

Many of you will be aware that the Panorama programme on the veterinary profession will be aired on Thursday 22nd July 2010 at 9pm on BBC1. We also understand that it has been released to newspapers in advance.

Although we have not seen the programme, we understand that it was filmed undercover at a branch of a large corporate practice and we have been told will show unacceptable behaviour to pets in their care, disregard to staff (in terms of support and training) as well as appalling business practices (inflating of charges). It is likely that your clients may have questions or concerns following the broadcast. Below is some general advice ahead of the programme for our staff. The major veterinary Associations (BSAVA, SPIVS, VPMA and BVA) are liaising closely on the issue and much of this advice is available on line. Once the programme has aired both BSAVA and BVA will be updating their websites with further information that may be useful.

We believe that all staff at Grove Lodge will share the same horror and anger that the profession and vocation we love, and the patients and clients we serve, could have been treated with such disrespect and cynicism. We hope that if these allegations are found to be true that the individuals responsible are appropriately disciplined and action taken to stop this happening in our industry.

We would like to make the following statement to reassure our clients of our ongoing commitment to professionalism in the care of their pets:

- NO animal in our care would be, or has ever been, treated with anything other than respect, care and kindness.
- NO member of staff is put in a situation where they are either unqualified or unable to cope or do not have the support to enable them to perform their job at the highest level.
- All charges for any given procedure are uniform whoever our clients may be. We are pleased to give estimates and explain costs in advance of any treatment.
- Grove Lodge is a practice that sets high standards. We do not compromise on standards of care for the health and welfare of the pets we treat under any circumstances.
- All our practices are members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Practice Standards scheme and have attained Tier 1, Tier 2 and full Tier 3 (veterinary hospital) status. These are the highest standards currently attainable for surgeries of our size and show that we have been independently accredited as performing the highest standards of veterinary care.

- Like many practices, we are a training centre that trains Veterinary Nurses – we believe that this is important in helping develop skilled nurses for the profession.
- All of our nurses are fully trained and competent to carry out anaesthetics and treat pets. Trainee students are supervised by a qualified member of staff (either Veterinary Surgeon or Qualified Veterinary Nurse). We would never allow a nurse to undertake any work which he or she is unqualified to perform, especially tasks that need to be undertaken by a Veterinary Surgeon.
- Most vets who join Grove Lodge do so after at least 3 or 4 years of experience at another practice or Specialist centre. However, when we have previously employed a new graduate directly from Veterinary School we have always supported that individual to the highest level on a day-to-day basis and provided ongoing training where required.
- Whilst not critical to the running of our practices we are strongly committed to promoting pet insurance. Insurance can help clients cover for the unexpected and help prevent clients from having to make heartbreaking decisions on the basis of cost. However, we have never exploited any insurance and remain committed to treating pet insurance responsibly.
- We do work for the RSPCA, Dogs Trust, CPL and WADARS, their staff have free access to all our clinical areas, especially at the hospital.

The health and welfare of your pet will always come first in all decisions we make. We have always worked to these high standards and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely

David Constantine and Andrew Ash
Owners of Grove Lodge