

Profession needs fair pay scale for its VNs

Dear editor,

I am writing after reading the letter "If we're so efficient, where's pay for VNs?" (August 11 issue). I would like to express my feelings on this matter. I have been working as a veterinary nurse for 10 years and qualified in 2004. I still find it frustrating that experience means nothing within the veterinary profession. I have found myself becoming more annoyed that new, qualified nurses (from 2006 onwards) are on the same salary as me. Yes, we all do the same job and work the same hours, but after working in emergency hospitals, referral centres and normal day practices, surely this gives me somewhat more experience than a newly qualified VN working in a day practice?

Educating clients would also be wonderful. Recently, a client was asking about work experience for her daughter. She then went on to say she wanted her daughter to become more than just a person who cleaned out kennels. I went into detail about the training nurses had to undergo and the role they had within the veterinary practice. She assumed I was the receptionist, and asked what qualifications I had. At this point, I told her I had 13 GCSEs at grade C and above, three A-levels and an NVQ level two and three in veterinary nursing. She responded with: "Oh, you are rather academic then!"

I believe there needs to be some kind of pay scale set in place for veterinary nurses. First-year trainees, second-year trainees, newly qualified and then qualified nurses with experience all need to be taken into account. I moved to the south thinking wages would be better; however, the maximum for a qualified nurse down here seems to be £16,500 to £17,000. This is ridiculous money, and it proves very difficult when you are trying to get a mortgage and support yourself. I see my job as a career, not a vocation (as it seems to be classed as). I worked hard to get where I am, but with very little recognition. When are we going to see sensible wages being paid to qualified and registered veterinary nurses?

Yours faithfully,

NAME AND ADDRESS SUPPLIED.

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