Publication Scheme, Part 1

1. This publication scheme is provided in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (‘the FOI Act’) to enable you to find our information about the RCVS and what we do. The Scheme is in three parts. This first part explains the nature of the scheme; Part 2, at page 9 lists the types or classes of information available and what is exempt disclosure [Publication Scheme 2 - RCVS]; and Part 3 lists the documents available [Publication Scheme 3 - RCVS]. If you do not find what you are looking for, please contact Ms Velia Soames, Head of Professional Conduct, preferably by e-mail on v.soames@rcvs.org.uk

2. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is the statutory body responsible for registering and regulating veterinary surgeons in the United Kingdom and has a Royal Charter function, for example, awarding certificates, diplomas and fellowships to veterinary surgeons. The RCVS is also responsible for the accreditation of qualifications that provide a ‘licence to practise’ as a veterinary nurse, the registration of veterinary nurses (RVNs) and the maintenance of the Register. The RCVS was first established in 1844 by Royal Charter and today operates primarily under a 1967 Charter and byelaws and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, with subsequent amendments and additions.

Our role is:

a. To safeguard the health and welfare of animals committed to veterinary care through the regulation of the educational, ethical and clinical standards of the veterinary profession, thereby protecting the interests of those dependent on animals and assuring public health.

b. To act as an impartial source of informed opinion on animal health and welfare issues and their interaction with human health.

For more information on these aims, the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, the Royal Charter of 1967 and our history, please see: About - RCVS

We are not here to protect veterinary surgeons. Veterinary surgeons’ interests are protected or represented by others, for example, the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and the Veterinary Defence Society (VDS).
3. **Our structure**

Our governing body, the RCVS Council, has 42 members:

a. 24 veterinary surgeons elected by the veterinary surgeons on our register (six elected each year for a four year term);

b. 2 persons appointed by each of the 7 UK universities providing veterinary degree courses (only one of whom has to be a veterinary surgeon); and,

c. 4 persons appointed by the Privy Council (usually including the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) for the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, a Member of Parliament and an appointee associated with the farming industry).

Departments within the RCVS include:

a. **The Communications Department**, which manages queries relating to Media, Government and public relations as well as congresses, regional meetings, publications (including the Annual Report, RCVS News) corporate communications and the website.

b. **The Education Department**, which deals with the statutory and charter functions of the RCVS relating to undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, and the professional development of veterinary surgeons.

c. **The Executive Office**, which is led by Nick Stace and is responsible for providing strategic leadership and overseeing the operational management of the organisation. The Executive Office coordinates Council meetings as well as Committees of Council.

d. **The Operations Department**, which is responsible for the provision of finance and IT services – software and hardware, and facilities, including reception and post room cover. The teams which make up these departments are Corporate services, Finance and Facilities.

e. **The Professional Conduct Department**, which investigates concerns against veterinary surgeons and registered veterinary nurses and provides advice to the profession. A team also manages voluntary practice accreditation scheme: the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme

f. **The Registration Department**, which maintains the registers of veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and veterinary practice premises.

g. **The Veterinary Nursing Department**, which manages the accreditation of registerable veterinary nurse qualifications, the enrolment of student veterinary nurses and the registration of newly qualified veterinary nurses.

h. **RCVS Knowledge**, which is an independent charity that works closely with the RCVS on a range of issues, but particularly with regard to managing the RCVS Historical Collection on behalf of the veterinary profession in the UK and providing a professional library and information service to practising vets and veterinary nurses.

You can find out more about each department on the following page of the RCVS website: [Contact us - RCVS](http://www.rcvs.org.uk)
4. **Freedom of information**

The FOI Act was passed on 30 November 2000. It gives a general right of access to information held by public authorities. It also sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities.

The Information Commissioner has a duty to promote best practice under the FOI Act and to ensure compliance. The Commissioner's address is:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
https://ico.org.uk/

Your rights to information under the FOI Act came into force on 1 June 2006. From that date, with certain exceptions, the RCVS has been required to:

a. Let you know in writing or by e-mail if we hold the information you have asked for; and  
b. Provide to you any information we have within 20 working days.

We will also have a general duty to provide advice or assistance to you or to anyone seeking information (e.g. to explain what information is available or to clarify what you want to know).

5. **Purpose and structure of the Scheme**

The purpose of the Scheme is to let you know what information is readily available from us. By 'readily available' we mean information that is on our website, or that can be obtained from us by letter, fax or e-mail.

In creating and reviewing this Scheme, we have to consider the public interest when:

a. Allowing public access to the information we hold; and  
b. Publicising the reasons for decisions that we make.

By law, our Scheme must:

a. Set out the classes of information that we publish or intend to publish;  

b. Say how we will publish the information in each class; and  

c. Say if we will provide the information free or charge for it.
The Scheme is in three parts:

a. Part 1 tells you about the **Scheme**;

b. Part 2 sets out the **classes or types of information** that we publish or intend to publish. It also contains a list of classes of information that will generally not be made available; and

c. Part 3 is the **Publications List**, which tells you what information is published, how it can be obtained and whether it is free of charge.

The Scheme is available on the RCVS website: [Home - RCVS](http://www.rcvs.org.uk) (The main site has been developed to conform to Priority 1 and 2 of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](http://www.w3.org/standards/wmp/wcag/), (WCAG 1.0) or from the RCVS offices.

6. **Obtaining information under the Scheme**

   The RCVS routinely publishes large volumes of information on its website. Most information provided in the Scheme will be freely available for downloading from the website. Other information listed in this Scheme that is not available from the website, will be available when requested in writing from the RCVS offices. Information listed under the Scheme may be requested by letter, fax or e-mail. You should send your request for information contained in the Scheme to:

   **Ms Velia Soames, Head of Professional Conduct**
   FOI Act Request
   The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
   Belgravia House
   62-64 Horseferry Road
   London
   SW1P 2AF

   **T 020 7227 3508**
   **F 020 7202 0740**
   **E v.soames@rcvs.org.uk**

   We are committed to making this information available to all sections of the community. At present the Scheme is only available in English. However, this will be reviewed at intervals and the Scheme will be translated into other languages if a need is identified.

   Like most organisations, the RCVS makes use of abbreviations in its documents and other records. We try to make sure such abbreviations are kept to a minimum. If necessary, we will provide an explanation of any abbreviations used.

7. **Exempt information**

   The FOI Act provides exemptions for certain classes of information. If the exemptions apply to the information you have requested you will be informed in writing. However, the RCVS is not obliged to confirm or deny if such information is held.
8. **Responsibility for the RCVS Scheme**

Overall responsibility for the Scheme rests with the Registrar. Day-to-day responsibility for the Scheme rests with:

Ms Velia Soames, Head of Professional Conduct  
FOI Act Request  
The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons  
Belgravia House  
62-64 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 2AF  

T 020 7227 3508  
F 020 7202 0740  
E v.soames@rcvs.org.uk

9. **Charging for information in the Scheme**

Generally, access to information held by the RCVS will be free of charge. Single copies of any publication listed in our publication list will normally be available free of charge from our website or from the RCVS offices.

Charges may be imposed for:

a. Producing multiple copies of specified information in paper or other format  
b. Specified hard copy publications

Charges will reflect the staff time necessary to produce the information and any copying and postage. We will let you know these charges when you request the information and we will require payment in advance.

10. **Copyright**

Material made available through the Scheme is subject to the laws of copyright. RCVS information may be reproduced in accordance with The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and associated legislation and within Copyright Licensing Agency guidelines. Where information is reproduced, it must be reproduced accurately, not used in a misleading context and an appropriate acknowledgement must be inserted. Permission to reproduce material does not extend to any material accessed through the Scheme that is in the copyright of third parties. You must obtain permission to reproduce such information from the copyright holder concerned. Information made available under this Scheme must NOT be reproduced, copied or otherwise used for any commercial purposes.
11. **Reviewing and updating the Scheme**

New material will be added to the publication Scheme as it becomes available. The whole Scheme has been approved by the Information Commissioner for a period of four years. However, the Scheme will be reviewed and updated periodically by the RCVS.

12. **Tell us what you think**

We are committed to expanding the amount of information in the Scheme and ensuring that you can find, request and receive the information easily. New information will be placed on the Scheme regularly. You will appreciate that reviewing and publishing material is in some cases a costly process and may take some time. However, we will endeavour to ensure that our Scheme contains information that is of use to everyone interested in understanding more about the activities of the RCVS. If you have any comments on this Scheme please write to Ms Kingswell at the RCVS offices.

13. **Complaints about the Scheme**

If you have a complaint about the operation of the Scheme:

a. Write to Ms Eleanor Ferguson, Head of Professional Conduct / Acting Registrar of the RCVS, at the RCVS offices seeking resolution of your complaint.

b. If you are not satisfied with the response that you receive, you may write to the Information Commissioner, who is appointed to consider such complaints at the address shown above.

14. **Requests for personal information**

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 (‘the DPA’), you already have a statutory right to have access to personal data we hold about you on computer or in a structured manual file (i.e. on paper). You also have the right to expect the RCVS, as the Data Controller, to ensure that data is:

a. Processed fairly and lawfully;

b. Obtained for specific and lawful purposes;

c. Adequate, relevant and not excessive for that purpose;

d. Accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;

e. Not kept for longer than is necessary;

f. Processed in accordance with your rights as the data subject;

g. Kept secure; and,

h. Not transferred abroad unless to countries with adequate data protection laws.
15. For the purposes of the DPA:

a. ‘Personal data’ is information that relates to a living identifiable person;
b. ‘The Data Controller’ is the person or organisation that controls the purpose and manner in which data is processed; and,
c. ‘The Data Subject’ is the person to whom the data relates.

Where we are the Data Controller, and subject to certain exemptions (see below), you are entitled to be told whether we hold personal data about you and, if so:

a. To be given a description of the personal data in question;
b. To be told for what purposes the personal data is processed;
c. To be told the recipients, or classes of recipients, to whom the personal data is or may be disclosed; and,
d. To be given a copy of any personal data held with any unintelligible terms, acronyms or codes explained.

To be given any information available to us as to the source of the personal data, a form for applying for access to your personal data is available from the website or on request from the RCVS offices. A fee of £10 must accompany your request for personal data under the DPA. You will be required to supply proof of your identity. You may also be required to provide us with further information in order to allow us to locate the information that you seek. A request for access to personal data will be dealt within 40 days of receipt of the request and payment of the fee.

16. Exempt information

As with the FOI Act, the DPA provides some exemptions to disclosure in relation to certain classes of information. If the exemptions apply to the information you have requested you will be informed in writing. However, the RCVS will not necessarily confirm or deny if such data is held about you.

17. Complaints

If you consider that a request by you for access to your personal data has not been dealt with properly you may:

a. Write to Ms Eleanor Ferguson, Head of Professional Conduct / Acting Registrar of the RCVS, at the RCVS offices seeking resolution of your complaint.

b. Write to the Information Commissioner, who is appointed to consider such complaints at the address shown above.