



Saturday 11th October 2025 | Ironbridge 1 | 08:45 - 09:45

Speaker: Hilary Orpet and Andrea Jeffery Ed.D,MSc,FHEA,DipAVN,Cert.Ed,RVN

Title: Creating an efficient veterinary team - unlocking potential and enhancing practice



Hilary Orpet is an RVN and Senior Lecturer at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC). She began her career in 1985, and joined the RVC in 1988 and basically never left (apart from a brief spell in first opinion practice and course lead at Middlesex Uni). Co-author of the Handbook of Veterinary Nursing and the Ability Model, she made nursing models cool before it was a trend. She helped create the foundation degree courses, improve animal welfare, and win awards with Andrea by her side. Now Deputy Director of VN, Hilary still teaches, writes, and completes researches.



Andrea swapped her Chief Nursing Officer role in a major employer group for a calmer life with an Awarding Organisation. A former BSc programme director at Bristol, she's passionate about keeping vet nursing a "career for life" (and has a doctorate to prove it). She's served on RCVS VN Council since the early days and co-created the Orpet and Jeffery Ability Model. She's won awards; including the RCVS Golden Jubilee and BSAVA Bruce Vivash Jones award.

Synopsis:

This session explores the different roles within the veterinary nursing team (RVNs, student VNs and veterinary care assistants) and how to improve the efficiency in the practice by maximising their skillsets.

Delegates will consider how outdated cultural perceptions and limited confidence in delegation, can hinder VN team effectiveness.

The session will explore current workforce models and how to unlock their potential in veterinary practice.

Through interactive group discussion, and the use of authentic examples, delegates will reflect on their own practice environments to identify opportunities for positive change. This in turn will help futureproof the profession through effective workforce planning and team-based care.

Delegates will leave with a clearer understanding of how empowering the veterinary nursing team not only strengthens clinical care but also addresses broader challenges in recruitment, retention, and wellbeing across the sector.



Learning Objectives:

1. Explore the different roles within the veterinary nursing team (RVNs, student VNs and patient care assistants).
2. Describe how to improve the efficiency in the practice by maximising their skillsets.
3. Evaluate how empowering the veterinary nursing team strengthens clinical and addresses broader professional challenges.