

Legal services team able to provide 'safety net'

Dear editor,

I would like to reassure the profession that, unlike as appears to be the case with the Unite experience described in a letter to *Veterinary Times* ("My Unite experience was not so positive", August 8 issue), the BVA's legal services are there for the individual and focused on settling his or her grievance.

The BVA carefully selected a service provider to offer the employment support traditionally provided by a union. The BVA legal services team is well positioned to mediate for and represent individuals across the breadth of the profession on any employment issue.

The round-the-clock legal helpline is consistently one of our most valued services, taking around 600 calls per year. In addition, we have had good take up of the new BVA mediation and representation services since their inception slightly more than a year ago. Feedback so far has been excellent, with members particularly praising the speed of response from the legal team, their knowledge of the veterinary environment and the very supportive role they play in bringing about a satisfactory outcome for the individual.

The well-documented stresses that put members of our profession at such a risk of mental health problems are unacceptably high. With their focus on conflict resolution and individual support, however, we hope the BVA's legal services will come to be seen as a safety net for our members, should things go wrong at work.

Yours faithfully,

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