

# Medivet *Clinical* *Report 2024*





# Contents

04	Welcome Testimonials	16	Career Pathways
08	Clinical Team Structure	17	Ultrasound training
09	Clinical Governance Structure	18	Collaboration with the University of Central Lancashire
12	Focus on Feline Hypertension	19	Medivet Labs
13	Antimicrobial Stewardship	20	VetCompass
14	Group Clinical Communications	21	Branch Partnership
15	Nursing Focus		

# We are exceptionally proud to invite you to review our first *Medivet Annual Clinical Report*

**As two first opinion clinicians ourselves, when we've reflected on the implementation of our last 12 months of clinical practice, we're proud of the impact that the Clinical Strategy has had on the development of our clinicians, our patients and indeed the wider veterinary industry.**

We've both now worked for Medivet for a long time and continue to be amazed by the diverse range of talents and skills our clinicians and clinic teams possess. This year has seen the formation of a dedicated clinical team within Medivet, who work closely alongside other senior leaders and executives to ensure that our clinical values are at the heart of everything that happens within the business.

We truly believe that all clinical colleagues, regardless of their role or tenure within the Veterinary Industry, bring with them a wealth of experience and knowledge that we should be keen to embrace - hence the formation of our new and inclusive governance structure which gives everyone the opportunity to participate and feed into our clinical agenda.

We're excited to share with you both an overview of our clinical and governance structures, as well as sharing some of the outputs and changes that have already been put in place across our estate.

As clinicians our primary focus is on animal welfare, thus we're proud to say that many of our initiatives have led to changes that directly improve the welfare of our patients, and in turn mean they remain a key part of their owners lives for a longer, happier time. By focusing on areas such as ear cytology, feline blood pressure and the efficiency of our laboratory services, we truly feel we've positively changed standards of care across the business for the pets and owners that we're lucky enough to serve.

Like 76% of our colleagues, we share a view that antibiotic stewardship is extremely important in order to protect these invaluable products for generations to come. We're excited to share that we've reduced our use of high priority antibiotics across the Group by 35% over the past three years - and we are continuing to explore strategies to reduce the usage further by our next report.



Our report details our focus on providing clinical support to both vet and nurse colleagues in areas that we've directly heard matter to them. Our invaluable nursing colleagues have been given the opportunity to develop their consulting skills, and are also undertaking further training in appropriate provision of schedule 3 procedures. Our vets have been given the opportunity to attend sessions helping to develop first opinion ultrasound skills, which has directly led to an increase in confidence and use of this important imaging modality.

We also know that the Veterinary Industry can be a challenging place for our colleagues to thrive, and we are committed to contributing to the creation of a diverse, sustainable and successful profession. We want to provide lifelong opportunities for anyone who is interested in joining the veterinary industry - and you can learn more about our pioneering work with the University of Central Lancashire and our Branch Partnership business ownership model within this report.

We'd like to thank all colleagues across the business who have contributed to the report and it's content over the past 12 months. We already have some fantastic plans for our next year, and would encourage anyone who is inspired by any of the clinical content within to reach out to us via LinkedIn - we love making connections within an industry that we both love being a part of.



**John Beel**

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Veterinary Ophthalmology  
*Clinical Services Director*



**Dr Rhian Littlehales**

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*Clinical Governance Director*



# A welcome from our *Chief Operations Officer*



**Andy Cresswell**  
*Chief Operating Officer*

When I joined the business in 2023, it quickly became apparent to me that our ethos of delivering 'exceptional care that is always there' can only be delivered by ensuring that our clinic teams had strong dedicated clinical support available to them.

More than any other industry I've worked in, I can honestly say that our colleagues are passionate and dedicated to their profession. I'm regularly amazed by the lengths that our teams go to ensure that their patients and clients are prioritised.

Because of this it's important to me personally to make sure that our structure truly prioritised these teams - ensuring we develop our approach and provide support in areas that matter to them the most.

**"It's for that reason I took the decision to form a dedicated senior clinical team - not only to provide the support to clinics, but to guide all areas of the business in ensuring that the ability of our clinical colleagues to provide care remained at the forefront of every initiative and decision."**



Having observed the powerful impact of the vet-led team when visiting clinics, I'm proud to say that with the support of our Clinical Leadership Team, we're making changes across the business that will enable our colleagues to spend more time fulfilling the aspects of the role that they've put enormous amounts of time and effort into training to do - which is usually also the parts of the role that they enjoy the very most.

I'm exceptionally proud to be a part of such a dedicated industry - as a pet owner myself I know what an important role first-opinion veterinary clinics play in their clients lives. When I look at this report, I'm proud to think of all we've achieved - and I look forward to us creating an even greater impact on animals, their owners and our clinic teams in the year ahead.

# Clinical *Team Structure*

**Through separation of the Clinical and Operational arms of the business, Medivet can apply individual operational and clinical expertise alongside each other. Although the roles interact closely, they allow for diversification in goals with proactive clinical and operational focus in each team.**

## **Clinical Services Director Role**

The Clinical Services Director leads the Divisional Veterinary Director Team so that together they're responsible for the standards and delivery of all clinical aspects of our Group. The role not only sets the standards of clinical excellence across the Group but looks to challenge and drive clinical progress and development. The Clinical Services Director supports and advises on core veterinary aspects across various departments in the Group within the key pillars of Patients, Clients, and our People. The role works closely with the Clinical Governance Director in the implementation of quality improvement (QI), regulatory changes and development of the Group's Standard Operating Procedure and Processes.

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## **Clinical Governance Director Role**

Working alongside our Clinical Services Director, our Clinical Governance Director Role supports in ensuring that our organisation operates within the regulatory, legal and ethical frameworks expected of a Veterinary Organisation. This role is also responsible for the implementation of our governance and QI structures, discussed in later parts of this report. Working closely with the wider industry, relevant government departments and of course our own clinicians, they make sure that every decision made in Clinic or Support centre is driven in line with the exceptional clinical standards we know our teams hold dear.

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## **Divisional Veterinary Director Role**

Our Divisional Veterinary Directors are experienced veterinary practitioners whose purpose is to support our clinic teams in the provision of exceptional care. They're the visible face of the clinical team in our practices, and work to ensure that high clinical standards, modern equipment and learning opportunities exist for our clinicians to be the very best that they can be. They're responsible for design and implementation of clinical projects focusing on proactive care to our patients, exceptional service to our clients and improved engagement of colleagues. They work closely with and support our operations team with expertise, guidance, and clinical perspectives.

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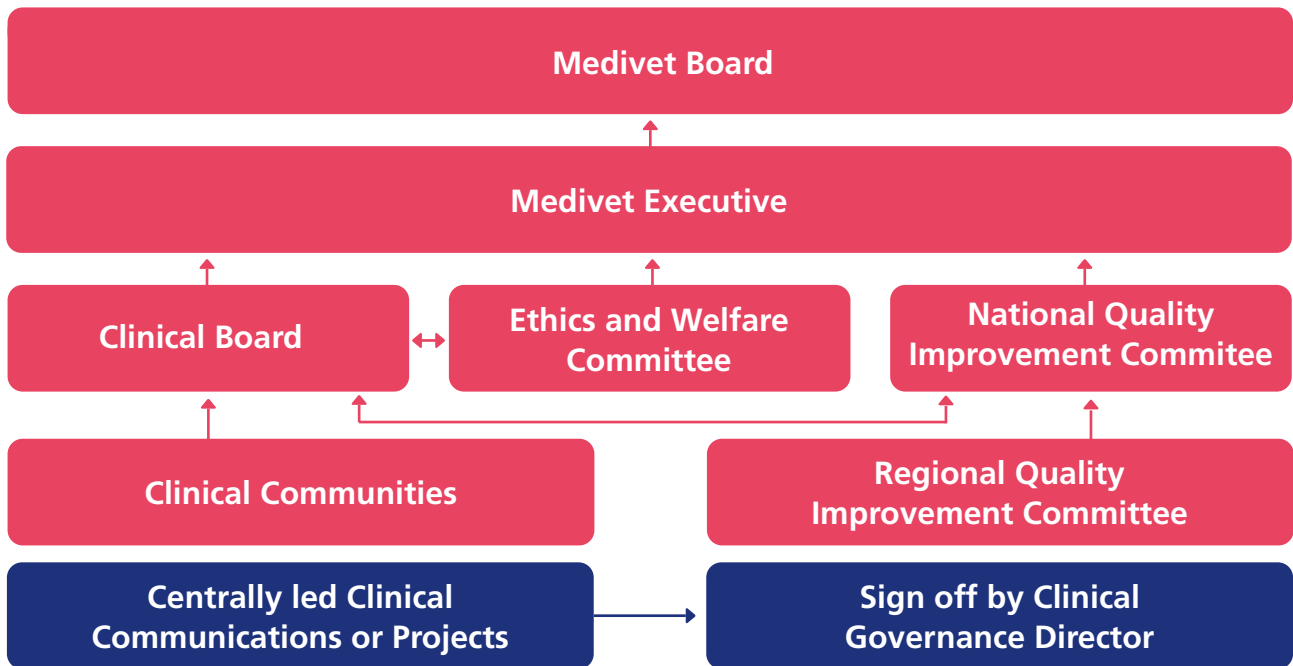
## **Operational team**

The operational arm of the business is led by the Divisional Operations Directors, who oversee a team of Regional Operations Directors. They support and manage clinics with their day-to-day operational concerns.



# Clinical Governance Structure

We value the opinions of all our colleagues at Medivet and believe that everyone - no matter what their role or qualification - should have the opportunity to feed into our Clinical agenda. That's why our governance structure gives a voice that feeds direct into our Executive Team and Board to our most important group – those working in clinical practice.



## Clinical Board

The Clinical Board is the decision-making forum for all clinical strategies and approaches. Each month, the board is attended by a core membership of our Clinical Services Director, Clinical Governance Director, Branch Partner Coordinating Community representative and procurement representatives. Every quarter, the QI lead joins to provide an update on the Quality Improvement initiatives. Each clinical community is represented by invitation quarterly and is attended by the relevant community chair and a practicing representative of the community.

**“I’ve been on the clinical board for about three years, and I’ve seen it to be a place of rigorous debate about how to support our colleagues and deliver the best possible care for pets right across the Group. The range of different skill sets and viewpoints across board members is underpinned by shared high ethical values and appreciation of how challenging the job can sometimes be.”**

*Daniel Varian - Branch Partner, Wantage, Clinical Board Branch Partner Representative*

# Clinical Governance Structure

## Clinical Communities

Communities are chaired by our Divisional Veterinary Directors, and are forums open to all vets and nurses across the Group with a shared passion for a designated field. Surgery, Medicine, Ophthalmology, Exotics, Diagnostic Imaging and Nursing are all represented by communities, and we have over 400 staff attending. The Communities span communication channels and provide the whole Group with clinical advice and guidance, as well as the opportunity for mentor/mentee relationships to develop.

**“The new clinical communities have allowed those with an interest in an area to meet to discuss topics concerning their area and provide rational, practical and evidence-based guidance, protocols and ideas which can then be shared to all colleagues in formats they are able to utilise. It’s already proven to be a much more effective and inclusive way of improving ways of working whilst accounting for the views, opinions and experiences of those working on the frontline, in referral and within management. It really helps to bring that feel of community. There is no ‘us and them’ we’re all working together for the best outcomes and improvements”.**

*Kiah Hann - Veterinary Surgeon, Swanland 24, Medicine Community*



## Ethics and Welfare Committee

Our Ethics and Welfare Committee addresses all Group matters that may impact on animal welfare or have ethical implications. They regularly screen and approve outputs of other committees and forums. The group is chaired by someone who is in no way incentivised by the commercial performance of the group, ensuring decisions are truly made with animal welfare as the main focus. Attendance at this committee is following application and selection, and the group contains Veterinary Surgeons, Registered Vet Nurses and lay representation.

**“Medivet’s Ethics and Welfare Committee is such an important part of the business. The Committee ensures that every decision and action is tethered to the principles of empathy, integrity, and the unwavering commitment to the well-being of our patients.”**

*Jan De Lay Rey - Graduate Support Mentor, Chair of Ethics and Welfare Committee*



## National QI Committee

Chaired by one of our Divisional Veterinary Directors, our National QI Committees create and review national clinical audits as a result of feedback from our colleagues across the clinical structure. They also promote reflective practice - regularly discussing near misses and incidents that have occurred at a practice level to share learnings at a Group level.

**“The implementation of the QI Board at Medivet has already proved powerful: not least by providing a focal point for escalation of feedback and ideas from our divisional committees, where formerly the process for introducing group-wide Quality Improvement initiatives was unclear and inconsistent. The members are some of our keenest advocates of QI in the company and bring so much value to every conversation: the fact that their passion is now recognised and utilised to impact Group Policy and Clinical Strategy is something we’re really proud of. We’re early in the process, but already there have been some great outputs from the QI Board, and we’re excited to assess the impact of these actions moving forward.”**

*Joey Kapff - Divisional Veterinary Director and National QI Board Chair*



## Regional QI Committee

Our Regional QI boards are attended by members spanning all roles within Medivet and chaired by our Divisional Veterinary Directors. Members update on practice initiatives, which are often escalated to the National Committee with resulting implementations across the Group. The two-layered committee structure means that everyone, no matter what their role, has the opportunity to feed into the wider Clinical agenda of the Group.

Our regional and national QI boards are attended by over 80 colleagues and regularly meet to discuss significant events, near misses and design/implement clinical audits that truly matter to our team. During this year, the boards have:

- ▶ All received RCVS Knowledge training, led by Pam Mosedale and her team - allowing attendees to become ambassadors for QI initiatives and psychological safety.
- ▶ Implemented the adoption of branded “near miss” books in clinics.
- ▶ Provided means by which clinics can quickly and efficiently assess their use of high priority antibiotics, ensuring clinicians make the best choices that protect these vital medicines.
- ▶ Supported in the creation of a new, more thorough, controlled drugs protocol.
- ▶ Audited the Group use of Ear Cytology as a diagnostic tool in first opinion practice and made recommendations to increase its use in practice.
- ▶ Planned an upcoming audit of antibiotic use during dental extractions.
- ▶ Supported the delivery of training on creating a Psychologically Safe Culture to Branch Partners across the Group.

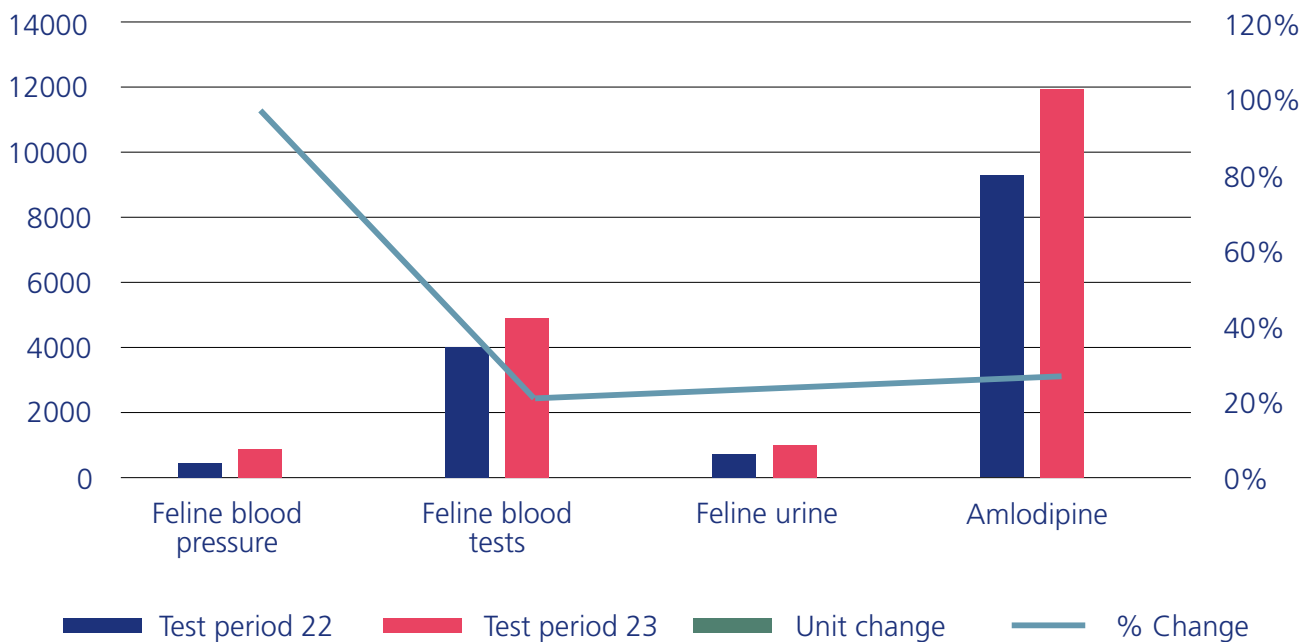
# Focus on *Feline Hypertension*

Due to the significant clinical and welfare impacts of feline hypertension, we wanted to make the promotion of diagnosis of hypertension in elderly cats a priority for our clinical teams. We know the condition was hugely underdiagnosed, as 20% of cats older than nine are hypertensive. These elderly patients are at risk of long-term organ damage, discomfort, reduced cognitive function and sudden onset blindness.

By working with our clinics to remind clinicians and nursing teams about the impact of hypertension and conducting training sessions, we were able to:

- ▶ Increase the number of routine blood pressure measurements taken by 32.2%.
- ▶ Increase the use of medications associated with reduction of feline blood pressure by 27%.
- ▶ Increase overall awareness in relation to feline geriatric disease, with feline blood tests and urinalysis increasing by 20-25% respectively.

## BP trial



# Antimicrobial *Stewardship*

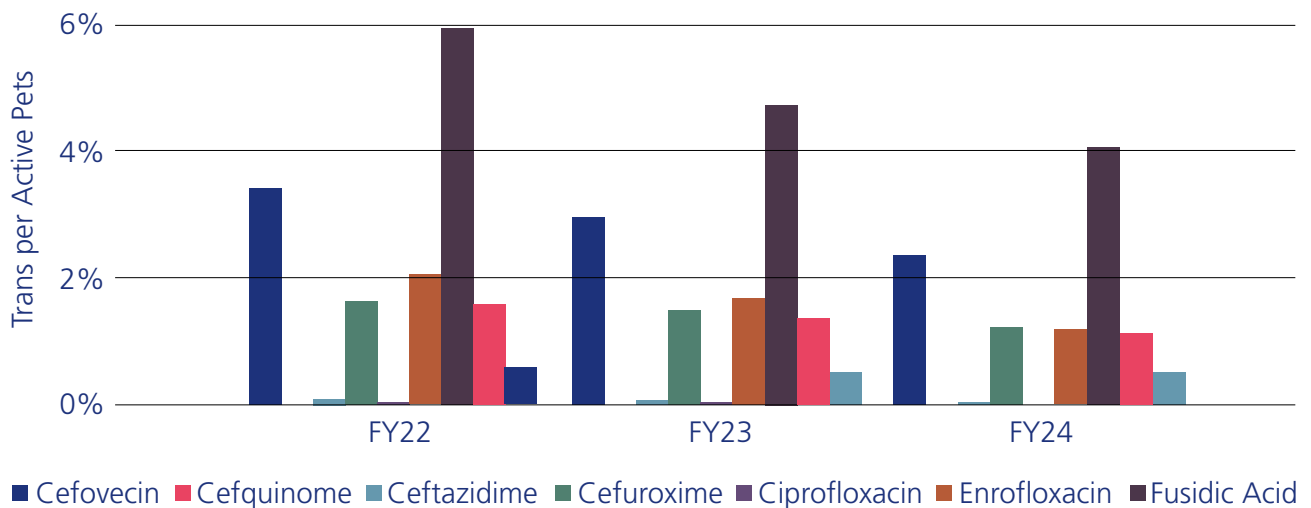
**We know that as a profession, we hold great privilege in relation to the use of antimicrobial medications for our patients.**

However, we share the public concerns in relation to overuse of antibiotics, and the subsequent impacts on public health that this may be associated with. An internal survey showed us that 76% of staff respondents reported that antibiotic stewardship is extremely important to them. We're aware that individual clinics are proactively attempting to reduce their use of antibiotics - with two out of three clinics reporting in the survey that they've discussed antibiotic stewardship in the last six months.

As a clinical team, we've continued to work with our teams to educate about and implement best practice. Using the principles of BSAVA PROTECT, we've linked our work in this space with several of our QI initiatives and internal projects. We've also made the subject a priority discussion within our clinical communities and worked with both internal and external stakeholders to evaluate and implement non-antibiotic based methods of infection control.

The below graph summarise how our usage has reduced month on month, year on year. There has been an overall reduction in the use of high priority antibiotics by 35% over the past three years.

## Antimicrobials in scope



# Group Clinical *Communications*

**We know that whilst ensuring we develop a Clinical Strategy for the Group is of utmost importance, there'll always be changes and challenges for us to face as an industry that we must react to quickly to be able to support our patients, clients and people as best we can.**

The challenge in any large group is ease and effectiveness of communication and is of key importance. What may seem logical as a way to distribute information does not suit all – so multimodal communication channels have been used to increase the dissemination of key information and the impact it has.

We supported our colleagues through changes to the RCVS Under Care Guidelines and the XL Bully legislation with clear, easy to access guidance and clear contact points for queries. We also ran several “Townhall” Q and A sessions, where colleagues were offered the chance to ask questions either on the day of the session, or in advance and remain anonymous.

Following these sessions, we produced FAQ documents. These sessions were invaluable in reminding us of the importance of listening to our people - some amazing questions were asked, and we felt proud to be able to address them in an open and constructive way.

We also made quick, but useful, changes to our in-house practice management system to support our Veterinary Surgeons to become as compliant as possible with prescribing law.

**“The Townhall sessions were extremely helpful when it came down to understanding the changes we needed to make. It was great to hear questions from everyone across the Group - especially as many of them yielded great answers that I'd never have thought about if I'd not been involved in such a group discussion”**

*Franziska David - Veterinary Surgeon, Medivet Dinas Powys.*

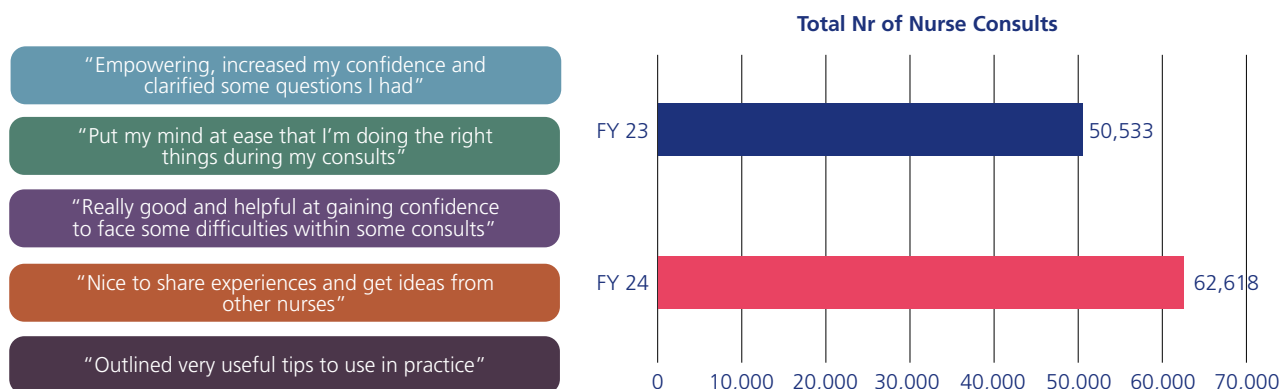
# Nursing Focus

**In 2023 we really wanted to start recognising and empowering our veterinary nurses to explore their wide range of skills in order to feel more valued and recognised in their roles.**

As veterinary practice remains a challenging environment, we were keen to explore how this will lead to a better workflow in a practice and a real 'one team' approach to cases.

We focused our support on Nurse Consults by delivering different training sessions:

- ▶ **Building Confidence in Nurse Consults:** The sessions covered the benefits of nurse consults, types of consultations, principles from the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct and delegation, and how to manage the diary to allow time for nurse consults. A total of 160 nurses have attended these sessions across different locations in the UK, with an overall satisfaction score of 4.6/5 and 100% of the nurses would recommend the training!



- ▶ **Developing Skills in Consulting CPD day:** focused on different clinical themes such as vaccinations, microchipping, cat friendly nursing, hypertension, the role of nurses in dermatology cases (cytology, chronic case management), osteoarthritis clinics (how to set them up, how to manage OA cases and senior pets). These sessions were delivered with the support of different industry suppliers in two different locations: Leeds and Luton. We had a total of 65 attendees and an overall score of 4.5/5.

## What did our nurses say about the events?

- "Very engaged speakers and nurses. Feeling empowered to bring ideas back to my clinic"
- "There were great points made that I will take back to practice to help implement effective nurse clinics"
- "Loved it. Every session was really relevant to my role. Feeling inspired to do a better job and develop new clinics"
- "Really enjoyable, lots of different sessions by lots of sponsors which was good to see what everyone had on offer for resources"
- "Well organised, useful resources and information regarding how to fill out forms during consultations and communicate with clients"

# Career *Pathways*

**Our Graduate Programme celebrated enormous success in 2023, with over 100 graduates taking part in our programme. The team celebrated winning the “British Training Awards” Early Careers initiative of the year, fighting off stiff competition from other strong brands. Our first ever Graduate Gala event at Mill Farm sports village gave our Graduates a chance to meet others from across the business, whilst celebrating their achievements of the last year.**

As if this was not enough, our Graduate Programme is now accredited by the International School of Veterinary Postgraduate Studies. We offer the only accredited graduate programme in the industry, and those joining us can be assured of the exceptional quality of teaching and delivery they will experience as part of the programme in clinical, communications and leadership training.





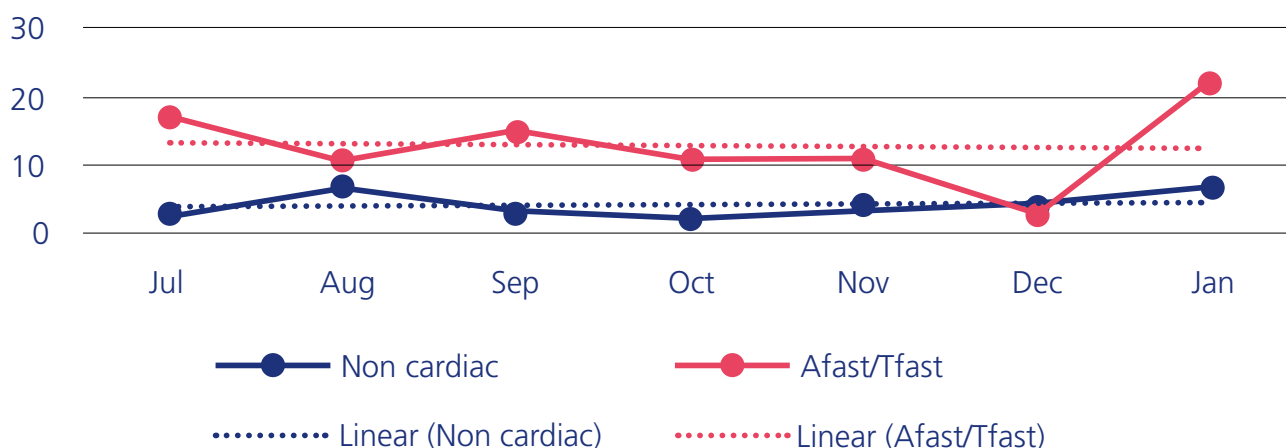
# Ultrasound *training*

In early 2023 a pilot programme commenced to improve the utilisation of ultrasound equipment across Medivet which, through internal data analysis and colleague feedback, was determined to be due to a lack of confidence and capability in using the equipment and performing diagnostic scans. The expectation of training was that a behaviour change would occur, resulting in better clinical outcomes and more effective use of the equipment.

Two cohorts were engaged and alternative pathways to teaching used, to be able to determine what style of teaching had the best impact. Outcomes were analysed for six months following the cohorts and compared to data collected prior to the training.

Following the above trials, a decision was made to run these skills courses as a 'basic' skills day, supported by internal first opinion veterinary surgeons and an external provider. Early results suggest this solution will continue to have the desired impact.

## Representative cohort



# Collaboration with the *University of Central Lancashire*

September 2023 saw the first cohort of circa 75 students begin their Veterinary Medicine degrees at the University of Central Lancashire. The school aims to produce a population of skilled first opinion clinicians who go on to have long and successful careers in practice. They aim to do this by both using “Real World” teaching from day one, but also by making adjustments to ensure that Veterinary education is accessible and inclusive to all, regardless of background.

Medivet has made a multi-year promise of support to the University in its aims, as we also believe that investment in diversity is key to a future sustainable industry. From supporting with interviews and communication skills sessions to reducing the impact of digital poverty by providing electronic devices and providing bursaries/hardship funds - Medivet is truly proactive in its longstanding commitment to the success of the Veterinary Industry.



# Medivet *Labs*

**Whilst the Lab Services business has been part of Medivet for many years, in 2023 we really wanted to integrate it more within the Group. A new Laboratory Director and Head of Clinical Pathology joined the team in 2023, both bringing with them extensive veterinary diagnostics experience from elsewhere in the industry to further develop the laboratory. Key developments for Lab Services this year included:**

- ▶ Implementation of a brand-new Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) across the laboratory, improving sample handling and traceability.
- ▶ Improving sample collection services for practices, moving away from inconvenient legacy collection services.
- ▶ Investment in new equipment to build testing capacity and resilience.
- ▶ Working in partnership with practices to provide guidance and support on all aspects of diagnostic testing. Ensuring practices can speak directly to our pathology team when they need to.
- ▶ Ensuring the quality of diagnostic work through maintenance of external accreditation by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service to the ISO17025 standard.
- ▶ Expanding the range of testing undertaken in-house so that over 90% of samples submitted to Lab Services are tested on site.
- ▶ Further development of our industry leading molecular biology testing service.

These technical changes have been supported by improved collaboration between Lab Services and the wider Medivet Group. Involvement of the team at both Divisional and Regional levels, CPD support and clinical pathology guidance have further strengthened the relationship between the lab and practices.



# VetCompass

**All Medivet clinics using the bespoke Medivet practice management system “Freedom” are actively supporting animal welfare research at the Royal Veterinary College by contributing to the “VetCompass” initiative.** This not-for-profit project aims to investigate the range and frequency of companion animal health problems, and importantly risk factors for the most common disorders. Medivet have been recognised in several publications for contributing to vital research - below listed the papers to which we contributed in 2023 alone:

Title	Journal
▶ Risk factors for unilateral cranial cruciate ligament rupture diagnosis and for clinical management in dogs under primary veterinary care in the UK	▶ The Veterinary Journal
▶ Commonly diagnosed disorders in domestic cats in the UK and their associations with sex and age	▶ Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery
▶ Periodontal disease in cats under primary veterinary care in the UK: frequency and risk factors	▶ Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery
▶ Assessment of glucocorticoid and antibiotic exposure as risk factors for diabetes mellitus in selected dog breeds attending UK primary-care clinics	▶ Vet Record
▶ Epidemiology and risk factors for mammary tumours in female cats	▶ Journal of Small Animal Practice
▶ Demography and disorders of English Cocker Spaniels under primary veterinary care in the UK	▶ Canine Medicine and Genetics
▶ Epidemiology of mammary tumours in bitches under veterinary care in the UK in 2016	▶ Vet Record
▶ Demography, common disorders, and mortality of Boxer dogs under primary veterinary care in the UK	▶ Canine Medicine and Genetics
▶ Dog breeds and conformations predisposed to osteosarcoma in the UK: a VetCompass study	▶ Canine Medicine and Genetics
▶ Cooling Methods Used to Manage Heat-Related Illness in Dogs Presented to Primary Care Veterinary Practices during 2016–2018 in the UK	▶ Veterinary Sciences
▶ Dog breeds and conformations in the UK in 2019: VetCompass canine demography and some consequent welfare implications	▶ PLOS ONE
▶ Target trial emulation: Do antimicrobials or gastrointestinal nutraceuticals prescribed at first presentation for acute diarrhoea cause a better clinical outcome in dogs under primary veterinary care in the UK?	▶ PLOS ONE
▶ Is it now time to iron out the wrinkles? Health of Shar Pei dogs under primary veterinary care in the UK	▶ Canine Medicine and Genetics

# Branch *Partnership*

**The Medivet Branch Partnership model is unique within the veterinary industry and is the corner stone upon which Medivet was built. The model offers an opportunity for clinically competent, entrepreneurial vets to partner with Medivet and become clinic owners.**

The Branch Partnership model provides mutual benefits to both Medivet and the Branch Partner. For Medivet the main benefits relate to the enhanced clinical performance of a Branch Partner led clinic. At individual site level, Branch Partners provides permanency of an experienced Veterinary Surgeon who will drive the clinical standards of the clinic by engaging in group-wide initiatives and projects and maintaining clinical control of their clinic in order to provide contextualised care to their patients. The skill level of the of the Branch Partner allows them to support and develop less experienced colleagues and graduates, with many Branch Partners now having completed the RCVS VetGDP advisor training. The stability and skill set of the Branch Partner therefore supports our Graduate Programme and improves vet retention within the business with many assistant vets developing into Lead Vets and Branch Partners themselves. Branch Partners are actively encouraged to participate in further CPD with many Branch Partners completing certificates and advanced qualifications.

Branch Partners also benefit from becoming part of the wider Medivet Clinical Community joining like-minded vets to support one another, drawing on each other's skills and expertise to further improve the care offered to our patients. This knowledge sharing also extends to the Clinical Community Forums, Clinical Board, and participation in clinical projects across the business.

Medivet acknowledges and values the significant clinical advantages that the Partnership model brings and as such continue to strive to ensure that the model is attractive, accessible and supports Branch Partners to allow them to perform their clinical duties to the highest quality.





