

# Veterinary Council of Ireland Newsletter

Winter 2015 Issue 11



## Minister Simon Coveney T.D. announces appointments to the Council

On 5 November 2015 the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney TD announced the appointment of two members to the Veterinary Council.

The new appointees are:

- **John O'Rourke; and**
- **Sinead Boyle**

These two appointed members were selected under the new arrangements involving an open advertisement and assessment system by the Public Appointments Service (PAS).

Welcoming the newly appointed members, the Minister said,

*“the overall balance in membership of the Council will enable it to carry out its statutory functions effectively in a way that will continue to enjoy public confidence. I wish the new members of the Council every success during their term of office.”*

This will bring the composition of the Veterinary Council to 19 members.

## Election Results for Council

The results of the election for new Council members have been declared and four registrants have been elected and appointed to the Council. Each appointee will serve a four year term commencing on 1 January 2016.

Ten veterinary practitioners put their names forward for election to fill the four vacancies on the Council.

The count took place on 22 October 2015. Of the 1,047 voting papers received by the voting paper return date of 21 October 2015, two were deemed invalid and five were spoiled. Eight voting papers received after the closing date were also eliminated.

The following four veterinary practitioners achieved the highest number of votes: Patrick G Cusack, Peadar Ó Scanaill, Michael Sadlier and James McManus.

These are the number of votes recorded for each of the ten candidates in the 2015 Council Election:

NAME OF CANDIDATE	Registration No.	Total Votes
AUNGIER, SANDRA PHILOMENA	67/82	144
CUSACK, PATRICK GERARD	16/82	603
GILL, DECLAN EOIN	113/98	137
GRAHAM, FINTAN PATRICK	29/67	360
MCCONNELL, KEVIN ANTHONY	39/91	354
MCMANUS, JAMES KO	58/73	452
O'BRIEN LYNCH, EDWARD M	46/70	215
Ó SCANAILL, PEADAR	51/88	528
SADLIER, MICHAEL PATRICK MARY	59/83	458
STUCKENBERG, ROBERT	105/98	121

## Veterinary Nurses and Anaesthesia

The Council has received a number of queries asking if a veterinary nurse is permitted to assist a veterinary practitioner with general anaesthesia.

Under the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, as amended, a veterinary nurse may be directed to assist a veterinary practitioner with “the induction, maintenance and termination of patients under general anaesthesia”. This includes “the performance of endotracheal intubation of a patient”. The directing veterinary practitioner must be present and remains, at all times responsible for the procedure.

For the purpose of anaesthesia, a veterinary nurse is permitted to calculate, draw up and administer an anaesthetic agent once full and clear dosage instructions have been received from the directing and supervising veterinary practitioner. A veterinary practitioner should only delegate such tasks if both parties concerned are agreeable and confident that the task at hand can be performed safely and successfully.

## Dr Laura Cuddy talks about her specialty in Small Animal Surgery and Canine Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation

### *What is your specialty, and what aspects of it attracted you?*

I am a board-certified American and European Specialist in Small Animal Surgery and American Specialist in Canine Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation. Currently, I am a Lecturer in Small Animal Surgery at the School of Veterinary Medicine, University College Dublin.

I appreciate that, as a specialist, I have been able to focus on optimising my skillset in specific areas. Working within a specialty hospital fosters close collaboration with specialists in other fields, facilitating a high level of care for our patients. To me being a surgeon is humbling; what can seem like the opportunity to intervene and change the course of a life for better may not always turn out the way you initially anticipated or hoped. Small animal surgery is evolving at a rapid rate as there are constantly new and often less invasive ways to treat our patients and our clients are demanding more advanced techniques and higher standards, drawing from their experience in human hospitals or from what they have seen in the media. It's exciting to be at the forefront of these new developments, often in collaboration with colleagues internationally and in the human field.

### *How did you develop your interest initially?*

From a young age I was inspired to not only become a veterinary practitioner, but a specialist in small animal surgery, from my interactions with Shane Guerin in Gilabbey Veterinary Hospital. This interest was fostered and supported by the faculty members in UCD during my undergraduate degree in Veterinary Medicine, and I hope that I, in turn, can inspire interest and success in this field in the current and future generations of graduating veterinarians. My interests in minimally-invasive surgery and in sports medicine and rehabilitation came from my experiences during my training at the University of Florida, a centre of excellence with a strong tradition in these fields. For me, surgery and rehabilitation are complementary specialties and I integrate my knowledge from both fields to optimise my patients' outcomes.

### *Where did you complete your specialist training?*

I completed my rotating internship in Small Animal Medicine and Surgery at the University of Florida in 2009, and was subsequently fortunate enough to be accepted into the renowned combined Masters of Science and residency programme in Small Animal Surgery at UF. I was welcomed as a Diplomate of the American and European Colleges of Veterinary



*Laura C. Cuddy MVB MS DACVS-SA  
DECVS DACVSMR  
Registered Veterinary Specialist*

Surgeons (ACVS and ECVS) in 2014, and by the American College of Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation (ACVSMR) in 2015.

### *What is the value to you of being on the Specialist Register?*

The Specialist Register recognises, at a national level, those who have successfully completed comprehensive further education and training in their chosen field. As specialisation within veterinary medicine becomes more commonplace, this Register is an avenue for colleagues and the general public to find and engage with a specialist who has been endorsed by the Council as appropriately qualified to call themselves a specialist in their chosen field and to have confidence in their abilities.

## Would you like to join a veterinary nursing course provider visitation panel?

In order for a veterinary nursing qualification to be approved for registration purposes by the Council, the course must meet the Council's criteria as well as European legislative requirements.

The Council undertakes formal visitations to veterinary nursing course providers to monitor the standard of approved degrees and diplomas.

The Council invites registrants who are interested in being a member of a visitation panel to contact the Council offices.

## Use of Courtesy Title 'Dr'

The Council has now agreed to permit registered veterinary practitioners to use the courtesy title 'Doctor' or 'Dr'. The Council has confirmed with the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Health that there is no legal impediment to the title's use by veterinary practitioners registered in the State, as long as they do not mislead the public that they hold a medical/dental degree or a PhD or Doctoral qualification. Every veterinary practitioner will receive with their Annual Registration Form a letter providing guidance concerning the title's use and explaining how his/her entry in the Register of Veterinary Practitioners can be amended.

# Ethical Ethel



Your ethical dilemmas are welcome for Ethel's consideration. These may be submitted confidentially to

[info@vci.ie](mailto:info@vci.ie) or the Council offices at  
53 Lansdowne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, DO4 NY29.

Dear Ethel,

I am in my current job for 6 months as the assistant in a two-person practice. I vaccinated 8 horses for a "sometimes" client of the practice a week ago. The owner has now asked that I also sign the passport of another horse for the same date, even though I did not vaccinate it at the time. My employer is away until next week and the client is insisting that this is a "normal thing for vets to do" and that if the principal was here he would understand the situation. I know that it is incorrect to put the wrong date on the certificate, but I don't want to be the "odd one out" if it is normal for vets to use their clinical judgement in a particular situation to override a bureaucratic stipulation. Surely, it is more important that the horse is vaccinated near the date rather than on the exact date on the passport?

Many thanks,  
Henry, Co. Longford

Dear Henry,

One of the greatest assets the veterinary profession has earned over more than 200 years is the reliance that members of the public have on the opinion of "their vet". Generally, this applies to opinions on clinical cases where an animal owner is looking for a diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. The law also holds veterinary opinion in special regard when it comes to matters relating to animal health and welfare and the clinical opinion of a vet can carry significant weight.

However, your issue goes beyond these direct associations in that it is a question of certification that a particular procedure was carried out in accordance with a specified protocol. Such protocols are designed in conjunction with veterinary expertise to serve the common good. Many of these also have commercial implications for buyers and sellers of animals and animal products.



Under such circumstances, the role of individual veterinary practitioners is to ensure that those protocols are adhered to. The veterinary signature is the only assurance that third parties to the event (in your case a vaccination protocol) can have that the protocol was followed.

So in the first instance, if you put a false vaccination date on the passport you are defrauding all such third parties. They cannot be aware that your clinical opinion has overridden the protocol, irrespective of your reasoning.

Your second point regarding it being common practice amongst vets (and your own practice principal) is irrelevant in that each veterinary practitioner is responsible for his/her own actions. Falsifying a document is

not only unethical; it is also illegal and so indefensible for any citizen. Where it involves a professional, such action brings the entire profession into disrepute and its future role in certification.

In conclusion, your first instinct to refuse to falsify the vaccination date is correct. While your client may not appreciate your stance, your employer should be grateful that you are protecting his practice's reputation in his absence and that you are not bringing the profession into disrepute. You might use this "crisis" to instigate a practice meeting where you could discuss this and other ethically challenging situations.

Kind regards,  
Ethel

## Veterinary practitioner found guilty of professional misconduct and sanctioned

An inquiry into the fitness to practise veterinary medicine of Mr Padraic Kilmartin (Registration No.: 46/11) of Glen Veterinary Clinic, Blind Street, Tipperary Town was held on 23, 24 and 25 September 2014. The basis of the case was that Mr Kilmartin failed to comply with the requirements of the Veterinary Council's Code of Ethical Veterinary Practice and the European Communities (Animal Remedies) (No 2) Regulations 2007 when he wrote veterinary prescriptions for animals that were not "under his care".

Mr Kilmartin was found guilty of professional misconduct at a Fitness to Practise Inquiry and the Council imposed a sanction of 'censure' on Mr Kilmartin. Censure is the highest penalty that can be imposed on a registrant before removing or suspending his or her name from the register. The Council's decision was confirmed by the High Court on 15 October 2015.

# From the US Navy Emergency Room to Veterinary Nursing

*Veterinary Nursing Award Winner, Vincent Sally, from Dundalk Institute of Technology, talks about his (relatively) late vocation*

When the recession hit in 2008 and Vincent Sally found himself unemployed, he decided he needed a career change. "I always had a strong interest in animals, especially dogs, having had a few over the years, so veterinary nursing was a natural fit with my interest in animals. My previous employment experience as an Emergency Medical Technician in the US Navy, coupled with the help of the staff of the VEC 'back to education' facility in Dundalk, pointed me in the direction of the veterinary nursing course in Dundalk Institute of Technology".

Vincent really enjoyed his time at Dundalk Institute of Technology. "The course was fantastic with a broad look at many aspects of veterinary nursing. Picking one aspect as a favourite would be difficult, but I found equine nursing, surgical nursing and clinical nutrition really good modules. Also, to be back in education after quite a break was a

surreal experience and one that I really enjoyed and will surely never forget".

Vincent's areas of interest in veterinary nursing were influenced by working within a small animal practice. He found that weight management and nutrition are especially important for many pets and he feels that he is now a competent contact point to help all the practice clients.

While he gets to grips with the job in hand he is too busy to think about what his long-term ambition in veterinary nursing might be, but he commented: "I would like to continue my education with a view to rounding my knowledge in relation to practice management. I want to settle into my new work life and gain confidence and competence in this new profession".

Long-term, Vincent wants to earn the confidence of his clients, and demonstrate the veterinary nursing



*(L-R) Deputy President Raymond Finn, VCI is pictured with Vincent Sally at the recent DKIT graduation ceremony.*

profession in a good light. He said: "As a mature student I have felt that the help of other mature students was very important to me in my educational journey in DKIT, so I feel I would like to be an advocate for other mature students and also to try and encourage more male nurses into the profession".

## Veterinarians are everywhere!

This issue we feature another advertisement from the powerful press and poster campaign commissioned by the Federation of Veterinarians in Europe (FVE).

The campaign is designed to draw attention to the importance and diversity of the work of the veterinary profession.

This advertisement highlights the role of the profession in people's Need for Animal Protein and uses the campaign headline 'Veterinarians are Everywhere', with the tagline, 'Because Veterinarians Are Vital'.

The advertisement includes the following text:

*The world's population is growing every day and by 2020 will we still be able to meet the demand for milk, eggs, fish and meat? Veterinarians help make sure the world can produce animals fit to eat by preventing disease and by helping animals breed using modern techniques like artificial insemination and embryo transfer.*

The advertisements can also be used as posters and if you are interested in obtaining copies of the posters for your practice please contact the Council at [info@vci.ie](mailto:info@vci.ie) or phone 01 668 4402. Other advertisements in the campaign will be featured in future newsletters.



# Profile of the Veterinary Professions 2014

## Veterinary Practitioner

### 2014 veterinary practitioner registrations - where did they graduate from?

In 2014, 145 veterinary practitioners joined the Register for the first time - 81 of these were new graduates. Of the 81 new graduates, 49 qualified in Ireland, 6 qualified in the UK and 26 qualified in other EU Countries. Of the 26 EU graduate veterinary practitioners who joined the Register, over 16 (60%) qualified in Hungary.



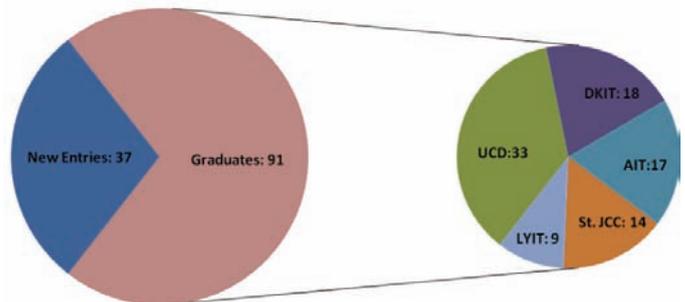
The total number of veterinary practitioners on the Register as of the 31 December 2014 was 2408. Approximately two thirds of whom are male.



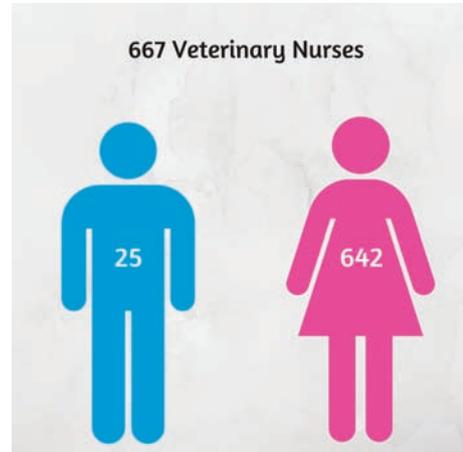
## Veterinary Nurse

### 2014 veterinary nurse registrations - where did they graduate from?

In 2014, 128 veterinary nurses joined the Register for the first time - 91 of these were new graduates who graduated from: UCD (33); Dundalk Institute of Technology (18); Athlone Institute of Technology (17); St John's Central College (14); Letterkenny Institute of Technology (9).



The total number of veterinary nurses on the Register as of the 31 December 2014 was 667, 92% of whom are female.



## Have your say about the newsletter

This is the 11th edition of the Veterinary Council of Ireland's newsletter; we are very keen to know what you think of it!

This link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LV67NKL> will direct you to a short survey which consists of 7 short questions.

Your answers will provide us with valuable feedback to help us enhance and improve future newsletters and provide you with interesting, timely and useful information about your profession.

## Contact Details

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