



What's in it for me?

A question potential registrants to the AHP Register may well ask. “What can AHPR offer me that my current organisation or association doesn't”? We'd like to try and clarify that for you.

For a bit of background to understand the current situation in the UK the only person that may treat an animal is a registered veterinary surgeon; however under part of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 and the Veterinary Surgery (Exemption) Order 2015 there is an allowance for non-veterinary surgeons (described as [unqualified](#) persons) to carry out certain procedures and to treat animals.

One of these exemptions includes “physiotherapy” (which the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons interprets as all kinds of manipulative therapy).

So what has this got to do with the AHPR?

The main reason to consider joining an independent voluntary register is due to the continuing review by the RCVS of the Veterinary Surgery (Exemption) Order 2015. The RCVS Exemption Order and Associates Working Party have been reviewing not only those people who are currently exempt; e.g. those who treat animals with “physiotherapy”, pregnancy ultrasound scanning of cattle and equine AI technicians to name a few, but also other service providers such as equine dentists who are not listed under the Exemptions Order or Schedule 3.

The RCVS EOA Working Party has come to the conclusion that the EO for “physiotherapy” is too wide and requires amendment and this may lead to the restriction on the types of procedures people working under the EO currently carry out. The aim of the RCVS is to have a solid working proposal that they can put to DEFRA to make any necessary changes to either the Order or the Act when some parliamentary time can be found. However at a meeting at the RCVS attended by members of AHPR earlier this year (January 2018) it was proposed that this could possibly be achieved in two years.

The main conclusion that came from this meeting was that something needs to be done to rectify the current situation where there is confusion amongst the “end users” of the services provided i.e. animal owners and veterinary surgeons, with the large amount of associations, organisations and training providers in the animal “physiotherapy” market.

The RCVS EOA Working Party have put forward a proposal to tackle this issue – the development of associate status (for example Registered Veterinary Nurses have associate membership of the RCVS) for animal “physiotherapy” practitioners and are considering two models.

1. **The accreditation model;** where the RCVS would accredit an existing register based on the regulatory structures it already has in place. They would expect the organisation to “provide registration services, set the standards for education, develop a code of conduct, provide advice to practitioners and investigate concerns (including holding disciplinary hearings)” and as long as the register met the stipulated criteria the RCVS would accredit it.
2. **The full regulation model;** where the RCVS would regulate individuals (as they currently do with vets and vet nurses).

The RCVS EOA Working Party considers both models could be suitable going forwards. With the full regulation model being described as a “RCVS Associates” and accredited organisations as “RCVS Accredited”.

So the main take home message from this is that things in the industry are changing and will change. There may in the future be changes as to which people can carry out certain procedures on an animal in relation to “physiotherapy”. Whichever route the RCVS takes any existing register that wishes to apply for accreditation will have to be robust and provide the level of regulation expected by an “independent” register.

The AHPR will offer you a register that will stand up to scrutiny by the RCVS and provide assurance to veterinary surgeons and animal owners that our registered members are well trained, professional, accountable and above all else have the welfare of the animals that they treat as their top priority. With the confidence of the “end users” that AHPR registrants are the people who can be trusted with their animals or their client’s animals then you will have an opportunity to increase your own client base.

The AHPR is unique in that it brings together a wide variety of allied animal health professionals providing different therapies that can complement each other in an animal’s treatment and well-being. A wide community of people who care about maximising the health of animals; you will be able to make contacts with like-minded people and foster excellent working relationships.

DEFRA on reviewing the AHPR website and the information presented have recently sent us the comment “we welcome an industry led initiative that not only provides a set of standards for your members but also assists in providing clarification for animal owners and vets”.

We have made the RCVS aware of the launch of the organisation and are currently, or will be, in contact with veterinary associations, veterinary surgeons, animal associations and insurance underwriters to bring AHPR to the forefront of users’ minds and you can be assured that we will continue to represent you to the RCVS as matters progress in the industry.

We are delighted that we can now accept applications to the Animal Health Professions Register; please click [here](#) to apply.

If you have any questions that you would like us to answer please email us at enquiries@ahpr.org.uk and we will share your questions and our answers so that everyone can be better informed.