



Award winner Amber lights up her practice

VETPARTNERS Veterinary Nurse of the Year Amber King hopes winning the special award will help to inspire the next generation of RVNs to enjoy fulfilling careers.

Amber first dreamed of working with animals when she was just three and is looking forward to celebrating Veterinary Nurse Awareness Month in May with other members of the profession across VetPartners' practices.

She is as passionate as ever about her role, and her commitment to lifelong learning has seen her achieve Certificates in Emergency and Critical Care and in Wildlife Care.

Whether it's cats or bats, Spaniels or sparrows, Amber is dedicated to the care of all animals, birds and wildlife that arrive at her practice.

Described as "a joy to work with" by colleagues, she has helped to foster a

positive, fun environment which has helped to bring the team at Nene Vets in Cambridgeshire even closer together.

It made Amber a popular winner of the Veterinary Nurse of the Year title at VetPartners' 2024 Congress.

"I love being a vet nurse so much and could never imagine doing anything else," she said.

"I always wanted to work in a vet practice and can remember drawing myself as a stick figure with a cat for my grandma when I was three. As a teenager, I did work experience in a practice and realised it was veterinary nursing that was the career for me.

"I love the patient care side and looking after sick animals. I am so vocal about what makes the nursing profession great, and I hope my passion influences others to get the most out of their role."

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A Note from Jo



JO MALONE, CEO

WE recently commissioned some research to assess the social media chatter across the country to better understand client views of vets and veterinary services.

What did they find? There were far more positive discussions about vets than negative. Whilst those negative comments were increasingly about price, overall, in fact, positive comments were double that of the negative.

There were also very low levels of discussion online about the CMA or the ownership of the veterinary practice, which aligns with feedback we've had from those of you we speak to in practice.

We will be continuing to monitor this in the coming year.

We had our in person hearing with the CMA, which went very well. I have had a few discussions with several of you about how it is going. The one thing I was keen to reinforce was that this is not an investigation into large vet groups, but across all types of practice, as it was in 2003 when the competition commission did a review.

We can see they understand a huge amount more than they did and we continue to work with them. There are still information requests coming in, but wherever possible we are handling them

Positive feedback is a welcome boost to us all

without asking any of you for information. We will keep you updated when there is more news on this process.

Focusing on our people

In the past 18 months we have had very few new practices, or other businesses, join the group, which has been a deliberate decision for lots of reasons, both in the UK and Europe.

It is likely over the next 12 to 18 months, we will continue to see few new practices joining us.

Instead, we will be focusing on further improving what we offer to every business within the group, and each person.

The launch of our new people system, Dayforce, is the start of that. There have been months of work in the background to transfer data and get the basic functionality right. Whilst for some it might not seem much of an upgrade yet, over the rest of 2025 we will be working practice by practice and business by business to introduce extra functionality.

We will continue to focus on enhancing the facilities you work within over the next 12 months, as we have in the last 12 months.

Enhanced colleague support

Our people are at the heart of everything we do, and we are committed to fostering

a workplace where they feel valued, supported, and understood.

We are taking further steps to help those impacted by pregnancy loss by enhancing our support.

We offer two weeks of bereavement leave for employees who experience the loss of a baby before 24 weeks. For those facing loss after 24 weeks, we provide enhanced maternity leave, followed by an additional two weeks of bereavement leave to offer further support.

We also understand the emotional and physical demands of fertility treatment. In October 2024, we introduced neonatal pay to strengthen our commitment to family support.

We are taking further steps to care for our people by introducing five days of dedicated, paid IVF leave, in addition to company sick pay. We are also investing in training for managers to ensure they can provide compassionate and informed support to employees navigating these deeply personal experiences.

I hope you enjoy this edition of The Tail.

Jo

Building on the vision that makes VetPartners unique

OUR values and our culture are what matters the most to us and make VetPartners unique.

We have summarised our values and key priorities in a visual representation that we call our Strategic House.

It was originally created in collaboration with our practice teams soon after VetPartners was established in 2015.

Recently we sought views of our practice teams to ensure it still resonates with people, whatever their role and whether they are in the UK or in our European countries.

The feedback was consistent that the

key elements of the house were still relevant but that we needed to simplify it to make it easier to remember.

VetPartners Group Director of Culture and People Tim Shearman said: "We recognise that the Strategic House is a visual representation of what is important to everyone at VetPartners, but we are also aware that, beyond the visual, what is most important is how we bring it to life for our colleagues, our clients and our partners on a day to day basis."



Nettie awards for caring pair who transformed garden

TWO green-fingered team members who joined forces to transform a rubbish-strewn piece of wasteland into a wellbeing garden for their colleagues have been rewarded with a VetPartners Nettie.

Linda Rogerson and Laura Guild gave up their Sunday to create the peaceful oasis at Galedin Vets in Galashiels.

They cleared away tumbledown fencing, broken branches, old tables, tubs and rubbish and cut down undergrowth from the area at the back of the practice.

After adding screening to shelter those using the garden from the wind, they painted fencing and filled planters and troughs with faux flowers to bring a splash of colour.

The kind-hearted duo added a picnic



Green fingers: Laura, left, and Linda created a peaceful sanctuary for colleagues

bench, a table and chairs and garden ornaments to create a space that colleagues can enjoy. Linda even roped in her husband to help safely dispose of the rubbish and waste.

The garden is already proving popular with colleagues and Linda, a veterinary receptionist, and Laura, a senior credit controller, were delighted to receive a

Nettie for demonstrating our values of being **respectful, supportive, dedicated, approachable** and **collaborative**.

They receive a cuddly Nettie mascot, a £250 Love2shop voucher and a certificate.

Nominate a colleague by scanning the QR code or email: recognition@vetpartners.co.uk



Are you ready for Month of Movement?

VETPARTNERS colleagues across the UK and Europe are joining forces during May to get active, boost their wellbeing and raise money for charity.

Whether walking, running, cycling, dancing, climbing or practicing yoga,

colleagues will be taking part in VetPartners' Month of Movement – a chance to enjoy physical activities, either individually or with colleagues.

For every hour of activity in the UK throughout May, VetPartners will



Heroes: Parklands team took part in the Belfast Marathon relay as part of Month of Movement

donate £4 to World Land Trust and Vetlife.

Colleagues log their activities on the Strava app and VetPartners will accumulate everyone's minutes, before handling all donations.

In 2024, more than 1,000 colleagues took part in Month of Movement and registered 12,597 hours of activity, raising £50,388 for World Land Trust and Vetlife through a donation from VetPartners.

VetPartners CEO Jo Malone, who will be taking part by walking and running, said: "Month of Movement is a great event as it brings us all together and encourages everyone to get active and have some fun. Getting outdoors in spring to participate in healthy activities is such a boost to wellbeing and it is also an opportunity to give back to great causes which are close to our hearts."

St Peter's rolls out the red carpet for TV star

A FOUR-legged TV star who appears in a hugely popular drama series is always camera ready, thanks to regular health checks at St Peter's Vets in Hampshire.

Ponti – who is male – plays Gertrude in the Disney+ adaptation of Jilly Cooper's novel Rivals and receives star treatment whenever he visits St Peter's Vets.

The seven-year-old crossbreed is set to start filming series two of the show, where he plays the beloved pet of Taggie, and is a firm favourite with its cast of celebrities and Dame Jilly.

Ponti is owned by Laura Ingall, who runs Pets on Set and trains and provides animals – including dogs, cats, ferrets,

donkeys, pigs and a parrot – for TV, film and commercials.

Laura praised the care St Peter's gives to her pets to help ensure they are in good condition for their turn in the spotlight.

She said: "The St Peter's team are lovely and always provide a caring service. Ponti needs to be in tip-top condition to appear in front of the cameras, and regular health checks helps with that."

St Peter's Vets Clinical Director Matt Tyler said: "It's always lovely to see Ponti when he comes into the practice. Laura's animals are a pleasure to care for and they are always so well behaved."



Star quality: Ponti with vet Matt Tyler and owner Laura Ingall

VetPartners innovates patient care across UK and Europe

VETPARTNERS is growing its clinical communities across the UK and Europe to enable the group to progress care together.

We have expanded our Group Clinical Board, which meets every month online and once a year in person, as well as hosting study groups and meetings for our clinical community across seven countries.



Support: Maegan Potter and Chris Walker, from Abbey Vets in Wales, with a copy of the report

The VetPartners Group Clinical Board, led by Rachel Dean, is comprised of a Clinical Board lead in each country, with the aim of collectively innovating care together as a large group and sharing resources and knowledge to deliver optimal clinical outcomes.

The ongoing development of a Group Clinical Board was one of the advancements included in VetPartners' **Clinical Board Annual Report** entitled **Progressing Practice Together**, which can be found by scanning the QR code.

The report highlights key achievements and new initiatives in 2024, including:

- Utilising post-op coding within Practice Management Systems (PMS) to enable Quality Improvement (QI) work across the UK and extending into Europe. So far this has allowed data collection from more than 27,000 coded routine surgeries over four years, with 93% of patients experiencing no or only minor problems post-operatively in 2024.

- Expansion of VetPartners' library of evidence-based clinical decision-making resources to support practice teams across the UK and Europe.
- Antibiotic purchasing across UK practices has reduced by 47% in kg per full-time equivalent vet, underlining a commitment to the responsible use of antibiotics.

Rachel said: "What makes this report extra special is that we are focusing on how we develop our clinical communities across the whole group and help different teams connect to discuss clinical cases, support each other and share new ideas."



Rob leading new surgical service

VETPARTNERS has launched a new advanced-level orthopaedic and soft tissue service, which will also provide mentoring and training for our practice teams.

VetPartners Surgical Services is a bespoke resource available to all of our small animal practices across Wales and the South West.

The ambulatory surgical service is led by Rob Harry, a veterinary surgeon for more than 20 years and an RCVS Advanced Practitioner in small animal surgery who has post-graduate certificates in surgery, endoscopy and endosurgery.

Whether our practices are looking to treat a complex case or would like to advance the level of care that they offer in-house, Rob provides surgical procedures and support, as well as mentoring and training for veterinary surgeons and supporting RVNs.

Rob can visit practices and perform orthopaedic surgeries, coach teams on specific procedures and help bolster what practices can offer your patients and clients.

He has also been mentoring vets who would like an additional pair of hands in theatre and can collaborate with CPD providers to offer CPD



Mentor: Rob supporting Ashworth Vets team

packages to help introduce new procedures at local practices.

To learn more about our services, please visit vetpartnerssurgicalservices.co.uk or email info@vetpartnerssurgicalservices.co.uk

We're helping pets to ditch the itch

SUPPORTING clients who are concerned about their pet itching is the main aim of our latest practice campaign.

Our Dermatology Campaign runs from April to June and there is still time for practices to get on board.

The campaign aims to highlight when clients should seek advice and what support is available, utilise products and services, such as nurse clinics and Pet Health Plans, to offer clients a high-quality service, and support optimisation of practice team skillset.

The campaign has been designed to be flexible so our practice teams can use

whichever elements of the campaign suit their situation to support organic growth.

Practices are encouraged to appoint a campaign champion, ideally team members from both clinical and non-clinical teams to help drive awareness.



Our marketing team has provided client information sheets, a guide to running nurse skin support clinics and a paw score chart.

There is also CPD available for the whole practice team, including a wide variety of webinars and videos, on VetPartners' learning platform Dermatology Campaign - VetPartners Learning

Waiting room posters are available to order via the practices Pawprint portal.

The social media pack is also available in the campaign folder on VetPartners Learning and an infographic was provided in the PowerPoint provided to practices.

Volunteering is so special, says Cerys

Every year, VetPartners gives all team members one day's paid leave to volunteer for a charity or worthy cause close to their heart.

Cerys Dickinson, Head Receptionist at Willows Veterinary Hospital in Northwich, Cheshire, spent her volunteering day at a working farm that offers young people with learning disabilities the chance to take part in farming life.

Here, Cerys explains the joy of giving back to such a worthy cause....

BY volunteering, I got to spend a wonderful day with some very special young people, outside in the fresh air, with animals which is always good for the soul.

Let's Farm is a real working farm in a beautiful, peaceful location in Winsford in Cheshire. It offers people with learning disabilities the chance to take part in farming life. Participants get to make new friends and develop new skills in a safe but exciting environment. Most importantly, Let's Farm is about having fun and supporting mental wellbeing.

On the day, I felt that I was connecting and giving something back to my local community. I came away with a great sense of wellbeing

from learning so much from the farm rangers who showed me the ropes.

Meeting the young people who have gained a sense of purpose from this programme, and the amazing team who support them, were the most enjoyable parts of the day.

I was eager to help in any area of the farm, but I was really pleased to be assigned to the sheep as I got to feed the orphaned lambs. I also got to see baby rabbits being born and meet all the other furry and feathered inhabitants of the farm and find out more about the farm's conservation projects.

I would recommend volunteering to any VetPartners colleagues as it is a



Fun: Cerys enjoyed giving back

fantastic opportunity to try something completely different and meet and support people you would not usually meet in the workplace. Being given a paid day is very encouraging and provides the support and inspiration to go and do something.

I am in awe of the fantastic work that is done on the farm and the positive impact it has made on the lives of the young people. It was a pleasure to be a part of it even if only for just the day.

Coastway cleans up

BICYCLES, a scooter, footballs and a length of washing line were just some of the items pulled from a Brighton pond during a clean-up by team members from Coastway Vets.

A group of 14 vets, veterinary nurses and receptionists volunteered to spend a Saturday morning helping clean the pond in the city's Queen's Park and donned waders, wellingtons and rubber gloves to remove rubbish and debris from the water.

They also used nets to scoop out large quantities of duckweed and cleaned the protection cages which are used to help prevent the over-spread of plant life.



The practice is taking part in a number of activities this year to support the park, to help wildlife flourish and to care for a public space that's important to local people. They've also donated 12 nesting boxes to encourage birdlife.

Vet nurse Jay Lisher said: "Our team members did an amazing job and enjoyed getting stuck in. All their hard work will make a difference to the wildlife and for local people who enjoy the space."

RVN Leanne enjoys experience of a lifetime

RVN Leanne Carter has described her experience of volunteering overseas for an animal charity as life changing.

Leanne is among the vets and RVNs who secured funding from VetPartners to undertake clinical work abroad with approved overseas animal charities operating in the most challenging conditions.

She volunteered with Luni-Lombok, a cat charity, on the Gili Islands of Indonesia, relishing the opportunity to use her skills helping at the charity's pop-up trap-neuter-return clinic in a hotel room.



Leanne, who works at Damory Vets in Dorset, said: "The population of cats is unregulated, and many suffer from poor health. The island has infrastructure challenges, such as no fresh water and unreliable electricity. There are no motorised vehicles, so transport is by foot, bicycle, or horse and cart, and fresh water is delivered daily by boat.

"In addition to spaying and castrating, we also vaccinated, treated parasites, and attended to injured or sick cats. I supported the daily

running of the clinic, including monitoring TIVAs and educating the local team on feline welfare and cat-friendly handling techniques.

"It was a rewarding, and at times challenging experience, that made me realise just how fortunate we are with our advanced veterinary care and medical supplies."

Interested in applying for funding in 2025? Vets on the 2024-5 graduate programme can **apply now**, and applications for vets and RVNs open in May.



Rosina starts new chapter with nursing textbook



ROSINA Lillywhite has drawn on her extensive experience of equine nursing to co-edit a new textbook for students and registered nurses.

Rosina, who is head of centre at VetPartners Nursing School, has co-edited and contributed several chapters to the Textbook of Equine Veterinary Nursing.

With a 21-year career in equine nursing, Rosina has led the Nursing School since its inception six years ago. She was previously head clinic nurse at Liphook Equine

Hospital and, in addition to her academic and clinical roles, she is a member of BEVA's Nurse Committee, where she contributes her expertise to the advancement of equine veterinary nursing.

The inspiration for the textbook came from Rosina and her co-editor Marie Rippingale, who recognised a gap in up-to-date literature for equine nurses.

Rosina said: "We felt there was a real need for a current comprehensive guide, so I approached a publisher with a proposal and they loved the idea. From that point, the book took four years to come together, with contributions from experts across the field.

"It's a bit surreal to see the book in print, but it's incredibly rewarding to have a resource that I know will be invaluable for students and nurses, providing them with all the information they need for their qualifications and when they're working in practice.

"As someone who is mildly dyslexic, this achievement is particularly meaningful. It's something I never thought possible, and to have made it happen is a huge source of pride."

Farm awards celebrating excellence

FOUR new awards have been launched by VetPartners to celebrate farmers who are making a difference to both animal health and reducing the environmental impact of production.

A shortlist of clients nominated by our farm vets has now been drawn up, and the winners will be announced in May.



VetPartners Farm Director Ian Cure, pictured, said: "These new awards are designed to celebrate excellence in farming from our clients across the VetPartners group, whatever the farm species. We want to showcase and celebrate outstanding farmers who are leaders in animal welfare, sustainability, and responsible medicine use."

"By rewarding those who have made on-farm improvements, in collaboration with their vets, we hope to inspire other farmers and also fly the flag high for British agriculture, showcasing the industry as one at the forefront of animal health and welfare, environmental sustainability, and responsible use of medicines."

The award categories are Environmental Impact Award, Health and Welfare Award, Responsible Use Award and Farm Health Champion Award.

Hannah's round-the-world trip for fresh inspiration

FARM vet Hannah Batty has travelled the world to discover new ideas that will help to reap rewards for her clients and her practice after being awarded a prestigious Nuffield Farming Scholarship.

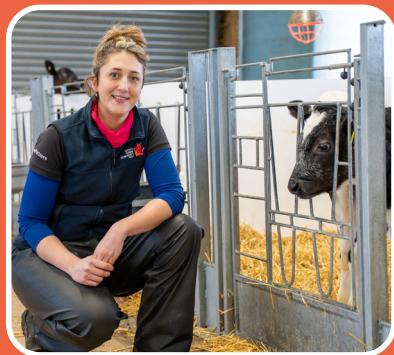
Hannah, clinical director at LLM Farm Vets in Shropshire, flew to Canada, South America, Australia and Europe on a fact-finding mission to learn more about how farm businesses put their people at the heart of everything they do.

Only around 20 Nuffield Farming Scholarships are awarded each year with the aim of creating positive change in agriculture through the development of future leaders like Hannah.

With the support of VetPartners and her practice, Hannah used the scholarship to visit a variety of farm businesses to discover how they manage and support team members and the positive impact this has on animal welfare and farm profitability.

Her travels took her to a diverse range of locations, from the vast landscapes of a Tasmanian dairy farm and a Brazilian beef farm to the 117th floor of a Melbourne skyscraper to meet the CEO of a dairy business with 69,000 animals.

Hannah said: "The Nuffield Scholarship scheme appealed to me because I loved the idea of challenging myself, broadening my horizons of global agriculture and being able to uncover new ideas to support our clients."



Well done to Clifton Lodge team

VETS and Veterinary Nurses from Clifton Lodge Veterinary Group are celebrating achieving additional qualifications.

Elizabeth Britz gained a GPCert (SADen+os) and Danny De Vries achieved a GPCert (Small Animal Surgery) and have now been promoted to Senior Veterinary Surgeons.



RVN Kayleigh Thomas has achieved a Nursing Certificate in Anaesthesia and has been successful in securing the position of Deputy Head Nurse. RVN Matthew Flower has passed his Nursing Certificate in Medicine.

Abbie Shears passed her RVN qualification and Bree Cockburn passed her Veterinary Care Assistant qualification to support her application for Senior Animal Nursing Assistant which she was also successful in securing.

Practice Manager Donna Wren said: "We are extremely proud of our colleagues as the dedication and commitment shown to gain these additional qualifications is outstanding. They have enabled the practice to increase the level of care we can offer to our patients and continue to strive to improve animal welfare and the services we can offer. They deserve their successes to be celebrated and shared as it really is a fantastic achievement for them personally and for us as a team."

Clifton Lodge Veterinary Group has practices in Hartlepool, Billingham, Horden and Sedgefield.

Dedicated team members clock up 164 years' service

FIVE colleagues at a Derbyshire vet practice are celebrating career milestones.

Practice administrator Sue Wilmott, head nurse Amanda Twells, deputy head nurse Louise Tomlinson, reception manager Jane Broughton and nurse Adele Carter have all achieved at least 30 years of service at Ashfield House Veterinary Hospital.

In total, they have clocked up 164 years' service between them, and put their loyalty down to the caring environment and the support of their friendly colleagues and clients.

Adele is the longest serving team member as she celebrates 39 years in September.

Amanda and Louise have both worked at the practice for 31 years, reception manager Jane Broughton has clocked up 33 years of service and Sue Wilmott is the latest to mark their 30th anniversary.



Kathy marks 40 fabulous years at Shearbridge Vets

AS a veterinary nurse working in a busy practice, Kathy Bailey has faced many challenges over the past 40 years, but she has loved every second she's spent in the role.

Kathy has dedicated four decades to Shearbridge Vets in Queensbury, near Bradford, having joined the team aged 18 in 1985 as a temporary nurse.

After impressing in the role, she was offered a full-time job and qualified as a nurse in 1989. A promotion to head nurse came in 2020 – just as Covid took hold and the UK went into lockdown.

Kathy said: "I'm proud to have worked here for 40 years because it is such a friendly and caring practice. I have lovely colleagues and clients and it's like a big happy family."

"Veterinary nursing has also changed a lot over the past 40 years and it's great that we can now do so much more to help pets and take on more responsibility. I'm very honoured to have been able to work in such a wonderful profession for so long."



Winnie celebrates 50 years

There have been double celebrations at Northlands Veterinary Group for a much-loved team member. Alison 'Winnie' Gilbert became a trainee nurse at the Northlands 50 years ago, and she is also marking 35 years' service at the Northamptonshire practice.

Winnie joined Northlands Veterinary Hospital in Kettering in 1975 and successfully completed her nursing exams two years later.

After a break in a completely different career, she was asked to return to the practice in 1990, and since 2001 has worked at the Rushden branch. She also cares for pets every other Saturday at the veterinary hospital.

Winnie said: "I love my job as much as I did when I first started and I'm not ready to retire yet. The people are wonderful and our clients are so friendly and I enjoy seeing them and their animals."



Rutland House caring for people as well as pets



CARING colleagues at Rutland House Veterinary Hospital in St Helens have been praised for their support of pet owners with dementia.

Rutland House cares for a number of pets belonging to clients who have dementia, and the team has been working on ways to ensure they feel safe and supported.

As part of their efforts, they teamed up with **Alzheimer's Society**, which provides training for businesses on understanding the needs of people with dementia, to help improve communication with those suffering symptoms such as memory loss and confusion and needing help with daily tasks and language and understanding.

Head Vet Steph Walsh and receptionists Rachel Sutton, Jeanette Hughes, Emma Harding and Liz Lynam underwent the special training, and the practice has introduced a range of measures to support pet owners with dementia, including big, clear signs to direct them to the reception desk.

Rutland House Vets Clinical Director Janie Clare said: "We have such a caring and supportive team here and they could see there was a need for us to understand how to communicate with clients suffering from dementia. Having a sound understanding of how to communicate and reassure people with dementia is important for both the client and their pet."

It is estimated that around **one million people are living with dementia** in the UK but more than a third of people with the condition don't have a diagnosis.

Support: Rachel, Liz, Jeanette and Steph with certificates

Praise for our mental health training

COLLEAGUES from practices, businesses and our central support team have joined forces to support others experiencing or living with mental health conditions.

Our first three Mental Health Training Pathway courses have been warmly received by those attending, and more face-to-face sessions are being held regionally throughout 2025.

From raising awareness of how individuals can look after themselves to supporting senior leaders to develop protocols, strategies and practical tools for supporting their team members, the new training is helping to challenge the stigma surrounding mental health in the workplace.

Run by VetPartners Mental Health Trainer Tessa Beecroft, the training pathway adopts a more collaborative approach rather than individuals having sole responsibility for team mental health.

Among those attending was Kim Morton, Clinical Director at Grange Vets, who said: "I found the training incredibly insightful. I am keen for my team to feel 100% comfortable in being open and honest with each other about their needs. It was also a reminder to look after me, as I feel leaders often forget about themselves while focusing on the bigger picture."

If you're interested in attending the Mental Health Matters: Level 1 training, please speak to your line manager and [book your place here](#).



Upcoming courses:
17/06/25 - North West
09/07/25 - South East
03/09/25 - Scotland
15/10/25 - South East
11/11/25 - South West
18/11/25 - Wales



Caring: Colleagues at our first mental health course and, above, trainer Tessa Beecroft

Progress in reducing gender pay gap

VETPARTNERS is continuing to make progress in reducing its gender pay gap, with recent data showing a further 1% decrease in 2024 compared to the previous year. The trend is clearly moving in the right direction, reinforcing the success of ongoing efforts to achieve pay equity.

One of the most encouraging developments is the increasing presence of women in senior positions. In 2024, the proportion of female colleagues in the upper pay quartile rose by 1%, following a 2% increase in 2023. At the same time, there has been an increase in male representation in lower quartiles, reflecting a more balanced distribution across different roles.

A major milestone for VetPartners in 2024 was the complete elimination of the gender pay gap among graduate vets. This achievement signals that pay equity is being embedded at the earliest stages of veterinary careers, setting a strong foundation for the future.

VetPartners is also making progress in pay equality within key frontline roles. More than half (52%) of employees consists of animal care assistants,

receptionists and veterinary nurses - roles in which there is either no median gender pay gap or where pay is in favour of female employees.

The company is making significant progress in addressing pay disparities among vets. The average pay gap within this group reduced by 1.2% in 2024, following a 1% decrease in 2023. The median pay gap for all veterinary surgeons now stands at 16.07%, closely aligning with the national median of 13.1%.

Even more promising is the progress among vets under 40 years old. Since 2022, their mean pay gap has dropped from 8.7% to just 3.3%, while the median pay gap has fallen from 4.76% to an impressive 1.1%. These figures indicate that younger professionals entering the field are experiencing greater pay parity than ever before.

While there is still work to be done, VetPartners' consistent year-on-year reductions in pay disparity demonstrate a firm commitment to gender pay equality. The company's targeted strategies, from supporting women in leadership to ensuring fair pay structures for veterinary surgeons, are delivering measurable results.

Recruitment top tips

VETPARTNERS has developed a useful guide on how to recruit new colleagues.

Our recruitment tool kit for practices is available on VetPartners Learning and includes everything you need to know so you can hire your next new team member.

The guide includes great advice and tips on how to use agencies, the ATR process, how to write adverts, as well as help on IR35 and visas.

There are also tips on conducting interviews with candidates, including questions you should ask to get the best out of the meeting, some dos and don'ts and how to communicate well.

There is also guidance on what to do after the interview, whether you offer a candidate their dream role or need to let them know they have been unsuccessful.

The aim is to support hiring managers in practices during what can be a daunting time.

You can find the tool kit [here](#).

For further information, contact careers@vetpartners.co.uk

Spring cleaning can boost our wellbeing

We've all heard the expression "a tidy house is a tidy mind", but is it true that a spring clean can help our wellbeing, and can we spring clean more than just our homes?

Whether it's home, workplace or the mind, VetPartners Wellbeing Group chair Steph Walsh is a fan of decluttering....

Clean homes are healthier

We sleep, eat and relax in our homes, so a healthy home environment is essential to wellbeing. A study by a professor at Indiana University found that people with clean houses are healthier and more active than those with messy houses.

In another study, women who described their homes as cluttered, are more likely to be depressed, tired and had higher levels of the stress hormone, cortisol.

Tackling your whole house can feel overwhelming, so make a plan and declutter room by room. Take pictures before you start so you can compare the progress when you've finished a room. Tell yourself, if you don't love, wear or use it, it's out!

Clutter can lead to overwhelm

Researchers have discovered that clutter can make it difficult to focus.



Clutter causes the visual cortex to become overwhelmed, making it hard to focus on one thing. Having your workspace clear and tidy can help you feel calmer, in control and at ease. You don't need to clear everything in one day, do a little at a time to create a clean, open workspace that will help your productivity and workflow.

Journalling leads to clarity

Our heads are often full of mental clutter. Journalling can be a good way to clear some of this clutter, by writing it down on paper then ripping it up and recycling it.

Another way to clear mental clutter is practising mindfulness, which involves living in the present moment, and noticing the small things without judgement. Mindfulness can help you to feel calmer and less stressed, as well as helping you cope with difficult or unhelpful thoughts.

Swap binge-watching TV for connecting with nature

Decluttering our routine of activities that don't serve us, like mindless scrolling of social media or binge-watching Netflix, can free up time to allow you to do activities that will serve us better. Going for a regular walk outside, especially as the weather is improving, can help our physical fitness, and our mental wellbeing through enabling us to connect with nature.



Colleagues can enjoy a range of wellbeing benefits, including massages, reflexology and Reiki, thanks to our Health Shield.

As well as discounted wellbeing treatments, you can also claim money back on everyday healthcare costs such as prescriptions, dental and optical, and retail offers.

So why not make the most of Health Shield and give your health and wellbeing a boost?

Health Shield can be accessed at www.healthshield.co.uk

If you need help accessing Health Shield, please contact reward@vetpartners.co.uk



Super-fit: Hazel and Piper in action

Hazel and her dogs are muddy marvels!

Work-life balance is so important for our wellbeing and having hobbies enables people to do something they really enjoy.

Here, Clyde Vets veterinary nursing assistant Hazel Steen reveals her love of CaniCross, a cross-country event for owners and their dogs.

AFTER a busy week helping care for equine patients at Clyde Vets, Hazel Steen loves getting out into nature with her beloved dogs Piper and Merlin.

Hazel is a huge fan of the sport of CaniCross, and from September to April she travels all over the UK to events with six-year-old Dalmatian Piper and 20-month-old Pointer Merlin.

CaniCross is a cross-country running event where you're attached to your dog by a harness and they help pull you along. Working as a team, the two-legged and four-legged runners tackle a 5km course together and try to get over the finish line in

the quickest possible time.

Hazel competes for fun and for the social aspect, but she's aiming high this year and has set her sights on flying the flag for Great Britain at the sport's World Championships this autumn.

She said: "I would recommend CaniCross to anyone because it's a great way to spend quality time with your dog and build an awesome partnership with them. You can choose to be competitive, but not all races are for athletes and you can go at your own pace or run over shorter courses, so anyone can join in."

"I'm really grateful for the support of Clyde Vets as they have enabled me to take a sabbatical from work in September and October so I can travel to competitions across Europe, to hopefully include the World Championships in the Czech Republic."

Flagship hospital has over 70 years of service



Welcoming referrals from all VetPartners practices, Goddard Veterinary Group's flagship Wanstead Hospital in North East London opened in 1952 and was the first site in the Goddard family of practices.

Now the largest and busiest site in the Goddard group, it is easily accessible to clients from the M11 and A12 and has onsite parking. A team of 19 Vets and 43 RVNs look after a multitude of cases, with vets specialising in a range of areas, particularly complex orthopaedics.

The hospital is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and our experienced team has access to extensive diagnostic and treatment facilities and vets who are highly experienced in particular areas of medicine and surgery.

We routinely accept referrals from other vets in North and East London and the surrounding areas. All our hospital vets have their own areas of particular clinical interest and are available to provide further advice for clients whose pets have been referred by their own vet practice.

Our people

John Gardner MA VetMB CertSAS MRCVS, senior veterinary surgeon

John is a Cambridge University graduate who, since qualifying as a veterinary surgeon, has worked at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in London and in practice in Hertfordshire. John is also an OV (Official Veterinarian) and joined the Wanstead team in 2008 as a resident orthopaedic surgeon and holds a Certificate in Small Animal Surgery. He spends most of his spare time with his young family.

Samantha Nightingale BVetMed PGCertSAM MRCVS, veterinary surgeon

Sammie graduated from the RVC in London in 2019 and worked for a number of busy small animal clinics in London before joining the Wanstead team in 2023. She has a further qualification in Emergency and Critical Care and is studying towards a certificate in Small Animal Medicine. Outside of work, Sammie is a keen traveller and marathon runner.

Facilities

- ICU
- Oxygen therapy kennels
- CT scanner
- X-Ray
- Ultrasound
- Separate cat and dog wards
- Isolation facilities



Services

- Emergency and critical care
- Orthopaedic surgery
- Keyhole surgery
- Soft tissue surgery
- Internal medicine



Contact details:

- To arrange a referral, scan the QR code to our website:
- Wanstead Veterinary Hospital, 84 New Wanstead, Wanstead, London E11 2SY
- Tel: 020 8989 7744



Mia's tips to combatting the cybercriminals

In today's digital world, protecting your personal and work-related information is more important than ever as cybercriminals are constantly looking for ways to steal passwords, hack accounts and access sensitive data.

The good news is that you don't need to be a tech expert to stay safe online. By following a few simple security habits, you can protect yourself from scams, hackers, and cyber threats.

Whether you're using a computer at work or a smartphone at home, VetPartners Director of Information Security Mia McGuigan shares some easy-to-follow tips to help keep your information secure and give you peace of mind...



1 Use strong passwords and don't reuse them

Create passwords that are long and unique. Avoid using 123456 or the word password.

Use a mix of words, numbers and symbols – for example, CoffeMug\$987.

Don't use the same password for multiple accounts as if one gets hacked, others will too.

2 Turn on extra security (two-step verification)

Many sites offer a second layer of security, such as a code sent to your phone.

This makes it much harder for hackers to break into your accounts.

Look for Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) in your account settings.

3 Think before you click

Scammers send fake emails and texts that look real. If an email or message asks for personal info or urges you to click a link—STOP!

Hover over links before clicking and, if it looks strange, don't click it.

4 Keep your devices and apps up to date

Updates fix security holes that hackers can use to break in. Set your phone, computer, and apps to update automatically. If you see an update notification, don't ignore it.

5 Back up important files

Computers and phones can break, get lost, or be attacked by viruses. Save copies of your important files on a USB drive, external hard drive, or cloud storage (like Google Drive).

6 Be careful on public Wi-Fi

Never log in to bank accounts or enter passwords on public Wi-Fi, such as in coffee shops.

Hackers can steal your information on public networks. Use your phone's hotspot or wait until you're on a trusted Wi-Fi network.

7 Lock your devices and log out

Always lock your phone, tablet and computer when not using them. Use a PIN, password, fingerprint, or face unlock.

If you're finished using an important account, like banking, log out when done.

VetPartners launches its first dedicated receptionist course



RECEPTIONISTS across VetPartners practices will be able to benefit from a new programme aimed at front of house colleagues.

Our new Client Experience Programme is the first dedicated training course VetPartners has created for veterinary receptionists, with the aim of enhancing customer experience.

The course, which will be run by VetPartners Business Support Managers, comprises of four modules, with three online 90-minute sessions and a final in-person session.

There will be online virtual learning content and assessment to be completed prior to every module. The cohorts will be set up regionally to ensure minimum travel disruption and encourage networking opportunities.

The programme includes:

- Ways to influence our clients' awareness and consideration of our practice and services.
- How we can impact how we acquire clients and retain them.

- How we can then support our clients to become advocates of our practice.
- Communicating with our clients and how we can best support them in challenging times.

Receptionists will need to have completed the British Veterinary Receptionists Association (BVRA) Foundation course to be eligible for the course, and anyone applying for a place on the waiting list to attend will need to be nominated by their line manager.

The new programme, which was piloted in March before being rolled out from April, is just one of the ways VetPartners supports receptionists to thrive in their role.

Line managers who would like their receptionists added to the Client Experience Programme, should scan here:



Scan here

Spotlight on...

Fiona Nichol

– Group Director of Training and Development



Fiona began her working life as a trainee veterinary nurse at a small practice in Bridlington, and is now responsible for supporting our nurses, along with other members of the veterinary profession, to develop rewarding and fulfilling careers at VetPartners.

She oversees L&D and Business Support Managers who facilitate and deliver training, such as the Developing Leaders and the Senior Leaders courses, mental health training and programmes for nurses and receptionists.

A former head nurse, she feels incredibly passionate about the role of veterinary nurses and receptionists, and Veterinary Nurse Awareness Month is special to her.

"I'm very proud of my veterinary nursing background and I understand the huge value our nurses bring to our practices," she said.

"I hope I can be a role model, support our nurses in their own careers, as well as help to develop the next generation of nurses."

Fiona is married to Darren and has three children, Lottie, 12, Betsy, 10, and six-year-old Milo. She has just bought her first horse, Charles, a 17-year-old Irish Sport Horse, to share with Lottie, and Kevin the cat is another new addition to the family.

What do you love about your role?

Having come from a nursing role, I understand the challenges and I also know the huge impact nurses and receptionists have in our practices, so I really enjoy championing them, ensuring they are recognised and have wider opportunities.

What do you do in your spare time?

I have fulfilled my childhood dream of owning a horse with my daughter Lottie. I love getting out hacking in the fresh air.

We also have a new cat. Having not had animals for a long time, having them back in my life has had such a positive impact on me.

We all make the tea at VetPartners, but who makes the best brew in the central support team?

Sonia Cantwell makes a very good cuppa. Tim Shearman isn't bad either and always gives me a mug with a fun message on.

What advice would you share with others?

Be it, until you are it. My school reports used to say I lacked confidence, but I've changed my mindset to embrace challenge. Even if I don't feel confident, I try to feel the fear and do it anyway.

What makes VetPartners special to you?

Without a shadow of doubt, it is the people. It is an industry of passionate, dedicated individuals, and I love seeing them develop and grow.



Can you recommend any good podcasts, books or TV Shows?

I enjoyed reading Stephen R. Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and the Diary of a CEO by Steven Bartlett, as well as anything inspirational by Brené Brown.

I love watching reality TV shows and anything to do with interior design like Grand Designs or Sort Your Life Out with Stacey Solomon.

If you could eat only one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Chocolate biscuits. I've just polished off a packet this morning. You can't go wrong with a chocolate HobNob.

What is your dream travel destination and who would be your dream companion?

Mauritius with my husband and I'd take the kids too to avoid mum guilt.

Calling all veterinary nurses!

In celebration of Veterinary Nurse Awareness Month, we've a very special competition exclusively for you.

We have three gift sets from the M&S Apothecary Sleep range containing a soothing blend of essential oils that are believed to have calming, sleep-inducing properties.

The curated selection includes a hand cream, body butter, votive candle and pillow mist, each fragranced with lavender, eucalyptus, vetiver and jasmine to help promote a restful night's sleep. A silky eye mask is also included to further encourage a state of relaxation.

To be in with a chance of winning one of the gift sets, simply tell us in less than 100 words what being a veterinary nurse means to you.



We'll pick three winners and notify them by email by Friday 30th May.

Email your entry to amanda.little@vetpartners.co.uk

Got a story to share in The Tail?



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