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The Charity:

[The Blue Cross](#) are a non-profit organisation designed to provide veterinary care to people who can't afford normal vet costs. They also have rehoming centres, which rehome all sorts of animals; from horses to hamsters! On top of all this, the Blue Cross work hard to educate people on animal welfare, and give out advice on how people can best care for their pets.

The Project:

The project had two strands: firstly, I worked on assessing the communication channels at Blue Cross. I was told that only 30% of the calls made to Blue Cross are actually answered, so clearly other communication channels had to be explored. The second part was assessing the feasibility of doing digital appointments with clients, much like the NHS is doing now. Both areas of the project required a deep look into the Blue Cross' use of social media and the internet.

My first encounter with the Blue Cross was in October 2016, when I began to volunteer as a receptionist at their Hammersmith hospital. I left Blue Cross when I went to Germany a year later for my year abroad, but that couldn't keep me away. What began as a simple desire to meet and pet as many dogs as possible became a genuine interest in their work and ethics (although one of my primary goals is still, of course, to pet as many dogs as possible).

Three main things that I learned are important when speaking to people: interest, empathy, and understanding. Learning how to approach people was very important when trying to get them to do my 6-page long surveys! Being left to my own devices has also forced me to communicate with people I might not have talked to otherwise. I've learnt the essential skill of how to motivate people to help you.

For example, I asked the receptionists to take a note of what their phone calls were about during a day. Most of all, though, I learnt how to communicate with those around me, and to explain myself better.



Highlights:

- Reading people's responses to the surveys – they were extremely positive and showed how much the clients value the work at the Blue Cross!
- Getting complimented on my coding skills – if you told me during my first year at university that I would be able to create working code on my own, I wouldn't have believed you.
- Working in an environment that I liked

