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11th November 2021

Important Changes to our Out of Hours Service

From 1st December, we will be outsourcing our out of hours emergency provision to a dedicated provider, CHELVETS, based at Dragon Veterinary Centre in Cheltenham.

We would like to make it clear that this is a decision that has not been taken lightly and we have had to consider many aspects in great detail. Our main reason for making this change is due to the recruitment and retention of both Veterinary Surgeons and qualified Veterinary Nurses that are pivotal in enabling us to provide the service that we do.

As with many sectors, there is a nationwide shortage of qualified Vets and Nurses, so many practices are finding it virtually impossible to recruit staff, especially if an emergency service is provided, in addition to the day job. There has also been a big shift in vets and nurses wishing to reassess their work-life balance.

Currently if you call us out of hours you are directed to and speak to one of our Veterinary Surgeons. We currently have a Veterinary Surgeon and a Veterinary Nurse on call 24 hours a day 365 days per year, who are seeing emergency cases as well as providing inpatient care. This is a huge undertaking for a practice of our size. This also relies on members of the team covering the emergency phone line after working a full day, and prior to another full day's work. This can result in our staff working a full day on a limited amount of sleep which is obviously not ideal for them or our patients.

As you may be aware over the last decade, we have resisted the rapid shift in the profession towards the use of a dedicated out of hours provider and have felt passionately about keeping this service within the practice, but we have reached a point where it is no longer viable moving forwards, and is starting to affect the service we can offer in the daytime.

Future out of hours arrangements from 1st December 2021

If you phone the surgery out of hours you will hear a message instructing you to contact ChelVets and it will also contain the relevant contact details, or alternatively you can contact ChelVets direct as listed at the bottom of this letter.

If your pet is hospitalised with us during daytime hours, it will remain with us here at Avenue Veterinary Centre with checks being performed by our team at the required intervals (details of this can be discussed with our team). If a patient is stable but requires 24/7 monitoring, we may discuss with you transferring him/her to Chelvets, but this would be very rare.

Veterinary Surgeons:

Mr PM Creber BVSC MRCVS | Mr JP Tuthill BVetMed (Hons) MRCVS
Mrs CL Johnson BVM&S MRCVS | Miss HR Jones BVMS (Hons) MRCVS | Mrs JC Campbell BVM&S MRCVS

is a trading name of Independent Vetcare Ltd. Registered in England and Wales, Company number: 07746795 VAT No. 115-1416-58

Registered Office: The Chocolate Factory, Keynsham, Bristol, BS31 2AU. Tel: 01225 481520

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If your pet is seen with us in the daytime and we feel there is a chance it may need to be seen out of hours, we will (with your consent) send your pets clinical history to ChelVets so they have it available should it be needed out of hours.

Why have we chosen ChelVets?

When looking at out of hours providers we have considered what we would want for our own pets, and this has been pivotal in our decision making. There are a number of Veterinary out of hours providers and we have chosen ChelVets for a number of reasons:

- Their brilliant service and reputation for patient and client care. They do not have to follow protocols and have full clinical freedom, that we feel is so very important and fits with our practice ethos.
- They have a very experienced team of emergency vets and nurses, that only work out of hours so they are refreshed when treating your pets.
- They have 24/7 inpatient care and monitoring so there is always a member of staff monitoring your pet around the clock if it requires surgery or hospitalisation out of hours.
- If your pet requires surgery or hospitalisation out of hours it will not be transported back to us in the daytime – it will be sent home to you directly when it is fit and well enough, so is done at the right time for the pet (this is unique to ChelVets compared to other out of hours providers who do not have the facilities to continue care during working hours). If you would rather your animal is transferred to us in the daytime this can be discussed with both us and ChelVets so it can be done at an appropriate time for your pet.
- Another important point that has become more relevant recently, is that you will always be seen at ChelVets, you will never be asked to travel to another practice elsewhere due to staff shortages.

Payments

All out of hours fees will need to be paid directly to ChelVets at the time of treatment. If the care of your pet involves treatment from them and us, then this will mean you have two final bills. If you would like to claim on pet insurance then you will need to submit two claim forms, one for each practice.

To Summarise...

Avenue Veterinary Centre opening hours: **Monday to Friday 8am - 7pm**

Saturday 8.30am - 1pm

(Outside these hours you will be directed to ChelVets)

If you need transport to get you and your pet to ChelVets, we recommend Sue's Taxis who carry pets and can be contacted on 01684 899242.

ChelVets are based at Dragon Vets, to the North of Cheltenham:

ChelVets: Dragon Vets, Prestbury Park, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham GL50 4SH



CHELVETS OUT OF HOURS TELEPHONE NUMBER: **01242 522022**

We trust that you appreciate our desire to inform our clients in advance of this change so there are no surprises at your moment of need.

We are sure that, although this is quite obviously less convenient, it will ensure your pets receive the best possible care from staff who are refreshed and will help us to keep and recruit best staff to treat your pets when you need us.

With very best wishes,

All the Team at Avenue Veterinary Centre

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