Blue Cross Animal Hospital

CASE STUDY

SMALL PRACTICE

WINNER

1. Promoting physical and psychological health at work

Promoting colleagues' physical and psychological health at work supports wellbeing.

1.1 What health and safety policies and procedures are in place in your practice?
Give brief details and an example

> Very comprehensive set of procedures and policies overseen by our health and safety dept. Includes risk assessment of all relevant areas, online reporting system for accidents and incidents, training for all in fire safety, work-station assessment for computer users, safeguarding, manual handling, animal handling, team welfare. Training provided as part of our induction process.

1.2 What health initiatives are promoted by the practice (e.g healthy eating, exercise, relaxation, access to natural light and fresh air)?
Give brief details and an example

> - mental health awareness
> - going home wellbeing checklist poster - encourages end of day check in
> - sports day amongst the three London Hospitals
> - sunflower growing and cupcake making competitions
> - happy board - everyone to leave notes and appreciation where due
> - wellbeing corner - puzzles, books, adult colouring books, painting
> - cycle to work scheme / work perks
> - themed sharing lunches / after work socials
> - BUPA, free eye checks, free flu vaccinations, access to physio referral

1.3 Is awareness of mental health promoted by the practice, and how?
Give brief details and an example

> - mental health first aiders x 2
> - time to talk days. Signed up to 'time to change'
> - Mental Health Awareness week - MIND posters / treasure hunts / MH facts / ways to alleviate stress, anxiety
> - well being representative x 1
> - wellbeing focus groups across all three London Hospitals
> - green ribbon badges for wellbeing reps/first aiders - easily identifiable for other team members/clients
> Employee assistance programme offers counselling and CBT
> - reflective sessions (like Schwartz rounds)

1.4 What stress management initiatives are promoted by the practice?
Give brief details and an example

> - As above
> - Reflective Rounds (our version of Schwartz rounds)
> - No blame policy
> - morning tea breaks
> - hour lunch breaks - practice closed
> - team work / support actively encouraged day-to-day
> - Employee Assistance Programme
> - Managers receive regular coaching from external counsellor
> - Training in difficult conversations, provided by VDS

1.5 Are colleagues supported during extended sickness absence and on return to work?
Give brief details and an example

- Return to work discussions, to see if/where support is needed and how it can be given
- phased return
- inclusion of employees off sick using Whatsapp groups, emails, inviting to socials and including in practice activities where feasible

1.6 Any additional comments on support of physical and mental health within your practice?
(maximum 150 words)

- Whatsapp group - vetted to ensure it rarely brings work home, it is more to post nice comments/photos/stories
- Wellbeing champions
- Be Well forum (The Health, Safety and Wellbeing forum)

Our reflective rounds are based on Schwartz rounds and encourage sharing of difficulties that have arisen, in a safe environment, with the aim being to listen and offer support, not to seek to provide solutions.

2. Relationships at work

Co-operation, information sharing, and supportiveness among colleagues are important not just for effective working but also contribute to wellbeing. Good relationships among colleagues can also help people to cope with stressful aspects of their work.

2.1 Do colleagues have opportunities to take *shared* breaks together during the working day?
If you do not employ any of the job roles listed below, please tick not applicable

Vets:	● yes	○ sometimes	○ no	○ not applicable
Nurses:	● yes	○ sometimes	○ no	○ not applicable
Reception staff:	○ yes	● sometimes	○ no	○ not applicable
Support staff:	● yes	○ sometimes	○ no	○ not applicable

2.2 Does the practice provide opportunities for colleagues to spend time together outside work, if they wish? Do these involve activities to suit different interests and preferences (e.g. people who might prefer to avoid alcohol)? *Give brief details*

- Monthly (payday) team meal
- Sports day
- Beach day
- Sharing lunches

2.3 What mechanisms are used to identify and address any difficulties or conflict between colleagues? *Give brief details and an example*

> Culture of open communication and encouragement to talk to the right person if experiencing difficulties
> 15min catch ups (at last monthly, aiming to increase this to every 2 weeks) with all staff.
> In the past where difficulties have arisen between individuals these were addressed by their manager on a one to one basis and where appropriate, a mediation session set up between the individuals. We also have support from our HR team for such matters.

2.4 Does the practice have a clear policy relating to harassment and bullying at work, including processes for managing allegations of harassment or bullying?
Give brief details and an example

> Comprehensive policy in our employee handbook - promotes the right of every employee to be treated with dignity and respect, to work in an atmosphere free of harassment, and to raise it should it occur.
> If reported, managers and team members are responsible to; Take prompt action / Ensure that potentially offensive material is not displayed / Make clear to employees that such behaviour is not acceptable and could be treated as a disciplinary matter / Investigate any complaints received.
> Complaints procedure for the individual experiencing or witnessing bullying is also easily available.

2.5 Any additional comments on support of relationships within your practice?
(maximum 150 words)

> We aim to operate a level playing field, no blame culture, new staff/locums all say they feel welcomed and supported

3. Communication at work

Ensuring that colleagues are informed about what is happening at work, and are able to have a say in how work is carried out, contribute to wellbeing. Effective communication is particularly important during periods of change at work.

3.1 Do colleagues meet regularly – i.e. daily or weekly – to discuss day-to-day work matters?
Give brief details and an example

> - Monthly breakfast meetings - held in local low cost establishment!
> - emails
> - monthly one-to-ones
> - discuss matters at the time they arise
> - Reflective rounds
> - 2 weekly 'catch ups' with individual team members

3.2 In the last six months, approximately how many meetings have been held at work for the following groups? *Specify number, or write n/a if not applicable.*

Vets: n/a

Nurses: n/a

Reception staff: n/a

Support staff: n/a

3.3 Apart from meetings, what other communication channels for colleagues are used in the practice? *Give brief details and an example*

- email
- Whatsapp
- monthly one-to-ones
- 2 weekly informal catchups
- white-board notes
- extension numbers for all areas of the hospital readily available

3.4 Are all members of the practice team able to have a say in how work is carried out? *Give brief details and an example*

Yes
- Meeting agenda is available to all team members to add items on there as they wish to discuss them
- team contribution amongst individuals is actively encouraged and coaching provided where needed

3.5 How do you communicate with staff on extended absence (e.g parental leave, sickness)? *Give brief details and an example*

Dependent on manager, nature of sickness and employee wishes but we would communicate their preferred way - by phone, email or text prior to each sickness certificate end date. Being mindful at all times of balancing business need and wellbeing of staff member

3.6 Any additional comments on support of effective communication within your practice?
(maximum 150 words)

We are a small team and so we hold meetings for the whole team together. Managers have regular (every 2-4 weeks) informal catch ups with individuals to check on wellbeing, any issues and pass on essential information relevant to their role.
- Open door communication policy
- Accessibility - managers to communicate where they will be if away from the hospital but still working - all extension numbers easily accessible throughout the hospital
- friendly
- caring
- communication adapted to the individual and situation
- flexible and open-minded communication

4. Career development

Support for professional and career development, such as supervision, training, and constructive feedback on performance, are important both for effectiveness at work and wellbeing.

4.1 How often are appraisals carried out for colleagues in the following groups?
If you do not employ any of the job roles below, please write 'not applicable'.

New Graduate Vets:	Monthly
Student Veterinary Nurses:	n/a
Vets:	2 x a year
Nurses:	2 x a year
Reception staff:	2 x a year
Support staff:	2 x a year

4.2 Is induction support provided for new colleagues in the following groups?
If you do not employ any of the job roles listed below, please tick not applicable

Vets: ◉ yes ◯ no ◯ not applicable

Nurses: ◉ yes ◯ no ◯ not applicable

Reception staff: ◉ yes ◯ no ◯ not applicable

Support staff: ◉ yes ◯ no ◯ not applicable

Staff returning from absence: ◉ yes ◯ no ◯ not applicable
(e.g illness, parental leave, travel)

Locum/temporary staff: ◉ yes ◯ no ◯ not applicable

4.3 Are there any mentorship schemes or other support schemes in place for staff? If so, which groups? (e.g new graduates)
Give brief details

- new graduate vet scheme
- Volunteer vets - practical experience actively encouraged by all team members
- Vet student EMS - support Vet Students on EMS, providing practical skill experience in consulting and surgery
- probation reviews for new starters each month, alongside catch-ups

4.4 Does the practice support relevant clinical development training for colleagues in the following groups?
If you do not employ any of the job roles listed below, please tick not applicable.
For each group where you have answered yes, give an example

Vets: ● yes ○ no ○ not applicable

CPD actively encouraged
£1500 CPD allowance, 5 days off per year
In-house CPD encouraged amongst team members for areas identified for development - free CPD also organised from external supplier companies where possible (e.g Zoetis, Hills, RCW,)
M&M rounds and at our main hospital for all of clinical team wishing to attend in person or Skype
Clinical Governance and Auditing - consistently shared with clinical team
Provide comprehensive clinical guidelines, encourage case reviews

Nurses: ● yes ○ no ○ not applicable

CPD actively encouraged
£500 CPD allowance per year
in-house CPD encouraged amongst team members for areas identified for development - free CPD also organised from external supplier companies where possible (e.g Zoetis, Hills, RCW,)
M&M rounds at the Victoria hospital for all of clinical team wishing to attend
Clinical Governance and Auditing consistently shared with clinical team

Receptionists: ● yes ○ no ○ not applicable

CPD offered
BVRA membership encouraged
in-house CPD encouraged amongst team members for areas identified for development - free CPD also organised from external supplier companies where possible (e.g Zoetis, Hills, RCW,)
M&M rounds at the Victoria hospital for all of clinical team wishing to attend
Clinical Governance and Auditing consistently shared with clinical team

4.5 Does the practice support relevant non-clinical development training for colleagues in the following groups?
If you do not employ any of the job roles listed below, please tick not applicable.
For each group where you have answered yes, give an example

Vets: ● yes ○ no ○ not applicable

Mental Health First Aid training,
First aid
Pet Bereavement training
VDS communications training
Education (mentoring) training
In-house wealth of online training courses from presenting skills to time management
Management training and development/coaching dependent on role

Vet Nurses: ● yes ○ no ○ not applicable

First Aid and Mental Health First Aid training,
Pet Bereavement training
VDS communications training
In-house wealth of online training courses from presenting skills to time management
Management training and development/coaching dependent on role
Clinical coach training

Reception staff: ● yes ○ no ○ not applicable

BVRA training
Health and safety courses - incl fire marshalls, first aid, mental health first aid
VDS communications training
In-house wealth of online training courses from presenting skills to time management
Pet Bereavement training
Dispensing training

Support staff: ● yes ○ no ○ not applicable

Health and safety courses - incl fire marshalls, first aid, mental health first aid
VDS communications training
In-house wealth of online training courses from presenting skills to time management
Pet Bereavement training

4.6 How are good performance and colleagues' achievements recognised by the practice?
Give brief details and an example

- Star of the Month
- Monthly achievement acknowledgments
- Achievements for the quarter are noted and reported back to the clinical management team
- Appreciation white-board - for anyone to use
- Performance Related Pay reviews at the end of year reviews

4.7 Any additional comments on support of professional and career development within your practice? *(maximum 150 words)*

> - Cross-hospital working encouraged to expose employees to new environments and to discover new areas they may be interested in
> - Training given at other hospitals where colleagues are trained in specialist subjects that employees would like to train into as well
> - sharing knowledge actively encouraged between employees within the hospital and to learn from other sites as well

5. Workload and work scheduling

Veterinary work can involve high workload, long working days, and working unsocial hours, including on-call working. Managing these effectively is important for wellbeing.

5.1 Do colleagues have opportunities for regular breaks during the working day?
If you do not employ any of the job roles listed below, please tick not applicable

Vets:	● yes	○ sometimes	○ no	○ not applicable
Nurses:	● yes	○ sometimes	○ no	○ not applicable
Reception staff:	● yes	○ sometimes	○ no	○ not applicable
Support staff:	● yes	○ sometimes	○ no	○ not applicable

5.2 Are individuals' workloads monitored and, if necessary, revised?
Give brief details and an example

> Yes
> - Diary bookings monitored and adjusted if workload appears unrealistic
> - if consistent late finishes, diary is revised and extra support given where needed

5.3 Do work schedules allow adequate recovery from work between one working day and the next?
Give brief details and an example

> Yes
> - shift patterns to facilitate adequate rest before the next working day
> - Lieu time given where applicable, if weekend work has involved volunteering etc.

5.4 How is colleagues' work-life balance supported?
Give brief details and an example

- Tell each other to go home / go on breaks
- working day at this hospital is 9-5pm - strive to keep to these times wherever possible
- collaborations
- Hour lunch each day - ideally shared (1-2pm)
- Flexible working requests

5.5 Any additional comments on support of workload and work scheduling within your practice?
(maximum 150 words)

- Diary structure recently revised to suit the busier needs of the hospital
- Consulting structure recently revised to suit the busier needs of the hospital

6. Work Demands & Work Conditions

Veterinary work can involve specific demands, such as working with distressed or discourteous clients, patient cases that are stressful, and lone working. Managing these demands effectively supports wellbeing.

6.1 Is training in working with clients provided for team members?

Vets: ● yes ○ no ○ not applicable

Nurses: ● yes ○ no ○ not applicable

Reception staff: ● yes ○ no ○ not applicable

Support staff: ○ yes ○ no ○ not applicable

6.2 How are colleagues supported in the event of client complaints?
Give brief details and an example

Complaints procedure. Support from manager and HR.
- Veterinary Defense Society
- LOP on aggressive clients and what to do when confronted by one - team members encouraged to read prior to such an instance occurring
- In house customer service training
- CCTV
- Recorded phone calls

6.3 How are colleagues supported in the event of clients being abusive or threatening?
Give brief details and an example

- CCTV
- recorded phone calls
- aggressive client LOP
- Manager and other staff support always available
- Reported monthly to senior management
- shared consult room - always at least 2 staff members in that room - other room has 1 staff member but rarely used if client suspected to be volatile - if abusive/threatening behaviour not subsiding, police called.

6.4 How are colleagues who may spend time working alone supported?
Give brief details and an example

- Reception door locked
- Leave together during lunchtime, when dark after late shift / if abusive client recently been in practice
- someone else always in building if door open or a client is in the practice
Risk assessments carried out for eg. trips to bank.

6.5 Any additional comments on support of work demands within your practice?
(maximum 150 words)

Always support available from others with difficult clients