

Separating employment and delegation

6. Schedule 3 of the VSA required VNs to work under the direction and employment of a veterinary surgeon. LWP was recommending that this restriction should be removed. This would allow for

the view that decoupling direction from employment would help avoid a potential double-standard relative to other allied professions and help to better use VNs to their full potential in the interests of animal health and welfare.

7. In discussion working group members made the following points:

The recent guidance issued by the College relating to musculoskeletal practitioners was clear that they could work on healthy animals without referral. This had the potential to create grey areas as diagnosing health or diagnosing the absence of disease, was an act of veterinary surgery.

Scrupulous allied professionals would work as part of the vet-

procedures, before acting in line with a delegated treatment plan.

The level of responsibility for animal welfare should be the same in farm animal as in companion animal. The creation of a two-tier system was not appropriate.

A significant portion of the vet tech role would not include acts of veterinary surgery and would not require veterinary delegation or direction. However, it was also recognised that continuity of care and veterinary oversight for animal health and welfare was also a consideration.

The role needed to work within the context of the vet-led team and the hub and spoke model.

11. It was agreed that BVA should take the matter up with the College.

Action: BVA to liaise with the College on composition of the working group.

Protection of titles

12. At the last meeting it had been agreed that statutory protection of titles should underpin the regulation of Associate groups. The current lack of protection for the title of veterinary nurse was agreed to be an issue.

13. At the recent Joint Officers meeting between BVA and BVNA it had been agreed that the campaign to protect the title of veterinary nurse should be revisited. It was likely this would be taken forward as a priority for 2021-22, with BVA and BVNA working jointly on ensuring appropriate foundations for a successful campaign.

14. In discussion working group members made the following points:

Recognisable titles should be created and protected. This would provide clarity to vets and animal owners.

Delegation frameworks would only work if allied professions were appropriately regulated and titles protected.

Further LWP recommendations

- 15.

LWP report, there was an additional, related, recommendation 8.1: RCVS should be empowered to more easily amend EOs to allow for flexibility and future-proofing.

16. In discussion working group members made the following points:

The proposal seemed pragmatic given technological advancements and rate of change in the sector.

The system should be flexible, but supported by appropriate checks and balances, including consultation with the profession on proposed changes to EOs.

EOs should remain narrow, specific, and clearly defined.

Amendments through primary legislation were cumbersome and limited by parliamentary time. It was appropriate to future proof legislation so that the system could be more agile in future and adapt to change.

17. It was agreed the proposal should be supported, subject to assurances that future changes to EOs would be in consultation with the profession.

Next steps

18. The BVA secretariat would:

Circulate the minutes of the meeting

Circulate an emerging themes document summarising the advice to date from the working group, including any areas of difficulty for further consideration

Share the advice to date with Policy Committee and Ethics and Welfare Advisory Panel for input

19. Working group members were thanked for their participation and considered input. There were currently no plans to hold a further meeting unless Policy Committee or EWAP identified any significant issues with the advice to date.

Action: Secretariat to share minutes from VN working group for completeness.