

Advice for BVA members around the BBC Panorama programme on the veterinary profession

Your clients may have questions and concerns following the Panorama programme. The advice from the BVA is very simple and members should get the whole veterinary team involved in handling worried clients:

1. **Brief your team.** Talk to the whole team about the issues raised in the programme and discuss the possible questions and concerns that clients may have and how you will address them.
2. **Agree an action plan.** Decide how you will handle client enquiries – it might be a specific person, such as the practice manager, who deals with any issues raised or it might be all members of the team.
3. **Set aside extra time.** You may need additional time to deal with people's concerns. Most of your regular clients will know you and trust you, but less frequent or new clients may need a bit more time to feel reassured.
4. **Allow access behind the scenes.** Consider if you can safely and appropriately allow access to kennels, operating rooms and other areas that clients may not otherwise see. Being able to see where their animal is being kept or undergoing surgery may help alleviate some concerns. Consider holding open days or open evenings to de-mystify what goes on behind closed doors.
5. **Introduce every member of the team.** Make sure clients get to meet every member of the team that will be caring for their pet so that they feel comfortable and confident about the treatment. Be prepared to answer questions about what each member of the team can and cannot do, particularly veterinary nurses at different stages of their training.
6. **Take time to discuss costs and treatment options.** Be prepared for lots of questions about bills and spend time going through itemised invoices with clients so that they understand exactly what the cost will be and why.

These are all obvious things that most vets will do in their normal working week, but the main thing for members to think about is the extra time that may be needed with each client.