



A note from Arthur O'Connor, Chair of the Legislation, Ethics and Monitoring Committee



Dear Registrants,

As I come to the end of my four year term on the Veterinary Council, and having had the privilege to chair the

Council's Legislation, Ethics and Monitoring Committee for the last two years, I am pleased to have the opportunity to share a few of my thoughts with you as to where the veterinary professions are currently, in my opinion.

The veterinary professions are twofold, the first the traditional well established and recognisably defined 'vet' or 'veterinary practitioner' and the second the newer and, not yet so clearly defined, 'veterinary nurse'. In their separate ways both of these professions face challenges to adapt to the realities of the modern world with its increasing consumer demands, animal welfare requirements and information overloads.

The veterinary nursing profession is still in its infancy in Ireland and needs to continue the good work that has already happened to carve out its identity and complete roles. That road ahead is exciting and full of potential and more work needs to be done to ensure that the general public, practice owners and all regulators, including the Council itself, understand the significant benefits to animal health and welfare of having a vibrant veterinary nursing profession.

Veterinary practitioners, like a lot of professions, have had an historically strong position in Irish society and, like a lot of professions, face significant challenges to maintain that position. The world of 2023 is much more demanding, much less deferential and much more informed than ever before. In tandem with that, regulatory restrictions on everything from working time hours to animal remedies availability place boundaries on the profession's decision making abilities. In my time on the Council I have found that these are things that the Veterinary Council is very cognisant of.

The most recent revision of the Code of Professional Conduct, that was reviewed and drafted by the LEMC, was a two year process, finalised after careful consideration and significant stakeholder engagement. Published in January 2021, it is at the core of what it means to be a veterinary practitioner in Ireland today. It is designed to give comfort to animal owners and consumers of animal products that the veterinary profession is obliged to operate independently of commercial and other pressures, in the best interests of the health and welfare of the animals that are under their care.

The LEMC is an interesting committee to be involved in and it is often asked to advise the Council on specific matters, such as what is or isn't an act of veterinary medicine. The committee, for example, is currently reviewing canine artificial insemination and has taken expert opinions in that field. We hope to be consulting with relevant stakeholders in the coming months with a view to determining where the lines between what is or isn't ethically justifiable and what is or isn't an act of veterinary medicine lie. While this type of work is often informative and enjoyable, occasionally it is very technical and painstaking. The outcomes, however, are always considered, informed and scientific.

The Veterinary Council is currently developing its Strategy Document for 2024-2027 and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who completed our consultation survey. We assure you that all views and opinions expressed will be considered and will greatly assist in developing the strategy.

I would also like to remind you of the election currently underway for 4 veterinary practitioner seats at the Council table. As an elected member myself I can only state that the importance of taking part in the democratic process and casting your vote is fundamental to ensuring there is a balanced view presented around the Council table.



I encourage anyone, who has not already done so, to familiarise yourself with the candidates who have been nominated and to cast your vote by the deadline of 18th October. I wish all the candidates well, it is a difficult thing to do to put your name forward in an election, and I know that whoever is elected will find the Council an interesting and supportive environment to work in.

The veterinary professions are the cornerstone of the maintenance of healthy animals, both companion and farmed, in the country. They are also, increasingly, positive influencers of, and voices for, improvements in animal welfare standards. The Veterinary Council's regulatory role over these professions should always ensure that it makes it easier for them to do what is right for the health and welfare of the animals under their care.

Here's to a bright and healthy future for both veterinary professions.

Arthur O'Connor

*Legislation, Ethics and Monitoring
Committee Chair*

Veterinary Council of Ireland

National Ploughing Championships 2023



Pictured above Paul Daly, Fianna Fáil Senator, Pippa Hackett, Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity DAFM, Jacquie Casey, Private Secretary to Minister Hackett DAFM, Niamh Muldoon, VCI Registrar and members of VCI Executive.

The Veterinary Council made its annual return to exhibit at the National Ploughing Championships which took place in Ratheniska, Co Laois on Tuesday 19th to Thursday 21st September 2023.

We were pleased to welcome and engage with many in attendance over the course of the 3 day event.



Pictured above Katie O'Connor, Cork College of Further Education, Niamh Muldoon VCI Registrar, Bill Cashman, former VCI Council Member and Alan Manahan, VCI Executive.

The VCI were pleased to welcome Pippa Hackett, Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to the stand.

A note of special thanks to our Executive Team and Council Members who made the VCI exhibit at this year's event a huge success.

Consultation on VCI Draft Corporate Strategy 2024-2027



In mid August the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) launched a public consultation to inform the development of our Corporate Strategy 2024-2027.

This consultation included a short online survey and written submissions, with over 300 responses received by the closing date of 13th September 2023. Written submissions could also be provided by email to info@vci.ie.

Your voice counts

As stakeholders we value your feedback and views as we develop and design our objectives and strategic plans for the next four years. The VCI Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 will set our mission, vision and values.

We thank all those who took the time to complete the survey and make submissions sharing their views.

The VCI will launch their Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 in December 2023.

Veterinary Council of Ireland Veterinary Practitioner Election 2023

The Veterinary Council is currently hosting an election. The term of office of four elected members of Council will terminate on 31st December 2023, in accordance with the provisions of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 (as amended), an election for four veterinary practitioners is taking place.

About the Council

The Council is made up of 19 members, 9 elected Veterinary Practitioners, 1 elected Veterinary Nurse and 9 appointed members. The appointed members are nominees of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (4), the Minister for Education and Skills (1), the National University of Ireland (2), the Director of Consumer Affairs (1) and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (1).

The role and remit of the Council is to ensure the highest standards of veterinary medicine through the regulation and management of the professions. Membership of the Veterinary Council carries an associated time commitment with Council meetings convened 8 times a year, in addition to some additional meetings for consideration of sanction matters and various Committees.

Remember to Vote

All Veterinary Practitioners registered with the Veterinary Council on 20th July 2023 are eligible to vote in the election. Eleven candidates were nominated and the deadline for receipt of ballot papers is **5pm on the 18th October 2023**.

Voting Papers are to be returned in hard copy to the VCI offices at 53 Lansdowne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.

The counting of votes will take place on **19th October 2023** and the result will be declared.

The four veterinary practitioner candidates who receive the highest number of votes will be eligible for appointment to hold office as a member of the Veterinary Council for a term commencing 1st January 2024.

We congratulate all candidates on their nominations and wish them luck in their candidacy.



Veterinary Practitioner Election Candidates 2023

The Veterinary Council are pleased to announce the 11 registered Veterinary Practitioners nominated to run in this election.



Niamh Buck
DVM MRCVS (23/23)

Niamh graduated in 2009 from St Istvan University in Budapest. Niamh spent the first 8 years of her career in general practice throughout the UK, which included Extra-mural studies in London. In 2018, Niamh became a head vet in Yorkshire, managing a large veterinary team, her passion for mentoring new graduates helped her to develop their new graduate development programme. In 2023 Niamh moved back home to Co. Tipperary and is working in general practice again.



Gary Cregan
MVB (09/88)

Gary graduated from UCD in 1988 and worked in mixed practice in North County Dublin from 1990 onwards. His experience combines 33 years of varied caseloads, managing partner of a multi person mixed practice, including food animal eradication programmes and TVI work. Gary is managing partner of the quarantine kennels involving pet passport inspection and has a keen interest in veterinary acupuncture. Gary would be honoured if elected to serve on Council.



Niamh Hogan
MVB (143/14)

Niamh is primarily a farm animal vet working for a mixed practice in Tipperary. She previously worked in New Zealand and will complete her Dairy Herd Health Certificate with UCD this year.

If elected, Niamh hopes to bring a young, practicing vet's voice to the council that reflects her passion for the future of vets like her in the profession.



Julia Ivanova
MRCVS (94/15)

Julia has been living and working in Ireland for the last twenty years. She has worked in first opinion, emergency and charity practice. She would like to achieve some improvements with the way VCI manages complaints. The clinical freedom of veterinary practitioners when choosing treatments and diagnostics is a priority for her, ensuring the patient's best interest. Please vote to support the voice of a practicing clinician in the VCI.



Catherine Lawler
MVB MSc (38/92)

Catherine Lawler, MVB MSc, is from Donegal and works with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine. Having worked in clinical practice in the UK, as a lecturer in UCD veterinary faculty and managed various government veterinary portfolios, Catherine has a strong interest in matters impacting the veterinary profession and is seeking election to the Veterinary Council to contribute to both regulating and upholding standards of veterinary medicine in Ireland.



William McCartney
(35/87)

William McCartney is a veterinary practitioner and a recognised specialist. William has over 35 years of experience in practice. During his time at the Irish Veterinary Association, William established the practice standards initiative. Throughout his career, William has been a clinical support for practitioners and an active provider of Continuing Veterinary Education.



Paul Mc Dermott
MRCVS MSc CertVPH (33/81)

Paul McDermott MSc (VPH) MVM is based in Co. Mayo, where for the last 18 years he has served as a County Veterinary Officer. Paul has over 24 years of experience working as veterinary practitioner. As a County Veterinary Officer Paul's responsibilities include the compliance and oversight of public health and animal welfare. Paul is the current President of Veterinary Ireland and the member of the VIL Animal Welfare Committee.



Sean O'Sullivan
MVB MRCVS (45/85)

Sean O'Sullivan MVB is based in Fermoy, Co. Cork where he is a partner in a mixed practice. Sean has over 30 years' experience working as veterinary practitioner in an evolving climate of increased regulatory affairs for vets and veterinary practices. Sean believes in maximising the presence of practicing vets in the decision-making, that affects the profession.



Lorenzo Prosperi
MVB (08/16)

Lorenzo Prosperi qualified in Pisa, Italy in 2015. Immediately thereafter, he moved to Ireland where he worked in practice in West Cork for three years, followed by practices in Kilkenny, Offaly and Kildare. Lorenzo aims to improve veterinary medicine in Ireland, to get a better working environment for all vets and empower vets within the private and public sector.



Alan Rossiter
MVB (80/97)

After 26 years of practice in Ireland and abroad and having served many representative roles including President of Veterinary Ireland and currently Director of FECAVA, Director of the Pet Emergency Hospital and member Advisory Council for Companion Animal Welfare Alan hopes to bring this experience to Council with a commitment to serve with vigour, enthusiasm, vision and empathy. For more on Alan see alanrossitermmb.vixsite.com/ar4vci.



Ann Carmel Welsh
BSc BVM&S CertAVP ESM MVB (09/16)

Anne Carmel Welsh is a partner at Kilcash Equine Clinic, Co. Tipperary with over 14 years experience. Carmel has worked in Australia and the UK and brings a wealth of experience and perspective which she believes will be invaluable to understanding the practising vet's perspective. Carmel has been proud to serve on Veterinary Ireland and IEVA committees and is acutely aware of the challenges facing the industry. She is committed to protecting its reputation for excellence.

Information on the 2024 Registration Renewal Process



The 2024 Registration Renewal Process will commence on Friday, 17th November 2023 with registrants receiving their renewal notification by email.

Any Registrant who wishes to continue to practise on 1st January 2024 will be required to renew their registration through completion of their Registration Renewal Form along with the relevant fee prior to 31st December 2023. Registrants are advised that the return of the 2024 Registration Renewal Form is mandatory under statutory instruments 279, 280 and 281 of the Veterinary Council's Registration Regulations 2022.

How can I access my Registration Renewal Form?

To ensure ease of access and convenience for Registrants in renewing their registration, an online Registration Renewal Form will be sent via email to all Registrants. If a Registrant requires a hardcopy of the form by post, this can be issued upon request by contacting this office on 01 6684402 or by emailing arf@vci.ie.

How can I pay my Registration Renewal Fee?

The online form will contain a payment portal to enable secure payment of the fee by debit or credit card. The automated Registration Renewal Process, which will be running for its fourth year, facilitates a smooth registration renewal experience for all Registrants.

Registrants will also have the option of paying the fee through the Council's website under the 'Pay Fees' tab on the homepage. A receipt will automatically issue to the Registrant's email address by using this payment method. Payment of the fee by cheque (paid in euro only), with registration number written clearly on the back will also be accepted.

If an employer wishes to pay the fee on behalf of their employees, they can proceed to pay through the Council's website, by cheque, or by requesting an invoice to arf@vci.ie. Registrants are reminded that they must complete their own Registration Renewal Form, even if payment is being provided by their employer.

Please note: To facilitate the option for all Registrants to make an online payment, all Direct Debits previously held by the Veterinary Council were cancelled in 2019 and will therefore not be processed.

Should you have any queries in relation to the Annual Renewal of Registration process, please contact the office on 01 668 4402, or via email to: arf@vci.ie and a member of our team will be pleased to assist you.

UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

It is important to keep your contact information and employment details up to date on the Register to ensure that any notifications or correspondence issued by the VCI are received.

I want to update my contact details; how can I do this?

To update your contact details, including your registered address, phone number or email address, please email registration@vci.ie or info@vci.ie and your contact details will be updated accordingly.

My employment details have changed, how can I update this information?

To update your employment details a PAS Declaration form must be completed. A PAS Declaration form can be completed and submitted online through the [Registrant Extranet](#) on the VCI website, or it can be requested directly by emailing pas@vci.ie.

Under the VCI's Premises Accreditation Scheme Regulations made in accordance with Section 108 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, as amended, every Registered Veterinary Practitioner and Registered Veterinary Nurse is required to provide a PAS Declaration to the VCI, and to update their PAS Declaration when necessary.

What information will I provide on the PAS Declaration form?

A PAS Declaration provides the VCI with information on where a registered person is practising veterinary medicine or veterinary nursing in the State. A PAS Declaration also informs the Council in relation to registered persons who are not practising in the State. For example, where a registered person remains registered but is retired, or is working in a non-practising role in the State, or where they are residing and working in another country.

Depending on a Registrant's circumstances, more than one PAS Declaration may be needed if they are practising at more than one registered premises and/or State premises or exempt place.

Upcoming safeTALK Training Sessions on Mental Health and Suicide Awareness

Further to the Report on the Mental Health of Veterinary Professions in Ireland published in April 2022, the Veterinary Council has partnered with the HSE's National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) to organise the delivery of safeTALK training nationwide to promote awareness of mental health and the available supports.

safeTALK is an internationally recognised half-day training programme that prepares participants to recognise and engage with people who may be having thoughts of suicide and to connect them to suicide first aid resources.

Following three pilot sessions in 2022, the safeTALK training will now be available nationwide, with the first training sessions taking place in County Kerry in October 2023. The safeTALK training on mental health and suicide awareness is free of charge, but please note pre-registration is required. The training is open to all veterinary practitioners, veterinary nurses and veterinary practice staff. Please see below for details on the upcoming safeTALK training:

- ▶ Free safeTALK training on **Monday 9th October** from 10.00 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. at the Gleneagle Hotel, Muckross Road, Killarney, Co. Kerry. Go here to register for this training: <https://bookwhen.com/suicideprevention-trainingkerry>
- ▶ Free safeTALK training on **Tuesday 10th October** from 6.00p.m. to 9.30 p.m. Austin Stack Park, Tralee, Co. Kerry V92 VOHT. Go here to register for this training: <https://bookwhen.com/suicideprevention-trainingkerry>

Any queries in relation to the safeTALK training can be sent by email to pas@vci.ie or please contact the VCI offices by phone on 01 6684402 and a member of the Executive team will be happy to assist you. Further training sessions are currently being scheduled and will be announced in due course.

Continuing Veterinary Education Audit 2023

What is the Continuing Veterinary Education Audit?

In line with the Veterinary Council of Ireland Continuing Veterinary Education (CVE) for Veterinary Practitioners and Veterinary Nurses Regulations 2020, as set out in Statutory Instrument (577):

The Council may audit [registrants] in respect of their compliance with the requirements of these Regulations for a period of up to five (5) years after the end of a CVE Year.

The Veterinary Council of Ireland conduct an annual CVE audit of 5% of the Registers of Veterinary Practitioners and Veterinary Nurses by random selection.

Whats involved?

Registrants randomly selected as part of the CVE Audit are requested to complete a CVE Audit questionnaire and submit evidence of their compliance in line with CVE Regulations.

CVE Audit 2023

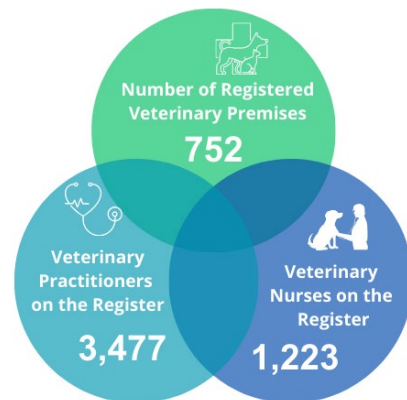
Registrants randomly selected for audit from the Register of Veterinary Practitioners and Veterinary Nurses received communication from the Veterinary Council on the 27th June 2023 requesting completion of a CVE audit questionnaire vouched by CVE certificates and evidence of compliance by the 4th September 2023.

A note of thanks to all those selected for the CVE 2023 Audit for their prompt engagement and response, which endorses the high levels of compliance and the continued commitment of the veterinary professions in continuing veterinary education.

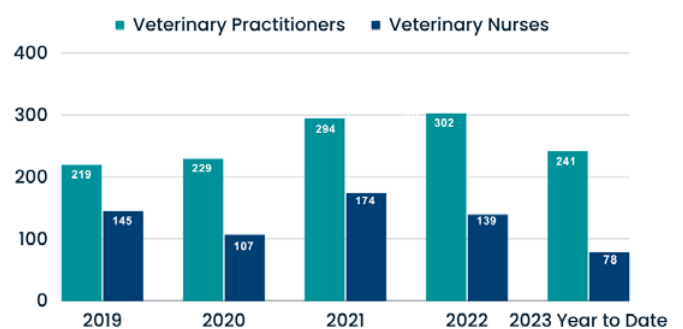
As the CVE Audit draws to a conclusion, very high rates of compliance of 90% of those audited offer assurance.

Stats from the VCI Register September 2023

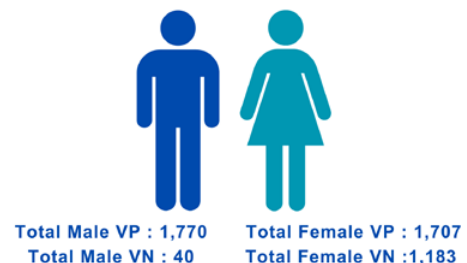
Total Number Registered VP - VN - Premises



Total New Entries VP and VN



Total Number of Male and Female VP and VN



Risk Management in Veterinary Practice

The Veterinary Defence Society (VDS) provide professional indemnity insurance to veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses based in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

As well as providing indemnity insurance cover, the VDS can also assist veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses with risk management in practice through their service VetSafe.

VetSafe is a confidential online reporting tool which can be used by VDS members to log the details of an incident, this process can help a veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses to understand why an incident occurred and learn from the experience. Further information about VetSafe can be found on the VDS website [here](#).

VCI Research Grant

The Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) appreciate the importance of further development of veterinary research, in particular by veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses currently in practice.

The Council offers an annual Research Grant Scheme of up to €10,000 to research projects that have potential to generate new knowledge in respect of veterinary medicine or veterinary nursing.

For further information regarding the Research Grant Scheme 2023 and how to apply please email grants@vci.ie.

Submissions for the Research Grant Scheme 2023 will remain open until 31st December 2023.



CVE Bursary 2023

As part of the Research Grant Scheme, the Council is offering a Continuing Veterinary Education Bursary (CVE) of up to €1,000 to cover the cost of attendance by a Veterinary Practitioner or a Veterinary Nurse at a major national or international CVE event.

The purpose of the Bursary is to encourage access to International Education events. Two bursaries are offered annually, one for a veterinary practitioner and one for a veterinary nurse. The closing date for submitting an application for the 2023 CVE bursary is the 31st December 2023. The successful recipient will be asked to write a report on their experience of the event for publication in a VCI newsletter, and they will be offered an opportunity to present any such work to the Council.

CVE events can cover an area of specialism that are relevant to a Registrants scope of practice. Registrants with a particular interest in events covering public health or ethical practice matters are particularly encouraged to apply.

To seek further information on how to apply please email education@vci.ie.



Reporting Issues of Concern

Report someone who is practising veterinary medicine illegally

If you are concerned that someone may be practising without being qualified, eligible or registered with the VCI, please email us at: info@vci.ie or call us on 01 668 4402.

To help us to investigate, the following information is useful

- ▶ The name of the person
- ▶ Details of what happened
- ▶ Where the matter occurred
- ▶ Have you reported this elsewhere (such as the Gardaí) and the outcome (if applicable)
- ▶ Any evidence you have to support the information.

What can we do if someone is practising illegally

When we receive information suggesting that an individual may be practising veterinary medicine or veterinary nursing without being qualified, eligible or registered with VCI, we will investigate where possible and take appropriate action in line with the Veterinary Practice Act 2005. Depending on the circumstances, we may:

- ▶ Advise the individual of the law
- ▶ Send a 'cease and desist' notice
- ▶ Initiate summary court proceedings against the individual for an offence under the Act.

Reporting animal welfare concerns

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine operates an animal welfare helpline where suspected animal welfare concerns can be reported via phone or email.

The helpline is manned from 9am to 5.45pm Monday to Friday. All complaints received are registered on their database and referred to the relevant Regional Office for investigation. All referred calls are investigated by their Veterinary Inspectors with follow up visits where required.

All call are strictly 100% confidential. The contact details for the helpline are as follows: Lo Call 0761 064408 or 01 607 2379. Email: animalwelfare@agriculture.gov.ie.

Reminder on Appropriate Waste Disposal at Veterinary Premises

The VCI wish to highlight the requirements regarding waste disposal and the importance of having appropriate contacts in place.

The Premises Accreditation Scheme (PAS) Standards require that any waste generated by the veterinary practice is stored hygienically, separated as required and disposed of in an appropriate manner by an appropriately registered contractor. This includes for non-clinical, clinical, anatomical, pharmaceutical, sharps and all other hazardous waste. The requirements are in place in the interest of staff, client and patient health and safety.

Reminder to Notify Clients on Practice Out of Hours Arrangements

All registered veterinary premises must provide an out of hours emergency service to its clients in compliance with the Council's Code of Professional Conduct and the Premises Accreditation Scheme (PAS) Standards. Emergency out of hours cover may be arranged with another registered veterinary practice within a reasonable distance.

Clients must be made aware of such an arrangement either before or when seeking the assistance of a veterinary practitioner, and information about how to seek emergency treatment should be made readily available to clients. PAS Standard 1.4 requires that premises signage includes telephone numbers for emergency cover. This is to ensure that the public and their animals can have access to emergency veterinary care.

The referral of emergency cases by any veterinary practitioner or practice to another, without the express agreement of the veterinary practitioner or practice that they are being referred to, is unethical.

Ethical Ethel



Dear Ethel,

This morning, my colleague, Anna, a newly qualified veterinary practitioner, attended to a new client seeking a second opinion for her French bulldog. The client explained to Anna that she had noticed a lump on her dog's leg and that when she attended her regular vet at a neighbouring practice, he advised her that the lump would need to be removed. Anna said she was busy with consults that morning and would carry out a clinical examination in the afternoon. The client signed a consent form, and the dog was admitted.

Anna ran a series of blood tests, took a biopsy and carried out an ultrasound and ultimately determined that the lump would need to be removed as it may be cancerous. When she informed the client of her opinion, the client complained to me, the owner of the practice, that she felt it was unnecessary to carry out these investigations as they had already been carried out by the first opinion veterinary practitioner, and that Anna had been informed of this. The client has requested a meeting to discuss her complaint, querying why Anna never requested the clinical records from the original attending veterinary practitioner.

I know this will be a stressful experience for Anna and I am considering not telling her about the complaint and meeting the client on my own. I am worried it will affect her confidence.

I would be grateful for your advice on how to deal with this complaint.

Yours sincerely,
Ronnie, Bray



Dear Ronnie,

Complaints from clients are an unfortunate reality of veterinary practice and happen to veterinary practitioners at all levels of experience. Receiving a complaint at any time in your career can leave the most experienced and confident of veterinary practitioners feeling upset, but to get one within a year of qualifying can really undermine your confidence.

Under the Code of Professional Conduct, when a veterinary practitioner receives a complaint, they should inform the client of the practice's complaints handling policy. The policy should clearly outline how to make a complaint and the process that is followed to deal with it. Veterinary practitioners should respond promptly, comprehensively and courteously to complaints and criticism, in accordance with the practice's complaints handling policy.

In this instance, Anna should be made aware of a complaint against her and given an opportunity to respond. Anna should also be present at any meeting that is held with the client to discuss the complaint. While a veterinary practitioner may feel anxious about responding to their first complaint, if they follow these steps, they can maximise their chances of resolving the client's concerns at an early stage.

- Get advice from your professional indemnifier promptly.
- Draft a response to the complaint.
- Identify any learning points.
- Say sorry – be open and honest with your client if things have gone wrong.

Pursuant to the Code of Professional Conduct, veterinary practitioners should listen carefully to clients and where the client informs the second veterinary practitioner that they are seeking a second opinion and provides the name of the original practice, it is incumbent on the second veterinary practitioner to inform the original attending veterinary practitioner of the case and request relevant clinical records. The original attending veterinary practitioner must respond promptly to a request for clinical records.

The records kept by veterinary practitioners should include dated examination findings, dated diagnostic test finds, all treatments, anaesthetics and surgeries and relevant communications with clients. If Anna had these clinical records she may have had sufficient information upon which to base her decision on. Equally, she may have decided that updated or further investigations were required. That is a decision that only she can make using her clinical judgment.

When a complaint is received from a client, it usually means something didn't go ideally. Often this is an issue with communication rather than something wrong in the patients care or harm to the patient. Every time this occurs take this as an opportunity to reflect and learn, and to look at all aspects of the care and advice provided by you, good and bad. Identifying learning points from the clinical management of cases and other aspects, such as documentation or administrative support, can be used to improve future patient care. Whatever form the complaint is made in, whether by letter, telephone or face to face, clients should feel that full and proper attention has been paid to them and that the veterinary team is keen to resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

I hope this advice is helpful and I wish you the very best.

Best wishes,
Ethel

Your ethical dilemmas are welcome for Ethel's consideration.

These may be submitted in confidence to info@vci.ie or to the Council offices at 53 Lansdowne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 D04 NY29.

VCI meeting with the South African Qualifications Authority



VCI Registration and Education team meet with SAQA.

The VCI were delighted to meet with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) on Friday 21 July 2023 at the VCI offices. The SAQA personnel in attendance were Deputy Director Nyaradzai Mukari, Zandile Mahlangu and Eugene du Plooy, Specialists in Professional Bodies and Researcher Tshepho Mokwele.

The SAQA is the overseeing body of the South African National Qualifications Framework (SANQF). The functions of SAQA include the registration of qualifications on the SANQF as well as the recognition of Professional Bodies for the purpose of the SANQF.

The SAQA met with the VCI as part of a benchmarking exercise in order to broaden their understanding of the role played by Professional Bodies in the education system here in the State.

VCI attends Irish Equine Centre 40th Anniversary



Pictured above VCI President Vivienne Duggan and Wendy Conlon, Teagasc.

The Veterinary Council President Vivienne Duggan and Registrar Niamh Muldoon were pleased to attend the celebration to mark the 40th anniversary of the Irish Equine Centre which was held on the 13th September 2023 in their offices in Naas, Co. Kildare.

American Association of Veterinary State Boards Annual Meeting and Conference 2023

The American Association of Veterinary State Boards are an association of veterinary medicine regulatory boards.

Their members include licensing bodies in the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Canada. Their mission is to support and advance the regulatory process for veterinary medicine.

The Veterinary Council were invited to attend the American Association of Veterinary State Boards Annual Meeting and Conference 2023 for the first time. The conference took place in Kansas City, Missouri from the 28th to 30th September. Registrar Niamh Muldoon and VCI President Vivienne Duggan were pleased to give a short update on current Veterinary Council matters to fellow regulatory colleagues.



Niamh Muldoon, VCI Registrar, Chris Runde, AAVSB President, Karen Runde, Vivienne Duggan, VCI President and Lizzie Lockett, RCVS CEO.



Niamh Muldoon, VCI Registrar, Lizzie Lockett, RCVS CEO and Vivienne Duggan, VCI President.

Guidance on attending to Wildlife

The Veterinary Council has produced a Code of Professional Conduct which sets out veterinary practitioners' professional responsibilities and provides advice on the proper standards of professional practice.

The Code sets out the principles that may be applied to all areas of veterinary practice and identifies the key responsibilities of veterinary practitioners to their patients, clients, the public, professional colleagues, and obligations under the law; and also provides guidance on aspects of practice.

The responsibilities of veterinary practitioners relating to the treatment of wildlife is set out in Chapter 3 of the Code and is reproduced below.

Wildlife

There are a number of reasons why veterinary practitioners should attend to wildlife. These include animal welfare, conservation, environmental protection, public health, and disease surveillance. A veterinary practitioner has a responsibility to provide first aid and pain relief to any species of animal to relieve suffering. This includes providing emergency care out of hours. Whenever veterinary practitioners are presented with a species that is categorised as threatened or endemic, care of that individual animal also plays a role in the conservation of that species.

Wildlife casualties are commonly presented to veterinary practitioners in general practice and should be triaged and provided with emergency treatment without delay to avoid unnecessary suffering. Essential information to be obtained when a wildlife casualty is presented includes:

- ▶ Exactly when and where the animal was found.
- ▶ Any history of trauma or obvious clues for cause of injury.
- ▶ Any treatment or food given so far.
- ▶ Contact details of the finder.

It is useful to have a standard form kept at the reception desk for the person presenting the animal to fill out. This ensures no details are missed.

An understanding of the basic biology, physiology and ecology of the commonly presented species is necessary for the veterinary practitioner to provide appropriate emergency care and make decisions regarding the chances of successful rehabilitation and release. All factors should be considered in the triage decision including availability of facilities, licensed and trained wildlife rehabilitators, veterinary services, sufficient funding, suitable release sites and anticipated quality of life.

Other than in cases where the veterinary practitioner is satisfied that euthanasia is warranted in order to alleviate suffering, decisions regarding the chances of successful rehabilitation and release should be made in conjunction with the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) or, where appropriate, with a wildlife rehabilitator that is licensed by the NPWS. As per section 49 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, invasive species must not be released from confinement.

On occasion, veterinary practitioners might conclude that the wildlife casualties they have attended to were adversely affected by environmental issues such as water pollution or habitat destruction. They should, in these instances, raise these problems with the relevant authorities, so that they can, where possible, be addressed or mitigated.

The reporting of wildlife diseases can play an important role in national disease surveillance. Therefore, in circumstances where an infectious disease in wildlife casualties is confirmed or suspected, veterinary practitioners should always consider whether it is appropriate to report this finding to the relevant authorities. Notifiable diseases and the identification of a novel pathogen in a particular species must always be reported.

Veterinary practitioners should be mindful of the risks of dealing with wildlife casualties. Many wildlife species are liable to bite, kick or scratch people, and can also be potential sources of zoonotic diseases. They also pose a risk of transmitting disease to domestic species within the veterinary practice. Therefore, veterinary practitioners should ensure that suitable standard operating procedures, relevant health and safety training and adequate risk assessments are in place to mitigate these risks.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI / H5N1)

While the 2022-2023 Avian Flu Regulations have now been lifted, the HSE, the Health Protection Surveillance Centre and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine continue to advise members of the public not to pick up or touch sick, dead or dying birds and keep pets away from them.

Members of the public who find dead or sick wild birds with any signs of bird flu (moribund, sneezing, nervous signs, diarrhoea, excessive thirst, loss of appetite, swollen head or wattle) should be advised to report them without delay to the local Regional Veterinary Office. Alternatively, contact the Avian Influenza Hotline 01 607 2512 or the National Disease Emergency Hotline on 01 492 8026. Sick/dead wild birds may also be reported via the Department of Agriculture's Avian Check App (accessible all hours) <https://aviancheck.apps.services.agriculture.gov.ie/>.

Where dead birds are present on public lands e.g., beaches and removal of the carcasses is required/appropriate, members of the public should be advised to contact their Local Authority.

In Ireland, the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) provides advice to government departments and the public on infectious diseases in humans. In this regard the advice that the HPSC has provided the department for those occupationally or otherwise exposed (vets and animal handlers) to infected birds or wildlife infected with avian influenza, is that the risk is considered low-to-moderate provided the correct personal protection equipment is worn, that the seasonal influenza virus has been administered and that antivirals are used post exposure.

Recruitment and Retention Survey and Event for Equine Practitioners

To assist in sustaining the equine veterinary profession for all, the Irish Equine Veterinary Association (IEVA) have launched a short survey for equine practitioners to complete on recruitment and retention [Link to Survey](#). The survey will close on Tuesday 31st October 2023.

For further information on the above contact the [Irish Equine Veterinary Association](#).



Summary Guide to Available Supports

WHERE TO GET HELP

There are different types of support available for people with mental health difficulties. Many of the supports listed here are available without a referral, and are provided by agencies with the support of the HSE.

If you need information about what supports or services might be helpful for you, Speak with a GP or call the HSE YourMentalHealth Information Line (freephone 1800 111 888) anytime day or night.

Samaritans

Samaritans services are available 24 hours a day, for confidential, non-judgmental support.

Samaritans is a service that can be used either if your situation feels more urgent, or if you feel like all you need is a good chat. There are branches of Samaritans in Ireland with volunteers ready to answer the phone if you feel overwhelmed. You can ring their helpline whether or not you have mental health issues, if you're worried about a friend, and even if you're under 18. All conversations with Samaritans are off the record, and there is no need to give them any personal details.

You can find your nearest Samaritans branch [here](#). Volunteers are on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- ▶ Freephone **116 123**
- ▶ Email jo@samaritans.ie
- ▶ Visit www.samaritans.ie for more information

Pieta

Pieta provide a range of suicide and self-harm prevention services.

Pieta first opened its doors in Lucan, County Dublin in 2006. Since then we have seen and helped over 60,000 people in suicidal distress or engaging in self-harm.

They operate 15 Pieta Centres, three Outreach services, and one Inreach service. Get in touch [here](#).

- ▶ Freephone **1800 247 247** anytime day or night
- ▶ Text **HELP** to **51444** (standard message rates apply)
- ▶ Visit www.pieta.ie for more information

Text 50808

A free 24/7 text service, providing everything from a calming chat to immediate support for people going through a mental health or emotional crisis.

- ▶ Text **HELLO** to **50808**, anytime day or night
- ▶ Visit www.text50808.ie for more information

Aware

Aware have a support line for anyone who is worried about depression, which operates from 10am to 10pm, seven days a week, as well as a support mail service. Aware also offer a suite of 'Wellness @Work' programmes that are ideal for helping your workplace understand the importance and value of looking after their mental health, and to use relevant coping skills to limit the impact of any challenges or concerns.

- ▶ Helpline no. **+353 1800 80 48 48**
Open 10am - 10pm
(Monday - Sunday)
- ▶ Website: www.aware.ie
- ▶ Email: supportmail@aware.ie

MyMind

MyMind provides fast and easy access to counselling and psychotherapy face to face and online. MyMind is the first and largest blended model of mental health care in Ireland, and is putting Ireland at the forefront of mental health innovation. MyMind has created a unique movement for community-based mental health services that work towards giving every person in Ireland equal access to mental health support early, affordably, directly, without stigma or delay.

- ▶ Website: <https://mymind.org/>
- ▶ Email: @mymind.org.com
- ▶ **(+353) 818 500 800**
(from Ireland)
- ▶ **(+353) 1 223 8651**
(from outside Ireland)
- ▶ **(+44) 20 33 22 44 99**
(UK and NI)

OTHER PROGRAMMES

Suicide prevention and bereavement training

The HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) provides a range of freely available education and training initiatives encompassing suicide prevention and mental health promotion. They include LivingWorks Start (online suicide prevention skills), safeTALK, ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and others, on self-harm and suicide bereavement. Visit www.nosp.ie/training for more information.

Publicly available HSE online health programmes

Stress Control online is an evidence-based stress prevention and management programme which aims to help people who want to learn effective ways to prevent stress or manage stress becoming a problem. It works for people with severe, moderate and mild symptoms of stress. It is a six session online class each lasting for 90 minutes. Dates for the next online sessions are available at <https://stresscontrol.ie/dates/>

Minding Your Wellbeing (MYW) was originally developed as an evidenced based, one day programme, promoting a positive approach to mental health and wellbeing. Since Covid 19 the programme is now available online as 5 video sessions, each lasting approximately 20 minutes. www2.hse.ie/healthy-you/minding-your-wellbeing-programme.html

Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate professional treatment is received or until the crisis resolves. To read more about the services they provide, please visit: www.mhfaireland.ie/what-is-mental-health-first-aid

IN AN EMERGENCY

Hospital and emergency services

If you, or someone you know is at immediate risk of harm, go to or call the emergency department of your local general hospital. You can also contact emergency services on 112 or 999 anytime, day or night.

A GP

A GP can offer support for anyone in crisis. If possible, ask someone to come along with you. Find a service near you:

- ▶ GP or health centre
- ▶ Out of hours GP service

HSE Mental Health Services

If you are being supported by a mental health team, or have been in the past, contact the service for support in a crisis.

IVBF Financial Support

There are times in many of our lives when we have financial difficulties - maybe because of a major change of some kind, such as a health problem or the breakdown of a relationship or death of a loved one. IVBF will look at all your circumstances to understand the issues better and will help you plan a way forward.

What sort of help is given?

- ▶ Emergency assistance
- ▶ Regular monthly grants
- ▶ One-off gifts
- ▶ Direct you to professional advice on State benefits and debt

Absolute confidentiality is assured

Call **087 4481304**, Monday – Friday
9am – 5pm.

Email: info@ivbf.ie

Website: www.ivbf.ie

IVBF Helpline (by Vetlife)

Available to veterinarians and veterinary nurses (working or retired), veterinary students and student veterinary nurses and other non-clinical practice staff.

Are you struggling with:

- ▶ Anxiety, Depressive symptoms, Suicidal thoughts, Suicide risk.

The free VetLife helpline is contactable 24 hours a day, 365 days a year either by phone or anonymous email.

Freephone 1800 145 145

Independent, confidential and free help for the veterinary community

including vets, veterinary nurses
(whether practising or not)
and their dependents.

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE

www.ivbf.ie



IRISH VETERINARY
BENEVOLENT FUND

Whatever life throws at you, we will support you.
The VetLife helpline is available 24 hours a day,
365 days a year.

CALL VetLife NOW 1800 145 145



**IVBF
Financial
Support**



**Helpline
(by VetLife)**

Contact us

Veterinary Council of Ireland,
53 Lansdowne Road,
Ballsbridge,
Dublin 4 D04 NY29.

info@vci.ie

www.vci.ie

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