



BVA policy position on good veterinary workplaces

Executive summary

There is general recognition that the veterinary profession has been challenged by recruitment and retention for a long time

in place measures to ensure the prioritisation of physical and mental health which are appropriate and tailored to the workplace. Individuals should take responsibility for their own personal health and wellbeing, recognising their moral and legal obligations.

Recommendation 2: A good workplace should collectively have the awareness, knowledge and skills to effectively prevent and deal with physical and mental illness, injury and disability at work, or affecting work. This includes:

- employers being aware and acting on legal requirements, regardless of the size or type of business
- employers being aware of potential risks to physical and mental health, and actively working to reduce them
- training for all team members to give them the tools to look after their own wellbeing, and that of others
- clear signposting to helplines and support groups to ensure team members know who they can call when in need
- regular review of risks to health and wellbeing and measures introduced to help

Physical health and safety

Good workplaces ensure personal safety always takes precedence, including over professional responsibility.

Recommendation 3: Employers should promote a culture of active engagement with health and safety matters, support good practise and challenge unsafe practises. Limitations must be respected rather than worked through, especially when managing chronic illness and disabilities, taking advice from external services and groups where necessary.

Recommendation 4: Employees should discuss any concerns with their managers, engage fully with all health and safety discussions, and always follow the advice provided.

Sickness

Good workplaces have a culture of respecting personal health rather than one of "pushing through" illness or injury.

Recommendation 5: Employers and employees should foster and support a culture of respecting personal health, including respecting when appropriate sickness absence is for the benefit of all. Everyone should take responsibility

Stress

Good workplaces proactively manage workplace stress.

Recommendation 6: Employers and employees should work together to proactively manage workplace stress in a way that is appropriate to the veterinary workplace and takes account of the individual.

Mental health and wellbeing

Good workplaces foster and support mental health and wellbeing are supported.

Recommendation 7: Employers and e

Lone working and domiciliary visits

Good workplaces recognise the potential risks posed by lone working and domiciliary visits and take steps to mitigate those risks.

Recommendation 9

Diversity and inclusion

Good workplaces recognise the importance and value of diversity, at all levels.

Breaks

Good workplaces ensure regular breaks are structured, protected and adhered to.

Recommendation 30: Individuals should take responsibility for, and realise the value of, their own time and make a conscious decision about taking breaks. Employers should

Recommendation 38: Employees should discuss suggestions for benefits with their managers without expectation. Employers should think creatively about benefits and take a 360° view, focusing on those which best help to create a positive work culture for their team.

Personal and career development

Encouraging progression

Good workplaces encourage career progression for all team members, with regular mentoring and appraisals throughout their career.

Recommendation 39: Everyone should take responsibility for their own career progression, encouraged and supported by structured personal and career development reviews in the workplace, with employers being transparent about all opportunities which arise.

Removing barriers

Good workplaces have clear career pathways that are an attractive, accessible and attainable professional route for those positioned across all socio-economic demographics.

Recommendation 40: The profession should seek to identify and remove barriers to career progression opportunities wherever possible, including financial, familial or geographical constraints.

Recommendation 41: Employers should create fair, clear and transparent structures for progression within their organisation and ensure that everyone knows how to seek out opportunities. When opportunities do arise, they must make the process for selection fair and truly open to all.

Recommendation 42: Workplaces should learn how to facilitate opportunities for progression from existing successful models, such as in corporate groups and the government sector.

Recommendation 43: Species and sector-specific veterinary associations should provide easily accessible information about career pathways in their sectors, including non-traditional career routes and post-graduate education opportunities.

Recognising different types of progression

Good workplaces recognise and reward both personal and professional development.

Recommendation 44: Employers should ensure that all employees have clear role descriptions, which are updated regularly to include any aspects of the role which have changed or developed.

Recommendation 45: Workplaces should encourage more opportunities for cross-sector working.

Recommendation 46: Everyone should recognise the importance of personal development, which may be non-veterinary related, on employee satisfaction and motivation.

Training and CPD

Good workplaces encourage personal and professional development (both clinical and non-clinical) that is aligned with the business.

Recommendation 47: All managers should receive training in key leadership skills. All members of the profession should appreciate the value of non-clinical training, recognising that it is as important as clinical CPD.

Recommendation 48: Employees should identify specific areas of interest and seek opportunities to develop skills in these areas, using them to benefit the organisation where appropriate. Employers should support this by encouraging employees to learn new skills and pursue areas of interest, providing enough time for training and learning, and working to create opportunities for team members to use and share new skills at work.

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Good workplaces foster a positive workplace culture by communicating and promoting shared values and attitudes to improve teamwork, raise morale, increase productivity and efficiency, and enhance retention.

Recommendation 58: Individuals should consider what they do personally, professionally and organisationally to show their values, and should repeatedly challenge negative behaviours and processes.

Recommendation 59: Organisations should recognise the importance of creating a positive culture that reflects the values of the team who work there, and use this to mandate how the organisation operates.

Recommendation 60: Employers should make sure policies are specific to their workplace and embedded within team behaviours.

Recommendation 61: The profession should challenge new and established practises which may cause harm to members of the vet-led team or animal welfare, discussing and calling out bad behaviours rather than normalising them. Professional associations should showcase case studies of good practise.

Driving change – measuring, reviewing and benchmarking

Good workplaces regularly assess, manage, monitor and review their culture.

Recommendation 62: All individuals should recognise that they have a role to play in creating a positive workplace culture. Employers should constantly assess, manage, monitor and review their culture, actively listening to and seeking feedback from team members at all levels of the organisation on a regular basis, and acting upon any issues which are highlighted. Employees should suggest ideas and actively engage with new initiatives designed to improve the workplace.

Social responsibility

Good workplaces are aware of their impacts on wider communities and consider the role of social responsibility in their workplace.

Recommendation 63: Individuals should be aware of their impacts on the wider community and engage with the sustainability and One Health agendas. Organisations should do their best not to have a negative effect on people, planet, animals, and should review, measure and mitigate their impacts wherever possible.

Recommendation 64: Employers should consider where social responsibility lies within the [] culture and, when possible, support employees in their additional efforts to make a positive contribution to the wider community.