



## **Position statement on classified advertisements for Veterinary nurses**

In 2008, the Veterinary Nursing profession in Ireland became a regulated and protected profession in accordance with the Veterinary Practice Act 2005. This Act, along with the Veterinary Practice (Amendment) Act 2012 lays down in section 91 the procedures which only registered veterinary nurses can carry out and that any non-registered person, lay person or otherwise, carrying out these procedures are guilty of an offence under the Act.

It has also been an offence since 1 July 2008 for a registered veterinary practitioner to employ a veterinary nurse who is not registered with the Veterinary Council or for a non-registered 'veterinary nurse' either to use the title 'veterinary nurse' or to perform any procedures listed in section 91 of the Veterinary Practice (Amendment) Act 2012.

### **Issue:**

Despite the introduction and inclusion of the Veterinary Nursing profession into legislation, giving it a protected status, the recognition of its value remains low. Wages and working conditions remain poor, despite the profession's high level of qualification and skills and nurses continue to compete for employment with Student Veterinary nurses and lay people, resulting in a mass exodus of a highly qualified, experienced work force.

The IVNA upon recommendation from the IVNU believe that lack of transparency and inconsistencies in how Veterinary Practices advertise for staff is a contributing factor to the continuous issues facing the Veterinary Nursing profession in relation to pay, working conditions and job satisfaction.

### **Cause:**

There is currently no policy regulating how those seeking to employ veterinary staff advertise for positions. Repeatedly employers place classified advertisements with merging of titles such as Veterinary Nurse/Animal Care Assistant or Registered Veterinary Nurse/Student Nurse. These adverts are ambiguous in nature at its best and offer no clear indication as to what the role entails. Furthermore, these classifieds could be construed to imply that a non-registered, non-qualified person may or may not be performing acts of Veterinary Nursing within the workplace.

**Solution:**

In order to protect the status of Irish Veterinary Nurses in Veterinary Practices, encourage transparency and increase retention of skill and knowledge within the profession, the IVNA requires the following criteria is met when placing a classified advertisement seeking to employ Veterinary staff;

1. **Job title specifying the role sought to fill.** There must be a clear distinction made between the different employment categories, i.e. Registered Veterinary Nurse, Student Veterinary Nurse and Animal Care Assistant. One classified ad cannot contain more than one job title as this would imply that a non-qualified person might carry out Acts of Veterinary Nursing.
2. **Job description.** There should be a clear description made available of what the role of the Veterinary Nurse, Student Nurse or Animal Care Assistant will entail within the Veterinary Practice to avoid any questions in relation to the level of qualification and commitment required to fill the job. The description should include duration of employment i.e. full time/part time etc., hours of work, inclusion of overtime and out of hours, contributions made by employer towards CVE and VCI fees and areas of responsibility such as surgical nursing, anaesthesiology, medical nursing, animal handling etc. It should also include any added responsibilities such as occasional reception duties, care of boarding kennel facilities or grooming duties.
3. **Name of employer and location.** The name and location of the Veterinary Practice seeking to employ staff should be clearly stated in the classified advertisements. This allows potential staff to consider travelling time, suitability of location and suitability of employer.
4. **Remuneration.** An indication of level of experience sought and the remuneration that can be expected should be included in the classified ad to allow nurses to evaluate the offer before applying.