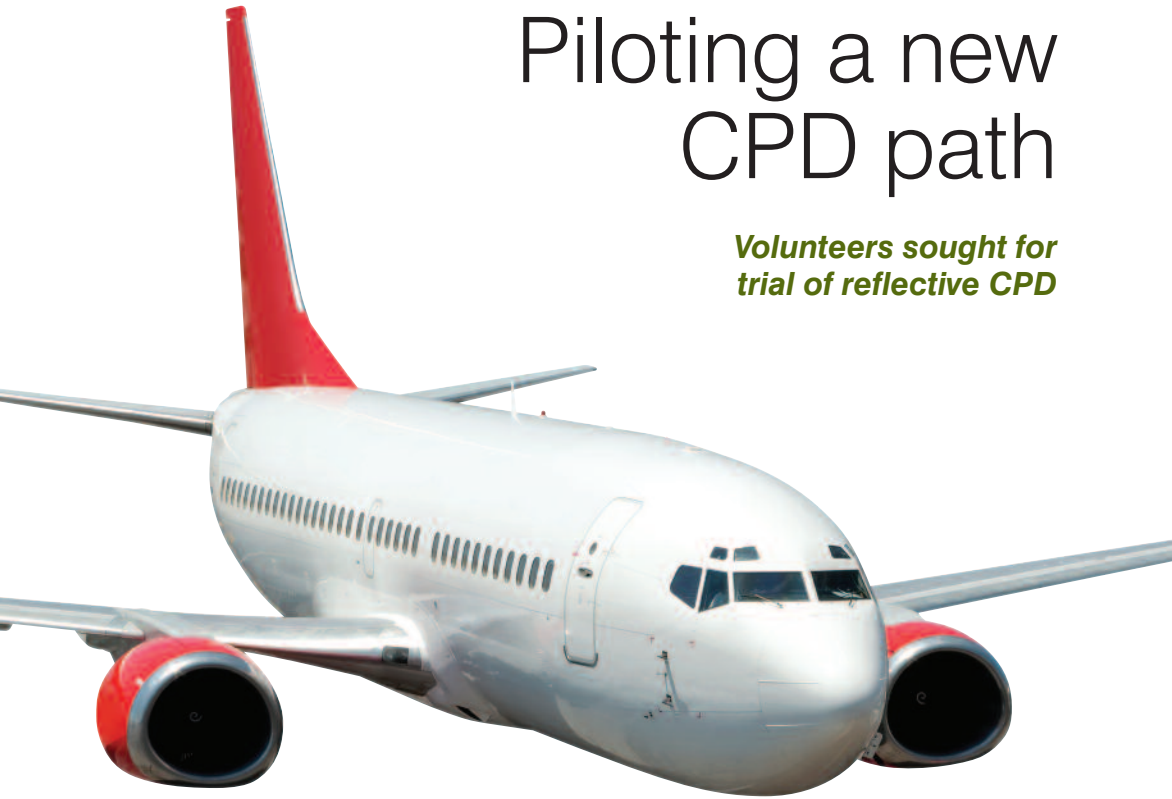


Piloting a new CPD path

*Volunteers sought for
trial of reflective CPD*



In this issue: VN Council nominations, CPD pilot and audit, training practice numbers, guided learning hours, accreditation updates, apprenticeships, updates on Year-one Competences, Day-one Skills and NPL, alternative dispute resolution trial, VN Futures: One Health special, ethical review trial, Schedule 3 consultation, fitness to practise guide, ACOVENE, Mind Matters, meetings and events, meet the team

Take a stand

VN Council nominations

The nomination period is now open for veterinary nurses who want to put themselves forward as candidates for our Veterinary Nurses (VN) Council elections next year.

VN Council has overall responsibility for making decisions on matters relating to VN registration, training and continuing education, with elected members serving four-year terms. This year, for example, VN Council members have been heavily involved in the VN Futures project and have also served on working groups looking at reforming Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act and the development of a new continuing professional development (CPD) policy.

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

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

Candidates must be registered veterinary nurses and need two nominators who must also be registered veterinary nurses who are not currently on VN Council. In order to stand they must submit a nomination form, a short biography and personal statement and a high resolution digital photo by 5pm on Tuesday 31 January 2017.

To download nomination forms and other information visit www.rcvs.org.uk/vncouncil17



Auditing your learning

CPD audit results revealed

Every year for the past seven years, we have audited the continuing professional development (CPD) records for groups of veterinary nurses in the UK.

For this year's audit we requested the records of four groups of VNs: a random sample of 400 veterinary nurses; 117 VNs who fell short of our requirements in the 2015 audit; 32 VNs who failed to respond to requests to share their records in 2015; and 79 VNs who confirmed they were not compliant in last year's registration process.

The overall response rate to our audit was 94% (591 veterinary nurses in total) with only 59% of those from 'Group 3' sharing their records with us. Of all those who responded, 71% were found to be CPD compliant.

"We would like to use this opportunity to remind veterinary nurses that CPD need not involve great expense."

Some of those respondents who were found not to be compliant gave reasons for this – the most common being maternity leave, working part-time, family commitments, illness and difficulty of finding time and money for CPD.

Speaking of the results Julie Dugmore, Director of Veterinary Nursing, commented: "While it is good to see that a majority of those we sampled are compliant – with one veterinary nurse doing an astonishing 2,056 hours of CPD in three years – there is still a large minority who are not meeting the requirement.

"We would like to use this opportunity to remind veterinary nurses that CPD need not involve great expense – catching up on the latest journals while on maternity leave or taking part in free online webinars, attending a practice clinical governance meeting can all count towards CPD. The main criteria for good CPD are that it is relevant to your work and it improves your practice – we are not prescriptive about the form it takes.

"More serious are those veterinary nurses who continually fail to respond to our requests for their records which can, ultimately, lead to them being taken through the disciplinary process."

For more information about CPD for veterinary nurses, visit www.rcvs.org.uk/vncpd

Reflective CPD

Volunteers sought for pilot

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

In June we held a six-week consultation with the profession asking them for their views on our proposal for an outcomes-based approach to CPD which would concentrate less on hours logged and more on interactive, reflective learning and measuring the impact that CPD has on the individual's practice and patient health outcomes. Of the 3,357 people who responded to the consultation, 30% were veterinary nurses, 69% were veterinary surgeons and 1% 'other'.

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

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

Professor Stephen May, who chaired the Working Group that developed the CPD proposals, explained: "Because of the concern voiced by members of the

profession responding to the consultation we decided that, at this stage, it would not be appropriate for the RCVS to move straight into this new way of doing CPD but that it would be more appropriate to hold a pilot. The idea is that we will explore some of the concerns around reflection and around the extra time and extra paperwork that people felt that a more reflective approach may lead to.

"It is important to note that we are not only looking for volunteers who agree with what we are doing but also those who are apprehensive about it or even some who see it as something they do not support."

Jenny Soreskog-Turp, our CPD Officer, said: "We were really pleased with the high number of veterinary nurses who responded to the consultation, and look forward to continuing that engagement in this pilot. We would really encourage veterinary nurses to get involved and provide feedback on these proposed changes that could affect the entire profession."

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

If you are interested in volunteering please contact Jenny Soreskog-Turp on cpd@rcvs.org.uk for further details.

Latest TP numbers

Comparison with PSS practices

As at 7 November this year there were 2,487 training practices (TPs) in the UK offering clinical training and work experience to student veterinary nurses.

From January 2016 to October 2016 some 157 new TPs have been approved, while 45 have had their TP status removed.

At the November meeting of VN Education Committee there was also some discussion around the cross-over between training practices and Practice Standards Scheme-accredited premises. Figures produced by the Veterinary Nursing Department demonstrated that, across the UK, some 310 RCVS-accredited practices were not TPs and that some work could be done to encourage these practices to gain TP status.

Documenting skills

Year-one Competences proposed

We are currently considering the development of a Year-one Competences document (similar to that which already exists for graduate veterinary surgeons) to reflect the professional skills and attributes a veterinary nurse should have developed after a year in practice.

In particular, we are interested in developing a stronger mentoring and guidance process for veterinary nurses once they enter practice as RVNs.

If you have ideas about the development of Year-one Competences, please contact Julie Dugmore, Director of Veterinary Nursing, on j.dugmore@rcvs.org.uk

Degrees of separation

New accreditation panels approved



At its November meeting VN Education Committee approved a new system for providing accreditation to higher education institutions and awarding organisations to offer licence to practise qualifications for veterinary nurses.

Until now all accreditation and validation visits have been conducted by our Qualifications Manager, Lily Lipman (pictured), accompanied by one member of the VN Education Committee.

However, in order to maintain a degree of separation between the visiting team, and the decision-making role of the RCVS Committees, it was proposed that these events should also be attended by an externally-selected panel member in order to reduce conflicts of interest and widen the pool of expertise.

Visitors for a particular visit will be appointed by the VN Education Committee following recommendations from our VN Department. The position is unpaid but reasonable expenses and loss of earnings will be covered.

We now have an open application system for individuals who wish to be considered as external visitors. If you have a background in veterinary nursing higher or further education and are interested in taking on this role, please contact Lily Lipman for a job description and person specification on l.lipman@rcvs.org.uk.

External examiners

Changes made to appointment rules

VN Education Committee has agreed new guidance for higher education institutions and awarding organisations regarding the appointment of external examiners.

The new guidance is strengthened in terms of the minimum qualifications expected from external examiners and the period of time an external examiner could be employed after ceasing to be involved in the active training of veterinary nurses. There will also be a stipulation for the external examiner to have access to the practical examinations as well as Day-one Skills logs of individual student veterinary nurses.

Under the new guidance we will be auditing the external examiner appointment process for higher education institutions and awarding organisations to ensure they meet our criteria.

No guide needed

Learning hours removed from criteria

At the Veterinary Nursing Education Committee meeting on 27 June it was agreed that guided learning hours should be removed from the Veterinary Nursing license to practise qualification accreditation criteria as they were found to be too expensive and labour intensive for both students and colleges.

These accreditation criteria applied to all awarding organisations and higher education institutions who are accredited to award veterinary nursing qualifications and required centre staff to be present for a minimum of 700 hours to give specific guidance towards the qualification being studied, equivalent to 23 weeks of full-time study.

Under the new criteria the number of hours of active training students are expected to have completed before registration has been reduced from 3,290 hours to 2,990 hours which, excluding annual leave and absence, is equivalent to 94 weeks.

Our young apprentices...

Veterinary Nurse Standard submitted

At the beginning of December the Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), Greg Clark, authorised the Veterinary Nurse Standard for Apprenticeships which had been developed by the Apprenticeships Trailblazer group to provide a structure for apprentice veterinary nurses.

The Apprenticeships Trailblazer group, comprising representatives from RCVS, employers, awarding organisations and training centres, developed this Standard to simplify veterinary nursing apprenticeships in accordance with the then Department for Business, Innovation & Skills' (BIS) Trailblazer Programme, launched in 2015 (BIS incorporated the Department for Energy and Climate Change to become BEIS earlier this year).

The Standard is expected to make every successful apprentice eligible for registration with us by the end of their apprenticeship period, and therefore incorporates our Day-one Competences and Day-one Skills. The Trailblazer group is now working on an assessment plan to accompany the Veterinary Nurse Standard for Apprenticeships.

Progress has been made

Updates to Day-one Skills and NPL

In September we incorporated a new behavioural assessment tool into veterinary nursing Day-one Skills. The new tool allows student veterinary nurses to self-assess more qualitative skills such as time management, communication skills and initiative, which can then be checked by their clinical coaches.

This new tool, as well as other changes made to the Day-one Skills List to make it more focused on veterinary nurses' everyday clinical skills, was then incorporated into the Nursing Progress Log (NPL), an optional online assessment tool for student veterinary nurses, when it was recently updated.

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

These updates are part of the revision of the Day-one Skills for veterinary nurses for which an open consultation was held in the summer of 2015. The new

skills are designed to be in closer alignment with the revised Day-one Competences, and to make the required skills more relevant to clinical practice.

“The NPL is designed to allow student veterinary nurses to track their progress and measure it against the Day-one Skills List, which outlines those particular skills veterinary nurses are expected to possess.”

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

To learn more about Day-one Skills or Day-one Competences, please visit our website at www.rcvs.org.uk/education/i-want-to-be-a-veterinary-nurse/

Call the mediators

New alternative dispute resolution trial launched

On 3 October 2016 a new alternative dispute resolution (ADR) trial, known as the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS), was launched on a nine-month basis.

We are funding the trial, which is administered by Nockolds Solicitors, a legal firm which has experience in running consumer dispute and mediation services. This is the second time we have trialled an ADR service – the first trial, administered by Ombudsman Services, was launched in November 2014 and came to a close this summer.

The VCMS is free and voluntary for both parties and will be able to consider those concerns that do not meet our threshold of serious professional misconduct.

Eleanor Ferguson, Registrar for the RCVS, explains: “A key difference with the VCMS from the previous trial is that it can be accessed directly rather than having to go through the RCVS concerns investigation process first. We hope that this will appeal to both parties as it

will offer a quicker and simpler way of resolving client concerns without RCVS involvement and should improve satisfaction with the process from both parties.”

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

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

The VCMS website has further information about the trial including frequently asked questions for both veterinary clients and professionals. The VCMS is available between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday, and contactable on 0845 040 5834 or enquiries@vetmediation.co.uk

Forging cross-profession links

One Health and the VN Futures project

The VN Futures project was co-founded in January 2016 by RCVS and the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) to draw up a blueprint for the future of the veterinary nursing profession.

In July the project published its *VN Futures Report and Action Plan* (available to download from www.vetfutures.org.uk/vnfutures) highlighting the main priorities for veterinary nursing in the next five years, namely: a sustainable workforce; structured and rewarding career paths; a confident, resilient, healthy and well-supported workforce; a proactive role in One Health; maximising nurses' potential; and a clarified and bolstered VN role via a reformed Schedule 3.

“There needs to be an increased understanding of the concept and definition of One Health and how it applies to veterinary nurses.”

The One Health stream of the project has proven particularly popular and the One Health Action Group, tasked with bringing the four recommendations under this ambition into fruition, recently had its initial meeting. The recommendations under the One Health ambition in the report are to develop links with

human-centred nurses; to explore the development of a cross-profession committee and regional events and research partnerships; to work to empower VNs to become involved with and lead on public health campaigns; and to develop an evidence-based resource for veterinary nurses.

Here we talk with VN Futures Action Group member Helen Ballantyne (pictured), who is both a veterinary nurse and a human-centred medical nurse, about the project and the unexpected prominence of One Health during the VN Futures consultation.

Why do you think One Health came out so strongly as one of the areas of interest for veterinary nurses in the initial VN Futures consultation?

This was really down to a combination of factors, including: veterinary nurses looking to develop their role within practice; increased awareness of veterinary surgeon involvement in One Health projects; higher levels of general public health education, leading to more thoughts on the use of nursing resources, including shared knowledge, equipment and resources; and the growing use of nursing clinics to support health promotion for patient health, facilitating robust therapeutic relationships that provide the opportunity to support and educate patient owners on One Health issues.

“As veterinary nursing develops it makes sense to look to how nursing has developed and learn from their triumphs and disasters.”

The initial interest in One Health from participants in the VN Futures project has then been followed up by the veterinary surgeons involved in these projects who can see the potential advantages of collaborating with veterinary nurses.

What role do you think veterinary nurses can have in the One Health field?

Further work is required to establish the best way veterinary nursing can contribute to the One Health field, but an obvious contribution is education, where veterinary nurses can take advantage of their pre-existing strong therapeutic relationships with patients and their owners. This could then fit in with subjects such as increasing awareness of responsible



use of antibiotics, and the use of robust infection control practices.

The initial step though, as laid out in the *VN Futures Report*, is to start sharing good practice. This means looking to established projects that already link human and animal health and letting others learn from their work and potentially replicate it in their own practice. If this is an area of work to which veterinary nurses are going to contribute, there needs to be an increased understanding of the concept and definition of One Health and how it applies to veterinary nurses in practice. The aim is that dissemination of case studies, involvement in pilot projects, and stronger links with the veterinary surgeons already involved in One Health will increase awareness in practice and potentially facilitate a greater role of veterinary nursing within this rapidly developing field.

“We know that the lack of a structured career path is something that experienced veterinary nurses struggle with.”

As both a nurse and a veterinary nurse how do you think stronger links can be developed between the two professions?

Initially the first step will be to look to the projects that are already being worked on. This in turn should lead to the development of new contacts and with the support of the RCVS and BVNA, the development of research to identify useful links and spaces for collaborative working.

The key point here though is open learning – shared resources, joint conferences and discussions, and a greater understanding of the responsibilities of the two professions. As veterinary nursing develops it makes sense to look to how nursing has developed and learn from their triumphs and disasters.

There are also models of nursing within the NHS that might be easily replicated in veterinary nursing, such as the diabetic specialist nurse and infection control nurse. There is a robust system of ‘link nurses’ who develop specialised areas of knowledge with the aim of educating their colleagues.

We know of nurses who would like veterinary nurses to help them with veterinary issues, specifically with community-based nurses who may come into contact

with pets. Just as veterinary nurses struggle to signpost and support people when they identify health-related issues, so community nurses may struggle when they identify a pet who needs help.



What kind of issues will the One Health Working Group be looking at as part of its remit?

The key point will be how to engage with veterinary nurses. The aims of VN Futures, as laid out in the report, are for a long-term increase in understanding and awareness of One Health, and so we need to define it in relation to veterinary nursing in practice to facilitate understanding and potential projects.

We will also be looking to develop pilot projects with nurses to establish evidence of the need for collaborative working and how it can benefit people and their animals.

As a project it also links in with other aspects of the VN Futures findings, and taking on One Health concepts could potentially lead to veterinary nurses taking on more responsibility in practice and developing skills and understanding. We know that the lack of a structured career path is something that experienced veterinary nurses struggle with, and One Health might allow for professional development and improvement that could help to retain veterinary nurses in practice.



VNFUTURES

Do you have big ideas about how veterinary nurses can collaborate with other professions to tackle health and societal issues? Then please contact Julie Dugmore, Director of Veterinary Nursing at the RCVS, with your One Health ideas on j.dugmore@rcvs.org.uk

Recognising achievement

CAW student awards

On Saturday 26 November, our Director of Veterinary Nursing, Julie Dugmore, presented the College of Animal Welfare (CAW) Student Awards at the Huntingdon Centre.

Each year CAW acknowledges the achievements of its students, from academic success to personal challenges and achievements. This year, awards were presented to students from the business school (including leadership and management, book-keeping and accounting), animal care and veterinary nursing. CAW also took this opportunity to recognise the achievements of its clinical coaches and teaching staff.

In addition to presenting the awards, this year's ceremony also hosted a veterinary nursing declaration ceremony where Julie took newly qualified veterinary nurses through their declaration on admission to the profession and formally welcomed them on board as associates of the RCVS.



Julie Dugmore welcomes new veterinary nurse Rebecca Corley to the profession

Next year's TP Congress

Code and VN Futures focus

Next year we will be giving two talks at the College of Animal Welfare's TP Congress on the VN Futures project and professional conduct respectively.

Both talks are on the first day of the Congress (Monday 20 March 2017), which takes place at the Whittlebury Hall Hotel and Spa near Towcester in Northamptonshire, and is aimed at helping clinical coaches develop the role they play in the professional development of their students.

Full details of both talks at TP Congress can be found at www.caw.ac.uk/events/tp-congress

BSAVA Congress 2017

VN Futures and Mind Matters focus

Julie Dugmore, our Director of Veterinary Nursing, will be joining BVNA President Sam Morgan for a joint presentation at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress at the International Conference Centre in Birmingham on Thursday 6 April.

The talk, entitled 'Where do we see the profession in 2025?', will cover the key points from the *VN Futures Report and Action Plan* (see pages 6 & 7) and an update on how we are working to fulfil the recommendations of the report.

On Friday 7 April at 8.30am we will also be holding a breakfast session on the latest news on our preparations for Brexit and how it might affect the profession, as well as further information about our outcomes-based approach to CPD.

Throughout the course of the Congress (from 6 to 9 April) we will also be promoting our Mind Matters Initiative and will be holding two mental-health related talks on Saturday 8 April. The first talk, titled 'Occupational Stressors in Veterinary Practice in the UK' takes place from 4.50pm to 5.35pm and will be delivered by Dr Elinor O'Connor from the Alliance Manchester Business School at the University of Manchester. The second talk will be called 'Resilience: What does it really mean?' and is delivered by Richard Dorney MBE, Director at Strongmind.

A rollercoaster conference

College at Vets4Pets event

On Tuesday 29 November Julie Dugmore, Liz Cox, the Chair of VN Council, and Michelle Wilson, a BVNA Council member, attended the Vets4Pets Nurses Conference to promote the VN Futures report and actions.

The event, held at Alton Towers resort, provided an opportunity to engage with practising nurses, discuss emerging challenges, and highlight changes the profession has asked for. Delivering lasting change is a responsibility for the whole profession, so it was great to see nurses coming forward to get involved with delivering this new chapter for the UK veterinary nursing profession.

Ethics review for VNs in practice

Application process now open

We are now accepting research proposals for our year-long Ethics Review Panel trial set up to provide ethical review for practice-based clinical research.

The aim of the Panel, which is chaired by veterinary ethicist Professor David Morton CBE and also has a veterinary nurse representative in Alison Devonshire RVN, is to facilitate access to ethical review for those wishing to undertake research outside of a university or industry context and who may not otherwise have access to the ethical review process.

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

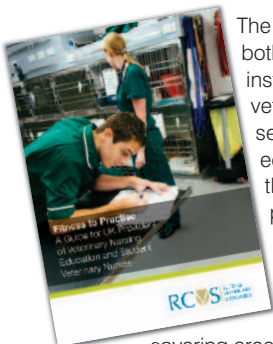
Detailed information about the submission process can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/ethics. Any questions should be directed to Natalie Heppenstall, our Standards and Advisory Officer, at ethics@rcvs.org.uk

Student fitness to practise guide

Publication available to download

***Fitness to Practise: A Guide for UK Providers of Veterinary Nursing Education and Student Veterinary Nurses* is still available to download from the publications section of our website:**
www.rcvs.org.uk/publications.

The two-part guide is aimed at both higher/further education institutions and student veterinary nurses. The first section gives guidance to education institutions on how they can recognise fitness to practise issues and address them appropriately, while the second part sets out the principles of behaviour for student veterinary nurses covering areas such as use of social media.



Consulting the professions on Schedule 3

Survey launched next year

Next year we will be commissioning a survey in which we will be asking the veterinary professions for their thoughts on reforming Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act, which allows veterinary surgeons to delegate medical treatment and minor surgery to veterinary nurses.

One of the key recommendations of the *VN Futures Report and Action Plan* published this summer (see pages 6 & 7) was that the role of veterinary nurses with regard to delegated tasks would be bolstered and clarified via a reformed Schedule 3. This was an area of change that came out strongly when the VN Futures Action Group was consulting the profession earlier this year as part of its preliminary research for the report.

“The position of the VN profession was also compared with its counterparts abroad and the legal technicalities of reforming the Schedule were considered.”

The Veterinary Nurses Schedule 3 Working Party, which is leading on this recommendation, had its first meeting in September to look at how the Schedule and its associated guidance might be revised. The meeting began with an overview of the history of the VN profession and the development and expansion of Schedule 3 since it was introduced in 2002.

During the meeting the position of the VN profession was also compared with its counterparts abroad and the legal technicalities of reforming the Schedule were considered.

By the end of the meeting it was decided that a survey should be commissioned to determine the appetite amongst both the veterinary nurse and veterinary professions for reforming Schedule 3 and to establish the current factors that discourage vets from delegating appropriate work to their nursing staff.

It is hoped the research will be carried out early next year (2017) after which the Working Party will reconvene to consider the best way forward.

To view our current guidance on delegation to veterinary nurses, please visit www.rcvs.org.uk/delegation

Low country for VNs

Qualifications Manager gives talk to Dutch regulator

On 11 and 12 November, Lily Lipman RVN, our Qualifications Manager, attended the National Veterinary Conference in the Netherlands, held by KNMvD, the regulator of the Dutch veterinary profession.

She was asked to present for 45 minutes on topics such as the development of the veterinary nursing profession in the UK, the role of UK veterinary nurses and the difference between a veterinary technician and a veterinary nurse. The audience consisted of both

veterinary surgeons and veterinary assistants – who are roughly the equivalent of UK veterinary nurses in terms of role, training and expertise.

Lily said: "I was very pleased to speak at the KNMvD conference, and it facilitated some very interesting discussions regarding the veterinary nursing professions both in the UK and in the Netherlands. The RCVS strives to keep our professional regulations relevant and fit for purpose, and it was a pleasure to share this experience with our European colleagues."

To OSCE or not to OSCE...

RCVS representatives at annual VETNNET conference

Julie Dugmore, our Director of Veterinary Nursing, and Victoria Hedges, our Examinations Manager, both co-hosted workshops at the 2016 Veterinary European Transnational Network for Nursing Education and Training (VETNNET) conference in Vilnius, Lithuania from 22 to 23 September.

Their interactive workshops addressed OSCE-based systems for teaching and/or assessment, aimed both at those delegates already using OSCEs and those currently using other systems.

The conference saw experts from around the world discussing some of the largest issues facing educators

today, such as: the importance of teaching staff being able to understand and communicate digital skills; the professional relationship between veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses; and reviewing and developing the Pan-European Practical Assessment System (PEPAS), an OSCE examination system available to all VETNNET members.

Next year's conference will be held in Cambridge from 21 to 22 September where there will be ample opportunity to review the newly developed PEPAS system, which will be of particular interest to awarding organisations and higher education institutions when developing their own OSCE systems.

European accreditations

November visit from ACOVENE

The Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education (ACOVENE), a voluntary organisation to accredit veterinary nurse education programmes in the European Union (EU), recently visited the College as part of its ongoing auditing process.

The College has been affiliated with ACOVENE, which is recognised and endorsed by the Federation of Companion Animal Veterinary Associations, since 2010 and, by virtue of the fact that we regulate veterinary nursing education, so too are all higher and further education institutions offering training in the UK.

Veterinary schools in Italy, Belgium, Norway, Portugal and the Netherlands, as well as the Veterinary Council of Ireland, are also ACOVENE-accredited.

Veterinary nurses graduating from ACOVENE-accredited programmes have attained a standard of knowledge and skills which are recognised by all affiliated institutions, and accreditation therefore allows for greater mobility of veterinary nurses within the EU.

As a further step in the auditing process a representative from ACOVENE will accompany Lily Lipman, our Qualifications Manager, on some centre and training practice audits during 2017.

Focusing on the mind

Update on latest MMI activities

2016 has been an exciting second year for the Mind Matters Initiative – Project Director Lizzie Lockett spoke at the Association of American Medical Colleges' Wellbeing Summit in Colorado in November, while Chair Neil Smith spoke at the European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine's Congress in Gothenburg, Sweden, in September. They've also presented at a joint Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS) and Veterinary Practice Management Association (VPMA) HR day, as well as to recent graduates.

SPVS Wellbeing Award

The deadline for the first year of the SPVS/MMI Wellbeing Award has now passed, with the winner to be announced at the SPVS/VPMA Congress in January.

You can still see how your practice stacks up wellbeing-wise by completing the Wellbeing Audit:

www.spvs.org.uk/wellbeing

Mental health for managers

We are about to trial a new one-day 'mental health for managers' course in conjunction with VPMA. Following any necessary updates, we aim to roll it out in each of the VPMA's CPD regions during 2017.

VPMA members, as well as vets and nurses within reasonable travelling distance will be invited by email. If you are a practice manager not covered by those groupings, please email Lizzie to be added to the list (lizzie@vetmindmatters.org).

Mental health awareness courses

We have run a series of popular mental health awareness (MHA) courses in conjunction with the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA). We are also supporting two MHA sessions at the veterinary schools and are providing an MHA session for the Association of Veterinary Students welfare reps.

Northern Ireland Peer Support trial

We are funding a trial of a peer support programme in Northern Ireland which could be a model of support for elsewhere in the UK. The project is chaired by former RCVS President Des Thompson.

Feeling mindful?

Registrations are now open for our second series of mindfulness webinars. The eight one-hour webinars, hosted by The Webinar Vet, teach mindfulness techniques to reduce stress and improve wellbeing.

The series costs £40, or £200 for a ten-person practice ticket, and you can sign up at www.thewebinarvet.com/mindfulness17RCVS (prices exclude VAT).

International Virtual Congress

We are delighted to once again be taking part in the Webinar Vet's International Virtual Congress, on 20 January 2017, from 7–9pm. Neil Smith will chair a series of free sessions focusing on resilience.

You can register at:

www.theinternationalwebinarvet.com/stream/rcvs-pre-congress-day

Inaugural Research Symposium

Our first MMI Research Symposium, 'Understanding and supporting veterinary mental health', will take place at the University of Edinburgh on 20 January 2017.

A call for submissions from those keen to do short talks or present posters is now open. For more information or to register, please see www.rcvs.org.uk/MMIsymposium

Out and about...

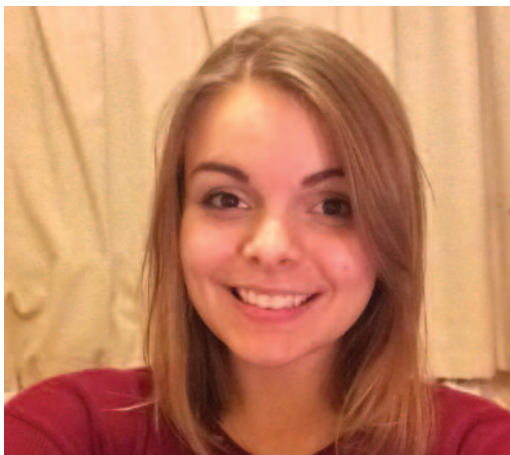
We are supporting lectures at the upcoming SPVS/VPMA Congress and the British Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress, and we recently ran a wellbeing competition at the London Vet Show. Visitors to our stand submitted their social media tips using the hashtag **#wellbeingtip**, with the winning tip, from practice manager and ex-veterinary nurse Emma Smith, being: 'Pack (lunch), plan, and praise!'



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

Meet the new team member

Emily Dilworth, VN Pre-registration Assessment Officer



decision to them, and help them on their way to registering with us.

I also help develop the Pre-Registration OSCE exam which runs three times a year in February, June and October. I help prepare the tasks before the exam and then afterwards record the candidates' marks and format their letters to let them know whether they have passed or not. I have also taken over from Claire O'Leary as the ACOVENE Secretary. We are still in the transition process for this role but I am looking forward to getting more involved in our work with our European colleagues and partners.

What is your professional background?

My professional background is indeed a short one as this is my first job since graduating earlier this year on 14 July. Prior to this I worked for the Leicester University Theatre Society as their secretary and then their president.

What is your interest in animal health and welfare?

My interest in animal health and welfare extends to my personal life also, as I only use cosmetics that are cruelty-free. I also have two little cats called Richard and Louis who try to wake me up at around 5am each day.

What is your role and what does it entail?

On 8 August 2016 I began working for the Veterinary Nursing Department as their Pre-Registration Assessment Officer. In my role I work closely with Victoria, the Examinations Manager, to help overseas qualified veterinary nurses. When a nurse who has obtained a qualification overseas wants to come and work in the UK they send their application to me and I process it before passing it on to be assessed. Once it has been assessed I then convey the assessor

Who does what in the VN Department

Julie Dugmore

Director of Veterinary Nursing

Annette Amato

*Deputy Head of Veterinary Nursing,
Secretary to VN Council*

Victoria Hedges

Examinations Manager

Chloe Baxter

Initial VN registrations

Claire O'Leary

Centre approvals and monitoring

Nimrah Syed

*Student enrolments and
careers advice*

Lily Lipman

*Accreditation and quality
monitoring for VN qualifications*

Emily Dilworth

*VN pre-registration support,
Secretary to ACOVENE*

Jenny Soreskog-Turp

*Continuing professional
development and Professional
Development Record support*

Catherine Phillips

DipAVN External Quality Assurer

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