

Newsletter for Referring Vets

ISSUE

21

Winter 2025

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THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
The Royal (Dick) School
of Veterinary Studies

Hospital for Small Animals

Welcome



Dear colleagues,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the Winter Edition of the Hospital for Small Animals newsletter, from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies.

In this edition, we focus on the Neurology Service's new electrodiagnostic capability and also report on hypophysectomy for patients with pituitary-dependent hyperadrenocorticism.

This issue also presents a selection of compelling case studies. The Internal Medicine Service reports on a case of oesophageal stricture and a novel treatment for this challenging condition, and we reflect on the efforts of Anaesthesia team in supporting the treatment of a giraffe from Edinburgh Zoo.

The Dick Vet Rabbit and Exotic Practice is delighted to welcome Dr Laëtitia Volait-Rosset, an ECZM Small Mammal and ABVP Exotic Companion Mammal specialist, to its team. With her arrival, we now have two small mammal specialists in the team: read about their competitive rabbit outpatient investigation package on page 7.

We are also pleased to announce that the Hospital has been awarded Dog Friendly Clinic Status, and would like to thank the team led by Dr Kevin McPeake, Head of the Behaviour Service, who helped us achieve this.

The schedule for the Dick Vet 2026 Clinical Club events can be found at the end of the newsletter.

As we continue to share the responsibilities of Clinical Services directorship, with Sue gradually transitioning towards retirement, we wish to express our heartfelt thanks for your ongoing support of the Hospital.

We wish you all a very happy festive season.

Laura

Sue

Laura Blackwood and Sue Murphy, Co-directors of Clinical Services

Hospital awarded Dog Friendly Clinic status

The Hospital has been awarded Dog Friendly Clinic status by two animal welfare charities.

The accolade, awarded by the Dog Friendly Clinic Scheme, a collaboration between the Dogs Trust and the British Veterinary Behaviour Association, recognises the numerous measures that the Hospital has taken to ensure that its canine patients are as comfortable as possible.

This official status is the latest species-specific award for the Hospital. The team also holds the Rabbit Welfare Association & Fund (RWAF) Gold Award, and has held Gold Cat Friendly Clinic status from International Cat Care since 2013..

Patient welfare

The Hospital offers a dedicated dog waiting area and specially designed canine wards with calming music. Pheromone diffusers are used in all patient areas and staff have access to training and resources on low-stress handling techniques, dog behaviour and welfare.



Dr Kevin McPeake (right) pictured with Christa Dukes RVN (left) and Lead Animal Care Assistant Tasha Cadman

The Hospital's pre-admittance client questionnaire enables owners to share information about dogs' dietary preferences and toileting habits and highlight any behavioural triggers, to help clinical, nursing and animal care teams to adapt the patient's environment and interactions accordingly.

"We are proud to have obtained Dog Friendly Clinic status. We will continue to reflect, review and improve the measures already in place to minimise stress for our patients and improve the experience of patients and their carers when visiting the Hospital."

Dr Kevin McPeake, Head of the Behaviour Clinic

**Refer
a case**



0131 650 7651

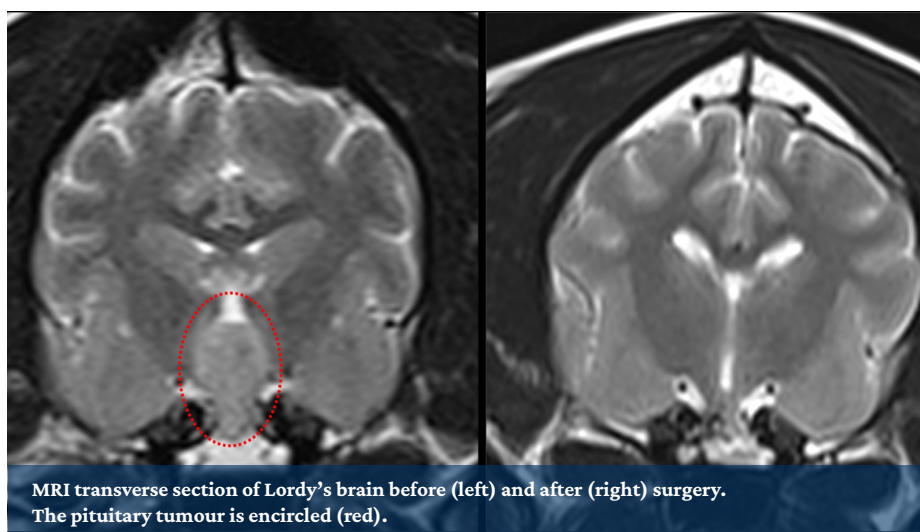


hfsareception@ed.ac.uk



edin.ac/hfsa-referral-form

Neurosurgeons perform hypophysectomy in dog with Cushing's syndrome



MRI transverse section of Lordy's brain before (left) and after (right) surgery. The pituitary tumour is encircled (red).

A dog's Cushing's syndrome has been resolved following a transsphenoidal hypophysectomy performed by Dick Vet neurologists.

The challenging surgery involved removing a large pituitary tumour from the base of the brain through the soft palate.

The Hospital is the first in Scotland and one of only five centres in the UK that has successfully performed surgery in dogs with pituitary-dependent Cushing's syndrome. It is also only one of a handful of centres in the world able to offer both radiotherapy and surgery options for cats and dogs with pituitary diseases.

Complex case

Lordy, an eight-year-old cocker spaniel, was referred to the Hospital's Neurology Service with multiple complex neurological problems.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) identified a primary pituitary tumour measuring 1.2 cm in height. Blood and urine tests confirmed that the dog had Cushing's syndrome, or hypercortisolism, due to the mass. Computed tomography (CT) a month later suggested that the tumour was increasing in size and that there was a significant risk that it would invade other local structures and potentially cause additional neurological problems.

Specialist surgery

Due to the size and position of the tumour, and after consultation with the dog's owners, a transsphenoidal hypophysectomy was carried out.

In preparation for surgery, a 3D-printed model was produced and fitted into the roof of the dog's mouth to help guide drill location and trajectory. A 5mm hole was burred through the base of the skull, allowing access and removal of the mass.

During and immediately after surgery, Lordy was cared for by the Hospital's Anaesthesia and Emergency and Critical Care Services, who ensured a safe and controlled recovery from surgery.

Positive outcome

Lordy recovered quickly following surgery and was discharged three days later. MRI scans 3 and 6 months later showed no sign of the tumour or damage to brain tissues.

Lordy remains a regular visitor to the Hospital's Internal Medicine Service, for continued monitoring and care.

"We are pleased that Lordy's surgery was a success. His care required a multidisciplinary approach and involved colleagues from the Anaesthesia, Internal Medicine and Emergency Critical Care Services at the Hospital. I would like to thank Dr Nicolas Granger, a veterinary neurosurgeon from Bristol, who played an integral role in making this surgery a success."

Dr Aran Nagendran, Co-Head of Neurology Service and RCVS Specialist in Veterinary Neurosurgery



Lordy's Cushing's Syndrome was resolved following surgery



Advice & referrals

If you would like to refer one of your patients to the Neurology Service, please contact hfsareception@ed.ac.uk

Neurology Service expands electrodiagnostic testing

The Hospital's Neurology Service has expanded its electrodiagnostic capabilities with the introduction of electroencephalography (EEG) —strengthening the service's ability to diagnose and manage complex neurological conditions in referral patients.

This investment enhances the team's ability to record electrical activity from the brain, nerves, and muscles to assess neurological function, and deliver a more comprehensive assessment of the nervous system.

Improving diagnosis

The equipment complements the service's existing tests such as electromyography (EMG) and nerve conduction studies (NCS) and creates possibilities for improving the diagnosis of idiopathic epilepsy, complex seizure cases, sleep disorders, and other paroxysmal neurological events. The electrodiagnostic machine can also be used to perform the Brainstem Auditory Evoked Response (BAER) hearing test. The EEG software is housed in a portable tablet and features a wireless headbox for patient comfort. It also incorporates an infra-red video camera capable of recording in darkness, with automatic night mode activation, allowing simultaneous video-EEG monitoring in low light.

Supporting vets

The Hospital's Neurology Service is one of the largest in the UK. A 24-hour emergency service ensures continuity of care for patients requiring urgent neurological assessment, monitoring and intervention.

With the addition of EEG testing, the team offers one of the most comprehensive electrodiagnostic suites available, ensuring every referred patient benefits from advanced diagnostic insights.

The Neurology Service also offers free advice to vets in first opinion practice and welcomes referrals for all neurological cases, ranging from acute emergencies to complex diagnostic investigations.



Advice & referrals

For advice or to arrange a referral, please contact the Hospital on 0131 650 7650 or email: hfsareception@ed.ac.uk

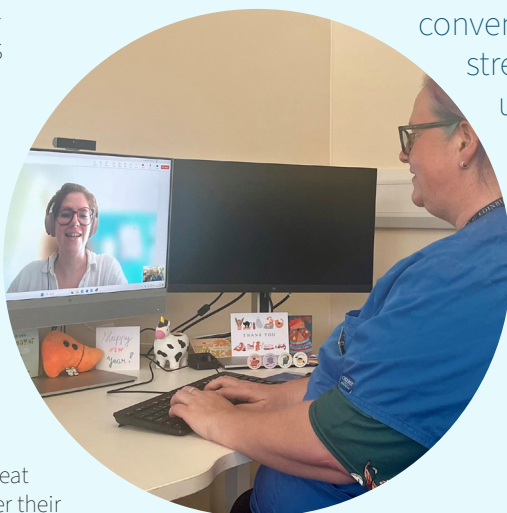
Gastroenterology clinic launches online consultations

Vets across the UK can benefit from a video consultation service to help treat their canine and feline patients with chronic gut problems.

Referring vets can book an online 1-hour consultation for their client with an RCVS Specialist from the Diplomat-led Integrated Gastroenterology Edinburgh Specialist Clinic (DIGEST) team, removing the need for the client and patient to travel to the Hospital.

Online assessment

Following the consultation, which involves a review of the patient's case history, test results and dietary review, the DIGEST vet will suggest some potential next steps to the referring vet, such as diet trials or probiotic use. This enables the primary vet to continue to treat their patient without a full referral, or refer their patient for more invasive tests, such as endoscopy or surgery, if required.



“Offering online consultations tailored for dogs and cats with chronic gut problems is not only convenient for many owners and less stressful for their pets, but it also allows us to determine if we need to see an animal or not, or if care can be continued in collaboration with their home vet. It also allows us to identify patients that need more in-depth investigations sooner, and we can then give the pet owner and vet a more precise plan of what is likely to be required.”

Professor Silke Salavati,
Head of Internal Medicine Service
and DIGEST Clinic



Further info

For more information, or to make an appointment for a video consultation for one of your patients, contact hfsareception@ed.ac.uk

B-tube repairs oesophageal stricture in dog

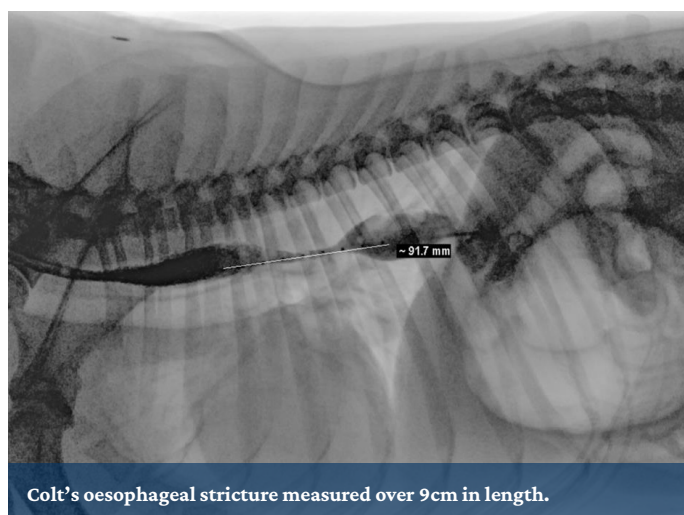
A dog with a large oesophageal stricture has made a complete recovery after being fitted with an oesophageal balloon dilation feeding tube, or B-tube.

The device allowed the stricture to be repeatedly ballooned at home by the dog's owners, removing the need for multiple, separate dilations under general anaesthesia, while also providing adequate nutrition through the tube.

New technology

The B-tube is a new device, first developed in the US, to treat animals with strictures. The Hospital for Small Animals is one of only a handful of places in the UK with experience of placing B-tubes in its patients.

The stricture is dilated under anaesthesia with progressively larger balloons before a B-tube is fitted. Following recovery, the patient's owner is trained how to provide the correct amount of nutrition to the patient through its feeding tube and how to inflate an integrated balloon twice a day for several weeks. This helps to break down scar tissue and reduce the risk of recurrence of the stricture.



Colt's oesophageal stricture measured over 9cm in length.

Successful case

Colt, a 2-year-old Labrador, was referred to the Internal Medicine Service after losing 20 per cent of his body weight due to persistent regurgitation of his food, following gastroenteritis after a general anaesthetic.

Fluoroscopy identified a 9cm stricture in the dog's oesophagus.

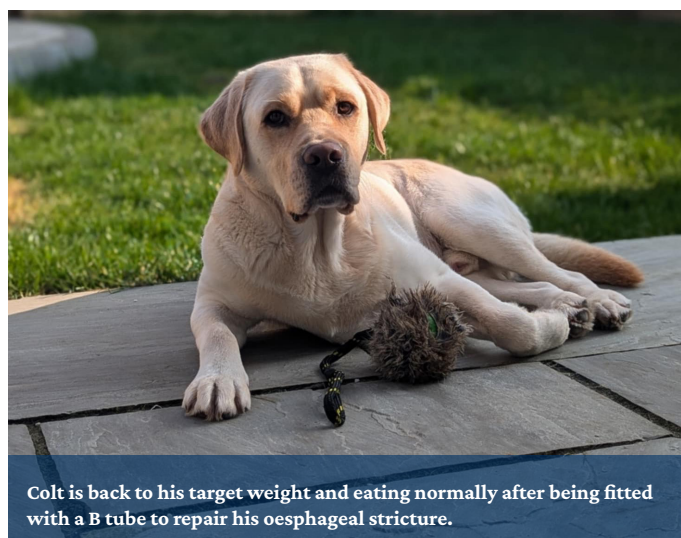
After consultation with the owners, a B-tube was decided as the best course of action owing to the extensive stricture, the dog's need for assisted nutrition due to his marked weight loss, and the likely need for multiple balloon procedures under anaesthesia to repair the stricture.

The dog was discharged two days following surgery and the B-tube remained in place for six weeks. The clients inflated the balloon twice a day, which the dog tolerated well.

After the B-tube was removed, the dog continued to eat a softened GI low-fat food. Within 2 months, he had returned to his original food, was no longer regurgitating and was back to his target weight.

Unusual condition

Oesophageal strictures are uncommon. They usually occur following gastro-oesophageal reflux during general anaesthesia, or after injury of the oesophagus - for example by a foreign body - or due to chronic vomiting. Normally, treatment involves a series of frequent balloon dilations under anaesthetic. As anaesthesia itself can promote gastro-oesophageal reflux of stomach acid, there is a risk of repeated reflux events further exacerbating the existing stricture.



Colt is back to his target weight and eating normally after being fitted with a B tube to repair his oesophageal stricture.

“We are pleased that Colt has made a full recovery whilst avoiding the concerns of multiple anaesthetics. His care required close collaboration between our team and the anaesthesia and diagnostic imaging teams, as well as our specialist medicine and nutrition nurses. Importantly, Colt's care was continued by his dedicated owners at home to achieve this positive outcome.”

Dr Tyler Morrison, ECATv-Clinical Lecturer in Small Animal Internal Medicine



Further info on the Internal Medicine Service

Please visit <https://edin.ac/48KvCBS>



Anaesthesia Specialists help investigate swelling on giraffe's face



Image credit RZSS

Vets from the Hospital's Anaesthesia Service have safely anaesthetised a giraffe from Edinburgh Zoo to allow an unusual swelling on its face to be examined.

A team over 20 vets, zookeepers and vet nurses from across Europe, co-ordinated by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, worked together to examine Gilbert, an eight-year-old giraffe weighing 800kg.

Complex anaesthesia

Giraffe anaesthesia is notoriously high risk because their anatomy and physiology leave little margin for error. They have exceptionally high arterial blood pressure to perfuse the brain at height, and their long, narrow upper airway and long trachea make intubation and effective ventilation challenging.

They are also prone to regurgitation, ruminal bloat and aspiration, and prolonged recumbency compromises ventilation and limb perfusion. Induction and recovery are also extremely hazardous.

Given the challenge, Edinburgh Zoo sought support from Specialists in veterinary anaesthesia from the Hospital.



"I'm proud to have been part of a superb international team delivering the very best care for Gilbert. Anaesthetising a giraffe is never routine: their extraordinary anatomy and physiology demand meticulous planning and constant vigilance. From airway control and oxygenation to precise positioning, every step was tailored to the species' unique requirements, and that preparation and teamwork delivered the safest possible outcome for Gilbert."

Dr Rob Ward, RCVS Specialist in Veterinary Anaesthesia

Dental examination

A team from the Dick Vet Equine Hospital examined the giraffe's mouth and determined that the cause of the facial swelling was food packing in Gilbert's right cheek, which they were able to remove.

The team suspect that the swelling may have a behavioural cause, especially since Gilbert refilled his cheek pouch with food as soon as he had recovered from the anaesthetic. With ongoing training, keepers hope to improve the giraffe's oral hygiene by regularly flushing the cheek pouch with water.

Hospital launches residency programme in Behavioural Medicine

The Hospital for Small Animals has become the first training centre in the UK to provide a standard residency programme in Veterinary Behavioural Medicine.

Approval from the European College of Animal Welfare and Behavioural Medicine (ECAWBM) will allow vets the opportunity to study in a dedicated centre in the UK while working towards ECAWBM Behavioural Medicine Diplomate status, the highest qualification in veterinary behavioural medicine.

With a dedicated referral-only Behaviour Clinic led by Dr Kevin McPeake, RCVS Specialist in Behavioural



Medicine, the Hospital is an ideal training centre for ECAWBM scholars.

Dr Benjamin Cross, the first vet to be enrolled onto the new standard residency programme in Behavioural Medicine in the UK, began his training recently.

His four-year residency will be supervised by Dr McPeake, who will also help him prepare for his board exams.

Dr Cross will gain extensive clinical training assessing and treating dogs and cats referred to the Hospital's Behaviour Clinic as well as in exotic animal and equine behaviour.

Exam Success

Congratulations to two clinicians who are celebrating recent exam success.

Anais Allen-Deal and Olivia Walesby have become European Diplomates in Emergency and Critical Care (DipECVECC).

Both completed more than 3 years of training, exams and research to achieve the highest qualification in their particular veterinary field. The Hospital for Small Animals has over 50 European and American Diplomates working across its 14 referral services, and we are delighted to welcome two more to the team.



Anais Allen-Deal



Olivia Walesby

Free 2026 wall planner

You should have found a 2026 wall planner with this newsletter to help your practice plan its year ahead. As well as some key events in the veterinary calendar, we have also marked the dates of all the free online CPD events the Hospital is running for vets and vet nurses in 2026, and a handy QR code for you to get more details and book your space.

If you would like an extra wall planner mailed to your practice, you can request one from vet.marketing@ed.ac.uk – while stocks last.

Join our mailing list

If you are a veterinary professional and would like to receive news and updates from the Hospital, along with information about CPD events direct to your inbox then...



Join our mailing list

Scan the QR code to join our mailing list:
<https://edin.ac/3WKsUHg>



Rabbit outpatient investigation package available

Our Specialist-led Dick Vet Rabbit and Exotic Practice is offering a routine referral rabbit outpatient clinic to provide referring vets advanced diagnostic imaging and clinical support for their cases.

Clients will receive an extended consultation so that history, husbandry and dietary assessments can be made. Rabbits will then undergo a clinical examination, before being admitted to the Hospital's dedicated rabbit ward. Each case will receive a routine haematology and biochemistry profile and conscious whole body computed tomography (CT) scan with intravenous contrast, ensuring a comprehensive, minimally invasive, diagnostic work-up.

Conscious CT scans remove any sedation or anaesthetic risks for our rabbit patients. It also minimises the time a rabbit patient spends without access to food therefore reduces the risk of gastrointestinal stasis development.



The outpatient investigation is ideally suited to the most prevalent and challenging conditions in rabbits:

- **Dental disease** – CT enables precise assessment of arcades, apical elongation, and secondary osteomyelitis, facilitating early intervention and surgical planning
- **Otitis media/interna** – High-resolution imaging of the tympanic bullae supports accurate diagnosis and grading of disease
- **Arthritis and musculoskeletal disease** – CT evaluation provides whole body detail, assisting in the diagnosis of degenerative joint disease, spondylosis and osteomyelitis. Bloodwork aids in systemic health assessment before analgesia regimes are implemented
- **Respiratory tract infections** – CT imaging allows for assessment of turbinate, sinus, tracheal and pulmonary pathologies and can help determine if chronic cases are curable or require ongoing management.

Following assessment, the referring vet will receive a diagnostic report and management plan, including recommendations for medical, surgical, or husbandry-based interventions. Alternatively, we can provide estimates for further treatment.

We offer a fixed fee package for initial referral and investigations through our rabbit outpatient clinic of £999, frozen until 31 March 2026.



Want to know more?

Please contact the Dick Vet Rabbit and Exotic Practice on **0131 650 7650** or email hfsareception@ed.ac.uk



Follow us on LinkedIn for the latest information about CPD, postgraduate courses, clinical research, vacancies and much more. Go to www.linkedin.com/company/TheDickVet.



2026 Clinical Club Dates

The Dick Vet Clinical Club holds monthly online CPD webinars. These free events are hosted by experts who discuss recent advances in their clinical area to help vets develop or refresh their knowledge.

Dick Vet Clinical Club CPD

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|
| JAN
14 | Dr Kevin McPeake
Head of Behaviour Service
Cat behaviour - assessing and addressing stress in Feline Idiopathic Cystitis | JUL
01 | Dr Jenna Richardson
Head of Dick Vet Rabbit and Exotic Practice
Respiratory disease approach and management in rabbits - snuffles and beyond! |
| FEB
04 | Dr Isabel del Portillo Miguel
Senior Lecturer in Oncology
Mammary tumours in dogs and cats: what is new in diagnostics and treatments | AUG
05 | Dr Julien Dandrieux
Senior Lecturer in Small Animal Medicine
Is faecal microbiota transplant worth the buzz? |
| MAR
04 | Professor Dylan Clements
Academic Head of Companion Animal Sciences
Orthopaedic infections, an old problem with new solutions | SEP
02 | Dr Magdalena Parys
Senior Lecturer in Oncology
Palliative radiotherapy in veterinary oncology: approaches for cancerous and non-cancerous conditions when curative treatment is no longer possible |
| APR
01 | Dr Jennifer Cartwright
Senior Lecturer in Small Animal Internal Medicine
The diagnosis and management of chronic liver diseases in dogs and cats | OCT
07 | Dr Kathryn Pratschke
Senior Lecturer Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery
How big should I cut? Practical decision-making in cancer surgery |
| MAY
06 | Dr Conor O'Halloran
Resident in Small Animal Internal Medicine
Mycobacterial disease in cats and dogs | NOV
04 | Dr Alisdair Boag and Dr Arangan Nagendran
Senior Lecturer in Small Animal Internal Medicine and Co-Head of Neurology & Neurosurgery Service
Pituitary diseases |
| JUN
03 | Dr Lynda Rutherford
Co-Head of Small Animal Surgery Service
Breathe easier - tips on managing brachycephalic patients from admission, to surgery and post-operatively. | DEC
02 | Dr Craig Breheny
Senior Lecturer in Emergency and Critical Care and Surgery
Platelets under fire: Tackling immune-mediated thrombocytopenia |



For full details of these, and the regular Nurses Clinical Club events, visit
<https://vet.ed.ac.uk/studying/cpd/clubs>

