

Laura Mills

Go for it!

Laura Mills, Principal Nurse Manager at **Vets Now Birmingham**, had worked in general practice for more than 12 years before beginning the Cert VN ECC.

Originally starting out as a voluntary kennel maid in 2000, Laura gained a training place in a private practice in 2002 and qualified as a VN in 2005. Laura undertook the Certificate, when she realised how much she enjoyed the challenge of emergency cases and how much she could still learn after being qualified for more than seven years. She successfully gained the award of Cert VN ECC in September 2012.

Completing the Certificate highlighted to Laura just how important the role of nurses in emergency work is, she adds, "It's also made me realise how much vets rely on nurses during this type of work. **The Cert VN ECC allows you to truly use your skills and knowledge and appreciate how rewarding these cases can be.**"

Whilst Laura was still completing the coursework portion of the course, she got to put her knowledge into practice, when a dog who had received a massive blow to the head after falling onto a car bonnet from several floors up on a high rise block was brought in.

She recalls: "It had come in with bleeding from its nose and ears, and had broken both its forelimbs. We started it on shock rate fluids and as I was assessing the dog on initial triage and treatment I found myself feeling much more confident dealing with it. The vet was able to be confident that I was able to monitor and care for the patient while they were also dealing with other cases. I had one of the student nurses helping me and enjoyed discussing with her the importance of avoiding an increase in ICP. We carried out regular blood pressure checks to ensure we were not raising the blood pressure too much to be detrimental and also explaining to the student nurse why not to take a jugular sample. I realised that if I'd been in the same scenario before I started the Cert VN ECC maybe I would not have been able to make the same nursing decisions and choices regarding the critical care nursing required. **I realised how much I had learnt, how much I could use practically every day and how valuable this knowledge had become!**"

Despite finding the course challenging at times, especially juggling coursework and revision with work and family, Laura believes completing the Certificate has armed her with the knowledge and confidence to take charge in emergency situations and she would urge others considering the Cert VN ECC to take the plunge;

"Although the course is often in-depth in areas, **you can easily use the knowledge practically in any type of practice.** As a nurse with more than 10 years experience, I certainly learned some new tricks and would never have thought I would be knowledgeable enough or have the confidence to work in a busy out of hour's emergency practice, but the Cert VN ECC course gives you this. **I would highly recommend the course. Go for it!**"