



New Faces

Savannah Sanchez - Registered Veterinary Nurse



Savannah graduated from the University of Bristol School of Veterinary Science in July 2025. A lifelong passion for animals has guided Savannah's journey, and she feels fortunate to have transformed that passion into a fulfilling career. She enjoys all aspects of Veterinary Nursing and is committed to providing compassionate, high-quality care to every patient.

Outside of work, Savannah loves spending time outdoors, going to the gym, swimming, and relaxing with her cat, Ginge.

Melissa Brett – Registered Veterinary Nurse



Mel qualified as an RVN in November 2023 and joined the team in September 2025 as she recently moved to Cornwall from Northamptonshire. She has particular interests in inpatient care and nurse clinics, where she enjoys building relationships with both pets and their owners.

Outside of work, Mel loves spending time outdoors and will most likely be found at the beach since moving to Cornwall. She also enjoys travelling with her husband - where this year they went on an incredible trip to the Philippines. At home Mel chills with her two cats; Sunny

Important Update: Protecting Pets and People from

Brucella Canis

What is Brucella canis?

Brucella canis (B. canis) is a bacteria that causes the disease known as Brucellosis. There are multiple other species of Brucella that affect other animals (e.g. Brucella abortus which affects cattle), but B. canis is the only species of Brucella that infects dogs.

B. canis is not something that has commonly been seen in the UK previously, but with the rise in imported dogs, cases are also on the rise in the UK – although still pretty rare. Most of the cases reported in the UK are seen in imported dogs, particularly those from areas where it is endemic such as Romania and other Eastern European countries.

As a disease Brucellosis is often difficult to detect, particularly as dogs can carry the disease for a long time before showing any symptoms of being infected, and when symptoms are present they are often vague and non-specific.

What are the symptoms of Brucellosis?

The most prominent symptoms of Brucellosis are seen in unneutered dogs, as it can cause severe reproductive issues. In female dogs it can cause abortion, poor fertility, and failure to thrive in any live puppies born. Male dogs may become infertile as well and can develop swollen and painful testicles. Brucellosis also can cause a range of very vague non-specific symptoms in any dog, neutered or not. These include lethargy (tiredness), lameness – in particular back pain, premature ageing and enlargement of the lymph nodes. It is important to note that many cases of Brucellosis are asymptomatic (no symptoms) despite carrying the disease and still being at risk of spreading it.

Why are vets worried about Brucellosis?

Our main concern is that Brucella canis, like all the other types of Brucella bacteria, is a zoonosis. This means that it can spread from animals to humans. It is spread through contact with bodily fluids, with reproductive fluids being highest risk, and urine considered medium risk. Whilst it appears to be less dangerous than the other more well-known species of Brucella that affect livestock (e.g. the more well known Brucella abortus), there is still a definite potential for it to cause illness in humans, especially those who may be immunocompromised or pregnant. As such, many vets including ourselves have introduced a protocol for testing and handling Brucella canis cases.

Our testing protocol

We require all newly imported dogs to receive a blood test a minimum of three months after they enter the country. This blood test is sent to the APHA (government laboratory) and two tests are performed on it. One test is better at picking up chronic infections (ELISA test) and one test is better at picking up active infections (SAT test). Between these two tests, the APHA states that this combination of tests provides a good level of confidence in the results when interpreted in light of the wider circumstances of the case.

The results take approximately 7-14 days to come back and will be reported by one of our vets once results have been received.

My dog had a test before being imported. Why does it need another?

We understand that many responsible rescues are now testing their dogs for Brucella pre import, but our policy stands that all dogs must be tested even if they have tested negative pre import. This is for two reasons. Firstly, the incubation period (time it takes for the body to respond to disease) is relatively long in Brucella, meaning that if a dog was exposed shortly before entering a shelter and then moved to the UK, it may test negative pre-import but be positive at a later date. We have also found that due to limited resources, many of the rescues abroad are only looking for active infections with their tests, whereas we wish to identify both active and chronic infections, the latter of which may not have been picked up in their home country.

What happens if my dog tests positive?

First and foremost, we will continue to provide care for your dog at Castle Veterinary Group even if they test positive on one or both tests.

If your dog tests positive, the APHA will get in contact with us and you to carry out a risk assessment, and they will be able to discuss the risk to you as a household. In theory, euthanasia is the only way to definitively prevent onward transmission and for some cases this will be the best option so our vets will discuss this with you. However, if you do not wish to go down this route then we will respect your wishes and continue to provide veterinary care, with a few precautions.

Staff will wear additional PPE when handling your dog to help reduce the risk of transmission. There will be a small nominal charge to cover the additional costs associated with this, but we will endeavour to keep it as low as is feasible. We will also ask you to wait outside for consults to minimise time in areas with lots of dogs such as the waiting room, and to minimise the risk of positive dogs urinating in high traffic areas.

If your dog is not already neutered, then we will require this as a condition of continuing to be registered with CVG. This is because reproductive fluids are the highest risk for transmission, and we do not feel this is an acceptable level of risk for our staff on a day to

day basis. Dates for neutering may be more limited as since neutering is the highest risk procedure to our staff, only certain vets and nurses will be able to carry this out.

If external facilities are needed for care, such as referral centres or laboratories, options may be more limited as we are unable to control these. Our lab has confirmed that the vast majority of samples from a positive dog can be tested as normal, and if there is likely to be concerns over a specific sample the vet will discuss this with you at the time. Regarding referral, we are not aware of any referral centres in the South West that will see B. canis positive dogs.

Louise Towl Veterinary Physiotherapist – Clinics at Castle Vets Launceston

We're delighted to announce that Louise Towl, Veterinary Physiotherapist, is offering her professional services every other Wednesday at Castle Vets Launceston. Louise will be bringing a wealth of experience and a compassionate approach to helping animals recover from injury, manage pain and move more comfortably.

Physiotherapy is an important part of modern veterinary care, focusing on improving mobility, comfort and quality of life for animals of all ages. It can play a key role in:

- Supporting recovery after surgery or injury, such as cruciate repairs or fractures.
- Managing chronic conditions like arthritis or hip dysplasia.
- Reducing pain and stiffness through gentle, tailored exercise and manual therapies.
- Improving performance and preventing injury in working and sporting dogs.
- Aiding older pets to stay active and comfortable for longer.

Louise offers manual treatments such as joint and soft tissue mobilisations, electrotherapy and exercise regimes, all tailored to meet the specific needs of each animal. She will be working closely with our veterinary team to ensure every patient receives a personalised treatment plan that compliments their medical care. Although dogs are the most likely small animals to require physiotherapy, cats and other pets may benefit too.

We're thrilled to have Louise joining us and look forward to offering this valuable new service to our clients.

If you would like to find out more or book a physiotherapy appointment for your pet, please contact the Castle Vets team.