

VOACON

2026

Event Guide



Ultimate Osteoarthritis Management
Targeting Whole Body Wellness

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Important Information

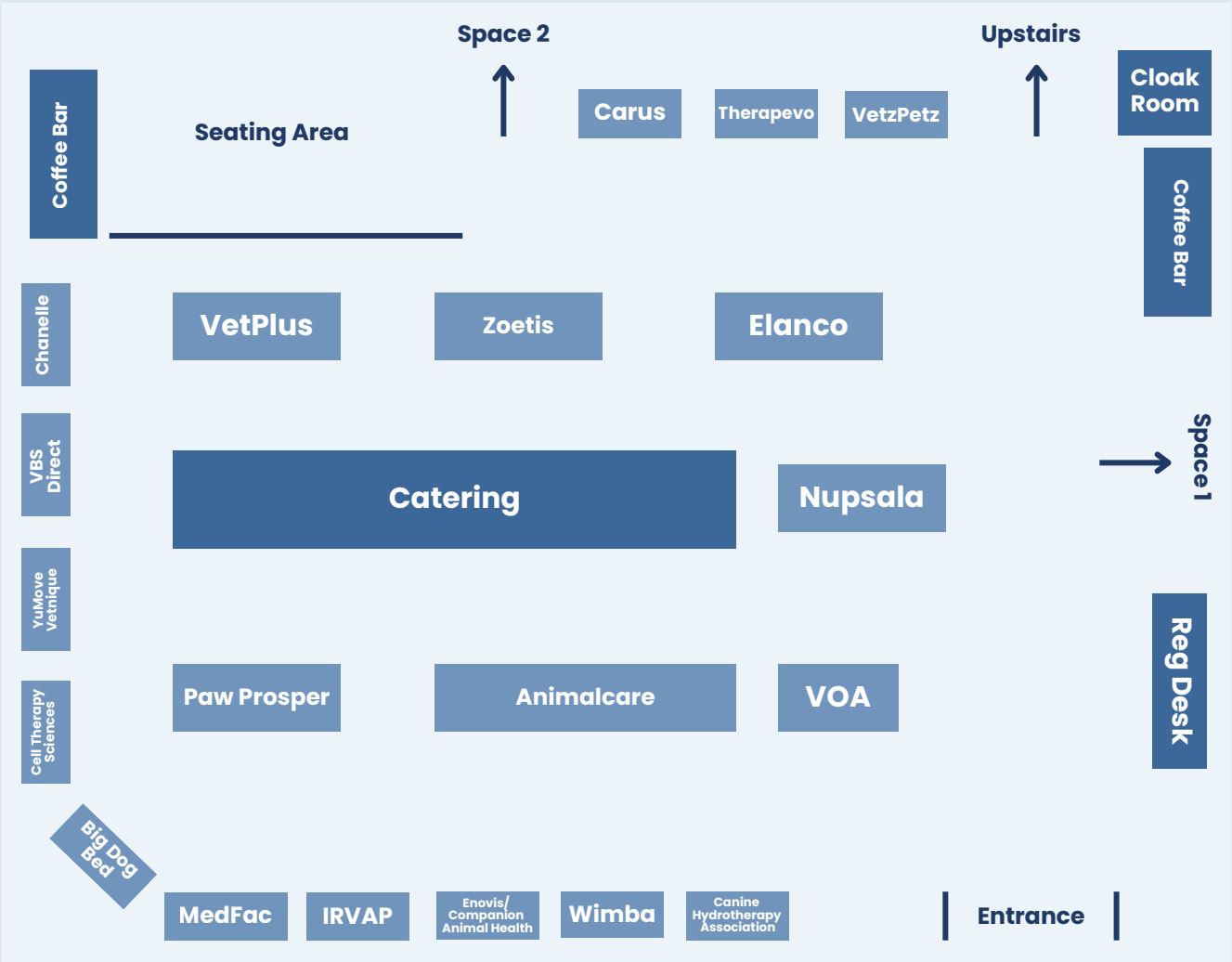
This year’s theme “Ultimate Osteoarthritis Management –Targeting Whole Body Wellness” invites you to explore a fresh approach to osteoarthritis (OA) care. Expect inspiring speakers, workshops designed to elevate you in practice, and unmissable networking opportunities with peers and leaders shaping the future of OA management.

Join the movement redefining OA care.

Congress Details

20–21 May 2026 | 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Holywell Park Conference Centre, Loughborough

Floor Plan



About the VOA

The Veterinary Osteoarthritis Alliance (VOA) is a collaborative initiative focused on improving the understanding, diagnosis, and long-term management of osteoarthritis in animals. By bringing together veterinary professionals, rehabilitation practitioners, researchers, and industry leaders, the VOA aims to address the challenges of this widespread yet often underdiagnosed condition, promoting earlier intervention and more effective, multimodal treatment approaches.

At the heart of the VOA is a commitment to education and clinical excellence. Through the delivery of high-quality resources, training, and events such as VOACON, the alliance provides a platform for sharing the latest knowledge, practical insights, and emerging innovations in osteoarthritis care. The VOA encourages a proactive approach to treatment, supporting veterinary teams in delivering consistent, evidence-based care that improves patient outcomes.

By fostering collaboration across the profession, the VOA seeks to elevate standards of care, enhance quality of life for animals living with osteoarthritis, and strengthen the partnership between veterinary teams and pet owners.



Lecture Timetable

Wednesday 20th May 2026

Registration Open 08:00-09:00				
09:00	ROOM SPACE 1 09:00-09:50 Keynote Sessions & Welcome Matt Gurney Zero Pain Philosophy			
	ROOM SPACE 1	ROOM SPACE 2	ROOM MEETING 4	WORKSHOPS
10:00	Comfort Break	09:50-10:20 Break	Comfort Break	Comfort Break
	10:00-10:45 Amy Watson Is it Cognitive Dysfunction, Is it Pain, Is it Both?	10:20-11:05 Diane Messum The Use of Orthotics: Managing Cases That Are Not Good Candidates for Surgery	10:00-10:45 Kirsty Cavill Whole Body Wellness in Arthritic Pets: Treating More Than Just The Joint	10:00-11:00 Kathryn Patel Winning Hearts (And Hips): Engaging Clients and Growing OA Clinics
11:00	10:45-11:15 Break	11:05-11:50 Nichi Cockburn Osteoarthritis Mastery: Practical Tools, Clinical Tips, and Up-to-Date Evidence for Therapists and RVNs	10:45-11:15 Break	11:00-11:30 Break
	11:15-12:00 Matt Gurney Learning How to Identify Allodynia and Treat Hyperalgesia		11:15-12:00 Jamie McClement How to do an OA Consult in Real Life Practice	11:30-12:30 Russel Chandler & Drew Tootal Intra-Articular Joint Techniques
12:00	12:00-12:45 Katherine Clarke The Role of Microbiome in Chronic Pain	11:50-12:50 Lunch	12:00-12:45 Kelly Eyre The RVN Role in Managing Feline OA	12:30-13:15 Lunch
	12:45-13:45 Lunch	12:50-13:35 Tace Allen Exercise Prescription in OA Patients	12:45-13:45 Lunch	
13:00	13:45-14:30 Matt Gurney The Evidence for Second Line OA Analgesics in Dogs and Cats	13:35-14:20 Natalie Lenton The Palpation Gap: Closing the Missing Half of Pain in Canine Osteoarthritis	13:45-14:30 Drew Tootal The Prevalence of MSK Injury in The Working Animal	13:15-14:15 Diane Messum How to Create Orthotics in Practice
		14:20-14:50 Break		14:15-14:45 Break/Room Turnaround
14:00	14:30-15:15 Kelly Eyre Behind the Scenes: Making OA Patients Comfortable During Hospitalisation and Surgery	14:50-15:35 OPEN DISCUSSION This session is a free discussion/debate for all veterinary professionals Chair: Kirsty Cavill	14:30-15:15 Jamie McClement Introducing the QOA-Lyon Questionnaire for Dogs and Cats	14:45-15:45 Lucy Williams Gastrointestinal Monitoring in the Osteoarthritis Patient: NSAIDs, Risk Assessment and Clinical Decision-Making
	15:15-15:45 Break	15:35-16:20 Alex Keller Beyond Pain Control: Early OA Management with 2.5% iPAAG	15:15-15:45 Break	
15:00	15:45-16:30 Ross Allan Collaborative Care: Why QI of Cruciate Patient Care Is a Model for Improving OA Management	16:20-16:40 Break	15:45-16:30 Lauren Davis Impact of Regenerative Medicine on Sleep Quality	15:45-16:15 Break
	16:30> Closed for Evening Prep		16:30-17:15 Russell Chandler Thinking Outside the Joint When Treating OA: MSK Ultrasound and Regenerative Medicine	16:15-17:15 Natalie Lenton Harnessing HeartMath®: Practical Tools for Stress, Coherence, and Clinical Resilience
17:00		16:40-17:25 Sam Lindley Acupuncture, Electroacupuncture and Acupressure: The Evidence		

Lecture Timetable

Thursday 21st May 2026

Registration Open 08:00-09:00				
09:00	ROOM SPACE 1 09:00-09:50 Keynote Sessions & Welcome Stuart Carmichael Taking Osteoarthritis Seriously			
	ROOM SPACE 1	ROOM SPACE 2	ROOM MEETING 4	WORKSHOPS
10:00	Comfort Break	09:50-10:20 Break	Comfort Break	Comfort Break
	10:00-10:45 Mark Lowrie Emerging Breed Specific Neurological Syndromes That May Explain an Awkward Lameness Case	10:20-11:05 Georgia Woods-Lee Nutritional Strategies for Managing Osteoarthritis in Companion Animals	10:00-10:45 Lauren Davis Sleep Quality as a Predictor of Pain	10:00-11:00 Ross Allan 3D Arthrology Adventure: Let's Get Inside Joint Disease
11:00	10:45-11:15 Break	11:05-11:50 Sam Lindley CBD, Pea and LDN: Is There a Place for These in the Treatment of OA?	10:45-11:15 Break	11:00-11:30 Break
	11:15-12:00 James Guthrie Joint Disease: Surgery versus Orthobiologics	11:50-12:50 Lunch	11:15-12:00 Matt Shackleton Whiskers and Wellness (cats): The Forgotten Patient	11:30-12:30 Marianna Kopka-Wypchat (WIMBA) Advancing Vet Care: 3D-Printed Orthotics, Prosthetics, and Wound Management Innovations
12:00	12:00-12:45 James Guthrie Timing of Surgical and Rehabilitative Interventions: Case Examples and Discussion		12:00-12:45 Elisabetta Mancinelli & Nichi Cockburn Hopping Towards Evidence: Understanding Osteoarthritis in Rabbits	12:30-13:15 Lunch
13:00	12:45-13:45 Lunch	12:50-13:35 Tasmin Durston It's Not Just the Dog: Supporting Owners of Dogs With OA	12:45-13:45 Lunch	13:15-14:15 Kirsty Cavill & Kathryn Patel Building Mobility Clinics That Work With Vet-IMPACT
14:00	13:45-14:30 Duncan Barnes When Do We Choose Joint Replacement Surgery? What's the Evidence?	13:35-14:20 Tasmin Durston Emotional Health of Clinicians & Owners	13:45-14:30 Elisabetta Mancinelli The Silent Sufferer: Optimising Rabbit Pain Management	14:15-14:45 Break/Room Turnaround
	14:30-15:15 Duncan Barnes Post Carpal and Tarsal Arthrodesis	14:20-14:50 Break	14:30-15:15 Matt Shackleton Reptile Musculoskeletal Pain: A Silent Pandemic	14:45-15:45 Emily Ashdown Practical Laser Masterclass
15:00	15:15-15:45 Break	14:50-15:35 Stuart Carmichael & Nichi Cockburn Canine Gait Analysis & Lameness Scoring	15:15-15:45 Break	15:45-16:15 Break
	15:45-16:30 Russell Chandler Multi-Level Approach to Osteoarthritis Management	15:35-16:20 Kelly Eyre & Christine Pye Cat Friendly Consults: A Team Approach to Feline Musculoskeletal Disease	15:45-16:30 Maria Johnston Canine Osteoarthritis and Hydrotherapy: An Active Balance, Multimodal Approach	
16:00	16:20-16:40 Break	16:20-16:40 Break	16:30-17:15 Laura Allmark (WIMBA) Preventive / Proactive Care and Supporting Conservative Therapeutic Possibilities, with 3D Printed Veterinary Orthotics and Prosthetics	16:15-17:15 Georgia Woods-Lee Weight Management: How to...
	16:30-17:15 Ross Allan Managing the Contralateral Limb of the TPLO Patient	16:40-17:25 Russell Chandler Current Research in Treating Elbow Dysplasia With Stem Cell Therapy		
17:00				

Keynote Lecture: Zero Pain Philosophy

Matt Gurney | 09:00 - 09:50 | Room space 1

Our keynote session will review the advances in pain management of OA and bring an appreciation of how far we have come as a profession in tackling this debilitating disease. We then turn our focus to the future and set out what the goals should be for advancing the level of care we can offer.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Identify core behavioural and physical signs of cognitive decline and chronic pain.
- Understand how pain and cognitive dysfunction interact in older animals.
- Develop effective multimodal plans for pets affected by one or both issues

Is it Cognitive Dysfunction, Is it Pain, Is it Both?

Amy Watson | 10:00 - 10:45 | Room space 1

As companion animals live longer, vets are increasingly faced with patients showing behavioural changes that could stem from cognitive dysfunction, pain, or a complex interplay of both. Distinguishing between these causes is essential for effective case management, yet the clinical picture is often subtle, overlapping, and easily misinterpreted. This lecture explores the shared pathways and presenting signs of chronic pain and cognitive dysfunction in dogs and cats, highlighting how inflammation, neurodegeneration, mobility issues, and emotional wellbeing intersect. We'll examine how to build a structured assessment approach, integrate behavioural observations with physical findings, and apply evidence-based tools to differentiate, and ultimately treat these multifactorial cases. Attendees will leave with practical strategies to improve diagnostic confidence and optimise outcomes for their ageing patients.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Identify core behavioural and physical signs of cognitive decline and chronic pain.
- Understand how pain and cognitive dysfunction interact in older animals.
- Develop effective multimodal plans for pets affected by one or both issues.

Learning How to Identify Allodynia and Treat Hyperalgesia

Matt Gurney | 11:15 - 12:00 | Room space 1

Starting with a definition of allodynia and hyperalgesia, we will review the pathophysiology of these in OA pain. Our discussion will centre around how to recognise these in our OA patients, illustrated with case examples. We will give consideration to how to prevent these happening. With our understanding of pathophysiology, we will examine our approach to treating allodynia and hyperalgesia, with consideration of the underlying causes which act as pain drivers. Approaches to address the underlying causes will be discussed, illustrated by case examples.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Define allodynia & hyperalgesia and explain how to recognise this in our patients along with the mechanisms underlying allodynia & hyperalgesia.
- Describe an analgesic approach to managing OA and explain which other treatment modalities are useful, besides analgesics.
- Understand how to assess the efficacy of our therapeutics.

The Role of Microbiome in Chronic Pain

Katherine Clarke | 12:00 - 12:45 | Room space 1

Emerging research highlights the gut microbiome as a key player in the pathophysiology of chronic pain. This lecture explores the intricate relationship between microbial communities, immune modulation, and neuroinflammation, which collectively influence pain perception and persistence. We will examine how dysbiosis—an imbalance in gut microbiota—can disrupt the gut-brain axis, leading to altered nociceptive signalling and heightened pain sensitivity.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Explain the mechanisms by which gut microbiome influences chronic pain, including its role in neuroinflammation, immune modulation, and the gut-brain axis.
- Describe the bidirectional communication within the gut-brain axis and its relevance to chronic pain syndromes.
- Understand how supporting the microbiome could help aid pain management.

The Evidence for Second Line OA Analgesics in Dogs & Cats

Matt Gurney | 13:45 - 14:30 | Room space 1

What should we reach for when the pain of OA progresses beyond are first line licensed analgesics? In this session we review the evidence base for options and consider the pain processes that are at play in these cases. With an understanding of our therapeutic targets, we can understand the rationale for analgesic selection.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the evidence for our second line options.
- Determine suitable outcome measures for judging efficacy.
- Describe the pain processes to target in chronic OA pain.

Behind the Scenes: Making OA Patients Comfortable During Hospitalisation and Surgery

Kelly Eyre | 14:30 - 15:15 | Room space 1

This session explores the essential nursing role in supporting osteoarthritis (OA) patients during hospitalisation and surgical care. It focuses on practical, behind-the-scenes strategies to minimise pain, stress, and reduced mobility in hospitalised patients. Delegates will learn how to adapt peri-operative nursing care, including gentle handling, appropriate positioning, analgesia support, and environmental modifications, to meet the specific needs of OA patients. The session also emphasises the importance of structured pain and mobility assessments in the post-operative period, enabling veterinary nurses to evaluate recovery effectively and escalate concerns promptly to ensure optimal patient comfort and outcomes.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Implement practical nursing strategies to minimise pain, stress, and reduced mobility in hospitalised OA patients.
- Adapt peri-operative care; including handling, positioning, analgesia support, and environmental modification to meet the needs of OA patients.
- Evaluate post-operative comfort and recovery using structured pain and mobility assessments, escalating concerns appropriately.

Collaborative Care: Why QI of Cruciate Patient Care Is a Model for Improving OA Management

Ross Allan | 15:45 - 16:30 | Room space 1

QI projects are commonly performed and ongoing in many practices. These, alongside initiatives such as the RCVS Knowledge Cruciate Registry, enable us to improve individual patient care, that of the wider pet population and also the 'value' of the care provided. This lecture will explore this topic: where we are, what might be possible and why we should take collective responsibility to develop OA management, with "one eye on QI".

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Recognise the features of QI that could help us improve the care of individual OA patients and the care provided by your clinic.
- Identify how similar strategies, along with tools such as CMLs and standardised customer experience assessments can be integrated into your patients' OA management plans.
- Gain better understanding of where a desire to further develop QI in OA management might lead us.

The Use of Orthotics: Managing Cases That Are Not Good Candidates for Surgery

Diane Messum | 10:20 - 11:05 | Room space 2

Orthoses are a valuable management option for patients that are poor surgical candidates due to age, comorbidities, cost, or owner preference. These externally applied devices support, guide, restrict, or assist limb and joint function, reduce pain, and improve mobility without invasive intervention. They can be used temporarily during healing or permanently where function loss is irreversible. Custom-fitted orthoses are particularly beneficial, ensuring appropriate load modification and minimising complications such as pressure sores. When combined with structured rehabilitation and good owner compliance, orthoses offer an effective, non-surgical alternative to improve function and quality of life in a wide range of orthopaedic and neurological conditions.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Understand indications for orthotic use in non-surgical cases. Identify orthopaedic and neurological conditions where orthoses are appropriate alternatives to surgery, including pain management, joint stabilisation, and functional support. Apply principles of orthotic design.
- Understand how biomechanics, material selection, limb alignment, load distribution, and custom fit influence orthotic effectiveness, comfort, and risk of complications.
- Integrate rehabilitation and owner compliance strategies. Recognise the importance of gait re-education, gradual orthosis introduction, monitoring for complications, and effective owner education to optimise outcomes and long-term success.

Osteoarthritis Mastery: Practical Tools, Clinical Tips, and Up-to-Date Evidence for Therapists and RVNs

Nichi Cockburn | 11:05 - 11:50 | Room space 2

This lecture provides a clear, practical review of current evidence in osteoarthritis care to strengthen clinical practice and improve patient outcomes. Key topics include weight management, lifestyle and environmental modification, the impact of neutering on disease progression, and the role of optimal nutrition and structured exercise.

Designed for both experienced clinicians and those building foundational knowledge, the session delivers actionable insights that can be applied directly in osteoarthritis clinics to ensure effective, best-practice care.

In addition to clinical strategies, the lecture addresses communication techniques that help clients understand osteoarthritis, adhere to treatment plans, and participate in shared decision-making. By combining evidence-based guidance, practical tools, and communication skills, this session equips practitioners with confidence and clarity to deliver high-quality, up-to-date osteoarthritis care.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Empower you to confidently discuss OA management with both your clients and your colleagues.
- Apply the latest evidence to support and improve long term outcomes.
- Create realistic, collaborative care plans that enhance quality of life for patients and their families.

Exercise Prescription in OA Patients

Tace Allen | 12:50 - 13:35 | Room space 2

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a prevalent, progressive condition affecting animals across species, significantly impacting mobility, comfort, and quality of life. Exercise is a cornerstone of OA management, yet it remains underutilised or inappropriately prescribed due to concerns around pain and joint damage. This presentation explores the role of therapeutic exercise as a disease-modifying intervention in mixed-species OA patients, including companion and athletic animals. Drawing on veterinary and translational human research, it examines OA pathophysiology, mechanobiology, and the relationship between loading, pain, and function. Participants will understand how clinically reasoned exercise prescriptions need to target and contain strength, mobility, aerobic capacity, proprioception, and functional performance components. Emphasis is placed on individualisation, owner/handler education, and long-term management within a multimodal care framework, enabling clinicians to confidently and safely use exercise to optimise outcomes in animals with osteoarthritis.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Explain the pathophysiological and mechanobiological principles of osteoarthritis that underpin safe and effective exercise prescription across species.
- Understand and justify individualised, evidence-based exercise programs for animals with OA, including appropriate dosage, progression, and regression.
- Monitor and adapt exercise interventions using pain, function, and movement quality to support long-term, multimodal OA management.

The Palpation Gap: Closing the Missing Half of Pain in Canine Osteoarthritis

Natalie Lenton | 13:35 - 14:20 | Room space 2

Drawing on over two decades of clinical expertise, Natalie Lenton, Director of the Canine Massage Therapy Centre and Founder of the Canine Massage Guild explores how discerning, structured palpation can uncover hidden soft-tissue dysfunction, and demonstrates how integrating two complementary models of muscular and fascial palpation provides a more complete assessment framework.

This engaging session reveals how missed muscular injuries contribute to up to half of the pain experienced by dogs with osteoarthritis. Delegates will gain practical insights into recognising the “forgotten half” of OA pain of muscle and fascia, discover 2 theoretical models of palpatory literacy and learn how targeted palpation can enhance multimodal pain management strategies.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Identify the role of muscular and fascial dysfunction as a significant, often overlooked contributor to pain in canine osteoarthritis.
- Apply two complementary models of muscular and fascial palpation to improve palpatory literacy and clinical assessment accuracy.
- Integrate targeted palpation findings into multimodal pain management plans to enhance comfort and functional outcomes for dogs with OA.

Open Discussion for All Veterinary Professionals

Chair: Kirsty Cavill | 14:50 - 15:35 | Room space 2

Discussion Topics*:

- What one thing could someone in your role start doing today to improve OA care?
- What's the biggest need to improve OA care in the future?
- What is the current biggest barrier to better OA care?
- What is important to the vet, nurse and allied professional when managing the same case.

** Topics may be subject to minor changes*

Beyond Pain Control: Early OA Management with 2.5% iPAAG

Alex Keller | 15:35 - 16:20 | Room space 2

Osteoarthritis in dogs is still too often addressed late in the disease course, when pain is chronic, function is compromised and structural damage is advanced. Early recognition and proactive management offer the opportunity not only to control pain, but also to stabilise the joint environment and slow progression. Injectable 2.5% polyacrylamide hydrogel (iPAAG) has emerged as a promising tool that targets the synovial membrane and joint homeostasis rather than acting as a simple analgesic.

This lecture will review the mode of action and clinical impact of 2.5% iPAAG within a truly multimodal osteoarthritis strategy, including rehabilitation and other intra articular options. Recent clinical studies and practice-based data will be presented to illustrate how early IA intervention with 2.5% iPAAG can improve comfort, function and long-term management of canine OA, and how these findings can be translated into everyday decision making in first opinion and referral practice.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the importance of early identification and proactive management of canine osteoarthritis to improve pain control, joint stability and long-term outcomes.
- Explain the mechanism, clinical role and evidence base for 2.5% injectable polyacrylamide hydrogel (iPAAG) within a multimodal OA treatment plan.
- Apply emerging research findings to everyday clinical decision-making, integrating iPAAG with rehabilitation and other intra-articular options for effective OA management in practice.

Acupuncture, Electroacupuncture and Acupressure: The Evidence

Sam Lindley | 16:40 - 17:25 | Room space 2

The evidence for acupuncture and electroacupuncture (EA) in the treatment of osteoarthritis is established in humans (clinical) and animals (experimental). The medical evidence (fMRI) strongly suggests what has been recognised clinically in non-human animal patients: that acupuncture tends to reduce the suffering component of pain and to push the body and brain towards homeostasis – the overall aim when treating “whole body wellness”. Acupressure has less evidence supporting its practice and, like acupuncture, may differ widely depending on the practitioner. However, if pressure is the key to successful therapy, we should compare the relative pressure delivered when using a digit and when using the insertion of a solid needle through the skin.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- To be able to describe the difference between electroacupuncture, acupuncture and acupressure.
- To understand that each modality may differ between practitioner, although EA has the advantage of potentially greater standardisation.
- Where acupressure is delivered because acupuncture is not available, the aims should be to minimise the discomfort of the procedure whilst maximising the outcomes, which should be defined.

Whole Body Wellness in Arthritic Pet's: Treating More Than Just The Joint

Kirsty Cavill | 10:00 - 10:45 | Room meeting 4

Whole-body wellness in arthritic pets requires a multimodal, patient-centred approach that extends beyond joint-focused therapy. Osteoarthritis is a chronic, progressive disease with far-reaching systemic effects, including altered biomechanics, muscle atrophy, reduced activity levels, metabolic changes, and negative impacts on behaviour and overall quality of life. Effective management therefore demands an integrated strategy encompassing pharmacologic pain control, targeted nutrition, weight optimisation, physical rehabilitation, environmental modification, and ongoing monitoring for comorbidities. By treating the patient rather than just the joint, we can achieve improved functional outcomes, enhanced longevity, and a sustained quality of life.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Recognise osteoarthritis as a whole-body disease with systemic and functional consequences.
- Apply multimodal, long-term management strategies for arthritic patients.
- Optimise mobility, comfort, and quality of life across all stages of osteoarthritis.

How to do an OA Consult in Real Life Practice

Jamie McClement | 11:15 - 12:00 | Room meeting 4

Osteoarthritis is a complex disease to manage. It requires detailed history taking, examination, imaging and planning. Managing this in the time available, to the owner's financial and emotional budgets, can be a challenge in modern veterinary clinics. Here we will discuss methods, tips and tricks to make the most of a 15-minute consult, and keep the pet owners onside so that we can truly create a constructive and long-term team approach to OA, to the benefit of our patients.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Conduct a streamlined but thorough osteoarthritis assessment, including history, examination, and imaging decisions, within common time limitations.
- Apply communication techniques that enhance owner understanding, engagement, and adherence to long-term OA management plans.
- Develop practical, individualised OA care strategies that balance clinical needs with the owner's financial and emotional resources.

The RVN Role in Managing Feline OA

Kelly Eyre | 12:00 - 12:45 | Room meeting 4

This session highlights the pivotal role of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) in the management of osteoarthritis (OA). It will explore the key clinical and behavioural indicators of OA, emphasising how proactive nursing observation and client communication support early recognition and ongoing monitoring. The session will also focus on the application of evidence-based nursing interventions—such as pain scoring, weight management support, and owner education—to enhance patient comfort and mobility. Finally, it will demonstrate how RVNs coordinate and contribute to multidisciplinary OA care plans, working collaboratively with the wider veterinary team to deliver effective, patient-centred management.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Identify the key clinical and behavioural indicators of osteoarthritis and explain how RVNs contribute to early recognition and ongoing monitoring.
- Apply evidence-based nursing interventions—including pain scoring, weight management support, and owner education—to improve patient comfort and mobility.
- Demonstrate how RVNs coordinate multidisciplinary OA care plans, working effectively with the entire team.

The Prevalence of MSK STS Injury in The Working Animal

Drew Tootal | 13:45 - 14:30 | Room meeting 4

Musculoskeletal soft tissue injuries are a leading cause of reduced performance and early retirement in working dogs. This talk will explore the prevalence of acute and chronic strain injuries, emphasising how injury patterns are dynamic and closely linked to job demands. Differences between search dogs, which may experience repetitive endurance-based loading, and protection or bite-trained dogs, which face high-impact, explosive forces, will be highlighted. The session will review common injury sites, diagnostic approaches including gait analysis and imaging, and evidence-based management strategies including rest, intra-lesional therapies, rehabilitation, conditioning, and injury prevention to optimise longevity and performance in working canine athletes.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Identify common soft tissue injuries in different types of working dogs.
- Understand diagnostic and management strategies for acute and chronic strain injuries.
- Apply work-specific prevention and conditioning principles to reduce injury risk.

Introducing the QOA-Lyon Questionnaire for Dogs and Cats

Jamie McClement | 14:30 - 15:15 | Room meeting 4

We know that OA impacts our patients in terms of pain and mobility, but it also affects their quality of life, sleep and emotions. We need to take these into account, but how do we assess them? And how can we treat if we can't measure? In this discussion we will introduce the new validated QOA-Lyon questionnaires for both dogs and cats that, in conjunction with other assessments, can be used to monitor the patient's quality of life, and the impact on it from both the OA disease and the treatments we recommend.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Identify common soft tissue injuries in different types of working dogs.
- Monitor the patient's quality of life.
- Formulate tailored OA treatment plans that align medical and mobility needs with the patient's emotional needs and quality of life.

Impact of Regenerative Medicine on Sleep Quality

Lauren Davis | 15:45 - 16:30 | Room meeting 4

While regenerative techniques hold promise for durable pain control and sleep restoration, evidence specifically linking various regenerative modalities to improved sleep in dogs is still emerging. As regenerative medicine aims to reduce pain, which has been shown to impact sleep quality in dogs with musculoskeletal disease, we aimed to investigate if there is a direct impact of regenerative medicine on both quality of life scores for dogs and sleep scoring, measurable by owner-reported validated questionnaire. In this lecture we discuss the work undertaken and the outcomes.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Summarise how regenerative therapies used for canine musculoskeletal disease may reduce pain and thereby improve sleep-related outcomes.
- Interpret sleep and QoL data to evaluate clinical response after regenerative interventions, including timeline expectations.

Thinking Outside the Joint When Treating OA: MSK Ultrasound and Regenerative Medicine

Russell Chandler | 16:30 - 17:15 | Room meeting 4

Orthobiologics for osteoarthritis are safe, efficacious, and readily available. Yet there may still be some barriers to their widespread use in clinical practice. These may include uncertainty about what to use, when to use it, and how to use it. In this session the main orthobiologics (PRP and mesenchymal stem cells) will be discussed in a practical sense. Case studies will be offered to exemplify the decision-making aspects of the regenerative medicine applications.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- To understand where orthobiologics fit into the multimodal paradigm of osteoarthritis management.
- To be able to identify suitable patients for orthobiologics.
- To learn the when, how, and using what products for regenerative medicine in osteoarthritis.

Winning Hearts (And Hips): Engaging Clients and Growing OA Clinics

Kathryn Patel | 10:00 - 11:00 | Room meeting 8-9

This workshop empowers members of the veterinary team to enhance pet owner engagement for osteoarthritis (OA) care. Participants will explore proven strategies to build trust and foster long-term relationships, positioning themselves as partners in managing OA. It will focus on empathy-driven client communication, the importance of regular follow-ups, and using real-life stories to inspire action.

The workshop will also introduce practical digital marketing techniques, including the effective use of social media and email campaigns. Attendees will learn how to tailor outreach and educational efforts to various pet owner segments, recognising that each group may require a unique approach and messaging style. Through activities and discussions, attendees will leave equipped to design engagement plans that resonate with their clients, drive proactive OA management, and ultimately improve the quality of life for pets under their care. It is recommended to attend this session with a LLM (e.g. ChatGPT) app installed on your phone

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate strategies to build trust and long-term engagement for osteoarthritis management.
- Apply digital marketing tools (e.g., social media, email campaigns) to raise awareness of OA care.
- Develop tailored engagement plans for different pet owner segments to promote proactive OA care.

Intra-Articular Joint Techniques

Drew Tootal & Russell Chandler | 11:30 - 12:30 | Room meeting 8-9

Accurate intra-articular needle placement is essential for both synovial fluid sampling, and for therapeutic injections. Orthobiologics are rapidly becoming the mainstay of disease-modifying osteoarthritis management which makes this an important skill to acquire. If you are new to these procedures or just wish to sharpen your skills, then this one is for you.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- To understand the anatomy of the main joints that can be sampled and/or injected.
- To understand the indications for intra-articular injections.
- To understand the contra-indications for intra-articular injections.

How to Create Orthotics in Practice

Diane Messum | 13:15 - 14:15 | Room meeting 8-9

This session introduces the principles of thermoplastics in orthotic design, guiding participants through material selection based on key properties such as strength, flexibility, durability, and mouldability. Learners will develop practical skills in casting and fabrication of custom high-temperature thermoplastic orthoses, with emphasis on accurate limb positioning and anatomical landmarking. The session also covers safe fitting, break-in protocols, monitoring for pressure areas, and client education, supporting effective use, comfort, and long-term success of the orthosis.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Understand thermoplastics and material selection. Define thermoplastics, compare high- and low-temperature materials, and identify key properties (strength, flexibility, durability, and mouldability) that influence orthotic design and clinical application.
- Develop fabrication and casting skills. Demonstrate correct casting techniques for a custom-made high-temperature thermoplastic orthosis, including limb positioning, anatomical landmarking, and principles that ensure accuracy, comfort, and function.
- Apply principles of patient use and care. Understand safe fitting, break-in protocols, monitoring for pressure areas, and owner education to ensure effective use, longevity of the orthosis, and optimal patient outcomes.

Gastrointestinal Monitoring in the Osteoarthritis Patient: NSAIDs, Risk Assessment and Clinical Decision-Making

Lucy Williams | 14:45 - 15:45 | Room meeting 8-9

Osteoarthritis commonly necessitates long-term NSAID therapy, raising concerns about gastrointestinal tolerance and safety. This session focuses on the assessment and monitoring of GI inflammation in dogs and cats receiving chronic medications, using faecal calprotectin as a non-invasive clinical tool.

The presentation will outline the physiological basis of faecal calprotectin, review the evidence supporting its use in veterinary patients, and discuss its application alongside clinical assessment in osteoarthritis management. Emphasis will be placed on recognising subclinical GI inflammation, monitoring patients over time, and using objective markers to guide treatment adjustments and support informed discussions with concerned owners.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Explain the importance of gastrointestinal monitoring in dogs and cats receiving long-term NSAIDs for osteoarthritis, including the role of faecal calprotectin as a marker of intestinal inflammation.
- Interpret faecal calprotectin results in the context of chronic NSAID use, concurrent clinical findings, and osteoarthritis management.
- Apply faecal calprotectin testing in practice, integrating it into osteoarthritis monitoring plans and using results to communicate GI risk and management strategies clearly with worried or risk-averse clients.

Harnessing HeartMath®: Practical Tools for Stress, Coherence, and Clinical Resilience

Natalie Lention | 16:15 - 17:15 | Room meeting 8-9

Chronic stress and anxiety are recognised challenges within the veterinary profession, impacting decision-making, emotional well-being, and clinical performance. In this practical workshop, certified HeartMath® Coach, Director of the Canine Massage Therapy Centre and Founder of the Canine Massage Guild, Natalie Lention, introduces delegates to HeartMath's evidence-based technology and techniques designed to improve physiological coherence - the synchronisation of heart, brain, and respiratory rhythms which affect cognition and physiological function.

Through guided practice and real-time biofeedback, participants will explore how self-regulation of the autonomic nervous system can reduce stress reactivity, enhance clarity, and build emotional resilience. These skills can be applied immediately in both professional and personal contexts to support well-being, communication, and patient care.

Delegates will need a working mobile phone connection and will be guided to download a specialist biofeedback app that you will be taught how to use in this session for free so you can see your state changing in real-time.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Apply HeartMath® self-regulation techniques.
- Demonstrate increased awareness and control of autonomic nervous system responses using real-time biofeedback technology.
- Integrate practical strategies to enhance emotional resilience, clarity, communication, and patient care within veterinary practice.

'Taking Osteoarthritis Seriously': Progressive Management of Osteoarthritis in Companion Animals – Masterclass Presentation

Stuart Carmichael | 09:00 - 09:50 | Room space 1

Historically and even today, we must accept that we have not been particularly good at managing osteoarthritis in our patients. We have struggled with both pain patterns and the chronic progressive nature of the disease and have not perfected the best way to contend with this. By accepting this truth and attempting to understand why and where we are falling short, we can make progress by recognising and reversing failings.

A progressive disease requires sustained and appropriate management depending on the stage of disease we are faced with in an individual patient. We need to master this or the amazing treatment options that are available to us may be used inappropriately and so, in effect, wasted.

By confronting our failings directly and learning from them we can create opportunities and ways to address many of the current barriers we face, a considerable number of which are self-inflicted.

It will be a long and difficult journey to change attitudes to management. We need to introduce both hope and belief that we can impact the disease. We also must avail ourselves of multi-professional talent by a change in our approach, adopt operational systems suitable for managing chronic disease, measure outcomes properly and fully involve, inform and support pet owners. We also must develop the belief and conviction to intervene earlier in the disease process where we have the most chance of making a significant difference to progression.

I will describe how the VOA is currently working to help make these cultural changes and improve our success in management.

Many of the fantastic medical and therapeutic advances that are becoming available to us are game changers, but we will not be able to fully exploit them to benefit our patients unless we learn to do the simple things better.

Key Learning Outcomes:

This presentation will consider the significant challenges in managing chronic osteoarthritis by looking at four critical questions and discussing them in turn.

- How did historical barriers impact management?
- Where do we stand now with OA Management in 2026?
- Possibilities – What does the next chapter hold?
- Progress -What do we need to do to improve and take full advantage of the possibilities offered to us?

Emerging Breed Specific Neurological Syndromes That May Explain an Awkward Lameness Case

Mark Lowrie | 10:00 - 10:45 | Room space 1

Several neurological conditions can present as unexplained or inconsistent lameness, often leading to prolonged orthopaedic work-ups. Degenerative polyneuropathies (including the GOLPP/LPPN complex) remain an important cause of vague gait change across many breeds. Dogs may show exercise intolerance, hindlimb weakness or collapse, sometimes acutely in warm weather, and subtle high-stepping gait abnormalities. Although Leonbergers are heavily represented, similar syndromes occur in Labradors, Saint Bernards, Greyhounds and numerous other breeds with variants in LPN1, LPN2, LPPN3, RAB3GAP1, RAPGEF6 and NDRG1.

Paradoxical pseudomyotonia in young spaniels can mimic orthopaedic stiffness, producing brief, exercise-induced rigid episodes that resolve rapidly with rest. Orthostatic tremor, most often in giant breeds, causes a characteristic high-frequency (>12 Hz) tremor only when standing, giving rise to apparent weakness or reluctance to move; EMG confirms the diagnosis, and improvement is usually partial with medication.

Paroxysmal dyskinesias: from the dramatic whole-body non-kinesigenic form to more subtle exercise-induced skipping episodes in small breeds, are increasingly recognised and may be mistaken for pain or patellar instability.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Identify clinical signs that differentiate neurological gait disorders from true orthopaedic lameness
- Recognise characteristic presentations of polyneuropathies, paradoxical pseudomyotonia, orthostatic tremor, and paroxysmal dyskinesias across different breeds.
- Apply practical diagnostic approaches to improve accuracy and reduce unnecessary orthopaedic work-ups in dogs with atypical gait changes

Joint Disease: Surgery vs Orthobiologics

James Guthrie | 11:15 - 12:00 | Room space 1

Orthobiologics are no longer a fringe option for canine joint disease – but when can they truly rival the scalpel, and when should they be used alongside it?

This case-based lecture will compare surgical and orthobiologic strategies for common orthopaedic conditions such as elbow dysplasia, cruciate ligament disease and hip dysplasia. We'll walk through the current evidence for PRP, stem cells and combination products in conditions traditionally managed surgically, highlighting where outcomes match – or fail to match – those of osteotomy, arthroscopy and joint replacement.

Using real-world cases, we'll explore decision-making frameworks you can take straight back to practice: when surgery is non-negotiable, when a biologic-first approach is reasonable, and how to integrate both to optimise function, comfort and client satisfaction. We'll finish with "best of both worlds" examples where surgery and orthobiologics clearly complement each other.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Evidence for orthobiologics in common orthopaedic conditions such
- When to choose orthobiologics instead of surgery
- When and how to combine orthobiologics with surgery

Timing of Surgical and Rehabilitative Interventions: Case Examples and Discussion

James Guthrie | 12:00 - 12:45 | Room space 1

Is osteoarthritis an unstoppable slide – or can the when and what of our interventions actually change the curve?

This case-based lecture will explore the timing of surgical, orthobiologic and rehabilitative strategies in canine OA. Using real patients, we'll examine how early intervention and structured rehab can influence pain, function and long-term joint health.

We'll dissect scenarios where multiple options exist: operate now or later, inject first or after surgery, intensify rehab or ease off and rest. Along the way, we'll ask whether OA is truly "progressive regardless" – or whether targeted, well-timed interventions can meaningfully alter disease trajectory.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- How surgery can slow osteoarthritis
- How orthobiologics can slow osteoarthritis
- How rehabilitation can slow osteoarthritis

When Do We Choose Joint Replacement Surgery? What's the Evidence?

Duncan Barnes | 13:45 - 14:30 | Room space 1

Joint replacement surgery can be life changing for dogs and cats, relieving pain, returning normal function and reducing or eliminating the need for lifelong analgesia and osteoarthritis management. As such it represents an important option in the management of osteoarthritis and joint disease. However, the benefits need to be balanced against the potential risks of surgery. The timing of surgery is important to optimise patient outcomes. In this lecture we will look at the evidence for joint replacement versus ongoing medical management and what the optimum timing for such an intervention would be.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the indications for total joint replacement in small animals.
- Understand the potential risks of total joint replacement in small animals.
- Understand the effect of age and timing of joint replacement surgery on outcomes in small animal.

Post Carpal and Tarsal Arthrodesis

Duncan Barnes | 14:30 - 15:15 | Room space 1

Arthrodesis of the carpal and tarsal joints is a salvage surgery for the treatment of osteoarthritis and other irreparable injuries of the joint. It is effective in relieving discomfort but will lead to loss of function and how we manage patients in the post-operative period is important to allow animals to adapt to the change in biomechanics that occurs. In this lecture we will look at the factors that optimise the outcome for patients having arthrodesis. This will include strategies before and during surgery and the importance of effective rehabilitation after surgery. We will also consider the avoidance and treatment of common post-operative problems and discuss whether post-operative external coaptation has a role following arthrodesis surgery.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the principles of effective arthrodesis of the carpus or tarsus.
- Understand important considerations in the rehabilitation of patients following carpal or tarsal arthrodesis.
- Be able to recognise common problems that might be encountered following arthrodesis and how to remedy these.

Multi-Level Approach to Osteoarthritis Management

Russell Chandler | 15:45 - 16:30 | Room space 1

The accepted paradigm of multimodal and multidisciplinary approach to osteoarthritis management is well embedded. This lecture explores osteoarthritis at the multiple levels of analysis that are possible. We will first take a bird's eye view of the global aspects of veterinary OA, before gradually narrowing down our focus. We will consider populations, breeds, individuals, body systems, organs, tissues, cells and subcellular structures. Intervention is possible at all of these levels. So how do we choose from the plethora of possible interventions and therapies that exist? Do our choices reflect our inherent interests and biases, and the lens with which we view OA?

This will be an interesting journey, and I hope to discover insights that may be relevant for us all.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- To encourage appreciation of the breadth and depth of veterinary osteoarthritis as a discipline
- To encourage appreciation of aspects of veterinary osteoarthritis that lie outside our day-to-day work
- To encourage cooperation in the formulation of a rational multi-level approach to osteoarthritis

Managing the Contralateral Limb of the TPLO Patient

Ross Allan | 16:30 - 17:15 | Room space 1

The contralateral limb of cruciate surgical patients throws up dilemmas. What clinical problems might be present at the time of assessment, what are the risks of bilateral disease and should the contralateral require specific management before and following the intended limbs surgery?

This lecture will outline the current evidence and provide insight into current strategies and approaches undertaken in clinical practice when dealing with something we encounter most days.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the principles of effective arthrodesis of the carpus or tarsus.
- Understand important considerations in the rehabilitation of patients following carpal or tarsal arthrodesis.
- Be able to recognise common problems that might be encountered following arthrodesis and how to remedy these.

Nutritional Strategies for Managing Osteoarthritis in Companion Animals

Georgia Woods-Lee | 10:20 - 11:05 | Room space 2

Osteoarthritis (OA) is one of the most common chronic conditions affecting dogs and cats, leading to pain, mobility limitations, and reduced quality of life. Nutrition plays a critical role in both slowing disease progression and supporting overall joint health. This session explores evidence-based dietary strategies that complement medical management of OA in companion animals. Key topics include the role of controlled caloric intake and weight reduction in reducing joint load, the therapeutic benefits of omega-3 fatty acids (particularly EPA and DHA), and the use of joint-supportive nutraceuticals such as glucosamine, chondroitin sulphate, green-lipped mussel, and antioxidants. Attendees will gain strategies to integrate nutritional management into routine OA care, improving comfort, mobility, and long term outcomes for affected pets.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the physiological mechanisms by which weight management and targeted nutrients influence osteoarthritis progression in dogs and cats.
- Recognise the evidence and limitations behind common joint supportive nutraceuticals and therapeutic diets.
- Apply practical, individualised nutritional recommendations to enhance multimodal OA management in clinical practice.

CBD, Pea and LDN: Is There a Place for These in the Treatment of OA?

Samantha LINDLEY | 11:05 - 11:50 | Room space 2

Cannabidiol (CBD); low dose naltrexone (LDN); and palmitoylethanolamide (PEA) are all three letter abbreviations (TLAs) for very different substances that have one major aspect in common and that is relevant to this congress: they are used with the overall aim of re-establishing, or pushing the body and brain closer to, homeostasis.

Chronic pain is a chronic stressor causing all the same changes in the sufferer as does chronic stress. Animals have an astounding ability to maintain homeostasis, but the systems that help achieve this can become depleted. CBD and PEA may help these deficiencies; LDN has an even greater potential role in overall wellbeing by modifying the immune system, up-regulating endogenous opiates and blocking inflammatory pathways.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- That relieving pain in the joints and associated soft tissues may not be enough to return a patient to wellbeing.
- How CBD, LDN and PEA may work in the chronic pain (and other impacts) of OA.
- Indications for the use of each supplement/medicine.

It's Not Just the Dog: Supporting Owners of Dogs With OA

Tamsin DURSTON | 12:50 - 13:35 | Room space 2

This lecture presents practical strategies for delivering consistent, empathetic osteoarthritis (OA) education that improves owner understanding and patient outcomes. As OA is a chronic, progressive condition, owners require ongoing guidance to recognise pain, understand treatment goals, and make informed decisions throughout long-term management.

The session covers core information that all team members should communicate consistently, including canine emotional expression, early clinical signs, home-based pain assessment, principles of multimodal therapy, and the roles of weight management, exercise modification, and environmental adaptation. Emphasis is placed on translating medical concepts into clear, practical guidance that empowers owners.

The lecture also explores collaborative goal setting, contextualised care, and motivational interviewing, highlighting how the entire veterinary team contributes to a unified, supportive approach to OA care

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Describe the core components of consistent OA client education to improve owner understanding and long-term patient outcomes.
- Evaluate practical communication strategies available to support and enhance owner confidence in managing their dog's chronic osteoarthritis.
- Explain the roles of different veterinary team members in delivering unified, empathetic, and accurate OA guidance that promotes continuity of care throughout the dog's OA journey.

Emotional Health of Clinicians & Owners

Tamsin Durston | 13:35 - 14:20 | Room space 2

Caring for dogs with osteoarthritis (OA) places emotional demands on both owners and the clinicians who support them. This lecture explores the shared emotional challenges of chronic disease management, including frustration, guilt, grief, compassion fatigue, and decision-making stress. By examining the emotional landscape of OA care, the session equips veterinary professionals with strategies to support owners empathetically while maintaining their own psychological resilience.

The lecture highlights how clear communication, expectation-setting, and collaborative goal planning can reduce emotional burden, build trust, and improve confidence. Common owner challenges, such as recognising pain, navigating treatment options, and coping with disease progression, are addressed alongside practical clinician responses. The session also focuses on clinician wellbeing, boundary setting, and supportive team cultures, reinforcing the importance of emotional health in sustainable, high-quality OA care.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Recognise the emotional challenges experienced by both owners and clinicians during the long-term management of canine osteoarthritis, including frustration, guilt, grief, and compassion fatigue.
- Apply communication and collaborative care strategies to reduce emotional burden, build trust, and support owners in understanding and managing their dog's OA.
- Implement techniques that support clinician wellbeing, including identifying early signs of emotional depletion, setting healthy boundaries, and fostering team cultures that promote resilience and reflective practice.

Canine Gait Analysis & Lameness Scoring

Stuart Carmichael & Nichi Cockburn | 14:50 - 15:35 | Room space 2

Assessing gait abnormalities in patients is always challenging. It takes time and requires space to allow movement to be viewed properly. As a result, it is often not properly assessed due to practical restrictions. And yet, it is a key component of assessing and monitoring a patient with musculoskeletal disease. A solution could be a simple video capture from a mobile phone and shared with the clinical team. This allows the assessment to be made before the patient arrives and when there is less time pressure and the gait can be viewed properly.

Various new tools such as treadmills and pressure mats are helping improve understanding of lameness, and these can also be used to identify and quantify gait problems in patients.

When a gait abnormality can be properly visualised, the next challenge is interpreting what can be seen. This involves determining both leg or legs involved and severity of the problem. We often use numerical lameness scores to try to describe this, but no real consensus on scoring exists and there is no well described system to use. Who is to say that clinician A's 5/10 is the same as that of clinician B!

In this presentation we will discuss lameness recognition and assessment using videos of lame dogs as examples and share tips on how to improve interpretation. We will discuss how to get the best results using video capture from owner mobile phones. We will give advice on how an owner should be instructed to film their dog to get the most out of this exercise. These videos should be shared before the animal presents for hands on assessment. They are also very useful for remote follow-up of cases.

Finally, we will introduce and share a new VOA Lameness Score system. We will demonstrate this in an interactive video session with the audience. This new system seeks to improve the usefulness of a score in both assessing and monitoring patients. The goal is to make scores consistent between different viewers so that they can be used to compare diagnosis and become much more relevant to follow-up recording.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the importance of gait assessment in patient assessment and devise strategies enable it in your practice
- Learn how to recognise fore and hindlimb lameness in patients
- Learn how to ascribe severity by using a lameness score as part of the patient assessment

Cat Friendly Consults: A Team Approach to Feline Musculoskeletal Disease

Kelly Eyre & Christine Pye | 15:35 - 16:20 | Room space 2

This session will explore how the whole veterinary team can optimise care for cats with osteoarthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions. From the veterinary perspective, we will review the pathology and epidemiology of feline osteoarthritis, the subtle and often overlooked clinical signs, and current treatment and management options. The nursing perspective will focus on owner engagement, the use of quality-of-life and mobility assessment tools, behaviour considerations, and practical strategies to support long-term monitoring.

We will emphasise how to keep the consult genuinely cat friendly, with guidance on minimising stress, handling mobility-compromised patients, and navigating the challenges of orthopaedic examinations and lameness assessments in cats. We will also address multimorbidity, such as muscle wastage, CKD, cardiovascular disease, and cognitive changes, and how these factors influence both diagnostic approach and treatment planning.

Finally, we will outline the roles of the wider team, including reception and animal care assistants, in creating a supportive, low-stress, and consistent experience for arthritic cats and their owners.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the key pathological, clinical, and behavioural indicators of feline musculoskeletal disease and their relevance to diagnosis and management.
- Apply cat friendly principles to consultations involving mobility-impaired cats, including handling strategies, environmental adaptations, and multimorbidity considerations.
- Recognise the roles of vets, nurses, and other staff members in delivering a cohesive, team-based approach to feline OA care and owner support.

Current Research in Treating Elbow Dysplasia With Stem Cell Therapy

Russell Chandler | 16:40 - 17:25 | Room space 2

Canine elbow dysplasia remains one of the most intractable articular diseases commonly seen. Despite a multiplicity of surgical techniques, outcomes are unpredictable, and the resulting osteoarthritis can be especially disabling. Mesenchymal stem cells can be used where surgery is not applicable, or caregivers prefer a less invasive approach. The current research information will be presented and discussed.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- To understand the challenges of managing elbow dysplasia.
- To revise 'traditional' approaches to the condition.
- To understand the rationale and results of MSC therapy for elbow dysplasia.

Sleep Quality as a Predictor of Pain

Lauren Davis | 10:00 - 10:45 | Room meeting 4

Poor sleep is both a consequence and an early indicator of pain in dogs: sleep disruptions (reduced total sleep time, increased nighttime restlessness, altered sleep–wake patterns and longer sleep latency) correlate with owner- and clinic-assessed chronic pain and problem behaviours, and improve when analgesia is effective, supporting sleep measures as clinically useful pain biomarkers in dogs. Validated owner questionnaires (e.g., SNoRE 3.0) and objective tools (polysomnography, physical activity monitors to a point) can detect these changes and, when combined with behavioural and physiologic assessment, help identify dogs with occult or worsening pain so treatment can be targeted earlier.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Describe common sleep changes associated with chronic pain in dogs and the physiologic/behavioural mechanisms linking sleep disturbance and pain.
- Compare methods to assess canine sleep (owner questionnaires, activity monitors, polysomnography), including strengths, limitations, and practical application in clinic.
- Apply sleep assessment to clinical decision-making: use sleep measures to screen for occult pain, monitor analgesic response, and guide treatment adjustments.

Whiskers and Wellness (cats): The Forgotten Patient

Matt Shackleton | 11:15 - 12:00 | Room meeting 4

Contemporary research is increasingly identifying a high occurrence in musculoskeletal pathology and pain in domestic cats. However, there seems to be a latency in owner identification of pain and lameness, which is intrinsically important for diagnosis and management of disease. We also see much less use of other modalities or rehabilitation within the feline patient, potentially due to key behavioural differences from canine patients, and a potential lack of confidence within veterinary and paraprofessionals.

Within this talk, we will discuss key factors in identifying and pain in cats, how rehabilitation can be safely and ethically applied to the feline patient, and the importance of a more holistic approach to improve a patient's recovery or quality of life.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Challenges in recognising lameness and pain in cats.
- How physiotherapy can be applied ethical for the cat patient.
- The need for a more holistic approach to treatment.

Hopping Towards Evidence: Understanding Osteoarthritis in Rabbits

Nichi Cockburn & Elisabetta Mancinelli | 12:00 - 12:45 | Room meeting 4

Osteoarthritis (OA) in rabbits is an increasingly recognised condition as companion rabbits live longer and receive more advanced veterinary care. This lecture explores the multifactorial nature of OA in rabbits, highlighting common predisposing factors such as aging, obesity, dental disease, altered biomechanics, and previous musculoskeletal injury. We will gain an understanding of the subtle and often overlooked clinical signs of chronic pain in rabbits, including reduced mobility, altered grooming behaviour, changes in posture, and decreased engagement with normal activities.

The session also reviews current diagnostic approaches, emphasising the value—and limitations—of radiography, the role of physical examination, and the importance of integrating behavioural observations from owners. Treatment strategies are examined using a multimodal framework, focusing on analgesia, weight management, physiotherapy, environmental modification, and supportive husbandry. Special consideration is given to the unique challenges of administering long-term therapy in this species, as well as the need for careful monitoring of response and welfare outcomes.

By the end of the lecture, attendees will have a clearer understanding of how to identify, manage, and support rabbits with musculoskeletal issues, including osteoarthritis, improving quality of life and strengthening the veterinarian–owner partnership in ongoing care.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Recognise and interpret clinical signs of osteoarthritis in rabbits, including subtle behavioural and postural indicators of chronic pain.
- Apply integrated diagnostic approaches to assess osteoarthritis severity using clinical examination, imaging, and owner-reported behaviour.
- Develop and justify a multimodal management plan to optimise welfare and quality of life in rabbits with musculoskeletal disease.

The Silent Sufferer: Optimising Pain Management in Rabbits

Elisabetta Mancinelli | 13:45 - 14:30 | Room meeting 4

Rabbits are uniquely vulnerable to chronic and acute pain, yet their prey-species nature means clinical signs are often subtle or entirely masked. This lecture explores the challenges veterinarians face in recognising, assessing, and treating pain in this understudied species. It also reviews the behavioural and physiological indicators of discomfort, emphasising the need for careful observation and owner-reported changes to build a complete picture of rabbit welfare. Current approaches to pain assessment, including validated scoring systems and decision-making frameworks, are discussed with practical examples.

The session examines analgesic options appropriate for rabbits, covering NSAIDs, opioids, adjunctive agents, and local techniques, as well as considerations around safety, dosing, and long-term use. Non-pharmacological strategies—such as environmental modification, physiotherapy, stress reduction, and supportive care—are integrated into a multimodal plan aimed at reducing suffering and enhancing quality of life. Practical challenges, including monitoring at home and reducing treatment-associated stress, are highlighted along with pragmatic solutions.

By the end of the lecture, delegates will have strengthened their confidence in identifying pain earlier and implementing effective, compassionate, and evidence-based management for rabbit patients.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Identify common soft tissue injuries in different types of working dogs.
- Understand diagnostic and management strategies for acute and chronic strain injuries.
- Apply work-specific prevention and conditioning principles to reduce injury risk.

Reptile Musculoskeletal Pain: A Silent Pandemic

Matt Shackleton | 14:30 - 15:15 | Room meeting 4

Reptiles are particularly challenging when it comes to identifying lameness and pain, due to limited research, and key taxonomic differences, both identification and managing analgesic activity can be challenging. However, due to cultural trends within the reptile/pet industries, many practices and misconception can further compound this issue or promote practices that could impede recovery and exacerbate pain experience.

In this talk, we will discuss some of the challenges identifying pain and pathology, as well as how trends might also impede our ability to promote health in reptiles. We will also discuss how knowledge gaps might be reducing our ability to introduce other supportive modalities in a safe and ethical way.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- The cultural problems impacting MSK health and pain recognition.
- How common husbandry practices could negatively impact pain experience.
- How management and rehabilitation could be adapted for ethical treatment and pain management.

Lecture Synopsis
Thursday 21st May 2026

Preventive / Proactive Care and Supporting Conservative Therapeutic Possibilities, with 3D Printed Veterinary Orthotics and Prosthetics

Laura Allmark | 16:30 - 17:15 | Room meeting 4

This session focuses on how preventive and proactive use of veterinary orthotics can support conservative therapeutic management in patients with osteoarthritis and other mobility limiting conditions. Rather than reserving orthotic intervention for end stage disease, this lecture reframes orthoses as tools that can be introduced earlier to reduce compensation, preserve functional mobility, and improve quality of life.

Attendees will review practical considerations for candidacy, expectation setting, and integration of orthoses into multimodal OA management plans. Emphasis is placed on realistic outcomes, behavioural preparation, fitting, supervision requirements, and long term monitoring. Case examples are used to illustrate how orthotic support can complement rehabilitation therapy, medical management, and lifestyle modification, in a variety of situations.

This presentation highlights evidence informed conservative strategies that support patient welfare and clinician decision making. Participants will leave with practical insight into when orthotic intervention may be appropriate, how to communicate its role to caregivers, and how to integrate these devices responsibly into OA care pathways.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Identify appropriate candidates for preventive and proactive orthotic support within conservative osteoarthritis and mobility management plans.
- Explain the realistic benefits, limitations, and supervision requirements of veterinary orthoses to pet caregivers to support safe and effective use.
- Integrate orthotic support into multimodal care, including rehabilitation therapy and long term monitoring, to reduce compensation and support functional mobility.

Workshop Synopsis
Thursday 21st May 2026

3D Arthrology Adventure: Let's Get Inside Joint Disease

Ross Allan | 10:00 - 11:00 | Room meeting 8-9

Aimed at delegates keen to develop their understanding of the basic anatomy of the joints we commonly treat for osteoarthritis. This workshop will provide the opportunity to learn and review anatomy as well as gain a better understanding of how the anatomy can change with the development of OA.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Be confident identifying the key anatomical landmarks and structures in joints we commonly treat for osteoarthritis.
- Improve your ability to visualise the internal structures of joints relative to palpable landmarks.
- Through improved knowledge of anatomy, be more confident to perform procedures such as arthrocentesis or intra-articular injection.

Workshop Synopsis

Thursday 21st May 2026

Advancing Vet Care: 3D-Printed Orthotics, Prosthetics, and Wound Management Innovations

Marianna Kopka-Wypchał | 11:30 - 12:30 | Room meeting 8-9

This workshop will explore the possibilities of using HP 3D printing technology in veterinary orthotics and prosthetics. Participants will learn about non-invasive measurement techniques, including simple manual measurements and 3D scanning with WimbaSCAN technology.

Additionally, we will discuss the applications of Wimba Wound Care—distance-support cushions designed to aid in wound and callus management. The workshop will cover proper usage and application on patients, providing valuable practical insights to enhance veterinary practice.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the applications of HP 3D printing in veterinary orthotics and prosthetics.
- Learn non-invasive measurement techniques, including manual methods and WimbaSCAN 3D scanning.
- Gain practical knowledge on using Wimba Wound Care cushions for wound and callus management in patients.

Building Mobility Clinics That Work With Vet-IMPACT

Kirsty Cavill & Kathryn Patel | 13:15 - 14:15 | Room meeting 8-9

This interactive taster session introduces veterinary practices to the Vet-IMPACT mobility clinic toolkit, highlighting essential components such as the CCM system, LOAD questionnaires, body and muscle condition scoring, and gait analysis tools. Attendees will explore how these resources work together to deliver effective mobility assessments and support optimal patient care.

Participants will be guided through the process of developing a practical implementation roadmap tailored to their own clinic. The session also prompts practice teams to reflect on their readiness and motivation to adopt the Vet-IMPACT approach, work toward Blue Paw Award and become eligible for practice accreditation. By the end of the workshop, attendees will be empowered to make informed decisions about the next steps for their clinic's involvement, ensuring they understand both the benefits and ongoing support available through Vet-IMPACT.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Discover the key components of the Vet-IMPACT Clinic toolkit and their roles in mobility assessment.
- Develop an implementation roadmap for introducing mobility clinic services, including staff training and patient pathways.
- Reflect on readiness and motivation for further involvement in Vet-IMPACT, working toward Blue Paw Award and practice accreditation.

Practical Laser Masterclass

Emily Ashdown | 14:45 - 15:45 | Room meeting 8-9

This practical laser masterclass is designed to deepen clinical understanding and confidence in applying therapeutic laser technology within veterinary rehabilitation and general practice. The session will explore the science behind photobiomodulation, including wavelength selection, tissue interaction, dosage principles, and treatment optimisation. Delegates will learn how to differentiate treatment parameters for acute versus chronic conditions, safely target deeper structures, and adapt protocols for varying patient types, including sporting and geriatric animals. The masterclass will also address common clinical errors, integration with multimodal rehabilitation plans, and how to objectively assess progress through outcome measures such as stance analysis. Live demonstrations and case-based discussion will provide real-world context and practical tips to improve treatment quality, compliance, and clinical results. By the end of the session, attendees will feel more confident in tailoring protocols, evaluating therapeutic response, and applying evidence-based laser therapy to a range of musculoskeletal and neurological conditions.

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Explain the principles of photobiomodulation and select appropriate treatment parameters for different tissue depths and conditions.
- Perform safe, effective laser treatments and modify protocols based on patient response and clinical anatomy.
- Integrate laser therapy into multimodal treatment plans and evaluate outcomes using objective assessment tools.

Weight Management: How To...

Georgia Woods-Lee | 16:15 - 17:15 | Room meeting 8-9

Obesity is a highly prevalent health issues in companion animals, contributing to reduced lifespan and increased risk of conditions such as osteoarthritis, diabetes, and respiratory compromise. Effective obesity care requires more than recommending weight loss, it demands a structured, empathetic, and evidence-based approach. This session outlines practical strategies for assessing body condition, determining ideal body weight, and formulating tailored obesity care plans for dogs and cats. Key topics include selecting appropriate calorie restricted diets, implementing safe rates of weight loss, improving owner compliance through communication and monitoring, and troubleshooting weight loss plateaus. Attendees will also explore behavioural and environmental enrichment techniques that support activity and reduce food seeking behaviours. By integrating these tools into routine practice, veterinary professionals can play a pivotal role in helping pets achieve and maintain healthy body weights, ultimately improving quality of life and long term health outcomes

Key Learning Outcomes:

- Accurately assess body condition and develop individualized, evidence-based obesity care plans for dogs and cats.
- Communicate effectively with pet owners to enhance adherence, monitor progress, and overcome common barriers to successful weight loss.
- Implement practical nutritional, behavioural, and environmental strategies that support safe, sustainable obesity care in clinical practice.

Speakers



Alex Keller

BVBiol BVSc MRCVS

Dr. Alexandra Keller graduated in veterinary medicine in Germany in 2000 and initially worked in mixed small-animal and equine practice. She completed her doctoral degree in 2004 and later graduated from the European Academy of Veterinary Chiropractic (EAVC). She founded a highly specialised practice in Frankfurt am Main focusing on small-animal orthopaedics, sports medicine and rehabilitation: the Veterinary Orthopedics Team Frankfurt, with a team of six veterinarians and an integrated rehabilitation department staffed by six physiotherapists.



Amy Watson-Doyle

MA VetMB MRCVS CVA(IVAS) GDVCHM ACVHCM (IVAS) CCRT

Dr Amy Watson-Doyle knew from age six that she wanted to be a veterinary surgeon. She earned her veterinary degree and a Master's in Pathology from the University of Cambridge in 2005. She spent eight years at a busy veterinary hospital, followed by three years of locum small animal work, before founding Pinpoint Veterinary Care in 2016. Amy practices integratively, completing her canine rehabilitation certificate (CRI) in 2014, acupuncture certificate (IVAS) in 2017, and Graduate Diploma in Veterinary Chinese Herbal Medicine (CIVT) in 2023. She has extensive experience treating dogs with canine cognitive dysfunction (CCD), combining conventional and integrative approaches, and has personal insight through caring for her own dog with CCD and a family member with dementia. Amy serves on the IVAS Board of Directors and House of Delegates, the British Association of Veterinary Herbalists committee, and lectures widely on CCD.



Christine Pye

BSc(Hons) BVSc GPCert(SAS) PgC(SAS) MPhil PhD MRCVS

Christine graduated from the University of Bristol in 2011 and spent several years working as a small animal vet, during which she completed a postgraduate certificate in small animal surgery. She later moved into academia, earning an MPhil in Musculoskeletal Biology at the University of Liverpool and, in 2025, completing her PhD researching biomarkers of ageing in pet cats as part of the Cat Prospective Ageing and Welfare Study. Christine now divides her time between her role as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Liverpool, where she continues her work on ageing science, and her clinical work for the RSPCA in Manchester.

Speakers



Diane Messum

MCSP, HCPC, BSc(Hons), MSc VetPhysio, ACPAT Cat A, RAMP

Diane has been a Chartered Physiotherapist for over 23 years, graduating from the University of Birmingham in 2002. She initially specialised in musculoskeletal outpatient care and hand therapy, skills that laid the foundation for her transition into veterinary physiotherapy. After completing her MSc in Veterinary Physiotherapy at the Royal Veterinary College in 2007, Diane ran a private practice for equine and small animals. Since 2011, she has led Therapy Services at Davies Veterinary Specialists, helping develop the Davies Therapy and Fitness Centre. Diane focuses on splinting and orthotics and contributes widely as a lecturer, mentor, and board member of the International Association of Veterinary Rehabilitation and Physical Therapy.



Drew Tootal

BSc BVSc MSc(Res) MRCVS

Drew graduated from the University of Liverpool School of Veterinary Science in 2004 and joined the Royal Army Veterinary Corps shortly thereafter. Over a 17-year military career, he worked predominantly with Military Working Dogs, from procurement and training through to operational deployment in Iraq in 2007. As Officer Commanding of the Veterinary Training Squadron at the Defence Animal Training Regiment, he supported their medical care and preparation for retirement. In 2022, Drew left the RAVC to help establish MSK Vets, part of the Nupsala Group, where he now focuses on canine mobility and innovative therapies for osteoarthritis and chronic pain. He remains closely involved with the working dog community, supporting both active and retired Service Dogs.



Duncan Barnes

MA VetMB CertSAS DSAS(Orth) MRCVS RCVS
Recognised Specialist in Small Animal Surgery (Orthopaedics)

Specialist Orthopaedic Surgeon Duncan graduated in 2001 from Cambridge Vet School. After 10 years in small animal general practice he studied for the RCVS diploma in small animal surgery (orthopaedics) via the alternative pathway, splitting his time between Anderson Abercromby Veterinary Referrals and his day job at Eastcott Veterinary Referrals in Swindon, where he still works as Lead Orthopaedic Surgeon. He became an RCVS recognised specialist in small animal orthopaedics in 2016. He enjoys all aspects of small animal orthopaedics but has particular interests in humeral condylar fracture.

Speakers



Elisabetta Mancinelli

DVM CertZooMed PGCertVetEd (FHEA) ECZM Dip

Elisabetta graduated from the University of Naples, Italy, in 2002 and has since built an international career in non-conventional animal medicine and surgery. After moving to the UK in 2007, she completed the first ECZM Residency in Small Mammal Medicine at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, achieving her Diploma in 2014. As diplomate of the European College of Zoological Medicine and RCVS Certificate holder, she has published widely and lectures regularly across the UK and abroad. Today, Elisabetta divides her time between clinical work at Valley Veterinary Hospital in Cardiff and her role as a clinician and lecturer in Exotics and Small Mammal Medicine and Surgery at the Royal Veterinary College, London.



Emily Ashdown

RVN, ISFMCert, CSMC, Animal Dip Phys, L3 Cert CanineHydro, L3 AET, VMLSO, RAMP, MIRVAP(VP/ICH) Founder of Precision Animal Laser Academy

Companion Animal Health: International Training & Education Manager Emily Ashdown is a Registered Veterinary Nurse and qualified Veterinary Physiotherapist with additional certifications in canine sports massage and hydrotherapy. Listed on RAMP and a member of IRVAP, she has worked across diverse clinical environments, including managing a large nursing team. Since 2017, she has focused on rehabilitation, running her own business and treating high-level performance dogs. Emily joined Companion Animal Health in 2017, supporting global teams in product support, product management, and clinical education specialising in laser therapy, stance analysis, and regenerative technologies. She lectures widely, developed the first Ofqual-accredited laser therapy qualifications, and founded Precision Animal Laser Academy.



Georgia Woods-Lee

BSc (Hons) RVN CertCFVHNut VTS (Nutrition)

Georgia qualified as a Registered Veterinary Nurse in 2004. In 2015, Georgia joined the ROYAL CANIN® Obesity Care Clinic at the University of Liverpool, Small Animal Teaching Hospital, where she is now dealing exclusively with pet obesity care and nutrition. Georgia was awarded her Certificate in Canine and Feline Veterinary Health Nutrition in 2017, the American Veterinary Technician Specialist (VTS) in nutrition certificate in 2019, and her BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing (Top-up) degree in 2022. In 2023 Georgia was appointed as clinical lead for the Obesity Care Clinic and an academic researcher whilst also working towards a PhD in pet obesity.

Speakers



James Guthrie

BVM&S CertAVP(GSAS) PgCertVBM CCRT DipECVS DipACVSMR
DipECVSMR FRSB FRSA FRCVS

RCVS & EBVS Specialist in Small Animal Surgery James Guthrie is a “double-boarded” specialist in small animal surgery (European College of Veterinary Surgeons) and canine sports medicine and rehabilitation (American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation, and European College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation). James is a senior orthopaedic surgeon at Fitzpatrick Referrals and his clinical passion is to maximise patient outcomes with minimally invasive surgery, coupled with regenerative medicine and rehabilitation therapies.



Jamie McClement

BVSc MSc CertSAS FRSB FRCVS

Jamie graduated from Liverpool Veterinary School in 2001, and came to Abington Park Referrals from Glasgow in 2008. In 2009 he achieved the RCVS certificate in Small Animal Surgery, and in 2015 was awarded Advanced Practitioner status in Small Animal Surgery by the RCVS. He completed an MSc in Musculoskeletal Science at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital Stanmore in 2019, and was made a Fellow of the RCVS in 2025, for Meritorious Contribution to Clinical Practice.

His areas of interest are joint surgery, management of osteoarthritis, and muscle/tendon injuries. Jamie is Chair of the IVC UK Referrals Clinical Board, a member of the clinical advisory panel of the Veterinary Osteoarthritis Alliance, and the “X-pertise in OA” International Scientific Panel. He lectures both in the UK and abroad on musculoskeletal disease in dogs and cats, and has published scientific papers on surgery and physical therapy. At home, he enjoys fencing, photography and art, and trying to control his four children and a sneaky whippet.



Katherine Clarke

BVSc PGCertSAM DipECVIM-CA MRCVS

Katherine graduated from the University of Bristol in 2011. She subsequently worked in a first opinion, small animal practice in Shropshire. After three years at this practice, she moved to the Midlands to complete an Internship at Willows Veterinary Centre and Referral Service, gaining her a certificate in internal medicine during this time. She joined the team at Davies Veterinary Specialists in May 2018 and completed a 3-year residency programme in small animal medicine. She attained the European Diploma in Small Animal Medicine in 2022 and is now a permanent member of the medicine service.

Speakers



Kathryn Patel

BVetMed CertAVP(GSAS) BSc PGCertVBM MRCVS

Kathryn qualified from RVC in 2012 and completed certificates in Small Animal Surgery in 2017 and Veterinary Business Management in 2023. She has experience in GP and referral practice with an orthopaedic bias and now works as Technical Marketer for Pain and Orthopaedic Health for Elanco's International Pet Health team. She is passionate about collaborative, whole-team care in improving osteoarthritis management.



Kelly Eyre

MRes (Anthrozoology) RVN ISFM DipFN AdvCertFB

Kelly qualified as a RVN in 2015 and has since gone on to complete the ISFM Diploma in Feline Nursing, the ISFM Advanced Certificate in Feline Behaviour, and has recently achieved a Masters of Research in Anthrozoology where she looked at the owners ability to recognise chronic dental pain in cats. Kelly was Clinical Lead for the Royal Canin Feline Healthy Ageing Clinic at the University of Liverpool for 7 years and now has an Honorary Research Associate role for the project, which aims to extend the quality of life in ageing cats through research and education. Kelly is a Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Nursing at Wrexham University, and has a passion for ensuring student veterinary nurses go on to qualify and excel within the veterinary profession.



Kirsty Cavill

BSc (Hons) RVN Clinical Myotherapist

Kirsty qualified as a Veterinary Nurse in 1991 and went on to serve as Clinical Director at The Vet Connection. She is also a Clinical Myotherapist and founder of Paws Canine Myotherapy Care, a rehabilitation service supporting pets with osteoarthritis and chronic pain. Kirsty chairs the Science and Education Group of the Veterinary Osteoarthritis Alliance (VOA) and is an active volunteer with StreetVet. She holds a degree in environmental science, is a Mental Health First Aider, and completed the RCVS Edward Jenner Leadership Programme. An award-winning professional, Kirsty regularly presents and authors articles on pain management, rehabilitation, and musculoskeletal health in companion animals.

Speakers



Laura Allmark

(Wimba) MSc (Vet Phys), BSc (Hons), MNAVP Cat 1

Laura Allmark is Head of Veterinary Physiotherapy at Anderson Moores Veterinary Specialists, where she leads the rehabilitation service within a multidisciplinary referral hospital. She works closely with orthopaedic and neurology teams to support dogs through post-operative recovery, injury management, and complex musculoskeletal and neurological conditions. Laura has a strong interest in evidence-based rehabilitation, exercise prescription, and service development, and is passionate about collaborative care that optimises patient function, comfort, and long-term quality of life.



Lauren Davis

BVSc MRCVS

Lauren qualified as a veterinary surgeon from Liverpool in 2011 and has worked in first-opinion veterinary practice, in industry, and in the human field specialising in pressure care products used within the NHS. Currently, Lauren is the director and founder of VetRelieve, a company dedicated to creating the best supportive pet beds for older pets. During her time working in industry, Lauren was the International Technical Adviser for VetPlus and moved on to take a customer-facing content writing role at Vets4Pets in Swindon. A sidestep then led to Lauren becoming Commercial Director at a human healthcare firm, specialising in active and static pressure care. Lauren is dedicated to bringing her knowledge from the frontlines of the NHS into the veterinary world and believes we can do much better for our pets by understanding the importance of sleep surfaces for health. Alongside the above, Lauren also has two small children and two demanding cats.



Lucy Williams

BVSc MRCVS

Lucy Williams is a veterinary surgeon with a background in small animal general practice and a particular interest in internal medicine and gastrointestinal disease. She currently works as Marketing and Veterinary Technical Services Manager at Carus Animal Health, where she combines clinical experience with science-led education. Her focus is on helping veterinary teams and pet owners address real-world clinical challenges through the appropriate use of diagnostic testing, supporting practical decision-making and long-term patient care.

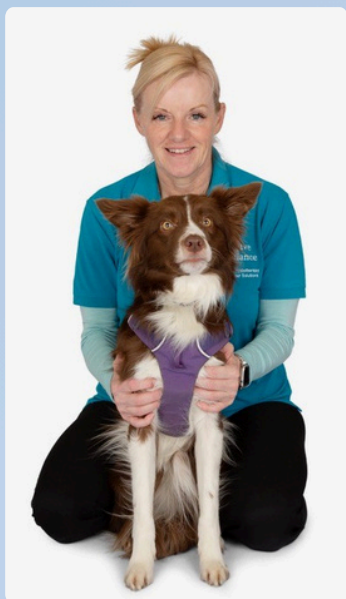
Speakers



Marianna Kopka-Wypchał

(WIMBA) Certified Animal Physiotherapist (PL), Canine Motor Skills Trainer, Fascia Manipulation Stecco Canine Level 2

Enthusiast of working and service dogs, she privately trains scent work with her own dogs. By selecting WIMBA products for her patients, she aims to restore their activity and improve their quality of life, believing that kinesitherapy is a key element of successful rehabilitation.



Maria Johnston

AdvCertVPhys; FIRVAP; Tellington TTouch Practitioner Level 3; APDT; CBWA; Ace Advanced Tutor. Veterinary Physiotherapist, Level 4 Hydrotherapist.

Maria Johnston is a veterinary physiotherapist and hydrotherapist, and founder of Active Balance Veterinary Physiotherapy. With over 15 years of clinical experience, she specialises in rehabilitating dogs with complex musculoskeletal conditions, particularly canine osteoarthritis and sporting dog injuries. Her work emphasises movement quality, load tolerance and functional, evidence-informed rehabilitation. Maria has collaborated closely with Barbara Houlding of K9HS for more than 15 years, helping develop clinically reasoned hydrotherapy approaches that extend beyond traditional swimming and integrate with land-based rehab. She has taught hydrotherapy for over a decade, lectures internationally, and previously served as veterinary physiotherapist for Agility Team GB.



Mark Lowrie

MA VetMB MVM DipECVN MRCVS

Mark, a graduate of the University of Cambridge, has worked in small animal practice and completed an internship at the RVC. He went on to finish a residency in veterinary neurology at the University of Glasgow and earned a Master's degree in steroid-responsive meningitis-arteritis in dogs. With a focus on involuntary muscle contractions, reflex epilepsy, inflammatory CNS diseases, and feline neurology, Mark is a Director of Movement Referrals: Independent Veterinary Specialists, where he now leads the second referral clinic in Uttoxeter, in the Midlands. He is also a veterinary consultant to the ISFM and was named PetPlan "Vet of the Year" in 2022.

Speakers



Matt Gurney

BVSc CertVA DipIECVAA FRCVS RCVS & EBVSTM
European Specialist in Veterinary Anaesthesia & Analgesia

Matt is specialist in anaesthesia and analgesia and trained at the University of Liverpool and works at Eastcott Referrals in the UK as Clinical Director. Matt is passionate about pain management, lectures on the subject globally and is the author of many international anaesthesia publications. Matt is a Past President of the European College of Veterinary Anaesthesia & Analgesia and a Co-Founder of The Zero Pain Philosophy. In 2020 Matt was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons for Meritorious Contribution to Clinical Practice. Matt is one of the co-founders of The Zero Pain Philosophy, an educational resource for vet professionals.



Matt Shackleton

BSc (Hons) MScVetPhys PGCert PTLLS MIRVAP(VP)

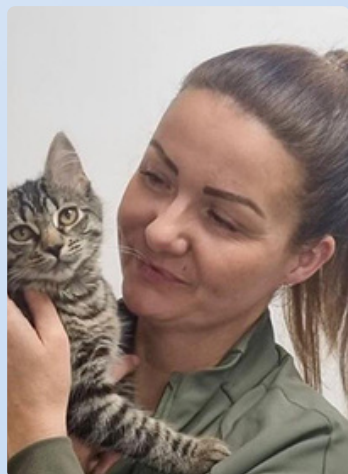
Matthew holds a master's degree in Veterinary Physiotherapy from the University of Nottingham and is a part-time lecturer in veterinary physiotherapy and zoo sciences. With a background in zoo-keeping, he conducted research into Komodo dragon locomotion in collaboration with leading UK zoos. He treats both wild and domestic animals and has over a decade of experience teaching the management and rehabilitation of a wide range of species, including zoo mammals, reptiles, birds, amphibians, and fish. Matthew delivers accredited CPD for veterinary and zoo professionals and is a regular guest speaker at universities and zoological conferences. He is an associate member of the British Veterinary Zoological Society and a clinical advisor to the Veterinary Osteoarthritis Alliance. He also consults internationally, helping zoos develop comprehensive lameness assessment and physiotherapy programmes, and has co-authored a book chapter on physiotherapy in geriatric captive animals.



Natalie Lenton

Natalie Lenton is the founder of the Canine Massage Therapy Centre and Director of the Canine Massage Guild. With 20 years' experience in clinical practice and education, she developed the Lenton Method™, a structured approach to advanced canine massage therapy. Her work has been featured in the Veterinary Record through the largest clinical study of its kind, evidencing the benefits of massage therapy on pain and quality of life in dogs. Natalie is a leading educator in the field, delivering professional training programmes, CPD, and owner workshops, with a mission to raise awareness of the role muscular health plays in mobility, pain management, and rehabilitation.

Speakers



Nichi Cockburn

RVN NCert (A&CC) CCRP AdvCertVPhys CCMP MIRVAP (VP)

Nichi is a Veterinary Physiotherapist and Registered Veterinary Nurse. She leads a busy rehabilitation service at Valley Veterinary Hospital in Cardiff. She works closely with her medicine, orthopaedic and rehabilitation colleagues, to develop an individual care package for physiotherapy, pain management and rehabilitation for small animals. She also accepts referrals from all over South Wales. Nichi has a particular passion (obsession) in the management of osteoarthritis and sits on the board of directors for the Veterinary Osteoarthritis Alliance (VOA). She is also a self-professed mad cat lady and has a huge passion for feline welfare, pain management and the human – animal bond



Ross Allan

BVMS PGCertSAS MRCVS

RCVS Advanced Practitioner in Small Animal Surgery

Ross graduated from Glasgow University in 2001, gaining his BSAVA Certificate in Small Animal Surgery in 2014 and his RCVS Advanced Practitioner status in 2015 - he remains signed up until 2030!

Ross is Clinical Director of Referrals at Pets'n'Vets, Glasgow where he leads Roundhouse Referrals, treating many lame dogs with orthopaedic injuries as well as developing the collaborative 'owner and teamvet' management of osteoarthritic patients.



Russell Chandler

BVSc CertSAO MRCVS

Dr Russell Chandler is an Advanced Practitioner in Small Animal Orthopaedics. He holds MSc qualifications in Orthopaedic Engineering, and in Stem Cells and Regeneration. He has worked in practices in the UK, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Russell is now employed as a referral small animal surgeon and regenerative medicine clinician at Greenside Vets in Scotland. He has authored a book on regenerative medicine for small animal musculoskeletal disorders. In addition, Russell is a Director of the Veterinary Osteoarthritis Alliance and is the founder and host of the VOA Podcast.

Speakers



Samantha Lindley

MRCVS CV

Samantha qualified from Bristol Vet School more years ago than she cares to remember; went shopping instead of attending behaviour lectures; and worked in farm animal practice until BSE changed that forever. There followed a hardly natural progression to acupuncture; behaviour; the link between pain and behaviour; the welfare of captive wild animals; and legal work. She has finally settled down to running a chronic pain service at Glasgow Vet School and educating students and the profession at large about chronic pain, its link with behavioural changes, and the place of acupuncture in improving the wellbeing of our patients.



Stuart Carmichael

BVMS MVM DSAO FRCVS

Director and Co-Founder, AIM OA

Professor Stuart Carmichael is a specialist in veterinary orthopaedics with extensive experience as a clinician, educator, and researcher. He is a Diplomate and Fellow of the RCVS, and Director and Co-Founder of AIM OA, a web-based disease management system designed to support the long-term care of dogs with osteoarthritis"



Tace Allen

AdvCertVPhys CClinEd DipPT DipESMT DiplCAT MIRVAP (VP)

Based in the Cotswolds, Tace runs a thriving rehabilitation clinic specialising in performance and working dogs. She began her career as a veterinary nurse in 2001 before qualifying as a human personal trainer and sports therapist, later opening a successful human sports injury clinic. Combining her passion for animal performance and rehabilitation, she gained Diplomas (with distinction) in Canine and Equine Sports Massage and qualified as a Veterinary Physiotherapist with CEPT in 2015. After completing her teaching qualification, Tace lectured on the MSc Veterinary Physiotherapy course at the University of Nottingham and now teaches Animal Science at Hartpury University. She continues to mentor students and is currently developing The Vet Physio Academy to support professional growth within the industry."

Speakers



Tamsin Durston

RVN

Tamsin Durston is a Registered Veterinary Nurse, Clinical Animal Behaviourist, and experienced veterinary team manager. With postgraduate study in human psychology and behavioural science, she specialises in influencing human behaviour change to improve animal welfare. After 14 years as Blue Cross Veterinary Nurse Manager at the South London Hospital, she joined Dogs Trust 10 years ago to focus on canine welfare. As Dogs Trust's Veterinary Engagement Manager, Tamsin oversees the Dog Friendly Clinic scheme which embeds canine behaviour principles into veterinary practice. Passionate about team wellbeing, she researched and authored the book *Emotional Wellbeing for Animal Welfare Professionals*.

Exhibitors / Industry Partners



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Animalcare is proud to work in partnership with the Veterinary Osteoarthritis Alliance (VOA) to support improved outcomes for dogs living with osteoarthritis. Through collaboration with veterinary professionals, Animalcare supports evidence-based, multimodal approaches to pain management across the patient journey. At VOACON 2026, Animalcare looks forward to contributing to shared discussions on long-term OA care and perioperative pain management, including insights following the recent perioperative licence extension for Daxocox®, as part of a broader, patient-centred approach.

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Reference: 1. Vaughan-Scott T, Taylor JH. The pathophysiology and medical management of canine osteoarthritis: continuing education. Journal of the South African Veterinary Association. 1997 Mar 1;68(1):21-5. Target species: Dogs. Indications for use: the treatment of lameness and pain of degenerative joint disease/osteoarthritis (non-infectious arthrosis) and related musculoskeletal disorders by therapeutic activity on the underlying pathological processes (disease modifying osteoarthritis drug) in the dog. Refer to product packaging and leaflets for full indications, side effects, precautions, warnings and contra-indications. Use medicines responsibly. Further information can be found on the datasheet, SPC or at www.chanellepharma.com. Distributed by: Chanelle Pharmaceuticals Manufacturing Ltd, Loughrea, Co. Galway, Ireland. UK: Vm 08749/4086 Copyright © Chanelle 2026 All rights reserved. [POM-V]

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1. Pye, C., Bruniges, N. et al. Advances in the pharmaceutical treatment options for canine osteoarthritis. J. Small Anim. Pract. 2022;63:721–738. 2. Kirkby Shaw, K. 2015. Introduction to the emerging piprant therapeutic class: prostanoid receptor antagonists. Oral presentation. American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine Forum, 3–6 June 2015, Indianapolis, IN, USA.
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COMPANION[®] **ANIMAL HEALTH**

Companion Animal Health delivers the most advanced technologies in pain management, photobiomodulation, rehabilitation, and regenerative therapies to veterinary professionals worldwide.

Whether your goals are to heal and reduce pain, regenerate and repair tissues, diagnose and record treatment success, or provide rehabilitative modalities, Companion has a portfolio of proven solutions for veterinary practices and their patients. We design, manufacture, and supply the only veterinary specific laser therapy system worldwide and supply the only canine and feline validated regenerative therapies system in the UK.

Companion's products are backed by evidence, supported by education, and successfully implemented through Companion's industry-leading commitment to long-term partnership.

Georgina.Macphail@enovis.com | www.companionanimalhealth.com

Exhibitors



IRVAP is a member-centred association for qualified professionals working within the animal neuro-musculoskeletal therapy sector. We strive to provide a fun, friendly, approachable, and supportive community for our members throughout every stage of their careers. Our mission includes advancing animal welfare by promoting the safe and effective practice of evidence-based animal therapies. We are committed to raising standards across the industry and contributing to its ongoing development. We advocate for our members and represent their interests to the public, within the industry, and among wider stakeholder groups.

conference@irvap.org.uk | www.irvap.org.uk

MedFac

MedFac UK Ltd is a specialist provider of innovative medical and rehabilitation products, working closely with hospitals, clinics, and healthcare professionals across the UK.

At this event, we are excited to showcase our latest development in veterinary care – Vet-Lite, a lightweight, durable material designed to support effective treatment and handling in animal healthcare settings. Built with both veterinarians and animals in mind, Vet-Lite offers a modern approach to comfort, usability, and performance. It is also environmentally friendly and biodegradable, making it a sustainable splinting and casting solution suitable for a wide range of animal applications.

enquiries@kinetecuk.com | www.kinetecuk.com

Exhibitors



Paw Prosper strives to help pets prepare for, live with, and overcome the challenges of injury and aging. Through our family of trusted, veterinarian-recommended brands, we offer innovative solutions that promote prevention, provide daily support, and aid rehabilitation. From mobility tools to recovery aids, our platform makes it easy for pet caregivers to access the most effective products for every stage of a pet's life, at exclusive wholesale prices. With a focus on vitality through ingenuity, Paw Prosper brings together the best in wellness to help pets thrive—living healthful, pain-free, joy-filled lives no matter what challenges come their way.

sales@pawprosper.com | www.pawprosper.com



We founded thérapévo as a team of medical, veterinary, and technology professionals with a clear vision: to make high-quality therapy equipment more accessible and affordable. We offer a carefully curated range of therapeutic modalities, giving practitioners the flexibility to choose solutions that align with their treatment protocols without compromising on quality or cost.

Backed by extensive research and due diligence, every product we supply is one we proudly stand behind. From sole practitioners to large organisations, we provide exceptional value, expert support, and competitive pricing.

All products are shipped from our UK base and fully supported in-house, including servicing, maintenance, and repairs. If your device requires work, we provide a free loan unit to ensure continuity. Our goal is to lead through innovation, accessibility, and service excellence.

info@therapevo.co.uk | www.therapevo.co.uk

Exhibitors



VBS Direct – UK leader in Rehab and Pain Management therapies: K-Laser clinically proven therapeutic lasers: wounds, surgical rehabilitation and pain management, with K-Laser surgical head accessories. Indiba global leader in radiofrequency rehabilitation accelerated healing, enhanced blood flow, and pain management for equine and small animals. Orthokine and APEX XCELL small animal and equine clinically proven regenerative medicine equipment: rehabilitation and osteoarthritis. Surgically: dual-purpose K-Laser, CO2 surgical lasers and Bovie electrocautery/diathermy, with CryoPen for accurate cryosurgery and ophthalmic procedures. VBS produce a full range of palatable, premium vet supplements that can be own-branded; for more information visit our website – www.vbsdirect.co.uk

info@vbsdirect.co.uk | www.vbsdirect.co.uk

VetPlus

Founded in 1995 by David Haythornthwaite, VetPlus is still today a family company and very much proud of it. VetPlus is based in Lytham, Lancashire, where it manufactures all of its products in its own state of the art GMP approved manufacturing facility.

Founded on two key principals:

- Make the best possible products for the pet
- Sell them only through veterinary practices

30 years later those principals remain as strong as ever.

With subsidiaries in Germany, Spain, Ireland, Portugal and the USA. Distributors in over 40 countries and regional offices in Singapore and Buenos Aires, we are the globally recognised leader in our field.

customer.services@vetplus.co.uk | www.vetplusglobal.com

Exhibitors



WIMBA is a veterinary technology company specializing in custom 3D-printed orthotics for pets. Founded in Kraków, Poland, WIMBA combines digital scanning, advanced design, and additive manufacturing to deliver lightweight, precise, and patient-specific mobility solutions. By eliminating the need for casting and simplifying the clinical workflow, WIMBA enables faster production, improved fit, and greater accessibility of orthotic care. The company works closely with veterinary professionals worldwide to restore mobility and improve the quality of life for pets.

help@wimba.vet | www.wimba.vet