

Guidelines for PDSA new graduate veterinary surgeons

Scope

PDSA New Graduate veterinary surgeons

Objectives

To provide guidance for PDSA New Graduate veterinary surgeons completing ECC placements at Vets Now clinics

Overview

Vets Now liaises with PDSA to give their new graduate programme veterinary surgeons the opportunity to gain valuable experience in emergency and critical care in a PDSA setting. The aim of the Vets Now/PDSA New graduate programme is to integrate the PDSA veterinary surgeon into the Vets Now clinic team. The PDSA veterinary surgeon will be there to learn and observe the out of hour's emergency environment in the first instance. Once the PDSA veterinary surgeon is comfortable with the surroundings and the Vets Now veterinary surgeon is comfortable with their approach, the PDSA veterinary surgeon will have the opportunity to see PDSA emergency cases as they present to the hospital. Any cases being seen by the PDSA veterinary surgeon must be discussed with the Vets Now veterinary surgeon before definitive treatment is administered.

The broad objectives of Vets Now/PDSA New Graduate placements are to allow PDSA veterinary surgeons:

- To gain experience of observing consulting room skills within an emergency situation.
- To improve their approach to and recognition of conditions most frequently encountered during out-of-hour's work in order to encourage accurate diagnostic and therapeutic decisions
- To enhance communication skills with members of the public and the veterinary team, particularly in the more stressful environment of emergency work.
- To understand the stresses and pressures placed on owners in an emergency involving their pet, and to relate this to their behaviour and attitude in the clinic.
- To improve practical clinical skills (e.g. intravenous catheterisation, venous blood sampling, urinary catheterisation, POCUS, etc).
- To improve knowledge and understanding of the use of diagnostic support equipment in an emergency setting (e.g. POCUS, trend monitoring using multiparameter monitors, pulse oximetry, ECG, blood pressure monitoring)

Guidelines for PDSA veterinary surgeon

At all times PDSA veterinary surgeons must be mindful of the requests of the Vets Now veterinary surgeon. A PDSA veterinary surgeon agrees to:

- ✓ Adhere to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct criteria at all times
- ✓ Agree personal objectives with their Vets Now veterinary surgeon at the Vets Now Clinic prior to commencement of placement
- ✓ Wear clean and tidy PDSA Scrubs and a name badge at all times.
- ✓ Understand that consultations they observe in an emergency setting are often more challenging than routine consultations in general practice
- ✓ Understand they may be required to handle and restrain patients, talk to and look after pet-owners, and to care for hospitalised patients.
- ✓ Only discuss cases with Vets Now staff in a professional manner (e.g. not in front of the pet-owner unless encouraged to do so)
- ✓ Not undertake any procedures or treatments before discussing the case with the supervising Vets Now veterinary surgeon.

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- ✓ Understand that the likelihood of performing any solo surgery is minimal in emergency practice due to the nature and complexity of the work, however the opportunity to scrub in and assist in interesting surgeries is possible.
- ✓ Information within veterinary medical records is considered privileged and confidential. An animal's medical record and medical condition is confidential and may not be furnished to or discussed with any person other than the client or the vet team involved in the care or treatment of that animal. This includes references to cases on social networking sites and the use of photographic images obtained in the clinic.

Suggested plan for PDSA veterinary surgeons on shifts:

- The Vets Now veterinary surgeon on duty should introduce the PDSA veterinary surgeon to the team and to each team members job role at the beginning of each shift
- The Vets Now Veterinary Surgeon should carry out a basic H&S induction covering the contents in Appendix 2 and the following local H&S measures for
 - Fire, exits and the evacuation plan
 - Security measures for the clinic, regarding locking doors and windows
 - Radiography, covering our Local Rules
 - First Aid measures, how to access first aid and how to report accidents using the QR code for online reporting
 - Manual handling equipment available within the clinic
- The PDSA veterinary surgeon should accompany the Vets Now veterinary surgeon on their ward round with the day shift host PDSA vet at the beginning of each shift.
- The PDSA veterinary surgeon may sit in on consultations with clients and the Vets Now veterinary surgeon at any time. The Vets Now veterinary surgeon will introduce the PDSA veterinary surgeon to the clients and ask permission for them to attend at the beginning of every consultation.
- If the Vets Now veterinary surgeon is content, the PDSA veterinary surgeon may undertake consultations with PDSA clients and assist with other tasks within the hospital including:
 - Caring for in-patients
 - Restraining animals for examination and procedures
 - Drawing venous blood samples from dogs and cats
 - Placing intravenous catheters in dogs and cats
 - Performing diagnostic tests (e.g. taking radiographs, blood pressure readings, ECG, POCUS, etc)
 - Carrying out medical treatments and procedures on PDSA patients
- The PDSA veterinary surgeon may assist the team in the observation and monitoring of critically ill PDSA patients.
- The PDSA veterinary surgeon may get the opportunity to assist in emergency surgical cases with the Vets Now veterinary surgeon
 - Emergency surgery can often be just that - an emergency! Therefore, the PDSA veterinary surgeon understands that the likelihood of performing any solo surgery is minimal, however the opportunity to scrub in and assist in interesting surgeries is possible.
- The PDSA veterinary surgeon must not undertake any procedures or treatments before discussing the case with the supervising Vets Now veterinary surgeon unless under obligation to adhere to the Code of Professional Conduct, they are required to administer emergency first aid to a patient, whilst awaiting the Vets Now veterinary surgeon, or are under the direction of the Vets Now veterinary surgeon.
- The Vets Now veterinary surgeon and the PDSA veterinary surgeon should discuss the cases encountered together.
 - For PDSA cases, the PDSA veterinary surgeon should put together a diagnostic/treatment plan for a patient and to discuss this with the Vets Now veterinary

- surgeon. The Vets Now veterinary surgeon can discuss the pro's and con's of these plans with the PDSA veterinary surgeon in an open manner.
- The PDSA veterinary surgeon may wish to review diagnostic results such as radiographs and blood tests, and discuss their interpretation with the Vets Now veterinary surgeon.

It may be helpful to read through the appendices below prior to attending your Vets Now placement.

- We want you to be aware of our Health and Safety Policy for Veterinary Surgeons and the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct
- You may wish to complete your individual learning objectives prior to your placement which you can discuss with your supervising Vets Now veterinary surgeon.
- Your supervising Vets Now veterinary surgeon will carry out a basic induction on your first shift to confirm you understand our policies and local rules (See Appendix 4)

Appendix 1

Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons

<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/>

Appendix 2

**HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE NOTES
FOR VISITING VETERINARY SURGEONS AND VETERINARY STUDENTS**

General information

There are inherent risks when working within a veterinary environment. It is your responsibility to take care to minimise these risks, not only for yourself but for colleagues and others likely to be affected by your actions.

When you first arrive at the Vets Now Clinic you may wish to familiarise yourself with the Health and Safety policies and risk assessments. A Vets Now member of staff will carry out a site-specific H&S induction, covering

- Fire evacuation
- Manual handling
- Security
- COSHH
- Radiation – Local Rules

General risks

- Always adopt appropriate methods of approach and restraint for animals
- Undertake procedures with animals, equipment, drugs or chemicals only when you have permission and understand what you are doing
- Wear clean protective clothing appropriate to the practice and to the procedure being undertaken. Remove protective clothing when the procedure is complete and clean or dispose of it appropriately
- Exercise good personal hygiene at all times. Wash your hands when a procedure is complete.
- Do not smoke on the premises and do not eat in clinical areas. It is permitted to bring a closed bottle into clinical areas to enable hydration
- Manage any cuts or abrasions, and ensure they are properly covered before commencing work with animals or pharmaceuticals.
- In the event of being bitten or scratched, thoroughly clean the wound with hot, soapy water then seek medical advice as appropriate. Remember to complete any details as an entry on

the online accident portal, this can be completed by scanning the accident QR code and report it to your supervisor

- Ensure that adequate precautions are taken by yourself and others when working with ionising radiation. Follow the Vets Now Local Rules, whilst working with Vets Now rather than the PDSA Local Rules.
- In addition, the process of handling animals or collecting samples may lead to exposure to allergens, parasites, bacteria or viruses. Some of the associated infections may be zoonotic and transmissible to man (e.g. Leptospirosis, salmonellosis) therefore appropriate precautions should be taken when handling these patients or samples, such as wearing appropriate PPE.
- Although all faeces are potentially hazardous, special precautions must be taken when handling animals with diarrhoea because of the risk of infection by salmonella, campylobacter and cryptosporidium spp.
- Women, who suspect they may be pregnant, must declare this to their practice supervisor because of the risks associated with anaesthesia, radiography, drug handling and zoonoses. Care should be taken especially when handling cat faeces because of the potential risks of Chlamydia, toxoplasma or other infectious agents.

Vets Now Health & Safety Policy (Jan 2025 version)

The Health and Safety at Work, Etc. Act (HSWA) 1974

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR)

Vets Now recognises and accepts it's duties under the HSWA and MHSWR (and all subordinate legislation) to do all that is 'reasonably practicable' to ensure the health, safety & wellbeing of all employees, trainees, students, clients, contractors and visitors - and all others who may be affected by our actions (volunteers, unpaid helpers, members of the public, etc.)

To ensure compliance, Vets Now will implement a Health & Safety Policy and documentation in compliance with health and safety regulations/issues that directly apply to the business.

Vets Now aim to promote the Health, Safety & Wellbeing within the organisation and to that intent to: -

- Liaise with third parties, primarily host practices, with regards to matters concerning Health, Safety & Wellbeing
- Encourage persons on the premises to co-operate with the company in all Health, Safety & Wellbeing matters, in the identification of hazards that may exist and in the reporting of any condition which may appear dangerous or unsatisfactory
- Provide suitable and sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to persons who have particular Health, Safety & Wellbeing responsibilities (e.g. Vets Now Fire Officers , H&S Officers, First Aiders, Emergency Appointed Persons, Radiation Protection Supervisors (RPS) etc)
- Implement Emergency Procedures, including evacuation in the event of a fire or other significant incidents.
- Ensure all machinery, equipment and safety devices are regularly inspected, maintained and are safe and suitable for use
- Ensure the workplace is safe and suitable in terms of comfort, space, heating, lighting, ventilation, cleanliness and free from unnecessary hazards
- Make, as reasonably practicable, safe arrangements for protection against any risk to Health and Safety of the general public or other persons that may arise from the company's activities.

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- Review working practices on a regular basis with a view to improving Health and Safety
- Implement reasonable adjustments for any employee who makes us aware of any health issues or requires additional support. To enable them to carry out their duties safely.

Vets Now undertakes to ensure that all employees will receive appropriate information and training to ensure that they:

- Are aware of the hazards at 'the workplace' (e.g. at the Clinic/ Hospital, Support Office; on client premises);
- Are familiar with all relevant Safety Policies, Procedures and Guidelines;
- Know where and how to access all necessary safety information, advice and guidance;
- Know where to find and how to use first aid and firefighting equipment;
- Are familiar with the procedures for reporting accidents and for reporting or raising other health and safety issues including SER's.

Vets Now also undertakes to ensure that:

- All employees, locums, trainees and students will be supervised until appropriately trained and assessed as competent;
- All machinery, equipment and safety devices are regularly inspected, maintained and are safe and suitable for use;
- All hazards are identified, and the associated risks are assessed and documented within risk assessments. Risks will be removed and/or reduced to as low as is reasonably practicable;
- Working practices are regularly reviewed to improve Health and Safety;
- Accidents and incidents are investigated, and appropriate actions taken to prevent recurrence;
- Individual employees/trainees/students will not be expected to perform tasks that may present risks to them specifically due to their age, sex or health status;
- An on-going health surveillance scheme is in operation where the records are regularly reviewed to check for possible links between working practice and ill health. As a result, any such links will be investigated and appropriate action(s) taken
- A 'named individual' will be appointed the Health & Safety Officer and designated as the 'responsible person' for managing health and safety at the Clinic/ Hospital/ Support Office and ensuring the Implementation of the H&S documentation.
- Vets Now Employees should:
- Co-operate with managers on health and safety matters;
- Take reasonable care of their own and others health and safety through their working practices.
- Report all health and safety concerns, accidents and incidents to an appropriate person as soon as possible
- Complete H&S training modules and refresher modules in a reasonable timescale
- Keep up to date with Health and Safety procedures, policies, risk assessments and guidelines relevant to their role.

Refer to the "**Health and Safety Law**" poster displayed on the notice board within the clinic/ Hospital/ Support Office for further information on how to report and manage Health & Safety.

This Health & Safety Policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are any significant changes or if/as necessary.

Tricia Colville

Vets Now CEO

Appendix 3

PDSA Veterinary surgeon’s individual objectives

PDSA Veterinary Surgeon name:

Clinic attended:

Duration of attendance:

	Individual Learning Objectives Discussed between student and Vets Now Supervisor	Achieved	Partially achieved	Not attempted	Other comments
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Appendix 4



Vets Now Visitor Induction Forms

