

It takes all sorts

Record number and diversity of candidates standing for election this year

Nineteen people are standing in this year's RCVS Council elections, including, for the first time, more women than men, and a much lower average candidate age.

Of the 19 candidates (listed on page 4) – which we believe to be the highest number since records began – ten are women. Not only is this the most women ever to stand, but it is in direct contrast to last year where all 13 candidates were men. Additionally, whereas the average age of all elected Council members in March 2013 was 56.5 (57 for women and 56 for men), the average age of this year's candidates is 47 (45 for women and 48 for men).

Last year, the all-male candidate list prompted concern from the profession and calls for us to investigate the reasons behind the lack of women and to take steps to redress the balance.

The then RCVS President Jacqui Molyneux invited feedback from the profession about the barriers to joining Council, and set up a working party, chaired by Council member Amanda Boag, to look at how participation could be widened, not only to women, but also younger members of the profession and those actively engaged in clinical practice.

The working party suggested a number of initiatives, including a mentoring scheme, providing more practical information about being a Council member (see www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos), and inviting prospective candidates to the RCVS to discuss the role in more detail.

"The College's efforts to broaden participation in its election process seem to have paid dividends," says Amanda Boag. "I'm delighted there is so

much more diversity amongst the election candidates this year, and that so many women have decided to throw their hat into the ring, especially as women now form over 50% of the profession."

VN Council candidates

In the Veterinary Nurses Council elections, five candidates have put themselves forward – an increase of one from last year (see page 4).

Kathy Kissick, Chairman of VN Council, says: "I can't stress enough how important it is for all veterinary nurses to get involved in our Council elections and I'd like to wish all five candidates the best of luck!"

In a slightly later start to the voting period this year, ballot papers and candidate details for both elections will be posted on 19 March 2014, and all votes must be cast, either online or by post, by 5pm on Friday, 25 April 2014.

How to choose?

To help you decide who to vote for, we have arranged a 'Quiz the candidates' evening, to be broadcast by The Webinar Vet on Thursday, 20 March. Recordings of RCVS Council candidates' answers to questions supplied by the veterinary profession will be available from 7pm; VN Council candidates will answer the VN profession's questions live at 8pm.

For the first time, we also have dedicated websites for both elections this year, where you can read all candidates' biographies and manifestos, and from where you will be able to listen again to the 'Quiz the candidates' recordings, before clicking straight through to the secure voting website (available from 19 March).

RCVS Council election:

www.votebyinternet.com/vetvote14.

VN Council election:

www.votebyinternet.com/VNvote14.

"I'm delighted there is so much more diversity amongst the election candidates this year."



In this issue: Charter progress, new VP, registration changes, webinars, CEO overview, updated My Account, RCVS Day, VN Golden Jubilee Award, register with FCA, 24/7 update, medicines advice, renewals due, practice registration, PSS surgeries and promotional material, veterinary careers, OV changes, CPD audit and monitoring, Fellowship proposals, new Day One Competences, 'You said, we did', literary endeavours, congresses and events, DC hearings, EBVM Conference.

Royal progress

Update on new Royal Charter

On 7 February 2014, our consultation on proposals for a new Royal Charter closed. The consultation followed the culmination of a year's work by the RCVS Legislation Working Party (LWP), which was tasked with reviewing the Charter.

"I am delighted by the positive and constructive responses that we have received from both organisations and individuals. The new Charter represents an historic opportunity to reaffirm the role of the RCVS and to put in place a framework for the regulation of the profession in the 21st Century," says Professor Stephen May, Chairman of the LWP.

The LWP considered all of the responses to the consultation in detail and put forward a series of amendments which would address the key concerns raised by consultees.

At its March meeting, RCVS Council approved the amendments, with some small text changes, and a final draft of the Charter will now go to the June meeting of Council for approval.

What will the new Charter do?

The Royal Charter gives us powers to employ staff, spend money, create Fellows and honorary associates, and award diplomas and certificates.

The Charter also provides the basis for other activities we undertake to support our regulatory activities, but which are not covered directly by the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966.

The proposed new Charter seeks to clarify the role and purpose of the RCVS and to shore up the foundation of existing Charter activities that complement regulation, such as the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) and the recognition of RCVS Specialists, and allow for their further development.

The new Charter would also improve the regulatory framework for veterinary nurses. It would do this by turning the current List of Veterinary Nurses into the Register. This would mean that any veterinary nurse removed or suspended from the Register for serious professional misconduct would not be permitted to undertake Schedule 3 activities. Around 1,000 listed nurses would be affected by this change and would effectively be transferred to the Register.

Next steps

A final draft of the Charter and accompanying bye-laws will go to the June 2014 meeting of Council for approval, with a view to a resolution being put to the AGM on 11 July 2014.

If the resolution was passed, then a petition would go to the Privy Council shortly afterwards. It is hoped that the Charter would be considered at the meetings of Privy Council in October and December 2014 and could be sealed and operative by as soon as March 2015.

Bradley Viner elected as Vice-President

Current Treasurer will take up post in summer

Dr Bradley Viner, who is currently RCVS Treasurer, was elected as the new (junior) Vice-President at the March meeting of Council, and will take up his post at RCVS Day in July.

Bradley has been a member of Council since 2005 and Treasurer since 2010 and, during this time, has served on all of the major committees – with the exception of the Disciplinary Committee. Outside of Council he runs a group of practices in North West London, is Vice-Chairman of Battersea Dogs and Cats Home and is a regular contributor to the *Veterinary Times* with his 'Reflections' column.

In his manifesto Bradley set out the nature of his Vice-Presidency, stating: "My personal ethos is very much based upon continual improvement. It is only by having the confidence to discuss openly how things could have been done better that an organisation can learn how to improve."

"I also recognise the vital importance of good communications: with Council; the profession at large; Government; and with other interested organisations. I intend to do my utmost to communicate with them as effectively as possible."

At the same session, Chris Tufnell was re-elected as Chairman of the Education Committee, while David Catlow was elected Chairman of the Standards Committee, both effective from July.



Addressing your concerns

Council approves changes to Register address and other regulations

Following feedback from members of the profession, RCVS Council has agreed in principle to a number of changes to our Registration Regulations, designed to make the renewal process less bureaucratic.

In 2010 we introduced a requirement that practising members must provide their work address for publication in the Register, as opposed to a home address. However, many of you told us that you prefer correspondence to be sent to your home address and so we propose to amend the regulations so that they no longer specify the type of address that should be given.

Other changes to the regulations include widening the right of appeal against refusal of registration to applicants with UK and non-EU qualifications. Previously, only EU (non-UK) applicants could appeal to our Registration Appeals Committee as of right.

Council also discussed whether the requirement for veterinary surgeons to confirm their addresses on renewing their registration – even if it hasn't

changed – should be dropped. However, an amendment was passed by majority vote to retain this requirement.

The proposed new regulations will be submitted to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Privy Council for their comments and approval. If approved, the new regulations should come into operation next year.



Goodbye cards

VN cards no longer available

As announced in our March 2013 issue, VN Council decided last year to discontinue issuing registered and listed veterinary nurse identification cards, a move which took effect during the recent renewal period.

The decision was made based on the fact that employers rarely seemed to ask to see the cards, and, in any event, they were quickly out of date.

For the most up to date information about who is included in the VN Register/List, please use the 'Check the Registers' tool on the RCVS website.

Your to do list...

- **Vote in the elections, deadline 5pm 25 April (cover)**
- **Vets: pay your fees and renew your membership by 31 March (page 8)**
- **Ensure your practice remains on Find a Vet (page 8)**
- **Join our Virtual Question Time on 15 April (page 21)**
- **Pose your questions at our Regional Question Time in Wales on 22 May (page 21)**
- **Visit our stand at BSAVA, book a Practice Standards Surgery, or join our lecture (page 20)**
- **Ensure we have your correct email address (page 8)**
- **Complete our Survey of the Professions (page 4)**
- **Sign up for the free Professional Development Record (page 13)**
- **Seek nomination, or nominate someone, for the Veterinary Nursing Golden Jubilee Award (page 5)**
- **Watch the CEO's post-Council update (www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos)**
- **Sign up for the first International Evidence-Based Veterinary Medicine Conference (page 27)**
- **Connect with us on LinkedIn (page 5)**
- **Renew your inclusion on the Register of Veterinary Practice Premises (page 8)**



Advancing on all fronts

Post-Council update

Nick Stace, Chief Executive

At our 6 March Council meeting I took the opportunity to update those present on progress with the 12 priority actions from our 2014-16 Strategic Plan.

We are only a couple of months into 2014, but we have already covered a lot of ground in terms of setting and upholding standards, including good progress on our Customer Charter, towards a new Royal Charter (page 2) and in overhauling our complaints-handling process.

We are also committed to advancing standards, through the work of RCVS Knowledge, our proposals for a new approach to the Fellowship (page 15), our review of the Practice Standards Scheme (page 9) and the introduction of the Advanced Practitioner status in autumn (page 14).

Staff engagement

I presented the headline results of our second staff engagement survey, carried out by Great Place to Work. Research¹ suggests that organisations with engaged staff are more productive, have lower levels of absenteeism and exhibit reduced staff churn. Ensuring our staff are clear about our purpose, and rate the College as a 'Great Place to Work', is not just so that we have a warm and cosy feeling: it's important to our customers (the profession and the public).

The fact that 96% of our staff were engaged enough to complete the survey was a good start. The results showed some improvements since last year, with better scores on management's communication, leadership's approachability and their words matching actions, and on fair pay (we carried out a salary benchmarking exercise last year).

The results also showed positive change in terms of the troubling issue of bullying between Council members and staff. Last year I was very unhappy to hear that 37% of staff felt that bullying or harassment had been a problem. This has now fallen to 17% (albeit with a slightly changed emphasis in the question, which may account for some of the change). That's better. But it's still not good – and nowhere near great.

We will be working hard to reduce this yet further over the coming months, and also to improve in other areas identified as needing some focus, such as staff training, development and recognition.

Open all hours?

At the Council meeting, Clare Tapsfield-Wright, Chair of our Standards Committee, reported that our recent evidence-gathering exercise regarding 24/7 emergency care had garnered over 650 pages of comments and views. This is an excellent response and shows that this project is well timed. The Committee is hosting a three-day select-committee-style meeting towards the end of March, to hear from organisations and individuals, and hopes to report back to Council in June.

Consumer redress

A commitment to "costing and trialling a new consumer disputes resolution service" formed part of our Strategic Plan, and the afternoon of our Council meeting featured presentations from two organisations with different approaches to this – the Dental Complaints Service and Ombudsman Services.

As a consumer champion, I believe that offering a structured and independent way to resolve the issues of those complainants (both professionals and members of the public) whose concerns, while legitimate, fall outside our jurisdiction, is an important hallmark of a first-rate regulator.

The Operational Board will work up some specific proposals to discuss with Council in June; meanwhile, you can join Registrar, Gordon Hockey, and me at BSAVA Congress on Saturday 5 April to discuss the concept in more detail.

¹Employee Engagement - The Evidence, Rayton, Dodge and D'Analeze, November 2012.

My full CEO update can be read at www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/rcvs-council/council-meetings/6-march-2014/, together with other Council papers. You can read a more informal slant on things via my blog at www.nickstaceblogs.org, which includes links to my regular post-Council video updates; or follow me on Twitter: @nickstacetweets.

Wonderful webinars

Clinical Governance proved a popular topic

If you missed our recent webinar on Clinical Governance, delivered by Bradley Viner and Pam Mosedale, you can 'listen again' via The Webinar Vet (www.thewebinarvet.com/webinar-category/rcvs-webinars – where you can also find our previous webinars) or via www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos.

The event was watched live by over 140 delegates, with excellent feedback including: "Thank you, great help for an upcoming senior role interview"; "Greetings from Italy and thanks for very useful information"; and "An evening well spent".

A future webinar is planned specifically for overseas graduates, and over the next few months we will also be holding events on 24/7, the Professional Development Phase, the complaints process, the Practice Standards Scheme review, and Advanced Practitioner status.

"An evening well spent"


With squeezed budgets for continuing professional development (CPD) and a time-poor profession, these bite-size chunks of learning should suit many members of the practice team.

In addition, we will be holding 'Quiz the candidates' sessions for both RCVS and VN Council elections (see cover) and a second Virtual Question Time meeting (see page 21).


All events will be free to attend, and if you miss the live event, you can always catch up in your own time and still gain a certificate of completion.

Keep an eye on RCVS e-News, The Webinar Vet website and the veterinary media for more information. If you have a suggestion for a topic we can cover, please let Lizzie Lockett know, on l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk.

3: Animal safety: significant event meetings/audits



- In case of an unexpected medical or surgical complication, anaesthetic death, accident or serious complaint – hold a **no blame** meeting ASAP and record details
- Consider what, if anything, could have been done to avoid this, and what changes in procedure might be made as a result



www.rcvs.org.uk

First Queen's Medal at RCVS Day

Our most prestigious honours and awards yet

This year's RCVS Day – our AGM and Awards Presentation – will take place on Friday 11 July, at One Great George Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3AA.

As well as AGM business and the investiture of the new RCVS President for 2014-2015, we will be awarding the first ever RCVS Queen's Medal – the most prestigious honour that the RCVS can bestow upon a veterinary surgeon.

Also at the event, Honorary Fellowship will be bestowed upon:

- Mr Andrew Holliman BVSc BA MSc MRCVS, Veterinary Investigation Officer, AHVLA
- Professor Maxwell Murray BVMS PhD DVM FRCPATH FRSE MRCVS, Emeritus Professor of Veterinary Medicine and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow
- Mr Donald Rutty BVetMed FRCPATH DipToxRCPath MRCVS, now retired but who had a career in the pharmaceutical industry

Fellowships will be presented, as well as Diplomas for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, and the Veterinary Nursing Golden Jubilee Award will also be made (see opposite for details of how to nominate for this award).

Those receiving awards will be contacted in due course, and a limited number of tickets will be available for members and veterinary nurses in early June – see the June issue of RCVS News, and the veterinary press, for more details.

Surveying the territory

Please help us gather data

Towards the end of March, we will be inviting veterinary surgeons and student, listed and registered veterinary nurses to complete our 2014 Survey of the Professions.

This year the survey, carried out by the Institute for Employment Studies, will only be available online, and we will email a participation request to all those for whom we hold a unique email address (ie not 'info@').

We will also be sending a letter to those for whom we do not have an email address, including a link to the survey.

The four-yearly, confidential survey provides useful data that helps us to develop policy, plan our activities and respond to questions from stakeholders such as government and the media.

In addition to the regular questions about what kind of work you are carrying out, continuing professional development and your views on the profession, we are also asking a set of questions about 24/7 emergency cover, which will feed into our current evidence-gathering exercise.

The deadline for completion of the survey is 30 April.

We plan to carry out an additional practice survey later in the year.

All sorts up for election

Here are the names of all the candidates standing in the 2014 RCVS and VN Councils elections (full story, page 1).

RCVS Council election candidates

David Bartram
David Catlow
Camilla Edwards
Caroline Foalks
Edward Gillams
Mandisa Greene
David Leicester

Thomas Lonsdale
Susan Macaldowie
Jacqueline Molyneux
Peter Moore
Sarah Oxley
Susan Paterson
Christopher Pearson

Katherine Richards
Janet Ritchie
Peter Robinson
Christine Shield
Neil Smith

VN Council election candidates

Amanda-Jane Erne
Tammy Ford
Hilary Orpet
Amber Richards
Megan Whitehead



Recognising outstanding contributions to veterinary nursing

Please nominate for our Golden Jubilee Award

If you know someone who has made an outstanding contribution to veterinary nursing, we want you to nominate them for the Veterinary Nursing Golden Jubilee Award 2014.

The award was launched by VN Council in 2011 to mark the 50th anniversary of the first RCVS veterinary nursing training scheme and to recognise outstanding service to the profession. The first recipient of the award was Jean Turner, while Sue Badger received the accolade in 2012.

"We are looking for those who have made an exceptional contribution to veterinary nursing, animal welfare or patient care."

This year we are looking for those who have made an exceptional contribution to veterinary nursing, animal welfare or patient care, whether this is in clinical practice, research, teaching or politics.

Registered or listed veterinary nurses, veterinary surgeons and lay people can all be nominated for this award.

Kathy Kissick, Chair of VN Council, said:
"With this award we are looking for someone

who can be an excellent ambassador for the veterinary nursing profession."

Nomination forms must be completed and received by us no later than **1 May 2014**. Nominators must be registered/listed veterinary nurses or veterinary surgeons, but the two additional proposers can be lay people.

The nomination form for the award can be downloaded from www.rcvs.org.uk/goldenjubilee. Alternatively, you can contact Annette Amato, Deputy Head of Veterinary Nursing, on 020 7202 0713 or a.amato@rcvs.org.uk.



Introducing 'My Account'

Managing details and renewing registration made easier

We have launched an improved online 'My Account' area for veterinary surgeons, allowing them to manage their details and pay their renewal fees with greater ease. Over the course of the year further improvements will be made to the area, to make it even more user-friendly.

My Account can be accessed on www.rcvs.org.uk/login using the login

credentials sent to every vet in the post as part of their registration renewal. Although veterinary nurses can't currently use My Account, we are in the process of updating it so that it will be ready for when they need to pay their renewal fees.

For more details about the updates, please see our article on renewing your registration, on page 8.



We are now LinkedIn

Connect with us

We have recently joined LinkedIn, the social networking website for professionals, allowing us to better inform vets and VNs about our news, events and activities and other items of interest.

The account also has information about our 'Products and Services' including vet and



VN education, advice and guidance, the Practice Standards Scheme, registration, complaints investigation and publications.

You can follow our account by signing up to LinkedIn

(www.linkedin.com), searching for 'RCVS' and then clicking the 'Follow' button at the top of our page.

For more ways to stay in touch, you can also follow us on Twitter (@RCVS_UK), view our YouTube videos (www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos) and view our online picture gallery on Flickr (www.flickr.com/photos/rcvs).

Celebrate our pets

National Pet Month (NPM) takes place from 1 April to 5 May this year, under the theme 'Celebrating our Pets'. Vet practices across the UK are invited to host events to back NPM in its silver anniversary year, promoting responsible pet ownership and supporting local pet charities. For details, see www.nationalpetmonth.org.uk.

CPD records – online only

This year's CPD Record Cards are available at www.rcvs.org.uk/education, and we are no longer posting out hard copies. But before you download yours, why not join the 6,140 vets and 3,570 VNs who are already using their online Professional Development Record? It's free, easy to use, and has many more features than the Card. Visit www.rcvs.org.uk/vetpdr or www.rcvs.org.uk/vnpdr for more information.

Council member resigns

During February, we accepted the resignation of RCVS Council member Bob Partridge.

Mr Partridge, who had been an elected member of the Council since July 2006, tendered his resignation for personal reasons.

Peter Robinson has taken up the vacated Council position, as he came next in the ballot in the 2013 election.

Burning issue

Body-warming precautions

The use of body-warming devices to maintain normothermia during the operative and perioperative period is now routine in many small animal practices, however, we have recently received a number of complaints where it has been alleged that dogs have suffered thermal burns as a consequence of using these devices.

Thermal burning can be an unfortunate consequence of the use of such devices and, because of the hair coat in animals, may go undetected until some days later, when tissue necrosis and sloughing occur.

Furthermore, the enhanced thermal conduction of a wet hair coat may invite a thermal burn when one might not have been anticipated.

"Such burns are an avoidable welfare problem and are difficult to explain to a highly distressed owner," says Jerry Davies, Chairman of the Preliminary Investigation Committee.

"There is a gamut of devices available, for which specific precautions should be observed. It is important, over and above the manufacturer's recommendations, to consider the use of insulating materials between the animal and the device, and to ensure, as far as possible, that the contact areas are kept dry.

"It goes without saying that any devices used should be regularly checked and serviced to ensure safety for animals and personnel alike," he adds.

Top ten endorsement

At its January meeting, the Standards Committee endorsed the Office of Fair Trading's decision to make permanent the change to RCVS guidance such that veterinary practices no longer need to display a waiting-room poster listing their top ten medicines and costs (as reported in *RCVS News*, November 2013).

All existing responsibilities to inform clients to enable them to decide where to obtain veterinary prescriptions and medicines remain the same (www.rcvs.org.uk/fairtrading).



Guarding against prescription misuse

VMD offers advice on detection and discouragement

In a recent meeting, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) told us they are regularly contacted by internet retailers and pharmacies about prescription misuse by veterinary clients – a subject they take very seriously and about which they would like us to alert the profession.

Such 'misuse' can include the alteration of an existing prescription, for example, date, medicine quantity or type; or, fraud, such as supplying the same prescription to multiple retailers or forging the signature of a vet/pharmacist/suitably qualified person.

The VMD generally deals with unauthorised prescription alterations via a warning letter (for first offences), although repeat offences and fraud will be passed to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Investigation Service with a view to seeking prosecution. There were 230 cases of potential misuse between April and December 2013.

If you have cause to suspect prescription misuse, we would encourage you to report this using the VMD's online form, available at www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/PrescriptionMisuse/.

To help discourage prescription misuse, the VMD has waiting-room posters (www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/pdf/Poster_LegalMedicine.pdf) which warn clients that it is an offence to alter a written prescription. You could also consider using typed, rather than handwritten, prescriptions; write quantities as both numbers and text; and, initial and date any alterations you make.

The VMD states that, when supplying medicines, you must take reasonable steps to ensure that the prescription is genuine. You should resolve any doubts by speaking with the prescriber, particularly

where supply is to be made against a prescription sent by fax or email.

Further guidance is available at www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/pdf/PrescriptionGuidance.pdf.

Writing prescriptions

The VMD also informed us that they often see incomplete prescriptions. Common omissions include: the issuing vet's name; the practice name and address; and, the species. For a reminder of the information to include on a veterinary prescription, see box below.

A written prescription must include

- a) the name, address and telephone number of the person prescribing the product;
- b) the qualifications enabling the person to prescribe the product;
- c) the name and address of the owner or keeper;
- d) the identification (including the species) of the animal or group of animals to be treated;
- e) the premises at which the animals are kept, if this is different from the address of the owner or keeper;
- f) the date of the prescription;
- g) the signature or other authentication of the person prescribing the product;
- h) the name and amount of the product prescribed;
- i) the dosage and administration instructions;
- j) any necessary warnings;
- k) the withdrawal period if relevant; and,
- l) If it is prescribed under the cascade, a statement to that effect.

Source: Veterinary Medicines Regulations, Schedule 3, paragraph 6

Fair trade – off

Register with FCA to continue operating credit legally

Veterinary practices with Office of Fair Trading (OFT) consumer credit licences are being asked to register with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) by 31 March 2014 if they wish to continue selling products and services on credit.

The FCA is taking over the regulation of consumer credit from the OFT from 1 April, and practices risk acting illegally if they do not register – which can be done via fca.org.uk/clicked.

Although the FCA has written to all OFT licence-holders, it's worth double-checking that you have taken the appropriate steps to register for 'interim permission' to provide

credit to clients, for which a fee is payable (£350 for most practices, and £150 for sole traders). Thereafter, the FCA will contact organisations with details of how to apply for full authorisation.

If you do not have an OFT licence and are not sure if you need one, more information is provided at oft.gov.uk/business-advice/offering-credit.

The FCA will be publishing its final rules on how it intends to regulate consumer credit before April. You can sign up for emails to get the latest news from the FCA via its website: fca.org.uk/firms/firm-types/consumer-credit/sign-up-for-consumer-credit-emails.

Animals used in advertising

Consider bigger picture if advising on set

Last year the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) published guidance for those involved with the production of adverts that involve animals, saying: "While advertisers are perfectly free to use or depict animals in ads, they should make sure that they don't inadvertently encourage or condone behaviour that might result in the poor treatment of our furry friends."



It goes on to say that "Advertisers using animals in their ads are also expected to have a vet on set during production to make sure the animals used are safe." The guidance gives examples of adverts where pets were depicted as being treated, eating or behaving in a way that might give rise to issues, and may even seem to condone animal cruelty.

We do from time to time receive complaints from members of the public about adverts including animals – not generally about the welfare of the individual animal on set, but worries that the way in which the animal is depicted on screen will lead to 'copycat' treatment from owners, which could be detrimental to animal health and welfare more generally.

While we appreciate that advertising agencies and their clients may well have agreed their concepts and plans well in advance of a veterinary surgeon's attendance on set, we would urge vets who are involved to give thought to the way in which the advert may be perceived, in addition to the health and welfare of the specific animal in their care, and raise any issues of concern with the advertisers.

The ASA advice can be found at www.asa.org.uk/News-resources/Media-Centre/2013/Paws-for-thought.aspx.

Substantial response to 24/7 call for evidence

Standards Committee to review over 650 pages of responses

We have received over 300 replies to our call for evidence on the provision of 24-hour emergency veterinary cover, representing one of the biggest responses we have ever received when seeking external views on our policies or activities (a recent survey of views on day-one competencies received around 500 replies).

In an open letter last December, Standards Committee Chair Clare Tapsfield-Wright noted that, over the past two years, Lay Observers on the Preliminary Investigation Committee had raised questions about the veterinary profession's ability to provide 24/7 to the extent required by the RCVS Code of Conduct, and said there was a disconnect between the public's expectations and the profession's capacity to meet those expectations. The main purpose of the call for evidence was therefore to gather views to form an understanding of the expectations of all involved and to ensure that our guidance reflects these expectations.

Over 200 veterinary surgeons, 20 veterinary nurses and over 50 members of the public took time to send us their views, and there were 'corporate'

submissions from 15 organisations and a petition from veterinary surgeon Jo Dyer. The replies have translated into 656 pages of information, which members of Standards Committee are now reviewing in detail. A three-day Select Committee-style meeting is scheduled for 26, 27 and 28 March, at which the Standards Committee will invite representatives of all the organisations, plus a number of the individual respondents, to provide more detail face to face.

In the coming weeks, we will be seeking further feedback from the profession via some 24/7-related questions in the next RCVS Survey of the Professions, and from animal owners via an online survey.



Know your Code

Communication between professional colleagues

We regularly receive enquiries from veterinary surgeons about what is expected of them when a client decides to register with another practice.

An important principle in the Code is that veterinary surgeons must communicate with each other to ensure the health and welfare of the animal or group of animals.

Chapter five of the supporting guidance to the Code provides further advice on the proper standards of professional practice and sets out what is expected of veterinary surgeons dealing with such situations. In short, it states that **relevant clinical information** should be provided promptly to colleagues taking over responsibility for a case and proper documentation should be provided for all referral or re-directed cases. The guidance also makes it clear that clients should not be obstructed from changing to another veterinary practice and should not be discouraged from seeking a second opinion.

There are also obligations on the part of the new veterinary surgeon and the supporting guidance states that:

5.4 Although both veterinary surgeon and client have freedom of choice, in the interests of the welfare of the animals involved, a veterinary surgeon should not knowingly take over a colleague's case without informing the colleague in question and obtaining a clinical history.

5.5 When an animal is initially presented, a veterinary surgeon should ask whether the animal is already receiving veterinary attention or treatment and, if so, when it was last seen; then, contact the original veterinary surgeon for a case history. It should be made clear to the client that this is necessary in the interests of the patient. If the client refuses to provide information, the case should be declined.

5.6 In an emergency, it is acceptable to make an initial assessment and administer any essential treatment before contacting the original veterinary surgeon.

For more information, see www.rcvs.org.uk/communication or contact the Professional Conduct Department on 020 7202 0789 / profcon@rcvs.org.uk.

Code of Professional
Conduct for
Veterinary Surgeons

Making our communications unique to you

Personal email addresses needed

Being able effectively to communicate with our members is vital – whether it be a fee notice, sending you a confirmation of a change to your record, sharing the latest news and announcements from the College or asking for your feedback on our service.

Communicating by email is the quickest and most cost-effective way of getting in touch, but these communications can only be effective if we have accurate and up-to-date email addresses.

Email addresses should be individual rather than being general practice addresses, for example, which may be used by a number of different people.

If you are a vet, you can check and update your personal details in the 'My Account' area of our website (www.rcvs.org.uk/login) – for which you will need your username (login ID number) and password. Veterinary nurses will be able to do this online later in the year.

Both VNs and vets can also contact the Registration Department on 020 7202 0707 or membership@rcvs.org.uk to amend their details.

Renewing your practice registration

Practice fees now due

We have now sent out invoices to all practices – including those signed up to our Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) – asking them to pay a fee to remain on the Register of Veterinary Practice Premises (RVPP).

In accordance with the Veterinary Medicines Regulations, veterinary surgeons may supply veterinary medicinal products (with the exclusion of AVM-GSL products) only from veterinary practice premises which are registered with the College.

The registration year runs from 1 April to 31 March each year and payment for 2014/15 is required by 10 April 2014. For practices signed up to the PSS, the RVPP fee is incorporated into the Scheme's annual renewal fee.

If you are a PSS-accredited practice and have any queries about your invoice, please contact us on 020 7202 0767 or pss@rcvs.org.uk. Practices not signed up to the PSS should contact our Registration Department on the above number, or rvpp@rcvs.org.uk.

Vet renewal fees now due

Please use our online 'My Account' area

Vets are reminded that they need to pay their registration fees to remain on the Register for 2014-15 by 31 March 2014. If we do not receive payment before 1 April, an extra £35 will be added to the renewal fee, and vets may ultimately be removed from the Register if they have still not paid before 1 June.

This year we have made updates to our online 'My Account' area (www.rcvs.org.uk/login) to allow vets to manage more of their details online and complete their annual renewal more quickly and easily. Vets have been sent their login details for My Account in the post. The changes to the My Account area are the first phase of a project to make it more accessible and user-friendly and to allow vets to better manage their details online.

As part of the renewal process, vets are also asked to confirm that their details on the Register are correct, including membership category and correspondence info. Those who are in the 'UK Practising' or 'Practising outside the UK' membership categories should also confirm – via the registration renewal form or the online My Account area – that they are compliant with the requirements for continuing professional development (CPD) of 105 hours over three years.

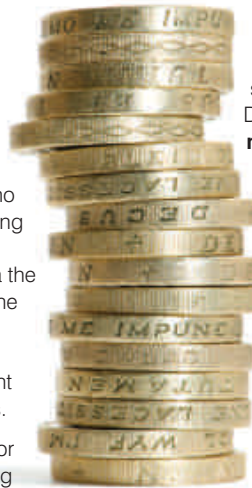
Vets with any cautions, convictions or adverse findings against them dating

from 1 January 2006 onwards, should also declare them. A convictions disclosure form and a document explaining our protocol on handling declared convictions can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/convictions. You can also call our disclosure of convictions helpline on 07818 113 056 from Monday to Friday, 11am to 4pm.

Fees can be paid by credit card through the My Account area or by cheque, bank draft, BACS or credit card via the registration renewal form sent in the post. Details of how to pay by bank transfer are also on the form.

Vets who have any concerns or questions about renewing their registration, or logging into My Account, or who need to request a registration renewal form, should contact the Registration Department on 020 7202 0707 or email membership@rcvs.org.uk.

NB: veterinary nurses, and veterinary surgeons registered as 'Non-practising 70+' and 'Southern Irish', are not currently able to access the My Account area due to ongoing development of this platform. VNs will be able to access the area in time for paying their annual renewal fees, which are due on 1 November 2014. If you have any questions, please contact our Registration Team on the contact details above.



Find a Vet update nearing completion

Thank you for your help

The update to our popular online practice search tool Find a Vet, which aims to make sure that the data we display is accurate, is almost complete, and we would like to thank the thousands of practices that got in touch and confirmed their details.

Some 3,000 of the 5,000 practice premises currently listed returned a form to our Registration Department, updating and confirming their details. Those premises that did not return a form will have their details removed from Find a Vet.

Find a Vet (www.findavet.org.uk) receives around 9,000 hits a month and allows animal owners to find the veterinary practice they need – including by location, specialism, accreditation within our Practice Standards Scheme and qualifications held by practice staff.

If your practice did not return a form or has not yet registered its details with Find a Vet, please contact our Registration Department on 020 7202 0767 or findavet@rcvs.org.uk.



Practice Standards Scheme Surgeries

Booking now for Birmingham and Ewloe

Do you have questions about the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS)? Are you thinking of joining, or are you preparing for an upcoming inspection? Perhaps you just want to ensure you're meeting the Code of Professional Conduct requirement and practising to the equivalent of Core Standards?

Then you have two opportunities to receive some one-to-one help from Senior Inspector, Lorna Francis, over the next couple of months.

First, we will be offering one-to-one 45-minute private appointments with Lorna at the British

Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress, on Friday 4 April, in the Exhibition arena. The sessions are free, although you will need to hold a valid ticket for the event.

Later, on Thursday 22 May, Lorna will be at the Village Urban Resort Chester St David's to discuss any queries practices may have about the Scheme. Again, private, 45-minute one-to-one appointments will be available, between 12noon and 5pm.

For more details, or to book your slot, please contact Fiona Harcourt (f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk) / 020 7202 0773).

PSS review – renewed focus

A renewed focus on patient outcomes and care

Following feedback from several animal-owner organisations in February, we have decided to shift the focus of our ongoing review of the PSS to make sure that the categories of accreditation are meaningful for members of the public – as well as giving practices the differentiation that they have asked for.

Under the proposed framework, practices will still fall into different categories, depending on the level of facilities and services on offer. However, in addition to this, a Gold or Silver award will be granted based on outcomes, and so, ultimately, quality of care available at the practice, regardless of facilities and services.

Despite this refocus, the proposed new structure remains largely the same, including the modular framework to allow practices to focus on the areas that are important and relevant to them, an overhaul of the current IT system and a new training regime for PSS Inspectors.

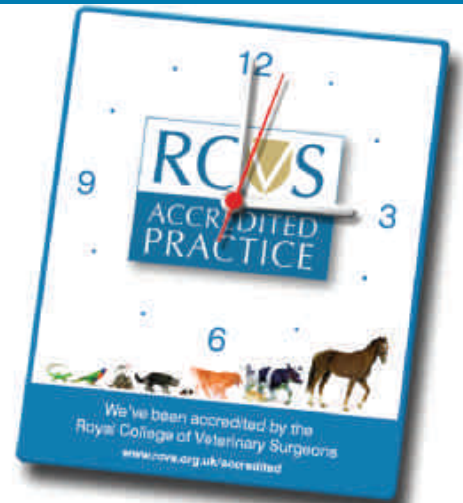
We will also be doing some further work with members of the public through a series of focus groups to make sure that the proposed Scheme would be understood and welcomed by animal owners.

If yours is a RCVS-accredited practice and you wish to stay in touch with the latest news about the PSS, sign up to our free newsletter, *The Practice Standard*, by emailing pss@rcvs.org.uk.



Time to show off

Clocks and stickers now available



Practices in the PSS put a lot of effort into becoming accredited, but do your clients and potential clients know? We have new ways to help you spread word of your achievement.

We have produced an attractive new RCVS Accredited Practice clock for your waiting-room or reception wall, so that clients can 'clock' your accreditation while they wait. It carries the same visual as our popular bookmarks, so might encourage clients to pick one of these up from your reception desk at the same time.

Meanwhile, we have also produced some new RCVS Accredited Practice window stickers, to be used around your practice entrance, so that your accreditation is one of the first things that clients see when they visit, and others see as they walk past.

A clock and two stickers will be sent to each accredited practice premises in March, and also given to newly-accredited practices as part of their welcome packs, while stocks last.

If you would like to give your clients a bit more information about the Scheme and what it means, don't forget to download our waiting-room presentation. Featuring Norm the Nervous Norfolk Terrier, the short presentation explains simply what RCVS accreditation means, and some of the many areas that our inspectors check.

The presentation is available in a variety of formats, including PowerPoint, images and video. Email the Practice Standards team on pss@rcvs.org.uk for a link from which you can download it.

Finally, don't forget to order your staff PSS lapel badges. Last year, all accredited practices were sent a batch of five of these smart enamelled badges, but more are available at £1 each or less (to cover costs and P&P). An order form is available at www.rcvs.org.uk/psspromotion.

Putting diverse skills to good use

How vets can use their knowledge, skills and experience outside clinical practice

The primary aim of the five or six years that vets spend studying for their veterinary degree is to prepare them for a career as a clinician – diagnosing and treating animals, performing operations and providing an all-round excellent service to clients.

It is understandable, then, that the vast majority of graduates go straight into clinical practice once they complete their degree. However, a veterinary

education, with its broad range of knowledge and array of skills, means that vets are well equipped for a wide variety of careers.

The sheer breadth of knowledge is a distinct advantage, with the degree encompassing not only clinical and scientific disciplines but also areas such as animal behaviour, communications, ethics, law and welfare issues. Vets are left with an equally diverse skill-set, covering not only the attributes that allow them to practise but also

other 'soft skills', such as problem-solving, effective communication and management.

Such skills and knowledge open many doors to the veterinary graduate in areas including research, the pharmaceutical industry, government, human healthcare and many others besides.

Here are four stories of veterinary graduates and current members of the RCVS who took their careers in different directions.

Photo courtesy of Gill Harris



David Watson, Editor of the *Veterinary Nursing Journal* and Communications Officer for the Diocese of Truro

Why did you decide to leave clinical practice and what prompted that decision?

I had the privilege of working in a partnership with two generous and forward-thinking vets in a mixed practice on the Norfolk/Suffolk border at the tail-end of the 'James Herriot era'. Peter and Bill taught me the importance of observation and listening.

"My veterinary grounding is essential to my 'street cred' and I do my best to keep tabs on the politics and the exponential growth of knowledge and expertise in the veterinary professions."

I loved the work, especially the consults and diagnostic side of things, and to this day part of me regrets leaving. But I was young, irrationally ambitious, and 'tempted' to explore a career in the pharmaceutical industry, eventually ending up as the 'Pedigree & Whiskas vet' for the Mars organisation, during which time I became increasingly involved in communications, training, marketing and publishing.

Following a chance conversation over a pint, I was offered the opportunity to take a further right-angled turn into veterinary publishing, where I edited *Veterinary Times* and *Veterinary Review* and, latterly, the *Veterinary Nursing Journal*.

What does your current work involve?

Although I am continuing to pursue a major parallel interest in the veterinary media, my 'day job' at the moment is as Communications Officer for the Diocese of Truro; a role which combines being a Bishop's 'minder' with media work, editing diocesan publications and developing digital communication channels.

What transferable skills do veterinary surgeons have that they can take into other areas of work?

Whether it is meeting the relentless deadlines of turning out two different journals every month, trouble-shooting complaints or handling overzealous investigative journalists, the skill sets are the same.

I maintain that the veterinary degree course – in my case complemented by the teaching in Professor George F Boddie's book, *Diagnostic Methods in Veterinary Medicine*, coupled with hands-on 'seeing practice' with Peter and Bill – offered me the best basis for the acquisition of problem-solving skills that anyone could obtain anywhere.

For, once we have mastered the skills of diagnosis, especially those of observation and listening, we are equipped to transfer those skills into any sector of a plethora of diverse career pathways where there are problems to solve.

Do you find that being a vet gives you extra prestige?

It's more a fascination really! People discount me as being slightly eccentric and then we just get on with whatever needs to be done.

As far as the veterinary publishing side goes, then my veterinary grounding is essential to my 'street cred' and I do my best to keep tabs on the politics and the exponential growth of knowledge and expertise in the veterinary professions.



Sine Littlewood, Assistant Director, National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Stroke Research Network

At what point did you decide to leave clinical practice and what prompted that decision?

After graduating from Edinburgh I spent around four years in practice before deciding to leave and do a postgraduate diploma in Administration. After that, I was part of a team that organised the Gateshead Garden Festival, and doing this made me realise that I had an interest in managing and motivating people and in organising things and making them happen. I enjoyed clinical practice but I wasn't quite getting that type of experience from it.

I later completed a Masters of Business Administration and went on to work in the NHS, where I held a variety of positions in areas such as commissioning, project management, IT procurement and service management in NHS trusts and strategic health authorities. It was while working at a strategic health authority that I got into linking up networks of different experts to drive forward healthcare, so when my current role became available, I was very interested in it.

What does your current work involve?

The NIHR Stroke Research Network brings together researchers, clinicians, healthcare professionals, stroke survivors and carers to provide coordination and leadership to

stroke research in the NHS on a national basis. I am working with people who are at the top of their game and who are making a difference to patients and the NHS through stroke research.

My role is very diverse but basically involves running the national coordinating centre and overseeing our eight regional networks, which requires performance and people management skills, patient liaison and involvement, communications, and working with researchers, patients and funders to develop and deliver studies.

“The diagnostic training that you get as a vet also means your mind is used to finding the reasons behind certain problems rather than just dealing with the symptoms.”

What transferable skills do veterinary surgeons have that they can take into other areas of work?

I think it helps when the clinicians I work with know they are speaking to someone with a clinical background and certainly it is useful for understanding some of the more technical language that I come across. As vets, we have a very broad range of experience and knowledge – for example, I’ve done surgery, given advice about vaccinations to clients and I also have an empathy and an understanding that you couldn’t replicate, all gained from my time in practice.

The diagnostic training that you get as a vet also means your mind is used to finding the reasons behind certain problems rather than just dealing with the symptoms. I find it very hard to stop being a clinician and remember that I am a manager but the clinical skills really do help. If you scratch me hard enough I am still very much a vet underneath!



Professor Tim Skerry, Professor of Orthopaedic Biology and Head of the Department of Human Metabolism, University of Sheffield

Why did you decide to leave clinical practice and what prompted that decision?

After three or four years in practice I became interested in surgery and orthopaedics and spent a lot of time putting dogs back together after road

accidents. As the bones often break along lines of weakness that are anatomical features, I found that I would see the same sort of fracture in the same sort of dog but that one would walk within 24 hours and another might take weeks to get use of the leg back. This made me think that there was a lot of biology to be understood better in fracture healing, and it prompted me to look for a PhD in that area.

The moment that decided it for me was when I met Lance Lanyon, who was Head of Anatomy at the Royal Veterinary College. We talked a lot and ended up on something that I could research – the way the skeleton responds to exercise. This has occupied much of my career since then.

What does your current work involve?

I am still interested in the way the skeleton responds to exercise, for two reasons. First, to identify ways of exercising and combinations of exercise that help people to acquire and maintain strong bones so as to avoid osteoporosis in later life; second, to identify signalling pathways in bone that are activated when we exercise, in order to identify drug targets. Essentially we’d like to invent a drug to save a trip to the gym or make the occasional trip to the gym much more of a potent stimulus for bone formation.

In the last few years we have found a gene that is associated with increased bone mass in mice and similar changes in people but also involved in the ability for tumours to metastasise around the body. Increasingly I’m focused on the development of antibodies or small-molecule chemical drugs that can be beneficial to cancer patients.

What transferable skills do veterinary surgeons have that they can take into other areas of work?

When I started as a PhD student after five years of clinical work there was a bit of a culture shock. The veterinary degree is a bit of many different things and I found that colleagues with degrees in biochemistry and molecular biology, for example, were more expert at focused things than me. Looking back now, however, I see that it is a big asset for researchers – by knowing a bit about many different things it’s possible to make arcane connections and I think that has helped, rather than hindered, me.

Another area where my veterinary degree has been influential has been in sitting on committees for funding agencies and I have done this for many organisations, for example, the Horserace Betting Levy Board. In the Levy Board, veterinary knowledge has been important and having a clinical perspective and basic scientific knowledge has been useful. With some funders there has been an occasional “well you are a vet, you will know about this” attitude, which means I get to review grant applications on esoteric subjects like fish genetics or insect flight!

In your line of work do you find being a vet gives you extra prestige?

I think that when I am examining students, or being part of an RCVS team assessing vet schools, it is pleasing to feel I have something to offer.

As far as prestige is concerned, I really don’t know. I have always been a believer that nothing I have done is exceptional and that success is round the next corner. Science is a real team effort and I have been very lucky to have had an exceptional range of talented people working with me, both in the past and now.



David Mountford, Chief Executive of the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA), and former Director at VetCell Bioscience Ltd

Why did you decide to leave clinical practice and what prompted that decision?

When I decided to leave the Royal Army Veterinary Corps eight years after graduating, I looked at the different skills I had picked up there and at the daily routine of some of my former class mates in clinical practice and decided I might be better suited, in the long run, to work outside practice.

What does your current work involve?

I am Chief Executive of BEVA and so my work ranges from developing the business side of the operation, through providing advice and guidance to vets and horse owners on non-clinical issues, to helping BEVA Council deal with the political issues that affect the profession and the equine industry.

What transferable skills do veterinary surgeons have that they can take into other areas of work?

My knowledge of the industry – both veterinary and equine – helps me understand issues such as exotic disease surveillance, antibiotic resistance, horse identification, and vaccine resistance, all of which have needed my input recently. An understanding of how practice works, and a willingness to listen, are also essential.

Most vets, in my experience, are pretty intelligent, pragmatic and objective in their analysis of situations and have good communication skills – these are genuinely transferrable into other areas of work and are much in demand.

In your line of work do you find that being a vet gives you extra prestige?

It’s a double-edged sword – often the ‘MRCVS’ provides kudos and authority, but, on occasion, people’s preconceptions of ‘a vet’ need to be blown away...



What does the removal of Veterinary Inspector powers mean for Official Veterinarians?

Simon Hall, Veterinary Director at the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA), explains the imminent change.

New arrangements come into force in April 2014

A HVLA has recently announced that Official Veterinarians (OVs) will no longer hold appointments as Veterinary Inspectors under the Animal Health Act 1981. This change, which comes in effect on 6 April 2014, is part of wider plans to modernise our relationship with OVs.

Veterinary Inspector (VI) status conveys legal powers which are seldom used by OVs, for example, powers of entry to premises, and powers to test, treat, sample and detain. It's no longer appropriate for such authority to be given to those who don't need it. Removal also reduces any concerns about potential conflicts of interest and, following advice from the tax authorities, simplifies responsibilities for payment of tax and National Insurance.

In future, situations requiring the use of legal powers will be managed differently. For example, with respect to TB testing, the most significant current use of VI powers, legislative changes are being introduced that automatically apply movement restrictions to herds in which reactors are identified without the need to serve a TB2 restriction notice. If there is a requirement to exercise legal powers, such as to gain access to premises where entry has been denied, this will, as now, need to be managed by AHVLA staff, who retain VI powers.

The RCVS recognises the rationale for the proposed changes, including the expected requirements of the proposed Animal Health Framework Directive and the fact that statutory VI powers are only required by OVs in discrete circumstances (such as imposing TB restriction notices and in assisting AHVLA in dealing with large scale disease outbreaks).

The RCVS has noted that domestic legislation concerning TB testing is changing and in future VI powers will no longer be required by OVs, as automatic legislative restrictions will apply when a Tuberculin reactor is disclosed. Furthermore, the RCVS is reassured that mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that, in the event of a major disease outbreak, sufficient numbers of OVs can be given temporary VI powers.

The RCVS also noted that AHVLA has consulted widely on the proposals and neither veterinary associations nor individual veterinary surgeons have raised any significant concerns regarding the proposals.

It is important to understand that the removal of these powers doesn't affect the authority conveyed by the OV appointment in all other respects. This includes the ability to sign certificates in an official capacity where enforcement powers are not required. The current OV stamp would remain in use, but may not be required by all.

I don't foresee any adverse impact on the level of authority the OV will have with farmers. There are no known instances where OVs have needed to invoke VI powers in order to perform their work, and a recent AHVLA consultation suggested that most OVs are unclear that they even currently hold these powers.

This change also removes a potential conflict of interest, as OVs will no longer be required to exercise enforcement powers over their clients.

AHVLA is an executive agency working on behalf of the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Scottish Government and Welsh Government. The agency was formed on 1 April 2011, following the merger of Animal Health and the Veterinary Laboratories Agency. Its role is to safeguard animal health and welfare as well as public health, protect the economy and enhance food security through research, surveillance and inspection.

Extra-mural studies survey

Thanks to those who responded

Earlier this year we conducted a survey with recent veterinary graduates about their experiences of extra-mural studies (EMS) while they were studying for their degrees.

The aim of the survey was to gather information about how EMS is working in practice and its educational value.

We would like to thank the 287 graduates who responded to our survey for their thoughts and feedback. We are currently in the process of analysing the feedback in order to get a picture of how well EMS is working for students and the role that it plays in their learning experience. In addition, the feedback will be used to inform any future discussions about EMS.

Getting back into practice life

Returners' supervision period

Veterinary nurses who are applying to return to the Register after a period of five years' absence or more are reminded that they have to go through a Period of Supervised Practice (PSP) before being restored.

"Veterinary nurses in the PSP should keep an ongoing record of their progress."

The PSP is a period during which veterinary nurses are supervised by a mentor – either a vet or an experienced VN – to allow them to refresh their skills and restore their clinical confidence before rejoining the Register. The period must take place for a minimum of 17 weeks on a full-time basis, or the part-time equivalent, and should normally be at an RCVS-approved VN Training Practice or a general practice or hospital accredited under the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS).

Veterinary nurses in the PSP should keep an ongoing record of their progress, in conjunction with their mentor, and aim to complete the period within a year. Once completed, veterinary nurses can apply for restoration to the Register by completing a registration form and Declaration of Completion – signed by their mentor – and by paying a fee.

For more details, please visit the 'Voluntary removal and restoration' section of our website, which can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/registration, or contact our Veterinary Nursing Department on 020 7202 0788 or vetnursing@rcvs.org.uk.

You can find your nearest VN Training Practice or PSS-accredited general practice or hospital by using our Find a Vet search tool on www.findavet.org.uk.

Setting international standards for veterinary education

We host international accreditors meeting

Representatives of veterinary education from across the world met at our offices in London recently for the latest meeting of the International Accreditors Working Group (IAWG). The group has been working to harmonise accreditation standards among the main veterinary accrediting bodies, in the interests of setting common standards for veterinary education across different countries and regions.

In addition to RCVS staff and Council members, delegates from the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC), the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) and the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) attended the meeting, which looked at ways in which accreditation standards and procedures could be brought closer together. Also discussed was the success of recent international joint visitations by representatives from each organisation to accredit veterinary degrees both in the UK and abroad.

At the meeting it was agreed to recommend to each of the parent accrediting bodies that these joint visitations should continue. A number of logistical issues were discussed and improvements identified to smooth the process of planning and reporting on joint university visits across the various jurisdictions. As all the member organisations' accreditation procedures and criteria were undergoing review,

it was agreed that the group would continue to share information between themselves and focus on harmonising their accreditation standards. It was also agreed that it would be important for each body to continue to contribute to the wider international debates about veterinary education standards, promoting best practice and the sharing of expertise between member organisations.



CPD monitoring – coming soon

How we will audit your CPD this year

As part of our proactive approach to monitoring continuing professional development (CPD), this year we will be calling in the records of those vets who have failed to declare that they are compliant with our minimum requirements.

“All those who were non-compliant will have their records requested again next year to check on progress.”

We will also be looking at a random sample of CPD records of those who have confirmed they are compliant, for comparative purposes. As part of the annual registration renewal process, we have asked all practising vets to confirm – either through the 'My Account' area on the RCVS website or the paper registration renewal form – that they have complied with our minimum requirements of 105 hours of CPD over a three-year period. Later this year, we will be writing to all those who did not confirm they were compliant asking them to submit a copy of their CPD Record Card or grant us permission to view their records on the online Professional Development Record (PDR).

Records will be analysed to determine the relative proportions of the types of CPD that have been undertaken and identify where further guidance on meeting the requirements may be necessary.

Christine Warman, Head of Education, says: “Our minimum requirement for 105 hours of CPD over three years was brought into the *Code of Professional Conduct* in 2012 and so, after 2015, those who persistently fail to comply with CPD requirements and respond to requests for records will be in breach of the *Code*. The purpose of this monitoring process is to see what proportion of vets are non-compliant, and to develop further guidance on meeting the CPD requirements going forward.

“All those who were non-compliant will have their records requested again next year to check on progress.”

For more advice and guidance about CPD for vets, please visit www.rcvs.org.uk/cpd.

Please remember to sign up to our online PDR – the most efficient and user-friendly way of recording your CPD. The platform also allows you to develop a learning plan and upload documents related to your CPD. Please visit www.rcvs-pdr.org.uk to register.



Update on Advanced Practitioner status

New 'middle tier' accreditation set to launch this year

Our new Advanced Practitioner status will be launched this autumn, following the approval in principle of the guidance notes for prospective applicants at February's Education Committee meeting.

Advanced Practitioner status was approved by Council in November last year and will now form a 'middle tier' accreditation between the standard veterinary degree and those with RCVS Specialist status. Applications for the status are due to be accepted from this autumn.

In order to apply, vets need to have at least five years' experience in practice since graduation and hold an up-to-date continuing professional

development (CPD) record. Applicants would also need to hold one of a number of postgraduate qualifications – those who already hold the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP) with a designation, or one of the 'old style' RCVS Certificates, will be able to apply, as well as those who hold equivalent clinical postgraduate qualifications and other relevant postgraduate masters' degrees.

Those accepted on to the list will be recredited every five years and will be expected to have undertaken a minimum of 250 hours of CPD over that period, half of which should be in their chosen field.

The RCVS Operational Board has also approved the fee levels for Advanced Practitioner status. The cost of initial applications is £50; an annual fee of £110 must also be paid to remain on the list of Advanced Practitioners.

The detailed guidance for applicants and the list of designations available will be published later this year. The online application system for Advanced Practitioner status is also currently in development. Please continue to look out for updates on our website and publications. You can also contact our Education Department on 020 7202 0791 or education@rcvs.org.uk.

New awarding organisations for VNs

Central Qualifications and City & Guilds fully approved

For the first time, student veterinary nurses now have a choice of approved awarding organisations for the Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing, after our VN Education Subcommittee fully approved Central Qualifications and City & Guilds to deliver the qualification.

The approval was granted in December last year and the organisations are the first two to be approved for the Diploma since we decided to wind down our awarding organisation status in order to avoid potential conflict of interest issues with our role as a regulator.

Julie Dugmore, Head of Veterinary Nursing, explains: "Gaining full approval means that students achieving the Level 3 Diploma from either organisation will now not have to pass the RCVS pre-registration Objectively Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) in addition to their Diploma exams.

"This is a landmark for the profession as, up until now, there was only one approved awarding organisation – the RCVS – for Further Education veterinary nurse training."

In a series of VN Admissions Ceremonies held in January, a number of City & Guilds students – including Elliott Page and Gemma Ellam (pictured

with Julie Dugmore and VN Council Chair, Kathy Kissick) – were officially welcomed into the profession.

Other institutions to receive approval were the Royal Agricultural University, which was provisionally approved to award an FdSc in Veterinary Nursing; the Scottish Qualifications Authority, which received full approval to award an HND in Veterinary Nursing; and, Oxford Brookes University, which was provisionally approved to deliver the RCVS Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing.

Ending our awarding organisation status

We are in the process of submitting our formal Surrender of Recognition to Ofqual, the qualifications and examinations regulator, to wind down RCVS Awards, our awarding organisation.

The Surrender of Recognition will make provision for RCVS Awards students by ensuring that there is support in place for them to achieve their award by the end of 2015. We will continue our role of regulating the standard of education for veterinary nurses by approving and monitoring veterinary nursing qualifications and awarding institutions.

"This is a landmark for the profession as, up until now, there was only one approved awarding organisation."



Accreditation 'down under'

Approval granted to two Australian veterinary degrees



We have approved the veterinary degrees of two Australian universities, following joint visitations conducted with colleagues from the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC).

In March 2013, RCVS Council members Dr Barry Johnson and Professor Jo Price took part in an accreditation visit to the University of Melbourne in concert with the AVBC. Following their recommendation, the RCVS Education Committee agreed to grant the degree continuing recognition.

Following a joint visit in May 2013, and a supplementary visit in November of the same year,

the University of Adelaide's veterinary degree was granted conditional approval for three years by RCVS Council in March, on condition that all the recommendations in the report are fulfilled by the time of the next visit. The next visit will take place in 2016 and we will be sending a representative.

This month, RCVS Council member Professor Stephen May will be chairing a short follow-up visit to the University of Nottingham to see how the degree programme has continued to develop since it was initially approved in 2011.

Professor Susan Dawson will be chairing a joint visitation between the RCVS and the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) to the University of Bristol in November.

The Operational Board has agreed to start charging an administration fee for overseas universities seeking accreditation for their veterinary degrees. As of this month, overseas universities will pay a fee to the College, in addition to travel, subsistence and loss-of-earnings costs to RCVS visitors.

Consultation on new Fellowship proposals

Profession to be asked for views

RCVS Council has agreed to undertake a two-month consultation with the profession on developing a new-style RCVS Fellowship.

The proposals put forward in the consultation paper have been developed by a Fellowship Working Party, chaired by Professor Gary England, which was set up by the Education Committee to consider the future of the Fellowship and propose new routes to expand it, and consider the 'learned society' concept. This work follows up on recommendations from the earlier Specialisation Working Party, chaired by Professor Sir Kenneth Calman, whose proposals for specialists and advanced practitioners were approved by Council in 2012.

Responses to the consultation will be considered by the Fellowship Working Party, and draft proposals for the new Fellowship will be put forward to Education Committee and, if approved, to Council.

We will publish the consultation paper on our website in the near future, together with an online questionnaire, and would encourage all members to consider the proposals and respond with their views.

A new Day One dawns

Day One Competences updated following consultation

Following a consultation with the profession and other stakeholders, which received almost 500 responses, a newly-improved set of Day One Competences was approved by our Education Committee in February.

Day One Competences are the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes that we require veterinary graduates to have obtained by the time they graduate, to ensure that they are safe to practise from day one in whichever area of the profession they decide to work. The competences provide the foundation for veterinary schools when they devise their curricula and have been adopted across Europe, as well as in Australia and New Zealand.

Prior to the Education Committee's recent approval, the competences had not been updated since 2002, and so, last year, a Working Party chaired by RCVS Council member David Catlow was set up to review them to make sure they were still fit for purpose, and continued to reflect both current and future expectations of the level of competence to be expected of new veterinary graduates when entering the profession. An online consultation was undertaken and we received responses from vets in education and in practice, as well as veterinary nurses, students and animal owners.

The majority of responses to the consultation indicated widespread support for the competences, and provided us with an indication of where additional clarification was needed.

The new edition covers more or less the same areas as the previous version, but the opportunity has been taken to improve the wording and provide additional guidance to aid the interpretation of each competence. The Day One Competences have been brought into line with the *Code of Professional Conduct*, as well as reflecting the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) requirements for 'day one' competence for veterinarians internationally.

"The majority of responses to the consultation indicated widespread support for the competences."

To complement the Day One Competences, veterinary students are also provided with access to an online log of practical and clinical skills and procedures (some of which will go beyond 'day one' expectations), in which they can record and reflect on their developing experience while at university. The Student Experience Log is part of the Professional Development Record, which students will go on to use once they graduate to maintain their online Professional Development Phase (PDP) and continuing professional development (CPD) records.

You can find the new list of Day One Competences at www.rcvs.org.uk/education/approving-veterinary-degrees.



VN CPD audit results

Many VNs still not meeting requirement

The fourth annual audit of continuing professional development (CPD) for veterinary nurses took place last year and the results, presented to the VN Education Subcommittee in December, found that almost a quarter of those who were randomly sampled were not meeting the minimum requirements.

All registered veterinary nurses (RVNs) are required to complete 45 hours of CPD over a three-year period and the audit, which was conducted between July and October, aimed to raise awareness of the obligation while assessing how many were meeting it.

The audit involved three groups of RVNs. The first was a random sample of 562 across all UK postal areas, excluding those who had been audited in

2012; the second group was of 231 RVNs whose returns in the previous year fell short of the overall requirement; the third group was of 54 RVNs who, despite reminders, failed to respond to the request to submit their CPD records in 2012.

Out of the random sample some 125 RVNs (22.4%) did not achieve their obligation of 45 hours over a three-year period. The most frequent reasons given for not having completed the requirement included maternity leave, family commitments and part-time working.

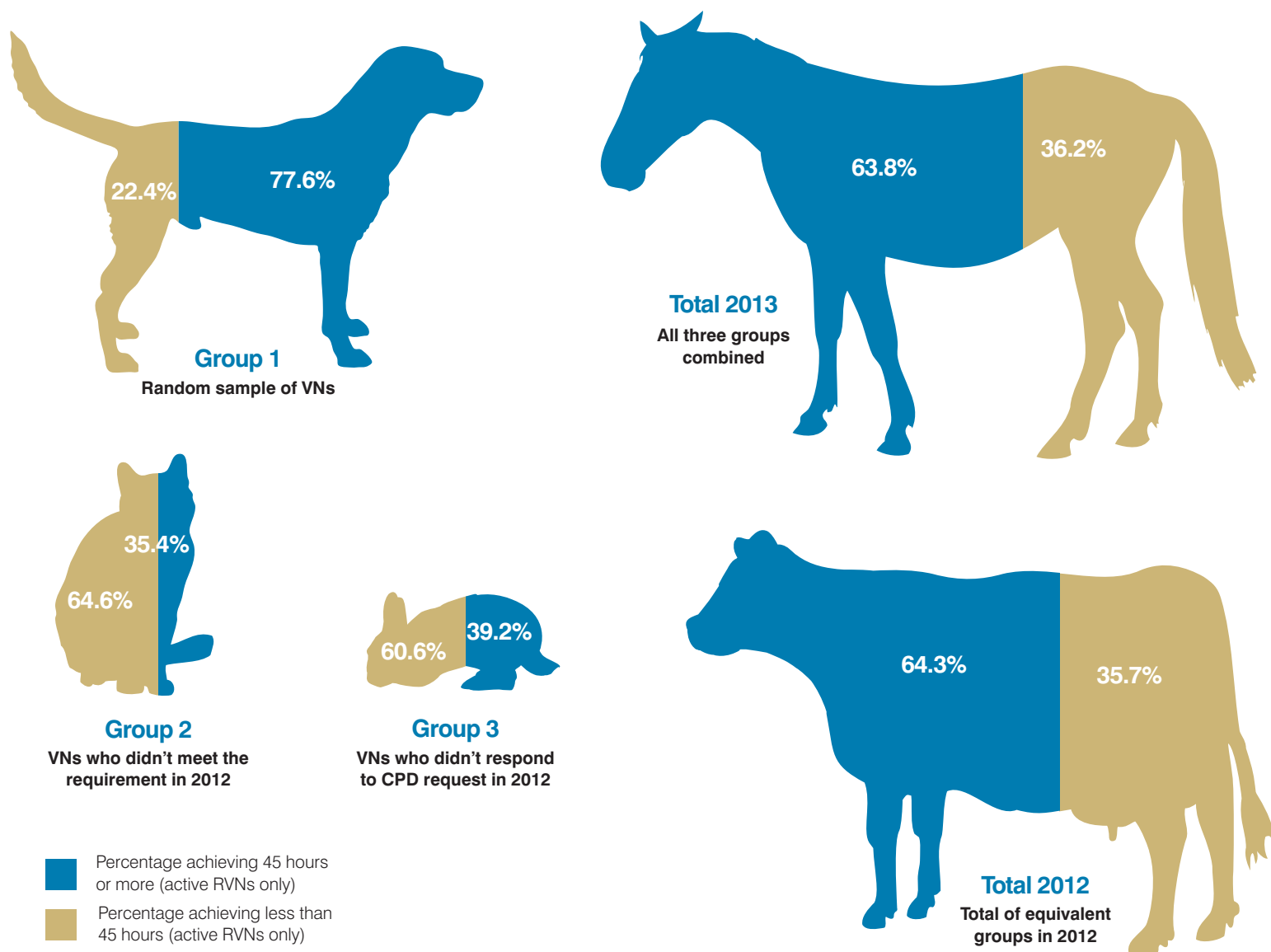
Commenting on the findings Julie Dugmore, Head of Veterinary Nursing, said: "Even if veterinary nurses are on a career break it is important that they keep in touch with the latest developments in the profession and keep both their clinical and non-clinical skills up-to-date. We do allow a

degree of flexibility with fulfilling the requirement so, if in one year you are not able to complete 15 hours of CPD you can make up the difference in following years.

"It is also important to stress that CPD needn't be expensive and that, of the CPD activities we accept, very few require substantial costs. What's important is that these activities demonstrate progression of a veterinary nurse's capabilities and competence."

For more details about CPD, including the type of activities that you can engage in and keeping a record of your activities, please visit www.rcvs.org.uk/vncpd.

The full details of last year's CPD audit results can be found in the charts below.



Out with the old

Old PDP website being phased out

We would like to remind all recent graduates that the old Professional Development Phase (PDP) website is being discontinued on 30 September this year and that anyone who graduated before 2012 should complete their PDP before then, or manually transfer their records over to the PDP component of the Professional Development Record (PDR).

If you feel you need more time to complete the PDP or need help to manually transfer your record, please contact Stephanie Platt, PDP Education Officer, on pdp@rcvs.org.uk or 020 7202 0736.

Exam dates

The **Diploma** written examinations will be held at the RCVS, Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF, on **Tuesday 8 July 2014**.

Closing date for entry is **1 March**, although as this is a Saturday, applications will be accepted up until midday on **Monday 3 March**.

Dates for clinical, oral and practical examinations will be published and notified separately.

Deadlines

Specialist status

Specialist annual fees are due on **Tuesday 1 July 2014**.

Specialists who first listed in 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010 are required to reapply by **Friday 15 August 2014**.

The deadline for new applications is **Friday 5 September 2014**.

Fellowship

The deadline for currently registered Fellowship candidates to submit their reports to the Committee is **Friday 1 August 2014**. This is also the date for **new applications**.

The RCVS Diploma of Fellowship is the College's oldest and most prestigious award. It is awarded following examination of a thesis, or following examination of a collection of the candidate's work to assess their 'meritorious contributions to learning' over a period of 15 years.

The subject of a thesis may cover any topic provided it relates to an "aspect of the art or science of veterinary medicine, whether clinical, experimental or otherwise, or may relate to the general development of the veterinary profession". The work must demonstrate originality and significantly advance knowledge of the subject.

Further information about application procedures may be found on the RCVS website at www.rcvs.org.uk/fellowship – or by contacting the Education Department, on education@rcvs.org.uk or 020 7202 0791.

Kathy Kissick RVN

Veterinary Nurses Council

Kathy Kissick qualified as a Registered Animal Nursing Assistant (RANA) in 1983 and, after progressing to a head nursing position at a practice in Lancashire, decided to take up a teaching career alongside her clinical one. Currently she is Head of the School of Veterinary Nursing and Farriery Science at Myerscough College, where she is responsible for a team of staff and more than 350 veterinary nursing students.

Kathy was elected to VN Council in 2008 and has been its Chair since 2012. Here are some of her thoughts on the role of VN Council and the profession in general. As Chair of VN Council, Kathy also sits on the RCVS Operational Board, which oversees the management of College business.

What does VN Council do?

VN Council has overall responsibility for all matters concerning veterinary nurse training, post-qualification awards – including the RCVS Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing – and the registration (listing) of qualified nurses. With all this in mind, the members of Council always have as their mantra the key statement in the veterinary nursing declaration: "that, above all, my constant endeavour will be to ensure the health and welfare of animals committed to my care".

However, the Council meetings are a small part of what the members of VN Council do. Members are ambassadors for veterinary nursing and the RCVS and, as such, representatives from Council attend admissions ceremonies where they take new nurses through the declaration; they represent veterinary nurses on other RCVS committees; and make presentations and speeches at events on behalf of the veterinary nursing profession.

How does VN Council decide its focus?

Our focus often depends on what is happening nationally in terms of welfare, and political, educational and economic issues that affect veterinary nursing – some issues need to be dealt with urgently but are, ultimately, transient. However, our primary focus is always on ensuring the welfare and care of animals and maintaining and improving good veterinary nursing practice.

What are VN Council's main priorities this year?

Our main priorities are further developing the Education Subcommittee and helping to develop a new Royal Charter, to formalise regulation of veterinary nurses, and also seeking statutory protection of the title 'veterinary nurse'.

We will also be more extensively promoting the VN Golden Jubilee Award so that those who have made an exceptional contribution to veterinary nursing can be officially recognised (see page 5 for details of how to nominate someone). Other priorities include the need to establish a working party to strategically manage approval of overseas VN qualifications.

What makes the work of VN Council useful to the rest of the profession?

VN Council comprises VNs, veterinary surgeons and lay members who are all passionate about the profession and the impact that veterinary nursing has on patient welfare and care. They are committed to the profession and upholding excellent standards of veterinary nursing training and patient care.

The members are from all walks of life and have chosen to stand for election or appointment because they want to make a difference and want to contribute to maintaining the gold standard of nursing care that the RCVS is known for. They are motivated and engaged enough to lobby the right people and to drive forward the profession to achieve progressive change.



You said, we did

How the College is listening to the profession

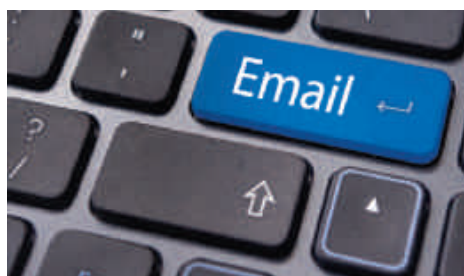
The key aim of our recently published Strategic Plan is to become a first-rate regulator, focused on delivering an excellent service to both the veterinary profession and animal-owning public.

In order to meet this aim the College needs to listen, be responsive to feedback and be willing to innovate and change established practices to provide a better service and, ultimately, to meet our vision of enhancing society through improved animal health and welfare.

Here are just a few examples, from the last year or so, of how we have listened to your feedback and made improvements accordingly.

You: Wanted more time to pay your registration renewal fees.

We: Sent the renewal forms a fortnight earlier than last year.



You: Wanted to be able to communicate more directly with senior management at the College, particularly the CEO.

We: Made Nick Stace's email available to all (nick@rcvs.org.uk) and he also, on invitation, visited a number of practices across the country to discuss the issues affecting them.



You: Wanted to be able to give your home address as your registered address.

We: Are reviewing the Registration Regulations with a view to no longer specifying which address must be given.

You: Wanted a greater diversity of people, particularly women, standing as candidates in RCVS Council elections.

We: Produced a YouTube video and a series of articles encouraging more women to stand for Council elections. This year more than half of those standing are women.



You: Wanted to have paper copies of your continuing professional development (CPD) record even when using the online Professional Development Record (PDR).

We: Added a 'print page' function to the PDR to allow users to print out their CPD records.



You: Wanted the disciplinary process to be independent of RCVS Council.

We: Amended the Veterinary Surgeons Act with a legislative reform order to make the composition of our Preliminary Investigation and Disciplinary Committees separate from that of Council.

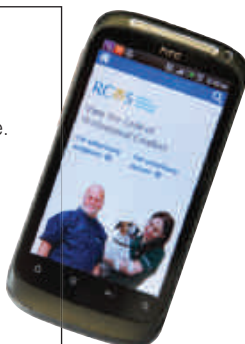
You: Wanted greater clarity on our Day One Competences, which set out the minimum essential knowledge, skills and attitudes that we require of veterinary graduates.

We: Launched a consultation about Day One Competences with the profession, vet students and animal owners and produced a new set based on your feedback.



You: Wanted the *Code of Professional Conduct* to be more accessible online and offline and available while working in practice.

We: Produced an app allowing you to download the *Code* on to smartphones and tablets and put a downloadable PDF of the full *Code*, including supporting guidance, on our website.



You: Asked for forms to change registration category and be restored to the Register to be made more accessible.

We: Made the forms available to download from the website and plan to turn these into interactive web forms in the future.



Poetry, please

The veterinary profession celebrates its artistic side

You: Wanted to be able to more prominently display your Practice Standards Scheme-accredited status to clients.

We: Produced a free waiting-room slideshow to get across key messages about the Scheme, the work involved and the benefits for clients and patients, in addition to window stickers and branded clocks.



You: Wanted to be able to manage more of your details online, as well as paying your fees.

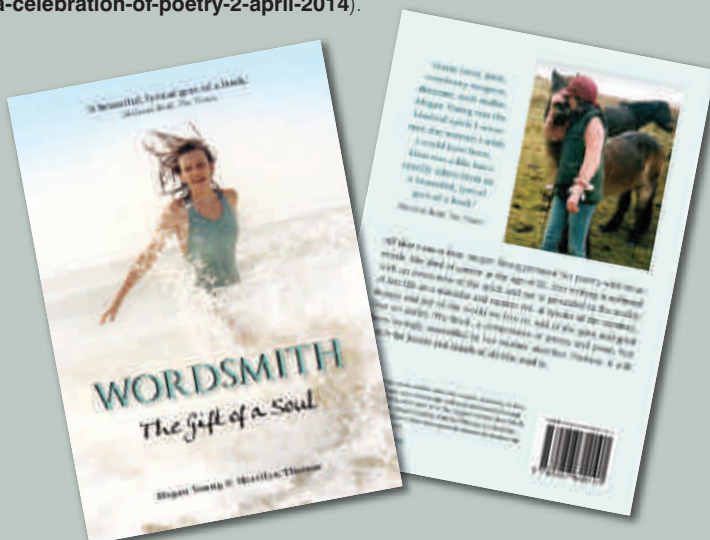
We: Redeveloped the online 'My Account' area of the RCVS website so that you could do just that.



The article on page 10 reminds us of the range of transferable skills that veterinary professionals gain. But many members of the profession have some special individual talents, too. This was brought home, sadly, by the recent publication of a book of poetry from a young equine veterinary surgeon, Megan Young, entitled *Wordsmith: The Gift of a Soul*.

While the poetry contains much that is joyful, the sadness comes from the fact that the book was published posthumously by Megan's mother, Merrilyn Thomas, after Megan passed away aged just 32 following a battle with an unknown form of cancer.

An Edinburgh graduate, Megan went on to practise in Kent, and her book is available via www.wordsmiththebook.com, and from online and traditional bookshops. Her old school, the Stephen Perse Foundation in Cambridge, is organising a poetry prize in her name. The Megan Young Poetry Prize, which carries a theme for its inaugural year of 'the natural world', will be judged by former poet laureate Sir Andrew Motion (www.stephenperse.com/events/a-celebration-of-poetry-2-april-2014).



Meanwhile, a group of veterinary surgeons and nurses with an interest in poetry published a collection last year under the title *My Constant Endeavour* – which you will recognise as part of the veterinary surgeon and veterinary nurse declaration on admission.

Roy Batt, who edited the collection, reports back from a recent meeting of the group, which took place at Belgravia House.

"On 1 November 2013, 15 of the 38 contributors to the book, with their partners, met for a most enjoyable evening at the Royal College. We came from far and wide. Most of us had never met before, and some had never been to the Royal College.

"The conversation was interrupted for a time to let each writer say a few words or to read from the book. One played a recording of his group, since some of the poems are lyrics. Others urged us to build on our abilities with poetry and prose, as a body of writers in the veterinary professions. Then conversation was resumed.

"The style in which the College hosted the evening gave us every encouragement. We thank them for their hospitality: we were reluctant to leave the gathering."

My Constant Endeavour, which contains each writer's biography, is illustrated by the late Barry Edwards. Copies are available from Roy Batt (royalvet1@yahoo.co.uk), with profits going to the Barrie Edwards Memorial Fund and to funding research in human pancreatic cancer.

If you would like to participate in future meetings of the group, please contact Roy on the email address above.

From the horse's (cat's, dog's...) mouth

We hear from owners at our Open Day

We held the second of our 'Stakeholder Open Days' on 6 February and although turn-out was rather low, thanks to the tube strike, we had a useful gathering of representatives from organisations that have direct contact with animal owners, such as the Kennel Club, Governing Council of the Cat Fancy, Blue Cross, PDSA, the Animal Behaviour and Training Council and the British Horseracing Authority, as well as

campaigning organisations such as Dog-ED and the Dog Union, and the acting editor of *Dogs Today* magazine.

While the purpose of our first such event (May 2012) had been to bust some myths about the RCVS and our role, February's event was a distinctly more two-way conversation. We were keen to update the group on our current projects and developments, and, more importantly, to hear their views.

Topics covered included the First Rate Regulator research, the Strategic Plan, the development of the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS), 24/7 evidence-gathering and the new Charter consultation.

Delegates found the PSS and 24/7 sessions the most engaging – which is not surprising given their direct impact on animal owners. Discussion was robust and illuminating and has led to a re-think about the way in which we may delineate different types of PSS category (proposed ideas went to the Practice Standards Group in March) and some useful thoughts to feed into the Standards Committee's review of 24/7 provision at the end of March.

All in all a very useful day for us, and, judging from feedback, likewise for our guests, one of whom said: "I found it really informative, and thought the steps the College is making to engage further with pet owners were really positive."

The key suggestion from delegates for improving the day was simply encouraging more people to attend – so, if readers know of any organisation that it might be suitable to invite to a future meeting, please let Lizzie Lockett know, on l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk.



RCVS on the go in Birmingham

BSAVA is the place to be

Come and visit us on stand 104 at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress, 3-6 April, in Birmingham. A team from the RCVS will be ready and waiting to answer any questions you may have, as well as providing information about the new Advanced Practitioner status, to be introduced in autumn this year.

Why not try your hand at our 'Advance to Go' game, and be in with a chance of winning a Kindle Fire? You can also pick up a free aluminium water bottle, to keep you refreshed as you advance with the RCVS.

Chief Executive Nick Stace and Registrar Gordon Hockey will be giving a talk on Saturday 5 April, in Hall 7, with the title: 'What's good for consumers is good for the profession – how resolving disputes quickly is the road to success'. The interactive session will outline our plans for a pilot consumer disputes resolution service. Coffee and pastries will be available from 8.30am, with the talk taking place from 9am to 10.15am.

Turn to page 9 for details about how to book your free Practice Standards surgery on the Friday of BSAVA Congress.

Show winners

LVS and VPMA/SPVS competition winners announced

Over 100 vets and nurses tested their knowledge of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct by taking part in a competition at the London Vet Show on 21 and 22 November 2013.

The competition, which was held on the RCVS stand, consisted of three 'true or false' questions about the Code, covering the topics of delegating Schedule 3 tasks to veterinary nurses, disclosing information about clients and the Practice Standards Scheme.

A quarter of those who took part answered all three questions correctly and, out of those, the winner was Jessie Hetherington (pictured), a veterinary surgeon at the PDSA PetAid Hospital in Sunderland, who won a £50 App Store voucher.

Jessie said: "This was my second time at the London Vet Show – I think it is a fantastic programme of quality CPD, and is amazing value!"

"Thanks to the RCVS for its friendly and informative stand – answering the competition questions on the Code of Professional Conduct was a useful reminder of our professional guidelines, and I never expected I would win!"

RCVS staff were also on hand to provide information and advice to delegates at the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons/Veterinary Practice Management Association Congress,

which was held on 31 January and 1 February at the Celtic Manor Resort near Newport, Wales. Over 400 delegates attended the show, many of whom entered the RCVS competition to win a luxury food hamper. Guests had to correctly answer the following question to be in with a chance of winning:

Q. How many Practice Standards Scheme inspections were carried out in 2013?
a. 368 b. 683 c. 986

The lucky winner was Jo Butterell from Aireworth Vets, Keighley, West Yorkshire, who plumped for the correct answer of 986.



Talk in York

Reaching into the ether

The review of the Practice Standards Scheme, graduate salaries and job prospects, the health and wellbeing of the profession and microchipping were all topics of discussion at our Regional Question Time (RQT) meeting in York, on 23 January.

Around 60 vets, VNs and other members of the practice team attended the meeting, posing questions to a panel made up of members of RCVS and VN Councils.

For those who couldn't make it, we summarised the Q&A on our Twitter account (@RCVS_UK). See right for a speed-date with the meeting, or if you have more time, you can read the full report at www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-events.

Virtual Question Time

Staying with the digital theme, your next chance to put questions to the College will be a Virtual Question Time, hosted by The Webinar Vet on the evening of Tuesday 15 April. This, our second virtual event, will give members of the practice team from across the UK and beyond the opportunity to quiz their regulator.

You can sign up via The Webinar Vet at www.thewebinarvet.com/rcvsvqt, and either submit your questions in advance, or on the night.

Welsh rendezvous

Our next RQT takes place on 22 May at the Village Urban Resort Chester St David's, near Ewloe, North Wales. Those living within reasonable travelling distance will be sent an invitation, but all are welcome – contact Fiona Harcourt for more information, on f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk – or join us via Twitter on the night

Duck-herding, anyone?

It all happens at the LPS

Animal lovers will have the chance to find out more about the role of the RCVS at the London Pet Show, 17-18 May, at Earls Court (www.londonpetshow.co.uk).

Nestling amongst the duck-herding and show-jumping rabbits, our team will be hosting a fun quiz, and also giving advice and information on how to find a veterinary practice, out-of-hours cover, and how we check standards in veterinary education. We will also take the opportunity to ask visitors about proposed changes to the Practice Standards Scheme.

Last year's event was a real eye-opener in terms of the level of public understanding about veterinary regulation, and has influenced some of our communications thinking over the last year.

If you're planning to visit, why not drop by the stand (A855) and say hello.

#RCVSrqt @RCVS_UK 23 Jan



Getting ready to answer questions from vets, VNs and practice managers at our regional meeting tonight in #York #RCVSrqt

President Neil Smith welcoming 60 or so vets, VNs & PMs to our York #RCVSrqt

Prez suggests people keen to know more about our Charter consultation watch our webinar. Follow the link @ www.rcvs.org.uk/consultations #RCVSrqt

Prez: our call for evidence on 24/7 is not a consultation with a proposal for change. We are open-minded & want to hear your views. #RCVSrqt

Prez encouraging vets & VNs to stand for election...make your contribution to your profession. Deadline is 31 Jan <http://rcvs.org.uk/about-us/rcvs-council/council-elections/> ...

Q: what % of practices are not in Practice Standards Scheme? Can you inspect them?

A: ~ 50%. Code says must practise at Core or =. We have no legal right of entry. If reason 2b concerned, have right to ask 4 access #RCVSrqt

Q: means u inspect righteous but not the rest?
A: we legally can't inspect all. Even if we could, would b cost attached. Not perfect, tho.

Nick Stace CEO, we are reviewing PSS to make it more accessible - many reasons to join, none not to. Less bureaucracy for eg. #RCVSrqt

CEO cont'd: We have told Ministers lack of power of entry is weakness but in fact govt looking to remove such powers from orgs #RCVSrqt

Q: what's RCVS doing to ensure vet grads are paid salary commensurate with experience & skills? #RCVSrqt

Prez asked what might b done? Regulate no. of grads might prevent 'race to the bottom', is suggested. Particular concern ref equine #RCVSrqt

Prez: even if UK grads reduced, there r the EU grads, who we must register. Our survey suggests grads not finding it much harder 2 find work

Q: grads unrealistic in expectations? Spend too much time at vet school in hospitals then find routine small animal work 'boring'? #RCVSrqt

Treasurer Bradley Viner: maybe need 2 encourage change in attitude: vet is excellent degree 2 have. Not nec about clinical practice #RCVSrqt

Bradley: altho we can't regulate numbers, we can – and do – regulate standards. #RCVSrqt

L 2 R: Treasurer Bradley Viner, CEO Nick Stace and President Neil Smith taking questions from the floor. #RCVSrqt [pic.twitter.com/JmmZD2UftT](https://twitter.com/JmmZD2UftT)

Q: shld RCVS regulate salary & prices? Prez: not for us. Maybe for BVA? Or in PSS? Q: wld be good for College to show an interest? #RCVSrqt

Prez: 1 danger with min salaries is that that's what people will get. Delegate suggested [min salaries] couldn't be in PSS unless ALL were in PSS #RCVSrqt

Q: if we made public more aware of low vet salaries, would that reduce numbers applying? May be good thing? #RCVSrqt

Council member Niall Connell: vet schools now focusing more on biz skills, which is a positive move. #RCVSrqt

Q: mental health issues a big concern: high achievers, high stress? Prez: key issue, looking at what we can do. Support in practice is key

CEO: Health Protocol aims 2 reduce stress on those with health issues facing complaint. Looking @ research on issues/intervention #RCVSrqt

Q: vets have 2 report criminal convictions, should they have 2 report mental illness? Delegates not keen on this: stigma, hard 2 define etc

Eleanor Ferguson, Head of Prof Conduct: 6 on Health Protocol since summer. Positive; otherwise they might have gone 2 disciplinary #RCVSrqt

Prez rounds up by thanking everyone 4 attending. There are issues we will take back. & pls don't forget to respond to consultations #RCVSrqt



Report to Council, March 2014

PI Committee Chairman Jerry Davies

Since the last Report to Council there have been four Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) meetings. During this period, the PIC has considered 46 new complaints, of which nine were closed; 16 were closed with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon; one was held open; ten were referred to the Veterinary Investigators for visits and interviews; three were adjourned pending the outcome of criminal proceedings; and, seven were referred to solicitors for formal statements to be taken. In addition, the PIC is investigating 33 ongoing complaints.

Health and Performance Protocols

Twelve veterinary surgeons are currently being monitored or considered under the RCVS Health Protocol and two under are being monitored under the RCVS Performance Protocol.

Referrals to Disciplinary Committee (DC)

Since the last Report, the PIC has not referred any new complaints to the DC. There are currently no cases listed or waiting to be listed for DC hearings, although an application for restoration to the Register is due to be heard on 18 and 19 March 2014.

Professional Conduct Department

In the period since the last Council meeting (7 November 2013 to 18 February 2014), 240 new complaints have been registered (the total number of complaints registered between the same dates in 2012/13 was 214) and 239 complaints have been closed.

Veterinary Investigators

During the same period, the four Veterinary Investigators and the Senior Case Manager carried out 28 announced visits, five unannounced visits and one registration visit, during which complainants, veterinary staff, third-party witnesses and the respondent veterinary surgeons were interviewed.

In addition, the Veterinary Investigators and Senior Case Manager are assisting three police forces with investigations relating to allegations of fraud by misrepresentation, the treatment of animals by unqualified persons and practising veterinary surgery when unregistered. They are also liaising with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Investigation Service and Trading Standards over two ongoing investigations.

Audit of closed complaints

Since the last Report, the PIC Chairman has audited ten of the 18 complaints closed at the assessment stage and 17 of the 44 complaints closed at the case examination stage. One case closed at assessment has been re-opened and the Senior Case Manager has requested the veterinary surgeon's written response. On three complaints closed at assessment, the Chairman noted that whilst the complaints did not cross the threshold for serious professional misconduct, it may have been preferable for the complaints to have been closed with advice issued to the veterinary surgeons involved.

The full report is available at www.rcvs.org.uk/pic.

Mr Matthew Morgan

Inquiry concerning: conviction and imprisonment for four counts of pet insurance fraud

DC decision: remove name from Register

Registration status: has until 18 March 2014 to appeal decision, otherwise name to be removed from Register on 19 March 2014

On Tuesday, 11 February 2014, the RCVS Disciplinary Committee (DC) removed a Surrey vet from the Register of Veterinary Surgeons after he was convicted and imprisoned on four counts of pet insurance fraud.

Matthew Morgan was convicted, upon his own confession, of dishonestly making false representations to make gain for himself/another or to cause loss to other/ expose other to risk on 22 July 2013 at the Central Criminal Court and, on 23 August 2013, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

The DC heard that Mr Morgan, who was not present at the hearing but represented by Mr Laurence Imrie, Solicitor Advocate, had, between 13 November 2009 and 21 December 2012, taken out 18 insurance policies for veterinary cover with

Mr Kumaran Kanesh

Inquiry concerning: convictions for wounding with intent and false imprisonment

DC decision: remove name from Register

Registration status: has until 18 March 2014 to appeal decision, otherwise name to be removed from Register on 19 March 2014

On 13 February 2014, the RCVS Disciplinary Committee (DC) directed that the name of a veterinary surgeon should be removed from the Register, having found him unfit to practise veterinary surgery following his Crown Court convictions for wounding with intent and false imprisonment.

At the one-day hearing, the DC heard how Kumaran Kanesh, who completed his veterinary studies in Sri Lanka before moving to the UK in 2003 to undertake further studies, had been sentenced to four restriction orders under the Mental Health Act at the Kingston Crown Court on 25 March 2013, following his attack on a woman and child in August 2012.

During the summer of 2012, following a period of worsening mental illness and increasing paranoia about people, Mr Kanesh had launched a pre-

four separate insurance providers – Direct Line, Pet Plan, Pet Protect and Sainsbury's – in relation to a number of pets. Of these pets, only one, namely his pet cat, actually existed – the rest were fictitious.

During this period, the respondent made 50 claims on the insurance policies, seeking payment to reimburse him for the cost of veterinary treatment for the fictitious animals and also making false claims for treatment for his own pet cat, including for invented injuries 'sustained' during a non-existent car accident. As a result of the claims, the insurance companies made 54 payments to Mr Morgan to which he was not entitled, totalling £198,295.

At the time he began committing the offences Mr Morgan was working as a veterinary surgeon at a practice in Kent and, in order to support his fraudulent claims, used the practice's official stationery and stamps to fabricate invoices, clinical records and insurance claims. He continued to make fraudulent claims after leaving the practice, having taken the practice's headed paper and stamp with him.

Mr Morgan's actions came to light in December 2012 after submitting a claim to Direct Line for an operation on the spine of his own cat. The insurance company became suspicious and contacted his former practice which confirmed he had not treated the cat. An investigation by the insurers and, subsequently, the police began.

On 31 December 2012 Mr Morgan voluntarily attended a police station where he admitted fraudulently claiming £5,534.52 from Pet Plan and £7,610.03 from Direct Line, citing financial pressure caused by divorce, but failed to admit to the rest of his fraudulent activities. He was arrested on 25 January 2013 and, upon searching his home, police found the stamp and headed paper along with documents relating to the insurance claims.

"As a result of the claims, the insurance companies made 54 payments to Mr Morgan to which he was not entitled, totalling £198,295."

The Disciplinary Committee, in considering the conduct of Mr Morgan, took into account a number of serious aggravating factors. This included the very high degree of financial gain from the fraudulent activities, the fact that there were 50 separate premeditated acts of dishonesty over a three-year period, the betrayal of trust of his former employer and the insurance companies, the potential reputational risk for his former employer, the abuse of his position as a veterinary surgeon and the fact that completion of insurance claims is an act of veterinary certification.

The Committee also considered, in mitigation, a letter from Mr Morgan to the Committee, three testimonials and representation from his legal representative. These cited the fact that Mr Morgan, when he committed the fraudulent activities, was heavily in debt, had serious domestic difficulties and was suffering from depression, although no medical evidence was submitted to the Committee.

However, it was the Committee's decision that the sanction of removing Mr Morgan from the Register had to be taken, in order to protect animal welfare and maintain public confidence in the profession.

Chairing and speaking on behalf of the Disciplinary Committee its Vice-Chairman, Ms Judith Webb, said: "The Committee is of the view that the Respondent's conduct in this case was deplorable... Such conduct can only undermine public confidence in the profession. The Respondent abused his position as a veterinary surgeon to perpetrate a deliberate long-term fraud on insurers for personal gain.

"The Committee is conscious that its role is not to punish but to protect animal welfare and maintain public confidence in the profession.

Due to the serious nature of the matters before it...the Committee has no doubt that the only suitable sanction is to direct the Registrar to remove the Respondent's name from the Register."

planned assault against Mrs A and Child B. In what the Crown Court Judge described as an extremely violent, deeply distressing and seemingly frenzied attack, Mr Kanesh bound and gagged Child B and Mrs A, before proceeding to cut Child B's eyelids with a knife. When Mrs A managed to free herself and tried to protect the child, Mr Kanesh then attacked her, stabbing her 17 times in the subsequent struggle. Both Child B and Mrs A ultimately managed to escape, where they were assisted by members of the public, before the police arrived to arrest Mr Kanesh. The Committee noted that both Mrs A and Child B had since made a good physical recovery from their injuries, although their psychological wellbeing was still in question.

Following the attack, Mr Kanesh was remanded in custody before being transferred to Broadmoor Hospital, where he was retained under the Mental Health Act until sentencing. Consultant psychiatrist Dr Samrat Sengupta told the sentencing hearing that Mr Kanesh suffered from paranoid schizophrenia with symptoms characterised by "persecutory and self-reverential delusional ideations" about members of his family and the wider public. He added that the degree of Mr Kanesh's illness warranted his ongoing hospitalisation and treatment, and that the possibility of relapse from failing to take his medication was a real concern. Passing sentence, his Honour Judge Price QC told Mr Kanesh:

"Because of your untreated illness, your mental illness overwhelmed you and you behaved in an extremely violent and deeply distressing way... I am quite satisfied that you committed those acts while suffering from mental illness. The tragedy is that if you had taken the medication then perhaps none of this would have occurred."

At the outset of the Disciplinary Committee hearing, which Mr Kanesh attended escorted by a mental health nurse, he admitted the convictions and that they rendered him unfit to practise veterinary surgery. Mrs A had written to the College stating she was supportive of Mr Kanesh and that she understood his behaviour had resulted from his ill-health. Dr Sengupta also wrote to the College stating that Mr Kanesh had since responded well to medication with complete resolution of his symptoms and had been moved to a lesser secure environment for further rehabilitation.

In its submissions to the Committee, the College stated that Mr Kanesh's convictions represented some of the most serious offences that it could consider, which, had he been of sound mind, would have led to a significant period of imprisonment. His conduct was of such an exceptionally serious nature as to significantly damage the reputation of the veterinary profession and undermine the public's confidence in it, regardless of the underlying reasons. The Committee accepted

the College's submissions and found Mr Kanesh unfit to practise veterinary surgery.

In determining an appropriate sanction, the Committee acknowledged that Mr Kanesh was suffering from a severe, acute psychiatric disorder and was unknown to the UK mental health services at the time of the incident, but noted that he had caused serious physical and mental harm to two individuals, and that his actions had involved a breach of trust, a vulnerable victim, premeditation and a high level of violence.

"The degree of Mr Kanesh's illness warranted his ongoing hospitalisation and treatment, and that the possibility of relapse from failing to take his medication was a real concern."

Speaking on behalf of the Disciplinary Committee, its Chairman, Professor Peter Lees, said: "The seriousness of these offences is self-evidently damaging to the reputation of the veterinary profession and the confidence of the public in the profession. [We] accept that if [Mr Kanesh] fails to maintain his regimen of medication, there is a real risk of a possible relapse... The only possible sanction in this case is to direct the Registrar to remove [Mr Kanesh's] name from the Register."

Mr Edward Gillams

Inquiry concerning: charges relating to discharge of a patient, provision of advice and treatment options

DC decision: case dismissed

Registration status: name remains on Register

On the 6 December 2013, the RCVS Disciplinary Committee (DC) dismissed a case against a Southampton veterinary surgeon after finding him not guilty of serious professional misconduct, saying at all times that he acted in the best interests of a dog under his care.

At the onset of the five-day hearing, the charges against Edward Gillams MRCVS were that, whilst in practice at Vets Now in Southampton in 2011, he discharged a dog that he knew or ought to have known was in no fit state to be discharged, and, at the same time, failed to provide adequate advice and information to the dog's owners, particularly with regard to an alternative plan to discharge and treatment options.

The dog, an Italian Spinone called Zola, had first been taken to the Vets4Pets veterinary clinic in Southampton at 4.30pm on 2 November 2011, where gastric torsion was diagnosed. During a subsequent gastrotomy (surgical procedure to open the stomach), 3kg of sausages and plastic wrappings were removed. Zola was discharged three days later, with a guarded prognosis from the operating veterinary surgeon. Zola's condition deteriorated that same evening, so his owners called the Vets4Pets practice and were referred to their out-of-hours provider, Vets Now, where Mr Gillams was on duty. On admitting Zola, the only

information available to Mr Gillams was what the dog's owners were able to tell him.

The Committee heard differing witness accounts from the dog's owners and from Mr Gillams regarding what tests and examinations were to be performed, and what advice and options were suggested. Ultimately, Zola was hospitalised overnight (despite some reluctance for this from one of his owners), given pain relief and antibiotics and placed on a drip; he was then to be collected by his owners first thing for transfer back to Vets4Pets. The next morning, Zola was described as 'sternally recumbent but responsive', holding his head up but not moving and not making any attempt to get up. Mr Gillams carried Zola to his owner's car for transport back to the Vets4Pets practice. He considered that he had discharged his duty to provide advice, as this was given the night before and in the circumstances prevailing in the morning there was no obligation to repeat this. Zola died on the journey between the two practices.

"He discharged his obligations in a manner wholly consistent with the standards of a competent vet in difficult circumstances."

Before reaching a decision, the Committee considered, in detail, the expert evidence of witnesses for both the College and Mr Gillams, which provided some conflicting views on Mr Gillams' actions. It also referred to the RCVS guidance available to Mr Gillams at the time through the *RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct 2010*.

The Committee noted that both experts agreed that Mr Gillams could not have known Zola was about to die when he discharged him and that it was a difficult decision for Mr Gillams to make, but expressed differing views about the fitness of the dog to be discharged and whether it was in its best interests to be discharged. The Committee rejected the contention that Mr Gillams ought to have known that Zola was not fit to be discharged, and instead considered appropriate his decision to discharge him into the care of his original veterinary surgeon. It felt that continuity of care would actually be better maintained in this manner, rather than a third veterinary surgeon taking over the case.

Regarding provision of adequate advice, the Committee accepted Mr Gillams' evidence that he was frustrated that the owners refused him permission to undertake the diagnostic work necessary to treat Zola effectively, and that he had no other clinical information to work with.

Chairing and speaking on behalf of the Disciplinary Committee, its Vice-Chairman, Ms Judith Webb, said: "The Committee expresses its sincere condolences to [the owners] for the loss of their much loved family pet Zola and recognises that this loss caused the family great distress."

Ms Webb added: "The Committee accepts that [Mr Gillams] discharged his obligations to Zola and to [his owners] in a manner wholly consistent with the standards of a competent veterinary surgeon in difficult circumstances. He leaves with no stain on his character or professional ability."

Full details of disciplinary hearings are available at www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary.

RVN PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE



Report to VN Council, February 2014

RVNPIC Chairman Lynne Hill

Since the last Report to VN Council there have been three Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVNPIC) meetings.

New complaints received

During this period, there have been seven new complaints received against registered veterinary nurses (RVNs). Of these, one is currently under 'Assessment' (consideration whether there is 'potential' for a case against the RVN); four are under 'Enquiries' (investigation); one is being considered by the Case Examiners; and, one was referred to the RVNPIC for consideration.

New complaints considered

The RVNPIC has considered one new complaint during this period, involving a criminal prosecution in Scotland. The Senior Case Manager is liaising with the Procurator Fiscal's Office and the Committee has adjourned the matter, pending the outcome of the court hearing.

Ongoing investigations

The RVNPIC is currently investigating two ongoing complaints. One has been referred to the police and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Investigation Service for investigation; the other has been referred to

the College's solicitors for formal statements to be taken.

Health Protocol

One complaint is being considered under the RCVS Health Protocol and the RVN concerned has agreed to undergo a medical assessment by the Medical Examiner.

Bogus registered veterinary nurse (conviction)

The Senior Case Manager is currently liaising with Humberside Police regarding a suspected bogus veterinary surgeon and veterinary nurse team. The outcome of the police investigation will be included in a future Report.

Referrals to RVN Disciplinary Committee

Since the last Report, the RVNPIC has not referred any new cases to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

The full report is available at www.rcvs.org.uk.

He showed the profession the way forward

Founder of the Animal Health Trust remembered

In the latest of our columns on the history of the profession, veterinary historian Bruce Vivash Jones and RCVS Knowledge Librarian Clare Boulton outline the life of WR Wooldridge, who encouraged the profession to develop its scientific base.

When the President of the RCVS handed Walter Reginald Wooldridge his diploma in 1924 he asked him, “How do you envisage your career?” Wooldridge said he intended to devote himself to research, only to be told, “Oh, there is no future in veterinary research”. He was aghast by the remark, and never forgot, it made him determined to show that research was the way forward for the profession.

Typically he started with his own education, adding the postnominals BSc, MSc, PhD and FRIC, plus honorary DVSc and DSc, resulting from research and teaching posts in Cambridge and London. He was elected President of the Veterinary Research Club in 1931 and the National Veterinary Medical Association (NVMA – now the British Veterinary Association) in 1941, for a two-year period. His ideas were developing, leading to notable presidential addresses, with his message that the profession must develop a long-term policy ‘without undue delay’.

“Wooldridge is best remembered for founding what is now the the Animal Health Trust.”

In 1937–39 and 1943–44 Wooldridge was a key member of the Interdepartmental Committee on Veterinary Education, chaired by Dr Thomas Loveday. The Committee’s recommendations not only resulted in all veterinary education being undertaken in the universities, with funding being available for research and closer collaboration with other disciplines, but also the 1948 Veterinary Surgeons Act.

It is forgotten now, but older members of the profession viewed these plans with misgiving; in 1938 and then again after the war, RCVS Council voted against their implementation. The government, however, proceeded with a Bill to put into effect the Loveday proposals. Wooldridge was elected to RCVS Council in 1939 and led the ‘rebels’, eventually winning the struggle, but it was a turbulent period for the College. In 1954 he was elected President, and in 1958 the College bestowed a Fellowship upon him. This was his pre-eminent achievement – veterinary medicine had developed as a science-based profession.

Today Wooldridge is best remembered for founding what is now the the Animal Health Trust. Once again it is a story of enviable tenacity to achieve a seemingly unattainable objective. The launch of this venture (with Loveday on his organising committee) was ‘typical Wooldridge’. There were no funds but he held an inaugural lunch on 24 September 1942 at the Mansion House with a glittering array of guests – and paid for the function himself. It was at the grimmest time for Britain in the war, but he boldly launched his Veterinary Educational Trust appeal for £1 million – a staggering sum, equivalent to over £25 million today. But he knew his subject and his audience: soon NVMA donated £2,500, RCVS £1,000 and, by 1944, the Bloodstock Industry Fund raised £60,000. The money was soon put to use and over the years hundreds of grants have been made supporting research scientists in their careers.

At the end of the war he started to implement his second aim. Changing the organisation’s name to Animal Health Trust, he began establishing research units, and within a few years had created the Equine, Small Animal, Poultry and Farm Livestock Centres. All this time there were serious financial problems but Wooldridge battled on and much was achieved. The work now is consolidated at the Newmarket Equine and Small Animal Centres.

This brief summary of an enormously active, often frustrating, but eventually successful life has left out many of Wooldridge’s achievements, posts held and honours bestowed. His death at the relatively early age of 66 was a shock. It robbed the profession of a sorely needed talent, but we can remember his notable career: he not only showed that there was a future in veterinary research, he showed that it was the veterinary future.



Dr WR Wooldridge presenting Sir Winston Churchill with his Diploma of Honorary Associateship in 1955

Warm welcome for new Head of Fundraising

Marcus Pugh joins team

At the beginning of the year we welcomed **Marcus Pugh** to the brand new role of **Head of Fundraising at RCVS Knowledge**, with responsibility for building up our network of supporters over the coming years.

Marcus, who has worked in fundraising for the charity and museum sectors, has the immediate task of developing links and sponsors for the Evidence-Based Veterinary Medicine Network Conference, and will also be seeking funding for the ongoing development of the Library and Information Service and the preservation of the rare documents, manuscripts and records in the RCVS Knowledge archive.

"RCVS Knowledge has attracted a significant amount of support from individuals and organisations loyal to the veterinary profession who want to 'give something back'."

Marcus comments: "Over the years, RCVS Knowledge [formerly RCVS Trust] has attracted a significant amount of support from individuals and organisations loyal to the veterinary profession who want to 'give something back'. I am keen to maintain these relationships and develop new ways to allow individuals and organisations to make a significant contribution to our work and our long-term goals."

If you are interested in finding out more about how you can support the work of RCVS Knowledge, please contact Marcus on 020 7227 3507 or marcus@rcvsknowledge.org.



A blog to inspire and inform

RCVS Knowledge blog gaining popularity

With posts about everything from early veterinary education in North America to historical documents pertaining to equine musculature, the **RCVS Knowledge Library Blog** is something of a who's who and what's what of veterinary knowledge and history.

Clare Boulton, the Head of Library and Information Services at RCVS Knowledge, is responsible for regularly updating the popular blog, which has more than 1,700 followers. The blog makes use of our extensive historical archive of veterinary publications – dating from the 1500s onwards – and the wealth of print and electronic resources.

She explains: "Most of my blogs are just based on items and publications I happen to find while going about my day-to-day work. For example, while recently going through the historical archive I was looking at some prospectuses from North American veterinary schools and found that many

of them were founded by graduates from Scotland. The Ontario Veterinary College in Canada, for example, was founded by Andrew Smith, an Edinburgh graduate and RCVS Fellow, in 1862.

"After putting this post up I was contacted by the College to say that they didn't have copies of the prospectuses referred to in the blog and that they were very interested in them."

You can check out the latest blog posts by visiting www.rcvsknowledgelibraryblog.org and also by following RCVS Knowledge on Twitter (@RCVSKnowledge).

Better yet, you can join our Library and Information Service to gain access to 25,000 books, conference proceedings and reports at Belgravia House, as well as off-site access to electronic journals and other online resources. For more information on joining, please contact Clare on clare@rcvsknowledge.org or 020 7202 0710.

Hitting our research targets

A total of £40,000 awarded across eight researchers



Following the launch of our Target Grants programme in October last year, **eight researchers have been awarded £5,000 each for studies about the nature and composition of veterinary caseloads in different types of practice across the world.**

This grant round aims to give insight into the frequency of complaints, diagnoses and interventions in small animal, equine and livestock practices, so that we can build a strong evidence base on which to make informed decisions as to where we should prioritise our research efforts.

Dr Rita Jorge, RCVS Knowledge Head of Research, comments: "As well as helping us set our research priorities, these studies could also have a very direct practical application for vets in clinical practice. For example, studies into disease prevalence and the most common type of treatment prescribed for certain categories of animal could help practices identify areas into

which they could expand the service they offer. Likewise, this information could prove useful for veterinary schools when they set their curricula by identifying the knowledge and types of skills expected of their graduates when they enter into clinical practice."

The eight grants were given to researchers from across the world. In the UK, the veterinary caseload for small animals is being evaluated by Dr David Brodbelt at the Royal Veterinary College; for livestock, the researcher is Jonathan Reader at Synergy Farm Health Ltd; and for equine, the research is being conducted by Marco Duz at the University of Glasgow.

In addition, Dr Ava Firth and a team from Vets Now will be focusing on emergency consultations, studying records from more than 125,000 out-of-hours small animal patients in the UK to find out about the most frequent emergency problems.

Outside of the UK, Professor Lothar Kreienbrock from Hanover University will be extracting data on small animal, equine and livestock populations in Germany; Richard Lerner from Pan American Zoonotic Research and Prevention will be analysing the small animal caseload of a low-income region of Peru; Dr Andrew Stringer from equine charity SPANA will be studying records of equine consultations in Ethiopia, Mali and Morocco; and Laura Craighead from the Worldwide Veterinary Service charity will be collecting consultation data from its network of partners in low-income countries.

For more details about the research projects please, visit www.rcvsknowledge.org/grants.

Putting evidence into practice

Tickets available for 1st International EBVM Network Conference

Places are now available for RCVS Knowledge's 1st International Evidence-Based Veterinary Medicine (EBVM) Network Conference, which will bring veterinary professionals from across the world together to share the latest scientific evidence and best practice in veterinary medicine.

The Conference takes place on 23 and 24 October at the Beaumont Estate, near Windsor, and is open to all those who wish to find out more about the practice and science of evidence-based veterinary medicine, including veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses, students, technicians and information specialists, and those who support their activity. Attending the Conference will amount to 12 hours of continuing professional development (CPD), as delegates will hear the latest scientific research and learn about EBVM tools at the point of care.

You can also contribute to the Conference by answering our call for abstracts for presentations, workshops and posters for the event. Submitted abstracts will be reviewed and selected by the Conference's Scientific Panel, chaired by Dr Mark Holmes (pictured) from the Cambridge Veterinary School (and author of the *Handbook of Evidence-based Veterinary Medicine*), and comprising members of the international EBVM Network. Abstracts should fit into at least one of the three conference themes of science, technology and society. The deadline for the first call for abstracts is 1 May 2014. Guidance for abstracts is available from the Conference website (www.ebvm-2014.org).

Dr Mark Holmes said: "There will be plenty of content at the Conference for the practising veterinary professional who wants to know what they can start doing to respond to their clients' needs in a more evidence-based way, or, for example, how they can better use their practice management systems to learn lessons about their clinical performance.

"International collaboration is vital to the success of evidence-based practice, which is why this event is so important – delegates will get to know their EBVM peers from across the world."



Nick Royle, Executive Director of RCVS Knowledge, adds: "The role of RCVS Knowledge is to become a global intermediary for EBVM and this Conference provides an excellent opportunity to share best practice and knowledge with colleagues from across the world. This will also provide an excellent opportunity for the practising veterinary professional (including nurses) to incorporate the latest scientific evidence into everyday clinical practice."

Attending the event will also provide the opportunity to participate in the EBVM Network, which aims to build an international community of veterinary professionals committed to sharing the latest evidence, skills and ideas.

Tickets to the event start at £575 and include two days of CPD, accommodation, meals, an evening reception and several networking events. Bursaries of £500 towards the cost of attending the Conference are available to EBVM Network members who are students, veterinary nurses or based in low-income countries.

The venue is easily accessible, situated 15 minutes from Heathrow Airport and less than an hour by rail from central London. To find out more about the Conference, please visit www.ebvm-2014.org.

How to apply for a bursary

RCVS Knowledge is inviting applications for the G N Hall and Freda Hall Bursary Scheme. Thirty bursaries of £500 each will be awarded to supplement funding for attendance at the Conference.

This Bursary Scheme is open to applications from international EBVM Network members who are either:

- Students in full- or part-time education (undergraduate or postgraduate) in a recognised tertiary institution;
- Veterinary nurses registered with an accredited body; and/or,
- Veterinary professionals based in low- or lower-middle-income economies registered with the relevant accredited body for their country.

Anyone may join the EBVM Network. You can sign up by completing a short survey at www.surveymonkey.com/s/EBVM_Network.

The deadline for applications is 1 May 2014. The application process is designed to be quick and simple. The application form is available at knowledge.rcvs.org.uk/grants.

How to get involved

- Attend the conference: you can register at www.ebvm-2014.org
- Submit an abstract to present at the Conference by visiting www.ebvm-2014.org
- Contribute to the success of the event by becoming an exhibitor or sponsor: email Marcus Pugh, RCVS Knowledge Head of Fundraising, on marcus@rcvsknowledge.org for more details
- Apply for a bursary at www.rcvsknowledge.org.uk/grants
- Become part of an international group of veterinary professionals by joining the EBVM Network
- Follow us on Twitter (@RCVSKnowledge), Facebook (www.facebook.com/RCVSKnowledge) and LinkedIn to get the very latest updates about EBVM



RCVS News at a glance...

Too busy to read the lot? Start here for important dates for your diary and story summaries, so you can decide what might be worth reading in full.

1 It takes all sorts

Record number of women candidates for RCVS Council elections.

2 A right royal Charter

Next steps for new constitution.

RCVS Treasure

Bradley Viner elected as Vice-President.

Home address success?

Registration Regulations amended in principle

3 The Stace of play

Update from the CEO on staff engagement, 24/7 and consumer redress.

4 Free and easy

Tune in to our free webinars.

A medal fit for a Queen

Highest honour to be bestowed at RCVS Day.

Surveying the landscape

Survey of the Professions will be coming to you soon.

5 Lovely Jubilee

Nominations needed for veterinary nursing award.

Please stop on 'My Account'

Revamped login area for vets.

6 Thermal shocks

How to avoid burns with body-warming devices.

Drug abuse

How to look out for prescription misuse.

Licence to credit

Veterinary practices may need to register with the FCA.

7 Know your Code

Communicating effectively with colleagues.

24/7 response

Over 300 replies for emergency cover call for evidence.

Ad veterinarian

ASA guidelines on producing adverts with animals.

8 Renew to continue

Annual vet renewal fees are now due.

Especially for you

We need your personal emails for communications.

Vetted and verified

Find a Vet update almost complete.

9 A surge of surgeries

Sign up for one of our PSS sessions.

The Scheme is a-changin'

Renewed focus on patient outcomes and care for PSS.

Hands on clocks

PSS clocks and stickers available.

10 Career off the beaten path

Putting your skills to good use.

12 The power of OV

Rule changes for Official Veterinarians come into force.

Return to work

Supervision period for RVNs if returning to work after five years.

Painting a mural picture

Thank you to those who replied to our EMS survey.

13 A world stage

RCVS hosts international accreditors meeting.

Record requests

CPD audit for vets coming soon.

14 Keep advancing

Autumn launch for new 'middle tier'.

Awards aplenty

Student VNs have more choice after approval of new awarding organisations.

15 Antipodean accreditation

Australian vet degrees approved.

New fellas

Consultation on new Fellowship proposals.

The day is one

Day One Competences updated following consultation.

16 Nurse slackie

Many VNs still not meeting CPD requirements

17 Kissick chair

Meet the head of VN Council.

18 Cheers big ears

How the College is listening to the profession.

19 A vet in verse

Edinburgh graduate's poetry posthumously published.

20 Go straight to Brum

Join us at BSAVA Congress in Birmingham.

Animal house

Owner organisations share views.

Code won

Winners of Code competition.

21 Tweet by gum

Report of meeting in York.

Like herding ducks?

We will be meeting animal owners at the London Pet Show.

22 PIC report

Read the latest preliminary investigation statistics.

23 DC hearings

Charges against Edward Gillams dismissed; Kumaran Kanesh removed from Register following convictions for wounding with intent and false imprisonment; Matthew Morgan struck off after imprisonment for four counts of pet insurance fraud.

25 A life scientific

Pioneering veterinary scientist W R Wooldridge remembered.

26 Pugh-gillist

Welcome to new Head of Fundraising at RCVS Knowledge.

Research with clout

RCVS Knowledge target grants.

The building blogs of knowledge

Veterinary history blog gains in popularity.

27 The evidence place

Tickets available for RCVS Knowledge EBVM Conference.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2014

20 March

Quiz the Candidates

31 March

Complete the Survey of the Professions

Renewal fees due

Register with FCA if offering consumer credit

1 April

National Pet Month starts

3-6 April

See us at BSAVA Congress

10 April

Premises registration and PSS fees due

15 April

Virtual Question Time

25 April

Your vote must be in by 5pm

1 May

VN Golden Jubilee award deadline

17-18 May

We'll be at the London Pet Show

22 May

Regional Question Time: Ewloe

5 June

Council meeting

1 July

Specialist fees due

8 July

Diploma examinations

11 July

RCVS Day



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RCVS SETTING VETERINARY STANDARDS