

# RCVS news

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*Text-only version of  
RCVS News email*

# 'SUPERB' checklist poster to assist Schedule 3 delegation

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) has produced a six-point checklist poster for use in the practice setting to help veterinary surgeons remember the key things they need to consider when delegating work to veterinary nurses under Schedule 3.

Schedule 3 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act provides that vets may delegate medical treatment and minor surgery (not involving entry into a body cavity) to registered veterinary nurses (RVNs) and student veterinary nurses (SVNs) under certain circumstances. Following an RCVS survey of the veterinary professions to gauge how well both vets and vet nurses understood the provisions of Schedule 3, it was clear that both groups, but especially vets, could benefit from some additional guidance and greater clarity around some of the terms and language in the Schedule.

Following the publication of the survey report, the RCVS Veterinary Nursing Schedule 3 Working Party made a number of recommendations, including the production of a number of case studies (available via [www.rcvs.org.uk/schedule3](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/schedule3)) and a reference poster to assist veterinary surgeons in making those everyday decisions on delegation in practice.

An A3/A4 poster setting out the key principles of delegation has now been prepared and will be printed and posted to all UK veterinary practice premises this autumn.

Ian Holloway, RCVS Director of Communications, who helped develop the poster with the RCVS Standards Committee and the College's Standards & Advice Team, explains: "It was clear from the survey results that we could do more to help vets and vet nurses understand and remember the principles of delegation under Schedule 3, so hopefully our six-point checklist, using the memorable mnemonic 'SUPERB', will do just that.

"If the poster can be placed in a prominent position in the practice setting, we hope it will become a handy, everyday reference tool for all veterinary professionals, and help vets remember the six questions they need to consider before delegating work to their VN colleagues.

The mnemonic SUPERB stands for:

Specific procedure – is the procedure medical treatment or minor surgery not involving entry into a body cavity?

Under care – is the animal under your care?

Person – can you delegate to this person?

Experience – does the RVN/SVN feel capable, and have sufficient competence and expertise?

Risks – have you considered the risks specific to this case?

Be there – are you available to direct or supervise as necessary?

Only if veterinary surgeons can answer all six questions in the affirmative, can they delegate to RVNs and SVNs accordingly.

The poster will also be available to download from [www.rcvs.org.uk/schedule3](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/schedule3) where further resources about delegation are available, including links to the relevant chapter of the supporting guidance to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct and the Schedule 3 case studies.

# RCVS makes changes to CPD policy following feedback

Following concerns raised by veterinary professionals regarding the RCVS' upcoming transition to an annual continuing professional development (CPD) requirement, we have made two key additions to our CPD policy to address feedback and support veterinary surgeons and VNs through this transition.

The CPD policy change that these additions aim to address is the shift to annual hourly requirements from January 2020, with veterinary surgeons required to complete 35 hours of CPD each calendar year and veterinary nurses required to complete 15 hours.

This replaces the previous requirement of 105 hours and 45 hours of CPD over a rolling three-year period for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses respectively.

The shift to annual hourly requirements has been made to ensure that every vet and VN achieves their CPD targets each year, simplifying the hourly requirement, in addition to allowing us to address non-compliance in a meaningful way. The switch to annual hours will also take vets' and VNs' personal circumstances into account and a degree of flexibility has been built into the system to recognise this need.

The first of the two new additions is the option for vets and VNs to take a 'CPD pause', which aims to address some of the feedback we received about the need to consider personal circumstances. In practice, this means that, for planned periods away from work, such as parental leave, and exceptional circumstances, such as serious ill health or unforeseen changes to family responsibilities, vets and VNs can pause their CPD for up to six months without the need to make up the hours when they return to work. This will therefore reduce the burden on vets and VNs returning to work after a break and makes it clear what the requirements are for each year.

The second change is that the RCVS will allow for vets and VNs to carry over some of the CPD hours they have accrued in 2019 into 2020, to smoothen the transition to an annual hourly requirement.

Vets will be allowed to carry over 25 hours and VNs 10 hours of accumulated CPD from 2019 through to 2020. This will apply once, in 2020 only, and is only applicable to vets and VNs who have been CPD-compliant from 2017 to 2019 and have a surplus number of hours to carry over.

"We hope that these changes to the CPD policy will support vets and VNs to make the transition to an annual hourly requirement. We received a sample of feedback from some members of the veterinary professions regarding the move to annual hourly CPD requirements and these additions have been introduced to support members during this transition and to mitigate some of the concerns raised," says our Director of Education, Dr Linda Prescott-Clements.

The other significant change coming to our CPD policy in 2020 is the introduction of a new CPD recording platform, with the working title 1CPD. The platform, an app for VNs and vet surgeons to record their CPD, will be launched in January 2020, and will support the new outcomes-based, reflective approach to CPD. 1CPD will replace the existing Professional Development Record (PDR), at which all content from the PDR will automatically be exported over to 1CPD.

The new platform will also aim to facilitate the move to individuals reflecting on the impact of the CPD they have undertaken, to drive the outcomes-based approach that will be recommended in January 2020, and become mandatory in January 2022. This approach aims to support positive CPD outcomes by encouraging professionals to reflect on what they have learned, how they will apply their learning, and how it will improve their practice.

"The most important aspect of CPD, both now and after the new changes are introduced, is that it is relevant to your role and own personal development needs, so that it can support you to provide the best care possible. There are many types of CPD which can achieve this, including accessible options such as webinars, lectures, and reading relevant clinical papers, as well as learning events or opportunities in the workplace such as reflecting on significant events or audits, in addition to traditional CPD such as attending courses or conferences." says Linda (pictured right).

"The process of reflection is particularly important as it facilitates a culture of actively looking for ways to improve. Our new tool will support this reflection in a fast, effective and cost-free way. It's really important for us to get this point across – CPD is incredibly important for a flourishing profession but it doesn't need to be expensive, stressful or demanding."

For more information about the CPD requirement for both vets and vet nurses, what activities might count as CPD, how to record your CPD and a series of frequently asked questions about CPD please visit our dedicated webpage.

# University of Surrey's vet degree receives RCVS approval

The University of Surrey School of Veterinary Medicine's degree yesterday (Thursday 3 October) received approval by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Council, meaning that, pending final approval from the Privy Council, those completing its veterinary degree will be able to register with the RCVS as veterinary surgeons in the UK.

The School of Veterinary Medicine welcomed its first cohort of students in September 2014, with its university building being formally opened by Her Majesty the Queen in October 2015. The 2014 intake of veterinary students graduated in July 2019 this year with RCVS President Niall Connell and RCVS CEO Lizzie Lockett in attendance.

Over the five years since the course was founded, we have been working with the University to help ensure that the development of its programme meets our standards. This has included, in 2017 and 2018, interim visitations with a team of accreditation reviewers, and a final accreditation visit in 2019 comprising not only representatives from the RCVS but also from the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) and the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC).

The final visitation took place between 25 February and 1 March 2019, following which the visitation team submitted its report to our Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC) in April 2019. The PQSC then recommended to the Education Committee that the RCVS recognises the University of Surrey's veterinary degree (subject to satisfactory external examiner reports, which were subsequently received).

The Education Committee approved this recommendation in May 2019, and this in turn was agreed by RCVS Council in its meeting yesterday.

Dr Susan Paterson, the Chair of the Education Committee, who also attended the final visitation as an observer, said: "We are very glad to have reached the stage where we can formally welcome the University of Surrey on board as the eighth UK veterinary school to offer an approved degree, and that we will, from now on and pending Privy Council's approval, be able to welcome its graduates onto the Register as proud members of the RCVS.

"We appreciate the immense hard work of both the faculty and the student body over the past five years in working to meet the College's stringent accreditation standards and the effort that they have made to address our feedback and advice in a constructive and engaged way.

"When I observed at the final accreditation visit earlier this year I, along with the other visitors, was particularly impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff, the network of partner veterinary practices and the student body to the school's ethos and success. We also recognised that, with its unique 'distributive model' meaning that students can get direct clinical experience across 49 veterinary practice partners, the students have access to a large and diverse medical and surgical caseload.

"The final report contained a number of further recommendations and we look forward to continuing to work with the school over the next two years to help them meet our recommendations and suggestions."

Professor Chris Proudman, Head of School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Surrey, added: "I am delighted that our new degree programme in veterinary medicine and science has been approved by RCVS Council for recognition by the Privy Council.

"This decision recognises the huge investment in veterinary education made by the university and the quality of the education that we offer. It is also validation of our innovative model of delivering clinical teaching through working in partnership with clinical practices and other organisations involved in animal health, which has proven very popular with our students.

"The commitment and enthusiasm of our partners has been truly inspiring and energising. I look forward to Surrey veterinary graduates making valuable contributions to the profession in a variety of ways over the coming years."

A Recognition Order to recognise the University of Surrey's Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Science (BVMSci Hons) will now be put before the Privy Council and, if it approves the Order, this will then be laid before Parliament. If the Order is approved by both the Privy Council and Parliament, the University of Surrey will then enter the cyclical RCVS accreditation process and be subject to annual monitoring.

The RCVS Primary Qualifications Subcommittee and the Education Committee have recommended that the next full visitation to the school should take place in two years' time in order to inspect its progress in addressing the comments, suggestions and recommendations made in the final visitation report.

The executive summary of the final visitation report can be found in the papers for the October 2019 meeting of RCVS Council. The full report will be published in due course.

# Second ViVet Symposium explores future of veterinary medicine

Last week we held our biennial ViVet Innovation Symposium, bringing together veterinary professionals and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to discuss the evolving role of the veterinary professional and the advancements in both companion and production animal care in the UK and across the world.

The symposium, held on Tuesday 1 October at the Lowry in Manchester, focused on precision veterinary medicine. It looked at how the growth of data driven practice and rapidly developing technology such as real-time low-cost genomics, artificial intelligence and big data will affect the veterinary professions, how their role might change and the opportunities available.

Featuring a wide range of inspirational speakers, the day explored the potential of emerging technology to improve the lives of veterinary professionals and the services they provide. The keynote speaker, Nancy Rademaker, opened the day's presentations with a thought-provoking talk on how technology has changed customer behaviour and how the profession must adapt to the 'new normal' in order to thrive. Nancy highlighted that the customer is looking for transparency, personalisation, convenience and speed and the challenges this presents for every sector.

The day covered three broad themes, the first of which honed in on how technology such as big data and artificial intelligence (AI) will fundamentally change the role of the veterinary professional. With medical knowledge expanding exponentially, many of the presentations touched on the increasing importance of veterinary professionals using tools such as AI to augment their intelligence and harnessing data insights. With so much data available to us, it is now about knowing what to do with it and how to transform insights into innovative action.

The second theme that was covered throughout the day was the complex interaction between innovation and regulation. Innovation is the mechanism through which products and services improve, but it carries a degree of risk as it involves novel and potentially untested products, services and ways of working - here lies the regulatory challenge.

"Daniel Berman, Lead of the Global Health Team at NESTA, spoke about how 'anticipatory regulation', quickly becoming recognised as best practice, is one way to approach this regulatory challenge. This is about regulators, such as the RCVS, taking a proactive approach to innovation, engaging stakeholders about the issues it raises and seeking to create future-proof frameworks which, in rapidly changing environments, will protect the public whilst at the same time as fostering innovation," says Anthony Roberts, our Director of Leadership and Innovation.

"This is in line with the aims of the ViVet project: to prepare the profession for the impact of innovation whilst at the same time allowing the College to reflect on the future relevance of its regulation."

The final key theme of the day focused on changing consumer demands and the opportunities and threats that these create for the veterinary professions. In particular, it was highlighted that today customers expect a quick, convenient and personalised service.

This creates a challenge for veterinary professions, who must navigate a complex tripartite relationship of vet, client and animal. Much discussion was held, therefore, on the need to find a balance between being customer-centric and keeping the animal health and welfare at the centre of what veterinary professionals do. This nuance was the focus of the day's 'Future of the Professions debate' with informed arguments presented for both side of the motion: 'In order to thrive the veterinary professions must become truly 'customer-centric'.

At the close of the debate the majority of delegates voted in favour for the motion, with general agreement that focusing on meeting the customers' need and wants must be balanced with the interests of the animal.

"It was a really positive and engaging day and the symposium provoked some exciting debate and discussion as to the opportunities the future holds for the veterinary professions, the role of the veterinary professional going forward, and how we collectively can drive this forward," says Anthony.

ViVet Symposium 2019 also held the final of the Student Veterinary Innovation Competition, which saw three finalist teams present their innovative veterinary proposals in front of a panel of industry professionals. The winning team was Christina Ratcliffe and Ana Almeida-Warren from Liverpool University with a presentation of their VetCase app concept. The concept, a case-based learning app, would include clinical examinations and diagnostic test functionality to reflect real-life situations and help students prepare for working in the veterinary industry.

The symposium was recorded on the day and videos, along with a write-up of the day, will be available soon on the ViVet website.

# RCVS celebrates VNs established and new at its biannual VN Day

Last week the RCVS celebrated veterinary nursing at London Zoo with an event welcoming new members of the profession and celebrating the achievements of one of its longest-serving members.

On Thursday 17 October, the latest of our Veterinary Nurses Day events was held in the Prince Albert Suite, ZSL London Zoo in Regent's Park, to recognise the achievements of new veterinary nurses being welcomed to the Register as well as those achieving their Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (DipAVN).

This event allows them to celebrate their accomplishments and to be formally welcomed to the profession, in the company of friends and family, followed by the opportunity to spend some of their day enjoying the zoo grounds.

During the ceremony, Rachael Marshall, Chair of Veterinary Nurses Council, led the newly registered nurses through their professional declarations while our President, Dr Niall Connell presented each new veterinary nurse a scroll containing the text of their declarations.

Before leading the declarations, Rachael said: "I would encourage you all to take control of your career and find areas where you can take the lead, whether this be within your practice or by contributing to the wider profession.

"Sticking your head above the parapet can be scary and often daunting, however, the satisfaction of challenging yourself and achieving things outside of your comfort zone is all the more rewarding.

"Remember this is a career for life. However you choose to use your qualification always be rightly proud to stand tall and say 'I am a veterinary nurse'."

We hosted two separate ceremonies, one in the morning and afternoon, and around 175 new veterinary nurses collected their scrolls, as well as nine RVNs who had achieved their DipAVNs. Also being recognised at the event with a lifetime achievement award was Deborah Holland who qualified as a 'registered animal nursing auxiliary' (or RANA) in 1981 and has seen first-hand how the profession has changed and adapted over the last 40 years.

Rachael added: "It was not until 1984 that a change in the law allowed the use of the title of veterinary nurse, and a further 30 years until a new Royal Charter in 2015 formally granted the status of associates of the RCVS, making veterinary nursing a regulated profession in its own right. Last year a change in the governance of the RCVS Council has allowed two veterinary nurses to become members of Council, which further demonstrates the solid recognition of the importance of the VN role, which this day aims to highlight and celebrate."

For this event the keynote speaker was Hayley Walters, Welfare and Anaesthesia Nurse at the University of Edinburgh's Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and the Jeanne Marchig International Centre for Animal Welfare Education, who was the recipient of the College's Veterinary Nursing Golden Jubilee Award in 2014.

During her address, Hayley spoke about the varied experiences of her career to date, including her international work on rescuing bears in China from the bear-bile harvesting industry and her work in training both vets and VNs at Edinburgh. She hoped that her experiences would serve as an example of the many potential career opportunities that lay ahead of the newly registered VNs.

In his closing speech for both sessions, RCVS President Niall Connell spoke of the challenges of veterinary work and the importance of reaching out to your peers and colleagues in times of need.

Niall said: "Talk to colleagues, talk to friends and support each other. More than ever our veterinary professions are closer together so you should never feel you are alone. If you need advice, seek it. There are so many people you can ask, colleagues, your associations and you will always be welcome to call the College for advice on professional conduct, CPD and other issues."

The vet nurses and their families were then invited to a reception where they had the opportunity to talk to staff and Officers from the College and have professional photographs taken with their guests.

One of those newly registered VNs was Louise Grimsby who commented: "I think it's been a really good day, everyone's been really welcoming. There's been lots of great information from the speakers and lecturers and there are lots of nice

memories from the pictures being taken. And I love the scroll we were given too!"

Another, Kerry Knight, said: "I think the day's been really well organised, it's such a lovely setting. I found the speakers really interesting, I was so inspired by Hayley Walters and all her travelling and international work. I think the event ran really smoothly, and I've just really enjoyed it."



# RCVS and VCI sign historic mutual recognition agreement

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI), the UK and Ireland veterinary regulators, have agreed a historic mutual recognition agreement to facilitate the recognitions of each others' accredited veterinary degrees.

At its meeting on Thursday 3 October 2019 RCVS Council, the College's governing body, approved the mutual recognition agreement (MRA) which had previously been approved by the Council of the VCI at its meeting on 25 September 2019.

The MRA is the first agreement that has been signed on a bilateral basis between the UK and another country in the European Economic Area (EEA), meaning that, through opportunities for an expert reviewer from each party to sit on local accreditation panels and sharing of visitation outcomes, the veterinary degree from University College Dublin can be recognised by the RCVS and the current eight UK veterinary degrees (including the recently approved University of Surrey degree) can be recognised by the VCI.

Currently, EEA citizens who graduate from University College Dublin have an automatic right to work in the UK via the European Union's Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive. The MRA means that, whatever the outcome of the UK leaving the European Union, following successful accreditation visits University College Dublin graduates can join the Register of Veterinary Surgeons in the UK, and UK graduates can join the VCI's equivalent register.

Dr Niall Connell, RCVS President, said: "We are glad to be able to sign this agreement with the VCI which is a vital element of future-proofing to ensure that, whatever the future relationship with the EU, Dublin graduates are able to be recognised as holding a registerable qualification by us as the UK regulator.

"I hope, in particular, this provides some reassurance to the community in Northern Ireland as many of its veterinary surgeons are trained in Dublin and so it is vital to ensure that, whatever happens with the UK's exit from the EU, this will continue to be a viable source of veterinary talent for the region."

The President of the Veterinary Council of Ireland, Peadar Ó Scanaill (pictured right), said: "I am delighted to see the continued close alignment the Profession enjoys across both nations. This close alignment transcends any borders and many decades of mutual cooperation and recognition.

"The veterinary profession in Great Britain and throughout the island of Ireland has moved step-by-step and shoulder-to-shoulder in unison over the years and recent political events will not sever that important bond. Cooperation and mutual recognition are the key components of our future together."

The MRA also stipulates that, in order to maintain the agreement, the RCVS and VCI will have the opportunity to attend accreditation visitations to each other's veterinary schools in order to ensure that they are meeting their respective accreditation criteria for veterinary education. The current expectation is that these visitations will be carried out in conjunction with, or as part of, those of any international accreditation bodies, such as the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).

It is expected that, later this month, the VCI President Peadar Ó Scanaill and CEO Niamh Muldoon will meet with RCVS President Niall Connell and RCVS Director of Education, Dr Linda Prescott-Clements, in London to sign the agreement.

The full text of the agreement is available to view in the papers for the October 2019 meeting of RCVS Council.

# New Chairs appointed for DC and PIC

Two of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) statutory committees have appointed new Chairs. The first, the RCVS Disciplinary Committee (DC), has appointed Ian Arundale as its new Chair, with Dr Martin Whiting as the new Vice Chair. The second, the RCVS Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC), has appointed Dr Bradley Viner as its new Chair.

The Disciplinary Committee conducts the RCVS disciplinary hearings, tribunals where charges are heard against a veterinary surgeon alleging that he or she is guilty of serious professional misconduct (the wording of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 is 'disgraceful conduct in a professional respect'), or that he or she is unfit to practise because of a criminal conviction.

Ian Arundale has now been appointed its new Chair following an application process from within existing Disciplinary Committee members, with the final interview panel consisting of Amanda Boag (President at the time), Ian Green (current DC Chair) and Miran Uddin (an independent barrister who works in regulatory law). He begins his role as chair in late October.

Ian Arundale replaces Ian Green, who chaired the DC from 2015 to 2019.

Ian is Deputy Chief Constable of Cleveland Police in the north east of England and was a police officer for 32 years serving in South Wales, West Mercia and Dyfed-Powys Police Forces. He currently provides expert witness services to inquests, courts and public inquiries. Ian has worked internationally and has assisted police forces and organisations in the USA, India, the Far East and New Zealand.

In addition to his work with the RCVS, Ian is also the Chairperson of the Audit Committee for the City of Cardiff Council and is a board member of the International Law Enforcement Forum (ILEF).

"I am pleased to have been selected as DC Chair and am looking forward to chairing the committee. The role of the DC is crucial to ensuring the RCVS protects and upholds the high standards of the UK veterinary professions, and I am humbled to be in a position to support this important function," says Ian.

Dr Martin Whiting has also been appointed as the new Vice Chair for the DC. Dr Whiting qualified as a veterinary surgeon from the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in 2006. Following a few years in practice, he returned to academia to complete a Masters in Medical Law and Ethics and a PhD in the public interest in veterinary professional regulation.

Martin was appointed as Lecturer in Veterinary Ethics and Law at the RVC in 2013 and became an RCVS and European Specialist in Animal Welfare, Ethics and Law. In 2017, Martin moved to the Home Office to work with the Animals in Science Committee and is currently the Head of Operations for the Animals in Science Regulation Unit.

Dr Bradley Viner has been appointed as the new Chair of the RCVS PIC and began his role on 1 July 2019.

The PIC is a statutory committee tasked with investigating concerns made to the RCVS in which there is an arguable case for serious professional misconduct.

The Committee meets every fortnight to decide if there is a realistic prospect that the conduct of the veterinary surgeon in cases before them will be found to have fallen far below the standard expected and should be referred to the Disciplinary Committee, or whether they should be handled in an alternative way.

Bradley was appointed through an independent selection process led by an external HR consultancy, with RCVS Council ratifying the final appointments.

Bradley replaces Andrew Ash, who chaired the PIC from July 2015 up until Bradley's appointment.

Bradley established his own small animal practice in Pinner, Middlesex, which then grew to a group of five practices in north-west London. In 2017 he sold his practices to the Linnaeus Group and now works for them as Group Clinical Quality Lead across all their sites.

He was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in 2017 for Meritorious Contributions to Clinical Practice. Bradley was an elected member of RCVS Council between 2005 and 2017, including four years as RCVS Treasurer and one year as RCVS President in 2015-16.

"I was delighted to have been selected as Chair of this Statutory Committee as I feel it is one of the most important interfaces between the College, the profession and the public. It has a vital role to play in protecting animal welfare and the reputation of the profession, but I am well aware that fear of disciplinary proceedings can be very stressful to those involved.

"I undertake to continually strive to work to find a balance that ensures the Committee maintains a well-regulated profession acting in the public interest but also makes every effort to avoid causing unnecessary stress on members that are subject to its proceedings," says Bradley.

On the recent appointments, RCVS Registrar Eleanor Ferguson added: "As chairs of our statutory committees, both Bradley and Ian will play a crucial role in upholding the integrity of and public confidence in the veterinary profession. I have no doubt that they are well-equipped for the roles, bring a wide range of skills and experience, and will chair these important committees effectively."

For more information about the RCVS concerns investigation and disciplinary processes visit its dedicated section on this website.

# Popular online RCVS Leadership course returns next month

The College's popular online leadership programme is now accepting sign-ups for the next round of the course which begins in November.

The Edward Jenner Leadership Course for Veterinary Professionals, which was developed in conjunction with the NHS Leadership Academy and is hosted by the FutureLearn online learning platform, starts on Monday 18 November but those who are interested can register now.

The course is open to all members of the veterinary team, including veterinary and veterinary nursing students, with the first two courses comprising the programme, which are free to access, can be worth up to 48 hours of continuing professional development. The full programme costs £77 and includes an assessment leading to an NHS Leadership Academy Award in Leadership Foundations.

Since its launch last year, when the first iteration of the programme was run, there have been almost 7,000 enrolments across the programme's modules, with participants drawn from over 130 countries and reflecting the full scope of the veterinary professions with veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and other practice staff taking part.

Earlier this year the programme was also a finalist in the EFMD (European Foundation for Management Development) Excellence in Practice Awards, which recognises collaborative management and leadership programmes across the world.

Anthony Roberts, our Director of Leadership and Innovation (pictured right), said: "Since we launched the programme last year we have seen some very positive feedback on the course and we are hearing many instances of people putting into practice the everyday leadership skills they have learned.

"The programme, which is open to everyone in the veterinary team whatever their role or position, emphasises the art of good leadership through the use of everyday scenarios that will be familiar to anyone working in a clinical veterinary setting.

"In line with the College's new CPD policy, the course then encourages participants to reflect on their learning and use this to gain confidence and develop their leadership skills in practice."

To sign up to the next iteration of the programme visit our webpage dedicated to the course. Please note that you will need to sign up to FutureLearn in order to access the course.

# RCVS Council agrees to prepare time-limited supplementary guidance on export health certification in case of no-deal Brexit

The Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) has agreed to an urgent request from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) to prepare supplementary guidance on certification for veterinary surgeons in case of the 'extraordinary' circumstances that might be seen if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

The supplementary guidance [see below] would relate specifically to the veterinary export health certification of groupage consignments, ie those which contain multiple low-risk food product types in a single consignment, for export to, or transit through, the EU.

Currently, Export Health Certificates (EHC) are not required for such consignments; however, in the event of a no-deal EU Exit, the UK would assume third-country status and be required to develop a scheme to enable the substantial volume of these product export/transit arrangements to continue.

Such low-risk products would include products of animal origin for human consumption, eg composite products like pizzas and quiches, meat products and processed milk, along with processed pet food; they would not include products like fresh meat, raw milk, raw pet food or live animals.

APHA's proposed scheme [see 'Related documents' box below] is intended to facilitate the provision of relevant consignment information to the Official Veterinarian (OV) responsible for issuing the EHC in a manner that meets their professional obligations whilst also accommodating the scale and complexity of the supply chains involved.

The College's supplementary guidance would recognise that it would be neither practical nor possible for the certifying OV at the point of export to have personal knowledge of all relevant products contained within a groupage consignment. Instead, the scheme would involve the OV relying on a 'support attestation' containing:

- a. a 'supplier declaration' made by a representative of the supplying company who has 'authority and responsibility' to do so, such authorisation coming in writing from the managing director or equivalent; and,
- b. a declaration by a registered veterinary surgeon (or Certification Support Officer acting under the direction of an OV) carrying out relevant checks in relation to the supplier.

The supplementary guidance would further acknowledge that for such a scheme to be workable, veterinary surgeons would need to place reliance on exporters and suppliers of goods providing batch specific information valid for 30 days (with additional assurance provided by vets carrying out periodic checks of the supplier's premises and records ).

However, the system would be limited to use only in stable supply chains, with APHA's implementation of a Trusted Supplier Scheme (TSS) intended to provide confidence in the accuracy of support attestations. Any exporters found to be non-compliant could be immediately removed from the TSS, potentially permanently.

The College's supplementary guidance would then advise OVs to ensure they read, understood and strictly followed APHA's new guidance on export health certificates, and would offer the reassurance that, providing they act with integrity and adhere to the guidance, no personal liability would attach to them in the event that the information contained with a supplier declaration is incorrect or incomplete.

RCVS President Niall Connell stated: "In discussions at its October meeting, in which we were pleased to have invited the British Veterinary Association to participate, RCVS Council had some concerns around this departure from our usual guidance and therefore sought a number of clarifications and changes to APHA's original scheme.

"Whilst acknowledging the steps taken by APHA to address these concerns, Council then put in place a number of caveats to preparing its supplementary guidance, including that it would be time-limited, subject to review, and only applicable in the extraordinary circumstances of a no-deal Brexit.

"It also accepted assurances from APHA that these certification changes would not compromise public health, or animal health and welfare, but would be urgently necessary under no deal in order to be able to maintain the UK's existing food export arrangements."

The caveats to Council's agreement with APHA to prepare this supplementary guidance are as follows:

It would only be applied in the event that the UK were to leave the EU without a deal;  
It would be a temporary, time-limited measure, as a result of these exceptional circumstances;  
RCVS Council would review this guidance within 12 months of its implementation; and  
The scope of the guidance would be strictly limited to the process for issuing Direct Export or Transit Export Health Certificates for groupage consignments containing low risk products being exported to, and transiting through, the EU.  
Apart from the specific situation that would be set out in the supplementary guidance, the rest of the RCVS guidance on veterinary certification would continue to apply.

#### Supplementary guidance

Certification of groupage consignments for distribution in, or transit through, the EU in the event of a no-deal EU Exit

1. Prior to the UK leaving the EU, Export Health Certificates (EHCs) were not required for groupage consignments containing low-risk products being exported to, and transiting through, the EU. In anticipation of the UK's exit from the EU without a deal, it has been necessary for the Competent Authority to develop a scheme to allow such exports to continue.

2. This scheme is intended to facilitate the provision of relevant consignment information to the Official Veterinarian (OV) responsible for issuing the EHC in a manner that meets their professional obligations whilst also accommodating the scale and complexity of the supply chains involved.

3. It is recognised that it is neither practical nor possible for the certifying OV at the point of export to have personal knowledge of all relevant products contained within a groupage consignment. Instead, the scheme involves the OV relying on a 'support attestation' containing:

a. a 'supplier declaration' made by a representative of the supplying company who has 'authority and responsibility' to do so, such authorisation coming, in writing, from the managing director or equivalent; and,

b. a 'health attestation' signed by a veterinarian (or Certification Support Officer (CSO) acting under the direction of an OV) carrying out relevant checks in relation to the supplier.

4. In order for this scheme to be workable, it requires that veterinary surgeons must place reliance on exporters and suppliers of goods providing batch-specific information valid for 30 days (with additional assurance provided by vets carrying out periodic checks of the supplier's premises and records). The system will be limited to use in supply chains that are stable, implemented via a trusted supplier scheme.

5. While this arrangement is somewhat of a departure from the RCVS Principles of Certification, RCVS Council has accepted that this departure is necessary to meet the extraordinary circumstances arising out of a 'no-deal' EU Exit, but only on the following basis:

It is only applied in the event the UK leaves the EU without a "deal"

It is a temporary, time-limited measure, as a result of these exceptional circumstances

RCVS Council will review this guidance by October 2020

The scope is strictly limited to the process for issuing Direct Export or Transit Export Health Certificates for groupage consignments containing low-risk products being exported to, and/or transiting through, the EU.

6. It covers products of animal origin (POAO) for human consumption as listed below and processed pet food that is fully packaged for the final consumer (or purchase in the case of pet food)

Included: Composite products, meat products, meat preparations, processed milk/matured or processed dairy products, fish/fish products, eggs/egg products, processed pet food

Excluded: Live animals, germinal products, fresh meat, raw milk, animal by-products (including raw pet food but excluding processed pet food)

(for full definitions see below and also Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) guidance)

7. Veterinarians should read, understand and strictly follow the relevant guidance issued by APHA. (link to pdf of the APHA guidance)

8. Veterinarians are to be reassured that in the event that information contained within a supplier declaration is incorrect or incomplete, no personal liability will attach to them providing they have acted with integrity and adhered to the relevant

APHA guidance.

9. Veterinarians are reminded that, apart from the specific situation as set out in this section, the rest of guidance contained within this chapter of Supporting Guidance to the Code of Professional Conduct continues to apply.

#### Definitions

An Export Health Certificate (EHC) is the official EU export certificate. EHCs are based on an EU model and as such, the wording in this certificate cannot be changed.

A groupage consignment is a consignment containing multiple product types or lines in a single consignment, e.g. multiple composite products, composite products combined with other products of animal origin.

A low-risk product is a POAO for human consumption as listed below and processed pet food that is fully packaged for the final consumer (or purchase in the case of pet food) and produced using only animal content from a traceable network of known suppliers. The following products are therefore classified as low-risk products: composite products, meat products, meat preparations, processed milk/matured dairy products, fish/fish products, eggs/egg products and processed pet food. By way of contrast, the following products are not classified as low-risk products: live animals, germinal products, fresh meat, raw milk, animal by-products (including raw pet food).

A composite product is a product for human consumption containing a both processed products of animal origin and products of plant origin (e.g. sandwiches, pizzas, ready meals, quiches).

A meat product is a processed product resulting from the processing of meat or from the further processing of such processed products, so that the cut surface shows that the product no longer has the characteristics of fresh meat.

A meat preparation is fresh meat, including meat that has been reduced to fragments, which has had foodstuffs, seasonings or additives added to it or which has undergone processes insufficient to modify the internal muscle fibre structure of the meat and thus to eliminate the characteristics of fresh meat.

# Nomination period for 2020 Awards now open

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2020 RCVS Honours & Awards, celebrating the achievements of veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and laypeople who are doing extraordinary work for the benefit of animal health and welfare, the veterinary professions and public health.

The College is seeking nominations this year for all six of its awards, all of which will be presented to the successful nominees at Royal College Day 2020, which will take place at 1 Great George Street in July 2020. These awards are:

**The Queen's Medal:** the highest honour that can be bestowed upon a veterinary surgeon for a highly distinguished career with sustained and outstanding achievements throughout.

**The Veterinary Nursing Golden Jubilee Award:** this award is for veterinary nurses who have had a sustained and distinguished career, who can demonstrate a leadership role within the profession and who can act as an ambassador for the value of veterinary nurses and their work.

**RCVS International Award:** this award is for vets, vet nurses or laypeople who work internationally, from either within or without the UK, in making an outstanding contribution to, for example, raising veterinary standards, veterinary education and improving animal health and welfare.

**RCVS Impact Award:** this award is for vets or vet nurses who have recently, or are currently, undertaking a project, initiative or similar that has a significant impact on the profession at large, animal health or welfare, or public health. Such impact could have been made through any field of veterinary endeavour, including clinical practice, research, education or veterinary politics.

**RCVS Inspiration Award:** this award is for vets or vet nurses at any stage of their career who have demonstrated the ability to inspire and enthuse others consistently throughout. It is open to those who have inspired and motivated individuals anywhere within the profession and recognises those who have gone 'above and beyond' what may normally be expected from a professional colleague.

**Honorary Associateship:** this honour is conferred to a small number of laypeople each year, in recognition of their special contribution to the veterinary sphere. It recognises the full range of individuals who contribute to the veterinary and animal health sector including scientists, lecturers, journalists, charity-workers, farriers, farmers and those involved in the commercial field.

Niall Connell, RCVS President for 2019-20, said: "2019 was particularly fruitful in terms of the number of nominations that we received for some of these awards, including the Queen's Medal and the Impact and Inspiration Awards. In fact, those of us who had to compile the shortlist really struggled because of the sheer quality of the nominations we received and the people who were nominated.

"We hope that this will be repeated this year, and I would ask the profession to give some extra thought to making a nomination for Honorary Associateship, an award which is conferred on laypeople who are going above-and-beyond for animal welfare and the veterinary professions.

"In my veterinary career I have met many of these people: the biochemistry lecturers at vet school who gave me a passion for the science behind clinical veterinary medicine; the receptionists who were experts at talking to clients with empathy and kindness, often during distressing situations; and the volunteers who give up their precious free time to help with the smooth running of our PDSA hospital.

"I would urge everyone to have a think about who might be suitable for any of these awards, to find out more about making a nomination on the RCVS website."

To make a nomination, visit our Honours & Awards webpage and click on the link for the specific award. As with last year, applications can be made either through an online application form or by downloading a PDF application form and emailing or posting it to us.

The deadline for nominations is Friday 10 January 2020. All awards will be conferred at Royal College Day 2020.

For an informal talk about the awards and how to make a nomination you can contact Susie Tomlin, Executive Secretary, on [s.tomlin@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:s.tomlin@rcvs.org.uk) or 020 7202 0761.



# Impact Award winner to speak about equine colic project at Nottingham Question Time

One of this year's recipients of our Impact Award will be talking to her peers and colleagues about her pioneering public awareness project on equine colic at an upcoming Regional Question Time in Nottingham on 25 November 2019.

Professor Sarah Freeman (pictured above) is Professor of Veterinary Surgery at the University of Nottingham's School of Veterinary Medicine & Science, and leads the Nottingham Equine Colic Project, which works with organisations such as the British Horse Society to raise awareness of the potentially fatal condition.

Professor Freeman's talk, 'Generating an evidence-based educational campaign on colic', will be addressing the new evidence that the project has developed by working with vets and horse owners, and how this led to the REACT colic campaign. She will be sharing experiences of how the campaign has worked and asking whether we can change people's attitudes and behaviours.

The evening starts at 6.15pm with food and refreshments with Professor Freeman's talk starting at 7pm, after which there will be an update on the College's latest projects and initiatives. Following this there will be a question and answer session with senior officers and staff from the RCVS - including RCVS President Dr Niall Connell, and Chair of RCVS Veterinary Nurses (VN) Council Racheal Marshall.

Dr Connell said: "Thank you to Professor Freeman for agreeing to speak about the colic project which, through its Colic Awareness Week, is helping to raise knowledge of the early signs of colic amongst horse owners, allowing them to get their horses treated in good time and saving their lives.

"I also look forward to talking to members of the profession about some of the issues currently on their minds – the evening is very much led by what those who attend want to discuss – from mental health, to our under care review, to the Practice Standards Scheme. Attending the event can also count to up to three hours towards your continuing professional development (CPD) requirement."

The event is open to all members of the practice team including veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses, practice managers and others. The event is free and places can be booked via the dedicated page on our website.

In the afternoon before the event, between 12 noon and 5pm, the College will also be holding a series of free 45-minute Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) surgeries with PSS Lead Assessor Pam Mosedale.

The surgeries are open to both RCVS-accredited practices and those considering joining the Scheme and allows delegates to discuss the assessment process, how to apply for awards, how to meet particular requirements and any other questions they may have about the PSS.

Places at the surgeries are limited, and are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and can also be booked via our website.

# International vet groups adopt statement on mental health and wellbeing

Our joint statement with the American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA) Mental Health and Wellbeing now has the support of three additional international veterinary groups.

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) have joined forces to promote improved mental health and are new signatories to the Statement, which was adopted by the RCVS and AVMA in July 2018 and revised on 29 August 2019.

The statement prioritises positive mental health and wellbeing for the individual veterinarian, allied animal health care professional and veterinary student as the first step to a healthy profession and optimal animal health, welfare and public health. The statement reads:

“We believe that for veterinary professionals to realise their full potential and the global veterinary profession to remain sustainable, maintaining high levels of mental health and wellbeing for all members of the veterinary team is a priority. Improving veterinary mental health and wellbeing has a positive impact on individuals, the profession at large and, ultimately, animal health and welfare, and public health.”

“I am delighted that these three organisations are joining the RCVS and AVMA in promoting and supporting positive mental health amongst the veterinary community. The global veterinary community faces diverse challenges but one common issue is ensuring that we care for and support our professionals so that they can, in turn, deliver high standards of care to animals and their owners – something that is particularly important to keep in mind this World Mental Health Day. I look forward to working with them towards this common aim,” says Lizzie Lockett, RCVS CEO and Mind Matters Director (pictured right).

“Collaboration among these highly respected international veterinary organisations amplifies the message that sound mental health and wellbeing is the very first step to allowing our colleagues to provide for the health and welfare of animals and people,” adds Dr John Howe, AVMA President.

Our Mind Matters Initiative and the AVMA's Wellbeing and Peer Assistance Initiative are the foundation of the joint statement. The organisations that have signed onto the Statement on Mental Health and Wellbeing will collaborate on projects to advocate positive behavior and support around mental health in the veterinary profession, developing evidence-based programs, and sharing best practices around interventions. A three-prong approach includes:

**Prevent:** addressing the systemic issues that lead to poor levels of mental health, including the risk of suicide, and sub-optimal wellbeing across the veterinary team. This includes researching the issues and developing and advocating policies and interventions that are supportive of positive mental health.

**Protect:** providing and promoting the skills and knowledge required by individuals and organisations to increase levels of wellbeing and improve mental health in veterinary medicine. Making such interventions evidence-based and widely accessible.

**Support:** ensuring suitable expert support is available to veterinary professionals and students who need it, provided in a confidential and safe environment, and accessible without fear of judgement.

The Mind Matters Initiative has been running in the UK since 2015 and addresses mental ill-health within the veterinary team by tackling systemic issues that put individuals at risk; protecting those who may be working in suboptimal conditions by providing them with training and tools such as mindfulness and personal wellbeing solutions; and supporting those who need specific help by funding and promoting independent sources of one-to-one help.

The AVMA program includes activities that address mental health issues such as development of a workplace wellbeing education program and ongoing education and outreach in the areas of optimising wellbeing, creating cultures of wellbeing in the workplace, boundary setting and conflict transformation.

“The WSAVA Professional Wellness Group's recently conducted worldwide survey indicates that issues concerning mental health and wellbeing affect all members of the veterinary team in all corners of the globe,” said Dr. Nienke Endenburg, co-chair of the WSAVA's Professional Wellness Group.

“These issues need to be addressed without delay to safeguard the health and well-being of veterinarians every-

where. We believe that collaboration between veterinary associations will help to raise awareness of this problem within the veterinary profession and assist in facilitating the development and sharing of tools and resources that will support veterinary team members, no matter where they practice.”

All groups expressed the need for enhanced mental health and wellbeing and the sentiment that together they can make a global change for the veterinary profession.

“One in five Canadian veterinarians and technologists have reported suicide ideation, burnout, and depression. It is important that we support veterinary teams and provide them with the tools they need to cope with the diverse circumstances of this profession,” says Dr. Melanie Hicks, CVMA President.

“We have expanded our efforts in this area with our inaugural Mental Health Awareness Week, launched this September. The CVMA offered a suicide awareness and prevention webinar, along with additional resources including a mental health illness checklist and access to local assistance. We will continue to support this initiative throughout this year and every year. We are proud to endorse the mental health and wellbeing statement championed by these respected veterinary associations and look forward to a collaboration that helps safeguard the mental health of veterinarians.”

“The mental health of veterinarians and veterinary students matters to us all,” said Rens van Dobbenburgh, FVE president.

“Not only when and where issues occur, but equally in recognising risky situations, addressing these appropriately and preventing mental problems as much as possible. It is shared responsibility of the veterinary profession to work together, to share best practices and to support safe work environments for ourselves, our colleagues and the whole veterinary team.”

# Knowledge Awards: Quality Improvement in Practice

We are delighted to bring you the Knowledge Awards for 2020, focused on continuous quality improvement (QI).

Who is eligible for this award?

The award is open to anyone who works within the veterinary industry. We are particularly interested in applications from a practice setting including, but not limited to, those from the administration team, veterinary nurses, practice managers and surgeons at all levels.

What is the award for?

The award aims to recognise those individuals and teams who are focusing on driving continuous improvements in practice for better outcomes for their patients, better service provision to their clients, an improved business case or better working conditions for the team. Winners will be announced in early 2020.

Application for an award on behalf of yourself or your practice

You can apply for yourself, on behalf of your practice team or nominate a colleague.

Apply for a QI award To apply yourself or on behalf of your practice: please download and complete the application form, providing your details and writing your case example about your QI initiative before 29th November 2019.

Nominate a colleague or a team

Nominate a colleague

To nominate a colleague or a team: please download and complete the short nomination form, providing your details, your nominee's details and a summary of no more than 200 words explaining why you have nominated this individual/team before 17th October 2019.

Once we receive this, we will contact the nominee directly, inviting them to complete this nominee form. On this form, the nominee will give us a more detailed insight into their QI initiative by writing a case example. This will be presented to our review panel alongside the other applications.

Both applicants and nominees will need to read the terms and conditions of the award.

All the documents you need are available to download at the bottom of this page. Please send the completed documents to us by email ([ebvm@rcvsknowledge.org](mailto:ebvm@rcvsknowledge.org)) or by post.

What happens if my application is selected as a winner?

If your application/nomination is successful, the applicant/nominee will become a Knowledge Champion and will receive a £250 prize. The successful applicant/nominee will also be invited to attend an awards ceremony and will be reimbursed up to £200 towards reasonable travel costs to attend the event at which this ceremony is held. If a winning application was made for a practice – rather than an individual – then a representative from the practice will be invited to attend the awards ceremony.

All applicants are encouraged to work with Knowledge to share their experiences in applying QI, be it through our blog, publishing in our journal *Veterinary Evidence*, or maybe even presenting at a conference!

Deadline

For nominations: 17th October 2019.

For an application (whether you have applied directly or have been nominated): 29th November 2019.

We anticipate that this will give you some time to initiate an improvement in your workplace (if you have not already) and to gather enough information to see if the change has made a difference.

Want to know more about QI?

If you would like to know more about QI, take a look at our resources on guidelines, clinical audit, significant event audit, checklists and benchmarking, listen to our QI-focused podcasts and read commentaries on QI from different perspectives – these are all available in the quality improvement section of our website.

You can undertake free short online courses on creating guidelines, clinical audit and significant event audit and can revisit these at any time.

If you are new to QI, watch our three-minute video to introduce you to the subject and refer to our helpful QI glossary which offers an explanation of key terms.

We are constantly adding more resources to support you with your practice improvements. If you would like to stay up-to-date with new tools as they become available, please let us know.

Our previous champions

Take a look at the winning QI case examples for our previous round of Knowledge Awards (2019). These QI initiatives focused on the following areas:

- undertaking clinical audits, setting and reviewing protocols based on evidence, and instigating their discussion and adoption by the entire practice team;
- developing an annual controlled drugs audit;
- delivering a consistent approach to diagnosis and treatment by developing guidelines and
- undertaking quarterly clinical audits and providing tailored training for nurses to elevate the practice's general anaesthesia and sedation monitoring.

# Reminder for all VNs to complete their annual renewal

We are reminding all veterinary nurses that they must complete their annual renewal, including paying their annual renewal fee, by Tuesday 31 December 2019 at the latest.

The renewal period has opened now, via the 'My Account' area of our website, with the official renewal date being Friday 1 November 2019. As the renewal year runs from November 2019 to November 2020, all veterinary nurses must complete the renewal process, including new nurses who may have first registered less than 12 months ago.

The annual renewal fee for veterinary nurses is set at £69 for this year, and payments can be made by debit or credit card via the 'My Account' area of our website, or by cheque, bank draft or bank transfer. Unfortunately, payments cannot be taken over the telephone.

All veterinary nurses also need to confirm their Register address and contact details, confirm their compliance with the current continuing professional development requirement of 45 hours over a three year period, and declare any convictions, cautions and/or adverse findings. These steps still need to be completed even if the veterinary nurse's employer is paying the renewal fee.

Veterinary nurses who fail to complete their annual renewal on or before Tuesday 31 December 2019 will be removed from the Register.

Veterinary nurses with any queries about annual renewal should contact the RCVS registration team via [registration@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:registration@rcvs.org.uk) or 020 7202 0707.

# College warns of potential PSS phone scam

We are warning members of the profession and practices to be vigilant regarding a potential telephone scam targeting RCVS-accredited small animal veterinary practices in the UK.

We have been alerted to this scam by a small number of practices who have received a phone call from someone using the names Mark Mitchell and Mark Holdin, from a company called 'Media Services'. The individual has a North American accent, although appears to be phoning from Germany.

Mark claims to be calling on behalf of the RCVS in order to update email details, the given reason being that people no longer respond to their faxes. He may or may not also mention that 'Media Services' needs to update the practice's location on 'City Maps'.

Once Mark has established up-to-date email addresses over the phone, he then emails through a form bearing the RCVS-accredited Practice logo, and asks the practice to handwrite their email address on the form, stamp it with a practice stamp, sign it, and email it back. What is not made clear is that the form is a two-year contract for advertising services, at a cost of £35 per month, or £840 in total, per practice premises.

The RCVS has not contracted out any of our data maintenance services to 'Media Services' or any third party company. No one by the name of Mark Mitchell or Mark Holdin is employed by or contracted to us.

We do not believe any such contract to be legally binding, because it has been obtained through deception and uses a trademarked logo without our permission.

If you are at all uncertain about any communication you receive purporting to be from the RCVS, please call us to verify its authenticity (020 7222 2001).

Do not sign any contracts with, or make any payments to, any third party individuals or companies unless you are certain of their authenticity.

If you believe you have been subject to this scam or similar fraudulent activity, please contact the police or your local Trading Standards Authority.

We appreciate it is increasingly difficult to spot persistent fraudsters, especially in a busy practice environment, and so are very grateful to those practices who have taken the trouble to get in touch with us to alert us to this situation.

# What does the evidence tell us about outcomes-focused CPD?

For some time, the effectiveness of traditional input-based CPD models has been questioned by educators, researchers and professional bodies. There has been increasing recognition that CPD records based solely on inputs (ie the 'what was done') do not necessarily prove that any significant learning has taken place or that this learning will be used to improve professional practice.

This recognition, coupled with an identified need to have robust and evidence-supported CPD models in place, has driven research into more outcomes-focused models of learning and development.

With research indicating that focusing on outcomes when undertaking CPD will have a positive impact on professional performance and practice, many professions are shifting to outcomes-focused models – including the veterinary professions.

Although the implementation of outcomes-focused CPD is in its infancy, numerous other professions (including human medicine and dentistry) have moved to this model. The veterinary world is still somewhat behind as a result, but upcoming changes seek to remedy this and bring the veterinary professions to a modern and evidence-based model of CPD.

What does outcomes-focused CPD mean?

Outcomes-focused CPD seeks to measure outputs, ie the impact of learning on personal and professional development, and how this improves, for example, outcomes for patients. The objective of this approach is to provide a measurement of genuine learning and professional improvement.

This places greater responsibility on participants to set out their CPD requirements and demonstrate how their activities have affected their professional practice, for example, if it has improved their performance in a certain area or had an impact on patient outcomes. In essence, it requires individual practitioners to take greater ownership of their professional development and not just consider what they have done but why they did and how it has impacted them.

What is involved in an outcomes-focused CPD model?

The majority of outcomes-focused CPD models require individual practitioners to follow four broad stages:

- Reflecting on their practice to identify their own development needs;
- Planning and undertaking appropriate CPD activities to meet these needs;
- Applying what has been learnt to their practice;
- Measuring and reflecting on the impact of CPD on their practice and patient health, identifying any further development needs.

What is reflection?

In a nutshell, reflection involves a systematic and critical analysis of the learning/development you have undertaken, thinking about if and how you will make any changes to how you work in the future as a result.

For those of us who are scientifically inclined, as many in the veterinary professions are, reflection doesn't always come easily, as it requires more than thinking scientifically about what to focus on or standing back from events and finding flaws in our practice or arguments.

As the philosopher Donald Schon, who was responsible for developing the concept of 'the reflective practitioner', points out, reflection recognises that we are not merely observers of our work – we are participants. Crucially, it acknowledges our part in the outcome and, in this regard, our strengths, our limitations and our feelings.

As such, reflection is integral to how we develop ourselves and learn which is, ultimately, the purpose of CPD. Reflection helps us identify learning opportunities that are directly related to our professional needs and goals – and through this, professional development is maximised by being both relevant and efficient.

There have been concerns voiced by some in the profession that reflection is onerous and adds extra work to a schedule in which some practitioners already struggle to find the time to carry out CPD in addition to other professional and personal responsibilities. While I hope this blog will make a very strong case for reflection, it is also worth noting that there is no expectation that vets or vet nurses need write an essay about every CPD activity in which they engage immediately



afterwards, but rather jot down a few notes or record some thoughts about it, when it is relevant.

So, what does the research on inputs-based versus outcomes-focused CPD tell us?

The impact of many CPD activities is reduced when they are undertaken in isolation outside a defined structure of directed learning – hence the need for learning and development models to support professions.

Research across a range of professions and studies has demonstrated that CPD activities which are interactive, encourage reflection on practice, provide opportunities to practice skills, involve multiple exposures, help practitioners identify between their current performance and a standard, and are focused on outcomes, are the most effective at improving practice and patient health outcomes.

CPD activities focused on outcomes encourage professionals to reflect on what they have learned, how they will apply their learning and how it will improve their practice.

With regard to the veterinary professions, in 2013, I conducted a study with my colleague at the RVC, Dr Tierney Kinnison, who is a Lecturer in Veterinary Education, which focused on the impact of adding a reflective essay-based Professional Key Skills Module to the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice where participants received feedback for their learning (May and Kinnison 2015).

We found that, at an individual level, participants who undertook reflective essay became more skilled at analysing their strengths and weaknesses, and started to be more proactive in identifying CPD opportunities to address this.

A specific example was consulting room communication, which was a dominant theme for reflection in the study. The participants adopted various models for structuring consultations and quickly recognised their value as they reflected on their deployment with clients. They found themselves more confident, particularly in challenging encounters, such as those involving complaints resulting from disappointment over treatment efficacy, and recognised superior outcomes in contrast to similar previous cases.

In addition to this, a greater focus on the meaning of professionalism (including recognition of not knowing everything and working on work-life balance), led to a reduction in the stress that many participants had been experiencing in their professional lives.

A later study, which I conducted with Tierney, in 2017 (Kinnison and May 2017), went a step further and looked at how reflection, alongside the development of non-technical skills such as communication, can make people reappraise difficult situations in a more constructive way and therefore lower stress. In this, we found that reflection (a key element in outcomes-focused CPD schemes) increased self-awareness and some participants were able to mitigate the effects of work overload through better prioritisation and distribution of labour, building on the strengths of the whole veterinary team.

These studies, along with a plethora of research from other professions, have formed the basis for the incoming changes to the College's CPD policy.

A switch to using outcomes as evidence of professional development, is seen as giving autonomy back to professionals to adopt their own approaches to learning and helping individuals to recognise the impact of that learning on their practice.

The important shift to outcomes-focused CPD in the veterinary professions

It is crucial to evidence-based veterinary medicine that we transfer established results from other contexts into our own. This means looking at the research and what other professions have done, and transferring what is proven to work to our profession. With regards to CPD, this means a shift to focusing on outcomes and not inputs.

This has led to the RCVS decision to introduce a new outcomes-focused continuing professional development (CPD) model for vets and VNs. This new model, which will become compulsory in 2022, will include a 'reflect' element incorporated in the CPD cycle – 'plan, do, record and reflect'.

However, we want the profession to be engaging in the reflective process as soon as possible and, one thing I can report from the two-year pilot of outcomes-based CPD that we undertook, is that many of those vets and vet nurses who were initially sceptical about or even hostile towards the concept of reflection, were won over by the end.

Over the coming weeks and months the College will be publishing a number of resources and undertaking a number of activities to help guide the professions through these changes and this new CPD process. References

Kinnison, T. and May, S.A. (2017) Continuing professional development: Researching non-technical competencies can support cognitive reappraisal and reduced stress in clinicians. *Veterinary Record* 181, 266.

May, S.A. and Kinnison, T. (2015) Continuing professional development: learning leads to change in individual and collective clinical practice. *Veterinary Record* 177, 13.

# Blog

## ViVet Symposium 2019 and reflecting on veterinary innovation from the past into the future

I am currently reading Iain Pattison's *The British Veterinary Profession 1791-1948* - a fascinating and interesting read on the history of the professions and some of the early veterinary pioneers who steered us with passion and diligence towards the modern veterinary profession we have today.

I am transported and inspired by the work of those who had to progress in a world where animals were once tended by 'horse doctors, horse surgeons, farriers, cow leeches, cattle-doctors, castrators, spayers and gelders, charmers, spell-workers, butty-colliers, water dousers...' – the list goes on.

I am enjoying reading about early veterinary leaders, such as Thomas and Thomas Walton Mayer, father and son veterinary surgeons who began the work towards the Charter, which created the RCVS and recognised the veterinary surgeon profession in 1844. Leaders like Sir Frederick Fitzwygram, 4th Baronet, ex Eton and Sandhurst and of the 6th Dragoons, who gave us the Charter of 1876. Or George Fleming, forge boy, son of a Glasgow farrier, credited for the Act of Parliament 1881 and Aleen Isabel Cust, our first woman veterinary surgeon, recognised in December 1922.

I think of those early veterinary surgeons and their future-focused attitudes. They imagined a profession of skilled and regulated professionals, with animal welfare at the heart of what they do. They worked with new concepts and advancing tech. They really were innovators at a time where the world and profession was rapidly changing and advancing.

So, how will future generations judge us as innovators? What about innovation in today's changing landscape?

Earlier this month I attended the RCVS ViVet Innovation Symposium in Manchester, where a series of excellent speakers challenged, stimulated and inspired us with discussions on what the future might hold, how we might explore it and what opportunities there could be for our veterinary professions.

The day was fantastic. We heard about how technology will fundamentally change the role of the veterinary professional. There was discussion about changes in consumer demand and a debate on how a shift to focus on customers' needs presents both opportunities and challenges for the veterinary professions. There was also discussion about the role of the regulator in addressing innovation and our changing society.

One of my highlights from the day was the excellent talk given by keynote speaker, Nancy Rademaker, on 'Survival in the New Normal'. In her presentation, she talked about how young people are in the 'New Normal' and how many of us are trying to find balance between the 'way things have always been done' and striving to negotiate the future with its changing landscape of new concepts, public needs and tech advances. Nancy commented that we should think in opportunities, not in boundaries or limits, and that may mean that we sometimes have to unlearn what we have learned to imagine the beyond.

I also loved the Student Veterinary Innovation Competition, where three finalist teams presented innovative veterinary proposals in front of a panel of industry professionals. All three of the finalists were fantastic and I was incredibly impressed by the students' confidence presenting in front of a room filled with seasoned veterinary leaders. The winning team was Christina Ratcliffe and Ana Almeida-Warren from Liverpool University with their VetCase app concept - a case-based learning app including clinical examinations and diagnostic test exercises to reflect real-life situations and help students prepare for life after graduation.

Listening to and reflecting on these presentations, along with the other presentations throughout the day, has made me think back to *The British Veterinary Profession 1791-1948*, as it strikes me how many of the challenges those early professionals faced mirror issues we face today. As technology and the amount of data that we have access to exponentially expands, and as the world becomes more connected and customer-centric, our professions face new challenges and opportunities – for example, the role in which artificial intelligence will have to play in the veterinary professions.

I believe that we can learn something from the veterinary pioneers of the past. We should embrace innovation and strive to use new developments to continue to enhance the professions. We also need to recognise that veterinary professionals have always been innovators – just open a copy of *The British Veterinary Profession 1791-1948* to be bombarded with

examples – and so we shouldn't be hesitant of the important role we have to play in shaping the future.

Those early professionals imagined the beyond and it would be unfair of us, the ones privileged to carry on their legacy of improving animal health and welfare, to let them down by doing anything less.

Videos and a write up of the presentations from the Symposium will be available on the ViVet website soon.

# Blog

## &me – Dr Serena Haywood

Dr Serena Haywood (MBBS BSc FRCPCH MSc MA)– Consultant Paediatrician, Guardian of Safe Working Hours, GMC Associate Assessor, BMA Doctor Supporter, London Women's Leadership Network Mentor, Trust Health and Wellbeing Champion, Resilience blogger (Recalibr8), theatre producer and playwright.

When your bio is longer than your story there's probably a thing going on....

My story is that I have depression (including postnatal), anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and a LOT of jobs. In my very doctory way, I work through my mental distress by doing more and more. Which means I've gathered a lot of titles along the way. On the surface then, I'm a mental health success story. Still a doctor. Climbing my way up the physician pole without overly frightening the horses.

But working harder and harder might not always be the healthy option. Workaholism is not unusual in doctors. I like to think that I take it to the next level. When I'm feeling low, I start another degree. I've had to be wrestled to the ground recently from starting a PhD. Why do this? I am terrified of stopping. I am a deceptively functional individual, successful by most measures, cheerful and good company. My friends say I make everything more fun and also 'things/drama' tend to happen around me. I love drama in all senses which is why I am a playwright and theatre professional as well as a doctor but this reflects my beginnings as the daughter of an alcoholic. Our collective behaviour is often one of cheerful calm, conflict avoidance and control at the expense of our own wellbeing whilst craving a maelstrom of emotions around us in order for things to make sense. I am a supporter and giver from childhood, absorbing others' distress but that has not always been a healthy position and my familial tendency to maladaptive behaviours has taken the form of working sometimes to the point of exhaustion.

I had depressive symptoms from late adolescence triggered by my parents' abusive domestic situation, which continued through medical school, culminating in my first significant depressive episode. Seeking help was not always easy and the support I received was often patchy and sometimes very peculiar; being told by a general practitioner (GP) to treat myself with plentiful relationship-less sex was a colleague low point. My trainee peers were fantastic but the oddness of responses over the years from bosses continued, with responses ranging from curtness, being patronised and, frankly, fear. The lesson that I therefore learned, was that doctors did not let the side down (particularly as a woman, heaven forfend) and the rules were: don't blub, be super profesh and 'just get on with it'.

When I experienced an extremely traumatic experience in paediatrics twenty years ago and was essentially left to deal with the emotional fall-out on my own ('You're fine are you? Good'), I did just that and more. My response was to keep my head down, shut down and emotionally blunt. This resulted in the insomnia, intrusive thoughts, hyper-vigilance and self-blame that I was later told were classic signs of PTSD. I came close to taking my own life. It was only in finding peers in Australia who told me this wasn't 'normal' that I looked outside of the hard shell I had built up around myself and started my psychotherapy journey (via MedNet, now the Practitioner Health Programme in the UK) that I continue today. This hasn't always been easy and, in part, I continue to make life challenging for myself by refusing medication and time off. This changed when another awful event four years ago triggered me into an emotional black hole and I conceded that I needed two weeks off. The fear and isolation of this event led me to take the risky decision to start talking about my mental health as much as I could to as many people as would listen. I was advised not to but did it anyway. And my life changed from there.

My colleagues have been universally accepting, my Trust (employer) has been supportive both in occupational health and managers and I have felt better. I have been supported in talking with junior doctors about resilience and that has led me to talking with other healthcare professionals, doctors returning to work, GP trainees, IT workers and on one notable occasion, Her Majesty's Treasury Office. I support doctors dealing with the GMC via BMA Wellbeing and they in turn support me to be a better listener and learn more about the mental health of others. I blog as recalibr8 as part of my mental health journey and teach the skill of writing to support others to develop resilience using amazing actors in workshops. Doctors asked to do improvised comedy are hilarious! I also write plays which are performed in fringe theatres around London, Manchester and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

My wish is that if only one person can read this and take the exceptionally brave step to seek support from other professionals as a result that is job done. If it also helps reduce the stigma of healthcare workers coping every day with mental health difficulties, even better (job done plus...yes, OK, always the extra step!). I rely on my friends, my family and ex-

ceptional kids, my colleagues and, importantly myself, to notice when my depression comes back. I know it will, it always does. But I'm learning to be kind to myself, to know when to stop if I need time out so I can give the best to my patients and actually and literally say no. I tell myself that I do recover from the dark moments and to know that my sense of failure that sets that off is often misplaced. I am on a sobriety journey now which is tougher than I thought but I am hoping to use that experience in my next writing project. Do come, tickets available soon (always the shameless plug!).

# Events

## **Introduction to the UK veterinary professions – a key CPD course for overseas vets and VNs**

Tuesday 29 to Wednesday 30 October, Brownsfield Suite, Crowne Plaza Manchester City Centre, Shudehill, Manchester M4 4AF

## **RCVS Council - November 2019**

Thursday 7 November, RCVS, Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF

## **Emergency & Critical Care Veterinary Congress**

Thursday 7 to Friday 8 November 2019, Royal Armouries, Armouries Drive, Leeds, LS10 1LT

## **VN Council - November 2019**

Wednesday 13 November 2019, RCVS, Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2AF

## **London Vet Show 2019**

Thursday 14 to Friday 15 November, Excel London, One Western Gateway, Royal Victoria Dock, London E16 1XL

## **Practice Standards Scheme surgeries – Nottingham**

Monday 25 November, De Vere East Midlands Conference Centre and Orchard Hotel, Beeston Ln, Nottingham NG7 2RJ

## **Nottingham Regional Question Time**

Monday 25 November, De Vere East Midlands Conference Centre and Orchard Hotel, Beeston Ln, Nottingham NG7 2RJ

## **Clinical governance in equine practice: practical examples of quality improvement**

Thursday 5 December, Ashbrook Equine Hospital, Middlewich Road, Allostock, Nr Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 9JQ

# CAMPAIGN

In November, we're launching a digital marketing campaign to raise awareness of the Practice Standards Scheme amongst animal owners – what it is and why they should care about it.

Look out for special previews at London Vet Show, and launch packs in the post for all RCVS-accredited practices!



# DC suspends vet from the Register following appeal to Privy Council

The RCVS Disciplinary Committee has directed that the Registrar suspend a veterinary surgeon from the Register for three months for being dishonest with, and making false representations to, the College.

At his first Disciplinary Committee hearing in January 2018, the Committee directed that Dr Gerhard Schulze Allen's name be removed from the Register after finding him guilty of serious professional misconduct in respect of four charges against him. These related to an incident of petty theft in California in the United States, and his subsequent dishonesty in not disclosing this to the RCVS.

Following the Disciplinary Committee hearing, Dr Schulze Allen submitted an appeal to the Privy Council. In July 2019, the Privy Council partially upheld his appeal, determining that the College had not proven beyond all reasonable doubt that Dr Schulze Allen's infraction for petty theft was a conviction under Californian law and therefore Dr Schulze Allen had not made false representations to the College when he said he did not have any criminal convictions or a criminal record.

However, the Privy Council partially upheld the College's charge that Dr Schulze Allen was dishonest and made false representations when he had, in a written application for restoration to the Register, represented that he did not have any adverse findings and that he should have declared his infraction for petty theft. The Privy Council also set aside the Disciplinary Committee's original sanction and remitted the task of sanction back to the Disciplinary Committee.

As a result of the Privy Council's decision, on Thursday 10 and Friday 11 October 2019, the Disciplinary Committee held a further hearing in relation to Dr Schulze Allen to decide the sanction in relation to the upheld charge against him.

As the charge had been upheld the Privy Council and, furthermore, admitted by Dr Schulze Allen, as well as found to constitute serious professional misconduct, the Committee only considered the issue of sanction against Dr Schulze Allen.

In considering the sanction the Committee noted that the aggravating factors were the fact that Dr Schulze Allen was dishonest to his regulator and in making a false declaration, demonstrated a wilful disregard for the regulatory role of the RCVS. In mitigation the Committee considered that there was no harm to animals, that it was a single and isolated incident in an otherwise unblemished career, and that he had accepted his wrongdoing, albeit at a late stage, and was developing some insight.

The Committee considered whether a reprimand or warning would be the most appropriate sanction but determined that this would not reflect the seriousness of the dishonesty in this case, nor maintain public confidence in the profession or uphold proper professional standards of conduct and behaviour.

Ian Green, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "The Committee concluded that the appropriate and proportionate sanction is suspension from the Register for a period of three months. A period of three months reflects the seriousness of the charge. Such a sanction sends a clear message to Dr Schulze Allen, the profession and the public that behaving dishonestly towards the regulator is a serious matter. The Committee considered that removal from the Register would be disproportionate given that this is a single incident and Dr Schulze Allen now accepts his wrongdoing."

NOTE: This summary is provided to assist in understanding the RCVS Disciplinary Committee's decision. It does not form part of the reasons for the decision. The Committee's full findings and decision is the only authoritative document.

# Hampshire-based vets cleared of serious professional misconduct by Disciplinary Committee

A joint RCVS Disciplinary Committee hearing for two Hampshire-based vets has found both individuals to be not guilty of serious professional misconduct.

The hearing for Geoffrey William Irvine MRCVS and Igor Vasilev MRCVS took place from Monday 14 to Tuesday 22 October 2019 with one charge against each relating to the treatment of Rupert, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, in July 2017.

The specific parts of the charge against Mr Irvine were that, between 7 July and 27 July 2017, he failed to discuss with Rupert's owners, alternative treatment options to dental surgery under general anaesthetic; failed to discuss with the owners the risks of dental surgery under general anaesthetic; and failed to obtain informed consent from the owners for this surgery.

Dr Vasilev was also originally charged with failing to discuss alternative treatment options, failing to discuss risks of the surgery and failing to obtain informed consent. However, at the outset of the hearing, as a result of new information which had come to light, the RCVS opted to offer no evidence in relation to these charges.

Mr Vasilev was separately charged with failing to maintain clear, accurate and detailed clinical records in relation to his treatment of Rupert on 11 and 18 July 2017.

At the outset of the hearing, Mr Irvine denied all aspects of the charge against him; while Dr Vasilev admitted all aspects of the remaining charge.

In considering the facts of the case against Mr Irvine and Dr Vasilev, the Committee heard the circumstances around Rupert's treatment and death, including how his dental surgery under general anaesthetic was recommended by Mr Irvine on 10 July and performed by Dr Vasilev on 11 July 2017.

After the surgery, Rupert was discharged, but vomited in his sleep that same night. He was brought back to the practice on 12 July, where Dr Vasilev administered antiemetic and antibiotic medication.

However, Rupert continued to vomit over the next five days, and was seen by the practice on 17 July and then on 18 July when blood tests were conducted. Rupert's condition deteriorated as he continued to vomit and lose weight and he was brought back to the practice on 22 July where he was euthanased by Dr Vasilev.

In consideration of the facts of the charges, the Committee heard evidence from Rupert's owners as well as two expert witnesses. The Committee found the first aspect of the charge against Mr Irvine proven on the basis that there was an inadequate discussion with the owners regarding the option of delaying the dental treatment on Rupert because of his recent ascites caused by congestive heart failure.

The Committee found the second aspect of the charge against Mr Irvine proven on the basis that he had not discussed the risks of Rupert undergoing general anaesthetic given the recent diagnosis of congestive heart failure, following which (in relation to the third aspect of the charge against Mr Irvine), it was therefore found proven that he had failed to gain informed consent.

With all aspects of the charge against Mr Irvine being proven, and with Dr Vasilev admitting the charge against him, the Committee went on to consider if the proven and admitted charges against both amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect (also known as 'serious professional misconduct').

In respect of Mr Irvine, Stuart Drummond, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "The Committee was not persuaded that the failure to obtain informed consent from [the owner] and discuss matters further with her on 10 July 2017 in the circumstances of this case would amount to serious professional misconduct which would bring the profession into disrepute.

"In the Committee's judgment, the breach of standards, whilst amounting to professional misconduct, was not serious professional misconduct, in the context of other discussions which had taken place.... The Committee further decided that a finding of serious professional misconduct in this case would be disproportionate having taken into consideration

the discussions that Mr Irvine had with [the owner] prior to 10 July 2017 and the fact he was dealing with a complex and changing case.

“The Committee therefore found that Mr Irvine was not guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.”

The Committee noted that Dr Vasilev had admitted breaching the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons in respect of failing to keep adequate clinical and client records.

However, in mitigation, the Committee considered a number of factors including that, in failing to maintain adequate notes related to Rupert’s treatment, Dr Vasilev had followed the standard of notetaking in the practice as set out by Mr Irvine who was practice principal; that Dr Vasilev had only worked with Mr Irvine in the UK and his record-keeping was limited to working in one practice; that Dr Vasilev admitted his failures at an early stage of the proceedings; that he had made efforts to avoid repetition in the future by undertaking webinars and research; and, that he had shown insight into the need to ensure full communication and detailed note-taking.

Stuart Drummond added: “In relation to Dr Vasilev, the Committee was satisfied that [his] standard of record-keeping was in breach of the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons and that the breach... amounted to professional misconduct.

“The Committee concluded that the breaches overall, when considering the context and number of mitigating factors, were, in the Committee’s view, insufficient to amount to serious professional misconduct... Accordingly it found Dr Vasilev not guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.”

This report is intended to assist in understanding the case and the Disciplinary Committee’s decision but does not form part of the decision itself. The full facts and findings are the only authoritative documentation and are available to download from our website.