a number of different aspects of the veterinary profession, for example, in terms of demographics, the state of the job market and financial indicators. This information will be invaluable in helping FVE to understand similarities and differences in terms of issues affecting the profession across the 24 FVE member countries.

The survey takes around 10 to 15 minutes to complete and there is the facility to save and come back to complete the survey should it be needed. Over 13,000 veterinary surgeons from across the FVE member states responded to the previous survey, which revealed a number of interesting findings; it is hoped that this survey will deepen the information the organisation can draw upon.

A promotional video about the survey can be accessed from the FVE website. And you can directly access the survey [here](#).

The survey closes on 28 February 2019 and the first tranche of results will be presented at the FVE General Assembly in Bratislava in June 2019.

# Over 400 VNs removed from Register for non-payment

The RCVS has removed 450 veterinary nurses from the Register for non-payment of their annual renewal fee on 1 January 2019.

The annual renewal fee for veterinary nurses is due for payment on 1 November every year, although veterinary nurses have up to midnight on 31 December to pay before they are removed from the Register.

Of the 450 VNs who were removed for non-payment this year, some 150 have subsequently applied for restoration to the Register, paying a £123 fee to do so. The number of removals as a percentage of the whole VN profession stands at 2.7%, just 0.8% higher than last year.

A list of those who have been removed from the Register on 1 January 2019, and who hadn't restored prior to the 8 January, has been published to assist practices in making checks to ensure that all their veterinary nursing staff are still on the Register.

Those with questions about how to restore to the Register should contact our Registration Department on 020 7202 0707 or [registration@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:registration@rcvs.org.uk). For questions about paying the annual renewal fee or setting up a Direct Debit contact our Finance Department on 020 7202 0723 or [finance@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:finance@rcvs.org.uk)



# RCVS to hold Graduate Outcomes student focus groups at AVS Congress

The RCVS is to hold focus groups for veterinary and veterinary nursing students at the Association of Veterinary Students (AVS) Congress this year, for its ongoing Graduate Outcomes consultation.

The Graduate Outcomes consultation is one of the most extensive projects undertaken by the RCVS in the last 20 years and is looking at potential changes to a broad range of areas related to how veterinary students are educated and trained, and how recent graduates are prepared and supported into life in practice.

The main areas of focus are Day One Competences, The Professional Development Phase (PDP), Extra-mural studies (EMS) and Clinical Education for General Practice. The Graduate Outcomes consultation survey closed on 18 January, having received nearly 2,000 responses.

The consultation is now moving on to its second stage, which involves in-depth focus groups and interviews with a broad range of veterinary students and professionals.

The first in this series of focus groups is being held at AVS Congress at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in Hatfield on Saturday 2 February. This will involve two sessions, both taking place in the Social Learning space between 12 and 2pm, lasting one hour each. These groups will be run by Charlotte Flaxman from the Work Psychology Group (WPG), an agency specialising in business psychology.

WPG is conducting the Graduate Outcomes consultation on behalf of the College. Each focus group can hold a maximum of 10 participants and refreshments will be provided throughout. Participating in the focus group also automatically enters attendees into two prize draws for a £50 National Book Token.

Prior to the focus groups, it is advisable to read the Graduate Outcomes consultation document in order to process some of the key issues in question, and start to contemplate some suggested solutions.

After registering, each participant's details will be shared with WPG who will then forward over a briefing sheet with further details of what can be expected during the session. For those interested in attending the focus groups, please sign up [here](#).

# Response to Vet Record article on Temporary Registration

We have today written to the Vet Record in response to an article it published recently about the Temporary Registration of overseas veterinary surgeons.

This letter is set out below for reference:

Dear Editor,

We should like to respond to a comment made in the last edition of the Vet Record ('Overseas vets are a no-deal Brexit contingency plan', pp 108-109) that the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons had already said 'yes in principle' to the Temporary Registration of Asian and South American vets. This is not the case.

Understandably, since the article's publication, we have been contacted with concerns about the potential for a lowering of standards if this allowed vets from non-accredited universities to practise veterinary medicine in the UK without undertaking the RCVS Statutory Examination for Membership ('stat exam'). We would therefore like to reiterate the information we supplied to the Vet Record when approached for a comment.

Temporary registration is not a new concept, but has been provided for since 1966 under Section 7 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act. RCVS Council did, however, approve new guidance on it last November.

Temporary registration gives the RCVS discretion to allow individuals who are not otherwise entitled to full Registration to be registered, subject to restrictions and conditions. It is very different to RCVS registration achieved by passing the stat exam. Passing the stat exam means vets are able to practise freely, for however long, in whatever sector of the profession they are best qualified to do so; whereas temporary registration allows vets to practise in the UK for a set period of time, in a specific location, under supervision by MsRCVS/FsRCVS and under pre-agreed parameters of practice. Such registrants would not themselves be MsRCVS and so would be unable to certify or issue prescriptions. Temporary registration does not allow the practising of veterinary surgery other than subject to such restrictions as are imposed.

Unfortunately, when we were approached by the Vet Record on this issue, we were not made aware of any quotes or comments suggesting that we had agreed in principle to any applications for temporary registration being made. We have not made any such agreements. All applications for temporary registration are considered on their merits by our Registration Sub-committee, which makes decisions on a case-by-case basis.

Yours faithfully,

Eleanor Ferguson  
RCVS Registrar

# AMBS to conduct well-being research, supported by Mind Matters

The Alliance Manchester Business School (AMBS) is conducting a research study on well-being and work demands for veterinary surgeons working in the UK. The project has been reviewed by the University of Manchester Proportionate Research Ethics Committee and will be carried out by Principal Researcher Dr Elinor O'Connor, Senior Lecturer in Occupational Psychology at AMBS and a supporter of the Mind Matters Initiative, along with fellow Lecturers in Organisational Psychology at AMBS, Dr Sheena Johnson and Dr David Hughes. Participation will be confidential and the study will be conducted online, for convenience. The total number of participants in the study is not pre-determined, and the study is unpaid.

The aim of this study is to investigate work-related demands and well-being experienced by veterinary surgeons practising in the UK, as well as the role of personality style on the relationship between work demands and well-being. The study is split into two phases, with the first offering an online questionnaire which will take roughly 15 minutes to complete. This includes questions about the demands experienced in work, well-being, and personality style. After completing this, the participant will be asked if they are then happy to take part in the second, follow-up phase of the study, which will involve completing a second online questionnaire in three months' time. This will predominantly include questions about well-being and will take roughly 5-10 minutes to complete. Participants can decide to opt out of the second questionnaire if they so wish.

It is anticipated that study findings will be published in academic journals and practitioner publications, as well as presented at psychology and veterinary conferences. If you would like to participate in the study please read the Participant Information Sheet where you will find a link at the end to the survey.

The survey can be accessed here. [https://mbs.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_eaCE5a8zaRMeHK5](https://mbs.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eaCE5a8zaRMeHK5)

For further information, please contact Principal Researcher Dr Elinor O'Connor.

# Tickets available for VET19 EBVM conference

<http://www.veterinaryevidencetoday.org/>

# What I've learned from the RCVS Leadership course

**Myra Forster-van Hijfte - RCVS Fellow**

The Edward Jenner Leadership programme is an RCVS and NHS Leadership Academy collaboration, which principally aims to give an introduction to the art of good leadership and decision-making. The programme uses a variety of innovative ways to help participants think about and reflect on how they can grow the skills and aptitudes that underpin these two things.

The course is designed to be of benefit to everyone in the veterinary team. Demonstrating that fact, Myra Forster-van Hijfte, Fellow of the RCVS, shares her experiences of being a learner on the programme.

So why did I enrol?

First of all, I like to learn.

Secondly, during my career I have experienced both good and bad leadership and have seen the impact this has had on the people working for those leaders. We, in the veterinary profession, have been trained as scientists and 'problem-solvers'. We have not been trained to be leaders and most of us will get into this position by 'accident' and fulfill this role to the best of our ability, whilst learning from mistakes. I felt that learning more about the science behind leadership would be useful in my understanding of leadership.

Thirdly, I have been in a leadership role (note: I did not write 'I have been a leader') for more than 10 years and overall have found it quite a challenging role. I was therefore very interested in learning more about leadership, to reflect on my leadership career and learn how I could have done things better, as well as improve for the future.

What is the set-up of this course?

The course has been set up into modules, with relatively short multiple modules each week. You can do these at your own pace and in your own time. The learning process is very diverse with audio, video and links to articles and exercises. After each short module there is the opportunity to share your experience and thoughts with the other people on the course and it certainly makes for very interesting reading. During the course most of us had similar remarks and responses to the course contents, but occasionally there were some left-field thoughts which made me think differently.

The course teaches you a lot of different tools. The ability to listen, to reflect on your emotions and responses to different situations in the audio scenarios and real-life experimentation, as well as teaching strategies on decision making and structured problem solving. The definition of resilience and what is needed to achieve this was also discussed.

Another interesting aspect was trying to define what a 'leader' actually is and setting the distinction between management and leadership. I personally feel that, in veterinary practice, we often do not have enough time to be leaders and instead get bogged down with the day-to-day management of the veterinary practice.

What did I learn?

I have certainly tried to be more reflective. Thinking about why I respond to certain situations the way I do, then trying to respond in a more analytical, detached way rather than in an emotional way, in order to get a better outcome for all. This is something that is difficult to do in everyday life. We are all too busy; but actually taking time to reflect and put things in perspective is very useful.

The other thing I found very useful was the way this course categorized problems into tame, critical and wicked. As veterinarians, we are problem-solvers and it was really refreshing to hear about wicked problems, which will not have an immediate easy answer.

## **Who should do this course?**

I actually think this course is useful for any vet, even when not in a leadership role or aspiring to be a leader. And, if you are a leader, it will teach you to be more reflective and help you deal better with the people around you, as well as solve issues.

As a vet in employment, it will help you to recognize good and poor leadership and how this affects you, whilst at the same time giving you tools to improve your work environment and provide you with techniques for coping with challenges life throws at you.

I have now finished this part of the course and I've thoroughly enjoyed it. I would certainly recommend it!

Published on 30 January 2019

# Sharing the kindness

On 24 November 2018, over 100 veterinary students from across the country logged into VetKind, the inaugural wellbeing webinar created by the Association of Veterinary Students (AVS) and professional development company SkillsTree, with support from the RCVS Mind Matters Initiative (MMI). Whilst at university, 63% of veterinary students suffer from stress<sup>1</sup>, which is something AVS is always keen to help combat. Therefore, the VetKind webinar was created to teach well-being strategies from an evidence-based perspective. Alongside the webinar, numerous self-reflection tasks and resources have been made available to vet students including further reading and a wellbeing focused playlist!

The morning seminars kicked off with a session led by Jenny Moffett, Managing Director of SkillsTree, titled 'The Science of Happiness'. According to a poll held during the session, 93% of delegates were aware of the large evidence base linking mindfulness to positive mental health, but only 15% regularly engaged in tried-and-tested mindfulness practices. Jenny presented the subtle differences between subjective<sup>A</sup> and eudaimonic<sup>B</sup> wellbeing and how – although these may not be in synch at certain periods of our veterinary studies – working towards goals that have meaning to us will help us feel happy, more so than working to feel happy in and of itself. Advice was also given to counteract the 'I'll do that when...' feeling commonly felt amongst students, whether it is through combining tasks or investing time in mindfulness techniques.

With 95% of delegates having experienced imposter syndrome, the second seminar on 'Perfectionism and Imposter Syndrome', led by work-based psychologist Jenny Lynden, was one which was certainly relatable to the delegates. The seminar looked at the fact that, combined with genetic and social factors, the construct of perfectionism encompasses excessive concern over making mistakes, high personal standards, doubting the quality of one's actions and a preference for order and organisation. Time was spent discussing the differences between perfectionist striving, and perfectionist concerns, and which features of these help or hinder our professional and personal lives. An anonymous attendee summed up imposter syndrome perfectly, saying 'I feel like a blobfish in a sea of dolphins' and the group chat was full of students echoing this!

'Empathy: friend or foe in veterinary wellbeing', again delivered by Jenny Moffett, explored whether empathy, despite being good for our patients and clients, is good for veterinary surgeons as professionals? It considered what leads us to feel empathetic distress instead of empathetic compassion? Both positives and negatives were studied in this seminar, as well as the challenges that come alongside the emotional labour of veterinary work.

The final seminar, 'Ten tips for fostering work-life harmony' by Ru Clements, Head of People and Performance at Vetled, offered tips such as: practising kindness; pacing yourself; and balancing one's goals and expectations. A key tip was the importance of giving yourself permission to take a break, to make mistakes or to celebrate your successes. Delegates commented that this was a lightbulb moment, allowing themselves to relax rather than feeling guilty that they weren't studying.

For the afternoon, delegates took part in small group online exercises, which allowed individuals to work through how they would offer support to an overwhelmed friend on extra-mural studies. Using ideas and strategies learnt earlier in the morning, students discussed the task and put the theory into context.

Adam Young, a fourth year Edinburgh student said he "found the VetKind event to be a really great way to discuss mental health within the veterinary profession. The main thing that stood out for me was the consistent themes raised by students from all the universities, outlining that those taking part were not alone in their thoughts and opinions with regards to completing their degree. The course also touched upon mindfulness activities to be implemented alongside our often busy schedules, allowing students to apply a variety of these methods in their own lives."

Throughout the event, an overwhelming sense of community and positivity shone through. The anonymity provided by an online setting allowed for engaging question and answer sessions with the speakers as well as discussion amongst students. There was a realisation that there is a supportive network of students who can empathise with the different pressures of veterinary studies, which was a comfort to many.

Recordings of all four seminars are now accessible online for every veterinary student and make sure to keep your eyes peeled for the next VetKind!

*Written by Hannah Fitzsimmonds, 4th Year University of Bristol student and Bristol AVS Representative. She can be reached for*

*further discussion via [lisa@vetmindmatters.org](mailto:lisa@vetmindmatters.org)*

*VetKind was created by Jenny Moffett (SkillsTree Ltd. Managing Director), Eleanor Robinson and Hannah Fitzsimmonds (AVS UK&Irl) with support from Lizzie Lockett (RCVS CEO) and Lisa Quigley (RCVS MMI Manager)*

*[A] Subjective wellbeing, is defined as happiness from maximising pleasure and reducing negative effects on oneself [2]*

*[B] Eudiamonic wellbeing is defined as living in accordance with your true self, putting focus on meaning in life [2]*

*[1] Bva.co.uk. (2016). BVA/AVS 2016 Survey Results. pg 12. [Online] Available on the BVA website. [Accessed 14 December 2018]*

*[2] Albuquerque, B. (2016) What is Subjective Well-Being? Understanding and Measuring Subjective Well-Being [Online] Available at: [http://positivepsychology.org.uk/subjective-well-being/?fbclid=IwAR2SH4oNPm14alea2m-V\\_H5-Eh4xRiJRM6onCRvBth5Ti0CzqtJXtVyMrf0](http://positivepsychology.org.uk/subjective-well-being/?fbclid=IwAR2SH4oNPm14alea2m-V_H5-Eh4xRiJRM6onCRvBth5Ti0CzqtJXtVyMrf0) [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].*

*Data collected during the event through polls with a total of 111 attendees.*



# Events

## **Mind Matters: Mental Health Awareness Training**

York (4 March 2019), Wincanton near Yeovil (25 March 2019)

## **Veterinary Nurses Council - February 2019**

6 February 2019, Belgravia House, London

## **Regional Question Time Liverpool**

19 February 2019, University of Liverpool, Leahurst Campus

## **ViVet Innovation Workshop series part 2 – Turning ideas into innovation**

20 February 2019, The Study Centre at the Moller Centre, Storey's Way, Cambridge

## **RCVS Council – March 2019**

7 March 2019, Belgravia House, London

# Hertfordshire vet reprimanded for inadequate care

Following a postponement of two years, a Hertfordshire veterinary surgeon has been reprimanded by the RCVS Disciplinary Committee for the inadequate care of a dog in 2015.

Amir Kashiv MRCVS first appeared before the Committee in December 2016 in relation to four charges against him regarding his inadequate treatment of a Scottish Terrier, called Tanzy, in March 2015 which was ultimately euthanased due to renal failure. The first charge related to Mr Kashiv's original consultation with the owner on 5 March 2015 and his failure to investigate for renal disease; his failure to discuss with the owner investigations to assess metastatic spread; failure to discuss with the owner alternative options to surgery such as palliative care or euthanasia; and failure to explain to the owner key factors with regards to the surgery he had suggested to her, including its nature and extent, the risks involved, the fact another vet would be performing the surgery, and what to expect post-operatively.

The second charge related to the fact that, having admitted the dog as an in-patient at the practice between 20 and 23 March 2015, he failed to conduct further investigations regarding her poor condition; provide any or any adequate pain relief, or fail to record the same; failed to discuss with the owner the dog's poor prognosis; and failed to discuss with the owner the option of euthanasia.

The third charge related to the fact that, on 23 March 2015, Mr Kashiv discharged the animal back into her owner's care when she was not in a fit state for discharge. The fourth and final charge related to the fact that Mr Kashiv failed to keep sufficient clear, detailed and accurate clinical records for his treatment of the dog.

At his original hearing in December 2016, the Committee found the four charges proven and also found that charges 1 to 3 amounted to serious professional misconduct. However, the Committee decided to postpone the judgement for two years, whilst recommending that Mr Kashiv agree to undertake a structured programme to improve his clinical practice, including putting together a personal development plan, having a mentor, accepting regular practice visits and undertaking additional continuing professional development (CPD).

The resumed hearing took place on Tuesday 18 December 2018, during which the Committee heard evidence from Dr Writer-Davies MRCVS (the veterinary surgeon appointed to review Mr Kashiv's practice and report back to the Disciplinary Committee over the two year period), Mrs Somers MRCVS, (his appointed mentor), and Mr Kashiv himself.

Dr Writer-Davies told the Committee that she had no concerns about Mr Kashiv's abilities regarding patient safety and that, in her view, he now meets the standards of a reasonably competent veterinary surgeon. She cited the fact he had gained in confidence when communicating with clients, had undertaken a considerable amount of CPD focused on the areas of concern identified in the case, that she had observed more detailed record keeping from him and that a veterinary nurse had been appointed to assist in running Mr Kashiv's practice.

The evidence from Mrs Somers also found that Mr Kashiv's knowledge was in line with that expected of a reasonably competent veterinary surgeon and that she had observed a good quality of care for pets and their owners from him.

Mr Kashiv also gave evidence, which the Committee said demonstrated considerable insight into his previous conduct and a good attitude towards self-reflective practice. The Committee also felt that the testimonials provided by Mr Kashiv showed him to be a kind and caring veterinary surgeon.

In conclusion, Stuart Drummond, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "The Committee considers that, having successfully completed the undertakings, Mr Kashiv is now a safe practitioner. The last two years has allowed Mr Kashiv to develop his skills particularly in the area of communication. However, the Committee has not lost sight of the fact that this was a serious case and that there was substantial harm caused to Tanzy.

"The Committee considers that in the intervening two years Mr Kashiv has gained considerable insight, developed better communication skills and remains open to improving his practice. It therefore imposes a reprimand on Mr Kashiv. The Committee considers that a reprimand is the appropriate and proportionate sanction to uphold proper professional standards and to maintain public confidence in the veterinary profession."

# Disciplinary Committee suspends Morayshire-registered vet for dishonest

The RCVS Disciplinary Committee has suspended a veterinary surgeon based in the County of Moray from the Register for nine months for being misleading and dishonest in relation to her treatment of a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel in March 2017.

The hearing for Dr Jacqueline Bohnen took place from Monday 21 to Wednesday 23 January 2019 in relation to two charges against her. The first charge was that, between 7.30pm on Saturday 18 March 2017 and 10.30am on Sunday 19 March 2017, she failed to attend to Belle, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, in order to provide appropriate and adequate care including: assisting Belle with urination; monitoring her with a view to considering alternative treatment options; and, monitoring Belle with a view to providing her owners with an update on her condition.

The second charge was that, between 18 March 2017 and 31 March 2017, Dr Bohnen had represented that she had attended to Belle on 18 March 2017 between 9pm and 10pm; on Sunday 19 March at around 6am; and on the same day around 9am, when she had not in fact done so and was therefore misleading and dishonest. More particularly the charges stated that she had made these misleading and dishonest statements in clinical records, hospital records, in conversation with the owners both in person and on the telephone, in a note provided to colleagues and during internal disciplinary proceedings held at her practice.

At the outset of the hearing the Committee considered a recent application from Dr Bohnen, by email, for the hearing to be postponed as she was now based in her home country of South Africa, and said she could not apply for a visa to return to the UK until later in the year and internet access in her location was poor. The College opposed this application and submitted its own application that the inquiry should proceed in Dr Bohnen's absence.

The Committee considered Dr Bohnen's application for postponement first, with the Committee finding that the RCVS had properly served the notice of inquiry to Dr Bohnen in accordance with the current rules, that she had had sufficient time and opportunity to apply for a visa since receiving the notice and that, in any case, she could remotely 'attend' the hearing via Skype or telephone if necessary by travelling to somewhere that did have adequate internet connectivity, and so it refused the application. The Committee also accepted the College's application to proceed in the absence of the respondent on the basis that the Notice of Inquiry was properly served and that it would be in the interests of justice to do so.

The Disciplinary Committee then went on to consider the facts of the case and heard evidence from the owners of Belle, the clinical director of the practice that Dr Bohnen worked in at the relevant time and a veterinary nurse, who was a student doing her training at the practice during the time of the events in question. Having considered all of the evidence, the Committee dismissed the parts of the first charge relating to considering alternative treatment options and updating the owners in relation to Belle's condition. They did, however, find the charge proven in relation to Dr Bohnen failing to assist Belle with urination.

The Committee found all aspects of the second charge proven in its entirety after Dr Bohnen admitted in advance of the hearing, that her representations were false and misleading.

The Committee then went on to consider whether the second charge and the aspects of the first charge that were found proven amounted to serious professional misconduct both individually and cumulatively. The Committee considered that Dr Bohnen's conduct in failing to assist Belle with urination, whilst falling below the standard to be expected of a reasonably competent veterinary surgeon, did not amount to serious professional misconduct.

The Committee did however find that Dr Bohnen's conduct with regards to the second charge constituted serious professional misconduct. Professor Alistair Barr, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "The Committee considers that the respondent's dishonesty was the prime aggravating factor in this case. Although overall it could be regarded as a single incident, the Committee has found that it involved the fabrication of a number of notes and clinical records in the immediate aftermath of the death of the dog, but, thereafter, the respondent continued to deny the falsity of the fabricated records that she had created up to and until the conclusion of her interview by the practice on 30 March 2017.

"During that time, the respondent had contacted the alarm company responsible for the security of the premises of the

practice, to enquire whether the security system would record the times of the alarm being switched on and off. This indicated that the respondent's dishonesty continued over a significant period of time, and that her persistence in sticking to her story became premeditated. In other words, the respondent's conduct over this time indicated a clear attempt to deceive."

Regarding the sanction for Dr Bohnen, the Committee considered that the principle aggravating factors in the case were serious dishonesty towards both her colleagues and the owners of the dog and involved clear breaches of the Code of Professional Conduct. By way of mitigation, the Committee noted that Dr Bohnen is of previous good character with no other professional findings against her and that she had demonstrated some insight into her behaviour and had admitted being dishonest and misleading prior to the hearing.

In summing up and deciding upon the sanction, Professor Barr commented: "Because of the seriousness of this case, the Committee did not consider that it was appropriate to postpone judgement, take no further action, or to administer a reprimand and warning as to future conduct. The Committee considered that the respondent's conduct, involving significant and admitted dishonesty over a period of time, required a significant penalty, in order to protect the welfare of animals and to serve the public interest.

"Accordingly, the Committee has decided to direct that the respondent's registration be suspended for a period of nine months."

Dr Bohnen has 28 days from being informed of the Committee's decision to lodge an appeal with the Privy Council.