

VN roles on the rise?

*Schedule 3 consultation
shows appetite for more
VN responsibility*



In this issue: Schedule 3 consultation and VN Futures, VN Council governance changes, new CEO, statement on complementary and alternative medicines, CPD pilot extension, 94-week requirement, accreditation team recruitment, VN Advanced Diploma, careers, Vivet, Brexit, accreditations, overseas VNs, webinars and podcasts, meetings and events, meet the team

VN Council governance changes

Refinements to size and composition approved

At the November meeting of the RCVS Council, members approved significant changes to the set-up of VN Council in order to improve its governance and available skillsets.

The key changes include:

- a shortening of the term of office for VN Council members from four years to three years;
- introducing a three-term limit for elected members with a two-year gap before they can re-stand for VN Council; and,
- reducing the size and changing the composition of VN Council to six elected veterinary nurses, two appointed veterinary nurses, two appointed veterinary surgeons and four appointed lay members.

“We hope that we can widen the pool of potential members, bring in ‘new blood’ to provide a wider range of experience and different perspectives.”

Previously, the composition of VN Council was eight elected veterinary nurses, four appointed veterinary surgeon members, and four appointed lay members.

The reduction in the number of elected veterinary nurse members means that there will be no elections to VN Council in 2018 as the outgoing members will not need to be replaced.

Liz Cox, Chair of VN Council, explained: “By making the composition of VN Council more flexible through introducing shorter terms and appointed veterinary nurses, we hope that we can widen the pool of potential members, bring in ‘new blood’ to provide a wider range of experience and different perspectives and, as a result, enhance the quality of debate and decision-making amongst the members.”



Liz Cox, Chair of VN Council

The pilot flies again

New CPD pilot approved

Would you like to help test proposed changes to continuing professional development (CPD)? We are now recruiting volunteers for an extended trial of a CPD system that focuses more on interactive, reflective learning and less on hours logged.

Our CPD Policy Working Group, which was first set up in 2015, designed these proposed changes and launched a six-week consultation on them in June 2016 - thank you to the 3,357 of you who replied!

While a majority of responders agreed overall with the proposed changes, certain elements, including the ‘reflection’ component of the cycle, received less support. Our Education Committee and VN Council therefore agreed to conduct a pilot before putting a recommendation forward to RCVS Council.

We then launched a pilot in March 2017 and feedback has been very positive. We are now extending the pilot for another six to nine months, so if you are an

RVN or a veterinary surgeon and would be interested in volunteering, please get in touch with Naila Hassanali, our Senior Education Officer, at n.hassanali@rcvs.org.uk.

If you would like more information before signing up, you can access our free webinar on the pilot via www.rcvs.org.uk/webinars.



CPD pilot volunteers at a training day in RCVS offices

Schedule for the Future

Updates on Schedule 3 review and VN Futures

In November, all the Working Groups from the VN Futures Action Group came together at the RCVS offices in London to review, update, and brainstorm about the 'future veterinary nurse'.

We joined with the BVNA to launch VN Futures in 2015, with the aim of forming a vibrant and sustainable veterinary nursing profession. After the initial research stage, six Working Groups were created to push the project forward, namely: Workforce; VN Schools Council; Post-registration; Career progression; One Health; and Increasing Training Practices.

At the recent meeting there was much to report: new career materials (see page 7), the potential for an Advanced Veterinary Nursing Practitioner status (see page 6), national coverage of smoking cessation research (see page 7), and our review of Schedule 3.



Winning Schell Scheme Award at BVNA Congress

The Schedule 3 review is particularly interesting to a wide cross section of the veterinary nursing profession and, in May 2017, we conducted a consultation to help us understand how the profession interprets Schedule 3 in everyday practice, how it could be better clarified, and how it might be amended to bolster the veterinary nursing profession.

An incredible total of 11,625 people responded (a record number for us!), of whom 6,873 were veterinary nurses (around 35% of the VN profession and including some 1,665 student veterinary nurses) and 4,752 were veterinary surgeons (around 21% of the veterinary profession). A big thank you to everyone who took the time to send us their views.

The report on the consultation highlighted many interesting factors, but presented one key message: a very high proportion of veterinary nurses (92%) and a clear majority of veterinary surgeons (71%) agreed that veterinary nurses should be able to undertake additional areas of work.

Interestingly, both veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons also indicated that confidence in their understanding of Schedule 3 was not very high. Veterinary nurses rated their personal understanding at 6.74 out of 10 and vets rated their understanding as 5.57 out of 10.

Furthermore, when asked what prevented the full utilisation of veterinary nurses, the majority of both vet nurse and vet respondents highlighted a lack of understanding of what tasks can be delegated under Schedule 3, with around 60% of veterinary surgeons also admitting that they were not good at delegating.

“We conducted a consultation to help us understand how the profession interprets Schedule 3 in everyday practice.”

While the majority of veterinary nurses (61%) thought that we gave sufficient support and advice about Schedule 3, only 50% of vets agreed with this statement. In corresponding comments, both veterinary nurses and vets said they would like more clarity, especially around 'grey areas' such as the meaning of the term 'minor surgery', as well as further communication from us about Schedule 3, and for more training for veterinary nurses to ensure they have the competence and the confidence to carry out delegated procedures.

The RCVS Schedule 3 and Legislation Working Parties are now considering the detailed results of the consultation, alongside reviewing the efficacy of the current Veterinary Surgeons Act, and determining whether changes need to be made to bring the legislative framework for the profession more up to date.

We very much look forward to the next meeting of the VN Futures Action Group, and please do make sure to keep an eye out for updates!



VN Futures Action Group meeting, 27 November 2017

Complementary medicines

New RCVS position statement

At its November meeting RCVS Council approved a new position statement on the veterinary use of complementary and alternative medicines, including homeopathy.

The statement is as follows:

"We have recently been asked questions about complementary and alternative medicines and treatments in general and homeopathy in particular.

"We would like to highlight our commitment to promoting the advancement of veterinary medicine upon sound scientific principles and to re-iterate the fundamental obligation upon our members as practitioners within a science-based profession which is to make animal welfare their first consideration.

"In fulfilling this obligation, we expect that treatments offered by veterinary surgeons are underpinned by a recognised evidence base or sound scientific principles. Veterinary surgeons should not make unproven claims about any treatments, including prophylactic treatments.

"We expect that treatments offered by veterinary surgeons are underpinned by a recognised evidence base or sound scientific principles."

"Homeopathy exists without a recognised body of evidence for its use. Furthermore, it is not based on sound scientific principles. In order to protect animal welfare, we regard such treatments as being complementary rather than alternative to treatments for which there is a recognised evidence base or which are based on sound scientific principles. It is vital to protect the welfare of animals committed to the care of the veterinary profession and the public's confidence in the profession that any treatments not underpinned by a recognised evidence base or sound scientific principles do not delay or replace those that do."

The statement comes after long-standing discussions within the veterinary community about the efficacy and ethics of complementary and alternative medicines.

We have also published a list of FAQs on the subject, which is available on our website:

www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/news/college-publishes-complementary-medicines-statement/.

Lockett got it

Lizzie Lockett appointed as new CEO

Earlier this year we were delighted to announce the appointment of Lizzie Lockett as the new CEO of the RCVS, an appointment that was confirmed by RCVS Council at its November meeting.

Lizzie first joined the College as Head of Communications in 2005 following a career in marketing and public relations, including a period as managing director of a marketing agency. During her time as communications lead, she oversaw a number of major projects including the launch of the Practice Standards Scheme in 2006; a major overhaul of the College's design and branding in 2011; the joint RCVS/British Veterinary Association Vet Futures project in 2014; and the establishment of the Mind Matters mental health initiative in 2015.

"I am delighted and feel honoured to have been chosen to take the College forward into its next stage of development."

She was appointed as Deputy CEO in September 2016, and when the previous CEO, Nick Stace, left the College for a position at the Prince's Trust in September 2017, she took over as Acting CEO. RCVS President Professor Stephen May said: "This was a very rigorous recruitment process with a very strong field of 60 candidates, so it is a testament to Lizzie's abilities and achievements that she saw off all the opposition."

Lizzie said: "I am delighted and feel honoured to have been chosen to take the College forward into its next stage of development.

"Under Nick Stace's leadership, the College achieved some really excellent things for the profession, the public, and animal health and welfare, and I look forward to our next exciting chapter."



94 weeks later...

VN Council removes 94-week requirement

On 3 May 2017, VN Council agreed to remove the 94-week requirement from the RCVS VN Registration Rules, a decision that RCVS Council subsequently ratified on 2 November.

The 94-week requirement, stipulating that veterinary nursing students must carry out an approved programme of veterinary nurse education at an approved centre lasting at least 94 weeks (equivalent to 2,990 hours), excluding annual leave and absence, was originally brought into the RCVS Registration



VN Council meeting, 3 October 2017

Rules in 2014. This was itself a change from the 1978 VN Byelaws that required students to have completed two years' training prior to application to register.

Under the current procedure it was possible for a student to have met, or indeed exceeded, the total number of required training hours but still fall short of the 'necessary' required weeks and therefore be unable to register, despite having completed an approved programme of training.

Julie Dugmore, Director of Veterinary Nursing, said: "We're very pleased to see this change go through – previously, some students essentially had to 'serve time' to make up weeks, despite having completed the required number of hours. There is no RCVS-accredited programme of training which runs for less than two academic years, and all accredited programmes must meet the RCVS criteria, as well as Ofqual or University accreditation criteria, so the 94-week criteria was ultimately redundant for the training requirements."

The VN Department is now reviewing the record of training to reflect the above change, so in the meantime students should be encouraged to complete the current form.

How are your standards?

Join the accreditation team!

Would you like to help student veterinary nurses continue to get the best possible training? You can now apply to join our accreditation team and help ensure high standards are upheld in veterinary nurse education across the UK.

Being an accreditation visitor involves around three or four days' worth of preparation time and a visit to the education institution, which lasts about a day. We will fully train you to become part of the panel that compiles an accreditation report for the VN Education Committee.

"We will fully train you to become part of the panel that compiles an accreditation report for the VN Education Committee."

We will also pay a loss of earnings allowance to your employer for any time you spend away from work on training and visits, as well as reasonable expenses. If you are interested and an SVN, or an RVN or MRCVS with five years' or more of experience in the veterinary nurse education sector, please contact Lily Lipman, our Qualifications Manager, at I.lipman@rcvs.org.uk, for more information.



Advancing the diploma

Developing a post-registration framework

The VN Futures Post-registration Group has been reviewing the current RCVS Advanced Diploma in Veterinary Nursing with a view to developing a framework that is more accessible, flexible and affordable for students and providers.

The group were keen to ensure that the new framework encompasses RVNs qualifying at all levels and with interests in all areas; clinical practice, management, education and teaching. The long-term vision is to create a clear career development path to motivate RVNs into studying at a higher level, encouraging and increasing sources of evidence-based veterinary nursing medicine and providing ambassadors to inspire the next generation.

Along with the new framework for qualifications, the group is also proposing an Advanced Veterinary Nursing Practitioner status.

VN Futures will be consulting with the profession on the new proposed framework in the New Year, so please keep an eye on your inbox.

*Dot Brighton,
Chair of the Post-
registration Group*



Take us to higher ground

Hartpury hosts Higher Education pilot

Hartpury College in Gloucester, together with a number of other higher education providers, recently hosted a pilot of the Degree Standards Project.

The Project is intended for aspiring, new or experienced examiners and aims to provide individuals with:

- an understanding of the role of the external examiner as articulated in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- development and deep understanding of the nature of academic standards and professional judgement
- the use of evidence to inform approaches to contribute to impartial, transparent judgements on academic standards and the enhancement of student learning.



Catherine Phillips, RCVS DipAVN External Quality Assurer

experience of external examining has been mixed, and this course allowed me to share experiences and challenges with colleagues both in veterinary nursing and those in other subject areas.

"I personally found the course to be very interesting, well-organised, and thought-provoking, particularly around ways to calibrate academic and professional standards.

"I would highly recommend this course to anyone who has the opportunity to attend future courses, and believe it would help us to strengthen and standardise our veterinary nursing external examiners."

"My own experience of external examining has been mixed, and this course allowed me to share experiences and challenges with colleagues."

The training was delivered via blended learning by two experienced facilitators and involved online activities, reading and a face-to-face day.

Catherine Phillips, an RCVS DipAVN External Quality Assurer who attended the pilot, said: "My own

VN Futures is smokin'

Joint media activity on smoking cessation

The VN Futures Action Group met on 27 November to consider updates from all the VN Futures working parties, namely: Workforce; VN Schools Council; Post-registration; Increasing Training Practices; Career Progression; and One Health.

The One Health Working Party had some particularly exciting media activity to report, following a press release issued jointly in October entitled: 'Is smoking killing your pet?'. The press release showcased research from the University of Glasgow which revealed how smoking can affect animals' health, causing lymphomas, cancers, or even eye, skin and respiratory diseases across different species.



Liz Cox, Chair of VN Council

This led to a flurry of interest from multiple national news outlets. BBC Breakfast called us to ask for a spokesperson, and we put forward Liz Cox, Chair of both VN Council and the VN Futures Action Group. In her segment Liz covered how pets can be at increased risk from second-hand smoke due to their grooming habits and their close proximity to their owners and encouraged owners, to think twice before smoking in front of their pets.

“The One Health Working Party had some particularly exciting media activity to report, following a press release issued jointly in October.”

BBC Radio Wales then got in touch and Liz had another interview in their Bristol studio, during which Liz suggested smoking outside when possible, and reminded dog owners that even smoking in the car on the way to a weekend walk can have an effect.

In the meantime, Wendy Preston, Head of Nursing at the Royal College of Nursing, was also invited to appear on BBC Breakfast, and explained how human-centred nurses can play a pivotal role in encouraging responsible pet ownership.

We look forward to seeing how other pieces of work from VN Futures can capture the public's interest. If you are interested in getting involved with VN Futures please do get in touch through the VN Futures website: www.vnfutures.org.uk.

Where can a VN career take you?

Case studies now available

Case studies featuring the wide range of career paths open to veterinary nurses are now available on the VN Futures website. They describe the professions of:

- Lance Corporal Lucy Hennessy who works in the Royal Army Veterinary Corps
- Susan Howarth, a Programme Manager for a veterinary nursing course
- Stuart Ford-Fennah, a Clinical Manager in a multidisciplinary veterinary referral centre
- Nimisha Patel, a veterinary nurse in a referral practice

- Hayley Walters, the Welfare and Anaesthesia Nurse at the University of Edinburgh's Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies

You can access these accounts through the VN Futures website: www.vnfutures.org.uk/vn-career-case-studies, and we are always looking for more case studies.

If you would like to submit a case study about your own work as a veterinary nurse, please contact Julie Dugmore, Director of Veterinary Nursing, at j.dugmore@rcvs.org.uk.

Keeping it flexible

Careers Progression Group meeting on flexible working

The Careers Progression Group, one of the Groups to emerge from the VN Futures Action Plan, will be holding the second of its four regional events early in 2018. It will focus on flexible working and job sharing, and is designed for employers and for VNs who manage rotas.

There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion, all aiming to help take some of the stress and worry out of leading a team, and give some reassurance and guidance.

We held the first of these regional events on 11 July in Hartpury College in Gloucester, which focused on veterinary nurses in managerial roles and on developing leadership within the team. There

were insights into managing the transition into a leadership, including avoiding that 'difficult conversation', along with practical tips on how to set up an effective and positive team development/appraisal process.

“There were insights into managing the transition into a leadership, including avoiding that ‘difficult conversation’.”

If you would like us to update you about the flexible working meeting, or would like to attend a future session, please email Claire O'Leary from the Veterinary Nursing Department on c.oleary@rcvs.org.uk.

Veterinary innovation will thrive!

ViVet programme launched to support innovation

Earlier this year we were delighted to launch ViVet, an ambitious and wide-ranging programme designed to ensure veterinary professionals are at the forefront of innovation in the animal health sector.

ViVet (derived from the Latin word 'vivet' meaning 'it will thrive') was launched at our inaugural Innovation Symposium, held at The Shard in London on Wednesday 20 September. This was an invitation-only event which brought together thought-leaders from the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions and those involved in innovative veterinary technologies or business models.

Managed by the RCVS, ViVet will provide a variety of resources and support to help the professions keep pace with change and remain at the forefront of animal healthcare provision.

At the Symposium, we also launched the ViVet website, which contains a number of resources – including blogs, case studies, and videos from the Symposium – to showcase new technologies and innovative business models.

To find out more, view the videos and reports of the symposium speakers, or to sign up to the ViVet newsletter, please visit www.vivet.org.uk.

“ViVet will provide a variety of resources and support to help the professions keep pace with change and remain at the forefront of animal healthcare provision.”

ViVet was inspired by Vet Futures, the project run jointly by the RCVS and British Veterinary Association. It identified the need for veterinary professionals to seize the opportunities offered by innovation to transform the way they work and to widen access to veterinary services.



Vet Futures student ambassadors

Brexit updates

Lobbying efforts and forecasting



Since the Brexit vote in June 2016, we have been working to create a unified voice for the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions.

We first established a Brexit Taskforce, dedicated to preparing for the risks and opportunities that Brexit may bring. The Taskforce members – a selection of staff and RCVS and VN Council members – had their first meeting in July 2016, and since then they have:

- sent a joint letter to the Prime Minister with the British Veterinary Association (BVA) (October 2016)
- conducted a survey asking for the thoughts of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses registered in the UK who studied in the EU (early 2017)
- co-hosted a 'Brexit roundtable' with the BVA at the Palace of Westminster (February 2017)
- published three Brexit Principles and associated policies (March 2017)
- called on the Prime Minister to give greater certainty around the rights of EU nationals working in the UK (June 2017)
- joined with the BVA and Defra on a project on the Veterinary Capability and Capacity Project (beginning summer 2017)
- held a Brexit webinar with the BVA (November 2017)
- contributed to a FVE Brexit negotiation plea with the BVA (November 2017)
- submitted a joint call for vets to be on the shortage occupation list to the Migration Advisory Committee's Call for Evidence with the BVA (November 2017)

Unlike veterinary surgeons, who are a sectoral profession with MRPQ (Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications), veterinary nursing qualifications from the EU are not automatically recognised by the RCVS, so they will be less affected by Brexit.

For more information and for updates on our work, please visit our Brexit page: www.rcvs.org.uk/brexit.

Taking a punt at it

Vetnet conference in Cambridge

Julie Dugmore, our Director of Veterinary Nursing, once again attended the annual conference for Vetnet, the European Association of Veterinary Nurse Educators, from 20–22 September. These annual conferences, this year hosted by UK awarding organisation VetSkill and held at Downing College, Cambridge, bring together colleges, veterinary nurse associations, accreditation bodies and anyone supporting veterinary nurse training in the workplace.

This year's theme was 'transition to clinical practice', and saw delegates enjoying a variety of lectures and workshops covering topics such as stimulating reflection in VN students, the resilient veterinary nurse, and embracing digitalisation. As well as serious CPD, there was lots of opportunity for networking, including a traditional punting tour and Gala dinner.

The Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) will be hosting next year's conference from 19 to 21 September 2018 in Galway, Ireland. Further information will be available soon at www.vetnet.com.

Regulating the regulators

ACOVENE accreditation

We are pleased to say that the Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education (ACOVENE) has reaffirmed that we are upholding their high standards of veterinary nursing training.

ACOVENE is currently the only EU-wide measure of programme content and quality for veterinary nursing training, and is recognised and supported by the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA) and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE). It is an invaluable benchmark for employers when 'veterinary nursing' is still such a fluid term across Europe; some programmes offer little more than uncertificated grooming and basic animal care, whilst others are substantial undergraduate courses established within veterinary schools.

During their 2017 review of the RCVS, the ACOVENE Board audited a centre and two training practices involved in further education, and a visitation panel accompanied Lily Lipman, our Qualifications Manager, on her quality assurance audit to observe our policies and procedures in action. Feedback, in the main, was very positive with the visitors confirming our compliance with ACOVENE criteria.

VNs from over the seas

Recognising qualifications

At its November meeting, VN Council agreed that veterinary nurses who completed their education in a Canadian Veterinary Medical Association-accredited school or a Hong Kong Polytechnic University are no longer required to submit their syllabus when they apply to have their qualification recognised for registration in the UK.

This is due to the high number of applications from veterinary nurses from these colleges, all of whom have demonstrated programmes of education similar to those undertaken in the UK. This puts them in line with veterinary nurses who have achieved a qualification in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA. Applicants from these countries are still required to sit and pass the RCVS Pre-Registration Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).

In total, 40 nurses who trained outside the UK sat the OSCE in 2017, 33 of whom passed and are now eligible to enter our VN Register.

Nurses who are intending to work in the UK are advised to make sure that they understand UK legislation, especially with tasks such as packaging samples for posting to an external laboratory.

For next year's OSCE dates, please see the article on page 12.

Rest assured

ENQA application progress

A panel from the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) will be visiting the College in April, meeting with a number of staff including CEO Lizzie Lockett, Julie Dugmore, Director of Veterinary Nursing, Christine Warman, Director of Education, and Corrie McCann, Director of Operations.

The panel will be discussing our application to join ENQA, which is in the final stages of drafting. ENQA promotes quality assurance in higher education institutions across Europe, and to become accredited we must demonstrate a consistently high quality of activity around accreditation of universities, and their programmes for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses.

ENQA accreditation will provide assurance that the RCVS accreditation processes remain of a high standard and fit for purpose for both professions.

An admittedly great ceremony

VN admissions ceremony at ZSL

On Tuesday 28 November we held a special ceremony at ZSL London Zoo to admit newly qualified veterinary nurses to the Register, and for veterinary nurses receiving a Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (DipAVNs). Two-hundred-and-twenty recently-qualified veterinary nurses made their professional declaration and were admitted onto the Register, and a further three veterinary nurses received their diplomas.

Julie Dugmore, Director of Veterinary Nursing, said: "In previous years the DipAVNs have been presented as part of the RCVS Day proceedings, but this year we decided to trial a new event concentrating solely on celebrating the achievements of veterinary nurses. This is now the second time we've had the ceremonies at ZSL, and we would like to thank them for helping put together such a memorable day."

Also present at the ceremony was Jean Green, a veterinary nurse who was retiring after over 40 years in practice. President Stephen May presented her with a scroll and thanked her for all her years of service to the profession.



Schedule 3 at BVNA Congress

Careers, mental health and nursing

We were pleased to once again exhibit at BVNA Congress this year, held from 6–8 October in Telford, and were delighted to win a BVNA award for the best shell scheme stand! Said stand had a strong Schedule 3 theme, featuring a popular game where congress attendees had to determine which tasks could be delegated to a veterinary nurse. About 200 people took part, but it wasn't as easy as it looked!

This game was designed to help raise awareness of our ongoing review of Schedule 3, which included a consultation launched in May. You can read more about the outcome of this consultation on page 3.

A Congress of minds

RCVS at the BSAVA Congress

We will once again be exhibiting at BSAVA Congress next year, held from 5–8 April 2018 at the ICC in Birmingham. We'll be at Stand 105 for the entire event, so do come and say hello!

We are also hosting a whole stream of talks on the Thursday in Hall 6, covering a number of RCVS topics:

- 8:30–10:10 - RCVS 'hot topics'
- Mind Matters Stream:
 - o 11:05–11:50 – Mind Matters Initiative: 'Maximising wellbeing at work: an evidence-based approach' with our Mind Matters Director, Lizzie Lockett, and Dr Elinor O'Connor
 - o 12:00–12:45 – Mind Matters Initiative: Blaming, excuses and mindset – how changing the way you think and speak can help change practice culture – Anne-Marie Svendsen Aylott, MRCVS

- VN Futures Stream:
 - o 14:05–14:50 – 'I'm an RVN: the future's bright, think big!' with our VN Council Chair, Liz Cox, VN Futures Action Group members Dot Creighton and Fiona Andrew, and Stephanie Writer-Davis
 - o 15:00–15:45 – 'One Health: collaboration is the name of the game' with VN Futures Action Group member Helen Ballantyne
 - o 15:50–16:35 – 'Because you're worth it: giving and getting more support, training and recognition' with VN Futures Action Group member Renay Rickard
 - o 16:40–17:25 – 'It's your career, own it' with VN Futures Action Group member Fiona Andrew

On the Friday, RCVS Knowledge, our partner charity, will also be hosting a whole day of talks. Join them in the Kingston Theatre to discuss everything from how to use evidence-based veterinary medicine in practice, to promoting a learning culture.

Casting some webs

Webinar updates and launch of a podcast

This year has seen a full schedule for RCVS webinars, all of which are available for free via The Webinar Vet.

We started in January with a webinar on 'The art of delegation – Schedule 3 consultation', and went on to cover the *RCVS Code of Professional Conduct*, the Practice Standards Scheme, overseas veterinary nurses, the Mind Matters Initiative, and Brexit, to name but a few.

The full list of webinars can be seen on our website at www.rcvs.org.uk/webinars, or accessed

for free through the Webinar Vet website at www.thewebinarvet.com/sponsors/rcvs.

Earlier this year we also launched an RCVS podcast as part of our aim to increase our channels of communication with veterinary professionals. We first interviewed President Stephen May and VN Council Chair Liz Cox about the year ahead, and have since talked to PDP Dean Shona McIntyre about how new veterinary graduates can make the most of their first year in practice. The podcast is available on iTunes and Podbean (www.rcvs.podbean.com), so please do subscribe for updates.

Awards and wellbeing

Full RCVS programme at SPVS/VPMA Congress

You can now sign up for our PSS Award Ceremony and drinks reception on the opening day of SPVS/VPMA Congress, 25 January 2018, at the Celtic Manor Resort.

Titled: 'Practice Standards Scheme – how can the new Awards work for you?', the free event is your chance to hear tips and advice from PSS Award winner, Charlotte Hartley, as well as PSS Lead Assessor, Pam Mosedale. President Stephen May will also be formally presenting PSS Awards to those practices who have achieved them over the last few months.

You can sign up now via the events page on our website: www.rcvs.org.uk/events.

On the Friday we are also hosting a Mind Matters Initiative stream, and RCVS Senior Vice President Chris Tufnell will be giving a talk on behalf of Vivet (see page 8) titled 'Disruptive Innovation & Equine Practice'.

Finally, on the Saturday, RCVS CEO Lizzie Lockett will be giving a joint talk entitled 'Learning from Excellence', with Carolyne Crowe, Richard Artingstall, Catherine Oxtoby, and Andrew Green.

Meet the new team member

Alana Hudson, Veterinary Nursing Administration Officer

What is your role in the Veterinary Nursing Department and what does it entail?

I am a Veterinary Nursing Administration Officer and I approve and process training practice updates, monitor the TP Admin inbox, and provide general support to my colleagues.

What is your professional background?

I come from a retail/customer service background, starting in a coffee shop when I was 17 before working in a sushi shop. My most recent role was as a duty manager in a busy Central London cinema, which was challenging but lots of fun!

What is your interest in animal health and welfare?

It is such a pleasure to work in an organisation that shares the same views as me, and it makes my work feel that little bit more meaningful. I sometimes look after a dog who has a blast when I bring her in to the office – what a wonderful thing to be able to do at work!

What have you learnt from working with the veterinary nursing profession?

I have learned of the amazing history behind veterinary medicine and the veterinary profession. The College is full of old books and diagrams of the anatomy of animals and animal medicine – it's inspiring and really highlights the passion and knowledge veterinary professionals hold and how far back it goes.

Without further ceremony....

Admission ceremony dates

We will be holding admission ceremonies at the College on 26 and 27 February at our offices in London.

Our Veterinary Nursing Department will send all eligible veterinary nurses an invitation. If you have any questions please contact vetnursing@rcvs.org.uk.

Let the examinations begin...

Dates for pre-registration exams

The pre-registration examination dates for 2018 have now been confirmed as: 17 and 18 February; 16 and 17 June; and 27 and 28 October. All of the examinations will be held at Hartpury College in Gloucester.

We are also holding three OSCE familiarisation days at our offices in London on 19 January, 4 April and 21 August. Those who need to undertake the RCVS pre-registration OSCE prior to entering the Register will have received an invitation to one of the events, which they can book by emailing Michad Wildman, VN Pre-registration Assessment Officer, at m.wildman@rcvs.org.uk.

You can also catch up on our webinar 'Overseas veterinary nurses – joining the UK register' for free via www.rcvs.org.uk/webinars.

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*

Michad Wildman: *VN pre-registration support, Secretary to ACOVENE*

Naila Hassanali: *Continuing professional development and Professional Development Record support*

Alana Hudson: *VN Administration Officer*

Catherine Phillips: *DipAVN External Quality Assurer*

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