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MAY 2024

Presidents Report

My term as RAMP President should have ended in January this year, however I was flattered to be asked by RAMP Council and verified by registrants at the AGM to continue for another term to action plans into the next phase of development.

RAMP has established itself as a competent Voluntary Industry Regulatory Body (VIRB) that maintain a register for the Professions of Chiropractic, Osteopathy and Physiotherapy in animal healthcare.

As an organisation we have progressed at pace, partially as we have been guided by the standards set by the human statutory regulatory bodies in those professions, encouraged by DEFRA and supported by many in the education sector, but mainly from the selfless hard yards completed by our voluntary Council members. RAMP is now satisfied we have robust and competent policies in place to guide these professions towards statutory regulation, which may come under the umbrella of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) should the legislation surrounding regulation of the veterinary healthcare industry allow.

RAMP have surveyed musculoskeletal (MSK) practitioners who have made it clear they want to be regulated by people who understand MSK practice, they want to retain RAMP standards for the professions, and they think that autonomy of practice for qualified and regulated practitioners in animal care is essential, in the same manner enjoyed by those providing human care. These aims will be paramount in the move towards any statutory regulatory model, and I will do my utmost to steer course to deliver. However, change of legislation is a slow process and RAMP needs to be a sustainable organisation. A regulatory body needs to be self-funding. As RAMP has developed there is an increasing workload that is becoming unreasonable to ask of a voluntary council, it was therefore necessary to ask the registrants to vote at the AGM to increase the yearly registration fee, so RAMP can plan to employ further administrative help. The plan is whoever this is will work alongside a voluntary Council but will take much of the load for day to day running and make sure RAMP continues to develop until we learn what legislative change is in place.

Thank you to all of you who renewed this year, RAMP will continue to work toward building a MSK veterinary healthcare industry that will integrate the MSK professions into a modern veterinary healthcare model, but we need the support of all eligible practitioners.

Together we can make this work!



To

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AMP Council

RAMP is happy to say we retained all our Council members this year and welcomed back Sonya Nightingale who will continue as Compliance Officer and Treasurer. Sonya who is a RAMP founder and Past President, really hasn't been far away, and had fulfilled the roles above as a non-voting Council member and advisor for the past 2 years.

The call for new Council members was well supported from the physiotherapists on the register but unfortunately it is still Osteopaths that we are short of and next year we will have a space on Council for a Chiropractic member. However, we do want to welcome Veterinary Physiotherapist Emily Harris onto the marketing team as a co-opted but non-voting member of Council this year. Emily has integrated well into the existing marketing team of Lucina Stott and Alice Frampton and is working with them currently to plan marketing opportunities for RAMP to reach the animal owning public.

Thanks goes to Sarah Sharp who has stood down as Vice President but still provides vital support as Applications Officer and Auditor. We are delighted to welcome Lucinda Stott into the role of Vice President.

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Dates for your diary

Bath and West Show: RAMP are delighted to be sponsoring the Pawsability Agility Cup Final at 'Bark and West', a canine dedicated section at the Royal Bath and West Show May 30th - June 1st 2024.

RAMP/MSK Professional Associations representatives meeting: June 10th 2024, if you have questions you would like your PA representative to ask please contact them.

RAMP registrants meeting via ZOOM: August 27th 2024 at 7.30pm for you to ask questions directly to RAMP Council members. Links will be published on the RAMP registrants Facebook page and sent out by mass mail nearer the time to all registrants.

BEVA Congress: RAMP will be attending this year again to represent registrants and talking to Equine Veterinary Professionals: Sept 12th-14th 2024.

IRVAP Conference on Friday 11th October 2024.

Watch our social media and website for other events sponsored by RAMP, we aim to market the register to the animal owning public within the limited budget we have available. If anyone has ideas on a good sponsorship opportunity please contact our marketing team on marketing@rampregister.org



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Insurance

Following concerns from Registrants whose treatments have not been acknowledged by pet insurance companies, RAMP has been chasing the companies and their underwriters for explanations.

We are often assured that RAMP is on the preferred provider list, only to have the same problem repeated. We would like to reassure you that we are continuing to clarify the professionalism of our Registrants and push to have RAMP noted as a preferred provider with all pet insurers.

The RAMP infinities scheme for registrants' insurance with Balens, still provides a very comprehensive cover of £6 million for both public liability and professional indemnity, for the premium of £85. This has remained at this competitive rate due to the gratifyingly low number of claims, proving the professionalism of our Registrants. So, keep up the good work!

If you are insured elsewhere it would be wise to check your public liability cover and inform your insurer that animal and human law is completely separate and different for your treatments as this could affect your public liability cover.

Viv Simon

BSAVA Manchester 2024



RAMP had their usual stand at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress this year in March, and although the attendee numbers were depleted from previous years, this gave us an opportunity to speak to people in much more depth than we had done previously, and the promo goodies were only given when they had listened and engaged with us!

Lucinda Stott and I, as small animal practitioners on Council were particularly interested to attend and were supported by Jo and Vav.

Promotion of RAMP registrants to the vets is of utmost importance, and the awareness of who we are, what we do and what this means for the vets, seems to be getting through now, with many people we spoke with already having knowledge of RAMP, and so now we can push much more about what this really means to them. Some very interesting and sparkling conversations came from this, and the promotion of RAMP as an information hub too, seemed to be carried forward and welcomed. The vets loved this idea, as many of our post nominals, associations and titles are quite confusing to those not in the MSK industry (and those in it too!), and some comments came back that RAMP would be a great independent source of info.

The BSAVA Congress also gave us means and ways of reaching some of the people within the pet insurance industry, hence some great contacts were made, and since followed up getting assurance from both Petplan and Waggel that RAMP registrants are on their provider lists. RAMP continues working to get more recognition at the underwriting levels. So, watch this space!

Carl Gorman (Chair of the BSAVA) was very interested to hear that the vets we spoke to were 100% positive about RAMP and suggested that we had opportunity to put an article into the Companion magazine, which is the BSAVA magazine. This is due for the July edition.

Overall, it was a good show, promoting RAMP and its registrants to the small animal vets and other veterinary professionals, A useful and worthwhile experience consolidating awareness of RAMP within the Veterinary healthcare sector.



NEW

VICE PRESIDENT

Having already been part of the social media team for a year now, over this period of time I have seen the amount of work RAMP does, not only to protect animals in the UK, but to progress the regulation of Veterinary MSK professionals. The value RAMP continues to bring to the industry still goes unrecognised and It is for this reason that I accepted the role as Vice President, as well as to continue supporting the marketing team.

I currently live in Hartlepool with my 3 Jack Russel Terriers, and it is here I set up my own practice, North East Veterinary Physiotherapy. I operate 2 clinics, one in Hartlepool and one in Amble, Northumberland. I am currently investing in an underwater treadmill and intend to expand my rehabilitative offer to hydrotherapy as well.

Aside from my own practice, I have supported RAMP as several congresses including BSAVA 2023 and 2024, BEVA 2023, LVS 2023 and the NEF 2024. This year my aims are to strengthen the marketing teams public awareness campaign, as well as to work closely with Jo, learn from her, and hopefully progress RAMPs position as a voluntary regulator. As I continue to be introduced to new Professional Association Presidents, Government leads and other professional associates I hope to be able to start taking on further responsibilities as we progress into the year.

As someone who asked if it were possible to volunteer and help RAMP at the IAVRPT symposium 2022, the team both encouraged and welcomed me and my support. I too would encourage anyone else wanting to help the work RAMP is doing to get in touch. Simply send us an email.

Lucinda

Professional Associations

Meeting professional association members at events is a great way to clarify the difference between professional association membership and voluntary regulation registration and keep everyone up to date with the changes happening in the industry. RAMP will always try to respond to invitations to speak to PA membership so please contact us via info@rampregister.org

NAVVP

RAMP was delighted to contribute to the NAVVP winter newsletter and RAMP President Jo Paul was invited to speak to members on December 20th, 2023, via a zoom meeting. The event was well attended and there were some insightful questions around educational entry mapping. It was explained that the process is transparent and accessible by anyone who requests a copy of the mapping documents. Further, RAMP must be robust to maintain our standards as we must be able to evidence how each registrant reaches criteria to maintain the integrity of the register. Members who were combining qualifications to reach entry criteria were encouraged to communicate with our Education Officer Amanda Stears at education@rampregister.org to confirm they were eligible before applying and reassured that they would be given advice on any top up education they might need to gain entry to the register.

There was also myth busting around concerns that RAMP treat human qualified practitioners differently from veterinary qualified practitioners. There are many routes to RAMP eligibility but once a practitioner reaches RAMP criteria all are treated the same; as MSK practitioners. RAMP encourage Professional Associations to request a meeting for their members if they want us to answer questions within the context of their own membership.

IRVAP

Once again RAMP is excited to attend the IRVAP Conference on Friday 11th October 2024 and is grateful to attend with our stand and Council members to meet attendees. Also once again some of our Council members will be delivering clinical presentations.



Saddlers showcase

The event at Saddlers Hall, in the City of London, was held to showcase and reward work in leather, mainly tack but also other offerings varying from a shot gun slip to shoes. I was a last minute "shoe in" for Vav, who had succumbed to some frightful lurgy engendered no doubt by residing in inhospitable latitudes. The vagaries of Public Transport overlooked those coming from the South West and I arrived in good order at Saddlers Hall, tucked away near St Paul's cathedral on a site existing since medieval times.

For those unfamiliar with the workings of the livery companies, they were established in the mists of time to regulate standards in the profession to which a liveryman would belong, much as we are moving towards with RAMP - perhaps we should think about establishing a Worshipful Company of Neuromusculoskeletal Practitioners! I felt immediately at home, meeting a past master of the Worshipful Company of Farriers, John Peacock (my livery Company and on the same interlivery clay shoot teams) and Jane Nixon, chair of the British Horse Foundation, with whose late husband, also a vet, I used to work. I also shared mutual acquaintances with Sam, representing the household cavalry and so it was a wonderful opportunity to catch up with some old friends and to forge new relationships in my role as RAMP representative. Champagne flowed initially before a number of research projects sponsored by the company were presented.

The Master of the Saddlers Company had just come back from a large equine trade fair in Germany and was made aware of the influence of the high quality Indian products having 50% representation there. He emphasised the need for British Saddlers to provide "value added" in terms of knowledge and service. To this end, the Saddlers Company are investing in research to examine best practices in tack fitting. There were 3 very interesting presentations, 2 from Hartpury and 1 from Southampton, of research sponsored by the company looking at noseband fit, back excursion during movement and attention to tack fit of professional groups when assessing horse performance.

These presentations reinforced the importance of assessing tack and the necessity of keeping abreast with current research developments in advising owners on best practices.

In common with most City of London Livery Companies, a proportion of the liveryman are very peripheral to the horse industry and a few intimately involved, with the remainder "in between". I did my best to raise awareness of the existence of RAMP and its goals to those unaware of the current state of the industry and the movement towards a change in legislation.

It was interesting to see that within the horse community represented, a number were very aware of RAMP's existence including Sam representing the RDA. Brigadier Philip Napier (clerk to the company) who is on the Equine Fitters Council said how grateful they were to RAMP for their advice some years ago when setting up their own voluntary register - they have 60 members currently. This was echoed by Catherine Morrison who appeared to be orchestrating the event. I thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon, catching up with old acquaintances and making new ones, and taking the opportunity to promote RAMP as it takes its place with the other professions to secure a best practice framework in our interactions with animals.



Human Equine Interaction Register UK



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Jo Paul was honoured to be invited to Hartpury University in February to talk about industry voluntary regulation and the RAMP journey.

The Register aims to bring together all people involved in the field of human equine interactions to ensure high quality service provision and create a greater awareness of their work.

The Register acts as a helpful resource for service users to make informed choices, service commissioners, funders, practitioners and anyone wishing to find out more about equine assisted or facilitated programmes in the UK.

On their website: <https://hetifederation.org/heir-register/> you can search for individuals and organisations who provide equine assisted or facilitated therapies including: physical therapies; psychotherapy; education; learning; coaching and have demonstrated that they operate to high quality, safe and ethical practice standards.

Those on the Register have demonstrated that they have both human and equine welfare at the heart of what they do.

Please contact the HEIR UK team at heiruk@hetifederation.org if you require additional information.

Competition Marketing Authority (CMA) Response



In November 2023 RAMP met with the CMA stakeholders' group and so received communication that the CMA were considering if a review should take place into current Veterinary services.

At first glance it would seem the issue was not relevant to RAMP. However, although we could not comment on drug pricing or veterinary interventions RAMP did feel it important that MSK care was represented as a component of contextualised care of animals. Therefore, RAMP compiled a response detailing RAMP welcomes the CMA's interest in the veterinary surgery industry, as commercial developments over the last ten years or so have fuelled consumer anxiety and compounded the challenges of providing safe and competent MSK care to animals.

Beyond pet owners, these changes impact wider aspects of the industry than simply vets and nurses, and RAMP would encourage the CMA to consider the whole range of professional animal healthcare providers accessible to pet owners, with the objective being a reduction in the current difficulties faced by consumers.

RAMP submits that pet owners would welcome a significantly greater contribution from competent, regulated MSK practitioners who work alongside vets, and provide services that are currently under-utilised and undervalued in the veterinary industry.

Revision of the Veterinary Surgeons Act to include regulated MSK professionals with clinical autonomy would encourage this highly skilled but highly threatened element of the MSK workforce to remain in practice as already too many have left the industry due to the difficulties in getting referrals and stresses around remaining within the law.

A summary of the points elaborated on are below:

- Any new structure should encourage and facilitate the inclusion of MSK care into future contextualised healthcare plans for animals. Delivering an alternative evidence based, relatively low-tech, low-cost option for owners, appropriately provided solely by suitably qualified and regulated MSK professionals.
- The current legislation and need for a veterinary referral should not restrict access to suitable qualified and regulated MSK professionals that work independently outside any specific veterinary practice. If the status quo continues, many highly skilled practitioners will leave the industry further restricting owners to the use of 'in house' services from vet practices.
- 'In house' MSK services provided by veterinary practices should be delivered by MSK practitioners evidencing an appropriate minimum threshold of pre-registration education and professional standards that permit these practitioners to join an industry regulatory body with appropriate high standards, properly expected by consumers and equivalent to those required to register with RAMP.
- Current legislation significantly restricts the optimal utilisation of MSK services and drives business to those who do not see a need to comply with appropriate levels of care, current legislation, or any regulatory structure. This is a risk to animal welfare as those practitioners are significantly less likely to collaborate with the vet or wider multidisciplinary team.
- Changing the legislation to allow qualified and RAMP level regulated MSK practitioners to work with clinical autonomy as first opinion providers within their scope of practice would substantially improve standards of care and in very many cases reduce the overall cost to the consumer by facilitating a competitive market. In addition, it would provide vets with an accredited, safe alternative to immediate high-tech investigations and support their stated aim to optimise contextualised healthcare for animals.

To & Vav



Education update

The RAMP Education team is excited to work with providers to contribute the development of programs to support practitioners reach RAMP education entry criteria and are currently working with several providers to provide high quality education required. This March, Jo attended a stakeholders day at the University of Nottingham which discussed the Veterinary Physiotherapy PGDip/ MSc.

Amanda has been busy working with new education providers and has assessed one AEP and one REP program with several more in the pipeline.

This month saw the successful accreditation (AEP) of a suite of qualifications from IPET and the Academy of Veterinary Physiotherapy led by Wendy Vaughan and her team that will offer students the chance to gain qualifications ranging from a Level 4 Diploma in Animal Sports Massage, through to a Level 5 Diploma in Animal Sports Massage and Rehabilitation, leading onto a Level 6 (degree equivalent) Diploma in Veterinary Physiotherapy. Those completing all 3 courses will gain an Ofqual regulated qualification from IPET giving graduates the same assurance over both the quality of the education provided and eligibility to join RAMP at the point of graduation from the Level 6 component.

At RAMP we believe that the road to qualification has many paths, and we are excited to welcome IPET and the Academy of Veterinary Physiotherapy to RAMP. They bring onboard the only UK based multiple species vocational training that meets RAMP AEP educational criteria. In 2017 Loo and Jamieson "called for an opening of new pathways of occupation- related provisions that offer greater parity, progression and enhanced social mobility across the academic levels in educational provision". We must ensure the industry welcomes and respects those who reach their potential with regulated degree equivalent qualifications albeit via a different route as MSK Practitioners.

RAMP is constantly working to encourage and support quality REP Courses to help practitioners reach RAMP education entry criteria. We are delighted to welcome K9HS led by Barbara Houlding who is a clinical specialist in Canine Physiotherapy to the REP portfolio. This program will be a valuable addition to anyone for either CPD in canine hydrotherapy or to add clinical hours and core knowledge to their education portfolio. The program delivers 46 RQF Level 4 academic credits which includes 70 practical education hours.

Resources

In response to questions, we receive RAMP are writing blogs which are published on the website News page and our social media outlets, Please feel free to use them to help answer questions you may get asked about RAMP. Also, if you have a question feel free to ask us for a blog on the subject.

2024 Blogs:

Jan 24: [RAMP Blog: In the beginning](#)

March 24: [RAMP Blog: Good Intentions, Unintended Consequences. The development of regulation for animal neuromusculoskeletal practitioners.](#)

March 24: [Professional Autonomy does not mean Absolute Freedom! Understanding the current debate around autonomous practitioner status of the Neuro-musculoskeletal Professions in Animal Care.](#)