

Placing **Sustainability** at the heart of the Veterinary Professions

**Vet
Sustain**

Vet Sustain Strategy 2025 - 2028

Picture credit: Planton Farm 2025.



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Dedication

We dedicate this to **Simon Doherty**, a founding director of Vet Sustain and much-missed member of the UK veterinary profession. Simon was a dedicated and passionate advocate of One Health and sustainability and was instrumental in the establishment of Vet Sustain.





Foreword



E Bailey

Ed Bailey
Director & Chair

Our mission is to continually improve the health and wellbeing of animals, people and planet by enabling and inspiring veterinary professionals.

For thousands of years, humans have depended on animals for food, fibre, livelihoods, leisure, companionship, and social and cultural cohesion. But during that time, domestic animal populations have boomed, alongside changing husbandry and breeding practices resulting in mounting environmental impacts, public health problems, and significant animal welfare concerns.

One Health is an approach that recognises the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health. Veterinary professionals are uniquely placed to advocate for this approach. We have a duty, desire, public trust, and an opportunity to act for sustainability - to improve the welfare of the animals under our care and those impacted by human activity, to respect and strengthen vital human-animal bonds, and to help protect the environment on which we all depend.

But - research shows that 97% of veterinary professionals consider sustainability to be important¹, yet many don't know where to start, and fewer than a quarter of the veterinary professionals we surveyed reported to have environmental sustainability policies in their workplaces².

Vet Sustain is proud to have helped the UK profession to forge a path towards a more sustainable future over the last five years.

Our independent impact assessment³ showed that Vet Sustain has already had a positive impact for those who have connected with us or used our tools and training. Our goal is now to widen that effect, so that everyone in the veterinary professions has the knowledge and the desire to play their part.

Our success, now and in the future, depends upon our community – the people within our

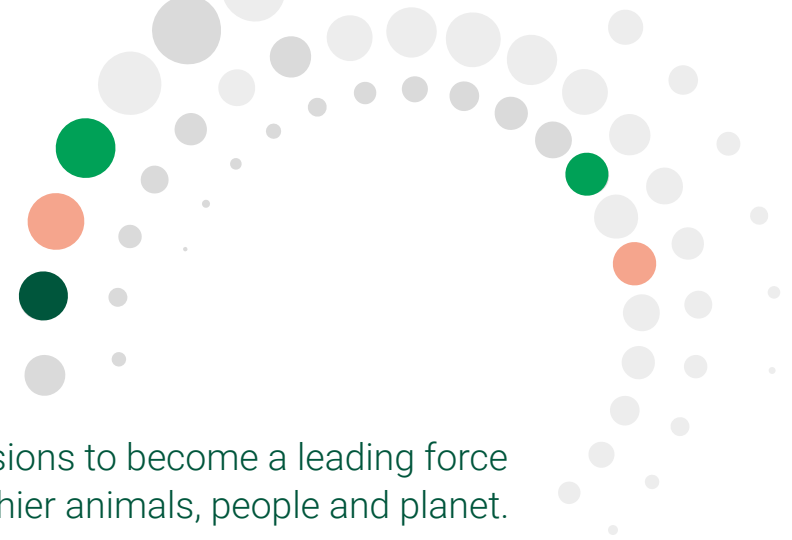
team, our working groups, our volunteers, our valued partners, and our wider network.

We look forward to broadening our reach and bringing in new partners to help us deliver on our mission.

¹ <https://www.bva.co.uk/news-and-blog/news-article/make-your-pledge-to-the-planet-urges-bva-as-vets-promise-to-make-their-workplace-more-sustainable/>

² Higham, L., Halfacree, Z.J., Stonehewer, J., Black, D.H., Ravetz, G., Moran, D., Boden, L. and Oxtoby, C. (2023), "Sustainability policies and practises at veterinary centres in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland", Vet Record vol. 193, no. 3, e2998: <https://bvajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/vetr.2998>

³ Rogers, S., Bell, C., White, J. (2024) "Vet Sustain – Impact Assessment": <https://vetsustain.org/resources/impact-evaluation-of-vet-sustain>



Introduction



L. Gelder-Robertson

Laura Gelder-Robertson
CEO

We have a **unique opportunity** for the veterinary professions to become a leading force for sustainability, achieving business success and healthier animals, people and planet.

From the moment I joined Vet Sustain, people have been asking me how to make the business case clearer for sustainability within veterinary sector. This strategy report is Vet Sustain's roadmap towards doing that. But the truth is, as a recent Cambridge Institute for Sustainable Leadership⁴ report highlights, what we really need is for sustainability to be viewed as a competitive advantage not just a responsibility. We need a shift in mindset that values near- and long-term risk and resilience over short-term gain.

Here, we lay out our three strategic pillars to help us enable and inspire veterinary professionals to do that: 'Learn', 'Connect' and 'Lead'. And there is good reason for us to look to increase our impact across a wider audience of veterinary professionals working with small animal, farmed, equine and all other species.

As the Willow Review⁵ shows, there are many benefits for small and medium-sized businesses (like veterinary practices) to engage in sustainability: 67% of UK SMEs

report reduced operational costs; 56% cite cost savings as a motivation; 52% say they are attracting new customers due to their sustainability commitments. And, as a 2019 BVA survey⁶ notes, action on sustainability can have a positive impact on mental health, motivation and attracting and retaining talent. In short, sustainability makes good business sense.

Yet, as our 2024 Impact Assessment⁷ points out, it's not always easy to know where to start faced with the magnitude and complexity of the challenges veterinary professionals face. As our 'Theory of Change' outlines, we will continue to support the professions as individuals, practices and at sector-level via the knowledge, community, skills building and thought leadership we offer via our brilliant network of experts and practitioners.

At the sector-level, we will convene a cross-industry, pre-competitive alliance to tackle key issues across welfare, the environment and wellbeing. Whilst at

grassroots level, we will look to develop more bite-sized training, tools and guidance to help veterinary professionals and practices navigate the steps they can take to reduce costs and grow their businesses sustainably.

2025 marks a pivotal moment in the veterinary professions in this decisive decade. In light of the CMA investigation, we have a unique opportunity to demonstrate our role as trusted guardians of animal, people and planetary health and wellbeing. The risks and costs of inaction far outweigh the costs and co-benefits of action. This is the moment for us to place sustainability at the heart of the veterinary professions.

⁴ Hooper, Lindsay; Gilding, Paul (2024). Survival of the Fittest: From ESG to Competitive Sustainability. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership: <https://www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/news-and-resources/publications/survival-fittest-esg-competitive-sustainability>

⁵ Ovens, Michelle CBE; Stace, Nick OBE; Minister Thomas, Gareth (2025). The Willow Review. London, UK: Small Business Britain: <https://willowreview.com/report>

⁶ Ravetz, G. (2020) BVA website blog, "Why is sustainability a vital part of workplace culture?" (2019 BVA Survey cited): <https://www.bva.co.uk/news-and-blog/blog-article/why-is-sustainability-a-vital-part-of-workplace-culture/>

⁷ Rogers, S., Bell, C., White, J. (2024) "Vet Sustain – Impact Assessment": <https://vetsustain.org/resources/impact-evaluation-of-vet-sustain>

A man with grey hair, wearing a teal jacket and dark trousers, is crouching in a grassy field. He is looking down at a black cow that has its head lowered towards him. Two other black cows are visible in the background. The scene is set in a rural area with a stone wall and a white house on a hill in the distance. A large, semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'Our Purpose' and a paragraph. The bottom right corner of the image features a pattern of small, semi-transparent white circles.

Our Purpose

During our first five years, we developed our Vision, Mission, and six Veterinary Sustainability Goals aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). We're now building on these firm foundations by underlining our Purpose and relaunching our Goals as 'The 6Ws of Veterinary Sustainability'.

Picture credit: Paragon Vets - David Black, Farm Vet and Managing Director at Paragon).



Our Purpose, Vision and Mission

Vet Sustain's overarching Purpose is to promote **'healthier animals, people and planet'**. Over the past five years, Vet Sustain has made significant progress towards our Vision of the veterinary professions becoming a leading force for sustainability. There is plenty more to be done, but as our independent Impact Assessment³ highlighted, we have strong foundations in place to expand our reach and impact.



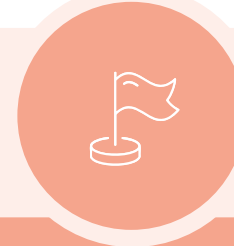
Purpose

Healthier animals,
people and planet.



Vision

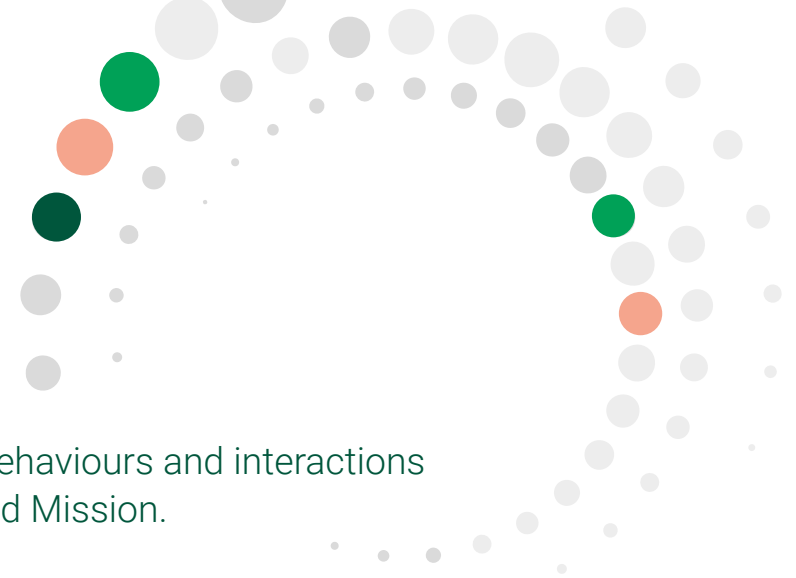
For the veterinary professions
to become a leading force
for sustainability.



Mission

To continually improve
the health and wellbeing of
animals, people and planet
by enabling and inspiring
veterinary professionals.

³ Rogers, S., Bell, C., White, J. (2024) "Vet Sustain – Impact Assessment":
<https://vetsustain.org/resources/impact-evaluation-of-vet-sustain>



Our Values

Our Vet Sustain mindset revolves around **5 key values** to foster positive behaviours and interactions amongst our community, as we strive to deliver on our Purpose, Vision and Mission.



We are kind

We are respectful and open to new ideas in our interactions with each other and the wider community.



We are positive

We are solutions-orientated and constructive in our dialogue.



We are scientific

We refer to peer-reviewed and current science where it exists to progress our ideas.



We are bold

We are not afraid to challenge norms and drive new solutions to pressing challenges. We champion Sustainability both from a macro 'One Health' perspective and a micro 'grassroots' level in the sector.



We are non-judgmental

We do not judge the actions of others and recognise our individual differences in culture and circumstance. We do not blame or shame. We allow and support individuals, communities and businesses to change.



Our Goals

The **6Ws of Veterinary Sustainability** are a blueprint to a brighter future for animals, people and the planet. They are our Strategic Goals, but they can also act as a simple decision-making lens for veterinary professionals to help them make informed decisions as they inevitably face the complex sustainability challenges of the future.

Vet Sustain's 6Ws of Veterinary Sustainability

Wildlife

Diverse and abundant wildlife

Conserve and enhance natural landscapes, habitats and biological diversity and abundance of wild terrestrial and aquatic plant and animal species.

Water

Enough clean water for all

Uphold best practice in fresh water conservation and protection to mitigate water stress and prevent water pollution.

Warming

Net zero warming

Implement and promote decarbonisation through energy efficiency, the generation and use of renewable energy, mitigation of global warming and sequestration of carbon.



Welfare

A good life for animals

Safeguard and advocate for the health and welfare, in life and at the point of death, of animals under our care and those that are affected by human activity.

Waste

A no-waste society

Minimise the usage and disposal of resources and materials, and support a transition to a circular economy.

Wellbeing

Health and wellbeing

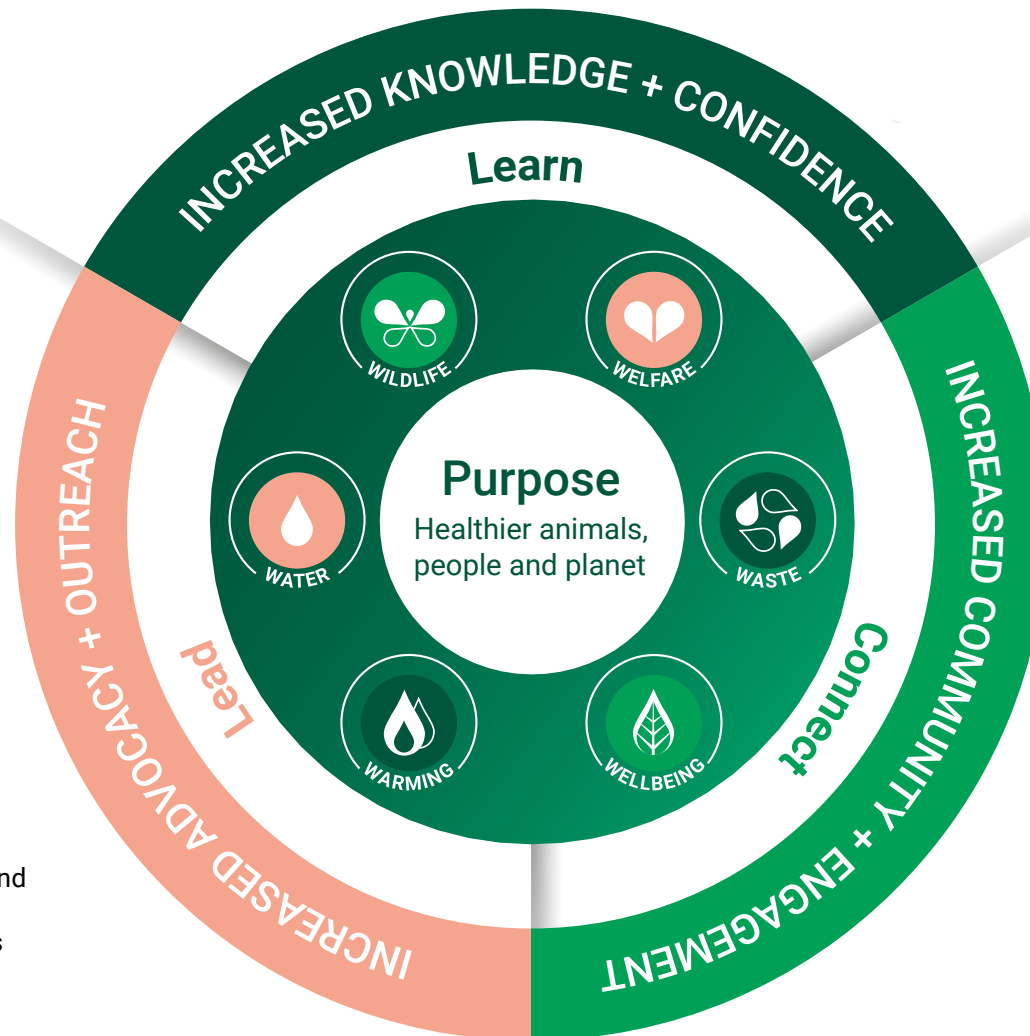
Safeguard and enhance the physical and mental wellbeing of people and support a transition to livelihoods and lifestyles that are fit for the future.



Our Theory of Change

How: by developing, sharing and widening access to evidence-based tools, training and resources.

Outcome: improved education, access, confidence and skills to act on welfare, environment and wellbeing issues.



How: by leading and advocating for sustainable change, through impactful communications and sector-wide engagement to promote best practice.

Outcome: wider knowledge of and engagement with sustainability challenges and solutions across the veterinary sector.

How: by building partnerships, network and community.

Outcome: increased collaboration, innovation and engagement to implement sustainable change for veterinary professionals, the professions and beyond.

Our Strategy

Our 3 strategic pillars outline how our community will be enabled and inspired to take action for sustainability - signposting individual veterinary professionals and businesses to the services we offer to support them on their sustainability journeys.

Picture credit: River Kao 'Clinical Veterinary Practice cat image' on www.unsplash.com.





3 Strategic Pillars

PILLAR
1

LEARN

We are the 'go-to' trusted provider of evidence-based veterinary **sustainability tools, training and resources.**



PILLAR
2

CONNECT

We are building a community of best practice and sustainability-conscious veterinary professionals across our **partnerships, network and community.**

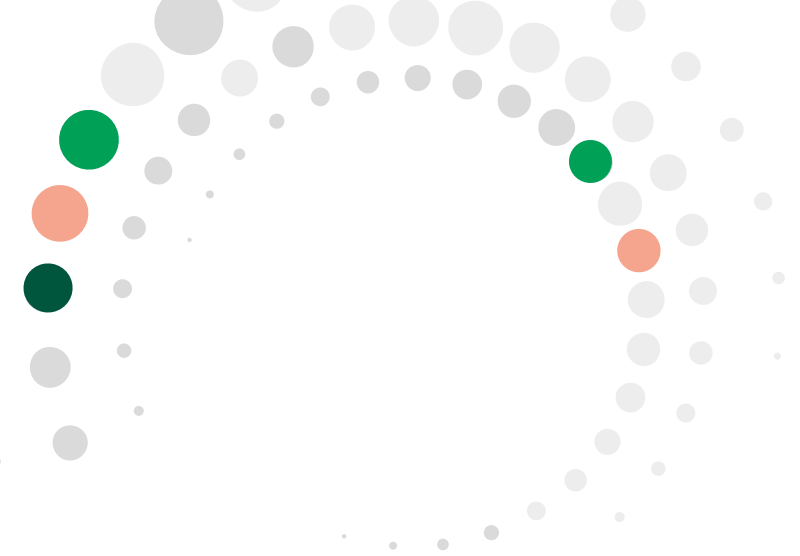


PILLAR
3

LEAD

We are bringing together key stakeholders and experts to lead discussion and advocate for evidence-based research and best practice.





Learn

We aim to be the 'go-to' trusted provider of **veterinary sustainability tools, training and resources**.

In a complex and rapidly changing landscape, we will bring together experts in veterinary sustainability to create evidence-based tools, training and resources to support veterinary professionals in making long-lasting sustainable change.

In collaboration with our network, we will identify 'hot sustainability topics' allowing us to focus future development into areas where there is a clear knowledge gap.

We will continue to build on our current suite of accredited CPD courses: Carbon Literacy, A Veterinary Approach to Sustainable Food and Farming, and A Sustainable Approach to Clinical Veterinary Practice, developing additional courses to meet the needs of the veterinary professions.

We will provide a growing bank of resources available on our website showcasing the latest sustainability initiatives from across our network, supporters and partners.

What we will do next:

We will drive use of our veterinary practice-specific carbon calculator tool, with benchmarking to provide industry standards, and to support future tool development in the pathway to net zero.

Through development of accessible bite-sized CPD courses, we will target a wider audience by making clear the business case for sustainable change.

How we will do it:

We will develop a growing suite of cross-species, financially accessible bite-sized CPD courses designed to support the development of knowledge and expertise in veterinary sustainability. These

courses will be suitable for all, irrespective of the learners veterinary role, previous knowledge, and experience.

These will include:

- **Entry-level Sustainability 101**, making the business case for change across welfare, environment, and wellbeing.
- **Biodiversity Literacy and Nature Connectedness**, to promote animal, human and planetary health and wellbeing.
- **Carbon Literacy and Carbon Calculation package**, to support the pathway to net zero.
- **Educating the educators** - to foster the integration of sustainable development into veterinary curricula, and partnering with leading industry CPD providers.



Connect

We are building a community of best practice and sustainability-conscious veterinary professionals across our **partnerships, network and community**.

We have cultivated a community of best practice from across the veterinary professions, via our creation of:

- **Four Working Groups** of veterinary professionals covering topics within Food and Farming, Equine, Greener Clinical Veterinary Practice, Veterinary Curriculum.
- A network of **seven commercial Supporters**:



- Sustainability **Ambassadors, Champions** and our social media network across LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and via our quarterly 'Saplings' newsletters that are emailed to our community.

What we will do next:

We will nurture and grow our communities and networks to provide greater support and cross-pollination of ideas. We will bring in best practice from other sectors and international partnerships to raise the ambition and profile of the veterinary sector as a leading force for One Health and sustainability globally.

How we will do it:

1. **By establishing a Veterinary Sustainability Roundtable:** a cross-industry alliance of stakeholders to tackle key welfare, environmental and wellbeing issues to drive the sector forwards to become a force for sustainability.
2. **By continuing to nurture and grow our community and network** of cross-species veterinary professionals engaged in and supporting others around sustainability.
3. **By raising the bar and benchmarking industry** standards to help boost people's knowledge, confidence and skills, and inspire action.
4. **By showcasing best practice sustainability initiatives** and thought leaders via our blogs, interviews, and case studies.



Lead

We are bringing together key stakeholders and experts to lead discussion and advocate for **research** and **best practice**.

We will lead the way in enabling and inspiring veterinary professionals to navigate complex sustainability challenges, now and in the future.

Utilising the expertise within our growing network and community, we will be leading forces for sustainability at key veterinary congresses and conferences nationally and internationally, advocating for the integration of sustainability in CPD programming.

Recognising the complexity of sustainability challenges facing the veterinary professions, we will deliver thought leadership on key sustainability topics by:

- leading conversations with key stakeholders and experts both within and outside our sector to ensure an evidence-based approach.

- advocating for raising the ambition to continually drive better outcomes for animal, people and planetary health at a practice, sector and societal levels.

What we will do next:

We will have visibility at key congresses and conferences through panel discussions, roundtables, lectures, plenary/keynote sessions, interactive workshops and presentations.

We will lead conversations across the sector and with key policy makers to support the development of sustainable initiatives and policy.

How we will do it:

1. **By agreeing key issues to tackle welfare, environmental and wellbeing challenges at sector level** through the Veterinary Sustainability Roundtable.
2. **Through the publication of best practice guides, webinars and interviews on veterinary hot topics**, using an evidence-based approach to enable and inspire veterinary professionals.
3. **By attending key veterinary conferences and advocating for sustainability** to be embedded in conference event programmes.
4. **By reporting on and signposting to relevant press and news articles** via our website and social media channels.



Measuring Success

As a Community Interest Company, we are dedicated and accountable to our community of veterinary professionals, in the UK and beyond. To ensure we are delivering on our Purpose, Vision and Mission for the benefit of our community, we have developed a set of measurable performance indicators, which we will use to continually monitor and improve our work.

Picture credit: ©Paragon Vets, Equine Vet, Jacqui Dodds with horse.



How we will measure success

We will measure our progress across our Strategic Pillars of **Learn**, **Connect** and **Lead** against our intended outcomes and include internal measures for sustaining Vet Sustain. More details can be found on our website for each KPI¹, but here are two examples for each pillar:

Learn

STRATEGIC PILLAR 1 LEARN Outcomes: improved education, access, confidence and skills to act on welfare, environment and wellbeing issues.		
ACTIVITY	KPIs	MEASUREMENT
1. To generate peer-reviewed, evidence-based toolkits, guidance and reference materials.	1. Number, scope, quality, and impact of tools and resources generated per year	1. Internal monitoring of number and scope (across 6Ws and species groups) of Vet Sustain outputs shared on our website.
2. To educate veterinary professionals and allied professionals via regular webinars, events and training courses featuring our expert network and external thought leaders on sustainability topics.	2. Number/proportion of veterinary practices and workplaces with sustainability policies and practices.	2. Surveys of veterinary professionals/ workplace representatives regarding sustainability policies and practices.

<https://vetsustain.org/resources/vet-sustain-kpis-2025-2028>



How we will measure success

Connect

STRATEGIC PILLAR 2	CONNECT	Outcomes: increased collaboration, innovation and engagement to implement sustainable change for veterinary professionals, the professions and beyond.	
ACTIVITY	KPIs	MEASUREMENT	
3. To reach a wider target audience of Veterinary professionals, by expanding our reach beyond the 'Converted' to engage with the 'Early Majority' across the professions.	3. Size and reach of our social network.	3. Internal monitoring of the size and scope of Vet Sustain's social media following and network subscriptions.	
4. To build people's confidence, knowledge and skills to affect positive change within their spheres of influence: at individual, practice, wider organisational / sector and societal levels.	4. Levels of confidence, knowledge and skills to advocate for and enact sustainability at individual, organisational, sector, and societal levels, and the role of Vet Sustain in developing these amongst veterinary professionals.	4. Feedback on confidence, knowledge and skills in sustainability, and the role of Vet Sustain in developing these, measured using surveys, interviews, or focus groups.	



How we will measure success

Lead

STRATEGIC PILLAR 3	LEAD	Outcomes: wider knowledge of and engagement with sustainability challenges and solutions across the veterinary sector.	
ACTIVITY	KPIs	MEASUREMENT	
5. To boost the visibility of the veterinary professions as a force for sustainability via initiatives we launch through the Veterinary Sustainability alliance, articles written in the mainstream media and journal articles published in scientific journals.	5. Visibility and impact of the veterinary professions as a force for sustainability.	5. Feedback on perceptions of veterinary professionals and the veterinary sector on our approach and contribution to sustainability, using surveys, interviews, or focus groups.	
6. To build a strong business case for change, with a compelling argument for the economic and social elements driving these changes.	6. Number and impact of interventions (e.g., resources, tools, events) to demonstrate a strong business case for sustainability.	6. Internal monitoring of Business Case outputs. 5-6. Feedback on Vet Sustain's leadership and impact using surveys, interviews, or focus groups.	



How we will measure success

Sustain

STRATEGIC PILLAR 4	SUSTAIN	Outcomes: ensuring our financial health, viability and wellbeing as an inclusive and impactful place to work.	
ACTIVITY	KPIs	MEASUREMENT	
7. To track and measure financial performance, to keep our organisation financially healthy and viable.	7a. Number of course sales and carbon calculations sold per year. 7b. Number of commercial supporters / Alliance members and non-commercial partners. 7c. Other income sources, e.g. consultancy projects completed and grants won.	7a/b. Internal monitoring of sales and partnerships. 7c. Internal monitoring of consultancy projects and grants won.	
8. To promote a culture of learning and improvement, so that we can continually achieve better outcomes to sustain the health and wellbeing of our team and our key stakeholders, including other species and nature.	8. Vet Sustain's performance as an impactful, compassionate, and inclusive place to work.	8. Employee feedback.	

We will monitor and evaluate these KPIs by seeking regular feedback and input two-way with our network, the wider profession and our international partners via an independent Impact Assessment, which will be conducted on a regular basis.

Working Group

Vet Sustain Working Group Away Day at Nottingham Veterinary School with team members, Board Directors and experts from across our four Working Groups, June (2025).

Picture credit: ©Vet Sustain "Working Group Away Day" at Nottingham Veterinary School (2025).





Sustaining Vet Sustain

We recognise that Vet Sustain will need to collaborate and innovate further to deliver on our Purpose and to achieve this strategy, while balancing our financial health, viability and wellbeing as an inclusive and impactful place to work.

Vet Sustain has developed a proven track record during its first five years of developing high quality tools, training, resources and thought leadership via our excellent community and network of supporters and experts.

It's important that we can continue to enable and inspire the veterinary professions in a way that's equitable, inclusive and accessible to all. And yet, that means we also need to find new ways to fund and reward the value, skill and expertise our community and network bring, beyond sponsorship and voluntary support. In short, we need to evolve how we sustain Vet Sustain in terms of finance and resources.

To that end, we will aim to access grants, funding and consultancy in partnership with existing and new stakeholders across the sector. The Veterinary Sustainability Roundtable and bite-sized courses

are our key first steps towards this, with a view to broadening the sustainability services we offer.

We know that no single action or organisation is sufficient to solve the complex problems we face within the veterinary sector or as a society. Therefore, we will also collaborate beyond our sector (where appropriate) to access the expertise, skills and funding we need to help us achieve financial stability and deliver on our Purpose to place sustainability at the heart of the veterinary professions and enable the quadruple bottom line of: 'healthier animals, people, planet and profit.'

As the Willow Review^[1] highlighted, sustainability makes good business sense to drive sustainable growth, build trust from clients, suppliers and customers, to boost employee morale and wellbeing, and to manage long- and short-term risk.

We will promote a culture of learning and improvement, so that we can continually assess what's working well, what's not, and where we need to adapt to achieve better outcomes to sustain the health and wellbeing of our team and our key stakeholders, including other species and nature.

Finally, to enable us to scale our reach and impact over the next 1-3 years, we will explore the role that technology can play, as the funding allows.



¹ Owens, Michelle CBE; Stace, Nick OBE; Minister Thomas, Gareth (2025). The Willow Review. London, UK: Small Business Britain: <https://willowreview.com/report>.

Gratitude

Vet Sustain would like to thank our Directors (past and present), our valued team, partners, volunteers, Working Group members and Chairs, our Champions and Ambassadors, social network members, and members of the wider veterinary professions and sector for their continued support, contribution and insights offered in support of this Strategy.

For more information on both this report and our resources and support for veterinary professionals, please visit our website and social media channels.



www.vetsustain.org



[@vetsustainpublic](https://www.facebook.com/vetsustainpublic)



[@Veterinary Sustainability Forum](https://www.facebook.com/VeterinarySustainabilityForum)



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www.mardymoo.co.uk



Laura Gelder-Robertson
CEO



Ed Bailey
Director & Chair



Hannah Davies
Education Lead



Laura Higham
Director



Justine Shotton
Director



David Black
Director



Jen Gale
Director



Zoe Halfacree
Director



Nathan Rhys Williams
Director



Stephanie Sanderson
Director

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