

Graduate Programme

Small and Large Animal tracks

2027

CVS Veterinary Group

“The job of all of us at CVS is to create a fantastic first job and support the beginnings of a long and rewarding career for you in the veterinary profession. The Graduate Programme will help you grow, learn new skills, find support, support others and also to learn about yourself. We will make sure you have a great place to work with lots of different opportunities for development to suit the authentic you!”

Dr Paul Higgs MA VetMB CertSAM DipECVIM-CA FRCVS
Chief Veterinary Officer

“As a GP Vet for the last 20 years I have thoroughly enjoyed working in our incredible profession, and our Graduate Programme is designed to help you to do the same! The sense of camaraderie, combined with top notch clinical training and tips and tricks on how to get the best out of your new role in practice gives you the very best start in your career. I can’t wait to welcome you all to CVS.”

Mark Moreton BVetMed MRCVS
Director of Learning and Development

Having been on the CVS Graduate Programme myself I know it has always been an industry leading initiative. But the amount it has evolved and grown over the last few years has been phenomenal. The amount of CPD now on offer is huge, and sets you up perfectly for wherever your career may go. The commitment CVS shows to be the company people most want to work for is palpable from day one, and the Graduate Programme is evidence of that. Being a vet, and being able to help people and animals every single day is one of the most rewarding jobs out there, so our passion is to help you help them.

Dr Hannah Spooner BVSc MRCVS
Post Graduate Programme Lead

As a passionate GP vet myself I am so proud of our Graduate Programme! Our aim is to provide our Graduates with the support and skills not only to empower them in their first few weeks in practice and make the experience a little less daunting but also to enable a culture of life-long learning in order to develop their careers in a way that suits each individual. The Residential Weeks and regional Tutor Groups are a fantastic way to build a peer support network which is fundamental to the improving our day to day work experience. The clinical CPD training is a superb way to put those skills learnt at university into action with relevant and realistic outcomes for most scenarios that the graduates will meet in day to day clinical practice.

Dr Sarah Rutherford BVetMed MRCVS
Head of Veterinary Clinical Education

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CVS Veterinary Group:

An overview

Passionate about animal care

At CVS Vets, we are one of the leading integrated veterinary service providers in the UK and Australia, putting our people first.

Our key strategic pillars

Our purpose is to give the best possible care to animals

Our vision is to be the veterinary company people most want to work for

1 We recommend and provide the best clinical care every time

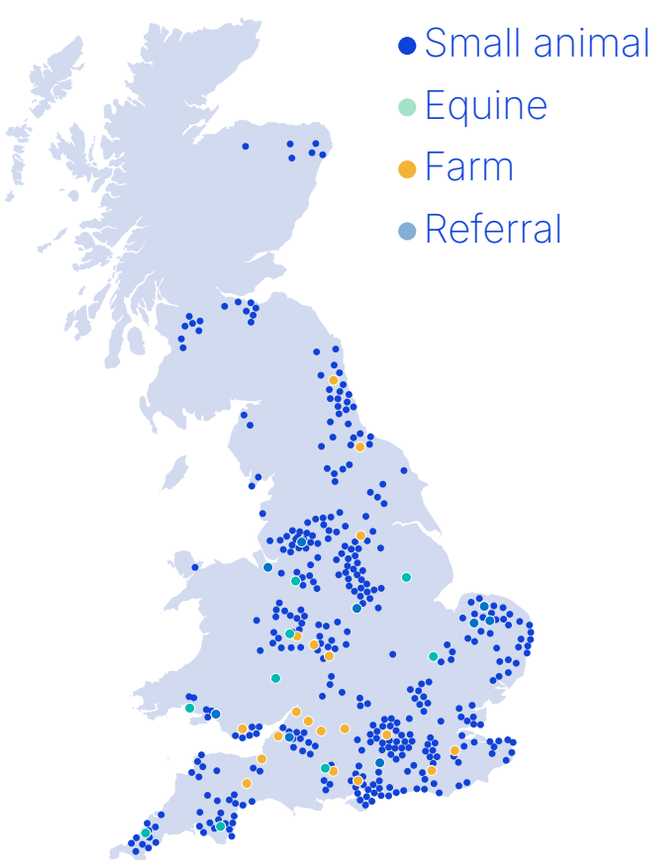
2 We are a great place to work and have a career

3 We provide great facilities and equipment

4 We take our responsibilities seriously

Our locations

We have locations across all of the UK and Australia, so you can find a practice best suited to you.



500+ vet practices
3 laboratories
10 referral centres
+2000 Vets
+3000 Nurses



Your Graduate Programme

Are you looking for a complete two-year graduate programme, designed by experienced vets, which will fully support you? If so, you have come to the right place!

The CVS Graduate Programme is tailor made for you, offering you the right support and training network and ensuring you have an experienced clinical mentor working alongside you in your practice. Our focus is on your development – we will ensure you get the best start to your career. Our programme delivers over £7500 worth of CPD, to help support you grow and develop your clinical and non clinical skills, with no financial tie in.

The Graduate Programme is long-standing and something we are extremely proud of here at CVS. We have supported over 1600 brilliant graduates through the programme, since 2012. We are always constantly learning and strive to evolve the programme year on year – in order to provide you with the support and opportunities, that enable you to thrive in your first years in practice. This all starts with our industry leading Onboarding Phase.

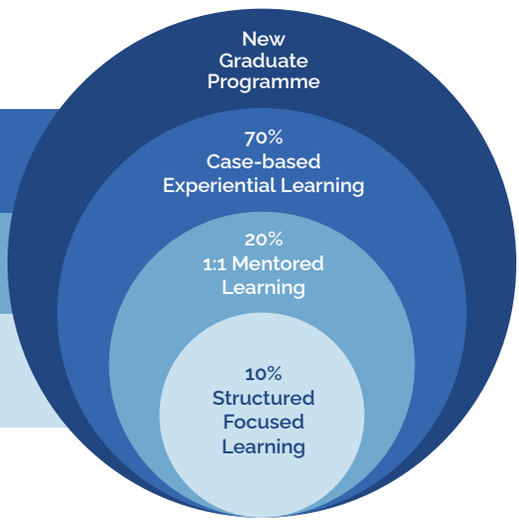
Throughout the two years, the training opportunities open wider for you, giving you the freedom to pick and choose the areas you want to progress in, and at the end you will automatically continue in your practice, as a permanent member of the team.

CVS Graduate Programme:
An overview

Through self-directed reflection in our clinical practices.

Through our supported VetGDP Advisor Mentoring Scheme.

Through our formal new graduate curricula mapped to RCVS VetGDP.



Learning ethos

Lombardo, Michael M; Eichinger, Robert W (1996). The Career Architect Development Planner (1st ed.). Minneapolis: Lominger. p. iv. ISBN 0-9655712-1-1. Duberman, Tracy. (2011). Developing physician leaders today using the 70/20/10 rule. Physician executive. 37. 66-8.

What support and CPD you receive
(Small Animal Programme)

Our programme's learning ethos highlights how we support in practice learning, with structured mentorship and high quality continued professional development tailored to individual new graduate needs:

A trained VetGDP Adviser

Your VetGDP Adviser will be an experienced vet who is there to provide day-to-day support. You will work closely with them to develop your skills and achieve your goals. They will help you to complete your VetGDP e-portfolio. In addition to the mandatory RCVS VetGDP training, CVS VetGDP Advisers also receive additional training to further develop their mentoring skills. Additional information on this can be found later in this booklet.

Professional skills workshops

We champion client communication and quality improvement in all Graduate Programme teaching, including having a number of days dedicated to the non-clinical aspects of veterinary life. These workshops focus on human factors, wellbeing and teamwork, to help you thrive in practice.

Clinical skills training

A full complement of clinical training takes place predominantly through face to face workshops and clinical wet labs. Highlights include Dentistry, Abdominal Surgery, Rabbit Essentials and Further Surgical Skills. A small number of the courses are delivered online, through our virtual learning environment Knowledge

Hub; these include anaesthesia, ophthalmology and feline medicine. This wide range of clinical topics will help you develop core skills and grow into a well rounded general practitioner - setting you up perfectly for wherever your future career may take you. You will also have access to the full BSAVA online library, the Vet Oracle telephone and online support service (providing access to specialists) as well as regionally based clinical leads dedicated to supporting you.

Year one

4 Week Onboarding Phase which include the Online and Residential training weeks followed by a year long structured induction info practice life.

7 Clinical Training Courses

1 Professional Skills Course

Year two

The second year is a split between courses and a 5 day elective of your choice. The courses include 4 Clinical Courses, a Careers Day and evening celebration and a Professional Skills Course. The elective is an opportunity to explore different aspects of the veterinary industry, both clinical and non-clinical. Examples of how graduates have used this time include visits to referral practices, working night shifts in Out of Hours clinics, work-shadowing business managers and conference attendance.

Tutor Groups

All graduates are invited to attend quarterly group coaching sessions within their local area, which are run by experienced vets from practice. These cover a range of topics and give the opportunity to discuss cases and share experiences, whilst at the same time developing and growing your peer support network.

Wellbeing and Pastoral Support

CVS is committed to supporting the wellbeing and mental health of all our employees.

We aim to create a culture where employees can talk openly and honestly about their wellbeing and mental health and to report difficulties without fear of discrimination or reprisal.

CVS is the only veterinary corporate that employs a Pastoral Support Vet (PSV). The Pastoral Support Vet is available to you for direct pastoral support outside of your practice, and they also work closely with practice leaders and VetGDP Advisers, to help ensure that you receive the best possible experience within practice.

In addition, we have the following wellbeing initiatives:

- a network of Wellbeing Champions/ First Aiders for Mental Health who can provide initial support and signposting within practice.
- an Employee Assistance Programme that is available 24/7 365 days a year. They have a confidential helpline staffed by trained counsellors to support not only you, but also your immediate family, when you need it the most.
- five Colleague EDI Groups with focuses on Ability & Neurodiversity, Ethnicity, Gender, LGBTQ+ and Social Mobility. Our focus is on making CVS a great place to work and to have a career for everyone, no matter who you are, your background, or how you identify.
- a Wellbeing Calendar for colleagues featuring topics such as resilience, exercise, sleep, stress.



CVS Vets Onboarding Phase
(Small Animal Programme)

Where your career begins.

We are delighted to start your Graduate Career with a 4 week Onboarding Phase. This includes a dedicated online training week, plus a week with our other new graduates at our brilliant and well renowned Residential Week.

We want to help make your transition to work as smooth and exciting as possible, meeting new friends and gaining new skills along the way.

People are at the heart of CVS and we endeavour to provide our colleagues with the best possible experience and the support they will need to, not only cope, but to thrive in their roles.

To ensure your veterinary career gets off to the best possible start, we have designed a 4 week Onboarding Phase that every graduate who joins us will complete. This phase is designed to ease you into your first job in a gentle, supportive way. You will start with our online training week. The week is a mixture of live webinars and self-directed interactive learning. This allows you to learn about new processes – for example our computer system in a low pressure environment. You will then attend the Residential Week, which provides an opportunity to socialise and network with peers and colleagues, as well as practice key day one skills in a safe environment – e.g. our dental wet lab, as well as revisit essential knowledge. You will then join your practice for weeks 3 and 4, for a relaxed Orientation and Induction, where a specific training plan will be followed, to ease you in practice life.

The Residential will

- Enable us to meet you in person so that we can welcome you to CVS.
- Allow you to practice key day-one skills and revisit essential knowledge.
- Bring you together with other CVS graduates, so that you can get to know some of your new colleagues and develop a peer-support network right from the start.
- Provide you with the opportunity to learn about CVS and how our practices operate.

Your first 4 weeks (Small Animal Programme)

Week 1 - Online Week

An online teaching programme, delivered through CVS Knowledge Hub, our virtual learning environment. This includes dedicated time for mental health and wellbeing training, as well as clinical refreshers on day one consults, emergencies, vaccine protocols and neutering videos. The week will also provide you with additional training on our practice management system (Provet) and introduce you to our practice protocols.

Week 2 - Residential Week

A 5-five day practical Residential Week including:

- Time Management: Building on training from the online week, we discuss diary management and prep room scenarios ensuring you will be able to manage a busy day with ease.
- Recommendation Culture training: Learning tips and tricks to help you make a confident, clear recommendation to a client when consulting.
- Dentistry: a practical wet lab session introducing you to the techniques necessary for performing dental procedures using cadavers
- GP Skills: A practical dry lab session, where you will have the opportunity to practice a range of skills such as ultrasound (using both the machines you will have in practice and our new cutting edge virtual reality headsets), Provet scenarios and drug calculations. Other topics covered include thoracocentesis, ophthalmology, haematology, ear cytology, bandaging, intubation and catheters, radiography, suturing and ligatures.
- CPR: an overview of current RECOVER guidelines followed by crash scenarios.
- Confidence in consulting: Euthanasia and consultation simulations preparing you for the day-to-day occurrences of general practice allowing you to develop

Week 3 - In practice Orientation Week

A gentle week where you will be 'off rota', giving you the chance to meet the team, find out where everything is and how the practice works. You will also spend some time shadowing either your VetGDP Adviser, or another experienced vet.

Week 4 - In practice Training Week

This becomes a more practical week which will take place at your practice. You will be working with real patients and clients and, as part of your structured training programme, will be fully supported by your experienced colleagues at all times during the week.

You will get the opportunity to hone your consulting and surgical skills, reflecting on your approach and receiving feedback from your VetGDP Adviser and other experienced colleagues.

Residential Testimonials



"I enjoyed each and every aspect of the Residential Week because you are getting to meet staff members with great levels of experience who can give many hints, tips and advice to help you in your early days in practice. I really enjoyed learning how to best communicate with owners, with all practice staff and how to keep continuity in my cases. I found the Residential to be more beneficial than I could've ever imagined, and I would definitely suggest a New Graduate join the CVS graduate programme."

"I was nervous about starting in practice but the Residential Week has helped settle my nerves. It allowed me to revisit essential knowledge and refresh my skills. I would 100% recommend this. It's also been lovely to meet other graduates and build bonds."





"I would definitely recommend the Residential Week. It was great to meet other graduates and create a social network. It was also beneficial to meet and learn from experienced colleagues and I look forward to implementing what I have learnt back in my practice."



Large Animal Programme

Should you be looking to work in farm or equine practice we offer a fantastic large animal graduate programme. Whether you join us as a farm vet, a first opinion equine vet or an equine intern you will be enrolled onto the graduate programme.

Our farm graduate vets and first opinion equine graduate vet will benefit from:

Large Animal Residential

This will

- Enable us to meet you in person
- Allow you to practice key skills and re-visit essential knowledge
- Bring you together with other CVS graduates, so that you can get to know some of your new colleagues and have a peer-support network
- Provide you with the opportunity to learn about CVS and how our practices operate

The farm animal topics covered will include pregnancy diagnosis, surgery, post-mortem examinations, calving, dystocia and foot trimming.

The equine topics covered will include orthopaedic assessment and back evaluation, distal limb ultrasonography, wound management and bandaging and nerve and joint blocking techniques.

In Practice Orientation

During your first week in practice some of the time will be spent 'off rota', giving you the chance to meet the team, find out where everything is and how the practice works. You will also spend some time shadowing either your VetGDP Adviser, or another experienced vet.

During the programme you will undertake a mixture of both Clinical Training Courses and Professional Skills Courses as well as an elective. The elective is an opportunity to explore different aspects of the veterinary industry, both clinical and non-clinical.

Examples of how graduates have used this time include visits to referral practices, working night shifts in Out of Hours clinics, work-shadowing business managers, graduate exchanges between practices and conference attendance. We have dedicated New Graduate Programme Leads for both our Farm Animal and Equine Graduates.

Here are some images from our recent large animal residentials



Benefits and perks

Paid Onboarding Phase

Attractive starting salary, reviewed at both the end of year 1 and year 2

No financial tie in during or after the programme

Professional memberships (RCVS & VDS)

Employee Assistance Programme: 24/7 365 days a year helpline to support you and your immediate family when you need it the most

Discounted UK gym membership with Gym Flex

Sharesave scheme

EV Car Benefit Scheme

Discounted cash healthcare plan, life and critical illness cover and private health insurance scheme

Free BSAVA Membership for 2 years

Up to 7 weeks annual leave plus Bank Holidays (or equivalent) with our Buy/Sell holiday scheme – allowing you to purchase an additional two weeks of annual leave each year

Unlimited access to hundreds of free webinars and courses available via Knowledge Hub.

Discounted pet treatments

Internal transfers: with a network of over 500 practices we can support you should you need to relocate

CPD valued at over £7,500 with no tie-in or claw back

VetGDP Advisers all additionally trained to support you

Pastoral Support Vet dedicated to supporting you

Free access to the full BSAVA online library, CVS clinical guidelines and VetOracle telemedicine service

Opportunity to attend a Careers Day at the end of the programme to discuss your next steps which may include (if you wish) new training pathways.



Meet your VetGDP Adviser

Your VetGDP Adviser will be your coach and mentor as you take your first steps into your new career pathway. They will provide you with the in practice support necessary as you develop into a confident and competent veterinary surgeon, and progress to completion of your VetGDP e-portfolio.

We recognise how important a good mentor is to your early years as a veterinary surgeon, and as such have created a development programme for our VetGDP Advisers - the CVS Graduate Mentor Training Scheme.

This scheme helps CVS VetGDP Advisers to further develop and hone their coaching and mentoring skills, confidently support conversations around mental health, and how to successfully support graduates faced with common challenges whilst they make that transition from student to veterinary surgeon.

VetGDP Advisers are also able to interact with each other through a network of peer support across the business, and can reach out to more experienced individuals should they feel they need to. This ensures that all VetGDP Advisers, regardless of their experience, can offer great and tailored support to the needs of their graduates.



Wider Clinical Support

At CVS we have Regional Clinical Leads (RCLs). An RCL is a vet who is available for clinical support in your region. They have a wealth of experience and are able to help with remote advice and in clinic mentoring. Our Regional Clinical Leads have been a key part of our business for over 4 years, working with our practice teams to champion fantastic clinical standards, develop brilliant clinical skills and provide outstanding clinical leadership. The RCLs have a real passion for general practice, believe that improvement never ends and want to help others find the joy that being a great vet brings. The Regional Clinical Leads work as part of the wider team to support practices to deliver the best experience for new graduate vets.

You will be further supported by a network of specialist veterinarians throughout CVS who are all available at the end of the phone. This service is called VetOracle.

The VetOracle service is a free advice line for you to get specialist advice whenever you need it. Our current new graduates say that this service gives them the extra confidence and support they need to confidently treat their cases knowing that there is always someone available to assist.

CVS also has an Advanced Clinical Services Network (or ACSN). This is a group of advanced practitioners in a range of disciplines who travel the country to visit CVS practices to perform very advanced surgical, cardiology or imaging procedures directly in general practice. It is like bringing a referral hospital to your own front door. It is aimed at the clients who may not be able to get to a referral hospital (either financially or logistically) and so this team can work with the vets in our practices to deliver this high end service. This means you can see first hand how these procedures are performed and take advantage of this network of vets to help support you in practice.

Career progression

We are committed to making CVS a great place to work and have a career. Our Learning, Education and Development Team continue to deliver significant training in support of colleague development.

114

vet vacancies filled by internal candidates in financial year 2024-2025

80%

of the CVS Executive and 80% of our Clinical Director roles filled by internal applicants

60%

60% of our Senior Vet roles filled by internal applicants





FAQ

How do I gain access to my online learning?

Access is available via CVS Knowledge Hub, our virtual learning environment.

How do I gain access to my online learning?

We generally run a Residential week for the small animal programme in both a North and South location at the end of Summer/start of Autumn. The large animal residential takes place once a year and the location does vary, however, all UK based travel, accommodation and subsistence costs associated with the small animal and large animal residential week will be covered by CVS.

Do I need to 'pass' the Graduate Programme?

Not at all! Our training is here to help you become the best vet you can be, your Onboarding Phase experience is just one element of the CPD, support and mentorship you will receive as part of the Graduate Programme. The purpose of the Onboarding Phase is about ensuring we smooth your transition from student to veterinary surgeon, giving you the perfect foundation to help you excel in your first years in practice. If you would like more support and training, we can help you with what you need to succeed. We want to help you become a confident vet with us and will provide a supportive team around you to help you achieve this.



I can't start until November – does this mean I will not be able to attend the Residential?

We prefer for all of our small animal graduate vets to carry out our signature onboarding phase (which includes a week of online learning as well as a Residential week) before joining their practice to ensure you receive the best possible induction. However, if this is not possible and a residential is not scheduled to take place at the time you wish to start work, you may instead start work directly with your practice and we will then create a personalised induction plan for your first weeks spent in practice.

We hold only one large animal Residential each year, so will liaise with you to try to ensure you will be able to attend. Most of our large animal graduate vets do spend a few weeks in practice prior to attending the Residential, as we have found this allows for a greater number of topics to be discussed during the Residential itself.

Are there any financial tie-ins for the graduate programme?

No, we don't believe in tying you into any agreement/pay backs as part of our graduate programme. We want all our graduates to be with us because they want to. Our vision is to be the veterinary company people most want to work for and for newly qualified vets, that starts with us having a fantastic and supportive Graduate Programme for your first years in practice.

Where will I be working when on the programme?

We match you to a practice based on your geographical and clinical interests. You are then offered a permanent position to work at the practice and enrolled onto our Graduate Programme.

How to apply

- Click the relevant apply now button or scan the QR code
- Complete your application
- You will be contacted by a member of the Graduate LED Team

Small Animal

apply now

Equine

apply now

Farm

apply now



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