



Q&A with Angharad Belcher, Head of BSAVA Congress

Why not make the move in 2020?

We have a five-year contract with Birmingham. The selection of a new venue has taken 18 months of research and site inspections, with intensive preparation work now underway to ensure we deliver a highly successful inaugural event in Manchester. It's all about long-term achievements rather than short term wins and a move of this magnitude is something we want to dedicate the time to doing properly so that the profession and industry can benefit fully from the change.

Why did you choose Manchester?

BSAVA is first and foremost about the quality and breadth of CPD on offer and we have a reputation for delivering some of the finest in the world. The decision-making process was primarily about finding a venue that could give us flexibility on how we build the programme, practical sessions and integrate the exhibition. Then we needed to ensure that the city would be capable of delivering the volume of accommodation needed for all our delegates at reasonable prices. Finally, we needed to ensure that evenings could be very well spent! Manchester meets all our requirements.

Why couldn't you just stay in Birmingham?

Birmingham has been an excellent venue but as Congress has continued to evolve and deliver more for delegates the split site at Birmingham is beginning to present logistical limitations. Each year it's necessary to build a temporary undercover walkway between the ICC and the Arena, at significant cost, to join the registration, exhibition and food hub with the lecture facilities. Given the high numbers of delegates at Congress, congested traffic flow in the walkway and the impact on busy delegates' time when moving from site to site are becoming increasing concerns. We are aware of the growing need to provide a more integrated experience at Congress and the move allows us to do exactly that.

Did you consider London?

Yes, but the costs in the capital are high and we feel that our members' money is better invested in international speakers and world class education.

Is this just a financial decision?

This isn't a financial decision, it's something that is very personal to all our trustees and directors who have spent many months going through all the details beyond the finance. Any savings that are achieved will be used to improve the delegate experience and deliver the highest quality education both at Congress and throughout the BSAVA programme.

Congress is one of the longest running veterinary events in the world, and we want to ensure that first class CPD remains at the core. This move is to enable Congress to step into the future and provide us with flexibility that is much needed, and of course, bring the exhibition and lectures together.

Have you fully considered the potential of Manchester in terms of location?

From the in-depth analysis of the delegate travel patterns over the past 3 years, and where our UK members are based, we are confident that delegate travel time will be well spent due to the ease of direct travel to, and a well-developed transport infrastructure in, Manchester. For many of our members the new location will mean that their travel time, on direct services, will be advantageous. The city centre is compact and walkable and benefits from an extensive tram network, a free bus service and three major national train stations providing services every 20 minutes from London Euston and taking just over two hours to complete. For international delegates and speakers, Manchester Airport is just 15 minutes by train from the city centre, offering direct flights from over 200 destinations worldwide including non-stop routes from across Europe as well as China, the Middle East, India and North America.

What is going to be different other than the city?

Every year Congress moves forward, bringing together the best veterinary experts globally, and ensuring that all vets and nurses celebrate all that has been achieved, and go back into practice feeling inspired. This will remain at the heart of every Congress, however the event is evolving and our teams of volunteers and the Congress team are working on many ideas based on recent delegate and speaker feedback to allow us to continuously improve. We have lots of new ideas for scientific content delivery which we will start in 2019 and 2020, as part of this journey. Now is also the time for delegates, members and the industry to tell us what you'd like to see done differently across CPD, event set up, socials and everything in between. The provision of the highest standard of science and education will be pivotal to all that we do, and we will not compromise on quality of speakers and education. However, the style and structure of practicals, demonstrations and lectures are aspects we will be looking at in detail to help delegates get the most out of the event.

Will the date of BSAVA Congress change?

All BSAVA Congress dates will fall clear of Easter – which is hugely important to us and our exhibitors and delegates given the pressures on the profession for staffing during bank holidays and school holidays etc.

BSAVA Congress 2021 will be held from 25 – 28 March 2021.

Can I get involved if I live in the city?

Yes! For those of you who live in or near Manchester we'd love to hear your tips on how to take best advantage of everything your beautiful city has to offer such as spectacular sites, secret bars, gastronomic delights and local transport options. We would also love you to be BSAVA Congress ambassadors on social media to help give vets and nurses the warmest possible welcome to your city. Please get in touch with the team via email or Facebook: Congress@bsava.com with 'Welcome to Manchester' as your subject @BSAVACongress <https://en-gb.facebook.com/thebsava/>