

Thank you for your interest in the full time Veterinary Surgeon Position at Acorn House.

About Us

Acorn House is a 12 Vet RCVS Accredited Small Animal Hospital in the beautiful county town of Bedford.

We are an experienced and knowledgeable team with a busy and varied caseload and excellent facilities including laparoscopic and orthopaedic kits, gastroscopy, bronchoscopy, dental suite with digital radiography, and ultrasound. We have dedicated dog, cat and exotics wards and are currently undergoing an extension which will increase our space to 3 theatres, 2 dental suites, a new dog ward, and surgical supplies room.

Acorn House runs as an independent practice but since 2018 has been owned by the Royal Veterinary college operating as a flagship practice modelling high quality first opinion care to their veterinary students. We are an ISFM Gold Standard Cat friendly Clinic, Dogs Trust Dog Friendly Clinic and RWAF Gold Rabbit Friendly Practice. We are proud to be an RCVS approved Graduate Development and Veterinary Nurse Training Practice.

Our Team

Rosie, the Practice Principal joined Acorn House as a new graduate in 1998 and holds a PGCert in Veterinary Education and is studying for a certificate in Feline Medicine.

Within our 12 vet team are many experienced clinicians including Advanced Practitioners in Dentistry and Zoological medicine and vets working towards certificates in Small Animal Medicine, Small Animal Surgery and Diagnostic Imaging.

We are extremely fortunate to have a fantastic nursing team, lead by our Head Nurse who holds an RCVS diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (surgical) and an ECC certificate. Amongst our nursing team are certificate holders in anaesthesia, exotics, feline nursing and veterinary education. We are proud to be a VN training provider and our SVN's are well supported by several clinical coaches.

Our amazing Client Care team including Accredited Veterinary Receptionists provide vital support to our clients and the clinical and management teams. Their friendly and helpful outlook embodies the Acorn House ethos.

Each team has regular meetings with representatives from other areas of the practice involved and there are quarterly practice meetings where everyone can share their ideas, and we can celebrate our successes and discuss any challenges we've faced over lunch. We then have in-house CPD or a team-building activity.

Wellbeing

Our team's wellbeing is as important as our high-quality patient care. We have focused on improving everyone's work-life balance, not only with our rota but also by providing weekly yoga classes and a private garden where the team often enjoy having lunch when it's sunny and we grow herbs for our rabbit patients.

We have trained mental health first aiders in practice and provide an employee assistance programme through BUPA. We are also proud to be a member of the Living Wage Foundation, have an EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) group that meets bi-monthly, and are currently working towards our Bronze award with Investors in the Environment.

Career progression

We are a practice focused on learning and development. We absolutely encourage our vets to follow their interests and further develop their skills. If you want to take on a certificate, we have the facilities and caseload to support this. If you already have a certificate, we will help you achieve and maintain Advanced Practitioner status. Vets with AVP's have the opportunity to join our Senior Vet team with additional management responsibilities.

As a teaching hospital, the RVC provides all our vets free online CPD including courses to help mentor and support veterinary students and new graduates. Two RVC 4th or final year veterinary students are on placement with us for a fortnight for most of the year. Their placement is structured to expose them to all areas of practice with dedicated named time with clinicians allowing students to gain varied experience and allowing vets sufficient time to carry out their clinical duties, paperwork and client calls.

Acorn House is happy to support a PGCert in Veterinary Education for staff who are keen to develop in this area.

Our rota

We know how essential a good work-life balance is to well-being and job satisfaction. That's why we've designed our rota to have set days and shifts, meaning you'll always know in advance what you're working so you can easily make plans outside of work. Our vets work a 4-day week with a fixed day off and just one Saturday shift (8-4.30) every month. Each week will include consulting, operating, and a late shift, with a support shift every two weeks. We first introduced the 'support vet' role a couple of years ago, and it has been invaluable in ensuring that the day runs smoothly for everyone with no extras squeezed in, so we all get to leave on time. The support shift runs from 8.30-7 with no appointments scheduled. This means the support vet is free to see any urgent/emergency appointments with an extended 30-minute consultation (preventing the emergencies from being tagged on to the end of the standard consulting blocks) and to help out the rest of the team where needed.

We provide our own out-of-hours service and have a dedicated ECC RVN on-site to provide 24-hour inpatient care. Our on-call rota is minimal, with just one weeknight every two weeks and one weekend on-call every two months. The ECC nurse takes calls in the first instance, so the vet can easily be on call from home, or if you'd prefer to stay on-site, we have a room available at the practice. The RVC takes the phones between 11 p.m. and 8 a.m., so from 11 p.m., the on-call is inpatient only, which means you usually get a good night's sleep during your shift. It's so reassuring to know if you have a tricky case, you can pick up the phone and chat with the specialists at the RVC, and any patients requiring advanced care can be transferred to the RVC Queen Mother Hospital.

We have also implemented a buddy system where two vets work the same weeknight on-call, alternating the on-call shift weekly, making it easy to swap if you have plans.

Location

Bedford is a lovely market town surrounded by beautiful countryside, including the nearby Marston Vales and Chiltern Hills. Whether you fancy a boat ride along the River Ouse, a country walk, mountain biking or a trip to the weekly market, escape rooms or cinema trips there's lots to do on our doorstep. Milton Keynes with its large shopping centre, Snow Dome and Theatre is a 20 minute drive away. There are also excellent transport links, with Luton Airport and London 30-50 minutes away by train. Bedford sits between the A1 and M1 providing excellent road links to the rest of the country.

The Role

- Full time
- Experienced vet (3 years qualified with previous experience of on call preferred but not essential)
- 4 day fixed week with Wednesdays off. 6 Saturday day shifts a year (8.30am-4.30pm)
- Equal share of consulting, operating, support and on-call shifts
- On call: Until 11pm (11pm-8am for inpatients only)
Fixed night every other week,
6 weekends (Saturday day shift then on call) and one bank holiday a year

The Package

- A salary of up to £68,000 DOE with additional supplements for Certificate holders
- Transparent salary banding with clear career progression
- Five weeks holiday, plus bank holidays, and holiday increases with length of service
- Additionally, you'll receive two paid personal days to help with unexpected events, and if you don't use them, they will be added to your holiday at the end of the year
- CPD is actively encouraged, with certificates and AVP status supported and funded, and unlimited online CPD available with the RVC
- Professional fees paid for RCVS, VDS and BSAVA
- Weekly Yoga classes
- Employee Assistance Program
- Enhanced maternity/paternity/adoption pay
- Cycle to work scheme
- Happy to sponsor visas

If you like what you hear and want to know more, call us for an informal chat or apply now with your CV and cover letter to:

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