

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

Appendix: Focus groups protocol (cat and/or dog owners)

Welcome and introductions

Welcome everyone, we are very glad you have joined us today for this small group discussion.

[Name] and I are here to help the conversation flow, and to ask you some specific questions about your experience as a pet owner. Our colleague [name] is also here and will be taking notes in the background, she may keep her camera off throughout the session. So now is probably a good time for us all to get introduced to one another.

Let's all say our name, where in the UK you are joining from, what types of pet or pets you have, and how long you've been a pet owner.

Setting context

So why are we here and how will it work today? We are researchers from Kaleidoscope Health and Care, and we are partnering with the charity RCVS Knowledge to better understand how veterinary care can be delivered in a way that is adapted to the individual circumstances of each animal and their owner. As pet owners, your insights are important to helping us understand:

- What matters most to you when making decisions about your pet's health;
- What challenges you face in accessing veterinary care; and
- What would help you to feel more supported and able to make the best decisions for your pet.

Your experiences and perspectives will help RCVS Knowledge understand what veterinary professionals and pet owners need and will shape recommendations for the veterinary sector.

How will this work?

- We are a small group so feel free to speak when you wish to.
- We want to hear from everyone today, so we might jump in and ask you or someone else to share their views.

- We have limited time together today and, in order to make sure we hear from everyone, we may need to interrupt you and pass the mic to someone else. Please don't take this personally and please feel free to type the rest of what you were going to say into the chat. We want to hear everything you have to say, but unfortunately, time will likely be against us.
- Feel free to type into the chat box if you prefer.
- If you think of anything afterwards that you wished you had said, please feel free to email us again, you all have my email.
- If you are having any trouble hearing or seeing us, please say so. We will try and help!
- Everything you say will be anonymous, which means nothing in the summary we write up will have your name attached to it.
- We would like to have your permission to record our conversation for our notes – these will not be shared with anyone and will be deleted within a month. *(We will also have already flagged this in the invite so that everyone comes with the expectation that it will be recorded and are not put on the spot.)*

Factors in decision-making

We recently ran a survey for pet owners, which you all kindly took part in. One of the things that we asked about was the factors that pet owners consider when making decisions about their pet's diagnosis and treatments. The top answers were:

- Quality of life for my dog/cat during and after treatment
- What level of aftercare (e.g. cage rest or giving medication) I will need to provide for my dog/cat at home
- Evidence of effectiveness of different diagnosis/treatment options
- Cost of treatment and diagnosis
- The broader impact of diagnosis or treatment options – e.g. responsible use of antibiotics to reduce antimicrobial resistance.

With this in mind, my first question for you is: **What do you think are the most important factors to consider when making decisions about diagnosis or treatment options for your pet?**

I want to hear from everyone on this one, so we'll go around the group, starting with X.

Thanks everyone for sharing. My next question is: **Can you give an example of when you were presented with a range of options for treatment or diagnosis? What happened and what was the impact on you and your pet?**

I don't need to hear from everyone on this question, but I'd like to hear from two or three people. If we aren't able to get to you, but you have an experience you'd like to share, please put it in the chat so that we can still have that experience in mind when doing our analysis.

My final question for you, before handing over to [name] to discuss barriers to personalised care, is about cost. I'm curious about the experiences you may have discussing treatment costs with the vet. This could go lots of ways. **Do you prefer to discuss costs before treatment with the vet or do you tell the vet to do what they think is best and not think about the cost until the end?**

We recognise that everyone here loves their animals but that we are all in very different financial contexts, so I wanted to say that there is no judgement from us on any of your answers.

Barriers

As we mentioned earlier, we recently ran a survey for pet owners, which you all took part in, and one thing that we asked in this survey was what barriers pet owners face when trying to get personalised care for them and their pet. The top four barriers that people faced were:

- Feeling emotionally unwell when their pet is unwell
- Feeling guilty if they cannot afford all the treatment options on offer
- Not understanding or remembering all the information the vet gives them
- And actually, a lot of pet owners said they don't face any barriers to receiving personalised or holistic care.

My question to you is: **What have been your biggest barriers to receiving the kind of care that is right for you and your pet?**

My next question is similar. For time purposes, we won't go around to everyone on this one. I'd love to hear from maybe two people, but would encourage anyone we don't get to to put their answer in the chat so we can still use it as part of our takeaway. **Can you give us an example of a consultation where you didn't feel that you received the care that was appropriate for you and your pet?**

My last question for us today is more future focused and asks you to think about what good care would look like. **What would help you to feel more supported and able to make the best decisions for your pet?**

Thank you so much for your time and sharing from your experience today. We really appreciate it and will be using your insights to feed into the research RCVS Knowledge is doing. Thanks again, have a lovely day.



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This appendix relates to the following report:

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