PRESIDENT’S PIECE

Before I became VMG President, I was given some advice on what to expect by the incumbent of another association. They were certainly accurate in warning me that at every event, someone would ask how my presidency is going, usually in hushed and sympathetic tones as if asking about a terminal illness. Almost three months in I have to say that it has been very busy but enjoyable so far! In the space of just over two weeks, I spent a day at a joint officers meeting with SPVS and a Congress 2018 wash-up meeting, another chairing the inaugural Board meeting of the VMG, represented VMG and SPVS at one of our joint CPD days, spent four days at BSAVA Congress and attended a regional meeting! In between events, I was back to my day job of running my big and busy practice, something that made one of my official functions particularly enjoyable – presenting the Pet Plan Practice Manager of the Year award. Back in early February, I spent a day in a Mayfair hotel as part of the judging team for the Pet Plan Awards. This year 22,000 nominations were received of which 10,000 were for practices and over 4000 from veterinary staff nominating their colleagues. Every nomination certificate received brings with it the exciting possibility of being shortlisted and it was a tough business selecting the three finalists from the list of practice managers. My fellow judges were SPVS President Peter Brown and Anne Corson, the 2017 title holder. I was delighted to announce that the worthy winner was Helen McHugh from Holmefield Veterinary Clinic in North Yorkshire. We hope that Helen has come down to earth after all the excitement but as she is a true all-round capable practice manager, she was probably back at work and fixing the washing machine on the Monday morning! We would also like to congratulate the two other finalists, Rachel Billing and Rachel Duncan. They are all key members of their teams. A little less glamorous but an important day was our March VMG Board meeting where we discussed and planned all elements of our membership offerings and events. This will be followed up in June by our annual strategy day which is hosted by a professional facilitator and another Board meeting the day after. We have been holding strategy days for several years and find them invaluable in planning our activities and determining the priorities for the coming year. In the meantime, I’m doing what many of you probably are – GDPR planning – and looking forward to some helpful advice at the Chiltern Hills VMG meeting next week. I will also be taking the wellbeing advice from VetLed and getting out to enjoy the sunshine. Don’t miss it!

See you all next month,

Julie Beacham BSc(Hons) CVPM
President

REGIONS REPORT • APRIL 2018

The Regions have been busier than ever over the past month hosting VMG Roadshow 1 Credit Control and GDPR regulations with dsl (UK) Ltd in Cardiff, Rotherham and our newly organised area North Wales!

We have faced some challenges, mainly in the shape of deep snow drifts across many of our regions during March, and more recently owing to speaker injury. Dangerous thing this GDPR!. Chiltern Hills on 10th April was a particularly eventful event, with the scheduled speaker finding himself in an ambulance at 11.30am with the meeting due to start at 2pm! Enormous thanks go to Dan Tipney of VetLed who stepped into the breach at the eleventh hour! Dan presented the HALT campaign www.vetled.co.uk/halt that places the spotlight on some of the physical and mental elements that commonly affect performance and wellbeing, to help clinicians and team members avoid mistakes, with only three hours’ notice! VetLed will be presenting VMG Roadshow 2 Practice Performance and Culture, a veterinary practice specific workshop with similar themes, across our Regions from April- July 2018. Check out www.events-by-vmg.co.uk to find your nearest one and register!

As a dog lover, Ben Grey of GDPR Portal was more than happy to spend some time back in February helping demystify GDPR for the South West regional meeting in Kilmington, Devon. Nearly 30 people attended the session despite the snowy weather! GDPR will have a big impact on business, particularly with the changes to the rights of individuals to make ‘Subject Access Requests’ and many people, even some in the legal profession, do not know what needs to be done or how to set about it. GDPR Portal aims to help small and medium-sized organisations take a practical approach to complying with GDPR. Ben, who founded GDPR Portal, set out to give the meeting attendees an understanding of what veterinary practices will have to record about how they process personal data and a practical demonstration of how to go about it. Feedback from the attendees was very positive!

Going forward, Ben is looking to continue to build the relationship with VMG and is hoping to participate in more events aimed at helping VMG members meet the GDPR challenge. For a demonstration of the GDPRPortal see www.gdpr-portal.com
**INTRODUCTION**

In just a month’s time, on the 25th May, we will be saying goodbye to the DPA (Data Protection Act), as businesses across the EU will be welcoming its new and improved successor, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This change is important, as GDPR is more than just a fancy title and brings with it new stricter legislation surrounding data protection that has been designed to promote the transparent, lawful and fair processing of all personal data.

This is a welcome and necessary change because, following the rapid growth of technology, we have seen an increase in the sharing of data by both private and public companies, leading to breaches in personal security. So, it’s time to tighten our data-protection belts and prepare to welcome GDPR, the stern sister of DPA, into our lives. GDPR will help us to securely protect our employee and client’s personal data and allow them control over their own data.

**Feeling overwhelmed?**

Do not panic, as the VMG (Veterinary Management Group) is here to help. As we transition practices into the era of GDPR without disruption to practice life or sleepless nights. Pens and paper at the ready, let’s go.

**WHAT IS GDPR?**

One of the main aims of GDPR is to empower the data subject (e.g. clients and employees), by allowing them to take control of how their personal data is used, processed and shared. This will be facilitated by the increased individual rights that are part of the new legislation. GDPR aims to increase transparency and data subjects will have the right to know exactly why your organisation needs their data, how it will be used and for how long. The other aim is to improve data security by introducing strict regulations surrounding the storage, processing and sharing of personal data.

Overall, the expectation is that going forwards, GDPR will help minimise the risk of data breaches and misuse. Also, for the first time, it will enable standardised data protection across the EU - allowing data to be shared securely and freely between countries in the EU.

**WHY IS DATA PROTECTION CHANGING?**

Data-protection has become a topic of hot discussion and an area of concern following the rise in identity theft and cyber-crimes. We have all felt frustration at one time or another at receiving seemingly endless junk emails and phone calls from companies that we have no recollection of ever signing up for – you may even have been a victim of identity theft yourself! A lot has changed since the DPA was first created in 1995 and we are now a data crazy nation. Consequently, GDPR has been created to reflect these changes and to help shield EU citizens from data and privacy breaches, which are commonplace in today’s world.

**WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE TALK ABOUT ‘PERSONAL DATA’?**

Personal data is any information that can identify a living individual, for example, names, photos, bank details, email addresses, posts on social networking sites, biometric data and voice recordings.

Please note, pet information is not classed as personal data and is exempt from GDPR legislation unless the owner can be identified in some way by their pet (e.g. if the pet’s name is especially unusual). The same applies to any anonymised data.

In addition, certain types of personal data are classed as ‘sensitive’ and need to be handled with care and require extra protection, for example, sexuality, health, criminal offences, race and ethnicity, religious beliefs and health. In the practice context, you will most likely be handling, storing and processing the following personal data about your clients and employees:

**Client personal data:**
- Names
- Addresses
- Contact numbers
- Email addresses
- Financial details

**Employee personal data:**
- Photos
- Bank details
- Tax and pension details
- Health and Safety reports
- Sickness records and medical information
- CVs
- Job application forms
- Sickness records and medical information
- Disciplinary procedures
- Holiday requests
- Salary information

**TAKING CARE OF YOUR CLIENT AND EMPLOYEES’ PERSONAL DATA**

In the practice setting, your client and employees’ personal data may be stored and shared on a hard drive, the cloud, USB devices, paper, mobile devices and on IT management systems. To comply with GDPR legislation, each of these devices needs to be securely protected by implementing the following data protection strategies:

- Restrict access to data on a ‘need to know’ basis.
- Give employees’ individual logins with individual access levels.
- Have a protocol in place to ensure employees change their password regularly.
- Use encryption when sending and sharing data.
- Where possible, anonymise data when sending to third parties.
THE COUNTDOWN TO GDPR HAS BEGUN • APRIL 2018 CONT.

- Ensure all computers, memory sticks, hard drives and back-ups are password protected.
- Ensure all paperwork is locked away in files at the end of the day – this applies when working from home too.
- Operate a ‘clean desk policy’ i.e. don’t leave personal data lying around in your car or desk.
- Ensure all employees receive in-depth training on personal data.
- All archived data should be encrypted.
- Securely get rid of any data that you no longer need or anonymise it.
- Check your network is secure regularly if you have several branches.

GDPR TERMINOLOGY DECODED!

Data breaches – Any damage, loss, or destruction of personal data is considered a data breach, as is the changing, unauthorised disclosure and unauthorised access to personal data. Notifiable breaches must be reported to the ICO within 72 hours.

Data controller – In the veterinary context, this is likely to be a partner or director who is responsible for the business. The data controller’s role is to remain up-to-date on any legislation surrounding data-protection and to continually review the data-protection in place to ensure that it is efficient. In addition, they will monitor and control what data is collected, why it is collected and whether it still needed.

Data processor – A data processor is a separate organisation that is responsible for processing personal data on behalf of the practice. For example, payroll, external-HR, laboratories, microchip companies, marketing agencies, debt recovery companies and IT services. It’s imperative that you are happy that these third parties are compliant with GDPR and will take good care of your data.

Data processing – This comprises the organisation, adaptation, alteration, retrieval, erasure, dissemination or any other changes or interaction with the data.

Data subject – This is the person that the data relates to, for example, in the practice setting this will be your client or a practice employee.

Lawful basis – There are six lawful bases under which personal data can be processed including consent. Most lawful bases require that processing is ‘necessary’. For more information on the lawful bases visit www.ico.org.uk

HOW WILL GDPR AFFECT VETERINARY PRACTICES?

GDPR will affect all EU businesses and the veterinary industry is no exception. We hold personal data on both our clients and our employees. With this title comes a set of stringent legal responsibilities in regard to the way that practices store, share, protect and process personal data (inside and outside of the practice). Another goal of GDPR is to try and minimise the amount of data that we collect and to carry out regular reviews. The new regulations encourage organisations to question why they need data on a regular basis and how long you need to keep it.

All this talk of new legislation can sound confusing, but, the good news is, if your practice's data-protection strategy is already a well-oiled machine, then the leap into complying with GDPR will be only a small one (with a few more hoops thrown in for you to jump through). However, for those of you that consider locking your record cabinet and tucking the key under the nearest pot plant good data protection, you may need a little longer to prepare!

HOW CAN VETERINARY PRACTICES PREPARE?

News of the new GDPR regulations coming into force might bring out your ‘inner ostrich’ and before you know it your head might be well and truly buried under a thick layer of GDPR sand. However, it’s imperative that you keep your head out of the sand and start planning sooner rather than later, as you need to ensure that everything is in place well before the changeover on the 25th May. Failure to comply with the new GDPR legislation could result in your practice being subject to crippling financial penalties. For example, for serious notifiable breaches, your practice could be fined up to 4% of your business’s annual global turnover! To avoid this happening, you need to ensure that details of all notifiable data breaches are reported promptly and within 72 hours of the incident to the ICO (Information Commissioner’s Office).

To help you prepare for the new legislation, veterinary practices should spend time carefully reviewing their existing terms and conditions and data protection policies. It’s important to understand and consider the following:

• Exactly what type of personal data do you handle at your practice?
• How is personal-data is stored and what methods are currently used to transfer it?
• What security do you have in place e.g. locked record cabinet; individual employee passwords; restricted employee access; firewall; encryption; malware, virus and Trojan protection?
• Who has access to the personal data at your practice currently and who needs access?
• Consider what ‘lawful basis’ (under EU law, personal data can only be processed if at least one lawful basis applies) you need to process the data. For veterinary practices, this will largely fall under the ‘contractual’ umbrella. This is because processing personal data is necessary to complete a contract between the practice and the data subject (your client) in order to care for their animal.
• What do you need to use the personal data for e.g. contact purposes, to email vaccine and appointment reminders or for direct marketing?
• How do you currently ask for and record consent and how do you keep it up-to-date? Practices will need to obtain consent when processing data where there is not a ‘lawful basis’, for example, using it for sending marketing email or SMS vaccine reminders or emailing clients details of new services or offers. Appointment
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reminders would be covered under the ‘contract’ lawful basis – the client has proactively already made the appointment with you. You are providing a reminder of this for them. Vaccine reminders may be permissible under ‘legitimate interest’. While a ‘nice-to-have’ and not strictly necessary for the fulfillment of your contract with the client, it is likely to be acceptable. A ‘balancing test’ should be applied for decision-making (See ICO website). In this instance, having a double consent mechanic may be useful – where the client on receiving the first reminder, confirms by positive consent that they are happy to receive further reminders.

- Verbal consent may also be acceptable in some instances. Consent given verbally to a receptionist is noted on the file with details of when and to whom given. Interestingly, direct marketing sent by hard copy is allowable under the lawful basis of ‘legitimate interests’; electronic is not. This is because when sending electronic marketing messages you must comply with both data protection law AND the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (PECR). For more information see https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/marketing

- Is your consent form transparent, for example, is it written in clear and plain language that is easily understandable? Does it state on it your lawful basis for processing their personal data and why you need it? Does it clearly state how the data subject can withdraw their consent?

- Is your privacy notice displayed? The privacy notice and processor agreement are the two essential documents that every business must have. Examples and further information can be found on the ICO website.

Consideration will also need to be given to approaching staff training, as it’s important that the whole practice team is prepared for the new regulations and knows how to spot and who to report a data breach to.

TO GET CONSENT OR NOT TO GET CONSENT – THIS IS THE QUESTION?

It is a common misunderstanding that you need to get your clients’ consent to process all personal data. This is not strictly true and there are six legal basis that are recognised where processing personal data is necessary including consent. In terms of veterinary practice, most tasks will be covered by the need for the data to complete a contract between the practice and the client.

For example, in ambulatory practice, we need the name, address and contact details of our clients for billing purposes and for attending visits. Therefore, you do not need to get the client’s consent under these circumstances. However, if you want to use their personal data (e.g. the client’s email address or mobile phone number) to send an email or SMS vaccination reminder or use it for electronic marketing, then you will need to get the client’s consent first. This also applies to collecting data to be passed on to microchip companies if it is a cat or an exotic that is being fitted with a microchip. Dogs are exempt, as it is a legal requirement to microchip all dogs in the UK, therefore, consent is not needed.

Consent doesn’t have to involve a signature, positive consent verbally (capture when and where it is gained), or via an email confirming consent, is also valid. However, changes to legislation will mean that opt-out, pre-ticked boxes and other passive forms of consent, will no longer be acceptable. Instead, only ‘positive consent’ and GDPR compliant ‘opt-in’ boxes will be permitted.

To comply with GDPR, all consent forms must be separate from your practice’s terms and conditions and written in easy to understand English. The consent form should be ‘transparent’ and include details of why you need the data and what it will be used for. In accordance with the new regulation, it’s vital that the form details clearly how they can retract their consent and this should be as easy as it is for them to give it. Don’t forget, if the data is needed by any third parties, this should also be clearly stated on the consent form.

Once you have gained their consent its vital that you record it and note down exactly what was said and who gained the consent. To keep your consent record up-to-date, it’s also vital that you have a system in place that stipulates how regularly review of the consent records should be undertaken. Unfortunately, even if you already have consent forms neatly tucked away for all your clients, it is likely you will need to re-seek consent unless you are confident that your form complies with the new legislation.

The other sticky area in practice is regarding clients that have disabilities that you want to make note of on their record. For example, if they have a hearing or visual impediment, it can be helpful to note this down. However, this is classed as ‘sensitive’ data and it’s imperative that you do seek your client’s consent before doing so.

WHAT ABOUT INDIVIDUALS’ RIGHTS AND GDPR?

As part of GDPR, individual rights have been increased and data subjects will now have the ‘right to be informed’ on how you will be using any personal data and why you need it. They also have the ‘right of subject access’. This means they can request to access any data that your practice is holding on them (this does not include the data on their animals). This request must be in writing and once verified as genuine, then you must respond within one calendar month.

The client also has the ‘right to rectification’ and if they see fit, they can request changes to the data you hold on them. However, this does not extend to medical opinions. Any wishes to dispute a medical opinion should be recorded on file, but it is outside of the remit of GDPR. In rare circumstances, clients may wish to exercise their ‘right to erasure’. This may not always be possible, as there is a very limited list of circumstances when this right applies. If you do get this request, it’s best to seek advice before acting, as this is a complicated area that requires careful handling.

Clients also have the ‘right to restrict processing’ when you are working with them to resolve a dispute about the accuracy of the data. The ‘right to objection’ will depend on whether it is needed for legal reasons by you and will need to be carefully evaluated. However, in the case of direct marketing, they always have the right to object and the use of their data should cease immediately.

If you are in doubt about where you stand regarding individual rights, it’s always a good idea to double check. You can find more detailed information on this topic if you visit www.ico.org.uk
THE COUNTDOWN TO GDPR HAS BEGUN • APRIL 2018 CONT.

THIRD PARTIES AND GDPR

As well as being careful about your own data protection, you also need to ensure that you have a GDPR compliant contract with any organisations (data processors) that you need to share data with, for example, external HR, microchip companies, marketing agencies, debt recovery firms, insurance companies and laboratories. Failure to do so could lead to your practice being liable should the data processors have a breach in data.

SUMMARY OF THE KEY GDPR CHANGES AHEAD:

1. **Assign a data controller**
   One of the key changes stipulated in GDPR will be the need to have one person in the practice who is solely responsible for data protection - this is the data controller. This will in most cases fall to one of the partners or directors who are responsible for the business.

2. **Accountability is king**
   GDPR places a strong emphasis on keeping documentation as proof, this is vital to ensure compliance.

3. **Passive consent is passé**
   Wave goodbye to 'opt-out' boxes, pre-ticked boxes and all passive forms of consent and say hello to 'opt-in' and all forms of positive consent and clear and easily understandable consent forms.

4. **Establish a lawful basis for processing data**
   Before you even think about processing personal data, you need to make sure that is needed on a 'lawful basis'. If the task can be fulfilled reasonably without the need to process data, then it is not lawfully needed. The reasons why and what the data will be used for should be clearly stipulated.

5. **Arm yourself**
   It’s time to get the big guns out. Sadly, with cyber hacking and data theft commonplace, you need to make sure you build a sturdy fortress around any data that you store. You can do this by ensuring your data is protected by firewalls against malware and stipulating that employees regularly change their passwords.

FINAL GDPR THOUGHTS

Although on first glance GDPR can seem a little daunting, with a little research, time and diligence you can easily prepare your practice for the changeover in May. The main point to remember is that the new legislation is there to ensure personal data is processed fairly, lawfully and transparently. Break what you need to do into bite-sized chunks and tackle these individually. Don’t forget to involve your practice team, as they also need to be fully aware of the new legislation and be confident that they can comply.

Want to know more?

Further support can be obtained by contacting the ICO’s (this is the UK’s regulator for data protection) GDPR helpline. They also provide an online GDPR assessment tool, to help you check whether your practice is ready and what you need to do to comply.

DISCLAIMER: The content in this article has been gathered from various sources and is the VMG’s interpretation of current information. It does not replace the need for seeking expert advice from a legal professional or the ICO for your own or your practice’s requirements.

NOTE: A version of this article has been published in In Practice, April 2018.

CUSTOMISED, GDPR FRIENDLY NEWSLETTERS - JUST FOR YOU!

Producing and distributing a regular newsletter is just one of the ways you can keep in year-round contact with your clients. Whether its reminding them about seasonal issues such as tick disease or giving them articles that you think they will benefit from reading, maintaining contact is important and we can help you with this.

*Interestingly, direct marketing sent by hard copy is allowable under the lawful basis of ‘legitimate interests’; electronic is not. This is because when sending electronic marketing messages you must comply with both data protection law AND the Privacy and Electronic communications Regulations 2003 (PECR). For more information see https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/marketing*.

Source: The countdown to GDPR has begun - is your practice GDPR ready? VMG April 2018 Newsletter
I recently sent you some photos of VMG Stressed Eric in Japan!
I am wondering if any of your members would consider sponsoring a team of vets and vet nurses from The College of Animal Welfare www.caw.ac.uk to run a 10K race for life, in aid of cancer research, in June 2018. We are 15 vets and VNS working in practice but also teaching veterinary nurses from all over the country. This is the link to our page and any support from fellow VMG members would be gratefully received!
https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/team/caw-runnings

Best wishes,
Charlotte

Charlotte French BSc ARCS MA VetMB MRCVS PGCert VetEd FHEA
Senior Veterinary Nursing Lecturer

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To whom it may concern

I thought that some of your members might like to contribute to the following fund-raising event.

Jacquie Lorraine is doing a sponsored night walk in aid of North Devon Hospice in VPMA Past President Ian Lorraine’s memory. Jacquie lost her husband, and we lost a colleague, a friend and a person a lot of us could turn to! He lost his fight to cancer December 2017.

North Devon Hospice helped Iain and Jacquie in many ways towards the end of his fight. Every penny raised counts towards the target and helps north Devon Hospice help those people who need it. If you can't donate please share to your friends and family on Facebook. Let's get above the £500 target and show Jacquie we're all behind her!
The following link takes you to her Virgin Money Fundraising page
https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=JacquelineKennedyLorraine&pageUrl=1
Regards,
Andrew Cobner, Lilac Technology Ltd.

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I recently sent you some photos of VMG Stressed Eric in Japan!
I am wondering if any of your members would consider sponsoring a team of vets and vet nurses from The College of Animal Welfare www.caw.ac.uk to run a 10K Race for Life, in aid of cancer research, in June 2018. We are 15 vets and VNS working in practice but also teaching veterinary nurses from all over the country. This is the link to our page and any support from fellow VMG members would be gratefully received!
https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/team/caw-runnings

Best wishes,
Charlotte

Charlotte French Bsc ARCS MA VetMB MRCVS PGCertVetEd FHEA
Senior Veterinary Nursing Lecturer

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Dear members,

I am Maria Barratt and I have been part of the Office team at VMG (formerly VPMA) for over 20 years. I am part of a team doing the Moonwalk in May 2018 - I have committed to the ‘half-moon’ which is actually 15.1 miles.

Here is the link to our teams’ fundraising page https://moonwalklondon2018.everydayhero.com/uk/treasure-chests

Please don't feel that you must give - but anyone that can it is appreciated. Each of the team members has to raise £100 and so if you are able to donate if you can make mention of my name in the comments please so they can apportion my fundraising.

Thank you.
Maria x

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How likely is it, that workplace culture is having an effect on you, your teams, your patients and your clients?

The answer is very! In fact, it’s a certainty. Culture drives our working environments, our thought processes and ultimately individual and team performance. This in turn affects our provision of patient and client care.

A healthy, productive work environment will involve a positive workplace culture – so who is responsible for creating and maintaining an engaging environment? Essentially, everyone! All team members contribute and everybody benefits – but who steers? What happens if change happens? Can you influence and guide your practice to a position of positive workplace culture?

Leadership in today’s practice comes in many differing and interesting forms – however your practice is structured, a positive workplace culture can be created and maintained with amazing results for staff, patients and clients.

We're excited to announce that our second UK Roadshow will bring you guidance, knowledge and interactive learning from the positive workplace culture experts at VetLed! There’s a fascinating science behind it coupled with great examples, handy processes and plenty of advice and ideas.

We have thirteen dates at thirteen venues across the UK – it's your opportunity to gain valuable insight for both self and team development. As always, networking and discussion with like minded people will take place over healthy and not so healthy refreshments!

For event details; dates, venues and times, please visit the following link: www.events-by-vmg.co.uk
April 2018 is a month in which there are some important employment law changes you’ll need to be aware of. Here, Citation provide an overview of an update which you can viewed in full at: www.citation.co.uk/news/hr-and-employment-law/april-update-employment-law-changes/

**NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE INCREASES:**
As of April 2018, the NMW rates will increase. To qualify for the NMW, individuals must be at least school leaving age. The new rates will be:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>AGE BRACKET</th>
<th>CURRENT RATE</th>
<th>APRIL 2018 RATE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE INCREASE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 to 24</td>
<td>£7.05</td>
<td>£7.38</td>
<td>4.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 20</td>
<td>£5.60</td>
<td>£5.90</td>
<td>5.36%</td>
</tr>
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<td>£4.05</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentices*</td>
<td>£3.50</td>
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<td>5.71%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

National Living Wage (NLW): The NLW will also increase in April, to £7.83 an hour – a 4.4% increase on the current rate (£7.50). Both the NMW and NLW increases apply from the first pay period on or after 1 April 2018.

**VARIous STATUTORY PAY INCREASES (SICK PAY, MATERNITY AND ADOPTION PAY ETC):**

- **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP):** From 6 April 2018, the weekly SSP rate will go up to £92.05 – a 3% increase on the current allowance (£89.35).
- **Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP):** As always, employees who qualify are entitled to 90% of their average weekly earnings for the first six weeks. Thereafter, as of 1 April 2018, they’re entitled to either £145.18 or 90% of their average weekly earnings – whichever is lower.
- **Statutory Shared Parental Pay (SSPP) and Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP):** As of 1 April 2018, the weekly allowance for SSPP and SPP will rise to £145.18. Remember, you pay employees either the statutory amount or 90% of their average weekly earnings – whichever is lower.
- **Redundancy pay:** As of 6 April 2018, the maximum week’s redundancy pay cap will increase to £508 – a 3.9% rise on the current amount (£489).
- **Statutory guarantee pay:** From 6 April 2018 onwards, the daily statutory guarantee pay rate will be £28 (currently £27). Employees are entitled to statutory guarantee pay during lay off or short-time working, and the maximum they’re entitled to is five days in any 13 week period. If the employee’s day rate is less than the statutory guarantee pay rate, then the lesser of the two is paid.

**EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATES**

**PROGRESSIVE CPD EVENT FOR INDEPENDENT PRACTICE: SOLD OUT**

Every year Vetsure invite Principals, Practice Managers, Head Nurses and other key decision makers to join them at their regular ‘THINK TANK’ events. Vetsure represent a network of the most progressive and passionate veterinary professionals – independent veterinary practices who understand that future growth is entirely dependent on collaboration and innovative thinking.

This year the two day conference takes place on the 9th and 10th May 2018 and is hosted by Ashley Gray. This year the event features guest speaker, behavioural psychologist and business growth consultant; Andy Edwards (pictured). Andy works with Veterinary Practices across the UK and has been involved with Vets for around five years. He brings his experience of working with around 175 different industries, trades and professions to the Vets he works with.

The best ideas often come from outside an industry rather than from within it,” Andy says.

**Think Tank 12** will explore the link between leadership and customer delight – and how to identify the problem areas. Using an accessible psychometric model of human behaviour, Andy will help Vetsure members identify their leadership (and personality) type. He’ll take participant understanding of themselves and others to a whole new level, helping to develop, motivate and inspire their team. Andy Edwards identifies the four ‘foundations’ of business growth and explains how these foundations fit together to increase business turnover by 48%!

The event is always over-subscribed but you can still show your interest by emailing katie@vetsure.com. VMG will bring a report of the day in a future newsletter issue.

For more information visit www.vetsure.com or call 01707 226672
Meanwhile, back in the real world... news from our colleagues in the veterinary industry

RCVS NEWS 9TH APRIL 2018: RCVS PUBLISHES TELEMEDICINE CONSULTATION SUMMARY

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) has published a summary of the consultation phase of its review of telemedicine within veterinary practice. Anthony Roberts, RCVS Director of Leadership and Innovation, commented:

“We would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to the consultation – although Council has not yet made any firm decisions, we felt it would be useful to share our research so far.

The use of telemedicine is growing rapidly in human healthcare and it is only right the RCVS assesses the opportunities it could bring to improve access to veterinary services. It is critical, however, that we understand the issues it presents ‘at the coal face’ and consider all the available evidence before making any changes to our Guidance. The RCVS should ensure its regulatory framework fosters innovation and maximises the opportunities to improve the quality, efficacy and accessibility of veterinary services, whilst at the same time protecting animal health and welfare. Standards Committee will meet again in April 2018 to take further evidence and develop proposals to take the issue forward. The full summary is available on the College’s website: www.rcvs.org.uk/telemeds-summary/

A West Country farm vet has been sharing her experiences of being injured by livestock.

A survey by the British Veterinary Association in 2015 found that 50% of the vets questioned had been hurt by livestock in the previous year.

Amy Jones from Cornwall told Farming Today that in the past she had trapped her hand in cattle crushes, was kicked in the abdomen by a cow and had her arm broken when she was thrown in the air by a bull.

Hear the full podcast on BBC Radio 4 Farming Today by following the link: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09z1d68

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PET LOSS SUPPORT FOR YOUR CLIENTS

Knowing how to support pet owners who are facing the loss of their pet is now widely recognised as a crucial part of customer care and core to client retention. The sadness and distress felt by pet owners who have lost a much loved animal is something that you will be all too familiar with.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP. Our leaflets are available FREE for you to give to clients. If you would like a supply of leaflets, please contact the Pet Bereavement Support Service office on 01993 867216 or email: pbsteam@bluecross.org.uk.

As the leaders in Pet Bereavement support, we provide a range of webinars and our more advanced award-winning accredited training courses to enhance your client care.

By gaining a certificate in Pet Bereavement Support you will have the confidence, CPD hours and key skills to support owners and colleagues during difficult bereavement stages.

We also run a series of one hour webinars designed to improve pet bereavement support skills for veterinary practices at a cost of £20.00. All delegates receive a certificate of attendance. Dates, times and forthcoming topics are:

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<tr>
<th>WEBINAR DATE</th>
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<th>TIME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21st March 2018</td>
<td>Tools for supporting bereaved clients</td>
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<td>Tools for supporting bereaved clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>26th Sept 2018</td>
<td>Tools for supporting bereaved clients</td>
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Please visit www.bluecross.org.uk/pbss-course to find out more and book your place online. If you have any questions please feel free to call us on 01993 867216.
STOP PRESS!

VMG REGIONAL ROADSHOW 2 ADDS
‘CLIENT RETENTION DURING PET LOSS’ TO THE LECTURE SCHEDULE!

Exciting News!! VMG Regional Roadshow 2 will not only bring you fantastic advice on understanding and managing a positive practice culture, but on several of the dates will also feature a lecture from the fantastic team at the Blue Cross Pet Bereavement Support Service to advise on Client Retention during Pet Loss!

An absolute MUST for all members of the practice client care team including vet nurses, animal care assistants and all of the front of house team, this presentation will cover many aspects that you encounter in your practices daily, from the difficult conversations involved in quality of life, pre and post euthanasia, as well as tips for do’s and don’ts when dealing with your clients.

With over 24 years of experience, Blue Cross will help you look at the importance of self-care for you and your teams, the grief cycle and how the support service can be there for you and your clients, when the time comes.

The combined regional meetings will take place in Grantham, Maidstone, Devon, Pembrokeshire, Oxford, Bromsgrove and North Wales with further practice performance and culture full workshops in Kings Lynn, London, Welshpool and Worthing. It’s a busy spring and summer 2018 at VMG!

To register for the regional meeting closest to you visit: www.events-by-vmg.co.uk and head for VMG Roadshows

CVPM WORKSHOP

On Saturday 21st April 2018 the second CVPM exam workshop was held in Long Hanborough, Oxfordshire, which was attended by six prospective candidates! The workshop covered the Certificate in Veterinary Practice Management syllabus, the core subjects tested by the CVPM and the format of the exam itself. The aim of the workshop was to give guidance to anyone interested in taking the exam, which enables individuals to demonstrate their ability to effectively manage a veterinary practice, hospital or unit.

All the attendees participated fully, and there was an atmosphere of enthusiasm for the subject in question. The feedback forms indicated that everyone found the session valuable and anyone thinking of sitting the CVPM exam would be encouraged to attend a workshop, if possible.

There is another CVPM workshop being held in Essex on Saturday 19th May, before the deadline for report submissions on 1st August 2018

Please email the VMG Office for details: office@vetmg.com

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visit vetcpdcongress.co.uk for full details!