



Veterinary Centre

SPRING 2018

NEWS



Rachel speaks at Virtual Congress

Our Practice Manager Rachel was invited to speak at Webinar Vets' 2018 Virtual Veterinary Congress in January. The Congress is now in its third year, and in 2017 welcomed over 6,000 delegates from across the globe. Rachel was one of three speakers in the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' Mind Matters stream on 'How to find your purpose and passion.' As winners of an inaugural Veterinary Wellbeing Award last January, Rachel's webinar focused on wellbeing initiatives implemented at 387 Vets to improve team morale, positivity, motivation and contentment at work. Delegates were encouraged to take away ideas for personal positive change, with a view to re-energising their own work experience and reducing stress. Rachel's webinar centred around CEO of Health Leads, Rebecca Onie's philosophy: "It's a simple solution. You change one thing and then suddenly you've changed everything." Here's to changing that one thing!

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New baby!

Congratulations to our vet Carole and her family on the safe arrival of beautiful baby James. James was born at home on 7th December, and weighed in at 8lb 8oz. Mum and baby are doing really well. We love this photo of big brother Levi sharing some love! We can't wait to meet baby James and give him cuddles too!

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BoW Gold Standard Award Winners

We were delighted to receive a Gold Standard Award from the Best of Walsall at the end of 2017 in recognition of our continued outstanding customer feedback. Your reviews really do matter! As well as being a really useful source of feedback to help us improve, reviews are a powerful influencer as to whether people choose to use a service. Findings from the Bright Local Survey 2017 indicate that 97% of consumers read online reviews for local businesses in 2017, and that 85% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations. Thank you to everyone who posted feedback about us in 2017!

Tip top in new Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Awards



The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Practice Standards Scheme has been running since 2005, and is a voluntary accreditation initiative to help practices to meet and maintain the highest standards of veterinary care. 387 Veterinary Centre has been accredited at Small Animal General Practice Status since 2009. Did you know that the RCVS accreditation is only held by around half of vet practices UK-wide?



In November 2015, the RCVS launched a new Practice Standards Scheme with a much greater focus on how practices can create a positive outcome for clients and pets. The Royal College also introduced brand new optional awards for which accredited practices can apply to be assessed to show key areas where they really excel.

Last year, we applied to be inspected in 'Client Service' and 'Team and Professional Responsibility' – two of the six awards available to RCVS accredited small animal practices. And in November, we received our official report



Client Service: Outstanding

'Outstanding' is the top award band for scoring over 80%. We scored 85%! The 'Client Service' award is for delivering excellence in customer service. Our assessor identified 387 Vets' key strengths as:

- The time and investment the practice has made in improving the end of life experience for pets and pet owners
- The team's commitment to the practice and each other, recognised by our Investors in People Platinum Accreditation
- Our response to feedback and willingness to act on it
- 15 minute appointments (5 minutes more than many other practices) enabling us to take time discussing treatment options and to get to know pet and owner

Suggested areas for improvement included potential practice tours and client awareness events. We already run first aid courses, and we're in the process of making our first bespoke practice video so you can see a little bit more behind the scenes. Watch this space! Text reminders were also suggested which we think are a brilliant idea. We are looking at introducing these in 2018.

Team and Professional Responsibility: Good

'Good' and 'Outstanding' are the only two award levels available. For 'Good', practices have to achieve over 60%. Of the five modules which comprise this award, we actually scored 'Outstanding' in four and 'good' in just the one, but awards are issued at the lowest band achieved.



'Team and Professional Responsibility' covers infection control, medicines, medical records, practice team and clinical governance. Our key areas of strength were identified as:

- Our medicines management and clinical auditing: having an on-going programme of monitoring and making improvements according to results
- Our infection control behaviours. Our assessor described these as 'excellent'!
- Our induction programme for new team members and the mutual support team members offer for professional development
- Strategies we've implemented to combat work-based stress and to create a positive working environment

Suggested areas for improvement were the contribution of clinical data to more national surveys and having a formal induction and integration policy for vet students "to visit a practice of this quality."



Our additional awards Assessor – who also carried out our separate general accreditation in 2016 – began his report with the following: "I had visited the practice last year on a routine assessment and found the overall level of attainment to be one of the highest I have seen."

And he concluded with this:

"I would like to wish everyone continued success at what I believe is a practice that sets the standard of how well things can be done." We couldn't be happier!



Alabama Rot: What you need to know

Many of you will be aware from Facebook of suspected Alabama Rot in the Cannock area earlier in the Winter. Sadly, two cases of the disease were confirmed on post-mortem, one in November and one in December (source: Anderson Moores Veterinary Specialists Facebook page).

What is Alabama Rot? Alabama Rot is a disease which can affect any age, breed or sex of dog. The disease causes damage to blood vessels in the skin and kidneys. Whilst ulcers form on the skin, internally, the lining of the kidneys can become damaged, leading to kidney failure. The disease can be fatal.

Symptoms: Lesions are a classic sign of the condition: look out for a distinct swelling or patch of red skin or open and ulcer-like wound. Lesions may appear on paws or legs, but can also appear on a dog's face, around the mouth, on the tongue and on the lower body. Within approximately 2 – 7 days of sores appearing, affected dogs develop outward signs of sudden kidney failure, including vomiting, lack of appetite or unusual tiredness.



Examples of Alabama Rot skin lesions.

Photo from Anderson Moores Veterinary Specialists website

Cause: Unfortunately, the cause of Alabama Rot remains unknown. The majority of dogs treated in the UK have been walked in muddy or woodland areas and in the last three years most confirmed cases have been between early Winter and late Spring.

Spread: To date, Alabama Rot has not been seen in any animals other than dogs. No people have been known to contract the disease.

Prevention: It's difficult to advise on preventative measures with the cause being unknown. It's thought the disease is picked up on paws or legs on muddy walks, so washing contact areas after walks could help. Vigilance is key.

- Check your dog daily for signs of unexplained skin outbreaks: red skin, sore patches or open ulcers
- Contact a vet if you think your dog is showing signs of Alabama Rot. Even if you are unsure, it's best to get your dog checked out. And don't wait. If you think your dog has contracted the disease, fast action could be vital.

Useful online sites for more information are Anderson Moores Veterinary Specialists' online information sheet for clients (www.andersonmoores.com/owner/CRGV.php), The Alabama Rot Research Fund (ARRF) website and the 'Stop Alabama Rot' website (<http://www.vets4pets.com/stop-alabama-rot/>).

At the time of this newsletter going to press, Anderson Moores Veterinary Specialists cited the total number of confirmed cases as 122 since 2012, with 37 in 2017.

It's important to be vigilant and keep our dogs safe. But equally, it's important to remember that whilst every single case is heartbreaking, numbers of identified cases are relatively small.

Alabama Rot Confirmed Cases Map: Stop Alabama Rot/ Vets 4 Pets website

Symptoms your dog is displaying are more likely to be representative of another condition or health issue, but it is always best to check.



Spring Alert! Keep Pets Healthy

A quick pet health checklist!



Lungworm prevention: Springtime means an increase in slugs and snails again. And an increase in the chance of your dog contracting potentially fatal lungworm. Slugs and snails can be carriers of *Angiostrongylus vasorum* – or lungworm.

The parasite can be transferred if your dog eats an infected slug or snail, or ingests grass or water through which an infected gastropod has passed. Prevention is better than cure. Worm monthly. Speak to us for advice.

Flea spree: With central heating and cosy warm conditions in winter – inside if not out! – fleas are active all year round. Given that an adult female can lay 50 eggs a day, that's potentially a lot of fleas. To avoid, best practice is to treat your pet for fleas every month. If your pet does contract fleas, your carpets will too. We recommend treating carpets and upholstery, washing bedding on a 60 degree cycle and treating all pets for at least three months. Speak to us for treatment advice. We run free parasite nurse clinics! There are lots of options and we'll help you pick what's best for you and your pet.

It can still be cold: Don't leave dogs alone in cars or conservatories as dogs can develop hypothermia quickly. Signs include slowing of breathing and pulse, lethargy, cold tummy. If you suspect hypothermia, contact the practice immediately.

Easter foods: Great for us. Not so good for our pets. We all know the dangers of chocolate for dogs (the cocoa is poisonous – the higher the cocoa content, the less they need to ingest before they become ill). But don't forget hot cross buns. Raisins, currants and sultanas are poisonous to dogs. And grapes too.

Slug bait: Deadly. Get to the vets immediately if you suspect your dogs has eaten any.

Plants can be poisonous: Many bulbs, plants and house plants can be poisonous to pets. Bring the plant or bulb with you to the vet if you are unsure what your pet has eaten. Lily pollen is especially dangerous for cats.

Donation will help to quench dogs' thirst



A big thank you to Janet and Matt Mitchell for their amazing donation of £140 to 387 Vets. Mum and son are Chair and Secretary respectively of the Wolverhampton and Cannock Branches of Epilepsy Action, and ran a guess the name of the teddy competition at their Epilepsy Action stand at the Pelsall Show last summer in support of 387 Vets.

The winning name of the bear was Hamish – and here is teddy Hamish sitting enjoying the sunshine in a comfy chair, wearing a very fetching blue bow! We're going to use the Mitchell's donation to buy an outdoor water station for use by all our canine visitors – including Janet and Matt's dog Eddie, a regular visitor to 387 Vets. And for in-patients who are used to drinking from a raised surface at home, we plan to make their stay here more comfortable by purchasing a set of raised water bowls.