

AVS/IVSA UK & Ireland Elections 2020

Name: Kate Dakin

Position: Welfare officer

Vet School: Bristol

Year: 3

About me:

"All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us", this is a mantra that I (try to) live my life by. Of course that is not the only decision we need to make, but ultimately it is the biggest decision that we each make; to use the time that we have for the things that we want to do and enjoy doing. I always wanted to be a Vet and that was always my aim, but after I failed my A levels I thought this was no longer an option for me. So, I moved abroad, I worked with horses (my favourite animal) in various countries and then, backpacked around South America for six months, I didn't plan on coming home but I ran out of money. So, I moved back to London (where I am originally from) and worked in an office in the city and got bored of it very quickly. I tried studying a History and Archaeology undergraduate in the evenings, but it wasn't for me. So, I moved to Devon (because why not) and undertook an access to higher education course for a year. I applied for Vet school and somehow here I am, 3rd year vet student, living in Bristol with my 2 Jack Russell's, who are my babies by the way and take up a lot of my free time, mainly by distracting me with cuddles and getting me to throw their ball.

Experience:

I have always struggled with anxiety to an extent, but it never really became apparent to me until the 2nd year of the Vet degree, partly because it never affected my life as much as it did in my 2nd year. As we all know Vet school is incredibly difficult, there are lots of pressures and stresses throughout the course and you barely have time to sleep never mind have a social life, visit your family, have a hobby, have a job, study the content, do extra reading, eat, have a dog etc. It's near impossible. Last year after trying to do all of these things it finally caught up with, which then added to that pile of things to manage. Since then, I have tried to be far more realistic about the goals I set myself, which mainly include a lot of time to just take care of myself, then each week when I achieve more than my very tiny goals I actually feel a bit better about everything. I realised more than anything it was the pressure I was putting on myself that was the main problem. As vet students we are ambitious and we achieve things by putting pressure on ourselves and being competitive, which are both great and exhausting attributes. That's why I understand first hand the importance of our welfare and wellbeing.

What I would try to achieve in my role:

The right welfare care for every single vet student. I will be at important meetings (I'll invite myself along to them) representing all of you, I am not scared to discuss problems that we as students face, I will demand more help for us and more recognition of the stresses we deal with on a daily basis (hopefully get some more free time for ourselves). I would like to increase the number of welfare grants available, which would allow for more wellbeing activities and events catering to our needs. Welfare is my priority for both us as students and obviously for animals. I will also work alongside the AWF to see how else we can contribute to the improvement of animal welfare. I'd like to create more events which see students helping to directly improve animals welfare, whilst indirectly improving their own welfare.

Why you should vote for me:

Voting for me is choosing someone who is an advocate for better mental health and wellbeing. It's a vote for someone who will work on your behalf for your welfare needs. Hopefully, laying my life out on the table for you, warts and all, has shown you I am at least approachable, that I am willing to take risks, push boundaries and that I am not scared of much (other than exams). So, I will get you what you need. I always wanted to be a Vet because I only wanted to work with just animals but actually, I have come to realise that I really enjoy helping people, I enjoy listening to people and learning from other people's experiences and most importantly always accepting every person for who they are.