

Quality assured

*European recognition for
VN accreditation process*



In this issue: Schedule 3 case studies, PSP policy, Graduate Outcomes, ENQA accreditation, post-registration qualifications, RCVS Honours & Awards, Veterinary Nurses Day, interview with student accreditation panel member, ACOVENE events, RCVS and Brexit, BVNA Congress report, Mind Matters update, meet the new team members, overseas exam dates

Navigating Schedule 3

Handy case studies published



This summer we published a series of practical case studies to help veterinary nurses and student veterinary nurses better understand and navigate their way through the implications of Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act and how it applies in practice.

The case studies were developed by the RCVS Standards Committee working with our Veterinary Nursing Department and Advice Team, with the aim of tackling some of the confusion that exists for both veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons about the legal framework contained in Schedule 3.

The Schedule sets out, in broad terms, that certain tasks and procedures can be delegated by a veterinary surgeon to veterinary nurses and student veterinary nurses. As a recent consultation on the profession's understanding of Schedule 3 revealed,

the framework is not without its ambiguities and our Legislation Working Party is currently considering changes to veterinary legislation in the round, including Schedule 3.

In the meantime, the published series of case studies is intended to provide clarification about the requirements of the current Schedule 3 exemption for veterinary nurses and student veterinary nurses and we recommend they are read in conjunction with Chapter 18 ('Delegation to veterinary nurses') of the supporting guidance to the *Code of Professional Conduct*.

“The published series of case studies is intended to provide clarification about the requirements of the current Schedule 3 exemption.”

The nine published case studies cover a variety of areas including supervision of student veterinary nurses, first and second vaccinations, microchipping dogs, veterinary nurses and dentistry, procedures involving entry into body cavities and prescribing decisions.

The case studies can be read in full at: www.rcvs.org.uk/schedule3cases

For further advice on Schedule 3 or any aspect of the *Code of Professional Conduct* or its supporting guidance, please contact the RCVS Standards and Advice Team on advice@rcvs.org.uk or 020 7202 0789.

Helping VNs back into practice

Changes to PSP policy

At the July meeting of VN Council, members introduced a pilot of a new Period of Supervised Practice (PSP) exemption policy.

The purpose of the PSP currently is to provide an opportunity for veterinary nurses who have taken more than a 5-year break from the Register, to refresh their skills before re-joining. However, it was noted that some nurses remove themselves from the UK Register whilst still working as a veterinary nurse outside of the United Kingdom.

These nurses will therefore be less likely to need their knowledge updating, before re-joining the UK Register. It was emphasised that this exemption should only

occur for VNs who had not been registered due to working abroad. The amendment therefore states that any nurses applying to re-join the Register will be considered for exemption subject to providing substantial evidence that their nursing experience overseas was similar to that which is expected in the UK.

Nurses would be required to provide a portfolio of evidence, including CPD records. These applicants must have been employed as a veterinary nurse (including some clinical aspects) for at least two out of the five years that they have been off the UK Register.

For more information contact Annette Amato, Deputy Head of Veterinary Nursing, on a.amato@rcvs.org.uk

Graduate Outcomes consultation

The future of vet education

At this year's London Vet Show in November we launched an ambitious consultation asking for views that would help shape the future of veterinary education, and therefore of the veterinary surgeon profession, for years to come.

The Graduate Outcomes consultation grew out of the joint RCVS and British Veterinary Association (BVA) Vet Futures research project, which found a mismatch between the expectations of vet graduates and the reality of veterinary practice.

“Veterinary nurses will be working closely with these ‘future vets’ and so their views on how they are educated, the kinds of skills they develop and how they are mentored and supported into clinical practice will be very useful.”

The consultation, which is being carried out on our behalf by the Work Psychology Group, encompasses four key areas: the current Day-one Competences for veterinary surgeons; the Professional Development Phase; extra-mural studies and clinical education for general practice.

Julie Dugmore, our Director of Veterinary Nursing, said: “Although this consultation is specifically about the future of how veterinary surgeons are educated, it is important that the views of veterinary nurses and other members of the veterinary team are taken into



account. Veterinary nurses will be working closely with these ‘future vets’ and so their views on how they are educated, the kinds of skills they develop and how they are mentored and supported into clinical practice will be very useful.”

We have also produced a video about the consultation which includes an interview with Racheal Marshall, Chair of Veterinary Nurses Council, explaining why veterinary nurses, as crucial members of the vet team, should respond.

Veterinary nurses who wish to respond to the consultation can do so by visiting: <https://app.keysurvey.co.uk/f/1362396/82a2/>. Please make sure to set aside enough time to complete the consultation.

Keeping clients informed

New case studies released

In October we published a series of case studies to aid veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons regarding the important issue of how best to gain informed consent from clients for procedures and treatments, as well as advice on the best ways of communicating with clients.

The case studies were developed by our Standards Committee, which includes veterinary nurse representation, and use a variety of examples of where there has been miscommunication between a client and the veterinary practice or practitioner that can lead

to an inadequate level of consent being gained for procedures and treatments, including euthanasia.

The case studies follow the Standards Committee approving changes to chapter 11 (‘Communication and consent’) of the supporting guidance to the *Code of Professional Conduct* in January 2018 to give further advice on how to discuss informed consent with clients, who can be responsible for gaining consent for a procedure and additional guidance on consent forms.

To view the case studies visit www.rcvs.org.uk/informed-consent

Putting the quality in QA

RCVS achieves European recognition

In November we were delighted to announce that the RCVS received recognition from the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (also known as ENQA), a pan-European association which accredits organisations which themselves quality assure higher education institutions and degrees.

ENQA undertook a visitation to the RCVS in April this year after we applied for recognition from the association in respect of our accreditation of both veterinary nursing and veterinary surgeon education. During the visitation the ENQA panel undertook a review of our structure and governance, our procedures and policies relating to how we accredit veterinary nursing and veterinary education, the independence of the accreditation process and how accreditation decisions are scrutinised.

The report, published in November, highlighted some of the key strengths of the RCVS that the ENQA visitation panel found, including dedicated and experienced staff and committee/ panel members; a great awareness of the importance of quality assurance; excellent relationships with key stakeholders with active communication of activities and achievements.

The report also found some areas for improvement including further alignment of the accreditation

processes for veterinary nursing and veterinary degrees to achieve greater consistency; the development of a comprehensive quality assurance policy; and adopting a greater and more diverse pool of accreditors, particular for veterinary nursing degrees.

“We are already putting into place some of the recommendations made by the ENQA panel, for example, widening the pool of expert visitors for accreditation of veterinary nursing degree programmes.”

In respect of the last point, the Veterinary Nursing Department has already made significant changes to the composition of the VN accreditation panels to ensure that student veterinary nurses, among others, are better represented. See page 8 for an interview with one of our new student veterinary nurse accreditation panel members.

Professor Susan Dawson, Chair of our Education Committee, commented: “We are delighted that the College has been accredited by ENQA on its first application for recognition – something that is apparently quite a rare occurrence!

Post-registration qualifications

Plans continue to be developed

The College’s plans to develop a new set of post-registration qualifications for veterinary nurses are continuing to develop in consultation with the profession, higher education institutions and awarding organisations.

Earlier this year we held a public consultation on our proposals to develop two new post-registration qualifications for veterinary nurses to replace the Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing. These new qualifications would be a Graduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing and a Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing.

These new qualifications grew out of the joint RCVS and British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) VN Futures project in which it became apparent that there was frustration amongst veterinary nurses regarding a

lack of career prospects and progression, including a lack of opportunity to undertake qualifications in areas of advanced skills and knowledge.

Around 1,160 people responded to the consultation and, since the consultation closed in August, our Post-registration Qualification Working Party has been busy collating the feedback and making the appropriate changes to the proposals.

The latest draft of the proposals was recently discussed at a meeting in late October with representatives from higher education institutions and awarding organisations that provide veterinary nursing qualifications.

Julie Dugmore, RCVS Director of Veterinary Nursing, explains: “We had a very positive meeting with these representatives who gave some very detailed and

"We did a lot of preparation for ENQA's visit earlier this year and appreciate the thoroughness with which they looked at the College, its structure, how it works and the way in which we accredit higher education institutions.

"What the visitation demonstrated was just how useful it is to have a completely fresh set of eyes on how we do things and we are glad that, though areas for improvement were certainly found, the overall impression they had of the College was professional, thorough and dedicated, with a strong ethos on the importance of quality assurance.

"We are already putting into place some of the recommendations made by the ENQA panel, for example, widening the pool of expert visitors for accreditation of veterinary nursing degree programmes and closer integration and consistency between our processes for accrediting veterinary and veterinary nursing degrees.

"I would like to thank all the RCVS Council and committee members, as well as staff who gave up their time to talk to the ENQA panel and particularly our Education and Veterinary Nursing Teams who spent a great deal of time and effort preparing for the visit."

A copy of the full ENQA report can be downloaded from www.rcvs.org.uk/enqa

practical feedback with where improvements could be made to our current set of proposals.

"As a result of this feedback we will be making a number of changes to the current iteration of the proposals, including beefing up the accreditation standards, removing the synoptic assessment, inclusion of an end-point assessment that draws upon all the skills and knowledge within the programme and removing a prescriptive list of learning outcomes.

"We will now be discussing the final draft of the proposals at our next Post-registration Working Group meeting in January and hope to have the courses ready for roll out next year."

For more details about the original proposals visit www.rcvs.org.uk/consultations

CPD audit

VN compliance rates

This year, we held our ninth annual audit of a sample of veterinary nurses' CPD records. The aim of this audit was to enable us to evaluate compliance with our set requirement to complete 45 hours CPD over a three-year period, as well as to raise awareness of the obligations set out in the Code of Professional Conduct. The audit sample included 1,016 RVNs who were categorised into various groups. For this audit, veterinary nurses were asked to either grant the RCVS permission to view their online PDR records, or to send photocopies of their CPD records for a required period.

The overall response rate for the 2018 audit was 91%, with responses received from 922 veterinary nurses. Some of those who responded have now voluntarily removed their names from the Register.

It is important for all veterinary nurses to keep up with CPD requirements, and to find a manageable way to incorporate CPD into their working lives whilst maintaining wellbeing. CPD can take on many forms, and is pivotal to maintaining growth and learning over a nurse's career. If support is required, the RCVS is happy to answer any questions and provide assistance where possible.

Tribute to Council member

Research grants launch next year

Next year, the Mind Matters mental health initiative will be launching the Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grants, named after a member of RCVS Council who tragically passed away in October of last year, shortly after becoming a Council member.

One £20,000 grant will be awarded each year for five years starting in 2019 (making a total of £100,000 by 2023) to help fund research focusing on mental health and wellbeing within the veterinary professions, including veterinary nursing, looking at areas such as prevention, diagnosis, intervention and treatment. Further information about the research grants and how to apply for them will be released in early 2019. Researchers who wish to have an initial discussion about the grants should contact Lisa Quigley, the Mind Matters Initiative Manager, on l.quigley@rcvs.org.uk.

Further information about the Mind Matters Initiative is available at www.vetmindmatters.org

Stand up and be counted

Nominations open for VNC

Nominations are now being invited from all veterinary nurses who are eligible to stand for election to become a member of Veterinary Nurses (VN) Council in next year's election.

VN Council recently agreed changes to its governance and composition, reducing the number of elected members from eight to six and introducing new appointed veterinary nurse, veterinary surgeon and lay members. Another key change is that the term of office for VN Council members has been reduced from four to three years and the same three-term limit also applies. These changes also meant that no VN Council election was held last year.

The nomination period to put yourself forward as a candidate for VN Council runs until **5pm on Thursday 31 January 2019**. In order to stand, candidates will need to complete a nomination form, submit a short biography and personal statement and supply a high resolution digital photo.

The election period will start around mid-March and run until **5pm on Friday 26 April 2019**. Ballot papers and emails with a secure link to a unique voting website will be sent to all registered veterinary nurses who are eligible to vote. Furthermore, prior to the launch of the election period, the College will be



sourcing questions from members of the profession to put to the candidates, who will be asked to produce a video giving their responses to two questions of their choice. These videos will be published at the start of the election.

Nomination forms, guidance notes and frequently asked questions for prospective VN Council candidates are available at www.rcvs.org.uk/vncouncil19.

Prospective candidates for VN Council are welcome to contact the Registrar, Eleanor Ferguson (e.ferguson@rcvs.org.uk) and the Director of Veterinary Nursing Julie Dugmore (j.dugmore@rcvs.org.uk) for more information about the role of the College and VN Council members.

Simply the best

RCVS Honours and Awards 2019

Nominations are now open for the RCVS Honours and Awards 2019, in which we encourage members of the profession to think about those individuals that they know and work with and alongside who far exceed expectations and deserve to be recognised for it.

The Honours and Awards recognise a breadth of achievement across the veterinary world, encompassing veterinary nurses, veterinary surgeons and laypeople who contribute to the health and welfare of animals, to the veterinary professions or to public health.

This year nominations for six awards can be made: the Queen's Medal for veterinary surgeons; the Golden Jubilee Award for veterinary nurses; the Honorary Associateship for lay people; and the RCVS International, Impact and Inspiration Awards which are open to both veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons.

Further details about each of the awards, including the

nomination process, eligibility criteria and the evidence needed to process a nomination, can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/honours. On the same webpage we have also published a video featuring interviews with the recipients of the 2018 Honours and Awards, recorded at Royal College Day – our Annual General Meeting and awards ceremony – in July 2018. Among those interviewed is Rachel Wright who trained as a veterinary nurse in the UK and went on to found the Tree of Life for Animals (or TOLFA) animal hospital in Rajasthan, India in 2005.

The deadline for making a nomination is **Friday 18 January 2019** and nominations can be made via our online-only webform or by downloading and emailing or posting an application form.

If you have any queries about any aspect of making a nomination please contact Peris Dean, RCVS Executive Assistant, on p.dean@rcvs.org.uk.

A special occasion

Veterinary Nurses Day at London Zoo

We celebrated the achievements and importance of the veterinary nursing profession in November with our inaugural Veterinary Nurses Day at ZSL London Zoo. This day was held to welcome new VNs onto the Register and recognise those achieving additional qualifications, as well as celebrating the long service of some in the profession.

We normally host two admissions ceremonies each year, at which newly registered veterinary nurses, as well as registered veterinary nurses that have completed their Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (DipAVN), are invited to attend to celebrate their hard work and accomplishments with their friends and family. This year it was formalised as Veterinary Nurses Day and consisted of three ceremonies with the nurses, along with their guests, being invited to spend part of the day enjoying the zoo's grounds.

“As veterinary nurses you are a vital part of the veterinary team.”

For Racheal Marshall, who became Chair of Veterinary Nurses Council in July 2018, this was her first official event in the role and she led the newly registered nurses through their professional declarations. The ceremony was presided over by the President of the RCVS, Amanda Boag, who presented each new veterinary nurse with their scroll and welcomed them to the profession. Around 200 veterinary nurses



collected their scrolls, as well as 16 RVNs who had achieved their DipAVNs. The next set of VN ceremonies will be held in May and October 2019.

Speaking at the event Racheal Marshall said: “It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome you all here today, celebrating your achievements and taking your declarations to join the RCVS Register of Veterinary Nurses, for those of you who are new to our profession. The title of veterinary nurse is one to be very proud of. As veterinary nurses you are a vital part of the veterinary team, working alongside your colleagues to ensure the health and welfare of your patients, and supporting clients in what can sometimes be very difficult and emotional decisions.”

The next set of VN ceremonies will be held in May and October 2019.

Teaching everyday leadership

VNs encouraged to sign-up

We have now launched the fully developed version of our Edward Jenner Veterinary Leadership Programme, an online course focusing on developing leadership in the veterinary professions that is hosted on the FutureLearn digital education platform.

The programme is part of the wider RCVS Leadership Initiative, launched this April at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress in Birmingham, and inspired by the College's joint Vet Futures project with the British Veterinary Association (BVA). The overall aim is to integrate development of leadership skills into veterinary professionals' continuing education.

The Edward Jenner Veterinary Leadership Programme runs as a MOOC (massive open online course) and is the result of a collaboration between the RCVS and the NHS Leadership Academy. By adopting a range of conventional and innovative teaching techniques, the course aims to emphasise the importance of leadership by helping to foster the range of skills that underpin it. This includes building confidence around the everyday aspects of leadership, such as the active application of decision-making, growing resilience, implementing an inclusive culture and encouraging reflective learning approaches.

To find out more about the course and how to sign up visit: www.rcvs.org.uk/leadership

The student voice

Diversifying our accreditation panels

Last year we made changes to the composition of our accreditation panels which are responsible for accrediting and re-accrediting veterinary nursing courses at further and higher education institutions across the UK.

One of the key changes we made, as recommended by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (or ENQA), was to introduce student veterinary nurse representatives to be a core part of our accreditation panels. The rationale is that they would bring additional and different perspectives to the accreditation process, to be able to talk more easily to students (who are normally interviewed as part of the accreditation/ re-accreditation process) and take the 'student-eye' view of the courses and how they are working.

In this feature the RCVS has interviewed Rosalind Brown, one of those recently appointed to be a student veterinary nurse accreditation panel member, to find out why she decided to apply, what the role entails and what inspires her.

Why did you want to sign up to be a panel member?

This being my final year studying for my BSc in Veterinary Nursing at the Royal Veterinary College, I wanted to seize as many opportunities as I could. I received an email from our course lecturer about becoming a student representative and my ambition is to make a difference in my profession, which I have a lot of passion for and I felt this was a perfect opportunity.

How have you found the process of applying to become a student accreditation panel member?

It was a little tricky as I had to do a bit of reading and applying my skills, but it was well worth the end result.

I'm really enjoying the role so far, I get to visit a lot of universities and get an insight into the training of the veterinary nurses of the future.

Do you think it's worthwhile? If so, why?

I feel very valued and I feel like my presence allows for very informative feedback. I feel that students are more likely to talk to me about any issues or things they want to bring to the accreditation panel's attention and I think it is also easier for me to place myself in their shoes when looking at the facilities and services used by the students as well.

What kind of views do you feel you can bring to these panels, as a student, that other members cannot?

I think I can view a course from a student perspective and think of how I would feel studying the course. I also feel that students feel a lot more at ease when discussing their institutions with me and can open up more in the presence of a fellow student who's doing the same thing as them.

What are you up to at the moment and what are your career aspirations?

I qualified as a registered veterinary nurse in July 2018. I'm now currently studying BSc Veterinary Nursing at the Royal Veterinary College. Whilst I am studying I am also locumming part time at the RVC's Queen Mother Hospital for Animals in Potters Bar, Hertfordshire in its theatre department.

I'm also student representative for my year at the RVC and Veterinary Nursing President of the Interprofessional Club. This is an unfunded club which strives to bring veterinary nursing students and veterinary students together to learn about mutual subjects so that they start both professions working together from an early stage. The hope is that this will improve communication in the workplace and that it also allows for improved student mixing within the RVC.

I am also a Student Learning Technologist, which means I help capture lectures and ensure that they are recorded and can be accessed by students at a later date.

My lifelong goal would be to own a practice, this may take many years and a lot of dedication but I believe with hard work it can be achieved to help set a precedent for nurses everywhere.

What would you say to encourage other people to nominate themselves as student VN accreditation panel members?

I would say that you get to visit a lot of universities and see what they are offering students and you can also meet some very well-known people within veterinary nursing and have an adventure into new cities too.

It is also valuable experience if you want to influence future members of the profession and get an insight into what is involved in ensuring the highest quality education for SVNs.

Gilding the Lily

Farewell to Qualls Manager

Our Veterinary Nursing Qualifications Manager, Lily Lipman, has decided to leave the Veterinary Nursing Department and make her way exactly one floor upstairs to become the Senior Manager for the Practice Standards Scheme – the first veterinary nurse to hold that position.

She will now be concentrating on her PSS work, taking the lead on managing the Scheme, developing future strategic plans for the PSS, overseeing Lead Assessors and working closely with the Scheme's stakeholders. Lily has thoroughly enjoyed working within the Veterinary Nursing Department and will be known to many people in the veterinary nursing education sector for her dedication to quality assurance and dry wit. We will miss her but we are delighted for her on her new role.

We're hiring!

New qualifications officers sought

We are currently looking for two registered veterinary nurses to join the Veterinary Nursing Department team as qualification officers for further education and higher education veterinary nurse training respectively.

Candidates will need to be highly organised, motivated and dynamic in order to facilitate and support the accreditation and quality monitoring of those institutions delivering veterinary nursing qualifications.

Although the primary base for applicants will be our headquarters at Belgravia House, successful applicants will need to travel regularly and some overnight stays will be required.

Both are full time roles and applicants should forward their CV and covering letter to Julie Dugmore, Director of Veterinary Nursing, at j.dugmore@rcvs.org.uk.

The closing date for applications is Sunday 23 December 2018, with interviews taking place on Tuesday 8 and Thursday 10 January 2019.

How to apply and what's needed

If you are a student veterinary nurse or have recently qualified and want to become a student veterinary nurse representative on the accreditation panels then you should contact Julie Dugmore, Director of Veterinary Nursing at the RCVS, for an initial discussion on j.dugmore@rcvs.org.uk.

The job description and person specification are available on request and applicants must also submit a skills analysis, a CV and CPD details to be considered for the role. Candidates must demonstrate appropriate skills and knowledge in the relevant sector, and have no conflicts of interest with the awarding organisation or higher education institution that they are visiting.

Full details about the composition of the accreditation panels, the visitation process and the standards that these institutions are expected to meet are available in our *Awarding Organisation and Higher Education Institution Handbook* available to download from www.rcvs.org.uk/publications



Update on ACOVENE

Providing training tips in Europe

The board of the Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education (ACOVENE), which the RCVS provides the secretariat for, held its annual meeting on 14 November near Heathrow Airport.

During the board meeting, ACOVENE, a voluntary organisation founded in 2007 to accredit veterinary nurse programmes across Europe, gave re-accreditation to two veterinary nurse educational establishments – one in Italy and the other in Norway – which recently had re-accreditation visits.

A panel from ACOVENE will be also be visiting the RCVS offices on 12 December this year to audit the College's quality assurance policies and procedures.

The board also decided that, in 2019, ACOVENE will embark upon a review of its accreditation policies, procedures and dossier of competences (which outline the skills and knowledge student VNs should have developed by the time they finish the course) to ensure they align with best standards. A member of Veterinary Nurses Council will take part in the review.

CPD training in Eastern Europe

Through ACOVENE the RCVS has also been involved

in helping to provide training for veterinary nurses/ technicians in the wider Eastern European region. Lily Lipman, RCVS Qualifications Manager, and Matthew Rendle, Vice-Chair of RCVS Veterinary Nurses Council, recently attended the East European Regional Veterinary Conference (EERVVC) in Croatia on behalf of ACOVENE to give lectures on general nursing, infection control, theatre practice and professional communication.

The lectures were interspersed with practical sessions of barrier nursing and bandages and between 30 and 50 delegates attended the sessions, including some veterinary surgeons. Lily Lipman commented: "The feedback on the day was fantastic, with the vets and technicians all taking different points away with them in order to progress their own practice.

"Following on from the successful Croatian trip, both Matt and I then delivered a nursing stream at the Association for Veterinary Medicine for Companion Animals conference in Romania in November, where we had an equally good reception. It was great to meet some of our colleagues working in Eastern Europe and we hope to continue to strengthen this relationship."

You can find out more about ACOVENE by visiting its website on www.acovene.org

RCVS and Brexit

College continues its preparations

Over recent months the College has continued to work with colleagues and stakeholders in the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to ensure that the veterinary professions and sector are adequately prepared for the UK leaving the European Union in March 2019.

Recent developments include the publication of a policy paper and statement on a 'no-deal' Brexit, the approval of the role of Certification Support Officers and advising the profession on potential changes to pet travel, particularly if there is a 'no-deal' Brexit. In September the College published a position paper in which it called upon the UK Government to avoid a 'no-deal' Brexit at all costs because of its potential risks to animal welfare and public health due to the impact on the veterinary workforce.

With around 1,000 vets who graduated in the non-UK EU joining the Register every year, EU graduates play a

key role across all sectors of the veterinary profession including clinical practice, academia, research and, most notably, public health where around 95% of employees are from non-UK EU countries. Because a 'no-deal' Brexit would create uncertainties around the status of those EU vets and veterinary nurses currently working in the UK as well as increasing the demands for the profession around the certification of animal products for export, the RCVS concluded that a 'no-deal' scenario could risk lowering the animal health and welfare standards of the UK.

Related to this was the fact that, at its November meeting, RCVS Council approved proposals from the Animal Plant and Health Agency, part of DEFRA, for a new role of Certification Support Officers which would assist veterinary surgeons in their role of signing of animal products for export due to increased demand after Brexit.

For more information about the College's Brexit Principles and recent developments visit www.rcvs.org.uk/brexit

BVNA Congress success

Activity book well received

The RCVS stand at BVNA Congress was a huge hit, with many veterinary nurses attending to have a chat with members of our Veterinary Nursing Department, find out about our current VN-related project work and play our professionalism-themed game on the stand.

Particularly popular was the VN activity and mindfulness books, the brainchild of the creative minds in our Communications and Veterinary Nursing Departments and which were handed out as a free mindfulness and wellbeing aid with word searches, a miniature version of our professionalism game, a timeline of the history of the profession and a spot the badge game.

The book is still available to anyone who would like take a moment in their day to unwind and is available by contacting Chloe Baxter, RCVS Events Officer, on c.baxter@rcvs.org.uk.



Big plans for Mind Matters

Initiative receives additional funding

Our Mind Matters Initiative is going from strength to strength, with RCVS Council confirming additional funding from the current £200k to £250k per year and confirmation that it would continue to be funded on a rolling three-year basis.

Also launched this summer was the third iteration of the Wellbeing Awards, which acknowledge practices that go above-and-beyond in their focus on employee wellbeing. The deadline for these awards, which are run in partnership with the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS), has now passed but we will be announcing the winners at the joint SPVS and Veterinary Management Group Congress in January. Overall the awards are a fantastic way of promoting, showcasing and celebrating all of the fantastic work that is going on across the country, in the name of positive mental health.

Innovation works

ViVet events in 2019

Now in its second year the RCVS ViVet innovation project is hitting the ground running with various workshops coming up in the New Year.



The year will start with innovation workshops which will support the project's aim to accelerate innovation in the veterinary space. These workshops,

titled 'Turning ideas into innovation', will be led by veterinary innovators Greg Dickens and Guen Bradbury and take place on Wednesday 16 January 2019 and Wednesday 20 February 2019. Here, they will introduce tools and techniques to help individuals and organisations think creatively and guide participants through the innovation process, and help the veterinary professions to realise the potential of ideas and introduce ways to improve the quality, efficacy or accessibility of the services they offer.

You can sign up to attend either of the sessions by visiting <https://vivetinnovationworkshop2019.eventbrite.co.uk>. Each day costs £100 but if you book to attend both days there is a £20 discount with a total cost of £180.

December will see a webinar about exercise and wellbeing, with Oliver Glackin, the manager of our Leadership Programme, and veterinary surgeon Nat Scroggie, from the well-known blog and Twitter page, [@thisvetruns](https://twitter.com/thisvetruns). The webinar is hosted by The Webinar Vet and takes place on Thursday 13 December. Go to www.thewebinarvet.com/webinar/exercise-the-key-to-wellbeing to sign up.

Also hosted by the Webinar Vet is the International Virtual Congress in January 2019 which will feature three separate Mind Matters Initiative sessions on the subject of positive thinking. On Friday 18 January Jo Stevens will deliver a talk on how to stay positive in a negative world, on Saturday 19 January Lucy Whitehall will talk about how thinking positively makes life easier and on Sunday 20 January Anne-Marie Svendsen Aylott and Sara Tai will be discussing positive mindsets and how they assist wellbeing.

Meet the new team members

Reanne McDonald, Enrolment Officer

What is your role in the Veterinary Nursing Department?

I am the Student Veterinary Nurse (SVN) Enrolment Officer. My job entails dealing with general VN queries, SVN enrolments and SVN Nursing Progress Log queries.

What is your professional background and how does it relate to your current role?

I recently graduated from the BSc Animal Science course at the University of Reading. My main interest is animal welfare and behaviour. Working for the RCVS has provided an insight into methods to ensure animal welfare.

What is your interest in animal health and welfare?

I am particularly interested in how behaviour can be used as an indicator of welfare.

What have you learned about the veterinary nursing profession since joining the team?

Since joining the VN team, I have learnt about Schedule 3 procedures, differentiation between veterinary care assistant, SVN and RVN roles and the varying routes towards becoming an RVN.

Sian Tanner, Education Officer

What is your role in the Veterinary Nursing Department?

I am an Education Officer meaning I oversee the day to day administration of all Training Practices and Colleges. I also carry out PA work to the qualifications manager for the accreditation events.

What is your professional background and how does it relate to your current role?

My professional background consists of compliance and programme administration and it has given me the knowledge to work amongst tight deadlines and to ensure all data is accurate and also in compliance with the new GDPR rules.

What is your interest in animal health and welfare?

I have loved animals since I was young, I have a huge heart for animals and enjoy learning and also creating a happy environment for them to be in.

What have you learned about the veterinary nursing profession since joining the team?

I have learnt a lot of things – I definitely didn't realise how great the impact of the RCVS is on the veterinary professions.

Upcoming OSCE dates

The dates for next year's pre-registration practical exams for overseas registrants have now been finalised.

The objectively structured clinical exams (OSCEs) need to be undertaken by prospective veterinary nurse registrants who have an overseas qualification that has not achieved full approval from the RCVS and must be undertaken and passed before they can join the Register.

All the examinations take place at Hartpury College in Gloucestershire and the dates are as follows:

- Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 March 2019
- Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 July 2019
- Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 November 2019

Any candidates undertaking the examination or interested in applying to join the Register should contact Michad Wildman, VN Pre-registration Assessment Officer, on m.wildman@rcvs.org.uk.

Who does what in the VN Department

Julie Dugmore: *Director of Veterinary Nursing*

Annette Amato: *Secretary to VN Council*

Vicky Hedges: *VN Exams Manager*

Lily Lipman: *Accreditation and quality monitoring of VN licence to practise qualifications*

Michad Wildman: *VN pre-registration examination support*

Sian Tanner: *Centre approvals and monitoring*

Reanne McDonald: *Student enrolments*

Jenny Soreskog-Turp: *Continuing professional development (CPD) and Professional Development Record (PDR) support*

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