

Participant information sheet: Dog owners

Understanding stakeholder decision needs around Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus (GDV)

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Discuss it with others if you wish and contact us on the details provided below if you would like to request further information before making your decision.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is part of a wider project that aims to develop a 'decision aid' which is a resource designed to help dog owners and veterinary professionals to prepare for, and to make decisions together about GDV-related veterinary care. Before we design this resource, we want to understand what people need from it: what information matters, what makes the decision difficult, and what kind of support would genuinely help. We are running focus groups with three different groups; dog owners, veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses to make sure the decision aid reflects a full range of perspectives.

Why have I been invited?

You have been invited because **you are the owner of a breed at higher risk of GDV, and/or have experience of a GDV decision with a dog.**

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time, prior to or during the focus group, without giving a reason. If you wish to withdraw during the focus group, you may simply leave. Any data already recorded will not be deleted but will be anonymised and treated as per the section below 'What will happen to the data I provide?'

What will happen if I take part?

You will be invited to join a group discussion of between approximately six and twelve other individuals who are **dog owners who have experience of GDV.** It will last approximately 60–90 minutes. The discussion will be guided by a researcher and will

cover topics such as your experience and perspective of GDV-related veterinary care decisions, what information and support matters most, and what would be helpful in a decision-support resource. With your consent, the session will be audio recorded and video recorded so that it can be accurately transcribed for analysis. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to.

Are there any risks to taking part?

Some participants may find it emotionally difficult to discuss a GDV decision, especially if this relates to a personal experience of loss or a stressful emergency decision. You are free to decline to discuss anything you find difficult, to take a break, or to withdraw at any point. Details of relevant support organisations will be provided at the end of the session.

Are there any benefits to taking part?

There is no direct personal benefit, although many participants find it valuable to contribute to research that may improve support for others facing similar decisions in future. You will not receive any payment for your participation nor reimbursement of any costs incurred.

What will happen to the data I provide?

All focus group transcripts will be stored in an anonymised format, and no individual will be identifiable in any report, publication, or the resulting decision aid. Audio recordings and transcripts will be stored securely and accessed only by the project team in line with the data handling procedure outlined below. Recordings will be deleted after transcription and verification within 1 month.

All personal and sensitive data are stored on a secure cloud served through 2FA authentication which can only be accessed by members of the RCVS Knowledge project team. All personal data will be subject to RCVS Knowledge's standard privacy policy, in compliance with the lawful basis processing requirements under Article 6 of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

<https://www.rcvsknowledge.org/privacy-policy/>.

All members of the RCVS Knowledge project team will be informed of the confidential nature of the personal data and are bound by confidentiality obligations and use restrictions in respect to the personal data. Personal data with regards to participating and arrangements for focus groups will be destroyed within 3 months

What will happen to the results of the study?

Findings will be used to directly inform the design of a GDV decision aid prototype and may also be written up for internal proof of concept project reporting, presentation, or academic publication. You will not be identified in any output. A summary of findings can be made available to you on request.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed and approved by Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Ethics Review Panel (ERP).

Who is organising and funding the research?

This study is being conducted and is funded by RCVS Knowledge with thanks to a legacy gift from Mr Hyslop.

Contact for further information

If you have any questions about the study, you wish to discuss taking part, or have any concerns please contact the project lead and/or project manager:

Project Lead - Julie Gibson - julie@rcvsknowledge.org

Project Manager – Cath Grimsey – cath@rcvsknowledge.org

You may also contact RCVS ERP - quoting 2026-077-Gibson - if you have any ethical concerns regarding the study or you would like to complain:

<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/councils-and-committees/committees-subcommittees-and-groups/ethics-review-panel>

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.