

HOW CHILDREN'S BOOK CAMPAIGN IS HELPING TACKLE SHORTAGE OF VETS

Mum-of-3 persuades universities to send picture book about a vet, by a vet, to every primary school in Scotland to inspire pupils and overcome shortage of vets

SCOTLAND, UK, February 27, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- EVERY primary school in Scotland is being given a free copy of Shona the Vet, a picture book written and illustrated by a Scottish vet, to inspire children as young as P1 to consider going into the profession – in a bid to overcome the shortage of vets.



P1 pupils are enthralled as newly qualified vet Joanna reading Shona the Vet to them

The project comes as a new HND course opens the door this year to many more animal-loving pupils, by creating an access route to veterinary medicine without the requirement of straight A exam results.

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Future Vets Scotland guides children of all ages through the process of becoming a vet.”

Karen Gardiner

Shona the Vet is being sent to every primary school by Future Vets Scotland, in association with the country's three centres of veterinary medicine – the University of Glasgow, University of Edinburgh and Scotland's Rural College.

Dr Karen Gardiner founded Future Vets Scotland in 2023 after the strenuous efforts required for her two daughters

to get the work experience necessary to study veterinary medicine, and the reduction in the number of pupils going into the profession.

She said: "There is a perception that competition is high but the reality is the number applying is falling and with an ageing vet population we need more young vets.

"Future Vets Scotland guides children of all ages through the process of becoming a vet. It offers online and in-person resources for primary and secondary age pupils including real-life interviews with vets telling their stories to inspire and inform pupils; a database that matches pupils with places that offer work experience and mentorship; advice for school careers advisors; and links to the admissions teams in all three Scottish vet schools."

Author Catherine Stables, from Keith, Moray, who's been a vet for nearly 25 years, says: "I thought it would be good to have a female main character as vet, it's not well known that 85% of vets are women. And I wanted to show Scottish creatures other than highland cows and Nessie!

"You never know what animals you'll see as a vet – no two days are the same. It's never boring! And it's really rewarding when you see animals getting better."

Sheila Voas, Chief Veterinary Officer (Scotland), said: "This is a fantastic initiative. My thanks to Karen and the Scottish vet schools for making it possible. I hope the book will inspire the dreams of children, while the resources for schools and pupils on the Future Vets website will offer practical support which can make that dream come true."

Professor Caroline Argo, Dean of Veterinary Medicine and Head of the new SRUC School of Veterinary Medicine said: "The resource that Future Vets provides to support and encourage our vets of the future is invaluable. Encouraging young people with a passion for animals to follow their dream, no matter their background, is something that we at SRUC strongly support."

"The case studies featured on the website show the wide variety of experiences that the vets of today have had, and serve to inspire our vets of tomorrow. At SRUC we value highly the diversity and different experiences that all our students bring."

Professor Christopher Loughrey, Head of the University of Glasgow's School of Biodiversity, One Health & Veterinary Medicine, said: "We are excited and hopeful that this raises awareness of the veterinary profession as a possible career option for children."

Professor Lisa Boden, Head of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and Dean of Veterinary Medicine, University of Edinburgh, said: "We are delighted and proud to support this wonderful book. Our hope is that it inspires many children and their families to explore, nurture, and eventually realise their dreams of a career in veterinary medicine and agriculture."

Shona the Vet is published by Foggie Toddle Books, a publisher in Wigtown, Scotland's National Book Town. [You can buy it here.](#)

Notes to Editors

- For more information see www.futurevets-Scotland.org, Twitter and Instagram, email communications@futurevets-Scotland.org or call 07770 412 505.

- SRUC's first cohort of BVSci students will start in September 2024. Students should sign up to the [SRUC Vet School newsletter](#) to be informed how to apply.

- Pictures show Joanna Wilson reading Shona the Vet to p1 pupils. Joanna, 25, qualified as a vet from Edinburgh University last year. There is a video of her reading the book below.

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