



**Stronger together,  
with animal health and  
welfare at our heart**



**RCVS Strategic Plan**  
2025 to 2029



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# Introduction

## **Welcome to our new Strategic Plan – stronger together with you.**

As the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), we work to inspire confidence in veterinary care. We protect the public interest by ensuring animal health and welfare, and public health, are advanced through thriving world-class veterinary professions.

Many share an interest in this outcome, and it works best when we bring people together to achieve it.

To that end, the focus of our new Strategic Plan is ‘stronger together’ and, on the following pages, we set out what we aim to achieve over the next five years, working with our four key stakeholder groups.

If you are reading this strategy – whether you are a member of the public, a member of the veterinary team, a student, from within an organisation, government, media, or educational establishment, or part of the RCVS team or governance structure – you hold a stake in veterinary standards and animal health and welfare. So, you have a part to play.



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The main purpose of the RCVS is statutory regulation. Alongside our statutory functions, we have an important role in helping vets and vet nurses to be the best that they can be.

This means that, as a royal college that regulates, we are uniquely placed to bring people together in support of our common purpose in a collaborative, proactive way: producing professionals fit to practise, and professions fit for purpose.

Our collaboration can be small and meaningful, around a particular veterinary standard, or global and existential, such as on important One Health topics that aim to improve the health of people, animals and the environment. Whatever form it takes, it is all valuable and valued.

Thank you to all those who have contributed to the development of this plan. Please continue to help us meet our ambitions, for the benefit of animal health and welfare, and public health.

**As our founders put it: *vis unita fortior* – we are stronger together.**





# About us

**The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is an independent body established by Royal Charter in 1844.**

We regulate the veterinary professions in the UK by setting, upholding and advancing veterinary standards, and support veterinary professionals to be the best that they can be.

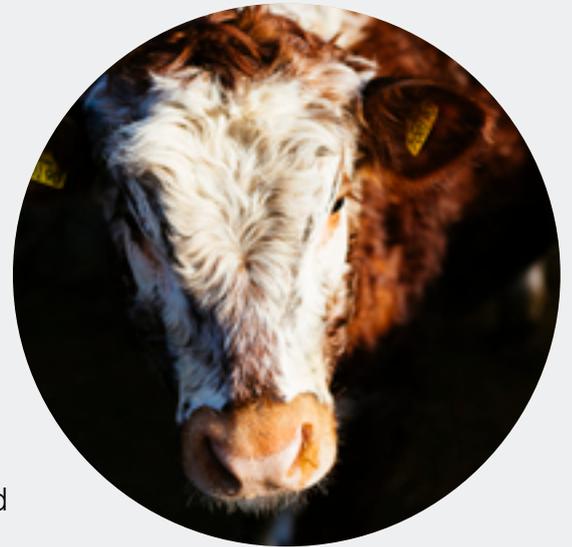
In short, we work to inspire confidence in veterinary care.

We do this in the public interest. This means we support the needs of consumers of veterinary services, including those who keep, own or rely on animals, and, via public health, society at large.

Although our statutory role is UK-focused, we have a strong global footprint in terms of members working overseas, and international veterinary professionals working in the UK. This gives us international reach, which is important as many of the issues we face – such as diseases, artificial intelligence and societal change – know no borders.



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### **What this means for you**

Our mission is to protect the public interest by ensuring animal health and welfare, and public health, are advanced through thriving world-class veterinary professions.

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### **How we get there**

Our vision is always to be ambitious and compassionate, working collaboratively to build trust and inspire all veterinary professionals to succeed.

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### **What we do**

To fulfil our role, we:

- accredit veterinary and veterinary nursing degree courses and training programmes,
- maintain a register of vets and vet nurses who are qualified to practise,
- set and uphold standards of good professional conduct,
- provide a framework through which vets and vet nurses can develop and thrive,
- help our world-class veterinary professionals be confident in the care they provide,
- award Fellowships, Certificates and Specialist and Advanced Practitioner statuses, and
- share knowledge, embrace innovation and support better ways of working.

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### **What we don't do**

There are some important roles that are the responsibility of other organisations.

For example, we don't:

- represent the interests of veterinary professionals,
- insure or legally defend vets and vet nurses, or
- provide animal healthcare advice.

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### **Find out more**

You can read more about our role and responsibilities at [www.rcvs.org.uk/aboutrcvs](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/aboutrcvs)



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# Our Values

# Compassion.

# Collaboration.

# Clarity.

# Courage.

**We have updated our values since our last strategic plan, which now include 'Collaboration' to support our strategic aim of being 'stronger together'.**

Importantly, we now thread our previous value of 'Inclusion and diversity' through all of our work in a more integrated fashion, reflecting the way we approach equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).



# Compassion. Collaboration. Clarity. Courage.

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## Compassion

We will be thoughtful, respectful, listening and understanding. We will also support our teams, so they have the space, energy and time to respond compassionately.

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## Collaboration

We will work with stakeholders to ensure the best outcomes and hold space to debate what matters. We will be curious about a diverse range of perspectives and seek to understand all points of view.

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## Clarity

We will seek simplicity, be clear and consistent. We will be straight-talking, and aim to manage expectations about what is possible, acknowledging that outcomes can't always please everyone.

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## Courage

For the sake of animal health and welfare, public health and veterinary standards, we will be forward-thinking, act with integrity, boldly seek opportunities for appropriate change, and hold the line where we need to, even when that may be challenging.



# About this plan

**True to our strategic aims, this plan has benefitted from extensive collaboration with, and feedback from, our stakeholder groups, and takes into account findings from surveys and discussion groups.**

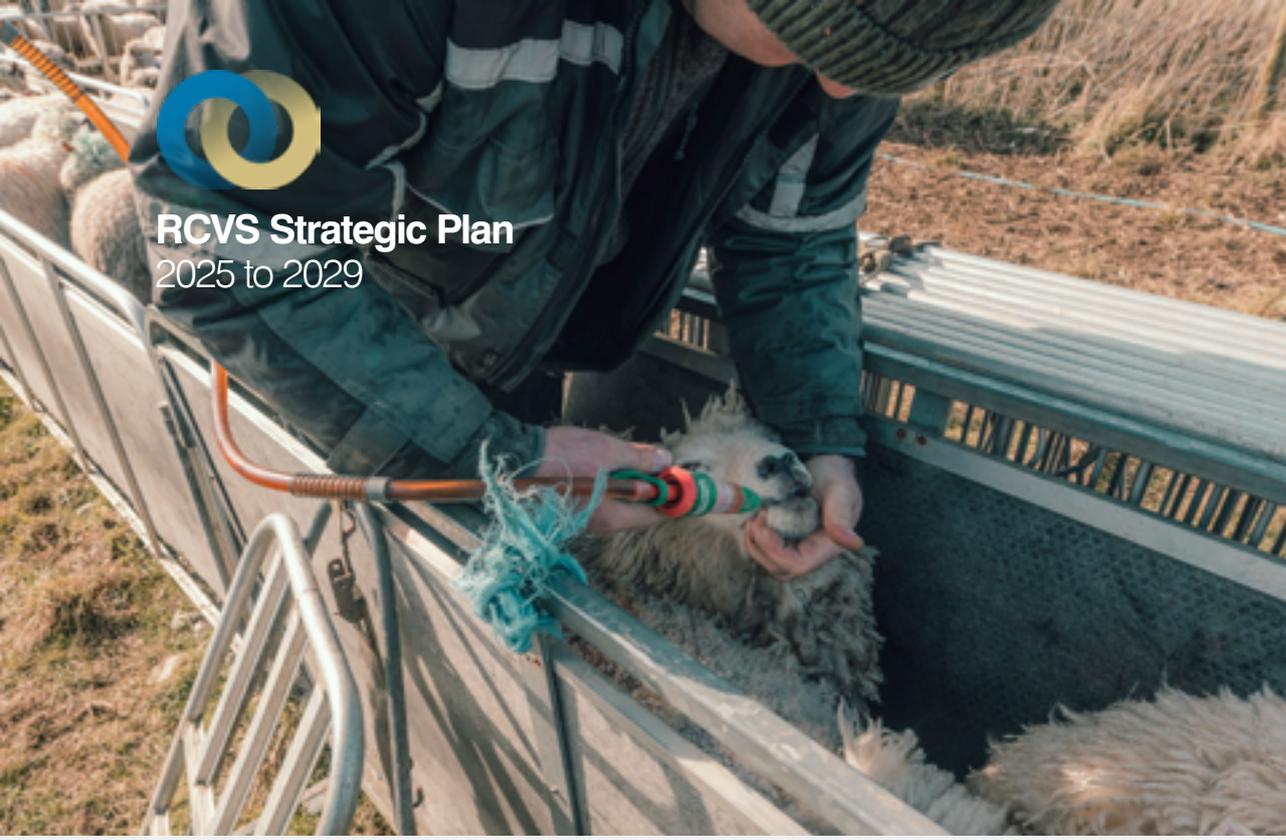
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## **Structure**

Each of the following four sections, focuses on our work with, and anticipated impact on, a different internal or external stakeholder group, namely:

- A. Veterinary professionals**
- B. Animal owners and keepers**
- C. Society at large**
- D. Our staff team and governance**

In each section, you will find our strategic ambitions and some proposed aims. What we actually do over the next five years will also be informed by changes in the world around us, feedback from stakeholders, our resources and the political landscape.



But regardless of the specific actions, two clear threads will run throughout our work: **we do the right thing; and we do things right.**

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### **We do the right thing**

Animal health and welfare is precious, and the veterinary team are its custodians. Our role is to support them to do the right thing – and in doing so, we must also do the right thing.

We take a leadership role, strive to advance and push for the legal underpinning that we need, via new legislation.

We demonstrate our impact, are risk-informed and relevant. We are fair and expect fairness in return.

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### **We do things right**

To support this, we must work effectively and efficiently.

We seek a strong evidence base for decisions, bring our stakeholders with us to ensure we can deliver, and be transparent in our process and decision making.

We must ensure we are on a sound financial footing, with appropriate resources and skills. We constantly learn. We prioritise the protection of our data, while sharing our knowledge.



### **Timeframe**

This plan is for a five-year period and will be underpinned by regularly updated operational plans that outline our activities in more detail, with timeframes, impact measurements and resource requirements.

Our staff, committees and working groups will contribute to these plans, to ensure they remain relevant and achievable.

As ever, any major changes emanating from this work will go to consultation with our stakeholders, both professional and public.

Our framework for strategic change will be agile enough to respond to the changing landscape, for example, the outcome of the Competition and Markets Authority investigation (due by end of 2025) and our ongoing push for new veterinary legislation.



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## **Stronger together with veterinary professionals**

### **Ambition:**

**We will support veterinary professionals to succeed in meeting high standards in their chosen careers. We will champion accessible, team-based veterinary care, delivered in settings that support professional autonomy and leadership.**

### **Our aims will include, but not be limited to:**

1. Achieving new veterinary legislation, including team-based veterinary care and practice regulation
2. Improving the way in which we use data to improve monitoring and enforcement of veterinary standards
3. Reviewing the Codes of Professional Conduct and supporting guidance, and how they are understood, complied with and enforced
4. Working, through Mind Matters and other initiatives, to achieve a veterinary workforce that meets demand, and an inclusive culture in which professionals can thrive, without fear of discrimination or harassment
5. Supporting veterinary professionals' appropriate use of artificial intelligence and other new technologies, to optimise positive impact, support growth and mitigate any risks
6. Ensuring our educational standards and career pathways meet the diverse needs of society and the professions
7. Supporting and engaging with veterinary and veterinary nursing students to help them better understand the role of the College and their responsibilities as future veterinary professionals



## **Stronger together with animal owners and keepers**

### **Ambition:**

**We will support animal health and welfare and public health by enabling access to veterinary care that is informed by the needs of consumers and service users.**

### **Our aims will include, but not be limited to:**

1. Achieving new legislation that enables us to better meet the needs of users of veterinary services
2. Forging trust between the veterinary professions, the College and animal owners and keepers, and supporting their needs
3. Supporting and informing service users in order to get the best from veterinary professionals, with increased transparency, agency and choice
4. Considering ways in which those accessing veterinary care could be better supported, by better understanding the human-animal bond and the role of animals in society, for example, exploring the role of pet bereavement counselling as part of our complaint resolution process, or the veterinary social work concept
5. Taking regular feedback and working to improve our services and communications to animal owners and keepers



## **Stronger together with society at large**

### **Ambition:**

**We will champion the role that veterinary professionals play in One Health and public health, take a leadership role on environmental sustainability and biodiversity, and continue to look beyond our domestic horizons to have a positive impact upon the world around us.**

### **Our aims will include, but not be limited to:**

1. Collaborating and holding space for conversation on challenging issues, such as the role of animals in society, the responsibilities of animal owners/keepers, and the cost of veterinary care
2. Articulating the contribution of veterinary professionals, and interrogating the evolving rights and responsibilities of professionals in today's society
3. Championing the veterinary role in One Health, by ensuring the veterinary voice is heard and that the next generation of veterinary professionals are equipped to contribute
4. Ensuring that veterinary professionals specifically responsible for public health are well supported with robust standards and safeguards
5. Lighting a fire of enthusiasm for veterinary work in the minds of the next generation of potential professionals, so we continue to better reflect the society that we serve
6. Building the College's reputation overseas and investigating opportunities to scale and supply relevant initiatives and services, in the interests of animal health and welfare
7. Engaging with the local community around Hardwick Street



## Stronger together with our staff team and governance

### **Ambition:**

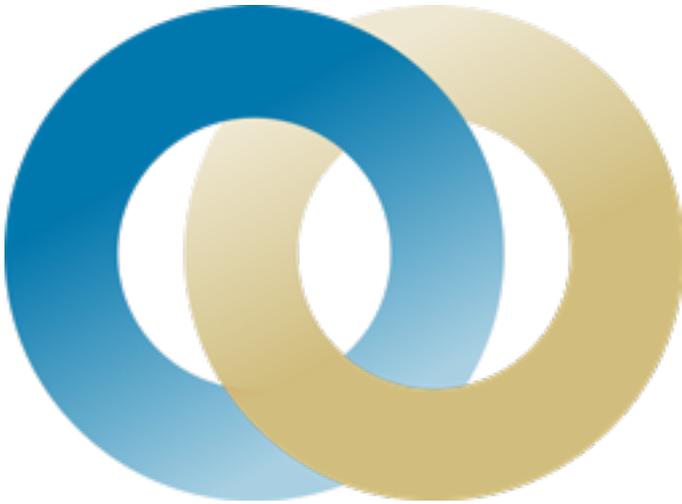
**We will attract and retain the diversity of talent and skills to deliver what's needed now and anticipate what might be next, building a culture that allows people to thrive, whether staff, Council or other contributors to our purpose.**

### **Our aims will include, but not be limited to:**

1. Achieving new legislation that allows for the right skills and structure for effective governance
2. Developing an infrastructure for success, including our new headquarters, and underpinning structures for finance, communications and digital
3. Planning for success and for succession, including a workplace review
4. Empowering our staff team confidently to deliver on the College's purpose, via competency frameworks and clarity of expectation
5. Creating a working culture with sound values and supportive management, and enabling and supporting our teams to live up to those values
6. Providing a working environment that is inclusive, supportive and respectful, to develop everyone's unique strengths, and with zero tolerance for harassment and abuse
7. Horizon scanning, and bringing the outside in, via research, collaboration and experience
8. Taking regular feedback across all our areas of work to ensure ongoing quality improvement

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