



Student-Led Charity Neutering Scheme

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History

- Partnered with the **Scottish SPCA** since I created the core rotation 2016 – providing the workplace-based experience you see today.
 - **All final year students** spend 1 week rotating through this rotation as part of their SA Primary Care block.
 - **Prior to COVID**, all cases sourced from Scottish SPCA rescue & rehoming shelters.
 - Our graduating class of 2021 faced the **possibility of no SA Primary Care rotation** & caseload when they started in May 2020 – we had relied upon our external partners Scottish SPCA & PDSA to enable us to deliver this experience.
- Like everyone else, **we adapted &** through combined efforts, responded to connect with others.



SCOTTISH SPCA
Scotland's Animal Welfare Charity

Challenges & Responses

Understandably we were **not able to run rotation at Scottish SPCA Clinic**. So, we sourced & **set up a temporary clinic** – mobile surgical unit based on campus at Garscube. Purpose 'built' for use by the NHS.

Our **caseload was no longer available to sustain the rotation** due to shelter intake decreasing. In collaboration with the Scottish SPCA **we set about seeking alternative caseload streams**:

- Assisting the Scottish SPCA Welfare Inspectors & the pet owning public, in the neutering of pets from multi-pet households.
- Providing a neutering service for animals homed from the shelters during the pandemic.
- Provided a low-cost neutering service for the pet-owning public of the local area – in line with government restrictions. Clients pay a reduced fee for their pet to be spayed/castrated by the final year students under direct supervision on-campus in the mobile unit.

Condensed rotation due to physical distancing restrictions on the mobile unit resulting in students attending in smaller groups for fewer 'days'. Students responded favourably as experienced **more hands-on practice in addition to greater one-2-one feedback opportunities**.

Not being on-site at the Scottish SPCA Clinic = **less support from other staff members**. We reached out to our colleagues providing training for their **Veterinary Nursing and Animal Care Assistants**, to find, unsurprisingly, their students had also struggled to source placements. We were **able to incorporate provision of such an experience while gratefully having them support the delivery of the rotation**.



The Gains

- When faced with a reduced, yet critical caseload, **it is possible** to create a sustainable experience for our students through partnership with others.
- Evidenced by the feedback, chocolates, cakes, cards & houseplants – the rotation has proved **very popular** with student vets, nurses & animal care assistants in that it offers a wide range of experiences within a small stand-alone team unit.
- Students have commented on **feeling more confident** not only with surgeries performed, surgical principles, monitoring anaesthesia etc. but also with the many other important aspects of patient & client care **e.g., client interaction (face-2-face & telephone), obtaining informed consent, discussing finances, safe handling & recording of drugs & medications** in addition to playing their part in the team – keeping the workplace clean & maintaining a high standard throughout challenging circumstances.



Future Hopes

- Our **Student-Led Scheme Partnership** has:
 - Allowed **access to caseload**, facilitating their learning opportunities with managing a surgical case from admit to discharge.
 - Provided a forum from which our **students can engage with pet-owning-public** delivering a much-needed service for clients in caring for their pets during the pandemic.
 - **Showcased the wonderful abilities of our students**, fostering engagement between the general public and the university overall.
 - Helped raise **critical funds** that go directly towards supporting the ongoing work of the Scottish SPCA in caring for the animals in their shelters and in the education of the wider public in all matters of animal welfare.
 - Highlighted the **possibility of an additional experience provision** that would enhance animal welfare, in the form of small animal dentistry. Several clients have enquired about when/if we would be able to provide this service – an experience that would be greatly beneficial to our students, pets and clients alike.

Owing to its success, we plan to continue with this rotation model with the graduating class of 2022 – maintaining and fostering development of our partnerships between the University of Glasgow, the Scottish SPCA, the general public and our vet nursing/animal care assistant training providers.





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