

## Zero tolerance for blame culture

*“Mistakes happen, it’s when they are covered up that this can lead to challenges.”*

### New Strategic Plan bids to develop learning approach

**A**t RCVS Day this year (15 July 2016), incoming President Chris Tufnell said: **“Sadly we often hear that there are vets and nurses who live in fear of the RCVS. This is something of which I’m personally ashamed. Being particularly mindful of the role that fear and anxiety play in mental health I will do everything I can to replace this fear.”**

Earlier in the meeting, as part of his CEO’s update, Nick Stace had stated: “[We need to be] much clearer about the kind of culture we would like to see that allows the professions to be their very best. A culture that encourages members of the veterinary team to learn from each other, to learn from their mistakes, to engage clients in the challenges of what they do, to be open when things go wrong, to manage public expectations, to move away from a blame culture.”

Blame, and perhaps more widespread, a fear of blame, can affect the behaviour of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses. It can have a crippling impact on not only their welfare but that of animals, and on public health. Anecdotally we find that this culture exists across the profession – and this has been particularly brought home by our work on the Mind Matters Initiative, which aims to address issues of mental ill-health and poor wellbeing.

It does not seem restricted to the veterinary profession either; the human healthcare professions seem to be equally affected, if not more so. An unrealistic level of perfectionism is demanded, either by clients/patients or

professionals themselves. Contrary to belief, 100% perfection is not actually expected by the regulators – the RCVS, the General Medical Council or others. But the damaging perception is there. In fact, mistakes happen; it’s when they are covered up that this can lead to challenges around professional conduct.

It’s time to change. One whole stream of our new Strategic Plan is dedicated to the ambition of replacing the current ‘blame’ culture with a learning culture. We will “establish the extent to which a ‘blame’ culture exists in the veterinary professions, the role that the RCVS may play in it, the impact it may have on the welfare of vets, veterinary nurses, owners and their animals, and how we can move towards a culture that has a greater focus on learning and personal development.”

Under this ambition we will be, among other things: considering the impact of our professional conduct system on the mental health and wellbeing of those we regulate; continuing to trial an alternative dispute resolution system, which will offer a more proportionate way of addressing lower-level concerns; helping to change the public’s expectations around their interactions with veterinary professionals, particularly around risk, uncertainty and value; and, extending our concept of life-long learning to include mentorship.

“Changing culture is not an easy task, and not something we can do on our own,” says Nick Stace. “We hope that by being brave and public with this new ambition we will galvanise activity from veterinary associations, educators, corporate practices and individual veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses. We are all in this together, and only by working together can we make a real difference.”

Turn to page 5 to read about how this ambition fits alongside others in our new Strategic Plan.



**In this issue:** CPD pilot, Senior Team changes, RCVS and VN Council nominations, Brexit, Fellowship Day, ethical review trial, VF and VN Futures Action Plans, CEO update, President’s Charity Box, Schedule 3, ADR trial, Strategic Plan 2017-19, clinical records, feline renal transplantation guidance, Controlled Drugs, communicating fees, telemedicine consultation, annual renewal fees due, the new PSS and PSS Awards, education roundup, meetings and events, PI and DC reports, RCVS Knowledge updates

## Piloting an outcomes-based approach to CPD

### Volunteers sought

**A**t its November meeting, RCVS Council approved a pilot of a new outcomes-based approach to measuring and recording continuing professional development (CPD).

In June we held a six-week consultation with the profession asking them for their views on our proposal for an outcomes-based approach to CPD which would concentrate less on hours logged and more on interactive, reflective learning and measuring the impact that CPD has on the individual's practice and patient health outcomes.

Our proposed model for CPD had four key components: planning, doing, recording and reflecting. While an overall majority of the 3,357 people who responded to our consultation agreed with the proposed changes to the CPD requirement, certain elements received less support than others. The lowest amount of support was received for the 'reflection' component, with 35% of respondents disagreeing with it.

With this in mind Education Committee, at its September meeting, decided that a pilot of a new outcomes-based approach should be held through 2017 with a group of volunteers.

Professor Stephen May, who chaired the Working Group that developed the CPD proposals, explained: "Because of the concern voiced by members of the profession responding to the consultation we decided that, at this stage, it would not be appropriate for the RCVS to move straight into this new way of doing CPD but that it would be more appropriate to hold a pilot. The idea is that we will explore some of the concerns around reflection and around the extra time and paperwork that people felt that a more reflective approach may lead to.

"We have taken all these comments into account and are now seeking to work with individual volunteers on this pilot. It is important to note that we are not only looking for volunteers who agree with what we are doing, but also those who are apprehensive about it, or even some who see it as something they do not support. We want to explore the full range of views and how we can move forward in changing our approach to CPD."

The pilot is expected to be launched in February next year and we are now looking for volunteers who both support the proposals and have a 'healthy scepticism' about them. Volunteers will receive help and support throughout the trial and will also be invited to attend an introductory CPD meeting at our offices in February.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Jenny Soreskog-Turp, our CPD Officer, on [cpd@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:cpd@rcvs.org.uk) for further details.

## Senior Team changes

### New management structure for College

**A**s part of a special meeting on 29 September, RCVS Council agreed to significant changes to the structure of our Senior Team, which leads the organisation on a day-to-day basis.

The changes made were:

- The appointment of Eleanor Ferguson as the College's Registrar. Eleanor was previously Head of Professional Conduct and had been Acting Registrar since March 2016, following the resignation of Gordon Hockey.
- The appointment of Lizzie Lockett as Deputy Chief Executive Officer, in addition to her roles as Director of Strategic Communications and Director of the Mind Matters Initiative.
- The appointment of Anthony Roberts as Director of Leadership and Innovation. Anthony was previously Practice Standards Manager and Special Advisor to the CEO.
- The appointment of Corrie McCann as Assistant Registrar, in addition to her role as Director of Operations.
- Lesley Evans, Director of Human Resources, is taking early retirement and will leave the College at the end of the year.
- A change in title for Christine Warman and Julie Dugmore to Director of Education and Director of Veterinary Nursing respectively.

Our CEO Nick Stace said: "I am delighted to announce these appointments, which received the unanimous support of RCVS Council.

"It is an exciting time for the College as we conclude our current strategic plan (with 34 out of the 35 objectives already met) and finalise the new outward-facing three-year strategy.

***"This new structure will enable us to meet these challenges as well as the many opportunities outlined in the Vet Futures and VN Futures reports."***

"The focus of the new strategy is on becoming first rate in everything we do, helping the profession embrace innovation, developing the next generation of leaders locally, nationally and internationally and helping support a blame-free learning culture in the professions.

"This new structure will enable us to meet these challenges as well as the many opportunities outlined in the Vet Futures and VN Futures reports and will help us to build on the foundations laid of a Royal College that the professions can be proud of, and that the public can trust."



(L-R) Corrie McCann, Lizzie Lockett, Anthony Roberts, Lesley Evans, Nick Stace, Eleanor Ferguson, Julie Dugmore and Christine Warman.

## Review of complementary and alternative medicines

The Standards Committee will be undertaking a review of our current guidance on alternative and complementary medicines and therapies in the coming year. The decision to review our guidance has been made for a number of reasons including changes to the way that homeopathy is viewed by

the NHS and a recent statement made by the Advertising Standards Authority regarding its advice and guidance on claims made in marketing materials (including websites) about homeopathic treatments as well as the outcome of a recent Disciplinary Committee hearing (see page 17).

# Join the team!

## Nomination period open for Council elections

**We are currently accepting nominations from veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses who wish to stand as candidates for next year's RCVS Council and Veterinary Nurses Council elections, respectively.**

We held an open day on 23 November for prospective candidates where they had the opportunity to talk to our President, Chris Tufnell, and Liz Cox, Chair of VN Council, to find out more about the role of the College, its Councils and its committees.

Chris says: "As someone who has been a member of Council since 2009 I can honestly say that the discussions you have and the decisions you make through both Council and its various committees do have a tangible impact on the future of the profession.

"For example, in my relatively short time as a Council member I have been involved in the review of specialisation in the profession and the setting up of Advanced Practitioner status, the championing of primary care as a valuable discipline in its own right and overseen the delivery of an ambitious Strategic Plan through my position on the Operational Board.

"These are all areas that I never imagined I'd be able to influence from my position as a vet in general practice. So, if you are interested in having

a say in issues as varied as CPD policy and how we respond to the challenges and opportunities of Brexit, then please put yourself forward for Council."

**"With the publication of the VN Futures Report in July there is now huge scope for VN Council members, current and prospective, to take forward some of its recommendations."**

Liz Cox, Chair of VN Council, added: "With the publication of the VN Futures Report in July there is now huge scope for VN Council members, current and prospective, to take forward some of its recommendations, for example, around clarifying Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act and building a structured and varied career path for veterinary nurses.

"As well as VN Futures there is also a lot of important day-to-day work for VN Council members around veterinary nursing education and professional standards and we would really encourage VNs from all areas of practice to put themselves forward as candidates and to have a say on these crucial issues."



The nomination period for both RCVS and VN Council runs up until 5pm on Tuesday 31 January 2017. Each candidate must have two nominations to stand, and will also need to submit a nomination form, a short biography and personal statement, and a high resolution photo. Nomination forms, guidance notes and frequently asked questions for prospective RCVS Council candidates are available on our website: [www.rcvs.org.uk/rcvscouncil17](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/rcvscouncil17) as are those for prospective VN Council candidates: [www.rcvs.org.uk/vncouncil17](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/vncouncil17)

The election period will start around mid-March and will run until 5pm on Friday 28 April 2017. Ballot papers will be sent to veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses who are eligible to vote in the week commencing Monday 13 March 2017.

# Brexit and beyond

## What the College is doing

**Following the vote to leave the European Union on 23 June this year, the College has been busy considering what this may mean for the future of the UK veterinary profession, our relationship with European colleagues and organisations and the affect that leaving the EU may have on the regulatory sphere.**

To this end we have set up a 'Brexit Presidential Taskforce' to consider how we can work with the UK Governments, veterinary organisations and our partners in the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) in order to take advantage of the opportunities presented by Brexit and mitigate the risks.

The third meeting of the Taskforce took place on 9 November and covered a wide range of issues, including the probability and ramifications of several different Brexit scenarios, and how to prepare for a potential shortfall of veterinary surgeons post-Brexit.

Also discussed were the accreditation of overseas veterinary degrees, ways to extend our global reach, and the opportunity Brexit might present to introduce a new Veterinary Surgeons Act. A proposal was also passed to further

research the impact of Brexit on the attitudes and intentions of EU-qualified vets working in the UK.

The Group will prepare a report and recommendations for Council's March 2017 meeting.

**"We have set up a 'Brexit Presidential Taskforce' to consider how we can work with the UK Governments, veterinary organisations and our partners in the FVE."**

### Foodchain

We also recently held a roundtable event with stakeholders from those involved in controls on animal-related threats through the foodchain – an area of veterinary practice that is heavily dependent on European (and in particular Spanish) veterinary surgeons.

### Concerns about language

Since the vote we have received a lot of correspondence from European graduate vets (who make up almost a quarter of the UK-

practising profession) who are concerned about their future working as veterinary surgeons in the UK and worried about some of the rhetoric coming from the Government following the referendum vote.

While it is impossible to predict the outcome of our negotiations with the EU once Article 50 is triggered next year, we have offered reassurance to EU veterinary surgeons that we recognise the vital role they play in areas such as public health, food safety and clinical practice, and will be working with the Government to try and ensure that it too recognises this role.

Our President Chris Tufnell, along with Gudrun Ravetz, his counterpart at the British Veterinary Association (BVA), wrote a joint letter to Theresa May outlining our concerns about how 'anti-foreigner' rhetoric has caused some personal distress to EU-graduated vets and the potential negative impact on recruitment and retention. The letter in full can be read at [www.rcvs.org.uk/brexitletter](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/brexitletter)

Furthermore, Chris Tufnell also sent a personal email to all EU graduates to reassure them and update them on the work that the College is doing regarding Brexit.

# Inaugural Fellowship Day

29 new Fellows welcomed



Chris Tufnell presents a certificate of Fellowship to Susan Dawson

**In October we held our inaugural Fellowship Day to welcome dozens of Fellows to the scheme and to celebrate the new Fellowship initiative launched earlier this year.**

The event was held at The Royal Institution in London on Wednesday 19 October and saw 29 of the 44 new Fellows attending to receive their certificate of Fellowship from our President Chris Tufnell.

Our Senior Vice-President Bradley Viner opened the event, saying: "The Fellowship should be seen as very much a merger of those already established in the Fellowship and those who have been appointed by the new routes.

"It is great to see so many existing Fellows here today to welcome the new Fellows, find out more about what is planned for the future, and hopefully discover their own role in what I am confident is going to be a vibrant learned society.

"This is the start of something new, something big and something that will have a really significant effect upon the shape of our profession in the future and the role it plays in broader society."

After his speech Bradley then gave the floor to Professor Nick Bacon (pictured top right), Chair of the Fellowship Board of Fellowship by Meritorious Contribution to Clinical Practice.

During his speech Professor Bacon outlined his vision for the new Fellowship, saying: "The FRCVS is the highest grade of membership and it is important that vets from all facets of the profession will be able to become a Fellow during the course of their careers.

"The Fellowship will provide for a dynamic group of professionals and will be a dynamic organisation with a strong group identity.

"It is not an 'old boys' club' – each application is considered on its merits. There is also no formal membership target – instead it has been made to include as many people as meet the standards."

He added that it was the College's intention to hold a Fellowship Day on an annual basis and that the Fellowship, as a learned society, would function as a source of scientific fact for the College, the profession and the public at large to make use of.

***"The Fellowship will provide for a dynamic group of professionals and will be a dynamic organisation with a strong group identity."***

Following Nick Bacon's talk, 29 Fellows were presented with their certificates of Fellowship and formally welcomed to the Fellowship by President Chris Tufnell.

Of those attending, 14 were made Fellows for Meritorious Contributions to Clinical Practice, 12 for Meritorious Contributions to Knowledge and three for Meritorious Contributions to the Profession. In addition Dr Mandy Peffers also attended to receive her Fellowship by Thesis and a posthumous Fellowship was bestowed upon the late Dr Ian Purchase for Meritorious Contribution to Learning.



Martin Gore, Professor of Cancer Medicine at The Institute of Cancer Research and a Consultant Medical Oncologist at The Royal Marsden, then gave his keynote speech which focused on the 'academic and service provider divide' in human medicine.

He said that schemes such as the new RCVS Fellowship, which are encouraging more people from clinical practice to become Fellows, were vital for bridging this 'divide' and allowing academics and practitioners to share their knowledge and expertise.

President Chris Tufnell then closed the proceedings by outlining the original purpose and vision behind the Fellowship as it was set up in the 1870s and saying that the new initiative was "building on great things."

He went on to thank RCVS Council member Professor Gary England, who chaired the Fellowship Working Party that developed proposals for a new initiative; Professor the Lord Trees, who chaired the Fellowship Appointment Group; RCVS Council for approving the new initiative; members of the Fellowship Board and Credentials Panels for their ongoing work; and, all those who applied for the new Fellowship.

Applications for the new Fellowship have now reopened until February 2017 – details on how to apply can be found on [www.rcvs.org.uk/fellowship](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/fellowship) For further information about what is required, please contact Duncan Ash, Senior Education Officer, on [d.ash@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:d.ash@rcvs.org.uk) or 020 7202 0703.

# Ethics review for practice-based research

Nine-month trial launched in summer



Want to do some research in your practice?

**Research proposals are now being Accepted by an Ethics Review Panel set up by the College for a one-year trial in order to conduct ethics review for practice-based clinical research.**

The Panel, which is chaired by veterinary ethicist Professor David Morton CBE, is accepting applications from veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses wishing to undertake practice-based research. Applications opened on **Monday 1 August 2016.**

The aim of the Panel – which has veterinary, veterinary nurse and lay representation – is to facilitate access to ethical review for those wishing to undertake research outside of a university or

industry context and who may not otherwise have access to an ethical review process.

During the trial period the ethics review process will be limited to considering research projects involving cats and/or dogs, with the possibility of expanding to other species if the trial is extended or made permanent.

Detailed information about the submission process, including guidance notes for applicants and an application form, can be found at [www.rcvs.org.uk/ethics](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/ethics)

Any questions should be directed to Natalie Heppenstall, Standards and Advisory Officer, at [ethics@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:ethics@rcvs.org.uk)

# Action stations for VF

## Plan launched at summer Summit

**T**he Vet Futures (VF) Action Plan was launched at our Summit on 4 July this year – kindly hosted by the Royal Veterinary College at Camden, London. The day brought together a broad range of delegates, from practice, industry and research, as well as veterinary students, to hear presentations from members of the VF Action Group on a range of themes, including careers, reflective practice, animal welfare and technology.

You can see videos from the day at [www.vetfutures.org.uk/resources](http://www.vetfutures.org.uk/resources), plus view the 'live drawing' which captured the atmosphere, as well as photos of presenters and those who took part in our pledge campaigns, at [www.flickr.com/photos/rcvs/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/rcvs/albums)

Work is now under way to take the actions forward and the VF Project Board, which includes officers from the two organisations behind Vet Futures, the RCVS and British Veterinary Association (BVA), together with a Vet Schools Council representative, is tasked with monitoring and evaluating progress.

The Action Plan can be downloaded from: [www.vetfutures.org.uk/resources](http://www.vetfutures.org.uk/resources).

**“An update on VN Futures will take place at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress in April.”**

### VN Futures

The Summit also saw the launch of the *VN Futures (VNF) Report and Action Plan*, which outlined six ambitions for the veterinary nursing profession, around creating a sustainable workforce; developing structured and rewarding career paths; building a confident, resilient, healthy and well-supported workforce; taking a proactive role in One Health; maximising nurses' potential; and, clarifying and bolstering the role of the VN.

An action planning meeting on 6 September was well attended by engaged and enthusiastic delegates willing to help bring the actions to fruition, and a meeting is planned on 1 December to harness the expertise and energy of those willing to take part in the development groups. Particularly proactive, the VNF One Health Group has its first meeting on 8 December.

An update on VN Futures will take place at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress in April (see page 14) and the VN Futures team will have a stand at the Vets4Pets Conference on 29 November.

### Vet Futures Europe

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is a European organisation, not an EU one, so, despite Brexit, we are delighted to be continuing to develop the Vet Futures Europe project. One whole afternoon of the November FVE General Assembly was set aside for workshops to explore the six themes identified, and see how delegates from the 38 countries represented by FVE felt they could be taken forward.



## We are still Europeans

### Operational Update

## Nick Stace, Chief Executive

**T**hree years ago Council agreed our 2014–16 Strategy Plan. So often, strategic plans sit on a shelf somewhere gathering dust (or, in this day and age, a forlorn and unvisited page on an intranet). Not ours: I was delighted to inform Council today (10 November) that we had achieved, or were well on our way to achieving, 34 out of our 35 objectives. The outlier is a review of our disciplinary rules and sanctions, which has been delayed in order to link up with a larger audit of our concerns process.

Some activities are underway and set to conclude shortly, for example, the trial of an alternative dispute resolution service, which has just moved into a second iteration, the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS). The VCMS was launched in October and will run for nine months. Early indications are positive (see page 6).

The development of our new Professional Conduct IT system is also underway and this, coupled with our recent investment in additional staff resources in the department, together with a new approach to how our Preliminary Investigation Committee meets, should help to speed up the time it takes for a case to be processed, which we acknowledge is a stressful process for all concerned.

At its meeting today Council approved a new three-year plan, which I have every expectation will be as well-used and referenced as the previous document. It sets out some challenging ambitions, particularly around culture change and leadership. You can read more on page 7.

### Brexit

The most forward-looking strategic planning process cannot anticipate every challenge, and it was not only to the RCVS that Brexit came as a bit of a surprise. However, we are where we are, and we need to be creative about how we respond to the issues.

In July, under the chairmanship of President Chris Tufnell, we set up a Taskforce to ensure that the profession is in charge of its future by maximising the opportunities and minimising the risks of Brexit. The group is looking at the recognition of EU qualifications, the potential impact on the UK workforce of changes in immigration rules, and the impact of potential changes in legislation that will affect the profession. With 23% of our current veterinary workforce comprising non-UK EU graduates, the potential impact on the workforce, and therefore on animal health and welfare and public health, could be high, and it's important we both lobby government to ensure our views are heard, and also develop plans to mitigate the potential effects. To this end, we wrote to the Prime Minister recently, jointly with the British Veterinary Association, and you can read about the letter on page 3.

Meanwhile our President has written to all non-UK EU graduates on our Register to reassure them that their contribution to our veterinary profession is absolutely valued and that, regardless of the immigration rules the government may lay down, we will continue to recognise their membership of the RCVS for as long as they wish to maintain it.

Finally, I am delighted that we continue to be welcome in the European veterinary community, despite Brexit! As I sign off, I am hopping on the Eurostar to Brussels for the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe's General Assembly at which there will be a series of workshops to consider actions FVE may take to meet the ambitions identified by Vet Futures Europe, which was catalysed by our own Vet Futures project, and on which the UK is taking a lead role. FVE describes itself as a European organisation, not an EU one, and we are still all Europeans, after all!



## Seasonal and year-long fundraising

### President supports five charities

**C**hris Tufnell has chosen five charities to be the recipients of this year's RCVS Christmas Box, a £3,000 annual donation to the charity of the President's choice, as well as any other funds he raises throughout the course of his Presidency.

His chosen charities are: Vetlife, Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA), the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA), Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, and The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust (GHDT).

Speaking of the charities, Chris said: "I'm dedicated to charities that have a pyramid effect. The GHDT and the PDSA, by improving the health and welfare of animals, directly benefit the health and wellbeing of the communities in which they work, while RDA and Hearing Dogs for Deaf People both use animals to help people. Finally, none of this is possible without a healthy veterinary community and Vetlife plays a significant part in ensuring this."

The President's Christmas Box donation is made every year in lieu of sending out RCVS Christmas cards.

## Views sought on Schedule 3 changes

### Survey to be launched in 2017

**T**he Veterinary Nurses Schedule 3 Working Party had its first meeting in September this year to look at how the Schedule and its associated guidance could be revised to bolster the veterinary nursing profession. The meeting began with an overview of the history of the VN profession and the development and expansion of Schedule 3 since it was introduced in 2002.

It also compared the VN profession in the UK with those overseas, and discussed the legal technicalities of how the Schedule might be reformed, as well as looking at the evidence which emerged during the VN Futures project.

***"The Working Party decided to commission a significant survey of both the veterinary nurse and veterinary surgeon professions."***

The Working Party decided to commission a significant survey of both the veterinary nurse and veterinary surgeon professions to determine the appetite for bolstering the role of the veterinary nurse, and to establish what factors currently discourage vets from delegating Schedule 3 work to their nursing staff. The research is hoped to be carried out early in 2017, after which the Working Party will reconvene to consider the best way forward.

## New ADR trial launched

### Dozens of enquiries in first month

**A**t the beginning of October a new alternative dispute resolution (ADR) trial was launched on a nine-month basis with the aim of resolving complaints that do not meet our threshold of serious professional misconduct.

The trial, known as the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS), is free and voluntary and is funded by the College and administered by Nockolds Solicitors. This is the College's second ADR trial – however, there are several differences between the VCMS and the first trial that was administered by Ombudsman Services.

***"We are hoping we can find a way of resolving concerns that members of the public may have about veterinary services in an appropriate way."***

Eleanor Ferguson, our Registrar, explains: "Annually, the RCVS receives around 1,000 concerns from members of the public about veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses. However, around 80 percent of cases are closed at the assessment and investigation stage and while, for example, the RCVS may be able to give advice to the practitioner about professional conduct, we are not in a position to recommend the sort of practical solutions that may resolve matters. We understand that this can be very frustrating for both animal owners and practices who may feel that the issues are therefore unresolved.

"As with the last trial we are hoping we can find a way of resolving concerns that members of the public may have about veterinary services in an appropriate way.

"However, a key difference with the VCMS from the previous trial is that it can be accessed directly rather than having to go through the College's concerns investigation process first. We hope that this will appeal to both parties as it will offer a quicker and simpler way of resolving client concerns without RCVS involvement and should improve satisfaction with the process from both parties."

Nockolds Solicitors already runs a similar scheme on behalf of the General Optical Council (GOC) known as the Optical Consumer Complaints Service (OCCS) and will bring to bear many years' experience of resolving complaints through mediation.

Jennie Jones heads the VCMS and said: "We are delighted to be launching the service and look forward to offering the benefits of mediation to both animal owners, veterinary professionals and their

practices. In our experience mediation enables the parties to find a resolution which both can accept, and allows them to move on.

"Complaints can be highly emotive, and this is a particular feature of veterinary complaints given the close relationship between owner and animal. Mediation acknowledges the emotional elements of a complaint whilst being future-focused. Mediation is by its nature voluntary, meaning the parties feel empowered and make a positive decision to resolve the concerns.

"As a free-at-the-point-of-use scheme accessed directly by the public, we look forward to receiving calls and enquiries from animal owners as well as answering questions about the VCMS and mediation from veterinary professionals and practice managers. We are happy to help practices to explore the benefits of mediation and an ADR scheme for veterinary complaints as well as understand how the VCMS can assist with a particular complaint situation within their practice."

According to Nockolds there has already been significant interest in the trial with 59 enquiries received by the VCMS to the end of October, of which three had entered the formal mediation process. These enquiries include complaints about the standard of care received by an animal, client services and clinical fees.

The trial will run until July 2017 and will deal specifically with concerns made about the treatment of horses, cats, dogs and other small mammals (eg rabbits, hamsters, gerbils etc) by a veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse.

The VCMS website ([www.vetmediation.co.uk](http://www.vetmediation.co.uk)) has further information about the trial, including frequently asked questions for both veterinary clients and professionals. The VCMS is available between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday, and will be contactable on 0845 040 5834 or [enquiries@vetmediation.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@vetmediation.co.uk)



# Our new roadmap

## Three-year Strategic Plan approved

**At its 10 November 2016 meeting, RCVS Council approved our next three-year strategic plan (2017-19). It will take the College into new territory around culture change, leadership and global impact, while continuing to build on the significant progress achieved over the last three years.**



The new plan was developed with staff input

**The hallmark of our 2014–16 Strategic Plan had been getting the basics right – clarifying our identity, improving our core functions, setting our service agenda and strengthening our foundations, among other things. We achieved 34 out of 35 of these objectives (the exception being a consideration of our disciplinary rules and sanctions, which was delayed to coincide with a larger review). This has given us the firm foundation and improved levels of confidence from stakeholders required for us to be more ambitious and outward-looking with the new plan.**

**“The new plan is the product of many hours of meetings and consultation with a range of audiences.”**

Our purpose continues to be to set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and the new plan addresses the big issues affecting the veterinary team, whether that’s playing more of a global role following Brexit, the importance of embracing new technology, or the pressing need to consider culture change within the profession to ensure it continues to grow and learn.

The threads of education, regulation and registration weave throughout the activities outlined in the plan, for example, the importance of continuing to develop the lifelong learning culture within the profession. In addition to the corporate plan, there is a specific Education Committee Strategic Plan, which considers areas

such as a review of the Statutory Examination, and ongoing development of Advanced Practitioner and Specialists status, and the veterinary nursing profession has its own VN Futures Action Plan.

**“Our purpose continues to be to set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and the new plan addresses the big issues affecting the veterinary team.”**

The new plan is the product of many hours of meetings and consultation with a range of audiences. Internal stakeholders include staff, Council and our Operational Board. External input came via Vet Futures, our joint initiative with the British Veterinary Association (BVA), which consulted the profession widely and has strongly informed our final route map (see [www.vetfutures.org.uk](http://www.vetfutures.org.uk)).

The 39 actions in our new plan are arranged under five ambitions – see box right. For example, we commit to:

- Establish the extent to which a blame culture is present within the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions, and set a baseline against which any change can be measured, as we move towards a culture where learning and reflection is encouraged
- Help to change the public’s expectations around their interactions with veterinary professionals, including around risk, uncertainty and value
- Develop a biennial Innovation Symposium, to showcase new technologies, educational and business models etc from within veterinary and related fields, and encourage a culture of innovation
- Review Schedule 3 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act, and the relevant parts of the *RCVS Code of Professional Conduct*, to clarify and bolster the role of the veterinary nurse
- Review the regulatory framework surrounding new technologies, to ensure it is proportionate, enforceable and encourages innovation, while maintaining high standards of animal health and welfare
- Explore compulsory practice inspection
- Review outcomes for graduates, with consideration of the likely requirements from the profession and the public of the vets of tomorrow
- Develop a strategy to make sure that the profession is in charge of its future by maximising the opportunities and minimising the risks of Brexit

- Continue to review our Estates Strategy so that we have appropriate spaces in which to work effectively and creatively, and a building that reflects the status of a Royal College
- Develop and improve the advice we offer to animal owners and others to ensure they get the best out of their interaction with veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses

For the full set of actions, please visit [www.rcvs.org.uk/strategy](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/strategy)

Of course, a more outward focus brings with it risks, and it is important that, in taking a leadership role for the veterinary professions, we continue to bring our members, and the audiences that they serve, with us. To that end, if you have any comments on the plan, we would be happy to hear from you. Please contact CEO Nick Stace on [nick@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:nick@rcvs.org.uk).

### A: Learning culture

**Ambition:** to establish the extent to which a ‘blame’ culture exists in the veterinary professions, the role that the RCVS may play in it, the impact it may have on the welfare of vets, VNs, owners and their animals, and how we can move towards a culture that has a greater focus on learning and personal development

### B: Leadership and innovation

**Ambition:** to become a Royal College with leadership and innovation at its heart, and support this creatively and with determination

### C: Continuing to be a First-rate Regulator

**Ambition:** continuing to build on the foundations that have already been laid, we will work to ensure that the legislation and regulations that support us are not only fit for purpose today, but enable us to make the UK veterinary professions, and those allied professionals who work alongside them, the best that they can be into the future

### D: Global reach

**Ambition:** to improve animal health and welfare on an international basis by raising veterinary standards overseas, contributing to the improvement of the One Health agenda and ensuring that our regulation keeps pace in a global market

### E: Our service agenda

**Ambition:** continue to build on our service agenda to ensure that people not only find interactions with us to be efficient and fair, but seek out and take up opportunities to engage further

## That's a good record

### New guidance on clinical records

**A**t its September 2016 meeting the Standards Committee agreed to implement new guidance on clinical and client records in order to provide greater clarity and help resolve a number of issues currently affecting the profession.

The changes made to chapter 5 ('Communication between professional colleagues') and chapter 13 ('Clinical and client records') cover areas such as dealing with amendments or additions to records; dealing with factual inaccuracies and client disputes; access to and provision of records; and the retention and storage of records over time. The Committee also agreed to update the discussion of ownership of diagnostic images, to reflect that these are no longer generally provided to clients in the form of physical images. The changes have been seen and accepted by the Veterinary Defence Society (VDS).

To read the guidance on clinical records in full, please visit [www.rcvs.org.uk/records](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/records)

## Feline renal transplantation guidance

### Final decision made by Standards

**I**n April 2016, the Standards Committee approved new guidance on feline renal transplantation procedures, following lengthy discussions and consideration of evidence presented by the Science Advisory Panel.

The Standards Committee decided that feline renal transplantations could only be ethically and legally acceptable if the kidney was transplanted from a dead animal, and that living and pre-euthanasia cats (defined as animals under terminal anaesthesia before undergoing euthanasia for an unrelated condition) were not acceptable transplant animals.

The new guidance was reported to RCVS Council in June 2016. One Council member noted that the requirements relating to the expertise of the veterinary surgeon carrying out the transplantation procedures and aftercare of the recipient (addressed in the previous guidance) had been omitted from the new guidance. Accordingly, the Committee agreed that these issues should be covered and approved additional guidance regarding requirements for active lifelong care and requirements around the competency and expertise of the vets involved in the transplantation procedure.

The newly clarified guidance can be found in chapter 27 ('Miscellaneous procedures: legal and ethical considerations') of the supporting guidance at [www.rcvs.org.uk/miscellaneous](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/miscellaneous)

## Can I get a witness?

### Guidance on destruction of controlled drugs

**W**e want to take this opportunity to remind vets and veterinary nurses about who can witness destruction of controlled drugs (CDs).

Destruction of CDs is subject to a number of important considerations. The VMD advises that the legal requirements to witness the destruction of Schedule 2 CDs apply to stock. This refers to CDs that have not been issued or dispensed to a patient. However, any leftover medicines, for example, liquids, which are still required for use, are considered as stock. A witness is required if these are to be destroyed on expiry (including where applicable 28 days after broaching) or for other reasons.

There is no legal requirement to have the disposal of waste product witnessed. Leftover medicines are generally considered waste and not stock if they are unusable. Any medicine left over in an ampoule or vial which is considered unusable is considered waste product.

Schedule 2 CDs (and Schedule 3 and 4 CDs that have been prepared extemporaneously for use under the prescribing Cascade) must be destroyed in the presence of, and instructed by, any of the following:

- An Inspector appointed under the Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMRs) (this includes a Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) inspector or RCVS Practice Standards Assessor)
- A veterinary surgeon independent of a practice

where the destruction takes place (including those who have no personal, professional or financial interest in the veterinary practice where the drug is being destroyed but excluding temporary staff and family members)

- A person legally authorised to witness the destruction of CDs such as a police Controlled Drugs Liaison Officer (CDLO)

The VMD advises that a veterinary surgeon acting as an independent witness should not accept or demand any form of payment beyond that reasonable to cover transportation costs for witnessing the destruction of a CD. They should also record their RCVS number and confirm their independence in writing in the CD register. A record must be made of the date of destruction and the quantity destroyed which the witness must sign. This includes the name of the CD, form, strength and quantity; date it was destroyed; and the signature of the witness and the professional destroying the drug. It is good practice for all schedules of CDs to be destroyed in the same way although, legally, this only applies to Schedule 2 CDs.

CDs should be rendered irretrievable before disposal, for example by using a denaturing kit.

Destruction of CDs should occur with sufficient frequency to ensure that excessive quantities are not stored awaiting destruction. The frequency will depend on the volume of CDs so this might be, for example, every couple of months and should be determined locally following a risk assessment.

#### For more information please see:

- RCVS Guidance on Controlled Drugs [www.rcvs.org.uk/publications/controlled-drugs-guidance](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/publications/controlled-drugs-guidance)
- VMD Guidance Note [www.gov.uk/guidance/controlled-drugs-veterinary-medicines#return-and-disposal-requirements](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/controlled-drugs-veterinary-medicines#return-and-disposal-requirements)
- BSAVA Guide to the Use of Veterinary Medicines [www.gov.uk/guidance/controlled-drugs-veterinary-medicines#return-and-disposal-requirements](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/controlled-drugs-veterinary-medicines#return-and-disposal-requirements)

## Communicating fees

### Guidance on client expectations to be strengthened

**A**t its September meeting the Standards Committee considered whether the College could do more through the supporting guidance to the *Codes of Professional Conduct* to help veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses manage client expectations regarding fees.

The Committee agreed that the existing professional obligations of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses to communicate fees to clients and gain informed consent should be emphasised to more effectively set client expectations around veterinary fees.

In order to help with this the Committee agreed that the supporting guidance should be strengthened to place more emphasis

on providing accurate initial fee estimates and accurate estimates for different stages of treatment; on explaining the cost of out-of-hours care; and on providing detailed practice fee information, for example, through client leaflets.

The Committee also noted that, through the Vet Futures project, the College and the British Veterinary Association (BVA) were also doing work around developing communication materials to explain veterinary fees and the value of veterinary services to the general public.

These ideas will now be used to update and refresh the existing guidance on fees in chapter 9 ('Practice information, fees and animal insurance') of the supporting guidance.



# Technically speaking

## Consultation on impact of tech on practice

**The Standards Committee and Operational Board have approved plans for an evidence-gathering exercise on the hot topic of telemedicine and new technology.**

As a key issue for the veterinary profession, affecting all angles of veterinary activity, we are planning to review the possibilities that exist for this emerging area of practice. Over the winter we will be launching an evidence-gathering exercise, inviting views, comments and ideas from all interested parties. The evidence gathered will then be considered by the Standards Committee, with a view to identifying how telemedicine and technological advances sit alongside professional standards and responsibilities.

**“Feedback...will help us formulate new professional standards and guidance.”**

Information and communication technology affects almost every aspect of our lives – rapid advancements have revolutionised the business world over the past 25 years, and continue to transform the way business is done in all sectors across the globe. The Standards Committee Chair, David Catlow, says: “Technology is also changing veterinary medicine and impacting on how veterinary services are delivered. While these advancements can offer opportunities to improve the delivery of veterinary care, they also present new challenges for the profession and how it is regulated and this is why we have launched this consultation.”

Telemedicine – the use of electronic information and communication technologies to provide clinical healthcare remotely or at a distance – is also playing a growing role in the human healthcare sector, with regulators such as the General Medical Council issuing guidelines to doctors on issues including remote prescribing.

Some forms of telemedicine are already well established in the veterinary sector, including Specialists being available for remote consultation with general practitioners, remote interaction between the veterinary team and animal owner

with the provision of general advice by telephone or Skype consultation, and the capturing and sending of radiographs, computerised tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) images over the Internet. However, the laws and professional regulations that govern this aspect of veterinary practice around the world appear to be fairly undeveloped.

We recognise the potential for new technologies to improve the provision of veterinary medicine, for example, by facilitating wider access to veterinary care, allowing clients to show symptoms as they happen, and enabling more accurate triaging of emergency cases. However, it is important that telemedicine services are conducted within an appropriate legal and regulatory framework.

“The feedback from veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and the animal-owning public will help us formulate new professional standards and guidance,” says David Catlow.

The Standards Committee considered a draft consultation outline and questionnaire at its September 2016 meeting. The paperwork will now be finalised with the Committee and the consultation launched at the start of the new year.

The consultation will run for eight weeks, and will comprise two separate online questionnaires, one for members of the veterinary profession, and one for animal-owning members of the public. The questionnaire for members of the profession will enable respondents to provide their views on a number of key themes, and should take around 30 minutes to complete. It will be possible to respond anonymously if preferred. We will also write to veterinary and veterinary nursing organisations directly to seek their views.

Once all of the responses have been collated, the Standards Committee will review them and will also invite a number of individuals and organisations to present and discuss their views with the Committee either in person or via Skype.

The consultation questionnaires will be available at the start of 2017 on the RCVS website at [www.rcvs.org.uk/consultations](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/consultations)

# The dues are due

## Deadline for VN renewals

**The deadline for completing the annual renewal for VNs was 1 November 2016. However, any veterinary nurse that intends to remain on the Register does still have until 31 December to pay their fee or their name will be removed from the Register.**

All registered veterinary nurses were contacted at the end of September by email or, where we don't have an email address, by post, to ask them to complete their annual renewal and pay their fee of £61.

This year only 1,086 veterinary nurses were contacted by post, compared to around 3,500 letters sent last year. Text message reminders will also be sent to those for whom we hold a mobile number - this is in response to feedback requesting more contact via email or text message.

Although payment was due by 1 November, the final deadline is 31 December 2016. The annual fee can be paid by credit or debit card online via the 'My Account' area of our website ([www.rcvs.org.uk/login](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/login)) or by cheque, bank draft or bank transfer.

Veterinary nurses also need to confirm their Register details, compliance with our continuing professional development requirement of 45 hours over a three-year period and declare any convictions, cautions and/or adverse findings.

If you are concerned that you have not received your annual renewal notice, then you should contact our Registration Department on 020 7202 0707. If you have any concerns or queries about paying the annual renewal fee, then please contact our Finance Team on 020 7202 0723.



# Spring renewal

## Veterinary surgeons registration

**The annual renewal notice for veterinary surgeons will be sent by email in mid-to-late February next year. If we do not have an email address for you, then your annual renewal notice will be posted to your correspondence address.**

The deadline for veterinary surgeons' completion of annual renewals is 1 April 2017.

In order to complete your annual renewal you will need to confirm you are meeting our continuing

professional development requirements, complete a disclosure declaration, pay your fee and confirm your status and that your Register details are correct. Please note your fee can be paid by credit or debit card online, by your employer, by Direct Debit (if previously set up), or by cheque or bank transfer.

If you pay your fee after 30 April 2017 the amount due will increase by £35, and if the fee is not received in full on or before 31 May then your name will be removed from the Register.

Should you, at any point, need to restore your name to the Register, you will need to pay a restoration fee, in addition to your outstanding annual renewal fee.

If you have not received your annual renewal notice by the beginning of March, or if you have any questions about completing your renewal and paying your fees, please contact the Registration Department on 020 7202 0707 or [registration@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:registration@rcvs.org.uk).

# The new PSS: one year on

## New Scheme proves popular

**F**ollowing the launch of the new Practice Standards Scheme at the London Vet Show in November 2015 it has proven very popular, with a year-on-year increase of over 34% in new applications to join the Scheme. RCVS-accredited practices now also account for 58% of all eligible practices.

Furthermore, there has been a great deal of interest in the new Practice Standards Scheme awards which allow RCVS-accredited practices to demonstrate the areas in which they excel. So far a total of 46 RCVS-accredited practices have achieved 77 awards with feedback received about the awards application process demonstrating that it has been an effective way to drive improvement of standards in the practice setting.

**“91% of practices reported that their assessment experience was ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’.”**

The new team of Assessors and the new assessment process, which concentrates on behaviours and outcomes rather than paper-work, have also been well received with post-assessment survey results showing that over 95% agreed their assessor was helpful and informative.

Positive feedback has been received regarding the new modular structure, with the additional guidance making the requirements clearer and easier to understand. This is demonstrated by the fact that 91% of practices reported that their assessment experience was ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’.

The new IT system was trialled earlier in the year. Although features of the system, such as the ability to upload documents before inspections, were popular, the testing revealed some technical and usability issues which we are in the process of resolving with our external developer. We hope that a version of the system (known as ‘Stanley’) will be available for practices to use by the end of the year.



# Recognising excellence

## 18 practices receive PSS Awards at special ceremony



**A**t this year’s BVNA Congress in October (see page 14) our President Chris Tufnell handed 18 practices their Practice Standards Scheme awards at a special ceremony which also recognised the role played by veterinary nurses in achieving RCVS-accredited status.

Representatives from practices all around the UK attended the event and awards were given out across the small animal, equine and farm animal practice accreditation categories.

The event was introduced by RCVS Council member Jacqui Molyneux (pictured above) who chairs the Practice Standards Group that is responsible for coordinating the Scheme and whose own practice – Prince Bishop Veterinary Hospital near Durham – received six outstanding awards in the small animal practice category.

She said: “I feel immensely proud to be here today and introducing this awards reception at BVNA Congress. I’m proud of all those who worked so hard on the Practices Standards Group to develop and implement the new Scheme. I’m proud because my own practice, led by my Head Nurse Victoria Howarth, is receiving awards today. But most of all, I’m proud because today’s event recognises and celebrates the vital but often-overlooked role of veterinary nurses in the Practice Standards Scheme.

“We know that RVNs are frequently the champions of the Scheme, advocating its role, driving forward new approaches in their practices and preparing for assessments. There is, therefore, perhaps no better venue at which to mark the achievement of these practices than BVNA Congress.”

The ceremony then featured presentations from three veterinary nurses whose role had been integral in their practices achieving awards, including Gillian Calvo from the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) Queen Mother Hospital for Small Animals and Victoria Howarth from Prince Bishop Veterinary Hospital. The third veterinary nurse to speak was Helen Boyd from Macqueen Vets in Wiltshire, which received five ‘outstanding’ awards.

Speaking of the awards assessment process, Helen said: “The whole process has been very useful to the practice as it has provided an

audit record on the majority of procedures carried out within the practice and allowed us to update and improve our working systems. For example, new surgical checklists, new general anaesthetic monitoring forms, physiotherapy techniques and so on.

“For anyone thinking of applying for the assessment, I would recommend it to others as it has improved our standards in all areas including better patient care and improved client experience.”

She added: “The assessor, Richard Killen, made us feel at ease throughout the whole process. He had a relaxed manner and was able to ask questions through conversation. He was very personable and understood the practicalities of a working practice.”

**“We know that RVNs are frequently the champions of the Scheme, advocating its role, driving forward new approaches in their practices and preparing for assessments.”**

Chris Tufnell then invited representatives from each practice onto the stage to receive their awards, while excerpts from the Assessors’ award reports were read out to the audience and official photos of the practice teams were taken.

In his closing remarks, Chris emphasised the sense of pride that all the practices should take in their ‘tremendous achievement’, reiterated the important contribution made by veterinary nurses in the Scheme, including in his own practice, and thanked Jacqui, the Practice Standards Group and the College’s Practice Standards Team for all their work and commitment.

Pictures of the event can be found on our Flickr page at [www.flickr.com/photos/rcvs](http://www.flickr.com/photos/rcvs)

For more information about the Practice Standards Scheme, including its accreditation and awards process, visit [www.rcvs.org.uk/pss](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/pss)

# International success

## Ten new vets join the Register after passing membership exam

**O**ur President, Chris Tufnell, congratulated 10 international veterinary surgeons who had passed their Statutory Membership Examinations and welcomed them to the College's Register at a special ceremony on Wednesday 21 September 2016.

The Statutory Membership Exam needs to be undertaken by those who hold veterinary qualifications that are not recognised by the College.

This year, 15 applicants were successful and 10 of these attended the ceremony. Those attending came from a variety of countries

spanning four continents – including Brazil, Colombia, India, Nigeria, Trinidad & Tobago and Zimbabwe.

Norman Masamvi, who graduated from the University of Zimbabwe in 1994, was one of those who attended the ceremony. He said: "I have worked mostly in the public health sector in Zimbabwe mainly focussed on exports to Europe but I wanted to start working in the UK because it will be a step up and there will be greater opportunities in public health here. The exam was challenging after so many years in practice but I like the fact that it was very thorough."



# Logging our progress

## Updates made to the Nursing Progress Log

**W**e recently made a number of improvements to the Nursing Progress Log (NPL), an optional online assessment tool for student veterinary nurses.

The NPL was developed to allow student veterinary nurses to track their progress and measure it against the Day-one Skills List, which outlines those particular skills veterinary nurses are expected to possess upon joining the Register, and Day-one Competences, which set out in broad terms what is required of new veterinary nurses by the time they finish their training.

We updated the NPL in August to reflect recent changes made to the Day-one Skills List, which made it more focused on veterinary nurses' everyday clinical skills. We also added a new professional behaviour assessment tool to the Day-one Skills List in early September, allowing veterinary nurses to evaluate if they are meeting the professional standards expected of a registered veterinary nurse in practice.

These updates are part of the revision of the Day-one Skills for veterinary nurses for which an open consultation was held in the summer of 2015. The new skills are designed to be in closer alignment with the revised Day-one Competences, and to make the required skills more relevant to clinical practice.

***"The NPL was developed to allow student veterinary nurses to track their progress and measure it against the Day-one Skills List."***

As well as introducing the new professional behaviour assessment tool, it has been agreed that the practical placement hours requirement would be reduced from 2,100 to 1,800, calculated as 35 hours per week over one year, and would therefore comply with current HMRC National Minimum Wage requirements.

To learn more about Day-one Skills and Day-one Competences, please visit our website: [www.rcvs.org.uk/education/i-want-to-be-a-veterinary-nurse](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/education/i-want-to-be-a-veterinary-nurse)

# You could be a champion...

## Like your CPD? Tell us why

**W**e are looking for particularly keen members of the profession (both vets and VNs) to write for our CPD Champions Blog. You don't need to have done 200 plus hours of CPD every year to be a champion – instead, we are looking for those who are enthusiastic about the benefits of CPD, and have tips they'd like to share about how best to stay in touch with their field.

Previous blogs have discussed: how to do CPD on a budget; the benefits of clinical clubs; how to integrate learning into everyday practice; how to fit CPD in with the demands of work and family; and mentoring as CPD.

***"If you have an example of your favourite CPD, please post them using the hashtag #mykindofCPD... and we'll be able to share them."***

We have also been running a social media campaign in November to highlight the many different kinds of activities that can count towards CPD, sharing examples submitted from prominent members of the veterinary profession.

If you have an example of your favourite CPD, please post them using the hashtag #mykindofCPD on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, and we'll be able to share them. To view the posts, please visit our social media channels at @RCVS\_UK, @thercvcs, or @thercvcs (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram respectively).

Our thanks to those who have already volunteered either to write a CPD Champions blog or submit examples to the #mykindofCPD campaign. If you are interesting in becoming a CPD Champion, please contact Luke Bishop, Senior Communications Officer, at [l.bishop@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:l.bishop@rcvs.org.uk) or 020 7202 0784.

**"Participating at a mammal medic course. This one-day course gave me the confidence to health check an injured marine mammal and organise a team of volunteers, or make a judgement call on rehabilitation and survival alongside the veterinary surgeon."**

**Kathy Kissick, RVN, Chair of Alderney Animal Welfare Society**

**#mykindofCPD**

## Deadline time for CPD audit

### Still time to share CPD records

**If we asked you to participate in this year's audit of veterinary surgeons' continuing professional development (CPD), you can still submit your records by early December.**

We contacted just over 1,400 veterinary surgeons in September with a request to submit CPD records for 2013-15 along with a reminder that, under our *Code of Professional Conduct*, veterinary surgeons are expected to undertake at least 105 hours of CPD over a rolling three-year period.

Of those audited, 583 had not confirmed their CPD compliance in the annual renewal for two consecutive years; 400 were a random sample of vets who self-certified as CPD-compliant as part of the 2016 annual renewal; 124 were vets who were not compliant in the 2015 audit; 98 were vets who did not respond to the 2015 audit; 68 were vets who have not responded to any Professional Development Phase communication; and 124 were vets who have self-certified as non-compliant as part of the 2016 renewal process.

**“Veterinary surgeons who continually fail to comply with the CPD requirement or to respond to requests for their CPD records may be reported to the Preliminary Investigation Committee for further enquiries into their fitness to practise.”**

If you are one of these and have not yet replied, you have until **Friday 2 December** to do so. The records can be submitted by notifying us that you are using the online Professional Development Record ([www.rcvs-pdr.org.uk](http://www.rcvs-pdr.org.uk)) or by sending in your CPD record card via email or post.

Veterinary surgeons who continually fail to comply with the CPD requirement or to respond to requests for their CPD records may be reported to the Preliminary Investigation Committee for further enquiries into their fitness to practise. A CPD Referral Group has been set up to consider these cases and will be making judgements on which should be referred to the Professional Conduct Team.

If you have need of further advice about undertaking CPD or recording or submitting records you can contact Jenny Soreskog-Turp, our CPD Education Officer, on 020 7202 0701 or [j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk)

## Graduates' views sought

### BSAVA and RCVS to launch joint project on PDP

**We will be joining forces with the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) regarding the impact of the Professional Development Phase (PDP) on new graduates.**

The PDP is a period of supported learning and development which is designed to support new graduates in the transition from student to practice life in the first year or so post-graduation. One of our Education Committee's strategic aims over the next few years is to “maximise the impact of the PDP in supporting new graduates” and, in order to do so, it was felt that an evaluation of the PDP was needed to better understand the impact it has on graduates and employers.

As the BSAVA has already been conducting work in this area, by developing and drawing together resources to support new graduates undertaking the PDP, it was decided that a joint project would be beneficial – although graduates working in all fields of the veterinary profession will be included in the research. It is hoped the research will provide a foundation for a programme of work and improvement on the PDP to ensure it is fit for purpose.

A Working Group, comprising representatives from the RCVS and BSAVA Councils as well as recent graduates and employers, has now been set up and is expected to meet before the end of the year.

## Changes, stat!

### New design for Statutory Membership Examination

**At its November meeting RCVS Council agreed a number of recommended changes to the Statutory Membership Examination.**

The examination must be taken by all veterinary surgeons whose veterinary qualifications we do not recognise, but who wish to join the Register. The exam was developed over 30 years ago, and in May 2015 the Education Committee agreed to a review of the design and delivery to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

At the beginning of the year we conducted a consultation involving key stakeholders. The recommendations were subsequently discussed and agreed by the Examination Board, Primary Qualifications Subcommittee and Education

Committee, before finally being presented to RCVS Council for its November meeting.

The consultation report made a number of recommendations including enhancing the support available for applicants, revising the examination methods and identifying how to manage the exams in the long term.

These changes are scheduled to be implemented from 2018. Candidates preparing to sit the exam in 2017 will not be affected by the changes. Once the new exam format has been introduced there will be a transition period during which time both exams will be available. This will allow re-sit candidates the opportunity to complete the examination route that they originally entered.

## Accreditation updates

### Recent and upcoming visitations

**Following a visit to the University of Liverpool in March 2016, Education Committee agreed that the Liverpool degree would continue to be recognised for a period of seven years.**

The College also conducted an accreditation visit to St. George's University in Grenada (pictured) from 7 to 11 November, at the university's request. The visit was chaired by Professor Susan Rhind, Director of Veterinary Teaching and Assistant Principal for Assessment and Feedback at the University of Edinburgh's Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies.

The College is preparing for the preliminary visit to the University of Surrey's School of Veterinary Medicine in March 2017, which will be chaired by Professor Norm Williamson, Professor Emeritus of Veterinary Medicine at New Zealand's Massey University.



# Wellbeing and resilience in focus


 mind matters

## Update on latest MMI activities

**An update on our recent activities to help address mental health issues and promote wellbeing within the veterinary team, from Mind Matters Initiative Project Director, Lizzie Lockett.**

**As we move towards the end of the second year of the Mind Matters Initiative, the project is gaining momentum and recognition – not just within the UK but also overseas, as I was invited to the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges' Veterinary Wellness Summit in Colorado in November to outline what has been achieved so far. Meanwhile, MMI Chair Neil Smith gave a well-received talk at the European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine's Congress in Gothenburg, Sweden, in September.**

Presentations have also been made recently to a group of practice managers at a joint Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS) and Veterinary Practice Management Association (VPMA) HR day, and to recent graduates as part of a large corporate practice's graduate intake programme, among others.

### SPVS Wellbeing Award

The deadline for the first year of the SPVS/MMI Wellbeing Award has now passed, and the judges will soon be assembling to assess which of the entrants has been best able to demonstrate how they have put their team's wellbeing first. The winners will be announced at SPVS/VPMA Congress in January, and we are looking forward to celebrating their success and sharing their winning formulae.

You can still see how your practice stacks up wellbeing-wise – and get some suggestions on things you could try – by completing the Wellbeing Audit: [www.spvs.org.uk/wellbeing](http://www.spvs.org.uk/wellbeing).

### Mental health for managers

Neil Greenberg, Professor of Mental Health at the Department of Psychological Medicine at King's College London, maintains that: "Resilience is not what's within you, but what's between you and other people". It's with this in mind, and recognising the key role that those in management play in supporting members of the team with mental health issues, that we are about to trial a new one-day 'mental health for managers' course, in conjunction with VPMA.

The course will cover basic mental health issues, the Mental Health Act, employment regulations, the role of the line manager in managing mental health, reasonable adjustments, how to manage someone who is returning to work, and how to develop wellbeing action plans.

Following the trial we will evaluate and update the course as necessary, and aim to roll it out in each of the VPMA's CPD regions during 2017.

Vets and nurses within reasonable travelling distance of the venues will be invited by email, as

will VPMA members. If you are a practice manager not covered by those groupings, please drop me a line and I will add you to the list ([lizzie@vetmindmatters.org](mailto:lizzie@vetmindmatters.org)).

### Mental health awareness courses

Our programme of mental health awareness (MHA) courses, run with the generous support of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA), have been very well received by delegates. They have mainly been three-hour sessions, with a couple of full days, carried out by trainer Trevor Bell. Feedback suggests that more full-day sessions would prove popular, so we are considering how to make this work for 2017.

Meanwhile, we are supporting two three-hour MHA sessions at each of the veterinary schools, in recognition of the key influence that vets within the schools have on their students, as well as aiming to make them better able to support their colleagues.

We are also providing an MHA session for Association of Veterinary Students welfare reps at their forthcoming Welfare Weekend, hosted by the University of Nottingham.

### Northern Ireland Peer Support trial

We are delighted to be funding a trial of a new peer support programme for members of the practice team in Northern Ireland. The project is chaired by former RCVS President Des Thompson, and training for the volunteers will take place in the New Year. We will be watching progress keenly as, if successful, this may be a model of support that could be rolled out elsewhere in the UK.

### Feeling mindful?

Following the very positive feedback from our first series of mindfulness webinars, earlier this year, registrations are now open for our second series. The eight one-hour webinars, kindly hosted by The Webinar Vet, will again see Dr Mike Scanlan teaching mindfulness techniques to reduce stress and improve wellbeing.

Comments from participants on the first series included this gem: "The course has been a great help to me, enjoyable, relaxing and enlightening. I wish I had been able to do it years ago. Better late than never! I would recommend it to everyone. Here's to the new and happier me! Mike is an inspiration!"

The sessions will take place on Wednesday evenings, from 8-9pm, starting on 1 February 2017, but don't worry if you can't attend every live session, they will also be recorded. The series costs £40, or £200 for a ten-person practice ticket,

and you can sign up at [www.thewebinarvet.com/mindfulness17RCVS](http://www.thewebinarvet.com/mindfulness17RCVS) (prices exclude VAT).

### International Virtual Congress

Staying with The Webinar Vet, we are delighted to once again be taking part in its International Virtual Congress, on 20 January 2017, from 7-9pm. Neil Smith will chair a series of sessions focusing on resilience, which will be free to join.

Last year's MMI 'happiness symposium' saw over 700 people tuning in, and we are sure that the 2017 sessions, as follows, will prove equally engaging:

- Managing work stress in veterinary practice – Dr Elinor O'Connor
- Veterinary resilience, more good days than bad – Dr Jenny Moffett
- An introduction to mindfulness – Dr Mike Scanlan

You can register at:

[www.theinternationalwebinarvet.com/stream/rcvs-pre-congress-day](http://www.theinternationalwebinarvet.com/stream/rcvs-pre-congress-day)

### Inaugural Research Symposium

Friday, 20 January 2017 is going to be a busy day as it's also the date for our first MMI Research Symposium. 'Understanding and supporting veterinary mental health' will take place at the University of Edinburgh's Pollock Halls, preceded by a networking dinner.

Keynote speakers will include Professor Rory O'Connor of the Suicide Behaviour Research Lab at the University of Glasgow, Dr Debbie Cohen, Chair of the Faculty of Occupational Health at Cardiff University, and Chris O'Sullivan of the Mental Health Foundation.

Do you have research in this field that you would like to share? A call for submissions from those keen to do short talks or present posters is now open. For more information, please see [www.rcvs.org.uk/MMIsymposium](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/MMIsymposium).

Tickets are available at

[www.rcvsmindmatters.eventbrite.com](http://www.rcvsmindmatters.eventbrite.com)

### Out and about...

Finally, our programme of sessions at congresses and events is ongoing...see pages 14 and 15 for news about our #wellbeingtip campaign at the London Vet Show, and lectures we are supporting at SPVS/VPMA Congress (27 January) and the British Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress (8 April).

These are just some of our ongoing activities. For more information about Mind Matters, please email [lizzie@vetmindmatters.org](mailto:lizzie@vetmindmatters.org) or follow us on Twitter: [@vetmindmatters](https://twitter.com/vetmindmatters)

## ExCel-lent minds

### Mind Matters at London Vet Show

## mindmatters

**T**his November we once again exhibited at the London Vet Show, where we promoted a number of projects and initiatives.

At the event, held from 17 to 18 November at its new venue of ExCel in London, we focused on the Mind Matters Initiative, a project launched in 2014 that aims to increase the accessibility and acceptance of mental health support, and encourage a culture that better equips individuals to talk about and deal with stress and related issues.

The stand also featured tips gathered from a month-long social media campaign in September, which saw daily suggestions for how to improve wellbeing from members of the veterinary profession and mental health experts. Visitors shared their own wellbeing tips for a chance to win a FitBit Alta worth £100. The wellbeing tips given during the social media campaign can be found on the Mind Matters Initiative's Twitter account [@vetmindmatters](https://twitter.com/vetmindmatters).

The Vet Futures project, a joint initiative between the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and the College, was also featured on the RCVS stand. The project was launched at London Vet Show in 2014, and the Vet Futures Action Plan, which detailed how the organisations would deliver on the recommendations of the 2015 Vet Futures Report, was launched at the Vet Futures Summit on 4 July 2016.

Jointly with the BVA we also held a session on the impact of Brexit – further details about this and other Brexit-related developments can be found on page 3.

## Instant pics

### New Instagram account

**W**e have recently started a dedicated account on Instagram, an online photo and video sharing social media platform, allowing us to post behind-the-scenes pictures and updates regarding our events, projects and initiatives. The account has proven popular, with some of our most

liked posts being about our first female president, Olga Uvarov, for Ada Lovelace Day (recognising the contribution of women to scientific endeavour) and events such as our Fellowship Day and Annual General Meeting. You can follow us at [@thercvts](https://www.instagram.com/thercvts) to see more!



## VNs are the future

### Series of sessions at BVNA Congress

**T**he Chair of our Veterinary Nurses Council Liz Cox RVN and Director of our VN Department Julie Dugmore kicked off proceedings at this year's British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) Congress with a talk entitled 'VN Futures – where is the profession headed?'. During the talk they outlined the six broad ambitions and 31 recommendations from the VN Futures Report and Action Plan which was published in July 2016 following extensive consultation with the profession. You can read the report at [www.vetfutures.org.uk/vnfutures](http://www.vetfutures.org.uk/vnfutures)

Following this talk there was a stream of other VN Futures-themed presentations including one from VN Council members Hilary Orpet and Andrea Jeffery entitled 'Failing to Fail' which introduced the new professional competencies assessment tool and outlined how it is to be used within practice by both clinical coaches and VN students.

Liz Cox also gave a talk about the importance of veterinary nurses being accountable for their work and developing, maintaining and improving their

professional persona. Furthermore, she joined Dot Creighton RVN, the winner of last year's Golden Jubilee Award, and Eleanor Haskey, one of the nominees for this year's winner Louise O'Dwyer, for a talk on the importance of making a nomination for the award.

***“Liz Cox also gave a talk about the importance of veterinary nurses being accountable for their work and developing, maintaining and improving their professional persona.”***

While all these talks were going on our staff were also busy on the College stand where we had our ever-popular Practice Standards Scheme-themed game in which delegates were encouraged to throw stuffed animals into a bucket in order to win a Fitbit Alta. We also held a special Practice Standards Awards ceremony as part of the Congress – more details of which can be found on page 10.



## Helping you build your resilience

### MMI stream at VPMA/SPVS Congress



**N**eed to build your resilience? Then join us at the Celtic Manor Hotel in Newport for the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS) and Veterinary Practice Management Association (VPMA)

Congress, on 27–28 January 2017.

In conjunction with the Mind Matters Initiative (MMI), SPVS/VPMA will be hosting a full day's programme around mental health and

wellbeing, chaired by Dr Radha Modgil, GP (pictured left) and co-host of Radio 1's *The Surgery*.

The day will include Radha's guidance on how to recognise common mental health problems, case studies from winners of the SPVS/MMI Wellbeing Award, and a session on 'Resilience, what it is and why it matters'.

Our team will also be on hand on the RCVS stand for both days, to answer your questions on any topic, including the new Practice Standards Scheme, Vet and VN Futures, our confidential reporting line and our ongoing continuing professional development review.

# Promoting to the public

## Raising awareness at BBC Countryfile

In August we exhibited at the first ever BBC Countryfile Live event at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire.

At our stand, which was designed to look like a veterinary practice, we talked to members of the public about the Practice Standards Scheme, our online Find a Vet search engine, and how to become a veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse.

The stall proved very popular with old and young, with youngsters particularly interested in trying our keyhole surgery game (with stuffed animals of course!). More pictures of the event can be found on our Flickr page: [www.flickr.com/photos/rcvcs](http://www.flickr.com/photos/rcvcs)



## BSAVA Congress 2017

### Brexit and CPD on the agenda

**A**t next year's British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress (6 to 9 April, ICC Birmingham) we will be holding a session looking at two critical issues affecting the profession – Brexit and our current review of continuing professional development (CPD).

The session takes place on Friday 7 April 2017 starting at 8.30am with pastries and coffee, with the talk on Brexit taking place between 8.45am and 9.30am and the talk on our outcomes-based approach to CPD taking place from 9.30am to 10.10am. The speakers are to be confirmed but further information will be in the March 2017 edition of RCVS News.

Our Mind Matters Initiative will also be promoted at the Congress, with visitors to our stand encouraged to share their wellbeing tips as well as two sessions covering mental health-related issues on Saturday 8 April 2017. The first talk, titled 'Occupational Stressors in Veterinary Practice in the UK', takes place from 4.50pm to 5.35pm and will be delivered by Dr Elinor O'Connor from the Alliance Manchester Business School at the University of Manchester. The second talk, titled 'Resilience: What does it really mean?', takes place from 5.45pm to 6.30pm and will be delivered by Richard Dorney MBE, Director at Strongmind Resiliency Training Ltd.

## RCVS Day: watch again

### Videos now available

**I**f you were unable to make it to this year's RCVS Day – our Annual General Meeting and Awards Day – on 15 July then fear not, for all the footage from the event can be found on our YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos](http://www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos)).

Highlights include the handing out of honours such as the Queen's Medal and the Golden Jubilee Award, as well as speeches from the outgoing President Bradley Viner and incoming President Chris Tufnell. There is also a video dedicated to our guest speaker Adam Little DVM, Director of Veterinary Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Texas A & M University, who talks about the exponential development of technology and the challenges and opportunities it poses for the profession.





## Report to Council, November 2016

**PIC Chair Andrew Ash**

**S**ince the last report to Council there have been seven Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) meetings in May, June, July and two each in August and September.

The total number of cases considered by the Committee was 69. Of these 16 cases were closed, 26 were closed with advice being issued to the veterinary surgeon, nine cases were held open, 12 cases were referred for further investigation, four cases were referred to solicitors for formal statements to be taken, one was referred to the Disciplinary Committee and one was referred to the College's Health Protocol.

In total, the Committee is investigating 27 ongoing cases including those referred to solicitors, visits and health cases.

### Health and Performance Protocol

There are 10 veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Health Protocol. Four veterinary surgeons were released from their undertakings and discharged from the protocol after positive reports were received.

There are three veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Performance Protocol. One veterinary surgeon was discharged from their undertaking having made significant progress with the support of their performance supervisor with both giving positive reports of their experience of the Protocol.

### Professional Conduct Department

In the period 4 May to 10 October 2016 the total number of cases registered by the Professional Conduct Department was 455 – this is compared to 451 for the same dates in 2015.

During the same period 507 cases were closed. Of these approximately 20% were closed because permission to copy the concerns form to the veterinary surgeon was not received; 59% were closed by the Case Examiners Groups because there was no arguable case against the veterinary surgeon; 3% were closed after review; 15% were closed or held open for a specified period by PIC and 3% were closed by the Disciplinary Committee.

### Veterinary investigators

During the period 4 May to 10 October 2016 the Veterinary Investigators and Chief

Investigator/Case Managers carried out eight announced visits, six unannounced visits, one health-related visit and nine review visits. During these visits people raising concerns, veterinary staff, third-party witnesses and the respondent veterinary surgeons were interviewed.

### Disciplinary Committee referrals

During this period PIC referred nine cases relating to four veterinary surgeons to the Disciplinary Committee.

### Concerns procedure

Between January 2016 and May 2016 an average of 40% of concerns raised with the College were closed or referred to PIC within four months – the key performance indicator for this stage. For the same period 83% of the cases where PIC reached a decision were closed, held open or referred to either the Disciplinary Committee or to the Health or Performance Protocols within nine months – the key performance indicator at this stage.

Starting in August 2016 a trial of twice monthly PIC meetings with five members sitting (rather than the full Committee of 10) was started with the aim of reducing delays in cases. This trial will be evaluated in spring 2017.

### Commonly-encountered issues: dental treatments

The Committee has recently noted a number of cases where complainants have raised concerns about dental procedures carried out on their animals. Often the complainant has consented to dental examination of their animal but not explicitly to the removal of teeth – in other cases complainants have consented to the removal or one or two teeth but have discovered, after the event, that more have been removed.

The Committee recognises that it is difficult to examine an animal's teeth until it is sedated or anaesthetised and that the number of extractions to perform may not be clear until this examination takes place. It acknowledges that delaying a procedure or prolonging anaesthesia or sedation in order to obtain explicit consent carries risk to the animal. However, complaints may be averted by providing clear advice to clients prior to such procedures, including the fact that it is not possible to accurately predict the number of extractions necessary until a full examination has taken place and detail this clearly on consent forms and in clinical records.

The full reports are available at [www.rcvs.org.uk](http://www.rcvs.org.uk)

## Mr Nigel Hough

**Inquiry concerning: inadequate communication and disparaging comments**

**DC decision: reprimand issued to Mr Hough**

**Registration status: name remains on the Register**

On 30 September 2016 the Disciplinary Committee issued a reprimand to Wirral-based veterinary surgeon Nigel Hough for failing to adequately communicate with clients in relation to the care of their dog and for speaking disparagingly about other veterinary practitioners.

In deciding on an appropriate sanction, the Committee expressed significant concerns over Mr Hough's treatment of the dog in his care, in particular his "failure to devise and implement proper and sufficient procedures to ensure that this dog was not released to owners unless it was safe for her to be released and... that the owners were fully advised as to what was required of them."

## Mr Ian Beveridge

**Inquiry concerning: application for restoration to the Register**

**DC decision: application granted**

**Registration status: name restored to the Register**

On 1 November 2016 the Disciplinary Committee granted Mr Ian Beveridge's application to be restored to the Register.

He had been removed from the Register following a disciplinary hearing in May 2013 in which he was found guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect with the Committee finding that he had treated clients badly, kept inadequate clinical records, was dishonest in his dealings with the College and that animals in his care were placed at risk. He subsequently appealed to the Privy Council but this was later withdrawn resulting in him being formally removed from the Register in March 2014.

He first applied to be restored to the Register in 2015 but his application was refused by the Disciplinary Committee at a hearing in November 2015. At the time the Committee found him unfit for restoration to the Register because, following his removal, his veterinary medicines account had been used on an unauthorised basis to order prescription-only veterinary medicines, which reflected a "cavalier attitude to practice". Furthermore, the Committee found that he had not fully accepted the Committee's original findings, had made inadequate effort in regards to engaging in continuing professional development



The Committee felt that Mr Hough had given “insufficient attention” to the animal’s post-operative care but did accept that the conduct represented a single incident. During the course of the hearing the Committee also heard mitigating evidence given on behalf of Mr Hough, with a number of written testimonials as well as witness evidence in support of his clinical expertise and surgical skills.

**“Failure to devise and implement proper and sufficient procedures to ensure that this dog was not released to owners unless it was safe for her to be released.”**

The Committee accepted that Mr Hough had taken to heart the lessons to be learnt from the charges against him and had implemented a number of written protocols to prevent recurrence of the short-comings in his treatment of the dog. Furthermore, the Committee also found that Mr Hough had demonstrated insight into the

conduct found against him and that he had apologised for the disparaging remarks he made about other veterinary practitioners.

**“The lessons which Mr Hough needed to learn have been learnt and...that the sanction of a formal and solemn reprimand adequately meets the needs of the public.”**

Alistair Barr, chairing the Disciplinary Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: “The Committee is persuaded on this evidence that there is reason to believe that the lessons which Mr Hough needed to learn have been learnt and concludes, therefore, that the sanction of a formal and solemn reprimand adequately meets the needs of the public interest in, and requirements of, this particular case. Mya [the dog] did make a full recovery from her extensive surgery but she and her owners deserved better post-surgery advice and support.”

(CPD) and also considered the seriousness of the original findings.

At the opening of his second hearing Mr Beveridge, who represented himself, sought to address the concerns that the Disciplinary Committee had outlined upon refusing his first application for restoration. Regarding his acceptance of the original findings, the Committee heard that he now apologised “unreservedly for his failings that led to erasure of his name from the Register” and the Committee considered that he had demonstrated a significant change in attitude from the previous restoration hearing where he had not fully accepted the reasons for being removed.

**“The Committee also accepted that Mr Beveridge, until his original Disciplinary Committee hearing, had an unblemished professional record and had run a successful small animal practice for over 30 years.”**

In considering issues of public protection the Committee also accepted that Mr Beveridge, until his original Disciplinary Committee hearing, had an unblemished professional record and had run a successful small animal practice for over 30 years. It considered numerous client testimonials as well as a petition signed by 600 clients from 2013.

The Committee also considered that there was no risk to the future welfare of animals in the event of Mr Beveridge being restored to the Register, noting the testimonials and references to satisfactory care and treatment given by Mr Beveridge to his patients.

**“It is the judgement of the Committee that the conduct which resulted in the applicant’s name being removed from the Register is unlikely to be repeated. The applicant has satisfied the Committee that he is fit to be restored to the Register.”**

Regarding CPD, Mr Beveridge produced evidence before the Committee that he had attended courses run by the North American Veterinary Community (NAVC) and the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA). The Committee accepted that he had made “considerable progress” in terms of CPD.

In concluding the hearing Judith Way, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: “It is the judgement of the Committee that the conduct which resulted in the applicant’s name being removed from the Register is unlikely to be repeated. The applicant has satisfied the Committee that he is fit to be restored to the Register.”

## Mr Roger Sidney Meacock

**Inquiry concerning: misleading statements made on website**

**DC decision: agreement for Mr Meacock to enter into undertakings with the College**

**Registration status: name remains on the Register**

On 18 October 2016 the Disciplinary Committee hearing into Staffordshire-based veterinary surgeon Roger Sidney Meacock was adjourned indefinitely following Mr Meacock entering into undertakings with the College.

Mr Meacock faced six charges relating to matters asserted on his website which the College alleged were misleading and/or inaccurate to the point of bringing the veterinary profession into disrepute.

On the day of the hearing the Disciplinary Committee was informed that, following discussions between counsel for both the College and the respondent, Mr Meacock had voluntarily entered into undertakings with the RCVS to amend his website in order to make it compliant with his professional responsibilities.

Following Mr Meacock entering into the undertakings counsel for the College applied to adjourn the hearing generally (ie indefinitely) to enable the website to be changed and for Mr Meacock to demonstrate his intention to remain compliant with his professional obligations. This application was not opposed by Mr Meacock and was granted by the Committee.

Judith Webb, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, explained that the adjourned charges would be kept open indefinitely but the Committee encouraged the College not to extend the period beyond two years. However, if at any time in the future Mr Meacock failed to keep up his undertakings or made further claims which the College found unacceptable, then a fresh case could be brought.



**Full details of disciplinary hearings are available at [www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary)**

**Mr Rahul Shah****Inquiry concerning: failing to provide adequate care****DC decision: reprimanded by the Committee****Registration status: name remains on the Register**

On 23 September 2016, following a four-day hearing, the Disciplinary Committee issued a reprimand to Slough-based veterinary surgeon Rahul Shah after finding him guilty of three charges of failing to provide adequate care for a dog in his care.

***“The Committee did accept that there was no element of dishonesty nor was there an aim of financial gain in the case.”***

During this hearing the Committee heard evidence in respect of three separate heads of charge brought against Mr Shah following a castration operation conducted on Shadow, a six-year old Newfoundland dog, which took place on 20 June 2014.

The Committee found each of the allegations against Mr Shah proved. In respect of the first charge the Committee heard from two expert witnesses, Professor Williams and Mr Plumley,

who agreed that the decision to discharge Shadow at about 6pm on 20 June 2014, given his condition, was inappropriate.

***“Balancing all of the factors as the Committee must, it is clear that on this occasion Mr Shah’s conduct fell far short of that which is expected.”***

The Committee considered that discharging Shadow at that time into the care of the owner given his state on discharge, was grossly negligent and a serious error of judgement. It therefore found Mr Shah to be guilty of the first charge.

The Committee then considered that, after being alerted to Shadow’s continued lack of progress by the telephone call from the owner between 30 and 45 minutes after discharge, Mr Shah exacerbated the situation by the inadequacy of his response in dealing with the concerns raised which, in the Committee’s view, represented a continuation of his previous poor judgement.

The Committee considered that Mr Shah was under a duty of care to advise the owner to seek urgent veterinary attention for Shadow and by his own admission he failed to do so, and he was therefore found guilty of the second charge.

During that telephone call Mr Shah also gave no further details about the out-of-hours care

available to the owner other than to inform her that there would be an additional cost.

He did not seek confirmation that any such information had been supplied by his student veterinary nurse colleague, however, and at no time did he see the owner in possession of the discharge sheet. The Committee therefore found Mr Shah guilty of this final head of charge.

The Committee did accept that there was no element of dishonesty nor was there an aim of financial gain in the case. The Committee also considered that Mr Shah was acting in good faith at all times. It also accepted that Mr Shah was entitled to assume that normal practice had been followed and that a previously compiled discharge sheet, containing the number of the out-of-hours provider, had been supplied to the owner.

Ian Green, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: “Balancing all of the factors as the Committee must, it is clear that on this occasion Mr Shah’s conduct fell far short of that which is expected and it therefore finds he conducted himself disgracefully in a professional respect.”

Furthermore, Mr Green said: “In imposing the sanction of a reprimand, the Committee urges Mr Shah in the strongest possible terms to ensure that his future conduct by way of training and support systems within his practice are such as to avoid any possibility of a future incident such as this occurring in order to ensure animal welfare and public confidence in the veterinary profession.”

## RVN PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE



## Report to VN Council, October 2016

### RVN PIC Chair Suzanne May

**S**ince the last report to VN Council in May 2016 the RVN PIC has said goodbye to Lynne Hill MRCVS and Jenny Thompson RVN and welcomed Sally Bowden RVN on to the Committee. Suzanne May RVN now chairs the Committee with Susan Macaldowie MRCVS as her Vice-Chair.

Since the last report to VN Council there have been three meetings of the Committee – in May, July and September.

Between 3 May and 6 September 2016 the total number of cases considered by the Committee was six. Four cases have been referred to the College’s solicitors for statements to be taken from witnesses and two cases have been referred to the RCVS Disciplinary Committee.

#### RVN concerns

Between 3 May and 6 September 2016 there were 15 new concerns received against RVNs. Three cases are currently

being considered by RVN PIC and 12 cases are under investigation by the Case Examiners Group.

#### Ongoing investigations

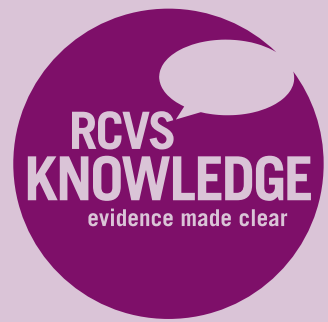
The Committee has three ongoing cases. One has been adjourned pending the outcome of a criminal court trial against the RVN which has been listed for 15 November 2016. Two cases are referred to the College’s solicitors for statements.

#### Health and Performance Protocols

There is currently one veterinary nurse on the RCVS Health Protocol.

#### Referral to RVN Disciplinary Committee

Since the last report to VN Council there have been two cases referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee for a formal hearing. These cases are still to be listed.



## Launch of online Archive Catalogue

### Hundreds of searchable items

**R**CVS Knowledge's Vet History project is pleased to announce the launch of a fantastic new way to access its unique veterinary history collections. From 7 November 2016, the new Archive Catalogue is available to view online, with detailed descriptions of hundreds of items from the last 150 years.

We hold the historic archive collections belonging to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, these consist of unpublished manuscripts, correspondence, clinical case notes and photographs illustrating the history of the British veterinary profession from 1800 to the present day. Following the appointment of a qualified archivist in October 2015, a five-year project commenced to improve access and awareness of the wealth of material we hold. This begins with the creation of an online database with descriptions of material catalogued to international archive standards. The catalogue will be fully searchable with biographical profiles for major persons featured in the collections.

Search the Archive Catalogue at [www.VHcatalogue.org](http://www.VHcatalogue.org)

The papers of the prolific veterinary author and army veterinarian Major General Sir Frederick Smith (1857–1929) are amongst the first collections to be fully catalogued and described online. Smith was involved in the Army Veterinary Service during the Second Anglo-Boer War and the First World War, and his honest and candid accounts of the loss of horses by the Army illustrate fascinating aspects of veterinary, social and military history.

RCVS Knowledge's Vet History project is ongoing, and further collections will be catalogued periodically over the next four years. Visitors are encouraged to check the catalogue regularly, and follow RCVS Knowledge's Vet History project social media channels for news and updates.

## RCVS Knowledge appoints new Executive Director

### Chris Gush started in September

**C**hris Gush brings a wealth of experience – he joined RCVS Knowledge from the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), where he led its innovation, improvement and research department helping to improve the quality and impact of care provided by general practitioners.

He led the department at the RCGP as Assistant Director from a small specialist unit to its current position as central to the development and delivery of the RCGP's vision. He has been credited with the transformation of the College's clinical activity and resulting growth in influence, both within its own membership and at a national policy level.



Chris says "I am delighted to be taking on this role at such an exciting time for RCVS Knowledge, helping to develop evidence-based veterinary knowledge and to support evidence based clinical decision-making by veterinary professionals. I look forward to working with colleagues to provide the profession with up to date research to inform treatment decisions."

Chris has been extensively involved with bringing evidence-based medicine into the hands of general practitioners and we are excited that he will bring this experience to the global veterinary community.

## Conference success

### Evidence-based in Edinburgh

**R**CVS Knowledge hosted the 2nd international EBVM Network Conference in the heart of Edinburgh from 1 to 3 November.

For the conference we secured leading speakers from around the globe, including the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) and GD Animal Health, alongside international universities and veterinary clinics.

Two social events were also run alongside the conference, including the first ever Sceptical Vets debate and the Evidence Awards – a black tie dinner, awards ceremony and live Ceilidh.

We would like to thank all those who attended the conference during this exciting time for the charity as we grow, adapt and continue to meet and bring inspiring people together in forums such as Veterinary Evidence Today 2016, ensuring RCVS Knowledge remains at the cutting edge of EBVM.



## Update on Veterinary Evidence

### Journal grows and expands

**V**eterinary Evidence continues to grow both through its submissions and through the views and downloads from its international readership.

Prizes were presented at the Evidence Awards for those who have contributed to EBVM through publication in *Veterinary Evidence*:

The Dame Olga Uvarov Award for Best Article was presented to Brittany Jean Carr – whose paper was full of useful information for vets in practice dealing with canine cruciate ligament insufficiency, where surgery may not be possible.

The Graham-White Award for the best Knowledge Summary was presented to Valentine Jacot, who has contributed to the veterinary community by producing a relevant, well-written and practical Knowledge Summary entitled "Are old dogs who undergo total hip replacement more predisposed to perioperative femoral fractures than young dogs?".

*Veterinary Evidence* will also soon begin publishing the veterinary community's Bright Veterinary Ideas. These will take the form of a short piece of writing of approximately 500 words and up to three

images explaining the bright idea a practice has adopted, and the benefits and learning that have been taken from this. It is hoped this will inspire other veterinary practices to both take up approaches which have been successful elsewhere and encourage them to try new ideas themselves.

If you have a Bright Veterinary Idea that you would like to share, please email [info@rcvsknowledge.org](mailto:info@rcvsknowledge.org)

# 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 Not playing the blame game**  
Moving away from a blame culture

**2 Who's flying this thing?**  
Recruiting people to pilot the new CPD proposal

**Team spirit**  
Changes to the RCVS Senior Team

**3 Join us for Counciling**  
Nominations open for RCVS and VN Councils

**Breakfast anyone?**  
Updates on our Brexit strategy

**4 My fine fellows...**  
Inaugural Fellowship Day held

**Trial it out**  
Ethics Review Panel is still open for business

**5 Vetting the future**  
Vet and VN Futures Action Plans launched in July

**Brexit Schmexit**  
'We are still Europeans' from the CEO

**6 Tuf love**  
President Tufnell picks five charities for Christmas donation

**Nursing party**  
Schedule 3 Working Party has first meeting

**Alternative route found**  
Alternative dispute resolution trial launched in October

**7 Still keen til '19**  
Council approves the College's Strategic Plan for 2017-19

**8 What does the record say?**  
New guidance on clinical and client records

**Don't self-destruct**  
Reminder about Controlled Drugs destruction

**Talk it out**  
Setting client expectations about fees

**Renal transplantations**  
New guidance on feline renal transplantation approved

**9 Phone therapy**  
Consultation on telemedicine due next year

**Pay your dues**  
VN registration fees are due by end of year

**Renewal soon**  
Vets reminded that annual renewal is due next spring

**10 A great honour**  
18 practices given their PSS awards at BVNA event

**11 Global community**  
Hello to new international vets

**Developing Champions**  
Become a CPD Champion and share your story

**Now that's progress**  
Updates to the Nursing Progress Log

**12 PDP research**  
New project launched in conjunction with BSAVA

**By St George!**  
Accreditation visit to Grenada

**13 Well well well...**  
Update on wellbeing and the Mind Matters Initiative

**14 Instant gratification**  
Follow our new Instagram account

**Look to the future**  
VN Futures focus at BVNA Congress

**A day for you**  
Day on mental health at VPMA

**15 Rewind and rewatch**  
Watch RCVS Day on YouTube

**The mind does indeed matter**  
Mental health on the agenda at London Vet Show

**File it away till next year**  
RCVS at the first ever BBC Countryfile Live

**17 PIC report**  
Read the latest report from PIC

**16-18 DC hearings**  
Nigel Hough reprimanded for failing to communicate; Ian Beveridge restored to the Register; Roger Meacock to enter into undertakings with the College; Rahul Shah reprimanded for failing to provide adequate care.

**18 VNPIC report**  
Read the latest report from VNPIC

**19 Archive is live!**  
RCVS Knowledge launches its online historical archive

**Gushing with good news**  
Chris Gush joins RCVS Knowledge as Executive Director

**Take your partners to EBVM**  
Second international EBVM Network Conference in Edinburgh

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### 2016

**2 December**  
Final deadline for CPD audit submissions

**31 December**  
Final deadline for VN renewals

**23-27 December and 2 January**  
Christmas and New Year office closures

### 2017

**20 January**  
MMI Symposium at International Virtual Congress

First MMI Research Symposium

**26-28 January**  
SPVS/VPMA Congress in Celtic Manor

**28-29 January**  
AVS Congress in Cambridge

**31 January**  
Deadline for Council and VN Council nominations

**1 February**  
First MMI mindfulness webinar session

**9 February**  
MMI mental health awareness training at Sandy Park, Exeter

**10 February**  
Deadline for Fellowship applications

**6-9 April**  
BSAVA Congress

Printed by an ISO 14001 certified printer using 100% vegetable-based inks. [www.linney.com](http://www.linney.com)