

Veterinary Nurse Prescribers

Executive summary

Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs) are an essential part of the veterinary team and deserve full recognition for their roles. Under the Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMR), only vets, pharmacists and SQPs can prescribe or supply certain categories of authorised veterinary medicines¹, but there have been calls to change legislation in order to introduce a 'nurse prescriber' role within the small animal practice team. The stated aims of introducing such a role are to address workforce shortages by improving retention and increasing opportunities for veterinary surgeons to delegate tasks.

BVA and BVNA support the principle of expansion of the RVN role, however, we believe that any changes to legislation should be approached in a measured way, in line with the wants and needs of the professions and clients, and with animal health and welfare at its heart.

BVA and BVNA believe that:

- Further work clarifying the duties that can be delegated under Schedule 3 should be undertaken and communicated through an ongoing and concerted awareness campaign and provision of joint CPD with vets and RVNs.
- The Suitably Qualified Person (SQP) role should be incorporated into RVN training, assessment and competencies, and to provide a pathway for current RVNs to be recognised with SQP status in a time efficient and cost-effective manner. This should be available to RVNs working in all sectors, and not restricted to those working with small animals.
- Any regulatory or legal change should only occur where a change would fulfil the following criteria:
 - Improved level of care to animals and animal health and welfare and public health outcomes
 - Enhanced service to clients
 - Clear lines of accountability between the veterinary surgeon and RVN
 - Positive impact on the division of workload within the veterinary team.
- Prescribing vaccinations should remain under the remit of the veterinary surgeon.
- Consideration should be given to granting RVNs additional rights to dispense POM-V flea and wormer treatments, working as part of the vet-led team.
- Consideration should be given to expanding the role of RVNs in the ongoing management of chronic cases, supporting owner compliance and contributing to the maintenance of long-term welfare. This may include repeat dispensing for certain conditions already diagnosed, subject to a standard operating procedure (SOP) and directed CPD, and routine veterinary surgeon checks.
- Consideration should be given to the potential role for RVNs in repeat dispensing contraceptive medication, anthelmintic monitoring and treatment, and administration of vaccines in a zoo setting, after initial veterinary assessment, under overall veterinary direction, and in line with the collection's Preventive Health Programme and Disease Surveillance Programme.

¹ Retail of veterinary medicines <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/retail-of-veterinary-medicines>