

Veterinary Nurse School Ambassadors

Guidance and ideas for planning and creating school talks

Your role as an ambassador will help to offer inspiration and guidance to others, from all backgrounds, to consider whether veterinary nursing is a career option for them.

Veterinary nursing is all-too-often 'forgotten' as a career opportunity and our aim is to change that, so that school-age children consider vet nursing alongside other animal and healthcare career options, and teachers and careers advisors have veterinary nursing on their radar.

Whether you are offering an online or face-to-face session, or developing resources to help promote veterinary nursing session, your aims should be to:

- Help inspire others, be approachable and professional
- Offer a memorable session or resource – share your experiences and passion for the role
- Ensure your material is inclusive to all children, whatever their background, ethnicity or socio-economic status
- Make the learning material as accessible as possible to a wide audience of young people
- Offer accurate and up-to-date information
- Encourage questions and discussion from the start, and offer reassurance that there is no such thing as a silly question

The information within this guidance offers you the basics to help start developing your careers information. If you think anything is missing or unclear, or there is something you would like a little more guidance on, then please contact us at info@vnfutures.org.uk

Ideas for key areas to cover during a session

Younger age groups (e.g. 9-14 year olds)

- **For younger age-groups the aim is to explain what a veterinary nurse is, what they do, and inspire young people to think about animal welfare and the role nurses play in this.**
- What does a vet nurse DO - ask the question – discuss input (remember that many children will have little understanding of what a veterinary nurse is and what they do)
- You can use the wordcloud resource to instigate discussion
- The diversity of species that veterinary nurses can care for during their career
- Use of visual aids such as images, diagrams and physical objects
- The vet team – images of different roles and the part they play in the care of animals
- Examples of the equipment used and what it's used for
- How veterinary nursing offers practical, hands-on training with a diverse range of topics covered during training
- A little bit about the subjects required to enter veterinary nursing
- Please refer to the ambassadors crib sheet
- Include a little about career options
- Work experience – some ideas of basic work experience they could gain (depending on age)

You can also use the 10 Great Reasons, and the veterinary nurse careers leaflet to guide you

Older age group (e.g. 14-18 year olds)

- **For older age-groups the aim is to explain what a veterinary nurse is, what they do, how they can enter this career, what they may expect from a career in veterinary nursing.**
- What does a vet nurse DO – more detail about some of the work, clinical skills, scientific and technical aspects, people skills
- You can use the wordcloud resource to instigate discussion
- The diversity of species that veterinary nurses can care for during their career
- Nurse clinics and other client support aspects
- Diversity of the curriculum, methods of training, the practical aspects, and the transferability of skills gained
- More about career options – different routes available after qualification
- Diversifying into more specific roles – eg exotic, equine, zoology, referral, education
- Lifelong learning/CPD/further qualifications
- Regulation, accountability, autonomy
- Salary... (potential earnings depending on qualifications, experience and sector worked in)
- The subjects required to enter veterinary nursing
- Routes into veterinary nursing - FE and HE
- Please refer to the ambassadors crib sheet
- Work experience – what sorts of activities they can complete as work experience and how to gain placements

You can also use the 10 Great Reasons, and the veterinary nurse careers leaflet to guide you

Ideas for key areas to cover during a session

Length of talk - options

In-person talks – prepare for 20-minute session, to be agreed with organiser at school, and dependant on any additional activities that can be included.

Schools may wish for you to deliver a session that fills an hour-long teaching session, for example.

Alternative talk lengths may be requested which you can discuss and plan on a case-by-case basis.

Careers fairs will usually ask you to prepare something that specifically meets the remit of and fits in with their programme.

Plan!

Use the school talk planning sheet to plan your session and do this with the teacher's / organiser's input wherever possible.

It is a good idea to speak to the teachers to gain guidance on the group you are presenting to, useful pointers on their abilities, and what they may find most engaging.

Find out from the teacher whether there are any particular areas of the curriculum which you can link your talk into – for example, biology, communication, ethics, maths.

Ensure you have any resources ready, including any handouts you might like to use, and practical activity resources.

Dress to impress

Present your talk looking like a veterinary nurse!

Wear your uniform, your badge, and look ready for action! This will help to also raise awareness of 'what a veterinary nurse looks like'.

Use of images

Use as many images as you can – a picture can tell a thousand words!

Ensure you have the correct, informed consent before using ANY images that include animals, clients or other staff. Ensure that you do NOT share any sensitive information or data that would enable an animal or person to be identified.

Ensure that images comply with best practice (some guidance on this is provided in the ambassadors resources section).

Practical tasks

You may wish to include some practical activities during your sessions.

These can either be 'tabletop' activities (for example wordsearch, fluid calculations, labelling diagrams etc) or more 'hands-on' tasks (such as taking heart and pulse rates, bandaging a stuffed toy etc)

There are some ideas provided in the ambassadors resources section.

Please ensure you run any practical tasks past the teacher and ensure that they are safe to perform in the environment you are in.

Sensitive topics

Be prepared that some children may have had an experience with a pet and share this or ask questions during a session. This may be upsetting for some children.

Find out from the teacher if there is anything that may crop up prior to your session.

Preparing a pre-recorded presentation

5 -10 minute pre-recorded presentations to deliver 'on demand' and for school careers fairs for example

Remember...

Recorded presentations can be more difficult for children to stay engaged with, so try and keep them short, keep your tone light and engaging, and use lots of images, diagrams and real-life situations to put your information into context.

What to use to record your presentation

Teams or Zoom can be used for recording your presentation (further guidance available in ambassadors resources).

PowerPoint can also be used to record a narrated presentation.

It is preferable to have speaker video visible (talking head). They want to be able to see YOU!

If anyone needs any help, please ask.

Sound/recording quality

- Quiet room, no distractions
- Close curtains to dull echo or place a cushion in front of you
- Use headphones and microphone
- Disable computer and phone notifications and emails before you start
- Do a sound check and listen back to it (it should be clear and audible at 50% volume) before you record the whole presentation

Background

Please ensure you have a neutral background with the light source in front of you, or design your own Teams or Zoom backdrop (videos online to help you do this).

Possible themes that can be used to deliver a session or activity

Please see the School Ambassadors resources section on the VN Futures website for more details on these themes.

'A day in the life' of a veterinary nurse

Show what a veterinary nurse may do in a 'typical' day.

Clinical scenarios (older age-groups)

For older children. Use common clinical scenarios that we encounter in practice to show the care that pets receive in a veterinary setting, and the part that veterinary nurses have in this care.

Career roadmap (older age-groups)

For older children. You can use a visual 'roadmap' to show the journey from training through to qualification, and the career and further training options that are available to veterinary nurses.

Please share any other ideas, scenarios, discussion topics, or anything else that you have used that has been successful with us.