

My Vet Nurse Journey

Well, what a journey my veterinary nurse career has taken me on, from starting out as a Saturday helper at a local small animal clinic, to my current role in telemedicine, my career as a small animal veterinary nurse has opened many amazing opportunities and adventures along the way.

How it all began, well many years ago(I won't say how many) whilst still at school, confident in the knowledge that I wanted to work with animals, my goal was to become a vet, so I started helping out on Saturdays at a local small animal practice, which progressed to helping after school and eventually a full time job as a VN, these were the days we all wore white coats and learnt on the job.



Fast forward a few years and having worked with an amazing Rana (Registered animal nursing auxiliary) I knew that veterinary nursing was the career choice for me, but I was also aware there was so much more to this role, so I moved to a training practice and began my VN training, one day a week and I loved finally gaining the theoretical knowledge and understanding, 2 years later I was proud to receive my qualification as RVN and subsequent change to bottle green, the colour synonymous with a VN, and then over the next few years progressed to a senior role in the practice.

Having reached my potential in this practice, and having gained confidence in my skills and abilities, I was keen to travel and expand my knowledge and experience, so using my VN qualification I started work as a locum VN, initially in the UK, working in a variety of settings from small local practices, a large charity hospital, to a renowned research referral centre gaining a huge amount of knowledge, learning and sharing tips and making many friends along the way.



My next adventure led me to the other side of the world where I spent a year travelling and working as a VN in Australia, here I met some incredible people, made some amazing friends and many wonderful memories of my adventures, caring for the usual menagerie of cats, dogs and some of the more local wildlife, and I am eternally thankful I managed to avoid any close encounters with the more hazardous type, (especially the eight-legged kind).

After a quick dash back to the UK and a few months of locum work to top up the funds, I was off again on another working holiday, this time to New Zealand, as a VN I had the opportunity to work in a variety of settings from an inner-city emergency clinic to a more alternative holistic practice, with plenty of time in between to explore this beautiful country, it's unique wildlife and amazing culture and people.



Then I was invited to travel to Borneo to volunteer at an Orangutan Sanctuary helping to look after the orphans and to develop educational information for visitors to the sanctuary and to the plight of these amazing apes as well as helping to develop good practice in the care of these orphans, a truly amazing opportunity for which I feel I am so lucky to have been given.

Returning to the UK I continued in a locum role until moving into a small animal referral setting, gaining more knowledge, experience and insight into the more unusual and complex cases seen and even dabbling a little into the world of exotics and working in the emergency out of hours setting as this developed to provide 24/7 care.

The next chapter for me was a little more sedate, marriage and then a family were my next adventures and I was able to continue working as an ECC nurse on a part time basis, enabling me to keep my knowledge and skills current, then by pure chance I came across an opportunity to work as

a VN at a charity clinic on the island of Alderney, working remotely under the direction of the vet on the neighbouring island of Guernsey.

It was the ideal opportunity for me at just the right time, somewhere safe to raise my young family and the chance to return to practice and make a difference once again.

After a bumpy flight during the tail end of a hurricane, on what I can only describe as the smallest commercial flight I have ever been on, I landed on Alderney and was taken on a whirlwind tour of the island, (which really didn't take long as it is quite small) and I knew this was the perfect next challenge for me.

So, within 7 weeks we had packed up the menagerie of pets, children and the contents of our home and relocated to 'The Rock' as it is known.

The role was quite different to anything I had undertaken before, it came with plenty of new challenges that island life brings and my problem-solving skills

were certainly put to the test in looking after the cats, dogs, and all nature of small furrries that were kept as pets on the island, as well as helping with the islands farm animals and horses, and the multitude of wildlife that call the island home.

A varied role was the understatement, being the only source of help on the island was a huge responsibility, hard work and challenging at times but it was also so incredibly rewarding.

It also provided the opportunity to work with the committee and charity to help organise and run fundraising events and continued improvement of the facilities and veterinary care on the island.



Hand reared feral kittens



Injured heron



Blonde hedgehog

As the family grew, it was time to return to the mainland, with my husband working away I was finding it difficult to return to practice life and fulfil family commitments, so I started a new chapter of working from home in veterinary telemedicine.

Once again, the perfect opportunity had arisen to enable me to continue to use my VN qualification, knowledge, and skills, and allowing me to be home for my family, giving me the luxury of the best of both worlds and I am now in a Head nurse position, managing a team and continuing to grow and develop in this exciting new area of the veterinary medicine.

So, in summary, I really do feel that my distant dreams of long ago to work with animals has been 110% fulfilled and that my qualification as a RVN has enabled me to achieve so much, to travel so far and to meet so many amazing people and their pets along the way, I am so grateful I made the choice to become a veterinary nurse.

Being a VN gives you so much opportunity to achieve whatever goals or dreams you may have and so much more, it can help take you on adventures, to go wherever you want your VN journey to take you, so my parting message must be, to go for it, grab those opportunities, use

your skills, follow your dreams and most of all, enjoy the journey 😊

Louise

Louise Faulkner RVN

