



## Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital, RVC - Winner

### Work Demands & Work Conditions

#### Q. Is training in working with clients provided for team members?

The entire hospital was provided with 2 days of client focused training in difficult situations and for clinical staff- consulting skills. All vets and clinic nurses are provided with consulting skills training on induction and all receptionists receive telephone communications training including complaints and customer service.

Regular, informal training at monthly team meetings also takes place, sharing lessons learned from client feedback.

#### Q. How are colleagues supported in the event of client complaints?

We've a client services manager who acts as point of contact for clients. Individuals involved in a complaint are supported in 1-2-1 meetings with this manager to find the best possible resolution for the employee, hospital, client & pet. Staff are encouraged to discuss client feedback in a blame-free way and lessons are discussed at team meetings in a constructive way to improve communication & prevent similar future complaints. We view complaints as feedback & encourage a growth mind-set.

#### Q. How are colleagues supported in the event of clients being abusive or threatening?

Abusive or threatening behaviour is not tolerated towards staff and in the event of this occurring the staff member would be fully supported. We have on site security and a panic alarm. An abusive client wouldn't be allowed back to the practice. No staff are required to deal with aggressive clients alone and thankfully this is a very rare occurrence.

### Q. How are colleagues who may spend time working alone supported?

A security guard is available and intermittently patrols the site, there is a panic alarm and any member of staff working alone has a dedicated mobile phone to call for help if required. There is an on-call vet every night for clinical support should the RVN need them as well as an on-call rota for additional nursing support. We hand over cases in rounds prior to shifts starting with overlapping of shift patterns to ensure the colleagues and patients are OK and planning can take place.

### Q. Give one additional example of how work demands are managed to support wellbeing in your practice.

A team meeting is held at 9am each day so the work schedule can be discussed, and areas of pressure identified. Workload can be planned and scheduled appropriately, and team members can help each other out where needed. We have a dedicated co-ordinator slot late morning where one member of the team must check in that everyone's workload is spread evenly and is to juggle workloads to ensure an even spread. Core shift patterns are for 7-hour days and all staff receive 28-33 days annual leave per year.

## Workload and work scheduling

### Q. Are individuals' workloads monitored and, if necessary, revised?

A daily nominated 'co-ordinator' conducts a 'check in' late morning to ensure the day is running smoothly and identifies if help is required or work needs to be redistributed to ensure everyone gets a break. Our consulting shifts have breaks timetabled to reduce pressure & that we run to time. We have time slots to call clients & complete other tasks. The nurses have a floating shift to help where needed. Surgeries are booked to a points system.

### Q. Do work schedules allow adequate rest between one working day and the next?

Shifts run 8am-4pm or 12pm-8pm and every effort is made to ensure staff can hand over and leave their shift on time. Overlapping shifts mean that breaks are staggered so more likely to be taken and when finishing an early shift cases can be handed over to late shift staff. Dedicated night staff then take over for overnight care, to minimise staff staying late. In the unlikely event that a clinician stays overnight to supervise a patient we ensure that they are not on duty the next day.

### Q. How is colleagues' work-life balance supported?

Annual leave is supported, and staff are actively encouraged to ensure they take regular time off. Work life balance is discussed and encouraged, and regular social events are organised. Every effort is made to ensure staff leave their shift on time and team members all work together to ensure this happens. Our core working hours are very reasonable. Our clinicians get 6 weeks holidays as well as CPD on top. We have a very reasonable 1 in 6 weekend rota.

**Q. Give one additional example of how workload and work scheduling are managed to support wellbeing in your practice.**

Regular revision of the rota and regular team meetings to discuss points of pressure. Overtime is monitored to assess where extra staffing may be required. Admin time is regularly available and offered. We offer flexible working arrangements. Some of our team are part time. Other team members that have a fixed rotas to fit in with childcare arrangements.

## Relationships at work

**Q. 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)?**

A monthly social activity is organised (a formal rota is in place to ensure this happens, with a different member of staff in charge each month, on a voluntary basis). Recent activities have included a movie night, a bowling night and dinner out. A board games night is planned for the next event. Informal social outings occur in-between and all staff are included. We celebrate regularly, birthdays, leaving parties. pay day and often just because we deserve it.

**Q. What mechanisms are used to identify and address any difficulties or conflict between colleagues?**

There is a strict policy in place that people do not talk/complain about each other behind their backs, this is enforced by all members of the team. If there is a conflict it is discussed between the individuals involved, with or without their line manager's involvement. Members of the team are encouraged to be able to talk directly to each other to solve problems occurring in the working environment. A culture of respect, support, open mindedness and kindness to other team members is in place.

**Q. Does the practice have a clear policy relating to harassment and bullying at work, including processes for managing allegations of harassment or bullying?**

Yes - this is included in the induction documents / staff handbook and a line manager system is in place for all members of staff to escalate concerns if needed. It is very clear that bullying behaviour is not tolerated, and this is enforced by all members of the team. We had a case when a vet and a nurse had a difference of opinion on the treatment for a patients. We had a facilitate meeting to get both parties around that table so that we could share each other's experiences and opinions

**Q. Give one additional example of how positive relationships at work are supported in your practice.**

We have regular team meetings with a positive approach - once a month. We have weekly management meetings and the hospital director has weekly one to one meeting with each manager. This gives us the opportunity to discuss and difficulties that may arrive.

We have trained mental health first aiders will highlight and address any conflict that may occur. The practice and a culture of fairness. We constantly look at our values system and employ people who hold the same values as our team. Regular emails identifying individual achievements, for example positive Facebook reviews. Positive attitude of management.

## Career development

**Q. Is supervision provided for less-experienced colleagues?**

Yes, morning and afternoon rounds allow discussion of cases and support is encouraged between more and less experienced members of the team.

We have a buddy system for new colleagues and a one to one induction system. We have a system in place that colleagues can book procedures in for themselves so that other more experienced colleagues can oversee them and support them

**Q. Does the practice support (e.g. fund and/or give time for) relevant training (e.g. clinical and/or professional/non-clinical skills) for colleagues in the following groups?**

**Vets:** Time is given to attend relevant CPD courses, in house training is provided e.g. with lunch and learn sessions, regular team meetings to identify areas for development. Access to all RVC on-line courses free of charge to staff. We have extensive library facilities. We are a training hospital and this is our culture.

**Nurses:** Time off for relevant CPD courses, personal development encouraged. All nurse will have a CPD plan and have access to all RVC on-line courses. We arrange for nurses to visit the referral hospital to up skill based on training needs.

**Reception staff:** We have an in-depth reception training schedule. We constantly monitor the quality of our service via client feedback, Net Promoter Scores and recorded phone calls so we can continually train and improve. All our reception team attend the On-Switch training courses.

**Support staff:** We hold regular CPD sessions that our support staff can attend. We have a structured training and learning process so that they can get the training and supervision that they need based on regular feedback from the other teams and the needs that they have identified themselves.

### Q. How are good performance and colleagues' achievements recognised by the practice?

Regular emails with positive message - positive reviews on Facebook always flagged up, reception regularly email the team to say if a client has said thank you or given good feedback to them, if a member of staff has a specific achievement (e.g. completes certificate etc), an email is sent to inform the team and a celebration may be organised. Senior management regularly say thank you to staff. We receive structured feedback from our students which is disseminated to the team

### Q. Give one additional example of how colleagues' professional and career development is supported in your practice.

Opportunity to attend training courses or pursue further qualifications, with time off provided for this. Professional and personal development is actively encouraged. A diary is kept of all CPD events attended by staff and information is disseminated amongst the team when a course has been attended.

All our clinicians are encouraged to become certificate holders and many of our nurses have additional qualifications in ECC.

## Communication at Work

### Q. Do colleagues meet regularly – i.e. daily or weekly – to discuss day-to-day work matters?

Daily 'morning brief' and afternoon rounds. Morning brief is to check in with vets, nurses, support staff, reception about any possible problems anticipated in the day and any areas where workload can be better distributed. Also allows staff to be aware of who might need extra help if they are very busy.

Afternoon rounds allow handover of cases and discussion of any difficult cases.

Regular team meetings and management meetings. The management team meet weekly as a group and one to one.

### Q. Apart from meetings, what other communication channels for colleagues are used in the practice?

Noticeboard to say who is on what shift, who is on call Email used by all staff

WhatsApp group for each team (e.g. nurses, exotics team) for instant messaging Walkie talkies for the nursing team so messages can be relayed quickly Clipboard for each member of staff on the computer for case related messages StaffHub app for instant messaging

### Q. Are all members of the practice team able to have a say in how work is carried out?

Regular team meetings are held where everyone is encouraged to give feedback on how things are working and what changes could be made, group emails are also used to discuss.

We have a flat communication structure in rounds where everyone has the opportunity to feed into a case. When reception structure was changed there was a consultation where all staff were encouraged to put forward their views on the proposed changes. The changes were ultimately altered in response to the consultation.

**Q. Give one additional example of how effective communication is supported in your practice.**

Our management structure is set up so that each meeting feeds into the next set of meeting. The management team meet on a weekly basis feed into the team meetings on a monthly basis. the flow of information is both to and from the team, ensuring two way sharing of information for decision making with representatives of all teams in management meetings and cross over meetings bi-monthly between clinical and front of house teams. We have meetings to discuss morbidity and mortality & Clinical governance as well as our normal meeting structure. We use social media to communicate with our team as well as the formal methods.

## Promoting physical and psychological health at work

**Q. Does the practice take a proactive approach to managing health and safety hazards at work?**

We have a formal H&S policy and provide regular refresher training and regular routine health screening with occupational health.

We have first aiders and several of our team formally trained as mental health first aiders.

**Q. Are healthy eating, exercise and similar health initiatives for colleagues promoted?**

We have gym on site with free access to all the team. Cycle to work scheme providing financial support for 4 cycle purchase. Negotiated discount with local gyms for memberships. There is a cafeteria in the building next door with a variety of healthy options, freshly cooked daily. Toaster and microwave provided in staffroom along with a fridge if we wish to bring in our own food.

**Q. How is awareness of mental health promoted by the practice?**

Open attitude to talking about mental health in self and colleagues  
Mental health awareness board with ideas for stress management and self-care and resources.  
A senior member of the team sends regular emails with self-care tips and advice on mental health regularly in participation with national awareness days and schemes.

**Q. What stress management initiatives are promoted by the practice?**

Vetlife posters and stickers displayed prominently around the practice

Regular (fortnightly) psychological health drop in sessions available (qualified psychologist on-site) Care first access for all employees - 24/7 free support for advice/ counselling services

Regular dialogue between the team and with students to promote active preventative measures for maintaining good mental wellbeing.

**Q. Are colleagues supported during extended sickness absence and on return to work?**

Regular "keeping in touch" calls/ meetings are encouraged during long term absence to reduce the stress of return and full support is given if staff are off sick, phased return to work is encouraged following OH referral and full support and regular review meetings are held.

We use wellness recovery action plans (WRAP) for staff with mental health conditions to ensure they have control of their health and wellbeing upon return also.

**Q. Give one additional example of how physical health and psychological wellbeing are supported in your practice.**

Staff room with sofas and nice environment to relax on breaks, separate to the working area.  
We have an on-site Gym and group exercise classes that all staff have access to.

We also participate in the ride to work scheme offering financial support for cycle purchase etc