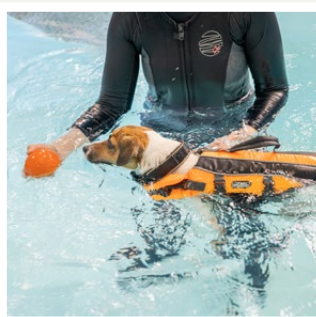


# VetPartners Clinical Board Annual Report 2025



Progressing Practice Together



## Table of Contents

- 2 - Table of Contents and Executive Summary
- 3 - Introduction
- 4 - Our Main Areas of Focus
- 5 - Group Clinical Board
- 6 - Clinical Board Communities
- 7 - Developing Resources to Support Clinical Decision Making
- 8 - Quality Improvement - Progressing Surgical Outcomes
- 9 - Quality Improvement - Antibiotic Stewardship
- 10 - Other Quality Improvement (QI) Projects
- 11 - Clinical Research and Evidence-based Veterinary Medicine
- 12 - Clinical Research Projects
- 13 - Contact Us



## Executive Summary

Welcome to our fifth VetPartners Clinical Board Annual Report, describing key developments within our clinical communities, Quality Improvement (QI) and clinical research work between January and December 2025. This report is for everyone; clients, all members of our practice teams and anyone working within the veterinary industry. We welcome conversations and collaboration with anyone interested in our work, please contact us at [clinical.board@vetpartnergroup.com](mailto:clinical.board@vetpartnergroup.com). This report was published in April 2026.

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# Introduction

We are proud to share the VetPartners Clinical Board Annual Report for 2025, which celebrates how working together across the group has enabled us to progress care, share experience and expertise, and deliver great outcomes for our patients.



Throughout 2025, we have continued to strengthen our clinical communities, advance patient care through focused quality improvement initiatives, and create greater opportunities to take part in meaningful clinical research. This report allows us to look back on how far we have come in a year and how we are working together to make a difference to the animals we treat, our clients and each other.

The last year has seen colleagues working collaboratively across all nine of the countries we represent, to create networks of people who share the same clinical interests, drive and passion. Our colleagues are united not only by a desire to develop themselves, but also to support and inspire others.

We have continued to run a variety of clinical research projects, supporting practitioner-led projects, presenting at a variety of conferences and publishing our work. Each year we develop numerous evidence-based, clinical decision-making resources to support our teams and answer any questions they identified in practice.

We have also continued to prioritise group-wide quality improvement projects, including increasing the use of post-op coding to optimise surgical outcomes and promoting antibiotic stewardship, resulting in a 65% reduction in our usage since 2021.

All meaningful change in clinical practice begins with a conversation. The more evidence-based conversations we have across the whole group, that are focused on our patients and on shaping clinical practice that is fit for the future, the greater our ability to progress care. By working together and learning from one another, we can achieve bigger and better things that have a lasting impact on animal health.

We hope you enjoy this report and if you have any questions, or ideas, please do get in touch.

**Dr Rachel Dean FRCVS, Director of Clinical Research and Excellence in Practice**

**In 2025 we:**

- Had 9 Clinical Boards
- Had 51 clinical interest and study groups
- Developed 179 clinical decision-making resources
- Held 111 meetings across the group
- Involved over 6000 people in clinical board work

## CEO Introduction



“It is brilliant to see the work of our Clinical Board and practice teams in another yearly report. Our vet-led, practice focused business means our people and the animals and clients we care for are central to everything we do. We are thrilled to continue to share knowledge and give back to the profession, while also supporting our teams as they continue to develop practice and provide an outstanding service to our patients and clients. I am excited about the continued development of our Clinical Boards both in the UK and across Europe and would like to say a massive thank you to everyone involved. We are so proud of everything we have achieved so far – together.” Jo Malone MRCVS, CEO, VetPartners

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## Our Main Areas of Focus



### Clinical Communities

Our clinical communities are at the centre of our Clinical Board activities. Anyone in our practices who works with patients and/or clients can join and help to guide our work. The communities ensure what we do is relevant and useful to clinical decision making in practice.

*“When we joined VetPartners in 2022, one of the most exciting things was connecting with so many other teams and being part of a larger veterinary community. Discovering the Clinical Interest Groups (CIGs) was great. You don’t need to be an expert to join in, just have an interest, and everyone is super-helpful. I really love the Dermatology CIG which is a smashing group of skin enthusiasts. I have learned a lot of practical tips from the Orthopaedic CIG which, as well as having exceptional expertise, is also unbelievably humble and helpful to those seeking advice. Recently, I joined the Small Animal Clinical Board and had the pleasure of connecting in-person with others interested in progressing clinical connections throughout the group.”*

**David Beattie, MRCVS, Member of the Small Animal Clinical Board, Northern Ireland**



### Clinical Quality Improvement (QI)

Clinical QI enables us to progress care in a collaborative, practical way. This not only improves outcomes for the animals we treat but also gives our teams and clients confidence in the care we deliver.

*“The responsible use of antibiotics is a key element of modern veterinary practice. In response to increasing antimicrobial resistance, the optimisation and reduction of antibiotic use have been defined as a quality improvement priority for the VetPartners Group Clinical Board. We are looking at antibiotic prescribing across our German practices and this is reviewed by the participating vets through a peer discussion, with the initial focus being on the use of metronidazole in canine diarrhoea and potential alternative treatment approaches.”*

**Dr. med. vet. Christine Waage, Clinical Board Lead, Germany**



### Clinical Research and Innovation

Undertaking practice-based research enables us to grow the evidence base for clinical decision making. We undertake group-wide and small-scale projects and everything in between to answer key questions our teams have in practice. Our research enables us to ‘give back’ to the wider veterinary profession and promote animal health and welfare. By joining together as a big group, we can really make a difference – together.

*“Working as a Vet tech on farm, my role is all about helping to improve livestock health and welfare by preventing disease and reducing antimicrobial resistance/use. A recent research project I have been involved with was on udder cleft lesions, which has meant we can now offer a full package of monthly observations on farm, identifying cows with lesions and then setting a vet protocol for the farm staff to follow with treatment. With this action in place, we are catching these lesions earlier and seeing them heal quicker, we can also work with the farm to help identify and reduce the risk factors”.*

**Nat Parker, Vet Tech, LLM Whitchurch, UK**



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## Group Clinical Board

Our VetPartners Group Clinical Board is led by Dr Rach Dean and the team is comprised of Clinical Board Leaders from each country:

### Clinical Board Country Leads

- Victoire Moucheboeuf – France
- Caroline Lepretre – France
- Christine Waage – Germany
- Kerstin Kneuertz – Germany
- Austin Donnelly – Ireland
- Francesca Bresciani – Italy
- Aline Rodts – Netherlands
- Ivo Lima da Silva – Portugal
- Susana Garcia – Spain
- Maeva Roman – Switzerland
- Luke Cottis – United Kingdom



### Group Clinical Board Meeting 2025

The Group Clinical Board oversee the development of our clinical communities across the business and provide support for our practice teams. We meet regularly online but once per year meet in person. Following meetings in Lisbon in 2023 and London in 2024, 2025 offered the opportunity for the team to meet in Madrid. We discussed key areas of focus including:



- How to develop and grow our **clinical communities** within and between countries.
- The ongoing group-wide development of **quality improvement** projects, including:
  - How we can increase the use of post op coding across the business to progress surgical outcomes
  - How we can develop our antibiotic stewardship further
- **Clinical research**, a key activity of the VetPartners Clinical Board, including:
  - How we can undertake group wide research projects in the future
  - Identifying people in the group wanting to or already undertaking research.



This time together allowed us to grow our relationships across the group, deepening our understanding of how we can support and learn from each other to progress practice throughout our business.



*“Meeting face-to-face in Madrid was fun! This meeting was more personal; teams from every country joined, sharing ideas on how to improve our knowledge, improve the quality within the clinics whilst keeping our teams happy and proud of the work they do. Each country has different challenges, cultural differences and restrictions. Input and ideas from the group are refreshing and food for thought”.*

Aline Rodts DVM, Clinical Board Lead, The Netherlands

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## Clinical Board Communities

### Clinical Boards

We have nine clinical boards across the VetPartners Group.

Over the course of 2025 we have worked with colleagues to grow our network of clinical communities across VetPartners.

In Europe each country has a clinical board or scientific committee that is small animal or multi-species in focus. In addition, the UK and Ireland have three boards: small animal, farm and equine.

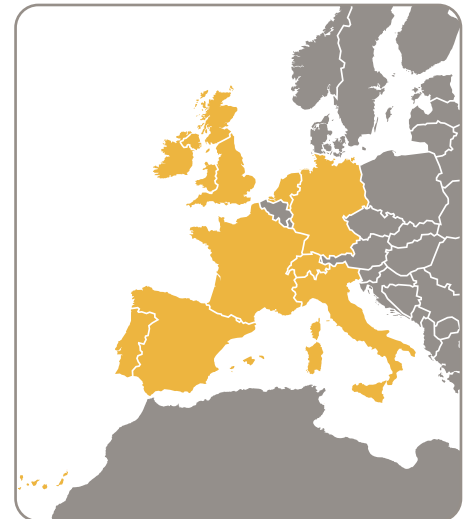
### Clinical Interest and Study Groups

Our clinical boards work closely with a wide array of clinical interest and study groups which enable people with similar interests to share their knowledge, skills, experience, and expertise across the group providing support and mentorship.

### Clinical Board Support Team

We are also lucky to have a central **Clinical Board Support Team**, a designated team with both clinical and extensive research experience and expertise, who are dedicated to collaborating with our communities across the group to facilitate the development of new skills, including the assessment and communication of evidence.

To learn more, [visit the clinical excellence page on our group website](#).



*"In Italy it has been great to see our clinical community grow. By focusing on practical tools, from updated protocols to evidence-based resources, we are ensuring our teams feel supported in their daily work. This year, we have worked more closely with the clinical board representatives in every single practice, and we plan to strengthen these relationships further. Our study groups have also increased their activities, launching training sessions and multidisciplinary events open to everyone. I am incredibly proud of how these shared resources and connections are helping our teams feel more confident and supported every day".*

**Francesca Bresciani, DVM, PhD, Clinical Board Lead, Italy**

*"Since Christine and I started the Clinical Board in Germany, we have already welcomed three fantastic members who really enrich the conversation. Together, we have established monthly webinars for all animal species from small animals, cattle and horses to a group especially for Vetpartners interns and junior assistants. This is complemented by topic-specific chats where veterinarians can exchange ideas about complex cases, clinical issues and practical experiences on an equal footing".*

**Dr. med. vet. Kerstin Kneuert, Clinical Board Co-lead, Germany**



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## Developing Resources to Support Clinical Decision Making

Throughout 2025 our clinical boards, together with our Clinical Interest Groups (CIGs) and study groups have created numerous evidence-based resources to support our teams in practice, review new medicines which have come on the market and address knowledge gaps that have been reported to us.

Examples of the resources developed this year include:

In 2025 we developed **179** clinical decision-making resources for our teams.

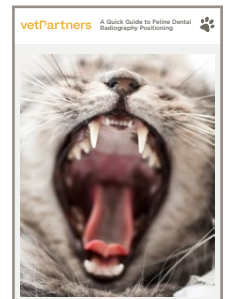


### JAK Inhibitors for Canine Allergic Skin Disease

These resources contain information on the JAK inhibitors available for treating allergic skin disease in dogs. We have created versions appropriate to all regulatory requirements within the group.

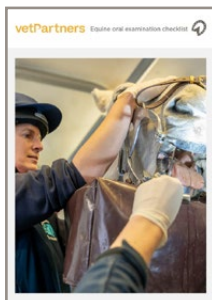
### Guide to Feline Dental Radiography

This guide is designed to support practitioners with limited experience of feline dental radiography.



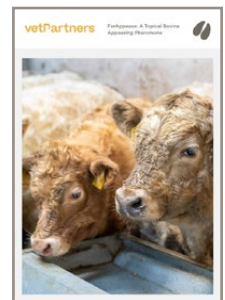
### Equine Dental Checklist

This checklist aims to help all practitioners to undertake a full oral examination, identify pathology and instigate correct and appropriate treatment of the equine mouth.



### Bovine Appeasing Pheromones

This resource contains information on bovine appeasing pheromone products, including FerAppease which is marketed in the UK.



### Visit VetPartners Learning

We have an extensive range of new and existing resources, spanning across species and available to all our colleagues at VetPartners. Please contact [clinical.board@vetpartnersgroup.com](mailto:clinical.board@vetpartnersgroup.com) to learn more or visit [VetPartners Learning](#) to explore the resources available. A handy user guide for the VetPartners Learning UK platform can also be found [here](#).

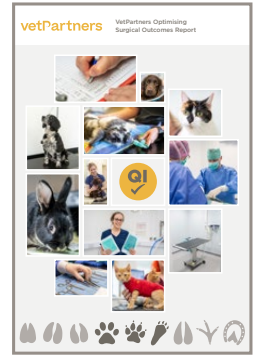
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## Quality Improvement - Progressing Surgical Outcomes

Across VetPartners, our clinical teams are doing a fantastic job of optimising surgical outcomes for all their patients.

In 2025 we published our Optimising Surgical Outcomes Report which contained data from 2021-2024 on over 27,000 surgeries across UK practices. These data were obtained by using post op codes (specific no cost codes assigned to the patient within the Practice Management System, PMS) which describe the state of a surgical site following surgery.



### Optimising Surgical Safety Report 2025

You can access our Optimising Surgical Safety Report [here](#).



We have increased our use of post op coding across the group!



The number of canine patients with no or only minor problems has improved!



For the first time we can extract post op code data from across the UK and Europe!



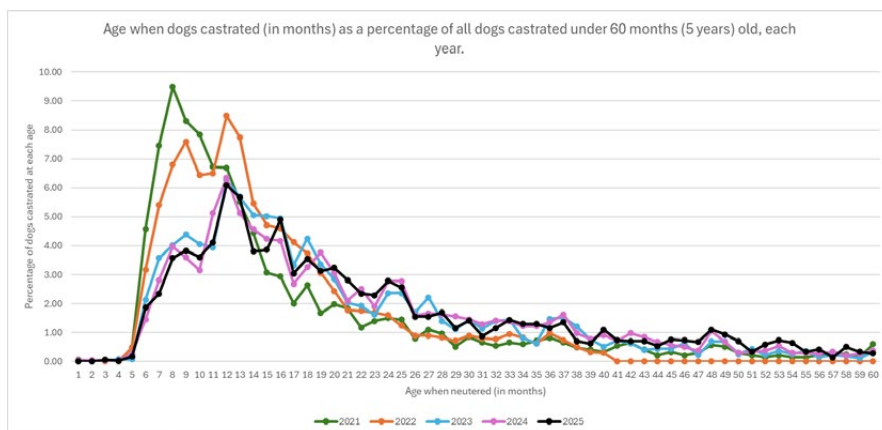
### Group Post-Operative Outcomes for Routine Neutering

Data collection across the whole group started at the end of 2024. In 2025 we collected data from 8700 patients within the VetPartners group.

Species	Number of coded neuters	No or minor problems	Mild redness plus discharge/seroma	Infection or wound breakdown
Cat	3058	94.7%	4.0%	1.4%
Dog	5433	93.0%	5.3%	1.7%
Rabbit	209	95.2%	4.3%	0.5%

These data support what a great job our teams are doing to optimise surgical outcomes for our patients across the group, with most neuter patients having no or only minor problems post operatively.

### Age of Dogs at Neutering in the UK



The age at which we neuter dogs can be a hot topic of conversation. Through our quality improvement data, we can see the age range of dogs at neutering has grown over time, showing that we are making decisions based on the context of individual patients.

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## Quality Improvement - Antibiotic Stewardship

The responsible use of antibiotics is an area of high priority for our practice teams and so we have made this a key area of focus for our Clinical Board Quality Improvement (QI) work across the group.

We have **reduced our antibiotic purchasing** (in kg per FTE[vet]) by **65%** since 2021.



### Antibiotic Reduction Progress to Date

Across the VetPartners UK team between  
**January 2025 and December 2025:**



We bought **2,802kg of antibiotics** (compared to 4,290kg in 2024, 5,588kg in 2023, 5,713kg in 2022 and 6,772kg in 2021)

On average we bought **1.54kg per full time equivalent vet** across the year (compared to 2.34kg in 2024, 3.15kg/FTE[vet] in 2023, 3.48kg/FTE[vet] in 2022 and 4.39kg/FTE[vet] in 2021)



This means we have **reduced our antibiotic purchasing** (in kg per FTE[vet]) by **65% since 2021**

**In the last year we have reduced our antibiotic purchasing by 34%**



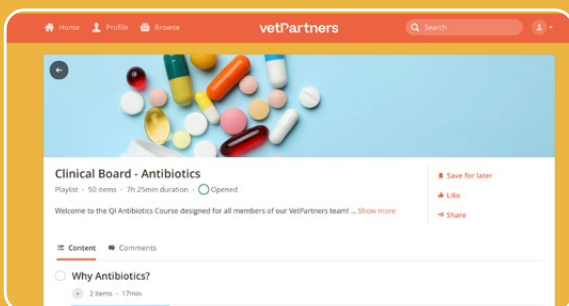
This would not be possible without our amazing teams and their dedication to progressing practice and safeguarding antibiotic use.

### VetPartners Antibiotic Stewardship Report 2025

You can access the VetPartners Antibiotic Stewardship Report for 2025 [here](#).

### Antimicrobial Stewardship Course and Resources

VetPartners colleagues can also access our support material on antimicrobial stewardship on [VetPartners Learning](#).



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## Other Quality Improvement (QI) Projects

Our clinical QI work encompasses many projects across all species. Some examples are included below:

### Equine Castration Audit

- We gathered data on 850 equine castrations performed across 29 practices.
- Follow up data were received on 533 of these castrations (63%), of which 90 (17%) had one or more post-operative complication(s).
- Swelling was the most common complication (52 horses), followed by infection (26 horses), bleeding (11 horses) and tissue protruding (5 horses).



### Peri-operative Antibiotics in Equine Surgery

In December 2025, the Equine Clinical Board launched a new project across six of our hospitals. This QI project, established to audit perioperative antimicrobial usage for specific surgical procedures, aims to help us understand:

- Whether antibiotics are being used for routine 'clean' surgeries or not
- The timing of antibiotic administration prior to surgery
- What antibiotics are being used post-operatively



### Cattle Caesar Audit

Our audit of cattle caesars closed during 2025. We have collated data from 952 caesars, with follow up data for 635 caesars. The majority of caesars recorded (75%) were in beef dams with the remaining 25% in dairy dams. Other findings have shown that:

- Dairy dams were more likely than beef dams to have significant assistance from the farmer or vet prior to the caesar (63% vs 38%)
- Dam survival at 60 days was 90% for beef dams and 82% for dairy dams
- Calf survival at 7 days was 75% for beef and 55% for dairy
- Dam survival at 60 days was higher for dams who were standing rather than recumbent during surgery (91% vs 67%)



### Vaginal prolapse in Ewes

- We received a total of 77 responses from vets
- Most (94%) said they administered an epidural; procaine alone was the most common choice (66%) with only 23% receiving xylazine
- 77% have the ewe in a standing position, the remaining 23% with rear legs elevated
- Over half (55%) said they placed a stitch once the prolapse was replaced, but only 16% stated they used a prolapse harness
- Calcium was administered for only 12% of prolapses



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## Clinical Research and Evidence-based Veterinary Medicine

Clinical research is a key area of focus for the Clinical Board.

Our VetPartners practices are diverse in terms of their types, specialties, case load and geography which offers us a huge collective pool of information.

By harnessing this information through research, we can ensure we are progressing practice in an informed way across the group and for the advancement of the wider profession.

We are proud to be working with colleagues near and far on many different projects, a selection of which are detailed below and on the following page:

Across our teams we have published over **62** publications and articles.



### Small Animal Clinical Research



- **Diagnostic accuracy of symmetric dimethylarginine for chronic kidney disease in cats and dogs: A systematic review.** Caroline Scobie (Westway Veterinary Group)
- **Do UK rabbit owners over-estimate the risk of rabbit anaesthetic mortality? An owner-based survey.** Rachel Sibbald (Abercorn Veterinary Clinics)

### Farm Animal Clinical Research



- **Polymelia in a female calf - a case report with surgical removal.** Evamaria Schraub (Weikersheim, Germany)
- **Variation in perceptions of pain and attitudes towards non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug use for different lameness scenarios in dairy cattle.** Emily Craven, Dr Jenny Stavisky and Dr Natalie Robinson (Clinical Board Support Team)

### Equine Clinical Research



- **Agreement of the performance of equine electrocardiogram recording devices for ECG complexity analysis.** Celia Marr (Rosssdales)
- **Prevalence and Progression of Resting ACTH, Insulin and Adiponectin Values as Indicators of Suspected Endocrine Diseases in Sport Horses and Ponies Compared to Non-Sport Horses, Ponies and Donkeys.** Emma Davis, Andrew Wood and Julie Potier (Liphook)
- **A systematic review of the prevalence of post-operative complications after general anaesthesia in adult horses (2000–2023).** Kate Loomes (Rainbow)
- **Disorders of the cervical vertebral column part 2: Update on current surgical techniques.** Rachel Tucker (Liphook)



*“From practice, I published an observational study I conducted on the new maternal vaccine against Cryptosporidium. For this, I needed some support with data analysis and publication of my paper. I received help from the Clinical Board Support Team - it was straightforward and they are highly competent”.*

*Dr. med. vet. Evamaria Schraub, Weikersheim, Germany*

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## Project FEET

This project explores how the whole mobility team perceive pain associated with various lameness-causing conditions in cattle and their approach to managing these.



There was good awareness that these conditions are often painful amongst all members of the on-farm mobility team. However, vets were more likely to say they would provide NSAIDs than farmers for all conditions. This builds on earlier work which highlighted that vets may underestimate farmers' willingness to prioritise their cows' welfare needs and therefore may be missing out on some important conversations about analgesia use.

In 2025 we published our **second paper** from this project. The first paper can be found **here**.

## Project DRAPES

This is our first randomised controlled trial across VetPartners practices in the UK, which examines whether using disposable drapes in routine surgeries gives different patient outcomes compared with using washable, reusable drapes, which have less lifetime environmental impact. We use our post-op codes to measure outcomes in each group.



By the end of 2025 we had over 2,400 patients enrolled! The full study protocol can be accessed **here**.

## Project NURSE

This project focusses on our equine nursing teams and how we can develop their clinical roles and promote equine health and welfare.

In October 2025 we published the **second paper** from this work. The first paper can be found **here**.

We are now undertaking part three of this project, which will seek the views of the wider equine clinical team to look at barriers and facilitators for nurses developing their clinical roles in practice.

## Project WORMS

This **project** is an ongoing collaboration between several large veterinary groups and organisations, including VetPartners, CVS, IVC, BEVA and Equine Reproductive Services. Project WORMS recognises the need to work together to protect equine health and welfare and tackle the growing resistance to worming products.



The owner survey (part **one** and **two**) found that over 40% of horses were kept on a livery yard, with yard managers frequently involved in decisions around worming. While the stud survey (part **one** and **two**) found that 36% thought they'd had a parasite-related illness on the farm in the past year (which may or may not have been confirmed with testing).

We are now continuing the collaboration and asking livery and competition training yard owners/managers how they control worms on their yard. The survey can be accessed **here**.

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*“It has always been a dream of mine to contribute to primary clinical research. Being part of the Equine Clinical Board has provided me with invaluable opportunities to become actively involved in research that strengthens and advances our evidence-based practice. Throughout this experience, I have learnt a tremendous amount from the Clinical Board Support Team, whose guidance and encouragement have supported both myself and fellow RVNs in shaping and delivering research. This community has also created opportunities to share our findings and newly acquired knowledge with colleagues across the wider veterinary community. The support of the Equine Clinical Board has not only increased my confidence but has also provided a platform to expand my expertise, and to share and apply that knowledge for the benefit of the veterinary profession.”*

**Anna Saul, RVN, Deputy Chair of the Equine Clinical Board, UK**

## Contact Us



We are very open to collaboration in clinical research. Working together with others who share our interests and values is the best way to keep progressing practice.

We are also happy to support and distribute a wide variety of projects from undergraduate and postgraduate colleagues, provided they fulfil our three basic criteria:

- They are relevant to colleagues within VetPartners
- They have appropriate ethical review
- A summary of results can be shared with us so we know what they found out

If you have a research project you'd like to carry out or participate in, get in touch at [clinical.board@vetpartnersgroup.com](mailto:clinical.board@vetpartnersgroup.com) to find out how we can help.

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