

Government Veterinary Services (GVS): A New Chapter for Government Vets

We will shortly launch the new Government Veterinary Services, a space for government vets to exchange ideas, develop professional interests and share our story with the wider veterinary community.

Vets have worked in government for more than 150 years, playing an ever-increasing role in protecting the animals and people of the UK against disease threats.

Today our number has grown to more than 600 professionals, with vets employed by 12 different government departments, while many more perform services on behalf of the government. Collectively, we possess a huge range of specialist skills, knowledge and experiences. We are trusted, too – 45% of livestock keepers trust vets above anyone else on issues ranging from animal health to farm management and biosecurity.

We collect and test samples across the country, build close and valuable links with the farming community and provide vital advice to underpin government policy on vital issues like responses to disease outbreaks. The community of UK government vets plays an important role in protecting the livelihoods of farmers, the health and welfare of their animals and public health across the country.

All of this makes us a community that has a lot to be proud of and which has a lot to share – something we need to do more of. The new Government Vets Blog and GOV.UK pages will allow us to do just this, helping grow our identity and skills, providing a place to share our experiences and helping the wider veterinary field understand the role we play.

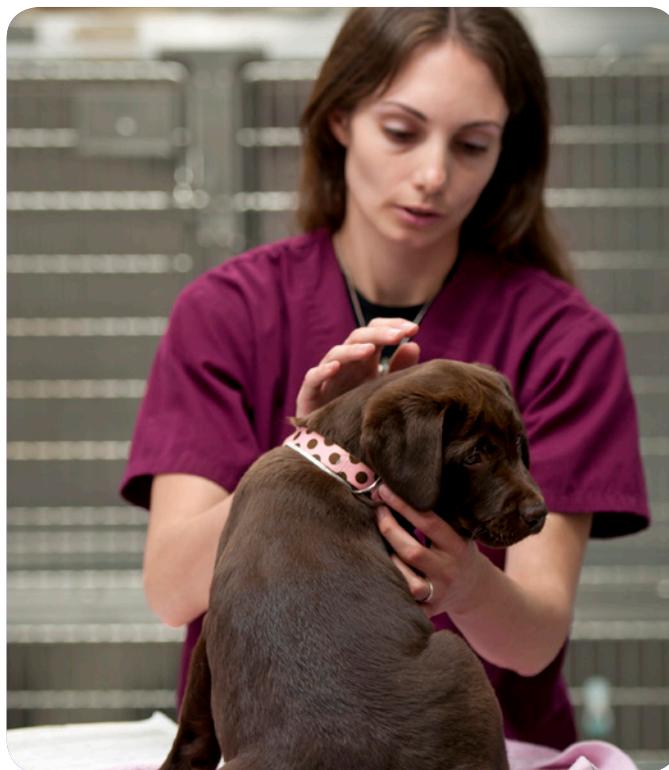
While our name and logo have changed, 'Government Veterinary Services' is much more than just a rebrand. We're introducing the new Government Vets blog, at vets.blogs.gov.uk, which will sit at the heart of our community. For government vets, it will be a useful insight into the working lives of our colleagues, allowing us to understand issues we all work on from a different perspective. It will also help us to share our story with those outside our number, including those who might be interested in joining us.

The new Government Veterinary Services pages on GOV.UK contain information for government vets and veterinary students who wish to join us to gain experience of the job. It includes links to our talent schemes, our unique competency framework and a range of continuous development resources. For those interested in embarking on a career in the GVS, the website includes a short video to give a flavour of what roles are available for vets in the Civil Service.

The new Government Veterinary Services newsletter will start in spring 2017, the first of a quarterly news bulletin for

all GVS members, and will include professional development opportunities and other relevant news.

As the Government's Chief Veterinary Officer, I'm thrilled that the new Government Veterinary Services allows us a platform to share our ideas and experiences. I hope this will bring us closer together as a profession, demonstrate the important role we play for the public and attract the next generation of vets to the Civil Service. Please pay us a visit soon and, as always, we welcome your feedback. You can email us at gvs@defra.gsi.gov.uk.



Professor Nigel Gibbens CBE is the UK's Chief Veterinary Officer.

He was appointed in May 2008 following previous experience in the State Veterinary Service and in policy roles on international trade, BSE controls, animal welfare and international relations co-ordination for Defra's Food and Farming Group.

Prior to joining the UK government in 1990, Nigel worked in private practice in his early career and in government veterinary services in Belize and Yemen.

Nigel enjoys cycling, walking, at home and abroad, gardening and DIY.

Nigel holds an Honorary Professorship from the Royal Veterinary College. He was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for services to the veterinary profession and animal welfare in the New Year's Honours list for 2016.

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