

Regulatory reform – enhancing the VN role meeting

Thursday 12 November 2020, 10am
Zoom meeting

Attendees

Liz Mullineaux - Chair
Carl Bradbrook Association of Veterinary Anaesthetists
Emma Callaghan Ethics and Welfare Advisory Panel
Deidre Carson British Equine Veterinary Association
Emily Craven Policy Committee
Dot Creighton District RVN
Daniella Dos Santos BVA Senior Vice President
Amelia Findon BVA Head of Policy & Governance
Vicky Ford-Fennah - Association of Veterinary Anaesthetists (RVN)
Anna Judson Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons
Alice Moore Policy Committee
Jo Oakden British Veterinary Nursing Association (RVN)
Gudrun Ravetz - BVA representative on RCVS Legislation Working Party
Tom Reilly RVN
Charlotte Wood British Veterinary Nursing Association (RVN)

Welcome and ways of working

Schedule 3 reform

5. The RCVS VN Schedule 3 Working Party had been established in early 2016, following the . The Working Party had commissioned a survey of the professions which had found that 92% of VNs and 71% of vets agreed that VNs should be able to undertake additional areas of work that were not currently permitted under Schedule 3. The top three activities which had been identified by the survey were cat castrations, dental extractions, and other minor surgical procedures. LWP had subsequently been invited to consider expanding the role of VNs in anaesthesia and allowing VNs to undertake dental extractions and cat castrations.

Anaesthesia

6. The working group reviewed the LWP recommendation 2.1 Extending the VN role in anaesthesia (induction and maintenance, under supervision)

An enhanced role for VNs in anaesthesia should only occur where all parties involved supported it.

Lack of prescribing powers for VNs could create a delay in action if an anaesthetised patient was unstable, or in an emergency.

The principle of protocol driven anaesthesia was supported. A pre-op discussion between vet and VN would enable potential deviations from the protocol to be explored and authorised so that the VN was enabled to make changes within predefined parameters. The ideal would be VNs involved in the development of protocols, with a more patient centred and team focussed approach.

A well-run team where everyone was clear on roles and responsibilities was key to good anaesthesia outcomes.

Workforce

Lay persons were currently involved in anaesthesia monitoring, which was not acceptable from an animal health and welfare perspective and would likely be totally unacceptable to clients if they were aware.

Expanding the role of VNs in anaesthesia would help protect the activity for VNs, would represent an animal health and welfare improvement, and could support retention.

Transparency with clients was an important consideration and the value of VNs working in anaesthesia must be communicated and championed.

Cat castrations

8. The working group reviewed the LWP recommendation 2.2 Allowing VNs to undertake cat castrations. In discussion the following points were made:

The proposal appeared peculiarly specific, although it was recognised that there was a historical context. The prohibition on VNs from carrying out cat castrations had been introduced in 1988 as the last in a series of Statutory Instruments that prohibited untrained lay people, including farmers, from carrying out numerous acts. Prior to this, cat castrations had been carried out legally by laypeople (including the precursor to veterinary nurses, Animal Nursing Auxiliaries) under both the 1948 and 1966 Acts. When the 1988 SI had been in use for four years, and the reforms to Schedule 3 to formally recognise their role was still three years away. This context, combined with the apparent appetite amongst VNs and vets who had responded to the RCVS Working Party survey, and the feasibility for a legal point of view, had led to LWP supporting the proposal.

The proposal was emblematic of how much the VN profession had progressed. However, it was agreed that the primary driver must not be the historical context, there must be clear anima

The British Veterinary Dental Association (BVDA) had been consulted by the College and were strongly opposed, being clear that it was impossible to define minor and major extractions and that seemingly minor dental work always had the potential to become major very quickly.

In equine there were already proposals to bring Equine Dental Technicians (EDTs) under the regulatory umbrella of the College using the Associate model, which had been supported by LWP.

Client perception was important here too. Those that were aware, often considered that allied professions working under EOs were more qualified than VNs.

Dental work could very easily lead to complications and many vets found the prospect of dentals intimidating.

Many vets would not feel comfortable or knowledgeable enough to supervise a VN carrying out the work. Training pre and post registration would need to improve.

BSAVA Veterinary Nursing Merit Awards provided a useful and less formal option for VNs to develop their role.

Tasks which appropriately trained VNs could reasonably perform ranged from ultrasonography, physiotherapy, radiography, prescribing some routine medications, and providing behavioural and nutritional advice.

VNs could also lead on patient safety, quality improvement, and workplace culture.

VNs also had a role to play in championing One Health and sustainability in veterinary practice.

Action: D Creighton/V Ford-Fennah to obtain update on VN Futures post qualification certificates proposal.

14. It was agreed that further discussion was needed on:

- a) general principles for the development of the VN role
- b) areas of the VN role which could or should be developed for the benefit of:
 - animal health and welfare
 - individual VNs
 - the veterinary nursing profession
 - the workforce and the wider vet-

Date of the next meeting

19. The next meeting would be held **Friday 11 December 10am-1pm (by Zoom)**