Interview with Helen (pseudonym) AT

16th March 2022 in person at participant’s place of work

Researcher – [K]

K: What motivated you to pursue this career?

P: I've always loved animals and I did a degree at [animal college]. Then I wanted to work in a zoo. I wanted to work with dolphins and be a marine biologist. I Slowly realized that that would take a bit more brainpower than what I had. So, in my last year they had a farm at college, and I asked to spend most of my time there. I really enjoyed the sheep, the cows, the calving. I'm a very physical person. I like doing stuff rather than learning stuff or sitting in an office. Then, I actually did work experience at a Zoo. They didn’t have any job openings though so I kinda just went online looking at farm and animal management jobs and this came up. It just said you’ll be working with animals, learning skills, working with vets and that sort of stuff. I thought that sounds interesting, didn’t know anything about the place. Just kinda came here and then realised it was for research and was like oh, okay, not really what I wanted  to do but I'll give it ago, I've been here 7 years now. When I started it was really nice and I just stayed in this role because I get to be with the animals every day, I get to clean them out every day, I get to do training, which I've been doing with these ones to try and make their lives easier because they have a lot done to them, and I want to make their lives less stressful. I just like making them happy and just being outside really. Yeah, just love cuddles with them like when they come up to me and I'm like ‘i’m your mummy!’. So, that’s what kind of got me here, my love for animals and then I just kinda wound up here and never left. I’ve worked in different areas, like a containment facility but that wasn’t for me because I'm more outside, animals, more that, so, a farm setting is better for me. But yeah, it’s interesting and every day is a bit different.

K: And what were your first thoughts when you realised it was a research facility?

P: Er, my first thoughts were do I want to do that? I thought, I love animals and I care for them, do I really want to see like... well, I didn’t know what they did here, so I was like oh god, is it really bad? Are they gonna get really sick? Then after a few months, I thought it’s not what I thought it was, they are actually happy, I'm just looking after them. Then I realised I could learn to do procedures on them so I can do them myself and I know that I’m doing it right. Yeah, then I just give them the best life I can whilst they are here. Sometimes it is hard, my first year I think I cried like ten times whenever like my favourite pig had to go, or my favourite cow or if I saw an animal that had to be put to sleep. You don’t like, get used to it, but you do realise that, actually, it’s humane and they’re not suffering and it’s what has to be done. So I love them whilst they are here and then think, okay you need to go now, you’ve had your time. But yeah, I've kinda come around to it now. I feel like I'm doing something good for animals and people. I feel it is an important job. My role is very small, I'm not a scientist, we’re at the bottom but I do feel like we contribute to something and if something good comes out of it, out of any of our studies, I'm quite happy and I feel like, boosted. Like, we did that! It’s like an achievement.

K: Has there been any studies in particular that you were proud of?

P: I was proud of, er it was probably about 6 years ago, we did one with baby calves for croup cough that babies get. It was a ten-year study, I only joined at the very end, but they brought out a successful croup vaccine for babies. So, when I saw it got published and the vaccines got sent out, I was like, oh we did that. So, I was really happy with that. Recently, we’ve done TB testing to improve TB testing outside and it’s recently been published and one of our TB agents is being used as part of the tests. So, one of our samples is being used to refine it and hopefully make it better for other animals so it’s more accurate telling if they’ve got TB or not, because you can save a lot of cows if you actually find out they haven’t got it. So, hopefully there’s no more unecessary culls. [member of staff] showed me the bottle and was like ‘you did this!’. I mean I clean them out, but I've bled them, done the sampling, I'll get involved where I can, so it feels good.

K: Is it important to see the impact of what you’re doing as motivation?

P: Yeah, because I think sometimes in this place you can get wrapped up in thinking ‘I'm just a glorified poo shoveler and I'm not really doing anything amazing’. You just think all the scientists get all the recognition but when someone comes to you and say’s that you’ve helped, you think ‘actually, I have!’. I don’t go to the lab, but I've sampled these animals, I’ve looked after them in the ways they’ve asked me to and I've done what the study wants me to and yeah, I've contributed. So, it does help when someone comes to you specifically and says ‘you’ve helped make this’.  It makes all the hard days, long days a bit better. It’s kind of worth it.

K: So, what experience did you have with pigs before you came here?

P: Actually, not a lot. It was just working with [my college] on the farm and they were big pigs. I mean, I never used to handle a 6-week-old pig, never even picked a pig up. I just used to go in with the big girls and give them some straw or run away because they wanted to eat you! We did have some piglets born on the farm but pigs are very good at doing it themselves, so we just saw them, but not a lot. But pretty much everything I know now, I got from here. Then just my own little ways of loving them, not a lot of people probably cuddle them and sit with them as much as I do, but I like to do that because the more they like me, the more they’re not sad. So, when they see me, they think ‘friend’ and not ‘someone who is going to hurt me’. I quite like being heavily involved in animal interaction and care, that’s what I really like.

K: So how did you learn most of the pig care here?

P: I learned food wise, I mean they tell us. I followed a guide of how to feed them and stuff. Cleaning out and giving them toys I just kinda found things and see if they like it. [other member of staff] is doing a pilot study on enrichment now. But yeah, we just found some boxes and they started chewing them, so we just put boxes in, they loved it. Tried out different fruit. Just anything that I thought they would like, because they’re in a pen... so I just tried some things and it was mainly just me sitting in with them because a lot of people, and I was one of them, are a bit scared of pigs because they bite and they nip, they’re not malicious, it’s just how they are. So, I wanted to overcome my fear and sit in with them and get to know them, what to look for, and yeah, just taught myself. I just have a caring personality, so I just give that to animals. Sometimes I mollycoddle them, but I don’t care, because I like them. People look at me like ‘are you really doing that?’ yes, I am. It’s a baby. Oh, and in the summer, we gave them little paddling pools, we thought that obviously pigs like to wallow naturally, and they’ll just roll-on mud. We don’t have that here so we thought about what we could do and bought some kiddy paddling pools and filled them up with water, they absolutely loved it. So, now that’s become a thing, every summer when it’s hot we put a paddling pool in. They love running round in it.

K: So, a lot of the enrichment is driven by you?

P: yeah. Then obviously other people who have been here longer have taught me stuff, some of the enrichment has already been there. So, yea, I've learned from experienced people too. Most people up there have been here longer than me. 20 years or so. They’ve given me their techniques; I've done that and adapted it to whatever I think that I should do. I give them nice fluffy beds too, that’s what they like most I've found. They run into the straw and go crazy.

K: How does working with pigs compare to other animals you’ve worked with before?

P: Pigs are probably my favourite. They are more intelligent, more interested, they’re more forgiving and they like human interaction the most, I think. I work with cows as well and it’s far and few between of friendly cows. They just want to eat their hay and stay away. If you go near them, they will just go away, you can give them enrichment, but I don’t think they play with it as well. I think cows just look at it and think ‘what’s that? What am I meant to do with that?’, whereas pigs will work it out and play with it. Sheep are very scared of most people, so they are very different as well, you can’t really get near sheep. And yeah, I just think they’re lovely. I love all animals but they’re just not as long towards people. I mean the sheep are always in a flock I think they prefer to be together than with us, whereas pigs we could have anywhere from 3-20 pigs in a pen, but whenever you go in, they are interested in you. I think we help them have a happier life and I think they show that to us. A cow we will look after, and they will still just stand there not that bothered. Pigs are also easier to train, I did teach one to sit once.

K: One of the pigs here?

P: yeah, down in containment. Just held my hand out with apple and he used to sit. They’re very inquisitive and just funny, when they make their little noises or run around. Just a bundle of joy, I think they maybe my life a bit nicer.

K: how do you describe pigs to other people who’ve never interacted with one before?

P: To be careful of their hands and feet! I’d tell them they are intelligent and lovely, but if you have to do anything with them, because that’s obviously what we do here and people come into handle them, they can be a nightmare, they can be scary, they can be loud, but you’re probably going to do more damage to them than they are to you. You just have to be calm and just sit with them. I say to a lot of people that they should start of just sitting in a pen with them. Just spend 10, 20 minutes, half hour, sit with them and get them to come up to you and just see how they are. That’s the best way to get familiar. Then I just train on handling as they’re coming through the door really. But yeah, I just tell them they’re lovely and they’re intelligent, and that they can be scary if you’ve never been with them. If they wanna come and bite you, they will. But you can tell them off and they will go away, it’s just learning to distract them from biting you if you’re doing something else.

K: Can they pick up on people who are not as confident?

P: I haven’t seen it enough to know for sure, but I think they could. I feel like the pigs play up to them more, maybe going up to that person and trying to bite them or just annoy them more. Or they will just run away if you try and handle them and take the mickey a bit because they think ‘you’re not going to catch me!’. But pigs are still inquisitive whether you’re scared of them or not. They’ll just keep coming up to you.

K: You said earlier you had favourites like number 95?

P: Yeah, 95. She’s my favourite because she talks more than the others to me, so all the others will just walk off and she’s still there. You go to do something else and she’s there, you’ve got the hosepipe and she comes round your feet and [imitates pig oinking], and gets higher pitched and she runs off, comes back, runs off, comes back... today in the pen obviously I got in and sat with them [after sampling] to kind of reassure them that it will be okay, she was there and I was stroking her face and she just loved it. She wasn’t very bitey. She’s quite a nice friendly one and seems to like attention more than the others. Yeah, she’s my favourite because she talks.

K: Are there often ones in different batches that stand out to you more?

P: Yeah, there’s always a couple. Weirdly, you’ll normally find one pen that’s friendlier than the other pen. So, pen 1 in this study is the friendliest, and pen 5 are not as friendly. I don’t know why that happens because we do the same thing, but there will always be a difference between the pens, and it’s all often, So, all 20 in pen 1 are really friendly and all 20 in pen 5 are a bit unsure. They have the same thing, the same stuff done to them, but yeah, there’s always a pen difference. I haven’t quite worked out why yet. There’s always a group that isn’t as bothered and just want to be left alone and do their own thing.

K: So how would you describe your relationship with the pigs here?

P: Er, I’d explain it as very good because I do put all my effort in to them. I can’t say I don’t have a bad relationship because I just want to look after them and love them and make them happy. So yeah, same with any animal, I'll give them treats. Some people don’t think that’s a good thing but I always try and give them something to do or something to make them happy, because I would want that as a human, so I think, well I do it for my dog. I give him a treat, I play with him. They’re not any different and they shouldn’t be bored if we can help it. So yeah, I have a very loving... I call myself pig mummy, so I have quite a good relationship with them! I like to see, like, [NVS] comments on it sometimes when she goes with different people or units or whatever, they can notice that they’re calmer with me. Like this morning, that pig [NVS] was trying to catch, and I stopped her and just went up behind her and got her, because I can get more on their level and they’re more calm, so I got her and it wasn’t too stressful. So yeah, I think there is a difference in how they are with me to how they are with everyone else, because I've been in there more, I spend more time with them, and I have my own way of making them comfortable. I feel they can recognise faces. So yeah, I don’t know if anyone else notices, but I think I'm the favourite of all the pigs because I think I'm the best pig mummy that there is about!

K: Do you think there are any barriers to providing the care you’d ideally want to?

P: I don’t know, sometimes we can’t go in with them depending on the study and if it’s infectious. Sometimes you’re not allowed to go in with them. Or if you go in, you’re fully geared up and you can’t have that touch, which I think they like when you can go in with just a boiler suit and gloves and they can touch you. If it’s a highly infectious one, you’re in a helmet and a suit, wellies, glove, tape and you can’t do anything with them. Sometimes that is annoying to me because I want to do something and I think when you leave them alone they’re more, they don’t like that. It doesn’t happen often but there are times when you’re not allowed to sit with them, but I want to sit with them because I need to make them friendly. So, them barriers are annoying, because I feel human interaction is the best interaction you can give them, unless you can put them in a field which obviously you can’t here. So, subsequently, human interaction does do something for them. When you can’t do that, that is an annoying barrier. Mainly here it’s like infections and stuff, but there’s nothing that would stop me doing what I do unless I'm told, but it doesn’t happen very often.

K: So are you ever told you can’t do things you’d like to?

P: Yeah, it happened last week actually, but I did do it because I spoke to the vet and she agreed with me. But it was for the enrichment study, [NVS] wanted to start it two days after they arrived and that afternoon I was going to sit with them because they’d only just come in and every time someone went by a pen they jumped. So I wanted to go and sit with them so I could train them to stand still when we temp them because that’s what we will have to do every morning for 5 days. I said, I don’t want to grab them every time we have to temp them because it’s not good for us and not good for the pigs. I know that if you spend time with them you can do it while they are feeding and it doesn’t cause anybody any hassle. [NVS] said to me she doesn’t want anyone to sit with them because she had started the enrichment study and me sitting with them would interrupt that, but I said ‘well, I am going to do it today because I need to, because they’re not friendly and it’s going to make it 10x harder down the line and it’s something I feel very strongly about and need to do.” We had a chat and eventually she agreed with me, so I did it. Yeah, that has happened recently. Someone said no and I've argued it and they then agreed with me. Sometimes they don’t always agree with me though.

K: Is that the kind of thing that you’ve become more confident in over time?

P: yeah, when I first started I would have just been like “yep, yep okay”, and just struggled on. Now that I've had experience and know the people and the animals here, I feel I have a good understanding of what the pigs need in order to make life easier, I do feel very strongly. So, now when people say no, I think, well I'm right and I know them animals, I'm going to be in there every day with them so I'm going to do what I think is best. They kind of listen to me now so that’s nice.

K: I bet. How do you notice when a pig might be in distress or pain, other than squealing?

P: Well yeah, funny thing about that is they also do that when they’re having fun. Now I more look at body posture. When they become friendly, all of them are up by the trough shouting at you because they’re hungry when you go in. If all of them bar one are up, then there’s one lying down that doesn’t want to eat or see you then that is a cause of concern. You go over and ask ‘are you okay?’ and then yeah, normally it means there is, we’ve had before a digestion issue or an infection or maybe sometimes they’ve had a cold because they’ve been on a flu study, so they felt rough for a couple of days then get over it. So yeah, how they come up to you, which is why I like to sit with them and make them friendly because if they all want to come to you, it’s easier to tell when one is not well because they don’t want to come to you and that could be a problem. Then there’s the obvious, like if they start limping or if they have a cut or, like the one that had a dislocated tail, pretty sure when she done that, she wasn't happy, but she’s okay now because she’s happy, eating, wants to play and all that stuff. But yeah, mainly behaviour and if they don’t come and see you. As soon as you go in and there’s one on it’s own that is a worry because they should want to be together. Shivering, we’ve had that before, or if they just don’t want to eat and kind of look at the food and walk away. That is another cause for concern.

K: And how does it make you feel when there are one or two that are not as happy as the others?

P: I feel a bit sad because I do try and do what I can. Here, there is nothing normally you can do because it’s normally because they’re ill. I’ll get a vet and try and get them to give them every medication under the sun to try and help them but if they never get better, then I'm really sad. Then we need to think for the welfare of the pig, is it worth keeping her or him, because yeah, it’s not nice. I’ve had it.a few times and I do get very sad. Most of the time they do get better, and I take it on myself to carry on treating them myself and then the vets don’t have to come down, because I've got a home office license so I can jab by myself and give painkillers. Sometimes I prefer it when it is just me because normally they are a bit calmer and I can kinda, mummy them. They kinda like it. But yeah, it is sad when they’re not well and they’re not going to get better. Or if they’re in pain. Definitely I don’t like it, and there’s nothing I can do so I just have to try my best and make the decision, which is always a bit rubbish but if it has to be done, it has to be done.

K: Does it make you feel different when it’s a pig that hasn’t yet finished a study that you might have to send it off?

P: Yeah, yeah. I feel, yeah it does happen a few times. But I prefer them to be here for the time they are meant to be here for because obviously they get a bit of a longer life, and I don’t think sending a pig down by itself makes them feel very good, I don’t think they’d enjoy it. So, yeah I prefer it when they can all go together. But then, inside I have to make the best call for the pigs. So, I'm sad if there’s nothing that can be done. But yeah, definitely nicer when they all trot off together. That's what I like about pigs, nothing ever get puts down here unless they’re really sick. You just load them on to the lorry and they trot on and me and the other AT, we have a little system. We bring a bucket of food and they follow us up on the trailer, they get a little bit to eat on their way down, so they don’t feel like anything is very different. They’re just munching some food on a lorry and they don’t know anything until they get to the PM room, so that is the way I like it. Yeah, it seems to work. They know us so they follow us, we’re like ‘come on piggies!’ and they just follow mum. But yeah, if it’s one on it’s own, you have to carry it out and put them in and it’s just sad to send it by itself. Obviously if it’s really bad we take them out and put them down in a separate area so the other pigs don’t know and can’t see. That’s sad as well. There’s happy times and there’s sad times, but I like that it’s all different and if I didn’t love animals, I wouldn’t be here. So, it kind of makes me realise that I am in the right place, because I can get sad as well as make decisions. I'm still human, I'm not like ‘kill it, I don’t care’. But yeah, it doesn’t affect me but that is good because I mean some people who have done it years they’ve seen it all and are just ‘yeah, let it go’, they’re not horrible but they’re not as emotional as what I'd be. For them it’s like it is what it is, happens all the time. For me, I’m.. I can do it but it’s sad. You have bad days and you have good days, but it’s okay.

K: How do you cope with the sadness?

P: Normally I go and cuddle another pig. I’ll go find the ones still here. If it’s end of study I don’t really get sad, I just think that was a good load, they’ve loaded up well, then they go off and I don’t really think about it because I'm not there. I’ve cared for them how they should be cared for. So, that’s always fine. It’s mainly if something sudden happens that we’re not aware of and a pig has to go. Or, it’s just not well. But yeah, I talk to my friend about it and rant to her or have a little cry, or hug my piggies. Then it’s just new that, new thing. But yeah, I have better coping mechanisms now. I tell myself I've done good,  I've not done anything wrong and I've done the best that I could for the animal. It’s just one of those things, that’s what I tell myself when it happens and I get past it. Then a new load of little four week old piggies come and I'm like ‘aww new friends!’. Then there’s new ones to train and get to know. Yeah, we do name some of our pigs because they say here don’t name anything because it will have to go, but there’s probably at least 3 or 4 pigs on every study that has come in that we give names to because they just have a personality or something so I have to name them. It doesn’t really affect me, I just like calling them by their names. We had a Marilyn Monroe, because she had a little beauty mark on her cheek.  We had Munch, he just loved the food and couldn’t get him out of it. So, we name them if they fit.

K: Have the ones in there got any names?

P: Not yet, they’ve only been here a week and... I mean 95 is my favourite and I'll probably just call her 95 as her name because I remember it. Unless something stands out to me... I don’t know, maybe she will be Little Pinky or something. I don’t call them Sausages because that’s not very nice! My friend goes ‘oh they’re little sausages!’ and I say ‘ they’re not sausages!’. They don’t know, they just look at us and go ‘i love you’, we just called you a sausage!

K: And how does your relationship change with pigs as they progress through a study?

P: I don’t think it really changes, apart from maybe, sometimes like my favourite little piggy, if we have them here for a while, when they get bigger, they then aren’t my favourite piggy because they change, either they don’t like you or they become a bit too aggressive or boisterous. If that happens, I back off from them, because then they’re too much. You can’t go in and feed them and they’re trying to bowl you over. So, I detach myself and how much time I spend in there because I think there’s not much point if I'm gonna get eaten alive. It depends on what’s going, there are times when I can spend 3 hours in the building because I've got time, there’s others when I only have time to go in and clean them out and feed them. Then I don’t see them until PM feed where I only have time to feed them and check they’re okay. So yeah, if we’re busy here throughout a study then the time I spend with them can differ. Towards the end it’s not as intense because I've got to know them and they’re older. I still give them all the toys but I don’t sit with them as much because they’re already friendly. Once the pigs get really friendly, you don’t have to sit with them all the time because they’re never going to get not friendly. You just want them used to having someone come in every day so they’re alright for the rest of the study. So yeah, probably no difference. The longer they’re here really the less time you spend with them, purely due to circumstance of they’re just not bothered anymore. They will say hi then like walk off because they’re bored, they know you, they’ll say hello then they will go off and do their own piggy thing, whatever pigs want to do!

K: And how do you deal with ones that may be more stressed than others during procedures?

P: Well, like this morning, the ones who were jumping out of the pen we would try to do them first or as quickly as possible, cause once you’ve gone what you need to do with them and when you’ve put them down it’s fine. So yeah, if there’s some that are really stressed we try and get them out the way first. There have been times when I've refused to do anything to them because they’re too stressed and I don’t believe that stabbing them with a needle whilst they’re really stressed is a good idea. We have emailed the people who run the study before and said this pig couldn’t be bled because of stress levels, we’re not doing it until next week, it needs another week to just chill out and then we will try doing that one first. We will always mark down numbers of the ones who are really stressed so we can get them out the way. Hopefully, they’re not as bad. Or, just refuse to do it at all because to me, the science is important but their stress is more important because pigs are one of the animals that can die because of stress. They will get too stressed and can’t breathe and die and they can’t come back for it. So, I'd rather not stress them out, leave it for a bit and see if they get better. If they never do, then that’s one of the times we say they’re not fit for study and then they go. That’s better than stressing them out, holding them upside down and them screaming in your face. You’re just looking at them thinking “i’m really sorry, I'm really causing you a lot of pain”. So yeah, we do them first or leave them completely alone and let them chill out.

K: Have you had pigs here die because of stress?

P: Yeah, we’ve had a few. Mainly bleeding. Yeah, they normally sound stressed when you pick them up they scream it’s what they do. Yeah, I don’t know if you took note of the one that was in the trough longer today, [NVS] was saying they are really blotchy, and it’s too stressed we were just gonna stop. That’s normally the sign to stop, their skin tone will change, and they might go pale because they’re not getting oxygen and they can’t breathe. We normally try and stop before that point, but as soon as [NVS] saw, you can see the spots come in and change of colour then we will stop and let it go, whatever [blood] you’ve got is enough. We’re gonna let it go. Hopefully, it stops that. We’ve had some who have walked off, stumbled and then they lay down and suddenly they can’t get their breath back and we have to call a vet over for an emergency. Sometimes, we can give them medication like steroids or adrenaline basically and it will perk them up and they will be absolutely fine, but sometimes it is just too far and they’re not gonna be okay. So, we can just give them pain relief and put them to sleep ourselves so they’re not in pain for too long. It’s one of those things, you can’t always help it. We used to breed pigs ourselves here called Babrahams, they were genetically inbred, bred here for years. They were dodgy because they were inbred and were mainly they pigs we would have issues with. So with commercial pigs they are quite hardy and you can do a lot to them before there would be any issue. They would scream and scream their heads off but they wouldn’t die, they’d be fine. The genetically altered pigs though, they would have heart deficiencies because obviously they were inbred. If we had any die, it would normally be them because even if they got a little bit stressed they could have a heart attack because they just weren’t put together right in the first place. So, these little piggies shouldn’t have any worries. But yeah, it depends on the pig, Baberahams are weird. They don’t scream either, they’re silent. You’d pick them up and there would be no noise, which I found really weird. You expect a pig to scream, but yeah, it was weird. But anything you did to them, anything you did they would be scared they were gonna die, I hated working with them. Absolutely hated it, because I just thought “please don’t, pease don’t die” and that’s obviously not nice. That’s one of the not nice things we have to deal with sometimes. One of them I dealt with, I was holding her in my arms about twenty minutes before the vet came struggling to breathe. I was gonna stay with her because if you have other pigs around her, you might have them go up to her and try and eat her. Pigs being pigs, they’ll eat anything. If a pig doesn’t move for X amount of minutes, they will... and she couldn’t breathe, she didn’t know what was going on. So I guarded her from the other pigs. She had to be put down, there was no saving her, but she was end of study anyway. We bled her to go to the PM room that day and yeah, she just did it earlier. We still had a lot more to do, so I said call a vet now and we’ll send her down now by herself because it’s better her going now than waiting for half an hour and not being able to breathe. So yeah, that was a hard one. We haven’t had any like that since.

K: But there are times when you can say you want to stop?

P:  yeah, yeah we’re all allowed to say stop. Even if someone argues it, you can say “i know this pig, we’re stopping”. So yeah, we’re pretty good up here. Most people up here would stop, there’s not many people who would see the signs and say “no, I need the blood”. Most of us, if it’s stressed, we won’t touch it. We’re all on the same wavelength here, which is nice. Most of the time I will say it, and they will agree and we can let them go.

K: Is it different when it’s an external study?

P: Only the contacts are different really, nothing to do with the pigs. But the equipment, like sampling equipment will take longer to get here and stuff. You have to liaison with someone over the phone or email rather than someone on site. Well I guess, if a pig was sick or something, depending on the study there’s certain medications and stuff they can’t be given so if they’ve hurt their leg or something, they might not actually be allowed a painkiller because of whatever the innoculum is that they’ve had, so we’d have to contact the study leader, try and get in contact with them ASAP and say ‘this is what has happened to your pig, this is what we want to do, can we do that? What would you like us to do?’ Obviously, if a pig is in agony it is down to us and we would put it down or deal with it regardless of what they said, but we always do have to check. Sometimes, someone could be away if they’re not at their computer or don’t answer their phone then you’re waiting time is getting longer and longer to treat this pig. But yeah, if they’re on site I’d just go to the persons office and explain what has happened and ask what to do. It’s quicker if it’s internal. But it doesn’t really affect the pigs too much.

K: is there anything else you wanted to mention?

P: Just, I love pigs and I love to look after them.