

To set, uphold and
advance veterinary standards

**RCVS Strategic Plan
2014–2016**

RCVS

Overview

Clarity of identity, purpose and direction are essential in order for the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) to continue to deliver an effective regulatory environment, as well as being more ambitious in becoming a first-rate regulator and Royal College. This document seeks to provide a framework for delivering this over the next three years.

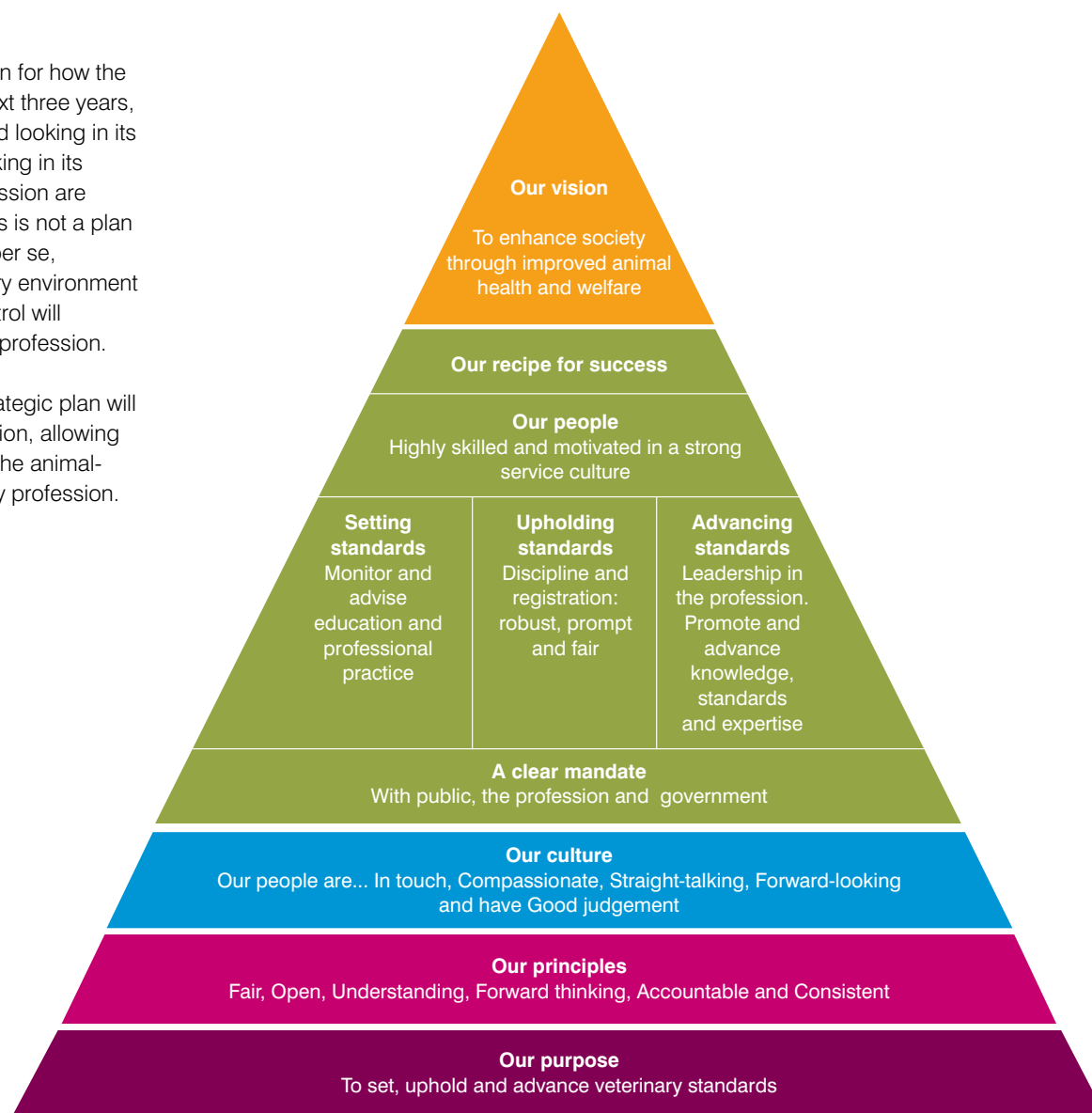
The content of this framework can be summarised in the adjacent pyramid. We seek to establish a clear purpose; articulate the principles that help to create the right culture; establish and understand what we need to do to achieve success; and, deliver a vision that provides focus and direction.

The rest of this document expands upon the content of the pyramid, providing more detail around specific objectives and defining areas for activity.

As a College we have always had to be flexible and responsive to the changing world in which we operate. Legislative developments and changing public demands mean that the professional environment in which veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses work continues to evolve, and with that so too has our work. The next three years will continue the change programme at a pace, so that we can become a truly first-rate regulator and remain a respected Royal College.

It is to be noted that this is a plan for how the College will function over the next three years, so is inevitably somewhat inward looking in its activities, although outward looking in its vision. All members of the profession are members of the College, but this is not a plan for the future of the profession per se, although of course the regulatory environment over which the College has control will continue to shape and lead the profession.

If properly implemented, the strategic plan will greatly strengthen the organisation, allowing us to deliver a better service to the animal-owning public and the veterinary profession.



Clarifying our purpose

Our purpose is:

**'To set, uphold and advance
veterinary standards'.**

Our vision is:

**'To enhance society through improved
animal health and welfare'.**

To set and uphold standards is our core regulatory function; advancing standards is in line with our purpose as a Royal College.



Defining what will make us successful

It is important that staff (and others operating on behalf of the College, such as examiners, inspectors, committee members and investigators) understand the culture in which we operate, giving them the scope and confidence to make appropriate decisions and deliver a first-rate service for the profession and the public – and ultimately for animal health and welfare.

Although culture cannot be dictated, guiding principles and behaviours can be helpful in shaping how people behave

Our principles

The principles for how the organisation operates, that were defined as part of the RCVS rebranding exercise in 2011, remain valid. They are:

Fair

We have the legal power to regulate and must behave fairly and impartially. We manage the interface between the profession and the public. To maintain the trust of both, we must always act without fear or favour.

Open

Justice must not only be done, but be seen to be done. So our Council meetings are held in public and we publish our procedures and decisions. Our activities are open and so are we.

Understanding

We show clear understanding of our field of operations; equally we aim to understand the needs of our wider audience.

Forward thinking

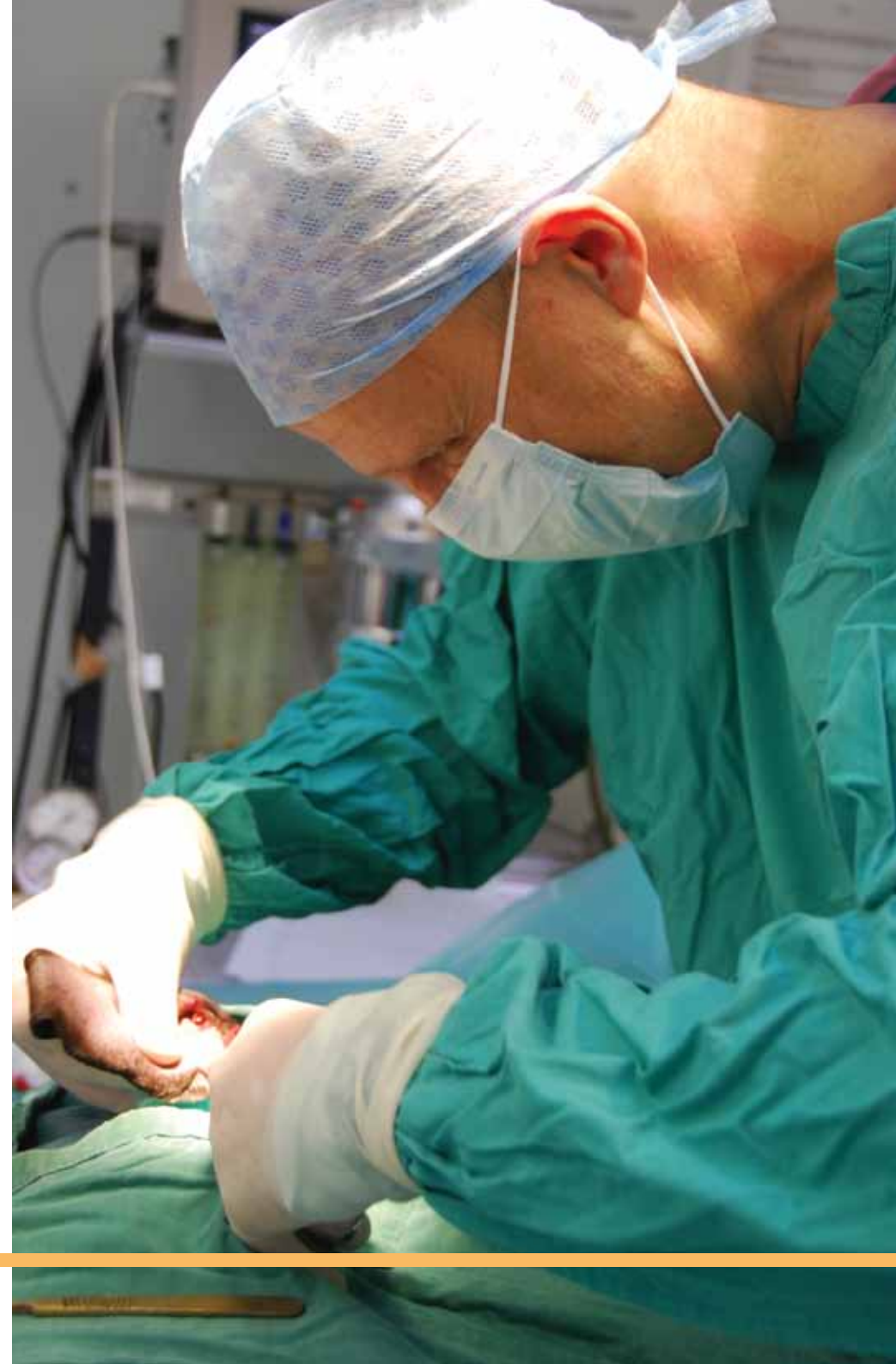
We have a long past, but are more interested in where we are going. We seek to ensure that the veterinary profession, and the College itself, is always fit for purpose, and that veterinary standards move with the times.

Accountable

We occupy a position of trust and as a public body we must be answerable for our actions. We must be willing to provide reasons for our decisions and keep our governance under review.

Consistent

People will look to us for guidance and they will not expect us to be contradictory. We must act as custodians for the standards of the profession and apply them with consistency.



Our culture – how we do things

Our behaviours

To our principles we add the following more personal behaviours, together with parameters that help to contextualise what this means for our employees and others acting on behalf of the RCVS.

It is through these organisational principles and associated behaviours that we engage with each other and with our customers, the veterinary profession and the animal-owning public.

We will measure our employees' performance on tasks and outcomes, as well as their adherence to the values, the behaviours and therefore the culture of the RCVS.

Behaviour

- ✓ Behaviour IS
- ✗ Behaviour IS NOT

Good judgment

- ✓ On top of your subject
Weighing up arguments
Finding solutions
Fair and rational
Learning from mistakes
- ✗ Making snap decisions
Analysis paralysis
Having a prejudice
Blindly sticking to rules
Shooting from the hip

Forward-looking

- ✓ Open to ideas
Embracing change
Measured evolution
- ✗ Change for the sake of it
Rushing to the wrong answers
Ignoring the present

In touch

- ✓ Asking questions
Curious and inquisitive
Finger on the pulse
Being there
- ✗ Following everyone else
Intrusive and nosey

Compassionate

- ✓ Listening and understanding
Thoughtful and helpful
Human and empathetic
Respectful and non-judgmental
- ✗ Hiding the truth
Being patronising
A pushover

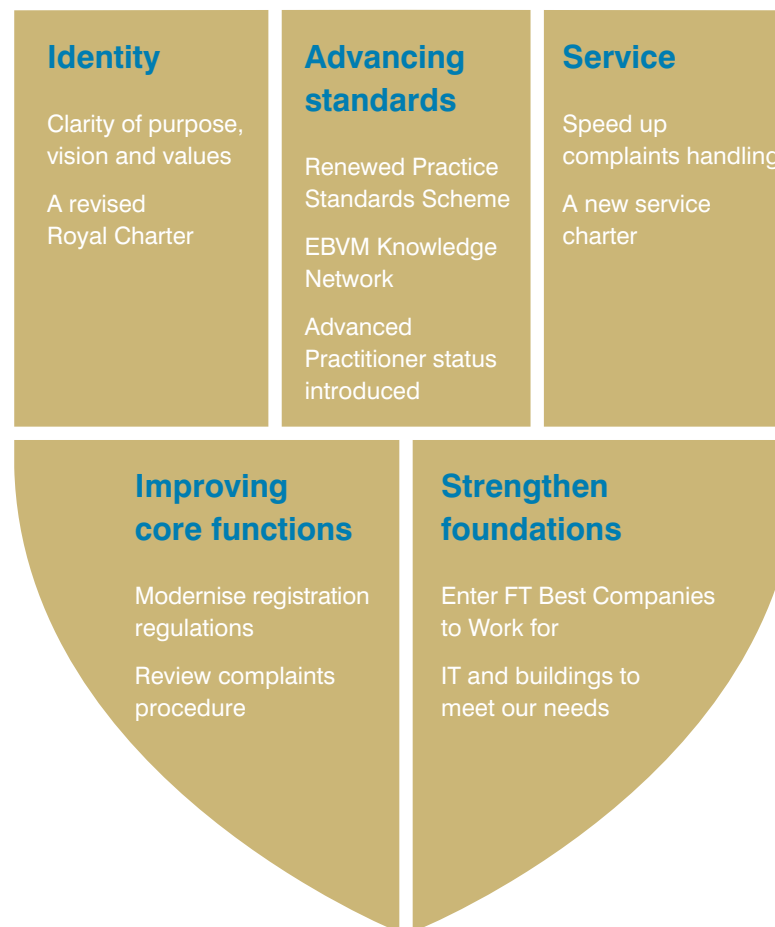
Straight-talking

- ✓ Clear and consistent
Using plain English
Honest and transparent
Managing expectations
- ✗ Patronising
Rude and abrupt
Arrogant

Our strategic focus

Taking account of feedback and recommendations from our First Rate Regulator research, and through discussion at all levels within the organisation, we have identified five areas where we should develop plans for improvement.

These include: our identity, our service, our infrastructure and foundations, relentless delivery on our core functions and looking at how we can develop our leadership role within the profession.



Identity

Ambition: the RCVS is clear about its role, is in the driving seat of reform and continuous improvement, and is seen as a modern and progressive organisation.

We will do the following to meet our ambition:

- Clearly articulate and make sense of functioning as one Royal College
- Create a revised Royal Charter to confirm RCVS roles and responsibilities
- Establish statutory or charter regulation and protection of title for veterinary nurses, and articulate clearly that the RCVS is the regulatory body for both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses
- Develop a governance structure that is dynamic and forward looking, concentrating on the strategic objectives of the organisation
- Ingrain our purpose, vision, principles and culture in everything we do and in every way we communicate
- Encourage improved engagement from and communication with our key audiences, particularly the public but also the profession and government.





Service

Ambition: the RCVS will be known for its excellent staff who will go the extra mile to meet the needs of the public and the profession, constantly seeking to reduce anxiety through clearer information and advice, and relentless in their delivery of robust, prompt and, above all, fair and transparent processes.

We will do the following to meet our ambition:

- Introduce a service charter, for the public and profession, of rights, expectations and responsibilities for every function within the RCVS and assess compliance
- Set a baseline target for satisfaction among the public and the profession and establish the most appropriate methods for measurement
- Develop our communications with the public and profession to ensure they are in plain English and embrace multiple channels of communication
- Improve the advice line for the public and the profession, be clearer about its role and look at facilitating veterinary experts to help inform the advice given
- Trial longer hours for the advice line ie evenings and Saturday mornings
- Cost and design a trial for a new consumer disputes resolution service
- Find more opportunities to raise awareness of the RCVS with the animal-owning public and the profession
- Reduce the time it takes for a complaint to be concluded in a fair and transparent manner.

Advancing standards

Ambition: the RCVS will advance professional standards while remaining mindful of the costs.

We will do the following to meet our ambition:

- Review, define if appropriate, develop the role of the Fellowships
- Implement and promote Advanced Practitioner status, and clarify and promote Specialist status, for the benefit of the profession and the public
- Continue to develop and promote a Practice Standards Scheme that is clear, meaningful and valuable to the public and the profession
- Promote and support RCVS Knowledge and evidence-based practice in its development of an evidence-based veterinary medicine (EBVM) network
- Ensure continuing professional development (CPD) compliance, and investigate CPD quality assurance
- Review and investigate options for re-accreditation.



Improving core functions

Ambition: we will do a first-rate job of ensuring proper standards of education, maintaining the Register and managing a robust, prompt and fair disciplinary process for veterinary surgeons and nurses.

We will do the following to meet our ambition:

- Ensure that the standards the RCVS sets for veterinary education and our means of monitoring them continue to influence and reflect best international practice
- Review the complaints procedure to improve communication with vets and complainants and introduce an internet-accessible complaint-tracking system
- Review disciplinary rules and sanctions
- Establish statutory powers to conduct language testing for those from the EU for whom English is not their first language
- Ensure there is appropriate guidance to the *Codes of Professional Conduct*
- Facilitate efficient, effective and user-friendly processes, including around the collection of fees
- Review and modernise the regulations around registration.



Strengthen the foundations

Ambition: the RCVS will have highly engaged and skilled staff focused on providing a high standard of service, supported by a stable, secure and suitable IT infrastructure and building facilities that fit the demands for continuous improvements to our service standards.

We will do the following to meet our ambition:

- Put in place measures that allow us to enter the *Financial Times* 'Great Place to Work' Survey
- Provide staff training and support, tackle succession planning and career development, and develop a flexible reward and recognition package for our staff
- Develop our role as an employer with wider engagement with the RCVS community, including our inspectors and examiners
- Encourage and foster positive relations between Council and staff
- Develop an estate strategy to look at our building requirements; whether we need an additional building to house Disciplinary Committee hearings, develop options and achieve agreement on a way forward
- Ensure that the staff team is in touch with the needs of the profession and the public
- Ensure IT infrastructure meets our needs, implement changes to the IMIS system (which may include full replacement) and, if necessary, upgrade other IT systems that underpin our work
- Reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and optimise resources where possible.



