

This leaflet does not constitute any form of policy on behalf of SPVS and is not intended to be instructional, but merely informative and hopefully helpful.



So...you have chosen your dream job. Now what??

This leaflet has been written to help guide you through the process from accepting your first job to your first day and first week in practice. If you get this part right and are fully prepared it is more likely your first week will be a real success.

Accepting a job offer

You will receive a job offer from your future employer with details of salary, starting date and possibly job description. This should be followed with an official contract which will have further details in (such as holidays, cpd etc) . Make sure you read everything fully and it is all as you expected before signing and returning to your employer.

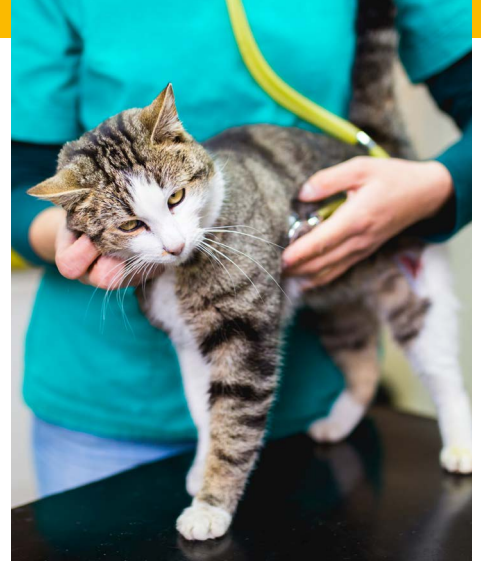
Be careful if you have accepted a job via an agency. Most agencies will have an agreement with your employer that if you leave within a certain time (normally within 12 weeks of accepting the job), the recruitment agency will pay a percentage of what it cost to hire you to your employer. After this time, it may state in your contract that if you leave (normally up to one year), you may be liable to pay back some of your recruitment costs to the practice depending on the length of time you were there. It is worth ensuring you know what these costs could be at the outset.

Ensure you familiarise yourself with the practice website and look at some reviews of the practice. It is sometimes worth, if time allows, organising another visit to the practice to interact with the staff again and familiarise yourself with the lay out of the practice. It's easy to forget when you have been to several interviews. Most good practices will have a practice manual and maybe a vet guide too so ask for these in advance. Any reading you can do in advance will be helpful and give you a more solid grounding so you can be more confident on your first day.

A Week Before Your Start Date

Make contact with the practice manager. Ask where you need to go when you arrive on your first day. Where so you need to park? Check on sat nav the distance to the practice and allow yourself plenty of time. Very importantly, is there place available to buy lunch nearby or is a packed lunch better?

The practice may want details of emergency contacts, may want your bank details (very important so you get paid!!) and may need to see proof of address so may be worth having your driving licence/passport/utility bill/national insurance number to hand. It is worth asking what day you will get paid too in case this impacts any of your current lifestyle.



Buy a nice notebook (always makes you feel better!) to make the notes you need, whether that's clinical or non-clinical for the coming weeks. It maybe you will be issued with keys and alarm codes so a key ring may be useful.

Check what is the uniform and whether you need to/can provide any of your own such as scrubs, theatre hat and shoes, waterproofs etc. Check policies on jewellery, hair, tattoos etc .

If you are going to be driving a practice car you may need your driving licence for this or the practice may ask you to insure you own car for business use too. Normally this is very little, if any extra cost but if, for example you use your car to go on CPD, officially you need it insured for business use. Mention if to your new boss if they forget to mention it to you.

Make sure you have a copy of the rota. Not just for the first week but as much as they can give you. Often there will be a master rota so you can see, for example the weekends you are supposed to be working for the whole year. That way you can check these and look for any problems e.g. holidays so these can be looked at and changed in plenty of time.

Ask for the name of your mentor if you have one. You could always make contact with them at this point if they have an email to introduce yourself.

Consider seeing if the practice has or buying: BSAVA guide to procedures in small animal practice. This is a great guide to most procedures in small animal practice and is a very practical, helpful guide.



Your First Day

Hopefully your preparation will mean you are ready to hit the ground running! You should be given a tour of the practice if needed, shown where the toilets and fire exits all are and shown where to put your coat and bag and where the staff room is.

The practice manager or your mentor should explain how your first day and first few weeks will be structured with a solid induction process. Ensure this meets with your expectations. How long are your consults? Which consults will you be seeing initially? How will operations be supervised? Will you be attending visits on your own initially or with a senior vet? Will you have computer training on the practice management system? Will/can you have a nurse to help initially with the computer as often things are hard to find! Will you have training on estimating bills? How is dispensary laid out?

During your induction you should make sure you know the basic health and safety rules and ideally read the practice manual. See if the practice has an ethos and a mission statement. What are the values of this practice? This will really help you understand how to do your job well in this practice.

Ask where the clinical protocols are and familiarise yourself with these. You don't have to do this in a day but over the coming weeks.

Your practice may have a list of common drugs used with dosages/pre med protocols/subscriptions e.g. to vetlexion which all may help you.

You should have a radiography badge so make sure you know where this is/how to use this. You may have a personal email address for work use issued to you.

If you have a practice car ask about petrol cards or if you claim fuel back. If you have a practice phone, similarly ask about how financing this works.

Most of the time no one will say to you to go on your break or lunch. You will be trusted to monitor timings yourself. It's always worth making a good impression and being on time if you can.

Your First Week

Well done! You survived!

Keep the conversations with your mentor, practice manager and boss free flowing. The only stupid question is the one you don't ask!

Hopefully by the end of the week you will have a one to one review and be able to make any adjustments needed and have any queries answered that you may have. Think about the things that have gone well and give yourself a pat on the back! Reflect on things that may not have gone so well and why that might be and how you can change it for next time.

The first week should be about building your confidence. Experienced nurses are great to learn off too so use them to their full capacity! Make friends with all the nurses and you will be sorted for life! It can be overwhelming initially but try and take things at your pace and remember to allow yourself to

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enjoy the job too! Make sure you take time to cuddle that cute puppy and realise what a privilege it is to do this job!

Check in with your boss or mentor to ensure you are meeting their expectations as this will give you the confidence for the coming weeks. Ask when your next review will be so you can plan for this. You will get complaints as that is the nature of the job. Try not to shy away from them. Be involved in their resolution. Try to use them as a learning experience and don't dwell on them. Remember also to make a diary of the successes and celebrate them.

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Further information and resources for SPVS members

SPVS New Graduate/Student Leaflets: Advice and Tips

Writing a CV

Preparing For and Going to an Interview

How to Improve EMS - Practical advice and top tips for students.

Top Tips for loving life as a GP vet - A series of 6 podcasts Listen here

SPVS Salary Survey - covering everything from basic earnings, bonuses, dividends and overtime, to benefits such as accommodation, car allowances and pensions.

<https://spvs.org.uk/graduate-support/>