

How to achieve contextualised care: Insights from the veterinary sector and pet owners

Appendix: Survey for veterinary professionals

Note: For most questions, only one answer could be selected. Where respondents were allowed or requested to select more than one answer, that is noted in brackets. An asterisk () after a question indicates that an answer was required. If there is no asterisk, the question was optional.*

Introduction

Thank you for showing an interest in this survey.

The charity RCVS Knowledge has commissioned Kaleidoscope Health and Care, a healthcare consultancy, to conduct research to better understand 'contextualised care' in order to explore how the term is understood, what makes it easier or more difficult to practise and how the current situation could be improved. As part of this research, we are gathering perspectives from those currently working in veterinary practice providing care to dogs and cats, as well as from pet owners.

Your answers to this survey will help us to better understand the barriers and enablers to contextualised care and to develop recommendations that serve the veterinary sector and pet owners.

We are committed to protecting your privacy. All survey data will be anonymised before analysis, securely stored by Kaleidoscope Health and Care, and destroyed within four months of completion of the project. Your individual answers will not be linked to any identifying information. For more details on our privacy policy and how your data is used and stored, or if you have any questions about this survey or the wider research, please contact Sarah Moir (email).

The survey consists of about 25 questions, depending on the answers you provide. We estimate the survey will take between 15 and 20 minutes to complete. While most questions are required, there are also a few optional free text questions. Please note that once you begin the survey, it is not possible to withdraw your consent as data will be collected as you progress.

1) Your participation is entirely voluntary. Are you happy to participate?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

2) I confirm that I am currently working as a vet or registered veterinary nurse in veterinary clinical practice in the UK. (This can include those on leave/sick leave/maternity leave or similar.)*

☐ Yes

☐ No

3) I confirm that my work involves the delivery of veterinary care to dogs and cats.*

☐ Yes

☐ No

4) I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.*

☐ Yes

☐ No

About you

[If Q1-Q4 were all answered 'yes', participants moved to Q5. If any of these were answered 'no', participants were notified that they did not qualify for the survey, thanked for their time, and provided with contact details in case of any questions.]

5) What is your role in veterinary practice?*

☐ Veterinary surgeon

☐ Veterinary nurse

6) [Asked of veterinary surgeons only] When did you qualify as a veterinary surgeon? (Select one.)

☐ Years provided from 1965 or earlier – 2025

7) [Asked of veterinary nurses only] How many total years have you worked in the veterinary sector?*

☐ 2 years or less

☐ Between 3 and 4 years

☐ Between 5 and 9 years

☐ Between 10 and 19 years

☐ 20 years or more

8) What type of veterinary practice do you currently work in? (Please tick all that apply.)*

☐ First opinion/primary care practice

☐ Emergency services and/or out-of-hours clinic

- ☐ Veterinary hospital
 - ☐ University practice
 - ☐ Referral practice
 - ☐ Other (please specify):
-

9) What is the ownership of the practice you work in? (Please select all that apply.)*

- ☐ Independent veterinary practice
- ☐ Corporate group
- ☐ Charity
- ☐ Vet school
- ☐ I work as a locum in various practices
- ☐ None of the above/other

What is contextualised care?

RCVS Knowledge describes contextualised care as a way of delivering veterinary care that acknowledges that there are different ways to approach the diagnosis and treatment of an animal, depending on the circumstances of the individual animal and their caregivers, and the context in which the care is delivered.

10) To what degree does this description match your understanding of contextualised care?*

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Somewhat matches my understanding
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Mostly matches my understanding
- ☐ Strongly matches my understanding

11) If the description doesn't match your understanding, how would you characterise contextualised care? [Optional – 59 responses]

12) How important is it for the pet owner to be involved in decisions about their animal's care?*

- ☐ Not very important
- ☐ Slightly important
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Very important

13) How easy do you find it to involve the owner in decisions about their animal's care?*

- ☐ Very difficult

- ☐ Difficult
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Very easy

14) How often do the following contextual factors influence your approach to the care of individual patients? *

Individual animal factors, e.g. comorbidities, age or temperament

- ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

Owner factors, e.g. ability to get to the surgery or give medication

- ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

Owner financial constraints

- ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

Practice factors – facilities, workload and availability of support staff

- ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

Practice factors – protocols, guidelines or frameworks

- ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

Legal and regulatory factors – medicines, e.g. cascade

- ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

Legal and regulatory factors – other, e.g. Dangerous Dogs Act

- ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

One Health concerns, e.g. antimicrobial resistance

- ☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

15) Which of the following statements best applies to you?*

☐ I feel confident adapting care to the circumstances of the individual animal and its owner.

☐ I feel somewhat confident in adapting care to the circumstances of the individual animal and its owner.

☐ I do not feel confident in adapting care to the circumstances of the individual animal and owner.

Impact of contextualised care

16) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

Applying a contextualised care approach is likely to improve the quality of veterinary care.

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

Applying a contextualised care approach is likely to improve trust between clients and the veterinary team.

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

Applying a contextualised care approach is likely to reduce the incidence of rehoming of pets to charities due to costs of veterinary care.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

Applying a contextualised care approach is likely to improve job satisfaction and reduce burnout.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

Applying a contextualised care approach is likely to foster a sense of openness and support within the veterinary team.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

Applying a contextualised care approach is likely to enable the practice to operate sustainably from a business perspective, while providing a range of care options.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

Barriers and enablers to providing contextualised care

17) From your experience, please select what you think are the biggest barriers to you providing contextualised care. (Select up to three.)*

☐ I don't have time to practise contextualised care.

☐ I feel that practice protocols and guidelines restrict my ability to practise contextualised care.

☐ My practice culture does not support a contextualised approach to care.

☐ It is difficult to provide contextualised care when owners see different members of the practice team at each visit.

☐ I feel most comfortable when I am able to provide 'gold standard' care.

☐ I find it difficult when financial constraints of the owner limit the care that I am able to provide.

☐ I find it difficult to communicate effectively with owners about the costs of veterinary care.

☐ I feel that there are very few barriers to providing a contextualised care approach.

18) Is there anything not listed in the statements above that you think is getting in the way of you delivering care that is adapted to the individual animal and its owner? [Optional – 162 responses]

19) [Asked of veterinary surgeons only] To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

I find it difficult to keep on top of the latest evidence for different treatment and diagnosis options.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

I find it difficult to provide owners with the information they need to choose between diagnostic or treatment options.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

I tend to rely on tests and diagnostics to get a clear answer because I am worried about client complaints or disciplinary action if I make the 'wrong' decision.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

I feel under pressure to recommend certain diagnostic or treatment options.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

I feel relieved when a pet is insured as this enables me to carry out more diagnostic tests.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

I feel confident and comfortable that I can provide appropriate care to an animal even when I don't have a definitive diagnosis.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

I am comfortable offering the client the option of euthanasia.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

20) [Asked of veterinary surgeons only] Of the following options, which would you find more useful to support you in delivering contextualised care effectively? (Please select up to three.)*

☐ Tools to support you to discuss diagnosis and treatment options, such as evidence-based decision aids

☐ Better data and research on outcomes for different treatment pathways

☐ A more supportive practice culture that values open communication, collaboration and flexibility

☐ More training and support on having conversations with clients about euthanasia as an option

☐ More emphasis in the veterinary literature on 'contextualised care' rather than 'gold standard'

☐ More peer support and mentorship

☐ More joined-up working across the veterinary team in your practice

☐ Better sources of accessible, evidence-based information for pet owners on the treatment and diagnosis options available

☐ Pre-consult information for pet owners to support them to consider what to ask and consider in a consult.

21) [Asked of veterinary nurses only] Of the following options, which would you find more useful to support you in delivering contextualised care effectively? (Please select up to three.)*

☐ Better data and research on outcomes for different treatment pathways

☐ A more supportive practice culture that values open communication, collaboration and flexibility

☐ More emphasis in the veterinary literature on 'contextualised care' rather than 'gold standard'

☐ More peer support and mentorship

☐ More joined-up working across the veterinary team in your practice

☐ Better sources of accessible, evidence-based information for pet owners on the treatment and diagnosis options available

☐ Pre-consult information for pet owners to support them to consider what to ask and consider in a consult.

22) Is there anything else that would support you to deliver a contextualised care approach more effectively? If you have fewer than three points, please leave the remaining boxes blank. [Optional – 208 responses]

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

23) How easy is it for you to access support from other veterinary professionals, including colleagues or specialists, when making decisions?*

☐ Very difficult

☐ Difficult

☐ Neutral

☐ Easy

☐ Very easy

What needs to change?

24) Do you think any changes are needed in veterinary policy or regulation to support the delivery of contextualised care?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

[If Q24 was answered 'Yes', participants were taken to Q25. If Q22 was answered 'No', participants were taken directly to Q26.]

25) If yes, please outline the changes you think are needed below. [Optional – 211 responses]

26) Do you think any changes are needed in veterinary education to support the delivery of contextualised care?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

[If Q26 was answered 'Yes', participants were taken to Q27. If Q26 was answered 'No', participants were taken directly to Q28.]

27) If yes, please outline the changes you think are needed below. [Optional – 277 responses]

28) Please add any other comments you would like to share about contextualised care below. [Optional – 93 responses]

Demographics

29) In which region of the UK do you work? [Optional – 416 responses]

- ☐ East of England
- ☐ East Midlands
- ☐ Greater London
- ☐ North East England
- ☐ North West England
- ☐ Northern Ireland
- ☐ Scotland
- ☐ South East England
- ☐ South West England
- ☐ Wales
- ☐ West Midlands
- ☐ Yorkshire and the Humber

30) What is your gender identity? [Optional – 417 responses]

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe (please specify): _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

31) What is your racial/ethnic background? [Optional – 416 responses]

- ☐ Asian or Asian British – Indian
- ☐ Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
- ☐ Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
- ☐ Asian or Asian British – Chinese
- ☐ Asian or Asian British – Any other Asian background
- ☐ Black, Black British, Caribbean or African – Caribbean
- ☐ Black, Black British, Caribbean or African – African
- ☐ Black, Black British, Caribbean or African – any other Black, Black British or Caribbean background
- ☐ White – English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- ☐ White – Irish
- ☐ White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ☐ White – Roma
- ☐ White – Any other White background

- ☐ Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – White and Black African
- ☐ Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – White and Asian
- ☐ Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background
- ☐ Other ethnic group – Arab
- ☐ Other ethnic group – Any other ethnic group
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Thank you!

Thank you for completing this survey! Your feedback is crucial in helping us improve the way veterinary care is delivered.

If you have any questions about this survey or the wider research, please contact [name, email address].

If you would like to be kept informed about RCVS Knowledge's contextualised care work, including when the results of the research are published, please let us know by providing your details at xxx. Please note that your contact details will be stored separately from your survey responses and cannot be linked to any answers you have given in this survey.



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This appendix relates to the following report:

Doorly, A., Everitt, S., Mantell, K., Cropley, K., Osterberg, A., Taylor, A. (2025). *How to achieve contextualised care: Insights from the veterinary sector and pet owners*. [Online]. RCVS Knowledge. Available at: <https://www.rcvsknowledge.org/cc-report>