



For the Record – male veterinary nurses

Chris Hann, Ryan Hunt, Ryan Mariner and Matthew Rendle

RCVS Knowledge:

Hello, and welcome to For The Record, a new podcast series from RCVS Knowledge. For The Record will feature conversations between current and former members of the veterinary professions, highlighting voices and experiences historically underrepresented in our official archive. In this episode, we hear from four male registered veterinary nurses working in the UK today. Together they discuss their route into veterinary nursing as a career, their experiences as men in a predominantly female profession, and their personal aspirations and goals.

Chris Hann:

Hi. I'm Chris Hann. I started off as a student nurse back in 2009 and qualified in 2012, and last couple of years I've been working at an animal hospital up in Edinburgh.

Ryan Hunt:

My name's Ryan Hunt. I have been in the industry six years next month and I qualified December, 2020. I currently work in Hampshire in a small animal first opinion practice, and that's it really.

Ryan Mariner:

Hi. I'm Ryan and I am a male RVN as well from Hampshire. I have been in practice since 2008 and I only registered in 2020, and I work as an out of hours nurse in a first opinion branch.

Matthew Rendle:

My name is Matthew Rendle. I started my training in 1989 and qualified in 1992, and I currently do various things but I work in a first opinion and referral exotics practice in Essex.

Chris Hann:

I guess my first question to you guys is how did you get to veterinary nursing? I don't think it's too far to say it's not a path that I think many guys think of, so I'd be interested to know how you guys got into it and see how different or similar it is to the way I got into it. I'll start, I guess.

I knew from a fairly young age that I wanted to work with animals, just interested in science and nature in general. Went to university and did a degree in zoology, but I came out of it not really knowing what I wanted to do with it. Didn't really get any kind of career guidance counseling of any note while I was there, I guess I went into it thinking I might be trekking through the jungle finding new species or I might

be helping conserve an endangered species somewhere. But came out of it, hadn't got a clue what to do with my new degree, every place that I tried to...

I just did that thing that I think you quite often do when you leave education, is you throw your CV at anyone and see what sticks, and the first place that offered me an interview was Battersea Dogs and Cats Home in London, and I hadn't even... Nursing or the veterinary profession wasn't even on the radar, I don't think, when I finished university. I think I'd kind of already dismissed it as something I was blissfully unaware of, veterinary nursing in general really. I think I was quite naïve or ignorant to that, to this whole profession really.

So I started just looking, just seeing what could I get. I wanted a job, I needed a job, and veterinary nursing started coming up as an option and at the time, like I said, I wanted to get my first job, I wanted to get working with animals, I wanted to see where things took me. Yeah, I got offered the job at Battersea Dogs and Cats Home and 12 years later I'm still doing it. So it certainly wasn't me fulfilling a childhood dream of, "I've always wanted to be a veterinary nurse." Or even work in this profession, but that's where I've ended up and, as I say, 12 years later I'm still here.

I think a lot of people grow up with an ideal job in mind and they fulfill that dream, but for me it certainly isn't the case. I do obviously like my job, but it wasn't what I set out to do when I first went to university or higher education or anything like that. So has anyone got anything similar to that? Or is it different for all of us?

Ryan Mariner:

I mean mine was different. Personally, I have an auntie who was an RVN and I used to go with her to the clinic back in the day to help her do things with her animals in the 90s. I just remember falling in love with it and trying very hard to get into the profession, but just couldn't get into it. It was just so difficult to get a position and a job, and I ended up going into childcare and then finally being given a place as a receptionist in my first practice and then working my way up through the ladder really. Then moving around, did referral, back to first opinion, I've worked all over and getting different experiences, but it wasn't very popular. Especially for a male, I found I was maybe overlooked a little bit because maybe they didn't take me very seriously, being a male, and it was very predominantly female nurses.

They seemed to go in and get trained very quickly, and I just waited for about two years to get a position and finally got in, and then just wanted to do anything to get in the door and kind of worked my way up through there really. Finally registered after all this time, but yeah, it's definitely not been an easy road.

Ryan Hunt:

I mean from a young age I kind of knew, I had a really keen interest in science and medicine but it wasn't my calling I think to begin with. I think when I was about 15 years old I got a job at a boarding kennels, which I got through work experience with my secondary school, and we did things like boarding dogs and we did stray dogs. Then we signed a contract with the police, and it was really cool.

But I mean I knew I didn't want to work at the boarding kennels forever, and it wasn't until I did my diploma in animal management that my auntie, who was a receptionist at a vets, got me work

experience there. I remember going, it's a first opinion, but it's quite a big step up from referral level and I remember going there and just being like... I wasn't even looking at the vets, I was just looking at the nurses and being in absolute awe of them, like, "Whoa, they are awesome." Like, "Wow."

I think that was in my last year of doing my animal management diploma, and I think from there or towards my last month I was just like, "I need to get into veterinary nursing. There is no other route for me, it's veterinary nursing and that's it." And so probably from the age of about 16, 17, and I sent my CV out to a lot of vets. I think I actually managed to get two, two get hold of me and I went for first one. I didn't even bother with the second one because, well, I've been here since.

Ryan Mariner:

Wow.

Ryan Hunt:

I've been here, yeah, for 16 years now. Yeah, I couldn't even picture doing anything different. I mean besides the boarding kennels it's pretty much my first real adult job, and I can't think of doing anything else.

Matthew Rendle:

That's really interesting. So I had the same, not really knowing what veterinary nursing was. I was bullied a lot at school so my solution for that at about 15 was I just stopped going, which seemed to sort it out, and I was very lucky that I had a really good teacher who could see that I was going a bit off the rails and he, in quite a maverick kind of thing for the 80s, he took me to one side and said, "Why don't you just find something you like doing that you might want to do?"

I went to my career's teacher at the time, I'd kept reptiles since I was about 10. I've kept snakes and things since I was a kid, and went to the careers teacher and like some of you have said I knew that I wanted to work with animals but I didn't know how. The careers teacher said for a boy, either working on a farm or working in a slaughterhouse was my best option, so that was not particularly supportive. Then my dad managed to convince a local practice to take me one day a week, so I used to go along every Thursday in a shirt and a tie and I didn't even know the career path existed at that time. It wasn't something I was aware of.

But just seeing them work and seeing how much difference they made to animals' time in the practices was amazing, so I did the work experience for about a year. I had to go back to sixth form to resit my maths, I think, either maths or English, I had to do one of them and then they offered me a training position. I started training in 1989 and then qualified in 1992, was a really, really terrible student. [inaudible 00:09:20] and stupid at the time and just thought, "I'll be fine, I'll just turn up and that'll be enough." So I took it a bit seriously after that and then, yeah, qualified in 1992 and stayed there, did theatre roles in exotics and stuff there, and stayed there for 13 years.

Matthew Rendle:

But it was a really, really good first practice, I think it kind of set me up to succeed because it was one of those practices that did everything. So they did cows and Koi carp and swans and everything, so it was a

really good kind of foundation of stuff. Yeah, I saw the work they did and just how good they were under pressure and, yeah, it was something that I was just really, really impressed by and just thought, as others of said, "That's the thing for me." Despite I'm not hugely academic and I'm dyslexic as well, so it wasn't an easy thing for me to go back and start studying. Like you say, I can't imagine doing anything else now.

Chris Hann:

So going back to something that you brought up, Ryan, about this idea that we as guys in a nursing profession might get... I'm trying to choose my words carefully here, but we might be overlooked or... One of the questions I pre prepared for this is do you guys think that, not as a whole because I know there are exceptions, but do you think if you were... There might be people out there who are looking for new nurses to join their team, they might overlook us purely because of our gender. Do you think they have a premisconception that somehow guys are less naturally suited to be nurses or something like that? Or do you have any kind of feelings that you've been discriminated in someway, or?

Ryan Mariner:

I feel I can understand what you're saying, and I think it's because the age as well when you're younger. Maybe I didn't seem as committed maybe, because I was a 16 year old boy at the time trying to do a job that obviously is very serious, and understanding it now as we've done it. Back in the day I found a lot of the practices were owned by people as well, and it was predominantly older vets, male vets especially, who didn't like the idea of having a male nurse I found in my experiences. They always just had female auxiliaries, kennel assistants and female nurses, so it didn't kind of go with their look of their practice.

Like I said, I just came into knowing people, kind of gave me a chance really I suppose is the best way to put it, and I think it's sometimes the empathy of a man doesn't always come across that you're going to be compassionate or sympathetic to the role when dealing with animal care, that we don't show emotion. Or if we do show too much emotion you're considered soft, or there is quite a lot of... it's very quite black and white, I think for the older generation especially as well or the expectation that you're going to want to be a vet is that same old question of, "When are you going to qualify? Is this a real job?" Those sort of things I've been handed a lot over the years, so that's my experiences of...

Now obviously a lot of people want to have male nurses because we do have a lot of different outlooks on stuff, I suppose, and different experiences and can bring different mixes to the group. So it has benefited me, being a male, if anything.

Chris Hann:

Ryan H or Matt, have you had similar experiences, or thoughts on that?

Ryan Hunt:

Yeah. I mean I wouldn't say I've been... I don't know. I don't think I've been treated differently.

Chris Hann:

No, no. We're touching a delicate subjection with discrimination in the workplace based on gender, but I'm just wondering if you've ever felt like, yeah, overlooked or has it benefited you in some way? Because personally I've never actually felt any negative things about being a guy in a female dominated

world. I actually sometimes look back to my first job offer and think, "Did I get that because I'm a guy?" Which is obviously in a stark contrast to what you were saying, Ryan, about how you felt like you were not getting stuff offered to you because you're a guy.

But from what I understand, that job offer that I got when I first became a student, there was scores, maybe 100 applicants and at that point I had never worked in a veterinary practice. I hadn't done work experience, I hadn't been a animal care assistant or a receptionist or anything, and somehow I got the job. Now, I'd obviously like to think that that's partly because I did a job interview, but at the same time is it because the clinical director was a guy? Was he thinking, "I might try and change up the dynamic of my team a little bit here"? Or, "He stands out of the crowd because he's a guy"?

So from that point of view I can see, if that is the case, I might just be overthinking it obviously, but has that benefited me then in that case? Yes. But it's interesting to hear obviously people who've experienced the opposite of me, which is they've been overlooked for things potentially because they're a guy.

Ryan Hunt:

Yeah. I mean like I said, compared to you guys I've been in the industry a very short period of time. But I think when I first started at my job, I remember it was an interview for a student veterinary nurse and I actually got the job alongside a female veterinary nurse because they still say to this day they couldn't choose between the two of us. She'd been working at a veterinary practice as a receptionist and I'd been obviously working with animals anyway.

Whether it had anything to do with the gender, I'm not quite sure. I am still to this day where I work the only male veterinary nurse who's ever worked here. Which I think is crazy, it's been open for years and years and years. But I don't know, I don't know. I mean yeah, it's difficult to say, isn't it? But then again since going to college and meeting other student veterinary nurses who have gone back and said, "We've got a male in our class." And they've kind of reported back to me that their management have gone, "It would be cool to have a male veterinary nurse. It would be a different dynamic." And that's when you take a step back and go, "Okay, right. Yeah, I guess maybe it would be different, I don't know."

I mean like I said, this is the only place I've ever known and it's just worked and we all get along really well. I think we're all a really good team here, so I'd like to say that, no, my gender hasn't had anything to do with it.

Matthew Rendle:

I think I'm the same, I don't think I've ever had anything where I've felt that I was at a disadvantage from being male. My first training practice had a qualified, male, veterinary nurse when I started and he was absolutely terrible, looking back at how awful he was has actually been quite good because I've always reflected, making sure I was never as bad as he was. So despite them, having had a lot of issues with a male nurse, I still got a position there as a trainee male nurse so I can't say I've ever encountered it particularly.

I think sometimes over the years maybe just feel a teeny, tiny bit excluded from the things that the female members might go off and do. I don't particularly want to go off and go to a... I'm old now but I don't particularly want to go out partying particularly or whatever. But I think that's fine, and I think it's important to reflect on diversity and how having a mixed team, any kind of diversity in a team in my experience is just very, very healthy. Just brings different strengths and weaknesses and different kind of approaches, so I think it enhances the team definitely.

Chris Hann:

I don't actually know what the statistics are for how many male nurses there are to female, but it sounds like... I mean I've only ever worked with two other male nurses during my 12 years. I don't know how many you guys, but do you feel like there is any increasing? Or is there always just maybe a token guy at some of the places that you've worked at before?

Matthew Rendle:

I can answer this as a no, because being Chair of Royal College's VN Council I kind of know all this stuff, which is worrying I think because I think I am a nerd. But there's about 19,700 nurses on the Veterinary Nursing Register currently, and less than 400 of those are boys. So it represents about 3% of the profession which is pretty much where it's been for a long time. It did go up to 4% at one point, and then went back down to three.

So I think it's hard to force diversity. I think it's important to just reflect on making sure that those of us, like you guys that are male veterinary nurses, it's important to be role models and make sure the people around you and your peers know that that's what you do. So I think that's important, is to try and increase the numbers, but it's been fairly static for a long time which surprises me because I've enjoyed my time. I would say no one enjoys their profession for their entirety of their career, I think that's impossible. But I would say 95% of it has been great and, yeah, I think it's a good profession to be in as any gender really. But we just perhaps need to just make it more, raise the profile of it as well and get more people realizing that it is a definite career for men.

The interesting thing that Ryan touched on was about people asking you when you're going to be a vet, and I was asked that question over the 30 years really. It's incredibly common, and over the years I've just got more and more sarcastic with my answers. My most recent one is I say, "They didn't have chunky cords big enough for me." Which I think is probably a little bit unprofessional, but it's hard to explain to people, like we have human doctors and human nurses, and nobody would ever ask a human nurse, "When are you going to be a doctor?" But somehow there's this kind of lack of transparency.

But again, we just need to make sure that we're clear to our clients, and I think some of that is in our gift. I think as veterinary nurses we don't explain to clients who we are, what we do, the amount of times I tell nurses off for saying, "It's just, Matthew. I'm just a vet nurse", just drives me insane. So I think just making sure clients realize that you're a veterinary nurse, wear your badge and all that kind of stuff, I think all goes towards raising the profile of male veterinary nurses.

Chris Hann:

Yeah. I mean we have obviously things like Veterinary Nurse Awareness Month, but we don't have anything to highlight that it's not just the girls doing it. I think, yeah, there's an element of that in it, but

also it's going back to what you were saying. Do you guys also come into so many situations where people assume that you're a vet? If you go out to see someone in the waiting area or in the practice and immediately you can just tell that they think you're a vet by the way they address you or the way they talk to you or something like that? And they look startled at you when you explain to them that you're a nurse instead?

Ryan Hunt:

I think it's worse, even when you're just out, say on a social event or whatever it is and you go, "I'm a veterinary nurse." And then they go off and say to somebody, "He's a vet." I never even said vet, I said two words.

Chris Hann:

And the word veterinary seems to throw people, because if you say the words, "I'm a nurse." They kind of know what you're doing. If you put veterinary in front of it, you go, "So what's that?" Yeah, that's an experience I've had several times, where you have to point out, "Yes, doctors and nurses in a human situation, and vets and veterinary nurses in a animal situation." So yeah, when you're trying to raise the profile of a profession and also us, as guys within that profession, and people on the whole don't know that you exist or what you do is possibly part of the issue. Because like I said before, I had no one guiding me down the route of going into nursing or anything like that in any kind of job guidance counseling that I had during my education.

I didn't have a family member or a friend or role model who said, "You should try this." Or, "Come join me doing this." So yeah, listening to what you guys are saying about how you got into it, I almost feel like I've had an extremely easy way into it and I should be very appreciative of that. But no, it's interesting.

Ryan Hunt:

I think the best part about when you say to a veterinary nurse, for instance I'm talking about in my scenario, sorry, it's when I wasn't a veterinary nurse and you said to veterinary nurses, "I want to be a veterinary nurse." They were like, "Yes, absolutely. Here, I'm going to help you try and find a way that you can get into this profession." And they were just so, so supportive. There was no doubt, there was nothing.

It was, "You're going to be a veterinary nurse, and here's how we're going to make you do it." Or, "Get you to do it." Sorry. Yeah, they were great, and still to this day when we get work experience in and they say, "I want to be a veterinary nurse." It's like, "Here are the routes, here's how you do it, here's what to expect." Yeah, and I think that's really, really great.

Matthew Rendle:

I think it's important to be signposts in those situations to people that stood out when you were training, that really took the time and that spent extra time out of their day to mentor and coach you because I was useless to start with and was quite frightened of dogs initially as well. I can remember just having that kind of one on one support and I think it's really important, and I think about that all the time when you see students that often struggle initially on placement, just as you say, just making sure you reach out to them in that initial part. So yeah, providing that support I think is key.

Ryan Mariner:

I mean I don't know if anyone else found it an issue as well, but with clinical coaches it's not been... I've found when I was training and stuff that there was a lot of clinical coaches that used to come and go between the training and I think that's been some of the barriers that has been allowing people to train as well, as often as we get applicants because there's just not enough clinical coaches to train student nurses. I don't know if anyone else has had that experience, but I had five in my three years because they just didn't last for my extended training, because of other issues going on with their lives or career changes and things like that. So I do think that is a barrier between getting more veterinary nurses into the career and profession, and the register as well.

Matthew Rendle:

It would be really interesting to see if that changes with the new E-Portfolio, because I think it's much more weighted towards the student than the clinical coach. Don't know if I should say this, but before, we didn't have clinical coaches when I trained. We had a little green book that you had to carry around and get random people to sign. Obviously we never signed any of it ourselves, that would be terrible. But essentially it wasn't a very good kind of structure.

But it did mean that you weren't limited to one person. All the RVNs chipped in and they knew their strengths and weaknesses, and would push you towards different people to learn different stuff which is actually expert witness support for those people. But I think everybody should be a clinical coach. I think it's something that once you get over your initial first year of being qualified, which can be a bit terrifying, I think it's a really good thing to put back into the profession, to coach people. I've had lots of students over the years and every time I have one I learn something from them. I think I learn about the challenges they face and how it's very different and I think, yeah, it's a really positive thing to be a clinical coach, definitely.

Chris Hann:

I think when you're a young guy the word nurse kind of, to some extent, has a stigmatism attached to it and it immediately puts it out of your mind as not even thinking about that kind of thing. I mean obviously it varies from different age groups and things like that, but I think for a fair chunk of guys out there, young guys going through education and things like that, like I said I think you sometimes stick a certain word or title into a job description and it will potentially put them off a little bit. And it needn't because we're obviously no less qualified or suited to do the job.

Getting guys into this profession is partly expelling this sort of, "It's not a job for guys" Kind of mentality which still hangs around a bit maybe, to an extent. I think just better career guidance and advice really because like I said, I'm at university, I'm finishing my degree and literally had a guy come in and say, and I'm paraphrasing here, but he essentially said, "Your two choices are to either do a PHD or a masters and stay in academia or go work for Barclays, because you'll earn lots of money there." And that was pretty much the extent of the careers advice that I got.

When I was back at secondary school doing work experience when I was like year 10 or something, I think you could go work at a vets but, I don't know, just didn't even think about that. Maybe better access or information provided at that kind of step might guide a few more people down the pathway, because yeah, maybe you just need to get a few more people interested from an earlier age or more

aware of it. Yeah, I don't know that part of you guys, if you have similar thoughts about what the hurdles are really.

Ryan Mariner:

I mean like I said before, I think the clinical coach for me was the biggest thing, but I think as well when I started training there was a real lack of understanding of what the job role actually meant and a lot of stigma was a glorified kennel assistant, or, "You are assisting the vets and being basically like their personal help." And even now I still have my friends and family ask things about the job role, and I'll tell them what I've done at work and things, and they're very still surprised that is within our job role to do.

It is a good thing, because it stops that sort of perception that I'm just standing there handing things to the surgeon or whatever, and when I've said we've done a blood transfusion or something like that you can see peoples' interest spark. Yeah, that is part of our job role and we are trained to do these X, Y, Z things. I just do think there is a little bit of, veterinary nursing in general, there's not a lot of people know what it is and I think as the years have gone on there is a lot more publicity about the career.

There was a nursing poster a few years ago with a male in the picture with two ladies as well, and that was like the first time I've ever seen a male veterinary nurse in publication. So maybe having a body or especially with social media and stuff these days, there are very good male influencers out there, male veterinary nurses who I follow and stuff just because they really do put out the word in there. So hopefully it will turn around a little bit, I feel, eventually.

Ryan Hunt:

I think going back to what you were saying, Ryan, when you said that even though you had an auntie who was an RVN, you still really struggled to get into the industry. I think in general it's a pretty difficult industry to get into because especially when you're applying from a... for a student position, it's going to be really cut throat because again, speaking from my experience, I was up against a lot of people. I mean because I went to an animal management college and I was with a lot of people, the majority of people on my course wanted to be veterinary nurses and you're up against all of them, and then you're up against the other colleges who also do animal management, and then obviously it's a lot of practices want qualified and there's just not many qualified.

I think that in itself is a difficult hurdle to tackle anyway, and then bearing in mind you've got the vast majority of males who want to be veterinary nurses are in that group. It's just going to narrow it down more and more, isn't it?

Ryan Mariner:

It does. Yeah, it's a very popular career choice I find between the 16 to 20 year olds maybe, when I was doing it as well everyone wanted to do animal management or animal care. I went to a college as well that's had a lot of funding for that animal unit. It was an agricultural college and they're always, say, 400 students for the animal cultures part and there was five veterinary nurses as students and it was just not very public. We had to sit in a floristry room because we didn't have any funding, so it was just very made to feel, not undervalued, but we were very overlooked by the animal care. You've got the tiny, little section which is the veterinary nursing, and a lot of the animal care students wanted to be

veterinary nurses and they were told if they do the animal care they can get into veterinary nursing, which wasn't actually the truth.

They had to still have all their GCSEs and the sciences, and we used to have a lot of students come as work experience that I would know from the college and I'd be like, "You still need to have X, Y, Z to be enrolled with the RCVS." And there was a little bit of, not manipulation, but it wasn't very clear to the animal care students and they thought it was just going to be a shoe in that you could just walk into veterinary. Which is why we always promote the work experience, because come work with us for a week because you'll see what it's really like behind the scenes, and it does open their eyes a lot of the time. I think you either feel that click of you love it, or you know this is not going to be for you.

So I do think trying to get more work experience, allowing more students at a time as well because we're only allowed one or two during the whole time for that whole year and there's quite a lot of students that apply for it. I don't know if anyone else has had that issue with-

Matthew Rendle:

So I think the work experience thing is key, and I think it's important in a veterinary practice culture to make sure they're factored in and you spend a bit of time with them and explain to them and talk to them about what happens and what's good and what's bad, and as Ryan said, make sure they really see the reality of the role. Because I think it's a bit sad if people set their heart on it, inception of what it is, because there are difficult bits about it as a profession. There are amazing bits about it.

So I think, yeah, work experience is key, as is being a training practice and trying to just encourage and nurture the next generation. I think also I found myself in the middle of where I am now, probably about 10 years ago, just being an absolute miserable person and moaning about the profession a lot. A friend of mine said, "You really need to leave." Actually very sound advice, and I joined the BVNA council and then went on to be Royal College Council, and now am the first male chair of VN Council that there's ever been. So I don't particularly enjoy wearing a suit and tie and standing up in front of 300 people about veterinary nursing, but it is giving my bit back to the profession.

I certainly moan less now and I think I have more of an understanding of what goes on and how we all need to do the work experiences and the chatting to people and doing school talks, and just getting out there. I think it's, yeah, super important. One of the things that I got involved in when I joined VN Council, it was something that Ryan touched on, was making sure that we're putting images out that we always have representation of diversity. So there are male veterinary nurses being seen doing their job in the mix of the information that gets put out there, because we probably are over represented in it now. But it's good that people just see it and know that that's actually... There are those people out there working it, and I think that's really important. It's a subtle one, but it's really important.

Ryan Mariner:

Absolutely.

RCVS Knowledge:

As a closing question for discussion we asked the participants to talk about where they see themselves 10 years in the future.

Chris Hann:

I'm at that stage where a lot of people are expecting me to do senior or head kind of nurse things. I have recently started as a senior nurse role, but the thing is I just want to be on the factory floor, as it were. I don't necessarily want to be doing the admin, officey stuff that I always see my previous head nurses having to do. So I'm not looking to progress much in that direction any further. I guess if I had to, yeah, in 10 years' time I could potentially see myself doing some sort of teaching role, but depends on what the route would be to get into it from where I am at the moment.

Ryan Hunt:

I 100% know there's so much more education out there for me that I'd love to get stuck into with the veterinary industry. I need to know more, I want to know more, I always want to know more. So I definitely know there's going to be further education for me, and it will definitely be in a veterinary industry, and I'm really enjoying being in my first opinion, small animal at the moment and I'm going to take my time in it, and when the time comes I know that I'll probably go bigger. Maybe I'd love to do some experience with referral practices, with emergency practices definitely, and just see where I go with that. But I love my job and I'm happy at the moment, yeah.

Ryan Mariner:

Hopefully I still have the same amount of love for the job that I've had for nearly 13 years. Every day is a challenge, every day is different. Some things become mundane and routine, which is why I've kind of fallen into emergency work over the last few years because it's just a bit more... It pushes me to work harder and think a little bit mentally as well, and trying to provide the best we can to the patients and clients. I would like too, like you said, certificates would be lovely. If they ever did something like, I don't know, a nurse practitioner or something like that eventually, like they do with human nurses, that would be a amazing for us to promote and push myself in that level. But yeah, I just enjoy the actual job style, role still and I don't know whether it'll be referral or first opinion again, but I imagine I'll still be on the floors in 10 years' time, doing my thing.

Matthew Rendle:

I think 10 years feels like a long time for me now. Yeah, I don't know what I'll be doing in 10 years' time. I get to do some wildlife, I enjoy it loads and if I could do that full time that would be amazing. Unlikely, but it would be amazing. I hope I'm still nursing, because whether I like it or not I'm going to start representing another area of diversity by being old. So I'm going to be an old, male veterinary nurse which that ticks two boxes of diversity as well, and I think that's a good role model. I think I work with loads of nurses at the moment that are half my age and take great delight in telling me they weren't born when I was qualified and all those kind of things that make you feel great.

Ryan Mariner:

Shade! [Laughs]

Matthew Rendle:

I hope that I can still be, yeah, doing the things I can do. My knees are knackered, my shoulders are knackered and my eyesight is going now as well which nobody warned me about, so I'm that old person now with my glasses on my head trying to take blood samples from birds. I can still get them, I can still take the blood samples from the budgie and the cockatiel. But I have no intention of leaving the profession. I do some part time teaching which is great, and as long as I can continue to be an effective, useful member of the team then, yeah, my plan is always to carry on.

RCVS Knowledge:

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