

To the Trustees of the Mayhew,

I write to you as the Chair of the British Veterinary Union in Unite – the national professional branch of Unite the Union representing veterinary workers across the UK and Northern Ireland.

The BVU have been disappointed to hear from our colleagues at The Mayhew of actual and potential redundancies.

As you are no doubt aware, the veterinary sector is in crisis. Whilst some factors affecting this crisis are outside our – and your – control, such as Brexit and Covid-19, other factors are within your control.

Those who work in the veterinary and animal welfare sectors care deeply about the animals they work with every day, and are at a high risk of compassion fatigue. Couple this with severe staff shortages, leading to overwork and burnout, and you have the perfect recipe for mental health disaster. By cutting jobs, the Mayhew would be increasing the workload for the remaining employees, who are already struggling, and reducing their ability to advocate to the best of their ability for the animals in their care.

Staff shortages are rife on a national scale, and whilst we do not have information on the current financial situation of the charity, we urge you not to make hasty decisions to cut jobs. When, as is inevitable, their absence makes clear how vital those staff were, you will find it difficult to replace them.

Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs) are generally underpaid, and undervalued within the sector. We note with concern that two RVNs have already been made redundant, the only redundancies thus far from the clinical team, and wish to impress upon you just how vital RVNs are to the veterinary team. Vets cannot do their job without RVNs to support them, and these job losses will place additional strain on day to day operations.

Finally, I would like to clearly state the support of the BVU towards all Mayhew workers, and their right to unionise. The workers of the Mayhew will have our support in seeking union recognition, seeking job protections, and seeking reassurance from yourselves as to the future of the charity.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzanna Hudson-Cooke', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Suzanna Hudson-Cooke BVetMed MRCVS
Veterinary Surgeon
Branch Chair, British Veterinary Union in Unite

