

IVC 2018 REPORT

ivc.group

Putting care into practice

How we're building the
strongest and most respected
veterinary group in Europe

878

clinics and hospitals
across eight countries.

And counting...

IVC INNOVATIONS

CT SCANNERS – THE NEW NORM

**PRACTICE MANAGEMENT
NOW IN THE CLOUD**

X-RAY ARCHIVING GOES DIGITAL

IVC GROUP
International
Exceptional Veterinary Care


EVIDENSIA



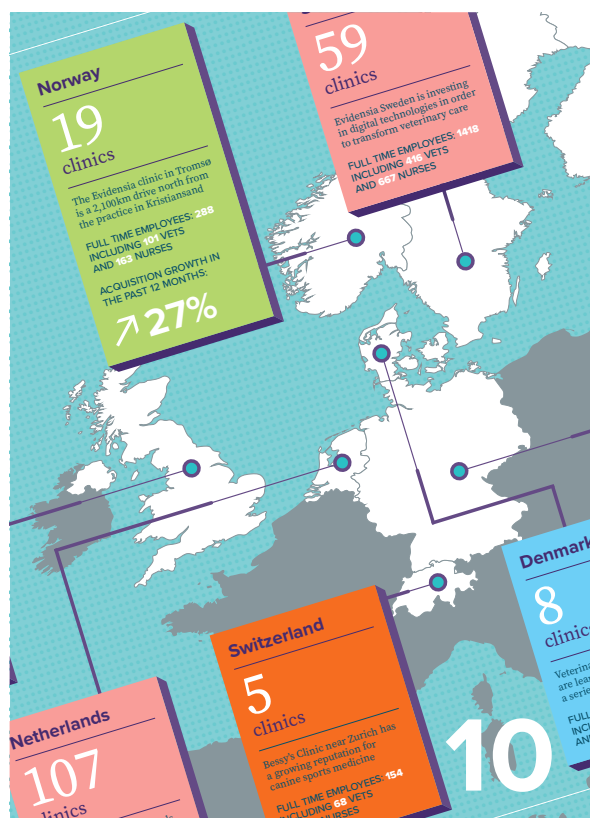
Veterinary care redefined

IVC GROUP IS EUROPE'S **LEADING VETERINARY CARE PROVIDER** BASED ACROSS 8 COUNTRIES. WE INVEST IN OUR PEOPLE, PREMISES AND PROCESSES TO PROVIDE CLINICAL EXCELLENCE ACROSS THE CONTINENT

“As you will see from these pages, we have so many exciting projects and so many examples of shared best practice across the group, it makes me feel very confident about the future. There is a real collective energy and a sense of enterprise that we have created together. Wherever I go, I get the sense that we’re really excited about what we can do next!”

DAVID HILLIER – CEO, INDEPENDENT VETCARE





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SOCIAL TOUCH POINTS



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Created, designed and published by **Vivid Content Agency**
vividcontentagency.com

**“Vets join us because IVC
is a place where they can
feel at home”**

DAVID HILLIER – CEO, INDEPENDENT VETCARE



Building a business on human values



WITH GROWTH THAT'S TAKEN THEM ACROSS THE UK AND INTO EUROPE, CEO **DAVID HILLIER** HAS OVERSEEN INDEPENDENT VETCARE'S BUSIEST 18 MONTHS TO DATE

It's been an incredible journey. When we founded the group in 2011, we started with just 20 practices.

From the outset, we understood that our greatest strength was that these practices were run by motivated vets with a wealth of management experience. Our guiding principle has always been our conviction that the best way of achieving high-quality clinical care and exceptional client service is through local leadership. The underlying strategy of IVC has therefore been to create a framework that enables local management to thrive. Our role is to provide the greater resources, skills and procurement synergies that come from being part of our group.

Key to our philosophy is ensuring that everyone, from clinicians to managers, share the same values. By staying true to these values, we find it easier to make the right decisions. Since the veterinary profession has always attracted principled, committed people, this matters to us all.

While many businesses have a top-down structure, that's not us at all. What excites us is listening to what our clinics need, then finding ways of meeting their needs while also achieving our shared objectives. We want each of our clinics to develop in their own ways, defining their individual clinical strategies but benefiting from methods and ideas tested within the group.

SERVING THE NEEDS OF OUR VETS

We want to put ourselves at the service of our clinics, making sure they have the means to compete. Our mission is to

support and inspire, not in telling clinics what to do or setting targets.

It took a while for people to learn of us. Slowly, as word spread, new practices joined our initial 20. This trickle turned into a flow until, over the last 12 months, more veterinary practices have joined IVC than any other group, not just in the UK but also across Europe. In May 2017, we were fortunate to be able to combine with Evidensia, a reputed veterinary group already well-established across Northern Europe. It's a group endowed with an exceptional network of specialist hospitals and first-opinion practices, and an outstanding clinical reputation. This infusion of fresh talent and ideas has been a huge boost to the whole group.

A PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER

Veterinary practices join us because their owners believe that with us, they will feel at home. They weigh their options and consider carefully what will happen to their colleagues and their reputations. They want to be sure that what they've built over the years is going to be preserved, valued and given a future. Often it boils down to the same shared human values – and the knowledge they are joining a larger team where they can make a real contribution.

We are delighted when we think how many former owners have not only stayed with the group but also gone on to help us transform the way we work and to assist the next generation to take on the role of Clinical Director. People such as Donald Kingsnorth, for example, who after running his own practices for years, has been instrumental in establishing our Graduate Academy programme (page 15).

THE VALUE OF PEOPLE

The IVC story is one of growth but also of talent development. We can offer people unique opportunities thanks to the range of clinical environments within the group. Likewise, we draw on a vast pool of talent when looking to create new roles. There are so many remarkable stories of people who have gained training and promotion – we are particularly proud to see them furthering their careers in ways that would not have been possible in the past.

From Finland (page 28), where we have benefited from sharing best practice with clinics in other countries, to Germany (page 34), where we support the use of nuclear medicine, IVC is changing the way people think about veterinary care.

As Europe's largest employer of vets, we feel a duty to give something back to the profession by ensuring we can offer our staff the opportunities they want. For instance, when we saw that many young vets were finding their first years in work quite challenging, we created our Graduate Academy to give them the skills to succeed. We also have a far-reaching investment programme to enhance our specialist facilities, and to utilise the latest digital technology to improve clinical quality and client access. This is part of our strategy to develop leading-edge referral services.

Over the next year, you'll see us continuing to grow as more veterinary practices join us on our journey. I also think you'll see us continuing to innovate and invest in new ways of working. In an ever-changing world, we're not just keeping up with that change, we're driving it. **IVC**

David Hillier
CEO, Independent Vetcare

At IVC it's our unique values and principles that unite us

OUR **FIVE CORE VALUES** ARE ESSENTIAL TO WHAT WE WANT OUR BUSINESS TO LOOK AND FEEL LIKE. WE REMAIN TRUE TO THESE VALUES IN EVERYTHING THAT WE DO

VALUE ONE

Respect – we respect the individual, we keep our promises, we treat each other with decency



IVC Clinical Board

Understanding individual needs is key to the IVC way of working – whether it's empathising with a customer's concerns, creating the best working environment or embracing new ideas from our experts.

The IVC Clinical Board highlights the importance we place on respect. We believe it's crucial to hear the views and experiences of veterinarians and keepers – not only to provide a forum for medical issues but also to share this wisdom across the group. We respect every professional's knowledge and always want to share best practices.



We always treat people decently and work to understand their needs

VALUE TWO

Entrepreneurship – we innovate and look for opportunities to succeed in a changing world

Innovation comes from being adaptive and constantly seeking new opportunities for success. This openness to change is why at IVC we put so much effort into supporting autonomy in our clinics and fostering entrepreneurship.

So many of IVC's developments have been initiated by this entrepreneurial spark we so value – from the UK's Pet Health Club to the Netherlands' Regional Clusters, Sweden's state-of-the-art Digital Center and countless others in every one of our locations.



VALUE THREE

Dialogue – we discuss before we decide

It's easy to forget that dialogue means the whole conversation. That listening is just as important as speaking. That real progress is made when we leave room in our day-to-day lives for questions, debate and problem solving.

That's why ongoing, open dialogue plays such a crucial role in our culture at IVC. We employ working groups, clinical boards, advisory boards, nurse committees, intranets, strategic meeting policies and much more across our practices to optimise open dialogue and information sharing.



→ **VALUE FOUR**

Openness — we are trustworthy, we share information, we're open to ideas, we speak our minds

Removing barriers and creating a culture that allows people to question things is extremely important at IVC. We pride ourselves on our transparency and passion for sharing ideas and learning.

This open and curious mindset has resulted in many IVC initiatives. A new intranet in Sweden, which is now being rolled out across all IVC countries, offers a great way for interest groups to share information and for employees to communicate. In the Netherlands, employee satisfaction survey results are being shared across practices.



VALUE FIVE

Engagement — our success depends on the commitment and engagement of our local teams

We firmly believe that if we encourage people to contribute on a local level, they'll feel part of the bigger picture. We want all our employees to participate in as much of our business as possible.

This year has been no exception. In the UK, we brought together our referral vets to shape our referral strategy. In Denmark, we introduced an annual Evidensia Day get-together, as well as numerous social and networking events. In the Netherlands, our volunteer vets coaching programme continues to go from strength to strength.



Our principles

THE IVC BUSINESS IS BUILT AROUND **SIX KEY PRINCIPLES**



1. Investment in your practice

We invest our money in refurbishments, facilities, equipment and technology so you can provide the best possible care for your patients.



2. Clinically led practices

We believe the best practices are led by vets and we want it to stay that way. That's why we place so much emphasis on our Clinical Boards.



3. Belief in people

The success of a practice is down to the individuals that work there. That's why we invest in continuous professional development (CPD) for all IVC staff.



4. An independent spirit

Your clinic is the heart of your community and we want it to stay that way. We always keep the spirit of the original practice intact.



5. Exceptional care

We know your primary concern is delivering the best possible care. That's why IVC practices always put their patients first.



6. Sharing expertise

We're incredibly proud of the depth of talent among our Referral Clinicians, as well as their state-of-the-art facilities.

IVC in numbers

STATISTICS CAN'T TELL INDIVIDUAL STORIES, BUT THEY GIVE AN INDICATION OF JUST HOW MANY PET OWNERS AND FARMERS TRUST US WITH THEIR ANIMALS

BETWEEN JUNE 2017
AND JUNE 2018

301

CLINICS HAVE JOINED US!



THE NUMBER OF MRI AND CT SCANNERS
THE GROUP HAD ACCESS TO IN JUNE 2018



NUMBER OF ANIMAL PATIENTS IN
FINLAND – AND COUNTING

IN THE LAST YEAR

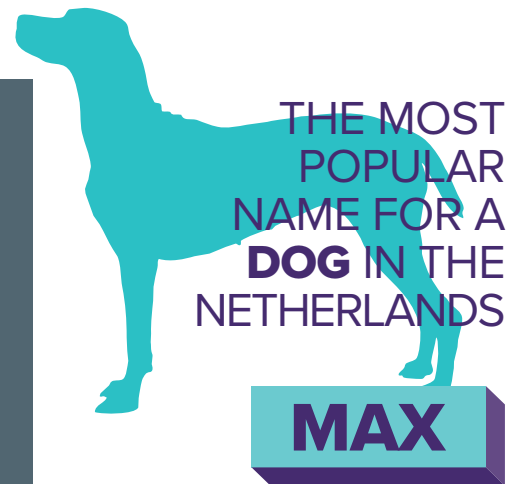
OVER 576,000

PEOPLE HAVE CONSULTED OUR PET
SYMPTOM GUIDE IN SWEDEN



Our Pet Health Club clients visit practices **twice**
as often as non-Pet Health Club clients

IN SHORT, THE
PETS IN OUR
PET HEALTH
CLUB ARE
HEALTHIER,
HAPPIER AND
BETTER
CARED FOR



THE MOST
UNUSUAL
ANIMAL TREATED

BY COUNTRY





“WE’VE ALWAYS PUT OURSELVES AT THE SERVICE OF OUR CLINICS, ENABLING THEM TO PERFORM BETTER” – DAVID HILLIER, CEO

2.3m

CUSTOMERS RELY ON PRACTICES WITHIN THE IVC GROUP TO SERVE THEIR PETS’ HEALTHCARE NEEDS

11,770

...AND COUNTING. THE NUMBER OF IVC EMPLOYEES ACROSS EUROPE CONTINUES TO GROW EACH AND EVERY MONTH

3,229

IVC VETS IN EIGHT COUNTRIES ARE WORKING EVERY DAY, TREATING SMALL ANIMALS, HORSES AND LIVESTOCK

2011

IT’S HARD TO BELIEVE BUT IVC WAS ONLY FORMED SEVEN YEARS AGO, INITIALLY WITH JUST 20 UK PRACTICES



87%

OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN
THE GROUP ARE WOMEN

PET HEALTH
CLUB IS IVC
GROUP'S
BIGGEST
PREVENTATIVE
HEALTHCARE
SCHEME WITH
MORE THAN
A QUARTER
OF A MILLION
MEMBERS

THE MOST
POPULAR NAME
FOR A **CAT** IN
DENMARK



AGE OF THE
OLDEST DOG
TREATED AT AN
IVC CLINIC IN
NETHERLANDS

IN DOG YEARS
THAT'S 161!

BREED – JACK RUSSELL

43

PERCENT



OF OUR
**FINNISH
PRACTICES**
NOW HAVE A
DESIGNATED
'DENTAL VET'

Our Pet Health Club clients **spend 52% more**
annually than non-Pet Health Club clients

IN JULY 13,826
CLIENTS GAVE OUR
UK PRACTICES A
NET PROMOTER
SCORE OF

92.88%



3,191

NUMBER OF
DAYS FOR
STAFF CPD

OCTOBER 2017 – APRIL 2018

878

clinics and hospitals
across eight countries.

And counting...

United Kingdom

624
clinics

IVC's story of incredible
growth started in the UK in
2011 with an initial 20 clinics

NUMBER OF VETS:

 **1,832**



Norway

19
clinics

The Evidensia clinic in Tromsø
is a 2,100km drive north from
the practice in Kristiansand

FULL TIME EMPLOYEES: **288**
INCLUDING **101 VETS**
AND **163 NURSES**

Netherlands

107
clinics

Evidensia in the Netherlands
is launching its own pet
insurance scheme, as well
as running its own online
pharmacy

Switzerland

5
clinics

Bessy's Clinic near Zurich has
a growing reputation for
canine sports medicine

FULL TIME EMPLOYEES: **154**
INCLUDING **68 VETS**
AND **66 NURSES**

Sweden

59
clinics

Evidensia Sweden is investing in digital technologies in order to transform veterinary care

FULL TIME EMPLOYEES: **1418**
INCLUDING **416** VETS
AND **667** NURSES

Finland

43
clinics

Evidensia is strengthening the branding of local clinics while giving them central support

FULL TIME EMPLOYEES: **729**
INCLUDING **215** VETS
AND **378** NURSES

Germany

13
clinics

Facing a skills shortage, Evidensia Germany is training its own specialist surgeons

FULL TIME EMPLOYEES: **575**
INCLUDING **222** VETS
AND **274** NURSES

NUMBER OF NEW ACTIVE
CUSTOMERS IN THE PAST
12 MONTHS:

15,000

Denmark

8
clinics

Veterinary staff in Denmark are learning from each other in a series of surgical residencies

FULL TIME EMPLOYEES: **122**
INCLUDING **45** VETS
AND **62** NURSES

CT scanning is just one of the many advanced diagnostic tools being used by IVC across Europe



Our mission for referral and specialised care

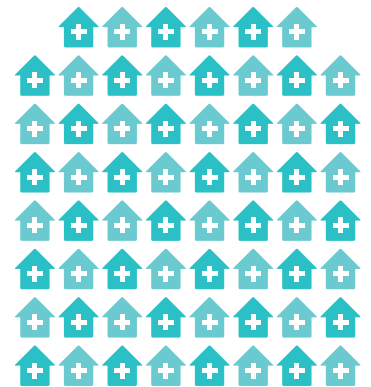
IVC LEADS THE WAY IN DELIVERING **HIGH-QUALITY, SPECIALISED VETERINARY CARE** ACROSS EUROPE

Core to our mission are clinical independence, international cooperation, and continuous education to develop our people and their careers.

We pursue these by developing and investing in centres of excellence, where our specialists and referral vets work together to provide exceptional care in every veterinary discipline. We recruit and support forward-looking clinicians. We involve them in developing our local clinics and in the development of the profession.

Our hospitals also act as learning centres, providing advanced training and support to all our vets and nurses. Furthermore, they offer our first-opinion clinics unrivalled access to advanced diagnostics and treatment, ensuring that our clients and their pets receive the highest levels of personalised care.

62



THE NUMBER OF
REFERRAL CENTRES THE
GROUP HAS ACCESS TO

“Referral and specialised care has always been an important and growing part of the IVC Group. During the coming year, we will be strengthening our efforts even more in this area to capture new opportunities. As such, we will continue to invest in new hospitals, advanced equipment and education programmes. Our strategy will not only transform the profile of our group but will also advance the provision of veterinary medicine in many of our countries”

DAVID HILLIER – CEO, INDEPENDENT VETCARE

Pet Health Club spreads the
cost of checkups and treatment
across monthly payments



United Kingdom

ACCORDING TO **PAUL COWLING**, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, IVC UK, IT'S ALL ABOUT LETTING VETS BE VETS BY MAKING SURE GREAT PEOPLE ARE FREE TO DO GREAT THINGS...



“As of this morning, IVC has 624 UK veterinary practices that employ around 7,500 vets, nurses and reception staff, although the numbers change constantly. I see my job as supporting our teams up and down the country and enabling them to develop their practices. This

includes keeping our people motivated, focused and commercially aware – they are truly the strength of IVC.

We are a diverse business with a broad range of local first-opinion practices and we have excellent referral facilities such as Southern Counties near Ringwood, which deals with surgical referrals from all over the UK.

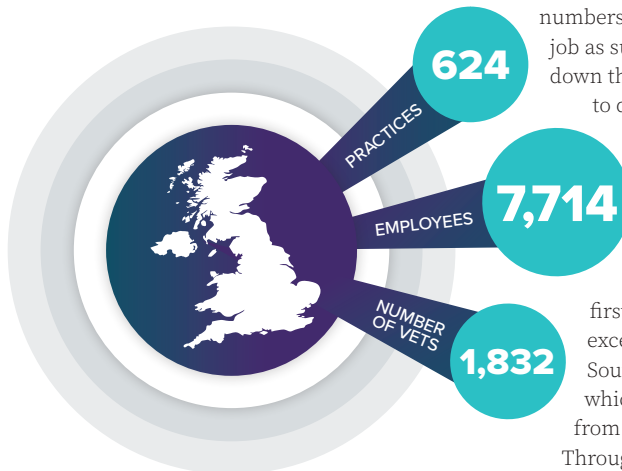
Through acquisitions, IVC has already taken on more than 600 entrepreneurs in the

UK, who each know their practices inside out. We want to learn from them, support them and share best practice across our company.

An example of this would be our Pet Health Club initiative, which helps more than 250,000 clients to spread the cost of treatment. It's also the cornerstone of our wider preventative healthcare plan. If each practice gets both the service quality element and the veterinary care right, this initiative gives us a loyal client base from which to deliver organic growth.

Running a successful practice boils down to three components: happy and motivated staff, engaged and delighted clients, and healthy, well-cared-for pets. Our focus is supporting practices in delivering this vision. I can't think of how we'd do it any other way.”

Paul Cowling
Chief Executive, UK



OUR STORY

A lifetime of learning at IVC

WHEN UNIVERSITY ENDS, A WHOLE CAREER OF LEARNING BEGINS. GROUP VETERINARY ADVISOR **DONALD KINGSNORTH** EXPLAINS HOW IVC IS SUPPORTING BOTH ITS NEWLY QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED VETS

On-the-job training, continuous professional development – call it what you want but learning as you go can be either a blessing or a curse for anyone starting their careers. At its very best, an experienced employee will take a young recruit under their wing and pass on the tricks of the trade learned over a lifetime. At its very worst, on-the-job training can mean a novice stuck out in the middle of nowhere in the dead of night, trying to read a text book by the unsteady light of a torch they're gripping between their teeth.

IVC recognised that newly graduated vets know a lot of theory but still have plenty to learn about putting it into practice. It also acknowledged that softer skills such as working in teams and handling the expectations of pet owners can only ever be gained by experience. That's why, in 2014, it started a two-year graduate training scheme for new vets. Chief Executive Paul Cowling turned to Donald Kingsnorth to help devise and run this programme.

A NEW CHALLENGE

"I had three small animal practices and one equine practice in Surrey that I'd sold to IVC in 2013," says Donald. "Having been in practice for 30 years, I was at a point where I was looking for a new challenge. This graduate training programme offered fresh opportunities for me to re-engage with all those things that you start off with in life – that boundless enthusiasm and belief that



Newly qualified vets are supported by two years of additional training sessions

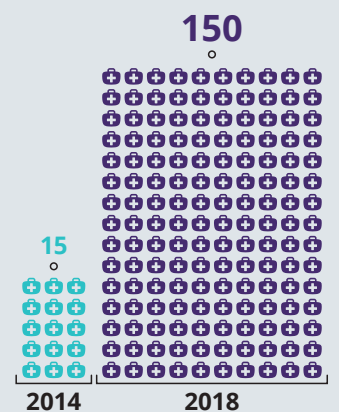
you're doing the right things. So it's been a really, really good time for me."

Working with the senior management team and other Clinical Directors, Donald helped to create a programme that's now in its fourth year. "Our first intake in September 2014 was just 15 young vets," he says. "The current year, starting September 2018, will have around 150. So we've already increased it tenfold!"

All the recruits are fully qualified veterinary surgeons registered with the Royal College who have already been recruited to an IVC practice. Every two months, each 'class' is brought together for a few days of concentrated studies.

"We're very lucky to be able to use the facilities at the University of Warwick for most of these sessions," notes Donald. "They're excellent facilities and the university has been very supportive of what we're trying to do. Much of this is

UK GRADUATE RECRUITS



"We're mindful that we need to be able to support vets in both social skills and coping strategies as well as technical proficiencies"

DONALD KINGSNORTH – GROUP VETERINARY ADVISOR

It takes time and experience to combine clinical skills with customer care



→ specialist training – dentistry or dermatology or ophthalmology – but we also balance that with soft skills. These are areas such as how to consult better, how to manage your time, how to understand the business side and even how to cope with the stress of practice.

“We think the latter is important because being a vet can be a remarkably stressful job. Clients have high expectations and our young vets in particular really feel that pressure and feel terribly responsible for the animals in their care, since the profession tends to attract all these incredibly conscientious people.

“So these sessions happen five times a year, although as a team, we’re seeing graduates every month because we alternate sessions with the first and second years. With this programme, we set out to change an entire mindset by making the first years in veterinary practice more rewarding and productive through day-to-day support and education.”

A EUROPE-WIDE INITIATIVE

Within the company, the graduate training scheme created such a passion for learning that the IVC Academy was created both in the UK and across Europe. This Academy programme now runs a series of two-day education sessions for more experienced vets. Chief Executive Paul Cowling notes, “IVC has already invested heavily in digital X-ray, ultrasound and dental equipment to give vets the equipment they need. With technology moving at pace, one of the exciting challenges has been to give vets the skills to cope with that change, particularly those more experienced, mature vets who might not be aware of such innovations.”

“We’re trying to design a better support structure for people and their careers,” says Donald. “We’re mindful that we need to support them in both social skills and coping strategies as well as technical proficiencies.”

Welcoming new practices to the group



Name: Debbie Partridge
Role: Business Integration Support Manager
Based: Wirral, Merseyside

What do you do at IVC?

I visit practices as they join IVC and act as the interface to take them through the financial processes and to help them settle. I then hand over to their Business Support Manager, but I am always on the end of a phone if needed.

What's been your biggest challenge?

The geographical spread and large number of practices joining us over the last 12 months. I have to navigate around many different practice-management computer systems and we even had one practice without one at all!

What do you most like about your job?

I love meeting new people in our extended family as they join IVC and helping to make the integration into IVC as smooth as possible. Everyone I have met has been so hospitable.

What's the furthest you've travelled?

We have a several practices in Northern Ireland and the very north of Scotland. I love to visit these areas as the scenery is breathtaking and I'm always extended a warm welcome. I'm just waiting for IVC to acquire practices in the Caribbean so that I can visit!

Establishing best practice for veterinary care



Name: Edward Davies
Role: Clinical Director
Based: Holmes Chapel, Cheshire

What do you do at IVC?

I am Clinical Director of CheshirePet, a small animal practice that I started in 1998 and sold to IVC in 2012. We employ 18 staff. In 2004, I purpose-built the building we now work in, and extended it in 2009 and 2017 to contain a physiotherapy centre and hydrotherapy treadmill.

You also sit on IVC's Small Animal Clinical Board. What's that?

Alongside separate Large Animal and Equine Clinical Boards, we oversee many issues including clinical and welfare decisions that affect the group, reporting back to the management team.

Can you give examples?

Large-scale breeding programmes can cause concern – as can the increase in breeding of brachycephalic dogs. We offer advice on how to deal with such potential concerns, and help make our vets aware of issues such as the illegal import of puppies. Our guidance helps IVC vets avoid inadvertently becoming involved in this fraudulent trade.

How does IVC help this work?

Being part of a bigger group enables ease of access to protocols such as clinical guidelines and other information.

INITIATIVE

Stepping up to management

FOUR YEARS AGO, **STRUAN HENDERSON** BECAME CLINICAL DIRECTOR OF CONGLETON VETS IN CHESHIRE. IN HIS OWN WORDS, HERE'S HOW IVC HELPED HIM MAKE THAT STEP FORWARD

THE OPPORTUNITY

"There is little training at UK veterinary schools in business and development, and IVC clearly knows this. That's why they offer lots of support to help vets thrive in these areas.

"I'd been working as a vet for 12 years when the job of Clinical Director came up at Congleton Vets. Although I didn't have the management experience, I felt I was ready for a new challenge. I formally applied for the role. Thankfully this was successful, and Paul Cowling appointed me to the position. He did this with reassurance that should it not end up being a role that suited me, then I could return to my previous employment as a vet only."

THE SUPPORT

"Despite being a corporate group, IVC's model leaves Clinical Directors free to run their business, although help and advice is always available. This support network was a very positive experience for me.

"I'd never dealt with financial budgets before, for example, and knew little about HR and recruitment. However, our Business Support Manager was always there to offer

support and advice, as was our Practice Manager, Melissa Sutton. Our Head Nurse, Jenny Proctor, also has a wealth of experience in the veterinary industry, and so we have been able to draw on each other's strengths, knowledge and experiences. Higher management have also always been available as and when we needed help."

THE OUTCOME

"Since becoming Clinical Director, staff numbers have increased on an annual basis. I have learned that change is inevitable and you constantly need to be able to adapt.

"In the past four years, I've also witnessed IVC evolve and develop. They've introduced Leadership and EMS programmes, as well as their New Grad, Nursing and Receptionist Academies. To me, this commitment to staff at every level is what makes IVC stand out as a unique veterinary employer. They're helping create leaders from within." IVC

Congleton Veterinary Centre:
www.congletonvets.com

4
YEARS AS
CLINICAL
DIRECTOR

12
YEARS AS
PRACTISING
VET



Struan moved to the area to work as a vet and be closer to family, and so felt committed to the practice



As part of IVC, the practice has enjoyed increased investment in new facilities and equipment



Congleton Veterinary Centre is currently celebrating its 10th anniversary

High levels of pet insurance means our Swedish practices can offer exceptional levels of care



Sweden

EVIDENSIA'S COUNTRY MANAGER FOR SWEDEN, **JOHAN WIKLUND**, EXPLAINS HOW THE COMPANY IS MEETING PET OWNERS' DEMANDS FOR HIGH-QUALITY CARE

"Evidensia was founded in 2012 by the merger of four of Sweden's leading specialist hospitals, two of which date back to the 1950s. Today, we have 46 small animal clinics and hospitals plus 13 equine centres and we employ approximately 1,400 people.

Evidensia Sweden has Equine Hospitals that are open 24/7, providing round-the-clock veterinary services. These are situated from the far north right down to the very south of the country.

More than 70% of pet owners have insurance in Sweden and that's one reason why the level of care is so high. We conduct treatments most countries wouldn't be able to offer.

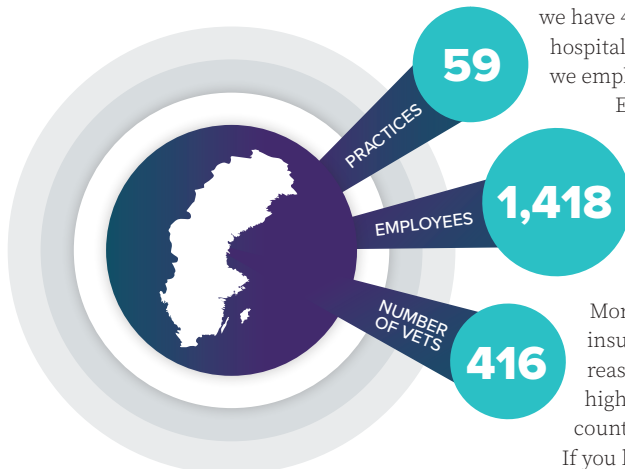
If you look at our revenue, we are by far the second-largest country in the group.

That's because the big-four Swedish hospitals account for 25% of the revenue in the whole of the Nordic region.

What we have been doing in Sweden is build up the professional support functions that any major corporation has. We can now see that clinics and hospitals feel there are experts at a central level that will help them out with the issues they were previously forced to deal with themselves, such as marketing, HR, real estate, IT and procurement.

Our employees' skill, engagement and customer focus is seen and acknowledged every day. Evidensia probably has some of the highest customer satisfaction scores ever recorded in Sweden. This comes from having fantastic colleagues enjoying their work."

Johan Wiklund
Country Manager, Sweden



OUR STORY

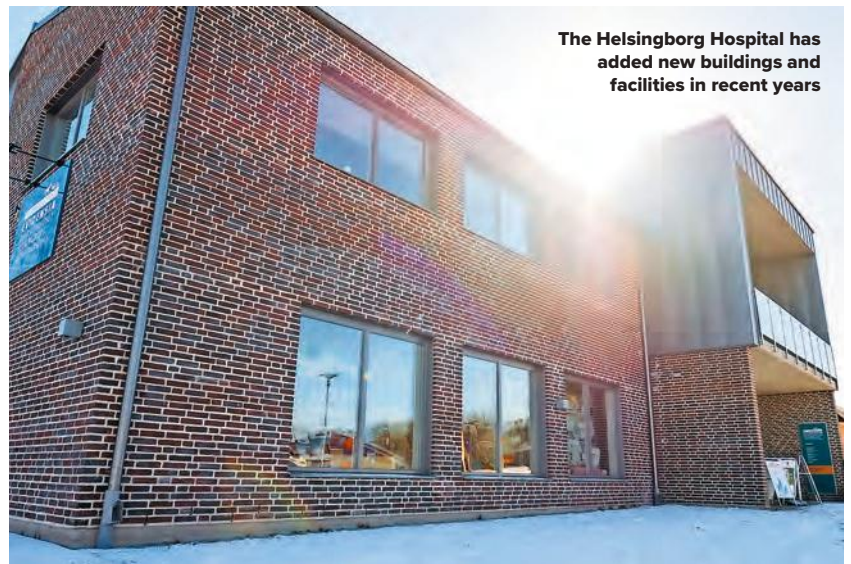
The best of the best

ADVANCED TREATMENTS AND THE HIGHEST STANDARDS ARE ON OFFER AT THE **ANIMAL HOSPITAL AT HELSINGBORG**, ALONG WITH A SENSE OF PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH PETS AND THEIR OWNERS

The Helsingborg Specialist Animal Hospital, the first of its kind in Sweden, opened its doors in 1964. In the years since, the facility has grown to become an internationally recognised centre of excellence, as well as a teaching hospital that treats horses and small animals, and which pioneers new treatments. Its 110 employees, vets and nurses supported by administrative staff, see 27,000 patients a year. “If you work here, you get a top education because of the high standards,” says hospital manager Louise Blomqvist. With a successful time at Helsingborg on your CV, she adds, “You can get a job anywhere.”

But that’s not the only thing that’s special about Helsingborg. As well as being a referral hospital, it’s also a place where pet owners can bring their animals directly for assessment and treatment. “We work with the feeling of a small clinic,” says Blomqvist, “and we have a personal relationship with both the patients and clients that makes me proud.”

This idea of a personal touch can only become more important over time. As in the rest of Europe, Swedes increasingly regard their pets as part of the family, and so they expect the best possible treatment when



The Helsingborg Hospital has added new buildings and facilities in recent years

it’s needed. Many owners research online before they even bring their animals in for treatment, so they expect to be involved in decisions about care. Additionally, in a country where 90% of dogs have medical insurance, there’s huge scope for offering advanced treatments for all customers.

“When you come to us,” says Blomqvist, “you never need to go anywhere else.”

A WORLD LEADER

Even by Sweden’s high standards, the variety and sophistication of the specialist treatments offered at Helsingborg is exceptional. It’s also one of the very few animal hospitals in the world to offer haemodialysis for acute renal failure. “That is a treatment that we maybe do a couple of times a year,” says Blomqvist. “It’s a rather expensive device, but we can save lives.”

The hospital is able to offer this treatment because its status means it’s able to cooperate with a foundation, Foundation Svensk Djursjukvård, to get funding for equipment that may never pay for itself in purely financial terms. This equipment becomes a resource for international specialists and for



Oncology nurse Sara Olsson is part of a team that supports both the pets and their owners



A budget for ongoing education allows all vets to be the best they can be



- use in training. “We have a very important role in Sweden and more widely in the Nordics,” says Blomqvist. “We are supposed to be, and we are, in the absolute forefront of Swedish veterinary medicine. We prioritise the education of our veterinarians in our budget and we do clinical research in the hospital with our own staff, so we are also contributing to new treatment methods.”

REWARDING WORK

Another specialist treatment on offer at Helsingborg is balloon angioplasty to treat heart disease. There’s also a strong emphasis on oncology. It’s not possible to cure cancer in dogs and cats, says Blomqvist, but well-judged treatments can both prolong an animal’s life and give a better quality of life too. According to veterinarian Majbritt Larsen, this work can be hugely rewarding.

“We often hear from others, co-workers and friends that it is depressing and sad to work with cancer patients,” says Larsen. “But we think it is just the opposite! We meet owners who are extremely grateful, and beloved pets that get every chance possible. We shower our furry patients with love and treats and our owners with understanding, and we are supportive of their choices.”

The success of this approach is reflected in the continuing expansion of the hospital, which has added new facilities and buildings over the past two years, a confirmation of its vital role within the wider Swedish veterinary system. Working at the hospital is “intense”, but Blomqvist wouldn’t have it any other way.

“It’s fun. I’ve been here 20 years and we could have a reality show here – so many people and patients have passed through, and they all have different stories. It’s the best job ever, I think, because one day never looks like the other.”

Bringing advanced care to the far north



Name: Elisabeth F Pekkari
Role: Animal Hospital Manager
Based: Gammelstad, northern Sweden

What does your role involve?

The staff are in my first interest area. I make sure that they have equipment and an environment that gives them the opportunity to perform a good job with our patients, but also to serve our animal owners in a good way.

You previously owned the business. How different is it being part of a group?

The great advantage is the power of a large company. It is very interesting to take note of other animal clinics’ financial flows and personnel strategies – the scheduling of veterinarians is an ongoing issue for us.

How do you share experiences?

Within Sweden, we have meetings at different levels. Otherwise, there is a lot of email contact and telephone. I always feel that I get input when I go outside my own hospital.

Why did you decide to extend the site?

What this venture offers is a top modern animal hospital with new treatments that we have not offered in the north before. We have been big, but are becoming even bigger. It also helps us to comply with hygiene requirements.

Supporting patients, their owners and staff too



Name: Susanne Lindahl
Role: Vet, Clinical Director
Based: Västerås, central Sweden

What does your role involve?

Managing the clinic is one part of it and working as a veterinary clinician with small animals is the other. In the clinic, my focus is soft tissue surgery and I mostly see cats and dogs. Managing the clinic involves everything from finances to developing the practice and the staff.

Are there areas of your work that are especially important to you personally?

I naturally have a great interest in my patients and I strive to provide the best care for them, regardless of whether I treat them myself or refer them to a specialist of some sort. In addition, since becoming the Clinical Director in 2016, I also have the opportunity to make a difference by providing opportunities and means for each member of staff to develop and grow.

What support do you get by being part of a larger organisation?

I really appreciate the administrative support. From the clinical perspective, we have a fantastic knowledge network that is available to everyone in the company. For me as a clinician, the ongoing work to enhance the quality of care through continuing education is essential, as it allows me to keep up with the latest in the veterinary medical field.

INITIATIVE

Ahead of the curve

EVIDENSIA SWEDEN HAS DECIDED TO TAKE THE BIG STEP OF DEVELOPING A NUMBER OF **DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES** THAT, TAKEN TOGETHER, HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO TRANSFORM VETERINARY CARE

Sweden has one of the world's most advanced digital economies. It follows that veterinary care needs to use available technologies to offer the kind of quick, responsive and personalised services that customers now expect from every kind of business. That's why Evidensia Sweden is investing in digital technologies as a way to help its staff work more efficiently, to improve business processes, and to serve both customers and patients.

Thanks to recent investment, most of Evidensia's clinics and hospitals now use Provet Cloud, a practice management system, or journal system as it's called in Scandinavia. In addition, the company has been rolling out a digital X-ray archiving system so that it's quick and simple to get a second opinion from an expert colleague in a different location. We have also introduced a company intranet where staff can connect to share knowledge and debate issues.

A common theme with all of these initiatives is the idea of linking colleagues so they can have access to the same data. But sharing isn't confined to staff and internal processes. There's also been investment in a new Digital Centre. Here, staff are developing an online pet healthcare guide where owners can access information on symptoms and diseases, an online pharmacy and ecommerce site, and even an online

consultation service, where customers can book an appointment to consult with a veterinarian via smartphone video.

With these kinds of developments, says Project Manager Daniel Collby, "We are leaping ahead of many other business sectors. You cannot drive this any quicker than we are already doing." Collby has achieved this by getting projects up and running quickly, rather than spending a long time planning and overanalysing what might be possible.

EXPONENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

Taken together, the rapid rollout of these digital projects has the potential to be transformative, particularly as it gives Evidensia access to rich data that can be analysed to help improve care. Complication reporting, for example, can be done directly through Provet Cloud. "We can analyse data and see if certain complications tend to occur in certain regions or at certain times of the day, so it can be used for improving quality," says Country Manager Johan Wiklund.

Many of these techniques and technologies draw on human medicine, where they've been tried and tested. This holds out the potential for exponential improvements in animal care. "We've picked a time in history where we're going to take this giant leap in what we can do," says Wiklund, "it's like going from no phone to iPhone!" **ivc**



Digital transformation will allow cradle-to-grave documentation of every pet



Regular appointments can be handled quickly and efficiently with better patient data




There's always a human side to IT innovation as staff need the training to make the most of it



Digital medical records allow second opinions from off-site colleagues



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark blue uniform, is smiling and holding a small brown and white puppy. The puppy is looking directly at the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

“Many businesses have a top-down philosophy, that’s not us at all. We believe the best veterinary practices are those led by local teams”

DAVID HILLIER – CEO, IVC

A rapid expansion into the Netherlands has been backed by investment in facilities and equipment



The Netherlands

IN THE NETHERLANDS, EVIDENSIA HAS TRIPLED IN SIZE IN A SINGLE YEAR. **MICHEL VAN SILFHOUT** REFLECTS ON A TUMULTUOUS YEAR AS WELL AS LOOKING AHEAD



“With a background of being a vet and a manager, I joined Evidensia Netherlands at the beginning of last year. The group had just launched and we have done a lot in the first year. We’re growing so quickly, with 107 clinics at the moment, 15 of which we opened in July alone, and I think we grew at around 300% in the first year. While that’s fantastic, it’s also a big challenge for us.

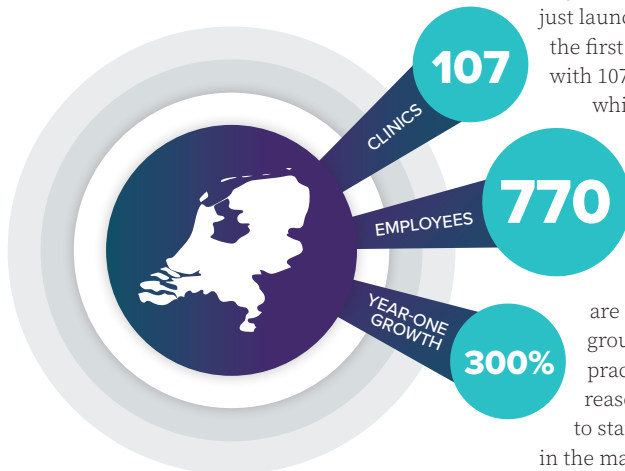
We started with strategy work, discussing who we are and why we are together as a group. You can have a veterinary practice stand alone for lots of reasons, so why should we choose to stand together? What’s changing in the market? We formulated our vision along with a plan for the year. That vision can

be summarised in two words: ‘better together’. We aimed to increase quality by leveraging the cooperation in our group and keeping local clinical freedom.

Once we knew that, we started to build support services and processes as well as investing in projects, clinics and new referral hospitals. By last summer, we had some good feedback and I asked people to start with actively telling our story in the market. We started to gain traction and from then on, it feels as if we’ve been running at full speed.

The challenge for the coming year is to maintain the healthy balance between growth and high standards. It’s been an amazing year and I believe that we are building a group where we can all be ‘better together.’”

Michiel van Silfhout
Country Manager, the Netherlands



OUR STORY

Thinking big, acting locally

EVIDENSIA IS EXPANDING RAPIDLY IN THE NETHERLANDS, YET THIS ISN'T A PROCESS THAT'S CENTRALLY DIRECTED. **LEADING THE WAY** INSTEAD ARE A SERIES OF LOCAL INITIATIVES BASED ON DAY-TO-DAY NEEDS

The nature of working life is changing. Where most of us used to work in top-down, hierarchical organisations, new business models emphasise autonomy, local decision-making and flexibility. Such changes are being embraced by Evidensia in the Netherlands, says Country Manager Michiel van Silfhout. "It starts by building an organisation where there are a lot of formal and informal communication lines, combined with mandates for people to be entrepreneurial and have clinical freedom."

The apposite word here is 'starts'. When Evidensia moved into the Netherlands in 2016, it was in many respects like a start-up. With no established structure in place, just a few clinics and with ambitious plans for expansion, there was a huge opportunity to build from scratch. "We didn't yet have any processes, strategy or story," says van Silfhout. "It was really an empty playground to start with, so we could shape the company in the way we wanted."

To make the most of this opportunity to break fresh ground, the team worked out an overarching strategy based on three main changes in the market. To address the challenges of a changing market, with



Across Europe, the expectation of higher standards from pet owners is driving change

customers asking for higher standards of pet care and employees asking to work fewer emergency hours, the team in the Netherlands settled on a hub-and-spoke model. "Our referral hospitals can support our clinics in advanced medical care and cover for emergency work over nights and weekends," says Marc Maas, a senior Clinical Manager who has been overseeing the building of a new Evidensia hub hospital in Hart van Brabant.

To give veterinarians and managers such as Maas the best chance of success, it's not enough just to emphasise local decision-making. There also needs to be strong support from the centre that goes beyond a strategic vision. So, for example, Evidensia in the Netherlands currently employs its own architect in order to build the new locations.

"We have also hired and welcomed eight new Diplomates to the group since last summer. They help to build our hospitals and in training our staff. We had an evening a fortnight ago where all the different hospital-building projects came together. We shared the drawings, we shared good ideas and we said, 'Actually if you combine your X-ray with



"Our referral hospitals can support our clinics in advanced medical care and cover for emergency work at weekends"

MARC MAAS – SENIOR CLINICAL MANAGER



The hub-and-spoke model addresses 24/7 cover as well as staff demands for a work/life balance



Evidensia's hands-off approach lets vets be vets

→ your surgery room, it's very easy because you can do X, Y, Z, which is creating real synergy."

There are other practical advantages to such an approach. Evidensia can make economies of scale in the supply chain by working across multiple projects, and can also build ongoing relationships with construction specialists that understand the demands of clinics and suppliers of medical equipment.

LOCAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

It's also important that people are able to discuss not just specific projects but shared areas of interest. "All the Clinical Directors meet every four months," says van Silfhout. "We share information, have workshops and good discussions, and there is also time to get to know each other further during breaks and dinner afterwards. We have also started to organise regional meetings for all our staff. Many initiatives have been started by small groups within the organisation, often locally."

Inevitably, sometimes initiatives won't work. "On some levels, we do make the same mistake twice because we don't enforce things centrally," admits van Silfhout. It is he thinks, a small price to pay for creating an organisation where staff feel empowered and don't have to constantly react to head office pronouncements, instead being entrepreneurial themselves.

"Many initiatives have been started by small groups within the organisation"

MICHEL VAN SILFHOUT – COUNTRY MANAGER

Bringing new skills and fresh talent to the group



Name: Marc Maas
Role: Clinical Director
Based: Waalwijk, southern Netherlands

What's your role within Evidensia?

We have a large clinic and recently built a hospital for emergency veterinary medicine. We also have two clinics in big pet shops that I manage on a day-to-day basis. We were also very busy last year with the building of the new hospital.

What do your clinics specialise in?

We are doing a lot of orthopaedic and soft-tissue surgery, medical imaging (CT, X-ray, ultrasound), oncology, rehab and physiotherapy, dermatology, internal medicine and dentistry. We are now in the process of developing neurology and emergency medicine.

How has Evidensia's rapid expansion affected you?

Since we face so many challenges, vets and other staff can see that they can have a career with us, from first-line vet medicine to specialisation at our clinic and the Evidensia Academy, or even managing a clinic of their own. That is why we can recruit new vets and nurses or technicians – our staff are motivated to make it a success. I'm proud to see how successful the group is. The organisation is growing fast. It feels like a start-up company – very positive!

Promoting a culture of continuous learning



Name: Robert Favier
Role: Head of Academy, NL
Based: Utrecht

What is your background?

Until a year ago, I was Head of the Masters Programme of Companion Animal Medicine at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Utrecht University. I had noticed that when undergraduates entered practice, they received little more formal education.

How did you end up with Evidensia?

I decided to send an email to ask if Evidensia could work with me? Within ten minutes, I got an answer... yes! I am now Head of Academy for three days a week. The other two days I spend in the referral hospital as an internal medicine specialist. I joined Evidensia to have the freedom to create educational programmes, and to work with fantastic specialists and trainers to deliver these.

What does your programme offer?

The course has two elements. One is personal development, the other is in veterinary skills. I decided to start with the outcome: what should someone know or be able to do when we put them through an educational programme, where does it end? My motto is making continuing education sustainable – by that I mean that people retain knowledge and skills that are offered to them.

INITIATIVE

Increased cover



PETS WITH INSURANCE ARE MORE LIKELY TO RECEIVE THE BEST TREATMENT. IN THE EVENT OF **SERIOUS ILLNESSES OR ACCIDENTS**, EVIDENSIA IN THE NETHERLANDS IS TRYING TO ENSURE THAT MORE PETS ARE PROTECTED



Pet owners in the Netherlands want their animals to receive treatment that's on par with what a human member of the family might receive. Veterinarian clinics have responded to this development. Clinical Director Marc Maas can remember that 15 years ago when he had a knee injury, the quality of the technology was such that the ultrasound scan didn't reveal much. Today's kit is much more sophisticated and useful, and it's not just human patients that are benefiting.

"These days, an average first-line clinic has ultrasound and a vet trained to use the equipment," he says. "There's also X-ray, dental X-ray and even complex lab equipment in most clinics. That's a huge amount of knowledge and technology on offer."

But this kind of technology doesn't come cheap. While some of the cost can be offset by economies of scale, with referral hospitals offering certain services on behalf of clinics, that's never going to be the whole answer.

Pet insurance has a part to play but, in the Netherlands, there's a problem. Only around 3-4% of pets are covered by insurance, which can force owners to choose between paying a huge bill or refusing pet treatment.

To try to counter this, Evidensia recently soft-launched its own insurance product in

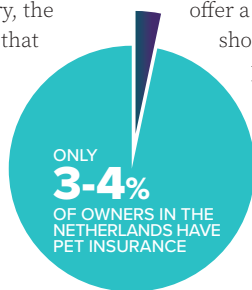
eight clinics. "We basically launched a white label product based on an existing product, because an insurer I would say is a different role to a veterinarian," says van Silfhout.

To do this, Evidensia went to a number of providers to look for a company that could offer a low-cost product where "everything should be very easy to use, no small print in the conditions". This was especially important because

pet insurance has a chequered history in the Netherlands. When it was first rolled out, says Marc Maas, "The insurance companies made the mistake of pricing it too low and then had to add a lot of small-print conditions and pricing

increases. There were a lot of vets taking advantage, so there were blacklists of vets not being eligible and a lot of negative press surrounding all of this. So we wanted to start with a clean sheet and a reliable product that we support."

If this initiative works, and the scheme was rolled out more widely in June, more pet owners will at last be able to afford state-of-the-art treatments. "The spend of an insured customer is significantly higher than with an uninsured one," notes van Silfhout, which holds out the promise of longer-lived pets enjoying better recovery rates and an all-round better standard of life. **IVC**



Evidensia's insurance plan puts treatment and payment into a single package



Finland

IN FINLAND, EVIDENSIA IS EMPOWERING LOCAL VETS AND MANAGERS BY ENCOURAGING A CULTURE OF OPENNESS. COUNTRY MANAGER **JUKKA TOIVANEN** EXPLAINS WHY

“We have been the largest veterinary chain in Finland since spring 2015. Evidensia now has over 700 employees, with 43 clinics, six of which are animal hospitals.

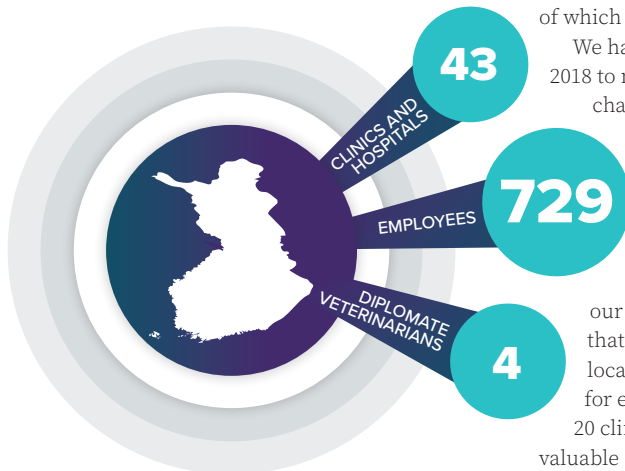
We have made big changes during 2018 to move away from a centralised chain model. As part of this new strategy, both myself and Vice President, Anssi Tast, have been out discussing our new ideas with our staff and getting feedback from them.

We want to show both our personnel and customers that our local clinics are run by local vets. To achieve this we are, for example, supporting almost 20 clinics in taking back their valuable and well-known original brands from the time before chains.

We have very talented vets leading our clinics, but not all of our Clinical Directors have that much experience when it comes to running a company. That’s why we want to make sure that we are supporting them continuously to be better leaders by offering them training courses. We want to make sure that both our Clinical Directors and Practice Managers have good knowledge in both – leading people and running a business.

One of our values is openness. We want to be open both to our personnel and to our customers by always listening to them. We also want to have open, ongoing discussions with our vets and nurses so that together, we can make Evidensia Finland the best place to work for veterinary professionals.”

Jukka Toivanen
Country Manager, Finland



OUR STORY

Round-the-clock care

THE OPENING OF THE NEW **VETTORI HOSPITAL IN RAISIO** MEANS THAT LOCALS NOW HAVE ACCESS TO 24/7 CARE FOR THEIR ANIMALS, SOMETHING FOR WHICH THERE'S AN INCREASING DEMAND IN FINLAND

People's attitudes towards their pets are changing in Finland. Anssi Tast, Evidensia Finland's Vice President, says that two decades ago, "It was still very much 'animals are animals' so they get a certain kind of treatment."

Not today though. "It is very obvious these pet animals are family members," he notes. "They are treated in the same way you would expect to treat your child, or anybody else in the family. We have to handle them in a very sympathetic way always, and we have to understand that our pet owners love their pets. This is one of the mega-trends – that people are humanising pets."

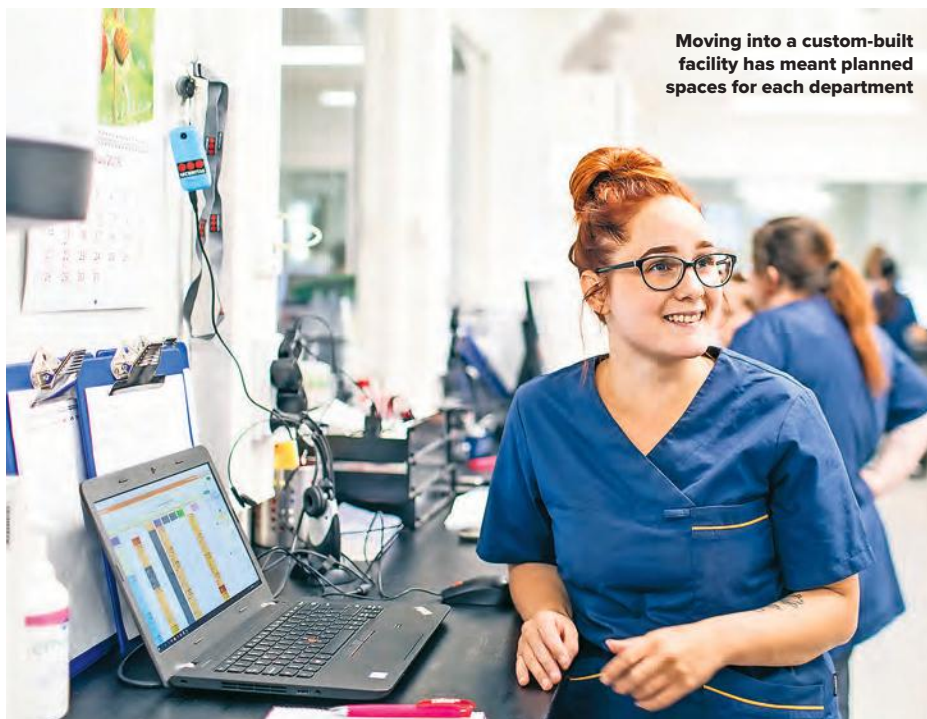
NEW EQUIPMENT

In turn, this has meant that animal hospitals in particular have had to offer state-of-the-art facilities that, just a few short years ago, would have been considered the preserve of highly specialised university facilities – or even

confined to hospitals servicing the needs of human patients.

That's exactly what Evidensia has been providing in Raisio in the south-west of Finland, since it opened its new Vettori animal hospital in May 2018. The facility is conveniently located at a town centre site, yet it's also close to a large park area. The local clinicians who initially identified a need for the facility drove the process. With support from Evidensia's head office, it took just six months to build the new hospital and then get it ready to receive patients.

The hospital was needed, in part, because there has been an obvious and increasing demand for facilities that are open all day, every day. "The old premises were too small to extend our services to 24/7 because if you have 24/7 services, you need kennel areas for dogs and for cats," says Tast. "And of course there's the need for operating theatres. Since we didn't have the space, we had to build it all."



Moving into a custom-built facility has meant planned spaces for each department



Being staffed 24/7 allows emergency procedures and extended aftercare

Clinical Director Mikael Granholm in the new Raisio Vettori hospital



→ Not just kennels and operating theatres, either, but X-ray and scanning equipment too. “That’s important,” says Tast, “because once you become known as a 24/7 hospital, you must be ready to take in more demanding referral cases.”

“Out-of-hours work is mostly emergency cases, but some animals need a longer period of intensive care that requires vets and nurses to be around,” adds Evidensia Finland’s Country Manager, Jukka Toivanen.

LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTRACT

The client list for the new hospital also includes the authorities in the nearby city of Turku. In Finland, local government has a statutory duty to organise first aid for pets and farm animals, so Turku purchases on-call services from the Vettori hospital.

The Vettori facility is Evidensia’s third 24/7 hospital in Finland and the company is looking to increase that number. Evidensia is planning a second hospital in Helsinki and is currently building a new hospital in Oulu, Finland’s fifth-largest city.

This is just the start. “We are really looking at a map and the population densities around Finland, for where we are going to open new 24/7 hospitals,” says Tast. That’s good news for Finnish pet owners, who want state-of-the-art, round-the-clock care for their animals.

“Once you become known as a 24/7 hospital, you must be ready to take in more demanding cases”

Helping staff with career development



Name: Jan Rähä

Role: Group Veterinary Advisor

Based: Espoo, southern Finland

What do you do at Evidensia?

I chair our clinical board, have been involved in planning the layouts of some clinic expansions and I help out with surgery. I just spent two days in a practice in northern Finland going through some surgical procedures with them that they were uncomfortable with.

What are the advantages of being part of a large group like Evidensia?

One advantage, especially for nurses, is advancing to other positions. If you’re a nurse in a single clinic, you either work there or you don’t. Now, with this organisation, there are all kinds of other positions you can work in. Even if you get allergic to animals, you can still stay within the business and do something within the central organisation!

Are there similar benefits for vets?

If you work as a rural country vet, it can be a very lonely occupation, plus you don’t get to meet colleagues or educate yourself that much. Working in these bigger units really expands your views on veterinary medicine. There’s also the possibility of visiting other practices, not only in your own country but, I hope, abroad too. We’re already looking at exchange programme initiatives.

Keeping a healthy work/life balance



Name: Ari Suhonen

Role: Clinical Director

Based: Kerava, southern Finland

What’s your role?

I work as both an orthopaedic surgeon and a Clinical Director. This lets me use hands-on skills as well as perform admin tasks, which I handle alongside our Practice Manager. It’s great that she’s so proficient since I’ve never been a Clinical Director before, so it’s all new to me.

Do you get strong support?

It feels there’s a strong understanding of what we do and, of course, it helps that the Vice President, Anssi Tast, is also a surgeon. If some equipment isn’t working, for instance, there will be an understanding of why we need to spend money to replace it. On the management side, we have been taught to focus on being a local clinic, so we’ve pushed local marketing and we’re already seeing some good results. In this way, I feel that I can affect things directly.

Right now, you’re a stay-at-home dad. How’s your work/life balance?

I know that the clinic manages without me but sometimes, it’s hard to stay away! I have the feeling that it’s *our* clinic, not just a place I work. Right now, I’m very happy. I want to continue my professional education and I think there will be chances to do so in the future.

INITIATIVE

Spreading knowledge

ONE PRESSING ISSUE WITHIN HUMAN AND ANIMAL MEDICINE IS **EXCESSIVE ANTIBIOTIC USE**. IN FINLAND, EVIDENSIA IS TAKING PRACTICAL STEPS TO MINIMISE THEIR IMPACT

The number of antibiotic-resistant bacteria is on the rise while, at the same time, new forms of antibiotic to treat so-called superbugs are coming to market less and less frequently. One solution that at least buys us time to develop new treatments is to reduce the amount of antibiotics being administered. This will mean a reduced likelihood of microbes developing resistance.

This is an approach that's being taken extremely seriously in Finland. "We have very strict policies in using antibiotics," says Anssi Tast, Evidensia Finland's Vice President. "We follow a similar approach to that in human medicine, where we want to be absolutely sure there is a real need for antibiotics before we use them." Microbes that develop resistance to antibiotics, he notes, "don't understand if they are killing animals or humans."

PRIORITISING HYGIENE

This approach goes beyond limiting prescriptions to promoting the highest-possible hygiene standards. When Evidensia builds new facilities, for example, its operating theatres have air-conditioning systems that keep the pressure higher than in surrounding rooms. This prevents the flow of air from less sterile areas into more sterile ones.

"You also have to have a separate area where you prepare animals for surgery that's not used for anything else," adds Tast. "So if you have a skin infection in a dog, you are not bringing these animals into a sterile area. You



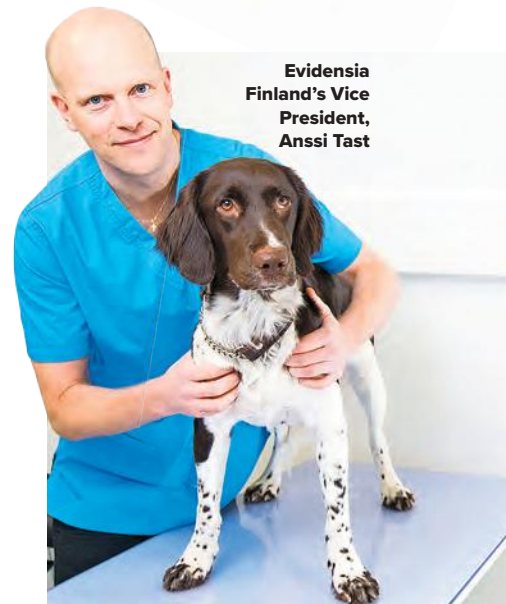
Overpressure created by air-con systems helps to maintain operating theatre sterility

have to have different kinds of areas where you are treating infectious patients and ones for clean operations, where you don't handle infected wounds or anything like that.

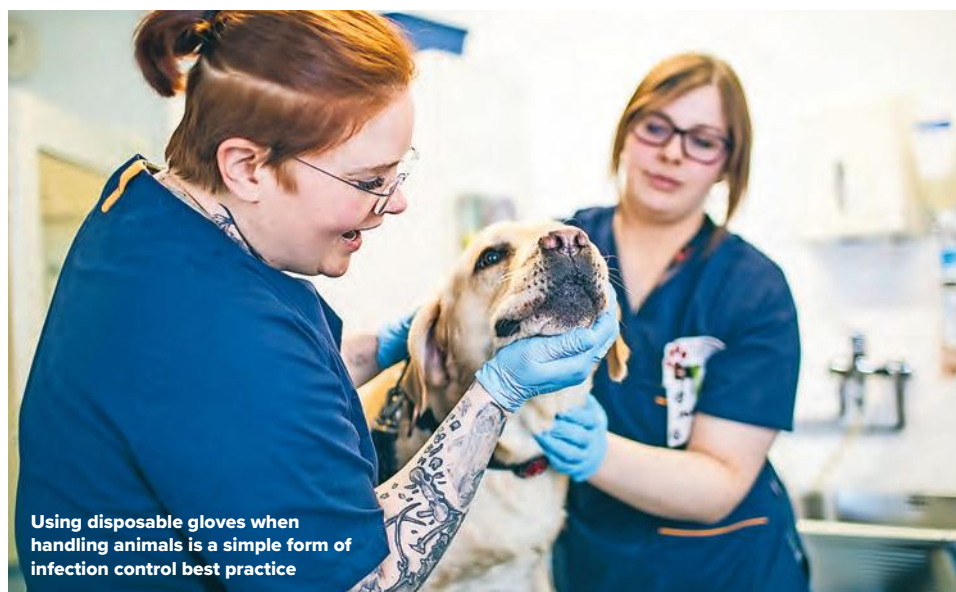
"It's also about the handling of animals, because the biggest risk is that you spread microbes when you touch the animal and you do not protect yourself. If you are not using gloves and then you, for example, touch a skin infection or an infected ear, you could subsequently spread infection around the clinic as you touch equipment."

A group of vets and nurses from Evidensia has worked on identifying and promoting good hygiene practice in clinics and hospitals, which they have detailed in a booklet. The aim isn't just to spread best practice among Evidensia staff, but into the wider veterinary community and across the whole country.

"This booklet has now reached all the Evidensia clinics but we want to take a little more responsibility about this issue in Finland as a whole," says Tast. "We have actually published our hygiene booklet so that every single veterinarian in Finland can use it freely."



Evidensia Finland's Vice President, Anssi Tast



Using disposable gloves when handling animals is a simple form of infection control best practice

**“We work with the feeling
of a small clinic and we have
a personal relationship with
both the patients and clients
that makes me proud”**

LOUISE BLOMQVIST – MANAGER, HELSINGBORG SPECIALIST ANIMAL HOSPITAL







While the animal is the patient, no vet can ever forget to take the owners' worries into account when discussing treatment options



Germany



WHEN THE CUSTOMER GETS TO CHOOSE, SERVICE IS EVERYTHING. **DR CHRISTOPH DÄNZER**, EVIDENSIA'S DACH REGION CEO, ON WHY IT PAYS TO GET THE DETAILS RIGHT

"Evidensia operates in the DACH region – that's Germany, Switzerland and Austria – although we're currently not active in the latter. The company made its first acquisitions in 2015 and exclusively serves customers with pets, with no equine or farming practices.

This dedication to small animals makes us conscious that although veterinary medicine is a healthcare service, it's also still a service industry.

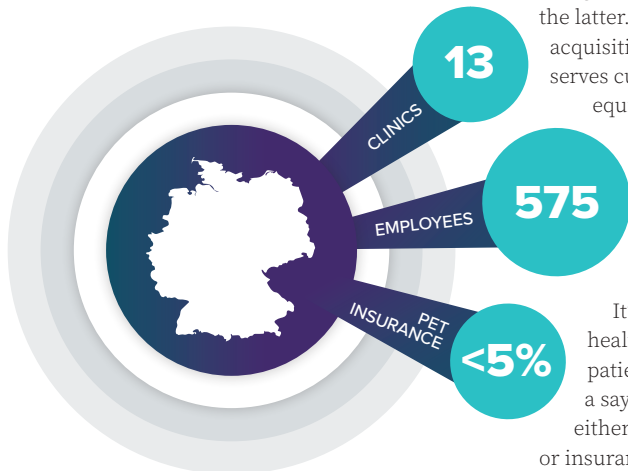
It's not like in the human healthcare sector, where the patient doesn't have much of a say about treatment because either a national health service or insurance company covers the costs.

In Germany and Switzerland, where pet

insurance rates are below 5%, vet fees are mostly out of pocket. This means we need to give every customer a good experience with high-quality veterinary care, friendly staff, and with fair and transparent fees.

One of the many benefits of established practices becoming part of Evidensia is that we can offer them support in maintaining such high levels of service by supporting them in marketing, HR, procurement and finance. We also discuss key priorities for the coming year. What might be a good and sustainable addition to our offering? What kind of digital presence do we want? Such initiatives are easier to implement as a group. There's much to consider but when we work together to get it right, our customers will keep coming back."

Dr Christoph Dänzer
CEO, Evidensia DACH region



OUR STORY

Seeing the unseeable

THE NORDERSTEDT CLINIC IS GERMANY'S ONLY PRIVATELY OWNED FACILITY LICENSED TO PERFORM **VETERINARY NUCLEAR MEDICINE** PROCEDURES. PROFESSOR RAFAEL NICKEL EXPLAINS ITS MANY USES AND THEIR BENEFITS

Across all of Germany, only the University of Giessen and Evidensia's Tierärztliche Klinik Norderstedt are approved to perform clinical procedures using radioactive pharmaceuticals. Once you consider all the rules and regulations involved, that's hardly surprising. Certification to store, handle and dispense these materials requires users to be specially trained, while the facilities themselves must be properly constructed, secured and shielded. Finally, staff must constantly wear personal dosage devices that monitor radiation.

To the general public, X-rays of broken bones are the only medical use of radiation, with maybe a few people also considering CT scanners or cancer-treating radiotherapy. Yet for Prof. Rafael Nickel and his colleagues at Norderstedt, nuclear medicine has a broad range of uses, from non-invasive imaging of organ function and measurement to long-lasting treatment of various ailments.

"Radioactive substances can be injected for diagnostic purposes," Rafael explains. "By placing the slightly sedated animal on a glass table, a gamma camera can track the flowing or the incorporation of these substances



Nuclear medicine is used in both the diagnosis of conditions and as treatment

in, for example, the joints or the kidneys or the liver, revealing physiological as well as pathological processes." This can allow diagnosis of obscure lameness in animals by imaging bones, but also decreased liver or kidney function in soft tissue.

RADIATION TREATMENT

Nuclear medicine can also be used for treatment, with the clinic regularly treating cats with hyperthyroidism, more commonly known as a 'hyperactive thyroid'.

"It's a surprisingly common condition in cats," notes Rafael, "and while there are drugs to control the symptoms, the best results for long-term survival are achieved with radioiodine injections, which go straight to the thyroid and destroy only the diseased thyroid tissue."

For the time of radioactive decay, each cat becomes the (possibly unwilling) guest of the nuclear medicine department. "By law, each animal must be considered a radioactive source until its levels drop, so it must stay in a specialised ward. Because of this, and because of the low rates of pet insurance in Germany, →

NORDERSTEDT CLINIC

Location: Hamburg, Germany

Staff: Around 30 vets, 40 nurses, eight receptionists and four administrators

Pets treated: Approx. 19,000 consultations per year

Surgeries: Typically 2,500 operations per year

Although located close to Hamburg, Norderstedt Clinic also treats referrals from all of northern Germany. As one of a handful of veterinary clinics practicing nuclear medicine, it also handles specialist cases from other European countries.



The Norderstedt facility looks unassuming yet it offers highly specialised treatment



→ if your cat has to stay with us for around ten days, the cost of the treatment can be as much as €1,800, which of course many owners are still willing to pay in order to help their cat.”

TARGETING JOINT PAIN

Providing another longer-lasting alternative to drug treatment, radiosynoviorthesis uses radiation to relieve joint pain through the targeted obliteration of inflamed tissue layers. Replacing frequent cortisone injections, a weak radioactive substance has a far more prolonged effect on the joint capsule, reducing fluid production and its associated pain. “It’s not very well known that this procedure is helpful,” notes Rafael, “so we actually published a paper about this treatment to increase awareness.”

Yet with its 18 years of experience in nuclear medicine, awareness of the Norderstedt Clinic and its nuclear medicine programme is already impressively high. Vets all around Germany, Holland and even Denmark regularly refer animals for treatment there. “Despite our good reputation, we still regularly present at conferences to other veterinarians,” admits Rafael. “What we do is so specialised that, with the most usual search terms, most vets going online to research treatments for certain conditions will tend to find us quickly.”

“By law, each animal must be considered a radioactive source until its levels drop”

PROFESSOR RAFAEL NICKEL – NORDERSTEDT CLINIC

Continuing a family tradition of vet care



Name: Florian Köhler

Role: Surgeon and Clinic Director

Based: Betzdorf, Rhineland

What do you do within Evidensia?

I’m a veterinarian surgeon with an emphasis on orthopaedic surgery. Since 2017, I have also been Managing Director of a practice that serves Betzdorf, a town of about 25,000 people located in a rural region east of Cologne.

You have family ties to your clinic?

Yes, I’d been employed by my father as an assistant vet since 2004. In mid-2016, my father handed over all business and medical responsibilities to my colleague, Andreas Borggräfe, and me.

How has Evidensia helped the clinic?

Tierklinik Betzdorf started in 1981 and had grown enough to be recognised as an animal hospital by 2010. It now employs more than 50 staff, so Evidensia’s active and successful support of investments into expanding our service offering and developing our quality management systems have been both welcome and timely.

Has the family-run dynamic changed?

Not culturally. However, business procedures have changed profoundly, and better work flows have increased service levels and productivity.

Expanding a business with group backing



Name: Dr Kay Schmerbach (left) and Dr Robert Höpfner (right)

Role: Surgeon and Cardiologist, Clinic Directors

Based: Berlin, Germany

What do you do within Evidensia?

We are specialists and also Managing Directors at the Kleintierspezialisten referral centre, which offers surgery, ophthalmology, oncology, internal medicine, neurology and cardiology.

You are currently expanding the clinic.

Yes, we founded it in 2012 and are in the process of building it up from 730 square metres to 1,100, with work finishing in summer 2018.

Is the building work why you decided to join Evidensia?

We were already on a strong expansion programme, so no. We were more impressed by the idea of working more closely with other professionals at other clinics and to develop veterinary medicine within a strong group.

And how’s it all working out for you?

We sold in January 2017, a young clinic in the growing phase. This growth has continued, with sales increasing at around 20% per year. The support of Evidensia makes it easier to focus on veterinary care. They also help to improve our business administration.

INITIATIVE

Skills for the next generation

WITH PET OWNER EXPECTATIONS AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH, THE VETERINARY SECTOR FACES A SKILLS SHORTAGE. THAT'S WHY EVIDENSIA GERMANY ISN'T JUST RECRUITING **SPECIALIST SURGEONS**, IT'S ALSO TRAINING THEM

The weather is baking when we speak to Dr Frank Wagner of the Tierärztliche Klinik Norderstedt. Despite this, work continues for the two resident surgeons he supervises. They've worked with Dr Wagner and his colleague, Professor Rafael Nickel, for three years now, learning soft-tissue and orthopaedic surgery skills. Although one of the residencies ended in July, there's an exam on the horizon, while the other resident has another year of training to complete.

"The Board Exam takes place every February at the University of Zurich lecture halls," explains Frank. "Everyone agrees you need several months to prepare for it – universities advise six – which is why they've finished work now."

The residents are working towards becoming 'Diplomates', a status created by the European College of Veterinary Surgeons. Achieving this requires supervision by recognised specialists at certified facilities. While these are mostly at universities, Norderstedt is one of the few private clinics that also fits the bill. Extensively equipped, staffed by Diplomates and located close to Hamburg, it sees a varied caseload that gives the residents plenty of learning experience.

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Increased owner expectation is driving this need for more specialised surgeons. "Nowadays, more is technically possible and owners are willing to spend more money for veterinary health care," says Frank. "Residency programmes exist, and people are keen to get on them, because they give them an excellent chance on the job market. From Evidensia's viewpoint, there are no highly trained vets hanging around on the street waiting to be recruited. That was why we said, 'Okay, for the future, maybe it's better to try and educate our own surgeons.'"

Yet the Diplomat programme represents a considerable investment. As well as the three years of supervised work, each resident must spend eight weeks of rotation in anaesthesia,



Surgical training attracts ambitious and talented vets

pathology, internal medicine and diagnostic imaging. "We have sent them to universities in Zurich, Vienna and so on," says Frank, "which of course involves travel costs. They also have time off to prepare presentations, write articles, etc. That's a lot of paid time off."

Of course, Evidensia doesn't know what each vet will do once they achieve Diplomat status. "They could say, 'Thanks for the last three years, now I'm going to the UK.' But that's the risk we are prepared to take because otherwise you have to find surgeons on the job market, which is currently very challenging."

By taking that risk, Evidensia is investing in the European veterinary sector. The hope is that, with a culture of openness and great career opportunities, this talent will remain within Evidensia for decades to come. **IVC**

"There are no highly trained vets hanging around waiting to be recruited, so we decided to train our own surgeons"

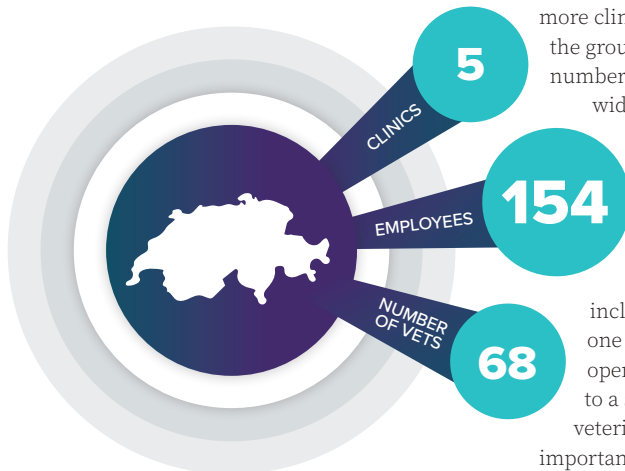
DR FRANK WAGNER – SURGEON

Evidensia in Switzerland
aims to help its clinics
build on reputations
established over years



Switzerland

DACH REGION CEO **DR CHRISTOPH DÄNZER** EXPLAINS
HOW PRACTICE OWNERS CAN ENSURE CONTINUITY AND
TRADITION BY JOINING THE EVIDENSIA FAMILY



“Evidensia bought its first Swiss clinic in 2015 and since then, as part of the DACH region of Switzerland, Germany and Austria, four more clinics and practices have joined the group. Even within this small number, we are already operating a wide range of clinics, from large and highly specialised referral hospitals to local practices.

Evidensia is working hard to support and expand each of them in the best possible way. Recent examples here include installing a CT scanner in one of the hospitals, upgrading IT operations and adding ultrasound to a smaller practice. As well as veterinary care, we acknowledge the importance of supporting all staff and, in some cases, adding relevant experts to a

team in order to build management expertise, letting the vets focus on being vets.

It’s this type of support that makes Evidensia so appealing to clinic and practice owners managing generational change. When a vet wants to retire, or sell the practice they established, they have a few options. One is to close down. The second is to sell it to another vet. The third option, to become part of a group, is often the most appealing, as a company such as Evidensia has the resources to invest in equipment and staff.

In this way, selling becomes a tactical way to solve the problem of succession. It’s one that gives vets the peace of mind that their staff and the legacy of their long-established practice will remain and continue to grow.”

Dr Christoph Dänzer
CEO, Evidensia DACH Region

OUR STORY

Four-legged athletes

BESSY'S KLEINTIERKLINIK, JUST NORTH OF ZÜRICH, IS IN AN AREA THAT HAS PLENTY OF CLINICS. **SURGEON DR RICO VANNINI** EXPLAINS HOW SPECIALISING IN CANINE SPORTS MEDICINE GIVES THEM A DISTINCT COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGE

First of all, how did you end up being a surgeon at Bessy's?

I graduated in 1981 as a general vet but I had always been interested in orthopaedics and traumatology, and had completed a residency in the United States in 1987. At the time, I was one of the first European vets who had the opportunity to complete a surgical residency training at the Ohio State University. That's where the seeds for my career were sown. I worked at the University until 1995. I then opened my own clinic and, in 2013, we moved into a bigger facility. I joined Evidensia in 2015 with my clinic.

You specialised in small animals – mostly cats and dogs. Why is that?

There's a lot of specialisation in veterinary surgery, with some only doing orthopaedics, soft-tissue surgery, neurosurgery or even exotics or zoo animals. Why? The trend is like in human surgery. You have to specialise if you want to be really good in one area. However, other than in human surgery, our patients are a lot less uniform – there are 90kg Great Danes and also 1.5kg Pomeranians, so it's still a big challenge, even though the bones and structures are basically the same.



People bring their pets to Bessy's because of its reputation for offering high-quality specialist care



Shelties are particularly popular with those who train their dogs for agility competitions

What services does Bessy's offer?

We provide general first-opinion treatment serving local needs. We are also a second-opinion clinic for people who weren't happy with treatment elsewhere. Then we have referrals by other vets, by breeders and by sporting colleagues. I'd say 80% are from Switzerland, but we also have people coming from Greece, France and Italy. Someone even brought their dog from the States once!

What's sports medicine for dogs? Is that treating racing greyhounds?

Actually that's only a very, very small part of it. The big trend now is agility competitions, where there's an obstacle course and the dogs go over hurdles and through tunnels, I'm sure you've seen it. Certain breeds such as Border Collies and Shelties predominate.

Is there big prize money?

Not at all! In fact, there is no big prize money involved. Owners do this because of the passion they have to work and train their dogs for hour after hour. The prize is the honour of being the best. It's not about the money.



“The process for dogs is exactly the same as with a human athlete – the right surgery based on the correct diagnosis”

DR RICO VANNINI – BESSY'S KLEINTIERKLINIK



A hydrotherapy treadmill helps with low-impact rehab

→ **Are the competitions hard on the dogs?**

Not particularly, although like their human counterparts, canine athletes get more injured than non-sportive dogs. Because their owners are so invested in them, they are prepared to come to us and spend more money than most pet owners, to demand higher medical standards than normal, in order to bring their dogs back to full sporting health.

The process for dogs is exactly the same as though you were treating a human athlete. To bring them back fast, you need to do the right surgery based on the correct diagnosis. Then rehab and retraining – that comes afterwards. So, for example, we have an underwater treadmill that's good training since animals can start using their injured leg quickly without putting too much weight on the limb.

Is all your work sports medicine?

I treat a large number of dogs with sport injuries every week. I'm particularly proud of this and it's a growing demand but at Bessy's, we serve all kinds of owners and pets. The region of Zurich is, I think, one of the most densely populated areas in Europe in terms of vets. Despite this, our good reputation helps us to stay successful in this crowded and competitive market environment.

“Owners value the personal engagement they get in training their dogs for agility competitions”

DR RICO VANNINI – BESSY'S KLEINTIERLINIK

Moving up to a leadership role



Name: Dr Janina Werner Heer

Role: Practice Director

Based: Winterthur, near Zürich

What do you do within IVC?

Since the start of this year, I've been the Practice Director of Kleintierpraxis ACR in Winterthur, where I'd previously been the senior vet for seven years. My step up to this role came about when the former owner retired and sold the practice to Evidensia at the end of 2017.

What made you want to take this role?

I had started working there as a junior vet in 2007 and the following year, was responsible for coordinating the expansion and relocation to the site that we still occupy. So during all my years there, I had helped grow the practice and my teammates became like a family for me. When the takeover was announced, we started thinking of how we could continue our work. That was when I decided I would like to become the Director of the practice.

How different has it been?

Being the boss is not the same as being a colleague. Also, my accounting and management skills are limited, so I am glad that Evidensia supports me. Within a group, it is easier to realise projects such as investing in equipment, yet each practice still remains independent with its individual development plans.

Scaling up operations within Evidensia



Name: Dr Dieter Fretz

Role: Clinic Director

Based: Hünenberg, Zug / Innerschweiz

What do you do within IVC?

As well as being a practicing vet, I have been Director of the EnnetSee clinic in Hünenberg, Switzerland for the last ten years. This involves all areas of HR and finance as well as quality management of hospital operations.

What kinds of services does EnnetSee currently offer?

We are a general small animal hospital with 60 part-time and full-time staff. As well as having specialists in surgery, orthopaedics and cardiology, we also have an emergency hospital open all hours, offer physical therapies and act as a training clinic with internships too.

Are there advantages to being a growing clinic in a larger group?

I started 32 years ago with a small animal practice of three people and now run a hospital of more than 60, so the differences are obvious. We have a range of services across different departments, can support 24/7 emergency care and the interchange of people has had positive effect on the level of education and veterinary care. None of that would be possible in a small, independent practice.

INITIATIVE

A better view

FIRST INTRODUCED IN THE 1970S, **CT SCANNERS** HAVE COME DOWN IN PRICE AND BECOME A UBIQUITOUS IMAGING TOOL IN HUMAN MEDICINE. TODAY, THEIR VETERINARY USE IS ALSO SPREADING

Computer tomography scanners, more commonly known as CT scanners, use X-rays to record multiple 'slices' through bodies that are then built up by computer processing into 3D images that can be rotated on a screen to be viewed from different angles.

The advantages of this over traditional flat X-rays are plain. Although use of these machines does deliver a small dose of radiation to the patient, the ability to obtain a clear view of bone and soft tissue with a quick and non-invasive process far outweighs this consideration.

"When you go beyond a local small veterinary practice, these days I think that any clinic is at a medical disadvantage if it does not have a CT scanner," says Dr Christoph Dänzer, CEO of the DACH region for Evidensia. "You're simply at a medical disadvantage if you don't have one but your local competitor does."

Why doesn't every clinic own one then? Cost of course. A decade ago, installation costs hovered around the €1m mark, once the costs of shielding walls, strengthening floors and refurbishing the facility were factored in.

The thought of an independent clinic taking on such a debt was virtually unthinkable.

DECLINING COSTS

"These days, depending on the facility situation, you're probably talking about SFr150,000 to SFr250,000," says Christoph. "Yes that's a lot of money, but it's significantly less than it used to be." For practices within the IVC/Evidensia group that can build a strong enough business case for owning a CT scanner, there's the backing of a larger group to fund this kind of investment.

"I hope that the installation of such technology is becoming the norm across Evidensia," says Christoph. "We recently put a CT scanner into a second Swiss clinic, leaving only our three smaller practices in the country without one. In Germany, we have 13 clinics that are all quite large and only two smaller ones do not have a CT scanner." IVC

"These days, I think that any larger clinic is at a medical disadvantage if it does not have a CT scanner"

DR CHRISTOPH DÄNZER – CEO, DACH REGION



The cost of CT scanners, while high, is no longer out of the reach of local clinics



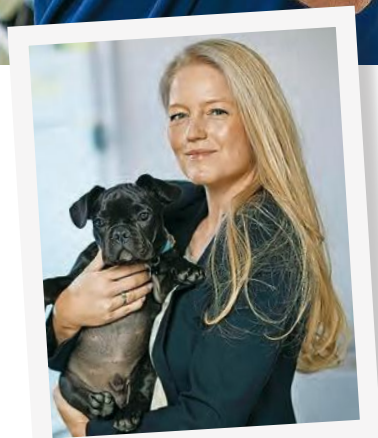


**“Pet Health Club
gives pet owners
the confidence that
any problems will
be spotted early”**

PAUL COWLING – CEO, IVC UK



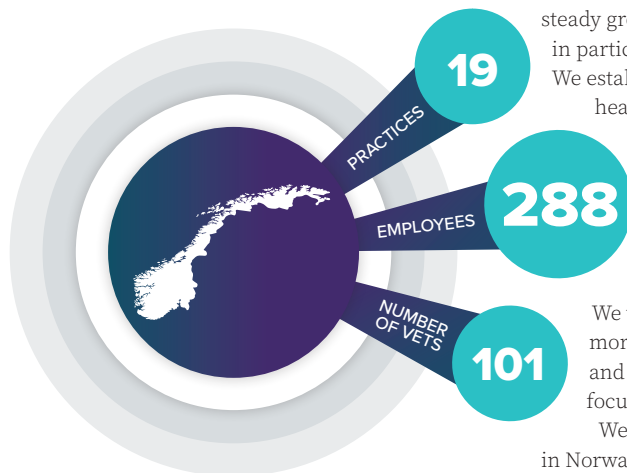
Norway has the potential
for many more practices to
join the Evidensia group



Norway



COUNTRY MANAGER **CECILIE RYAN YTTREEIDE**
CONSIDERS THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANSION AND
CONSOLIDATION IN AN EVER-CHANGING MARKET



“Evidensia’s journey in Norway started in 2012, when we acquired a hospital in Oslo, so we are still a young company. We’ve seen steady growth and the last 18 months in particular have been very exciting. We established a country-specific head office at the start of 2017, so we now have a full team in place. Our main objective is to make life easier for our clinics by supporting them within HR, procurement, marketing and administration. We want them to be able to spend more time with our customers and pet patients – that’s where our focus and hearts need to be!

We currently have 19 practices in Norway, from Tromsø way up in the north to Kristiansand way down in the south.

Evidensia’s market share is currently around 10% of a very fractured Norwegian market, in which only about 17% of the veterinary practices are part of a chain or group. To me, this shows a significant potential for Evidensia to acquire more good-sized, high quality clinics and enjoy further expansion over the next five years.

We can offer practices operational effectiveness and economies of scale, along with a large network that allows our vets, nurses and support staff to learn from each other and enjoy continuing professional development. By investing in our people, pets and their owners also get a great experience. I see a very exciting future for Evidensia in Norway and that future starts right now.”

Cecilie Ryan Yttreide
Country Manager, Norway

OUR STORY

The volunteer vet

SILJE ROBERTSEN, WHO WORKS AT EVIDENSIA OSLO DYRESYKEHUS, TELLS US ABOUT HER CHALLENGING BUT HUGELY REWARDING WORK WITH PRIMATES AND OTHER WILD ANIMALS IN ASIA

Having always been interested in primates, so I looked for places to volunteer and work with them during the final practical year of my veterinarian studies. I spent four months at International Animal Rescue's Macaque and Slow Loris Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre in Bogor, Indonesia and was very impressed by both the organisation and the centre.

After graduating from the Free University in Berlin in 2011 and saving up some money while working, I went back to Asia. I spent about a year in Kalimantan, Indonesia, volunteering as a vet for International Animal Rescue's Orangutan Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre, where I was part of a team consisting of mostly local veterinarians and nurses. I also spent around two years in Sarawak volunteering as a vet at the Matang Wildlife Centre for Orangutans Project.

MALAYSIAN ADVENTURE

The centre in Sarawak (Malaysian Borneo) is a governmentally run rescue centre for all wildlife that has been surrendered or confiscated from locals or illegal traders. It houses more than 300 animals of more than 30 different species. The role of the vet is wide-ranging because there is only one vet on site. The main focus is on keeping the animals in good health. We also started a release-and-monitor programme using tracking devices.

Since I left the full-time position at the end of 2016 and came to work at Evidensia in Norway, I have continued to support the centre in Sarawak. I raise funds, mainly by selling donated clothes on flea markets. My own clinic and other Evidensia clinics in the Oslo region have donated medication and equipment. I support the team with medical advice when I am not there, and I try to go over once a year, when my role is training and supporting the current volunteer vet.

The work itself can be challenging, since you often don't have access to the same equipment and medication as you do in Europe. It requires flexibility and creative



Butan the orangutan was in a poor state when she first arrived in Kalimantan in 2011

© International Animal Rescue

thinking. At overcrowded multi-species centres, the conflict is often to prioritise which animals to help, which can be quite frustrating at times. Being confronted with some of the world's most prominent challenges – deforestation and the illegal wildlife trade – is motivating, but the massive scale of these problems can be depressing.

Nevertheless, there are lots of good-news stories. Butan is a young female orangutan who arrived at the centre in Kalimantan a few weeks after I had first arrived in 2011. She had been kept by a local family for some time. →



A slow loris with corneal damage

© International Animal Rescue

→ They had treated her and clothed her like a human child. She came to the centre with severe clinical symptoms of malnourishment. It took many months of critical care before she could be introduced to the other young orangutans. Most orangutan babies stay with their mothers until the age of seven to nine years old, so to release one younger than that is not recommended. Butan was released with a traceable microchip in 2016 and is seemingly doing very well in the wild!

I also especially remember Pelansi, a young male orangutan found after being trapped with his arm in a wild boar snare for more than a week. The trapped arm was already badly necrotised and falling apart. He was brought back to the centre, kept sedated on a ketamine drip for weeks while getting intensive care and, after some months, he was strong enough for surgery in which the arm was amputated. He required close monitoring and bandage changes for some months but about one year after his injury, he was successfully released back in to the forest – a new area that had been thoroughly assessed in terms of viability, hunting and so on.

We are constantly seeking volunteer vets and vet nurses for the centre in Matang for periods of three to six months. If anyone is interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact me directly!

“Being confronted with some of the world’s most prominent challenges is motivating”

Recruiting tomorrow’s teams today



Name: Rutt Siri Kregnes
Role: HR Manager
Based: Oslo, Norway

What do you do within Evidensia?

I have been Human Resources Manager for Evidensia Norway since August 2015. Besides the ordinary HR issues, I am also responsible for all non-medical development and training for the staff, including developing and delivering leadership training.

Does Norway’s climate affect your work?

As a Norwegian, I am used to harsh weather. Last year, we went from the snowiest winter in ages to the warmest summer in 100 years. Still, I travel as often as I can to all our clinics because that’s where ‘the magic’ happens.

Are Norwegians willing to move far to get a great job?

Most are. The Norwegian University of Life Science, where most of our vets have studied, is in Oslo. While many stay in Oslo, more go home to work. We do struggle a bit to recruit nurses but we’re hoping this will improve when a new class of nurses graduates in the summer.

What role have you most recently filled?

We have just recruited our Digital Marketing Advisor. She has a lovely personality and is very customer-centred – exactly what the job needs.

Building a new clinic to prepare for the future



Name: Iselin Elvedahl Solnes
Role: Clinic Manager
Based: Trondheim, Norway

What do you do within Evidensia?

I finished my veterinary education in 2013. In 2016, I got the job as Clinic Manager at Evidensia Trondheim Dyrehospital. I spend half my time managing the clinic and half as a vet, working mostly in odontology and dermatology.

You’re in the process of establishing a new facility. Why is it needed?

We have grown so much that there’s just not enough space, so we are locating to a newer, much larger facility. The building is set to open in October and, hopefully, we will see our first patients there in December.

What new facilities are you most excited about?

All of it! We will have three more examination rooms, an extra operating room, a second dental working space, a separate intensive care area and even a CT room too.

How do Norwegian pet owners adapt to the extreme climate?

Almost no pets can live outside during long periods of winter. It’s also common to see dogs wearing all kinds of winter outfits, which can be very amusing.

INITIATIVE

Building business expertise

EVIDENSIA NORWAY IS USING **BOOST WORKSHOPS** TO TEACH SKILLS THAT DON'T NECESSARILY COME NATURALLY TO VETS. SO JUST HOW DO YOU TRAIN A SURGEON IN FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION?

By the time you've read two or three stories in this magazine, it will be clear that Evidensia and IVC staff are passionate about many things – their company culture, their own practices and, of course, the welfare of their animal patients. But what will be equally clear is that years spent training to be a veterinary professional rarely help to build administration and finance skills.

To anyone starting out in their career, this isn't an issue. However, since Evidensia is keen to promote career advancement, a lot of practicing vets move up to Clinical Director roles, which require a broader set of skills. To address this, Evidensia Norway started its Boost workshops in December 2017. Open to all employees, these aim to give teams an understanding of how every part of a busy clinic is connected. For example, how much does it cost to run a clinic for a day? How many patients are required to break even?

A COMMON GOAL

The Boost workshops are run by Caroline Burum-Auensen, a veterinarian, clinic leader and Head of Operations in Norway. She was trained by Christian Kolthoff, whose PraQtice consultancy (praqtice.dk) advises on strategy and communication within the retail and dental sectors as well as veterinary practices.

"The main point of the workshops is to build better teams, where we set our common goals and work out how to get there," says Caroline. "The ROI – return of investment – comes first and foremost in our employees. I find running these workshops rewarding because it gives us time to dive into many subjects. We are able to get the teams to work more closely and create a common understanding going forward."

CUSTOMER-FACING BUSINESS

It's still early days for the programme but the staff who have already gone through it have clearly learned a lot. Mona Bjerkvik is Clinic Manager of Evidensia Bærum Dyreklinikk.

"During the workshop, we created an action plan that included various focus areas specific to our clinic," she says. "We have now placed that action plan at work so that everyone can see it and stay updated regarding our progress. It includes long-term projects such as optimising the presentation and itemisation of our billing receipts. It also contains smaller adjustments in how we run the daily business. We have already seen great results with the steps we've taken this far." IVC



"During the workshop, we created an action plan that included various focus areas specific to our clinic"



(Above) Learning about business may not be the first priority of many vets, but it's vital to career progression (Left) Vets need to understand the commercial advantages of being able to supply every aspect of treatments, from diagnosis to special diets

As a customer-facing business, Evidensia is investing in all of its staff



Denmark

BY INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND EQUIPMENT, COUNTRY MANAGER **ULLA PLESS** SEES EVIDENSIA DELIVERING THE HIGHEST-QUALITY VETERINARY CARE

“Being part of Europe’s leading veterinary care provider, we have the power to invest in the latest equipment and in our employees.

We deliver high quality and we have a strong focus on customer services.

We support next-generation veterinary staff through knowledge -sharing and continuous education. We also invest in our Clinic Managers through training, because we see leadership as the foundation for our business.

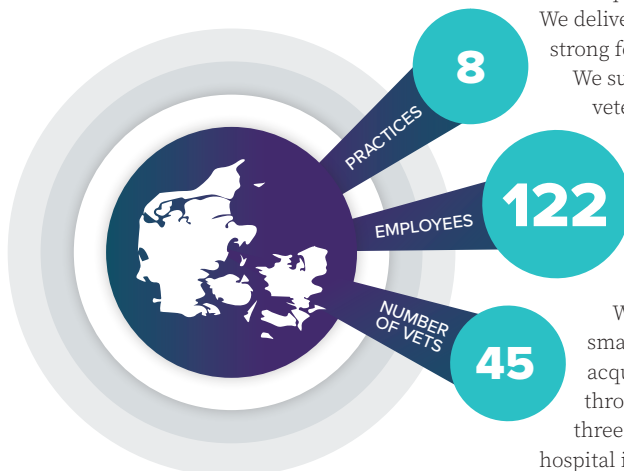
We offer the staff from our smaller clinics the possibility of acquiring practical experience, through an internship of two to three months, at our big referral hospital in Karlslunde. This means that the knowledge and the know-how is spread to

all the clinics in Evidensia, and it creates staff unity. At Evidensia, you are never alone.

Being a part of Evidensia Denmark also means having fun. Social activities, both for the individual clinics and Evidensia as a whole, are held throughout the year. Our Evidensia Day is held once a year. Here, you have the opportunity to hear different talks during the day, to participate in a workshop and to socialise with your colleagues. Activities such as bowling, fishing and parties are held locally in the different clinics.

I hope that in the future, we will have many more colleagues spread out across Denmark – colleagues who share the same values as us and who want to contribute to our further success.”

Ulla Pless
Country Manager, Denmark



OUR STORY

An informal education

WHEN IT COMES TO VETERINARY MEDICINE, IT'S **NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN** SOMETHING NEW OR TOO EARLY TO START TEACHING OTHERS, AS EVIDENSIA DENMARK HAS BEEN EAGER TO DEMONSTRATE



Of Evidensia Denmark's eight clinics, all care for small animals. Two are mixed practices that also see horses, and one treats cattle too. This gives the country's 122 employees such a wide range of experiences and skills that Evidensia Denmark has been keen to find ways to share their knowledge across the group. Denmark's annual Evidensia Day does just that, by offering everyone a chance to meet up professionally and socially. While attendance is voluntary, the vast majority of employees go along every year.



Passing on skills to the next generation is often a very hands-on occupation

"They all want to be part of something bigger," says Country Manager Ulla Pless. "Teamwork is something that is highly appreciated, as are education, development and sharing best practice. But we have found that most are motivated by the ways that we are looking at educating the next generation of vets."

The standard approach to continuous professional development is for senior staff to share knowledge and experience with newcomers. After all, newly graduated vets have still to experience work out in the field – often in the most literal sense! Yet Denmark has chosen to do something different with its Evidensia Days. Senior vets give talks about their specialist fields, but younger vets are also encouraged to give presentations. While this might seem counter-intuitive, the benefits have been clear.

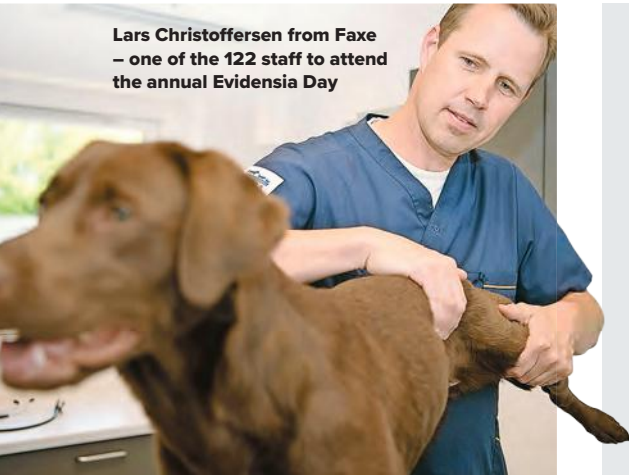
"It was a conscious decision to help boost the confidence and skills of our newer vets," explains Ulla. "They often want to share what they have learned and one way of doing that is by giving presentations. In time, they will almost certainly have to talk in front of



"While I was excited about sharing my knowledge, it was also a chance to present to my peers"

FREDERIK ALTHOEHN – KARLSLUNDE HOSPITAL

Lars Christoffersen from Faxe
– one of the 122 staff to attend
the annual Evidensia Day



→ strangers or much larger audiences, so getting a chance to do it in front of ‘the family’ is a safe way for them to get over their nerves.”

SHARING KNOWLEDGE

At the moment, Evidensia Denmark is planning an Evidensia Day workshop for referral colleges that are not part of the group. Seeing that even Evidensia’s newest graduates have the confidence to talk about their work does much to demonstrate the energy and dedication that goes into training them.

Finally, with veterinary medicine advancing all the time, talks from recently graduated vets can give more established vets insights into the newer technologies and techniques they might not know about.

Frederik Althoehn graduated from Copenhagen University in March 2017. He says, “I had only been working in Karlslunde small animal hospital for 12 months when I attended my first Evidensia Day. I had been asked by my supervisor, Jonas Overgaard, to talk about acute respiratory distress because Karlslunde is a referral hospital in the event of such emergencies. While I was excited about sharing my medical knowledge, it was also a chance for me to present to my peers, which was a very rewarding experience.”



Karlslunde animal hospital has excellent emergency facilities, including this CT scanner

Meeting pet owners with sympathy and respect



Name: Tina Charlotte True
Role: Receptionist
Based: Faxe, Zealand

What do you do within Evidensia?

I have worked at Evidensia for 11 years now. My main responsibility is to receive clients and to refer them to the veterinarians as well as to advise on special disease diets. To treat people well and with respect is a day-to-day task that I enjoy doing.

So you're the pet owners' first point of contact at the practice?

Yes, and being that first person, I think it's important to make them feel safe in what can often be a very emotional situation for them.

After a long day at work, have you had enough of animals?

You never have enough pets! At home, I have horses, cats, hens and I've also had a dog in the past, so I'm sure there will be another one soon.

What's the largest animal you've ever seen in reception?

It was a mastiff called Texas. He weighed an incredible 101kg!

And the strangest animal you've ever had to welcome?

That was probably an armadillo that was brought in from the zoo in Nykøbing F.

Promoting the highest standards across Denmark



Name: Anette Spohr
Role: Country Medical Director
Based: Faxe, Zealand

What do you do within Evidensia?

I am the Clinic Manager and one of the former owners at Faxe Dyrehospital in South Denmark. It's a practice that employs more than 30 people, including 14 vets, 11 nurses and four student nurses. I have also been Denmark's Country Medical Director for one year.

What's did you do before you took up your current position?

I came to Faxe with a PhD in small animal internal medicine after 12 years teaching students at Copenhagen University. Since Faxe is also a referral hospital for the whole area, I have specialised mainly in internal medicine and soft tissue work.

What advantages do you see of your practice being part of a bigger group?

I became a partner of Faxe in 2008 and Evidensia bought it in 2015, so I've seen both sides of this. Within Evidensia, I have seen the possibilities of mentoring young vets, which helps them and at the same time is stimulating for me. I also enjoy the network of colleagues and, in my role as Country Medical Director, I try to encourage cooperation between clinics to improve clinical standards everywhere.

INITIATIVE

Work from a fresh perspective

EVIDENSIA DENMARK IS PLACING EXPERIENCED REGIONAL VETS IN **REFERRAL HOSPITAL INTERNSHIPS** IN ORDER TO INCREASE THEIR SKILLS AND TO STRENGTHEN PERSONAL BONDS WITH COLLEAGUES

When an owner spots something about their pet that worries them, they seek the timely advice of a local vet. The same is true with vets in first-opinion practices, who refer cases to regional animal hospitals once they suspect that a problem may need to be seen by a specialist. Evidensia Denmark is now using the ties created from being part of a large group to allow a more fluid exchange of ideas and experiences up and down this referral chain.

Anne Rex Fleron has been working as a vet in general practice since 2003, spending 12 years at Evidensia Dahlgaard Dyreklinik in Birkerød before transferring to Evidensia Slotsbyens Dyreklinik in Hillerød last year. Both clinics are in the northern part of Zealand and regularly refer cases to Evidensia Karlslunde Dyrehospital, 50km to the south. In 2017, Denmark's Country Manager, Ulla Pless, suggested an internship at Karlslunde, which Anne immediately accepted.

FRESH APPROACHES, NEW IDEAS


"About a third of my work lies in dermatology cases," explains Anne, "with the rest mixed surgery and internal medicine. I have always liked surgery, so I thought the internship would be a win-win situation. I would be able to do more surgery, while I could teach them dermatology."

For two months, Anne worked three days a week at Karlslunde, switching with a vet who went to work at Birkerød. After a few days of observations, she moved onto consultations

and surgery. "I participated in orthopaedic operations, including several prolapsed discs," says Anne. "I'd had experience from Birkerød in laparoscopic operations but it was inspirational to see how they were performed in Karlslunde. I learned several new methods."

Anne also benefited from the up-tempo pace of the referral hospital. "The flow of patients is so much higher," she notes. "In those two months at Karlslunde, I saw as many orthopaedic surgeries as I had seen in years in general practice!"

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Prior to working in Karlslunde, Anne mainly referred animals to Karlslunde for CT scans, unaware of their other specialist skills. Now that she's back at her regular practice, she can not only refer a wider range of cases but also knows who to contact. "It makes cooperation so much easier and quicker because I can now call individual vets directly to discuss the patient," she says. "The vets and nurses at Karlslunde are no longer just nameless voices on a phone, they are friends and colleagues." 



Anne Rex Fleron says she has both benefited from her internship and been able to share her expertise

"In two months at Karlslunde, I saw as many orthopaedic surgeries as in years in general practice"

ANNE REX FLERON – EVIDENSIA SLOTSBYENS DYREKLINIK



Evidensia Denmark meets the expectation of higher standards from pet owners

IVC in pictures

WORKING WITH ANIMALS IS BOTH AN ADVENTURE AND HUGE FUN, AS THESE SCENES FROM DAY-TO-DAY LIFE AT IVC SHOW



Watch out for those nails!



Hanging out with my best friends!



"I'm being very brave"



No matter how small, we take care of them





We get pets from all corners of the globe



"Just one more treat?"



Service with a smile!



It's not all cats and dogs...



IVC 2018 Report in brief

Over
the last
12 months, more
practices have joined
IVC than any other group
– **David Hillier, CEO** IVC has
already taken on more than 600
entrepreneurs in the UK – **Paul
Cowling, Chief Executive, UK**

We deliberately set out to
change an entire mind-
set – **Donald Kingsnorth,
Clinical Director, UK** We
know that vets are
interested in being part
of something bigger –
**Ulla Press, Country Manager,
Denmark** I was excited about sharing
my knowledge – **Jonas Overgaard, Karlunde
Hospital, Denmark** I see a very exciting future for
Evidensia in Norway and that future starts right now
– **Cecile Ryan Yttreide, Country Manager, Norway** It's
common to see dogs wearing all kinds of winter outfits,
which can be very amusing – **Iselin Elvedahl Solnes, Clinic
Manager, Norway** More than 80% of pet owners have
insurance in Sweden and that's one reason why the
level of care is so high. We actually have Labradors being
given chemotherapy and we conduct other treatments
on animals that most countries wouldn't be able
to offer – **Johan Wiklund, Country Manager,
Sweden** It's the best job ever. One day never
looks like the other – **Louise Blom-
qvist, Hospital Manager,
Sweden**

Many
clinics had a long
history before joining us, so we
have made it possible for them to take
their valuable, well-known brands back –
Jukka Toivanen, Country Manager, Finland
They are treated in the same way you would expect
to treat your child, or anybody else in the family – **Anssi
Tast, Vice President, Evidensia Finland** When you go
beyond a local small veterinary practice, these days I think
that any practice is at a disadvantage if it does not have a
CT scanner or ultrasound – **Christophe Daenzer, CEO,
Dach Region** Radioactive substances can be injected for
diagnostic purposes – **Dr Rafael Nickel, Norderstedt
Clinic, Germany** There's much to consider, but when
we work together to get it right, our customers will
keep coming back. – **Christophe Daenzer, CEO,
Dach Region** We started to gain traction
and from then on, it feels
as though we've been
running at full speed
– **Michiel van Silfhout,
Country Manager, the
Netherlands** It feels like
a start-up company. Very
positive! – **Marc Maas, Clin-
ical Director, the Netherlands**
A lot of young vets are finding
their first few years challeng-
ing, so we are giving them the
skills to succeed and we're
very proud of that –
**David Hillier
CEO**



**“We make sure that our
clinics have the skills,
resources, investment
and expertise they need”**

DAVID HILLIER – CEO, IVC



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