

This leaflet does not constitute any form of policy on behalf of SPVS and is not intended to be instructional, but merely informative and hopefully helpful.



Preparing For and Going to an Interview

Your first job is probably the most important decision you will make in your career! It will, without doubt have a real impact on the ability and enjoyment of the job in subsequent years. Those who choose the wrong first job are often scarred for life. In contrast those that choose the right first job , full of support, structure, an open, no blame culture with obvious expectations both ways will no doubt thrive.

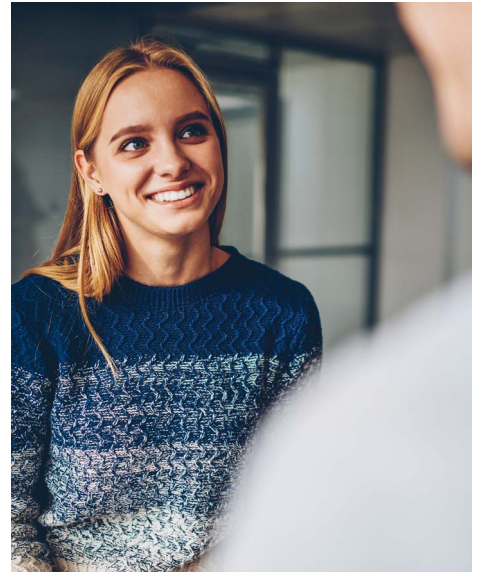
Before even looking at any job adverts or signing up to recruitment agencies consider the following:

- 1. Decide exactly what sort of job you want.** Do you want a mixed or small or equine? There is no point going for a job that ultimately is not what you want. Do you want to work for a corporate or an independent? There may be differences in clinical freedom, ability to change policies, pay, structure, induction processes etc. Which one fits your mould better?
- 2. Decide if you want to be close to your family and/or friends.** Your first job can be tiring with long hours and can make you feel quite isolated and lonely so it can help to be close to family or friends. That said if your ideal job is a little further away it may be worth it. You can build your life around the right job including new friends and maybe even a husband or wife!

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3. Have a very clear view as to what you want from a job. What you are prepared to compromise on and what you aren't. Don't just take a job because it has been offered. Make sure it is the right one. You can be selective. You are in a prime position and can be picky. Remember you don't have to use a recruitment agency. Often these will be pushy as they will just want to fill the position. If there is a vet you like the look of and appreciate their values but they don't currently have a job advert send a covering letter and your CV in anyway. Chances are they will interview you and you never know, you might get your dream job!

4. Don't decide on a job just from a zoom interview. You need to go to the practice in person and spend at least a day there to understand more the culture and values of the practice and staff that work there.



The Interview

1. Do some preparation. Look at the practice website. This may give you further information on the services offered, pricing structure, opening hours and team members. It is always impressive if an interviewee knows something about the practice.

2. Be assertive and be brave! You have recent knowledge, a willingness to learn and bring new ideas to the practice. Value yourself.

3. You will be asked a series of questions. These will vary depending on the type of job but consider your strengths and weaknesses. Try and relate these to actual experiences. Consider your answers rather than answering the first thing that comes into your head. It's also ok to say you don't know or you haven't experienced that particular thing. Listen to the person interviewing you to make sure you definitely answer what they are asking and be interested in what they are saying.

4. You will no doubt be asked if you have any further questions. Don't be bashful about money, holidays and rota. Make sure you fully understand if they are talking about basic salary versus package (SPVS salary survey will have median, lower and upper quartile values for different regions in the UK for you to compare). Ask about any bonuses. What is the probation period and if you pass it what benefits do you get then? How many holidays do you get and does that include bank holidays. Do you get any extra holidays for long service? What exactly does the rota mean? For example, 1 in 4 can mean very different things. How many weekends are you actually working? How many late nights? Is there a possibility of a four day week? Do you work bank holidays? Do you use an out of hours provider? Are patients kept in the hospital overnight? Who does the night checks? What time do you consult from in the week and at weekends? Is the rota split evenly between consults and operations and/or visits?

5. Ask about SUPPORT. This is the biggest factor you should be looking at. Is it a "sink or swim" type of practice or do you shadow a more experienced vet? If so, for how long? How long are your consults? Will you be seeing complex cases from day 1? Do you have a mentor? Who do you contact at night for advice? Remember to speak to staff on the day to verify this and make sure it truly is the case.

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6. Support from outside ie professional memberships such as BVA/SPVS/VDS. What is the CPD funding and allowance? Other support from inside the practice such as are there practice protocols in place? Is there a practice manual? what are the clinical requirements. Is the practice affiliated to the RCVS practice standards scheme? If so, what level are they? Does the practice have any awards e.g. cat friendly? The more there are of these the more the practice has looked at “management” and the better your chances of being nurtured properly.

7. Expectations. You need to understand what is expected of you from day 1 and throughout your career. This hopefully will be written down and very clear. Not only expectations clinically for medicine and surgery but communication expectations with clients, staff and management. Also how this links to salary too if applicable.

8. Never buy into promises. Some vets will promise the earth and this will never happen so take an offer based on the here and now. Look at the exact job description too to make sure you are fully on board with what is expected of you.

If you do all of the above, not only will anyone interviewing you be blown away by the thought you have given it and the detail needed, but you will have all the information you truly need to make the right decision – good luck peeps!

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Further information and resources for SPVS members

[SPVS New Graduate/Student Leaflets:](#) Advice and Tips

Writing a CV

So...you have chosen your dream job. Now what??

[How to Improve EMS](#) - Practical advice and top tips for students.

[Top Tips for loving life as a GP vet](#) - A series of 6 podcasts Listen here

[SPVS Salary Survey](#) - covering everything from basic earnings, bonuses, dividends and overtime, to benefits such as accommodation, car allowances and pensions.

<https://spvs.org.uk/graduate-support/>