

British Veterinary Association Members' Day Speech

Dr. Malcolm Morley, BVA President

28 September 2023

AS DELIVERED

Thank you, David.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to David for your leadership, strategic thinking, and unwavering commitment. As an integral part of the leadership team at BVA, your dedication to supporting our association – without ever losing sight of our core values – is invaluable.

Challenge and uncertainty have characterised the last few years. As David has outlined, the last few weeks have been no exception with the announcements of both the CMA review into veterinary services and the Prime Minister's commitment to ban American XL bullies by the end of the year.

When the veterinary profession faces uncertainties like these, it highlights the ongoing importance that BVA speaks with one strong voice on behalf of the profession. When I see this process in action, as in Council today, I feel immensely proud to be a member, and even more so to be an Officer, representing your voice and championing your views, which is so important during challenging times.

Cost of living and CMA

While BVA represents individual vets rather than veterinary businesses, responding to the CMA's review will be a key piece of work over the coming months. Our incoming President Anna Judson will say more on this later, but we

It really is an important issue, particularly given the demographic of our profession, and one that I would urge all members to engage with. [Evidence given to the Women and Equalities parliamentary committee by BUPA](#) last year suggested that 900,000 women may have left the UK workforce in recent years as a result of menopausal symptoms.

BVA's own Voice research showed that much more support is needed in the profession on this issue. Only 14% of vets are aware of a menopause policy at their workplace, while 46% say there is no policy and 39% are unsure. The survey also revealed that only 59% of vets would feel confident supporting a colleague experiencing menopause. Again, given that the veterinary profession is increasingly female in composition, we need to be taking these statistics very seriously.

The Menopause Hub, alongside other BVA member resources such as our 'Guide to Flexible Working' will help provide the right support to enable more women to stay in the profession. As well as this being the actions of supportive and equitable employers, providing support and making any reasonable adjustments may well mean that we will retain their vital skills and experience i

alongside the Young Vet of the Year 2023 at this year's BVA Gala Dinner during the London Vet Show – and I hope you'll be joining me there!

Although we still have progress to make in addressing challenges like recruitment and retention, I know that the work BVA is doing is bolstering and empowering our people, and helping to create better, more supporting workplaces, will allow them to thrive. Worldwide, many veterinary associations are recognising BVA's Good Workplaces as a model for the future and BVA will continue this important work as our new President, Anna Judson, picks up the baton.

Engaging the veterinary community - BVA Live

One of the (many!) highlights of my presidential year was BVA Live in May – it was just so fantastic to see so many colleagues engaging with the excellent CPD on offer and delving into thought-provoking discussions.

As with many delegates I spoke to, I found the interactive debate sessions particularly engaging. The unique format really allowed us to delve into challenging subjects, contributing our thoughts, but also challenging our own viewpoints by listening and learning from others.

BVA Live will return in June 2024, and along with our events partner Closer Still Media, we will be opening the doors to even more veterinary professionals than ever before with a new Educational Bursaries Scheme.

This exciting scheme will offer 2,000 veterinary professionals, including BVA members, fully funded entry to the conference. In addition, in response to feedback from our member survey, we're working with specialist divisions to develop a dedicated large animal stream to more fully reflect the composition of BVA membership. These developments will ensure that more vets across the profession have access to more diverse and high-quality clinical CPD. As before, we will also provide opportunities to engage with a wide range of non-clinical CPD topics encompassing career development, business, leadership and creating Good Veterinary Workplaces.

Legislative reform

However, initiatives to support the profession can only go so far. We simply can't build the veterinary teams of the future on the shaky foundations of outdated legislation. The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 is no longer fit for purpose and this year BVA has been supporting the RCVS in pushing for much-needed reform including in relation to the regulation of veterinary business.

There is also the issue of recognition of the wider veterinary team. I think everyone here would agree that vets don't work in isolation. We are closely supported by highly skilled individuals, such as vet techs, musculoskeletal professionals and equine dental technicians, but the current Act doesn't recognise these important

Environmental sustainability and BVA

As David said, environmental sustainability will remain a priority for BVA in the

From a personal perspective, thank you to my family and especially my wife Poppy