

Brexit and
the veterinary
profession
The facts

Update on Brexit-related activities

Letter to the Prime Minister

The RCVS and the British Veterinary Association sent a letter in October 2016 to Prime Minister Theresa May outlining how we want to work with the government to ensure the best possible outcome for animal health and welfare, public health and the veterinary profession post-Brexit, and calling for certainty around the rights of EU nationals working in the UK.

Brexit roundtables

The RCVS has organised several roundtables with key veterinary stakeholders to consult with the profession on the challenges and opportunities presented by the UK leaving the EU, and these have been attended by many other veterinary associations as well as representatives from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs including Nigel Gibbens, the previous Chief Veterinary Officer.

Brexit survey

In early 2017 the Institute for Employment Studies sent a confidential survey on our behalf to 5,572 UK-practising veterinary surgeons who graduated from a vet school in the EU (excluding the UK), as well as around 100 non-UK EU-trained veterinary nurses. This was followed up in June 2018 with a new survey for EU vets and veterinary nurses in light of the fact that certain elements of the UK's withdrawal from the EU have become clearer.

Veterinary Capability and Capacity Project (VCCP).

The RCVS has joined forces with the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) to form the Veterinary Capability and Capacity Project (VCCP). The VCCP aims to assess in advance the challenges and opportunities posed by EU exit, with the aim to develop a flexible and skilled workforce, which meets the UK's needs for both the immediate and longer term future. Key figures on the project board include the RCVS and BVA Presidents, the Chief Veterinary Officers for the UK, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and representatives from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate and the Animal and Plant Health Agency.

Migration Advisory Committee

The RCVS and BVA submitted a joint response to the Migration Advisory Committee's Call for Evidence at the end of 2017 in which we called for vets to be placed on the Shortage Occupation List, meaning that non-EU overseas vets would have fewer immigration restrictions regarding living and working in the UK.

Numbers

As a net importer of veterinary surgeons from Europe, the Brexit referendum poses both risks and opportunities for the UK. As of June 2018 the RCVS Register currently includes 7,729 non-UK European nationals, of whom 81% are registered as UK-practising. According to a survey conducted by the Institute of Employment Studies (IES) on our behalf, 87% are employed full time. This is in contrast to our 2014 Survey of the Profession data, which showed 65% of all vets are employed full time, illustrating the significant contribution of non-UK EU vets to the workforce. In addition, our registration data suggests 49% of UK-practising non-UK EU vets will not have been registered for five years by 1 March 2019.

Shortage of vets

88% of respondents believe there would be a potential shortage of veterinary surgeons if non-UK EU vets are no longer able to practise here.

Although it is too early to say with confidence, our data suggests new EU registrations are already levelling off, whereas in previous years they have been rising. This could seriously impact the meat production sector as we know that approximately 90% of vets working in public health are non-UK EU graduates. Clinical practice and education sectors also highly likely to be affected, with 78% of survey respondents working in clinical practice.

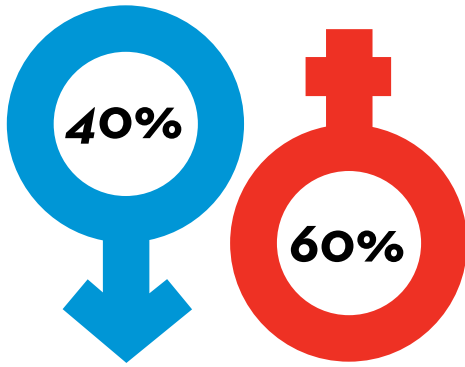
Prejudice

16% of respondents have personally experienced prejudice at work following the referendum, with a further 22% saying they had observed it.

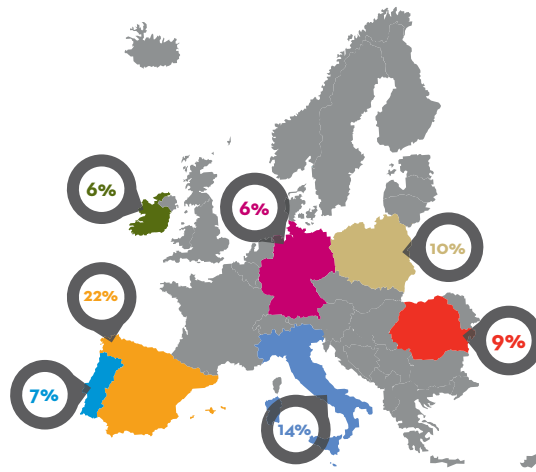
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Facts & figures

DEMOGRAPHICS



The gender split for responses was **60%** female and **40%** male, while the mean average age was 36.



COUNTRY OF QUALIFICATION

Spain	22%	Portugal	7%
Italy	14%	Germany	6%
Poland	10%	Republic of Ireland	6%
Romania	9%		

AREA OF WORK

Our 2014 Survey of the Veterinary Profession data showed **65%** of all vets are employed full time, in contrast to the Brexit survey data, which shows **87%** of non-UK EU vets are employed full time.

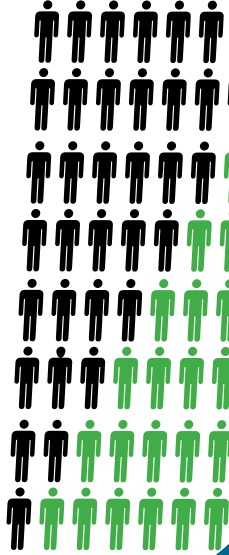
IMPACT ON VETERINARY SECTOR

88%

of respondents believed that the UK will have a shortage of veterinary surgeons if non-UK EU national vets are no longer welcome in the country.

77%

believe that EU-graduate vets are also less likely to apply to join the UK Register.



78%

of vets are in clinical practice

Of the remaining **22%**...



38%

Food Standards Agency



21%

Animal and Plant Health Agency



18%

Higher education



74%

of respondents said they were happy with the support and advice provided by the RCVS so far.

EXPERIENCES OF PREJUDICE

16% of respondents said they had personally experienced prejudice at work following the vote to leave the EU, with **22%** saying they had observed it.



CONTINUING TO WORK IN THE UK

73%

of respondents said they would like to continue to work in the UK

41%

said they are not optimistic about their future

67%

are finding the uncertainty about their future difficult

64%

feel less welcome



feel fearful about the future

44%

feel they have reduced job security

40%

said they are more likely to leave

40%

are actively looking for work outside the UK

18%

are awaiting the outcome of the Brexit negotiations before deciding what to do

79%

RCVS | SETTING VETERINARY STANDARDS

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The RCVS set up its Brexit Presidential Taskforce in July 2016, which led to the publication of our **four Brexit Principles.**

We would like any negotiations around our exit from the EU to ensure that:

- **Vital veterinary work continues to get done, by maintaining and strengthening the veterinary workforce:**
 - By increasing the number of home-grown vets and nurses, to offset any reduction in the migration of the workforce from overseas
 - By increasing both the capacity of UK vet schools and their funding levels
- **High standards of animal welfare remain and improve:**
 - We are advocating a reform of mutual recognition of professional qualifications
 - We would like any future movement restrictions to focus on graduates from courses not accredited by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education
- **RCVS remains a global force for good:**
 - By expanding our global membership and our mental health project, the Mind Matters Initiative
 - By working with developing countries to improve the accreditation of their veterinary schools
- **Advocating that no restrictions are placed on the free movement of EU-qualified veterinary surgeons or veterinary nurses, or on access to evidence, that would jeopardise veterinary research in the UK.**

For further information, please contact Ben Myring, Senior Policy and Public Affairs Officer, at b.myring@rcvs.org.uk or on 020 7202 0783