

The 2024 Survey of the Veterinary Profession

A report for the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

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Executive summary

This summary presents an overview of the results of the 2024 Survey of the Veterinary Profession, carried out on behalf of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES). The survey yielded a 19% response rate (6,987 responses), including full and sufficiently completed partial questionnaires.

Who are the vets who responded?

Nearly two-thirds (61%) of vet respondents were female, showing the continuation of the feminisation of the vet profession. Nearly all (84%) were heterosexual, white (96%) and around half (58%) were married. Half did not follow any religion and the average age was 47 years, which is slightly higher than for respondents in previous years. Although the respondents do not exactly reflect the vets on the RCVS Register by age and gender, they look similar to respondents in previous years of the Survey of the Profession.

Combined with a lower response rate than that achieved for previous surveys, this means that, although comparisons can reasonably be made to the results of previous Surveys of the Profession, these findings cannot be said to be completely representative of all UK vets.

Around one third (36%) had child dependants, and 8% had adult dependants, another increase from previous years. Seventeen per cent had a mental or physical health condition or disability and 14% identified as neurodiverse. Two-thirds had attended a state-run or -funded school, with a higher than the national proportion attending an independent or fee-paying school (29%).

The majority (83%) of vet respondents were UK practising, with 6% practising outside the UK and 11% not currently practising. Over half had qualified since 2000, with three-quarters qualifying in the UK or the Republic of Ireland.

A large majority of respondents (91%) worked entirely or mainly in the UK, increasing over the last decade. Three-quarters were British citizens by birth. Of those who came to the UK, over a third had indefinite leave to stay and a fifth became British citizens after birth. These vets came to the UK to work abroad or gain experience, or to access better career opportunities, pay and working conditions. Half said they planned to stay indefinitely.

The mental wellbeing of the vet workforce was poorer than that observed in the wider population and has continued to decline between surveys. Females, younger vets, those from ethnic minority groups, those with a disability or health condition, recent graduates since 2019, those working within (rather than outside) the veterinary profession and those in a corporately-owned (rather than an independently-owned) practice all had lower mental wellbeing scores.

What jobs do vets have?

Nearly all (90%) of vet respondents worked entirely within the veterinary profession, with 90% of these working in clinical practice. The proportion of respondents working in small animal practices has continued to rise, from 49% in 2010 to 58% in 2024, whilst the proportion of vets working in mixed practices has decreased (22% to 10%). Those working outside clinical practice worked mainly in veterinary schools, commerce and industry, or charities and trusts.

A small proportion (2%) of respondents were taking a career break, for reasons including child care, considering leaving the profession or changing their work, a poor work-life balance, chronic stress, and not feeling rewarded or valued. Nine per cent of respondents had retired, with one-third retiring since 2020.

Two-thirds of vets worked full time, with female vets more likely to work part time and the proportion of vets working full time declining with age. Some 12% had an additional job outside their main veterinary work, mostly in self-employed or voluntary/unpaid positions. Four-fifths worked from premises such as a practice or office, with eight per cent working from home (which was more common for women and younger vets) and 11% hybrid working (which was more common amongst vets with caring responsibilities).

Vets, on average, worked more than their contracted hours, where 33 contracted hours per week was the average but 37 was the average number of worked hours. Full-time workers worked 43 hours per week which was, on average, five hours more than their contracted hours (38 hours per week), whereas part-time workers only worked, on average, one additional hour per week (24 hours actually worked compared to 23 hours contracted per week). Younger vets, males, those without caring responsibilities and those working in clinical practice had higher contracted and working hours than average. Vets working in equine practice and veterinary schools had the biggest difference between contracted and working hours, at seven hours per week working in excess of contracted hours. Roughly one-third (35%) worked on-call, with those in equine, mixed and farm animal practice working the highest number of on-call hours. However, only 16% were required to be awake when on-call.

A minority (12%) of responding vets currently provided support to a graduate or returning vet as a Vet Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) adviser, with a further 10% having previously done so. Two-fifths currently provided Extra Mural Studies (EMS) support and a third have done so in the past.

A large proportion (88%) of those working within clinical practice in the UK worked in England (84%). Forty-three per cent worked in a mix of urban and rural areas, followed by one-third in urban areas and one-fifth in rural areas. On average, practices were staffed by 7.9 vet, 6.8 vet nurse and 2.0 student vet nurse full-time equivalents, which is similar to previous surveys.

In clinical practice, over half worked as an employed assistant, which is higher than in 2019 but lower than in 2014. The number of equity partners continued to decrease. A small proportion (13%) worked as a locum or independent practitioner in their main role,

with a further fifth working in this role in addition to their main position. The main reasons for working as a locum were gaining experience/expertise or because it suited their circumstances (rather than financial). Forty-two per cent worked in practices that provided their own out-of-hours emergency cover, with a further 42% using a dedicated provider. Forty-six per cent of respondents personally did out-of-hours work; within this group, half also visited clients away from the practice.

Just over half worked in a corporate group or joint venture practice while 40% worked in an independently-owned practice. Nearly three-quarters (72%) worked in an RCVS Practice Standards Scheme accredited practice. Half worked in more than one practice a month, with those working in more than one practice working in an average of 2.9 practices. Some 45% personally carried out routine visits to clients, reduced from 53% in 2019.

Working with dogs (50%) and cats (32%) took up most of the working time for vets working in clinical practice. The majority of on-call time was spent working with dogs (45%) and horses (excluding Official Veterinarians (OVs)) (43%). A further 11% was spent on practice management, 7% on people management and 6% on mentoring and training. One fifth provided remote services to clients, with the majority of this time spent providing consultations/advice, followed by tele-triage and remote prescribing.

The most common benefits available in the workplace for vets included financial support for training and/or continuing professional development (CPD), RCVS retention fees, discounts, paid time off for training/CPD and professional indemnity insurance.

In total, 878 respondents had qualified since 2019 and, as with the overall survey, the majority were female. Eighty-three per cent went straight into clinical practice after graduating, continuing to increase compared to 2019 (73%) and 2014 (52%). Of those who have worked in the profession since graduating (80%), it took an average of 1.5 months to find their first position, which was somewhat faster than in 2019.

Only 2% of respondents worked entirely outside the profession – a decrease over the past decade. Those working outside the profession were mainly female and aged over 50, and the majority had worked in the veterinary profession for at least five years (mainly in clinical practices). However, most did not intend to return to the veterinary profession, with this sentiment increasing over the past decade.

How do they feel about their work?

Respondents shared that although they found their work stressful, it gave them job satisfaction and they felt comfortable reporting and sharing mistakes. They were not satisfied with their salary/remuneration levels, but were satisfied with the support given by their line managers and others in the practice. In general, male vets were more positive about their work compared to female vets, and those with a disability or chronic condition were less positive than those without. Those working in independently-owned practices were, generally, more positive than those working for corporately-owned practices, except for flexibility and familiarity with and the use of quality improvement, where vets working in corporately-owned practices were more positive.

Respondents felt that clients valued their work and that they were able to deliver the best possible outcomes to their patients. They also believed that vet nurses were valued by the veterinary profession.

Many respondents had participated in scientific research over the past five years and were familiar with, and actively used, the concept of quality improvement in their work. They were familiar with the concept of evidence-based medicine and actively used this in their decision-making. They also felt that their workplace allowed them to exercise their clinical freedom.

On average, respondents did not feel that newly qualified vets had the necessary skills required for clinical practice employment from day one, or that the profession paid sufficient attention to the development of leadership skills or its environmental footprint.

Respondents felt, overall, that they should be obliged to provide emergency first aid and pain relief to animals according to their skills and the situation, but felt less strongly that, when on call, they should provide this only to animals registered with the practice. They also felt that when on call they should be obliged to attend an emergency away from the practice.

There were some differences in response patterns compared to vet nurses. In particular, compared to vet nurses, vet respondents were notably more likely to have participated in scientific research and to believe that vet nurses were valued by the profession and by clients. Vets were somewhat more satisfied with support from their line managers, and felt notably more able to exercise their clinical freedom.

Half of the vet respondents would choose to work within the profession if they had the opportunity to start their career again, whereas a quarter would not or were unsure, which was a similar result across the last decade.

Vet respondents indicated that the best things about being a vet were working with animals (chosen by 73%), challenge/stimulus (57%), job satisfaction (51%) and making a difference (50%). They identified the top challenges facing the profession as high expectations or demands from clients (chosen by 54%), stress levels (49%) and the affordability of veterinary services (46%), the last experiencing a significant increase since 2019. They thought the top things that would improve the veterinary profession were better financial rewards (47%) and less workload pressure (43%).

It is important to note that half of the vet respondents working in practice shared that they had experienced harassment or bullying from clients (34%) or colleagues (13%) in the last year. More than half of the incidents from clients, and a lower 40% of incidents from colleagues, were reported to the practice; only 7% of incidents from clients were reported to the police. Vets with a health condition or disability reported a higher frequency of harassment or bullying than those without.

How do they feel about the RCVS?

Vet respondents felt that the RCVS has a good international reputation, was highly professional and was respected by vets. They were less likely to feel that the RCVS was empathetic and understanding, or that registration provided good value for money. Half thought that the RCVS was meeting its 'diverse and inclusive' aspiration, whilst a lower third felt that it was meeting the 'compassionate' aspiration. Of those who had contacted the RCVS in the last year (22%), the majority thought that the communication was professional and the tone when addressing them was appropriate. However, overall views on communication with the RCVS were neither particularly positive nor negative. Respondents considered that the RCVS upheld standards within the profession and set appropriate standards within the profession, whilst support and compassion, again, were deemed to be less positive. Overall, vets rated the RCVS at 5.5 out of 10, which is somewhat lower than 6.6 in 2019.

Half of vet respondents were aware of the RCVS Academy, and 37% of these had accessed it, where 37% had completed one course and 16% more than one. Similarly to 2019, awareness of RCVS initiatives was highest for Mind Matters (73%) and lowest for ViVet (31%). The highest level of initiative use/engagement was still fairly low, with the highest engagement with Mind Matters (10%).

What does the future look like?

It is clear that vet respondents enjoyed their work and working with animals, felt they were making a difference, appreciated the challenges of the job and were well supported at work. Job satisfaction was high, and three-quarters were planning to stay in the profession for the next few years, although only half would, if starting their career again, choose this profession.

Respondents identified many areas for improvement, some of which the RCVS could influence, although others were more within the sphere of influence of employers. They found their work stressful and felt that fewer workload pressures and better financial rewards would help to relieve this worry. They were also concerned about the high expectations and demands from clients, which was compounding the pressures they were feeling, and were concerned about the affordability of services for their clients.

Vet respondents said they would like the RCVS to listen and consult with stakeholders more, to give greater support to vets and the veterinary profession more generally, and to regulate corporate practices. They would also like the RCVS to lessen the administrative burden of bureaucracy and regulation, to assist in bringing about better change management within the profession, and to gain a better understanding of the challenges that have arisen with the increasing corporatisation of the profession.

Newly qualified respondents were positive about how their education and course curriculum had prepared them for work in the profession, especially with regard to knowledge and understanding. They were less positive about the way that their course had equipped them with financial and business management skills and the ability to cope

with uncertainty and change; given the unpredictability of recent years, notably the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath, and the fact that the majority of vets spend most or all of their working lives within clinical practice, these aspects should perhaps be given more attention in the veterinary curriculum.

It is concerning that half of all respondents had experienced harassment and/or bullying from clients and colleagues in the last year, suggesting that veterinary practices, in particular, may need to put more policies and processes in place to tackle this unacceptable behaviour.

Stress and workload pressures continue to be major issues for vets and appear to have been exacerbated by staff shortages. The low average Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) score for vet respondents is concerning, with the average score having decreased compared to 2014, reinforcing that a continuing focus on mental health – perhaps especially the mental health of women, younger respondents and those with a disability or medical condition – remains necessary.

Retention continues to be an issue, although the percentage planning to leave the profession has not altered significantly over the past ten years or so. Three-quarters of vet respondents planned to stay in the profession for more than five years, with 15% planning to retire in the next five years and 10% intending to leave the profession for reasons other than retirement, mainly poor work-life balance, chronic stress and not feeling rewarded or valued.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This report presents the results of the 2024 Survey of the Veterinary Profession, carried out on behalf of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES). The RCVS is the statutory regulator responsible under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 for keeping the Register of veterinary surgeons eligible to practise in the UK, setting standards for veterinary education and regulating the professional conduct of veterinary surgeons. A survey of veterinary nurses (vet nurses) was conducted alongside the veterinary surgeon (vets) survey, and a companion report was produced, which presents these findings.

The 2024 Survey of the Profession is the eighth survey conducted by the RCVS, with previous surveys being conducted in 1998, 2000, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2019. All registered vets were invited to participate. Within this report, where appropriate, results are compared with previous years. These surveys aim to provide the RCVS, and other interested parties, with an evidence-based view of the vet profession and the changes taking place within it.

1.2 Survey process

The questionnaire was compiled by IES in collaboration with the RCVS, using questions from previous surveys as well as new questions and statements derived from discussions with RCVS stakeholders.

The survey, which was carried out entirely online, was launched on 8 January 2024, following an informal questionnaire testing exercise. A total of 37,095 veterinary surgeons were invited to participate via email, for all of whom the RCVS held email addresses. A small number (164) of these addresses were no longer valid at the time of the survey, meaning that the total sample receiving an invitation to participate in the survey was 36,931. Four reminder emails were sent at intervals.

1.3 Response

The survey was open for six weeks and received a total of 9,184 responses, of which 3,454 were partial completions, where individuals did not finish the survey by clicking on the 'submit' button at the end. Partial completions were included in the analysis if they had, at minimum, provided answers to the mandatory questions in the 'About you' section of the survey. These questions related to the respondent's qualification year and country, RCVS membership category, employment category, and country of residence. The final sample used for analysis included 6,987 responses. Of these, 5,731 were full responses

and 1,256 were sufficiently complete partials. The response rate was 24%, reducing to 19% when only including the completed and submitted responses. This is considerably lower than the 2019 rate of 32%, and slightly lower than the 2014 rate of 27%. The 2010 and 2006 surveys also achieved notably higher response rates, of 37% and 47% respectively.

A response analysis was carried out to compare survey respondents to the RCVS database of veterinary surgeons at the time the 2024 survey was launched. The results, presented in Table 1.1, indicate that females are slightly underrepresented in the survey sample, with males being slightly overrepresented; in addition, younger vets are underrepresented, and older vets over-represented.

Table 1.1: Veterinary surgeon survey response analysis

Gender	Age	Survey respondents %	RCVS database %	Over/under response
Female	Under 30	9.6	14.9	Under
	30s	19.3	24.3	Under
	40s	15.0	14.1	Similar
	50s and over	17.3	10.8	Over
	Total	61.3	64.1	Slightly under
Men	Under 30	2.2	4.1	Slightly under
	30s	6.0	8.8	Slightly under
	40s	7.6	7.4	Similar
	50s and over	22.9	15.5	Over
	Total	38.7	35.8	Slightly over

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024; RCVS database

1.4 Data input and survey analysis

Survey responses were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data were checked for outliers by examining the lowest and highest values. Where data points differed significantly from all other observations and were extremely high or low compared to the nearest data point, these were removed before analysis.

When carrying out the analysis, IES used key variables to provide breakdowns to explore responses by gender, age, employment status and area of work, and also took account of any analysis undertaken for previous surveys. Where appropriate, some of these key variables for group comparisons were collapsed into one. For example, a variable indicating whether the respondent has a health condition and/or disability was created by combining the 'physical health' and the 'mental health' variables. Similarly, a variable relating to providing care was created by combining the two variables on respondents' caring responsibilities and their responsibility for dependent children.

Chi-square testing was used to determine whether two categorical variables were associated with each other. Throughout the report, results from these analyses are only

reported if statistically significant and if less than 20% of cells had an expected count that was lower than five. Independent sample t-tests were carried out to compare the mean scores of two groups.

Open-ended, free-text questions were analysed separately and grouped into thematic categories. Where response rates to open-ended and free-text questions were high, a sampling approach was used to explore a selection of qualitative responses (for example, where an open-text question received a response rate of over 1,000, 20% were selected at random for analysis). Free-text comments that were illustrative of the qualitative codes were selected for inclusion in the report.

As stated in the privacy notice that was shared with participants, any response options to demographic variables that were selected by fewer than three respondents have been removed for privacy.

1.5 Report structure

The report details the findings from the survey under the following headings, exploring trends over time where appropriate:

- Personal details
- Work status
- Work in the UK
- Work outside the vet profession
- Work within the vet profession
- Work in clinical practice
- Recent qualifiers
- Views about the profession
- Wellbeing
- Views about the RCVS
- Conclusions.

A separate report details the findings from the survey of vet nurses.

2 Personal details

This chapter describes the demographic and personal details of respondents, including details on gender, age, ethnicity, responsibility for dependants, disabilities, year of qualification, degree course, RCVS membership category, country of qualification, and (for those who mainly or entirely resided in the UK up to the age of 18) social mobility. For demographic data about the profession as a whole, see RCVS Facts at <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/>

Chapter summary

- 61% were female and 39% male. This illustrates the continuing 'feminisation' of the profession; in 2002, a much lower 37% of respondents were female.
- Around 84% gave their sexuality as heterosexual/straight, somewhat lower than in 2019 (90%).
- The average (mean) respondent age was 46.9, higher than in 2019 when it was 44.8. Over two-thirds (68%) were aged between 30 and 59.
- Respondents were predominantly white (96% of those who provided their ethnicity), a similar percentage to 2019 and a little lower than 2010 when 98% were white.
- 50% said they did not follow any religion, and 40% said they were Christian.
- 58% were married, 16% single and 13% cohabiting.
- At the time of the survey, 3% were pregnant or on parental leave; a further 24% said they had at some point previously taken pregnancy or parental leave.
- 36% had child dependants, the same as in 2019, while 8% had adult dependants, notably higher than in 2019 and 2014 when the figure was 5%.
- 17% indicated they had a mental or physical health condition or disability that had a substantial and long-term effect on their everyday activities, and 14% said they were neurodiverse.
- The RCVS membership category of most of respondents was UK-practising (83%); 6% were practising outside the UK and 11% were non-practising.
- Over half (57%) had qualified from 2000 onwards.
- Three-quarters had qualified in the UK (73%) or the Republic of Ireland (3%); 15% had qualified in another EU/EEA/EFTA country, notably lower than in 2019 (23%).
- Most (85%) reported that they went straight into a veterinary medicine/science degree course rather than take another degree first.
- Almost all (95%) had graduated from the six oldest veterinary schools, with the Royal Veterinary College London having the highest percentage (24%). Almost 5% had graduated from the schools at Nottingham and Surrey.

- 66% had attended a state-run or state-funded school between the ages of 11 and 16; 29% had attended independent or fee-paying schools, considerably higher than the national statistic of 7.5%.

2.1 Demographic characteristics

Table 2.1 shows the respondent breakdown by gender, age, ethnicity and sexuality with comparisons to the 2019, 2014 and 2010 Surveys of the Profession where possible. These are outlined in more detail below.

Table 2.1: 2024 demographic characteristics, compared with 2019, 2014 and 2010

		2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %	2010 %
Gender	Male	2,131	37.5	41.5	46.2	50.0
	Female	3,359	59.1	57.4	53.8	50.0
	Non-binary	18	0.3	-	-	-
	Gender fluid	*	*	-	-	-
	Prefer to self-describe	6	0.1	0.2	-	-
	Don't know	8	0.1	-	-	-
	Prefer not to say	157	2.8	0.9	-	-
Age	Under 30	566	11.8	15.3	-	17.0
	30 to 39	1,200	25.1	28.4	-	26.0
	40 to 49	1,083	22.7	22	-	21.0
	50 to 59	941	19.7	17.1	-	16.0
	60 to 69	618	12.9	9.9	-	10.0
	70 and over	370	7.7	7.4	-	10.0
Ethnicity	White	5,194	92.3	93.9	96.9	98.0
	Mixed	69	1.2	1.2	1.0	0.6
	Asian/Asian British	62	1.1	1.2	1.0	0.7
	Black/Black British	16	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2
	Chinese	-	-	0.7	0.5	0.3
	Other	40	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.4
	Prefer to self-describe	39	0.7	-	-	-
	Prefer not to say	208	3.7	2.1	-	-
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	4,692	83.5	89.4	-	-
	Bi/Bisexual	201	3.6	2.6	-	-
	Gay or lesbian	175	3.1	2.9	-	-
	Queer	16	0.3	-	-	-
	Pansexual	23	0.4	-	-	-
	Asexual	55	1.0	-	-	-
	Prefer to self-describe	15	0.3	0.6	-	-
	Don't know	46	0.8	-	-	-
Prefer not to say	395	7.0	5.5	-	-	

Religion						
Buddhist	25	0.4	-	-	-	-
Christian	2,230	39.7	-	-	-	-
Hindu	5	0.1	-	-	-	-
Jewish	30	0.5	-	-	-	-
Muslim	21	0.4	-	-	-	-
Sikh	5	0.1	-	-	-	-
Any other religion	46	0.8	-	-	-	-
No religion	2,830	50.4	-	-	-	-
Prefer to self-describe	59	1.1	-	-	-	-
Prefer not to say	363	6.5	-	-	-	-
Total		100	100	100	100	100

‘*’ Denotes fewer than three responses to this category.

‘-’ Denotes that this option was not presented in previous years.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2010, 2014, 2019 and 2024

2.1.1 Gender

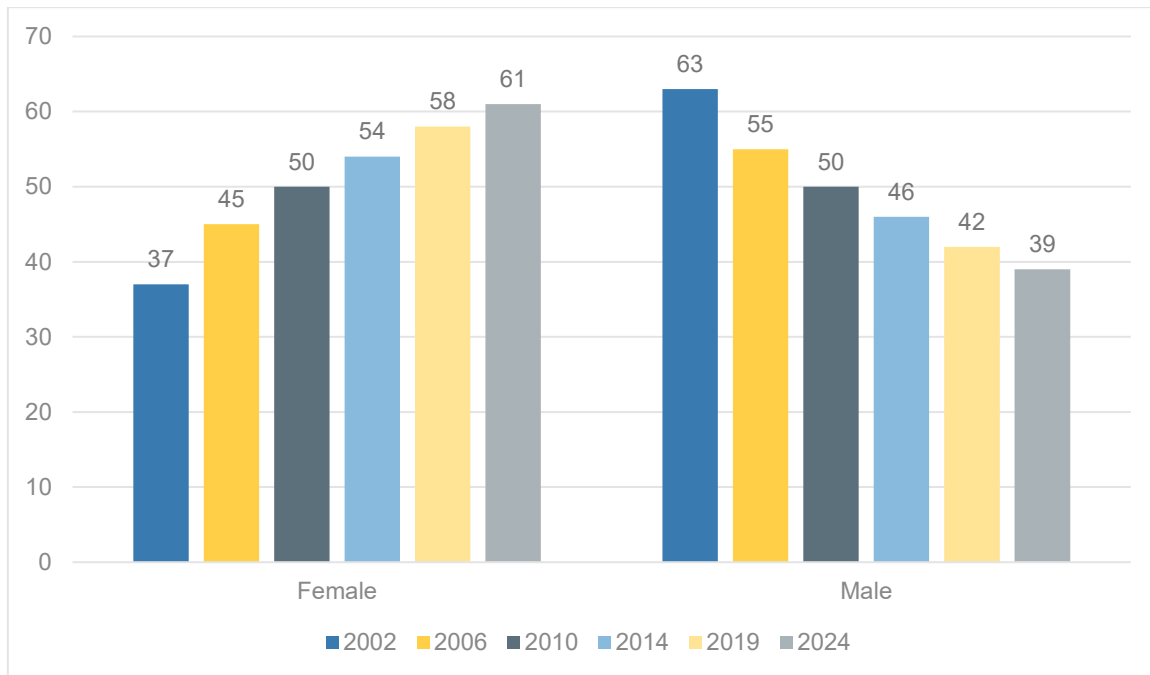
To enable the observation of changing percentages over time, only respondents who selected ‘female’ or ‘male’ have been included in the analysis for Table 2.2 and in Figure 2.1 below. This shows a percentage split of 61% female and 39% male in 2024, reflecting the RCVS registration data, where the proportion of females in the profession is continuing to grow. As shown in Table 2.2 and Figure 2.1, there has been an almost complete reversal of percentages of male and female respondents between 2002 and 2024.

Table 2.2: Percentage of female and male respondents, 2002 to 2024

Gender %	2024	2019	2014	2010	2006	2002
Female	61	58	54	50	45	37
Male	39	42	46	50	55	63

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2002 to 2024

Figure 2.1 Percentage of female and male respondents, 2002 to 2024



Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2002 to 2024

The vast majority of respondents (97%) said their gender identity was the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. A small proportion (<1%) said their gender identity was not the same, and 3% preferred not to say.

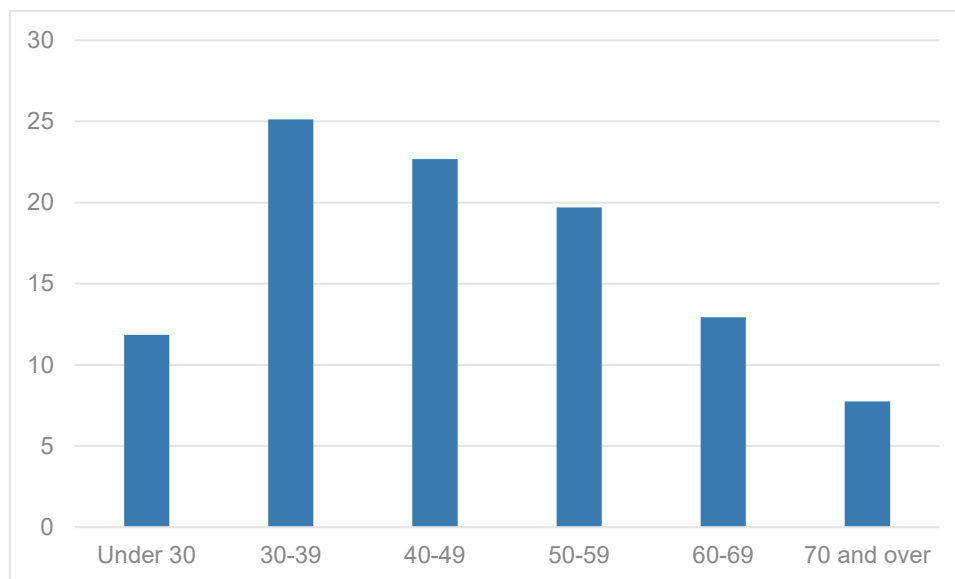
2.1.2 Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation was included as a question for the first time in the 2019 Survey of the Profession. In 2024, an additional four options were included: queer, pansexual, asexual and ‘don’t know’. Further, ‘gay woman/lesbian’ and ‘gay man’ were collapsed into one category, ‘gay or lesbian’.

Around 84% of respondents reported that they were heterosexual, a decrease from 89% in 2019. Around 4% said that they were bi or bisexual, 3% indicated they were either gay or lesbian and 1% said they were asexual. A small proportion (<1%) said they were pansexual or queer.

2.1.3 Age

The average (mean) respondent age was 46.9, higher than in 2019 when the average age was 44.8 and in 2014 when it was 44.3. Compared to the 2019 survey, the percentage in the under 30 and 30 to 39 age groups decreased, while the proportion of participants in all other age groups increased. Figure 2.2 shows the age distribution of vets who responded to this survey, indicating that most (68%) were aged 30 to 59.

Figure 2.2: Age distribution of vet respondents (%)

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Overall, the ages provided by respondents ranged from 23 to 98. The modal (most common) age was 34.

2.1.4 Ethnicity

As in previous years, most respondents to the survey were white. There was an increase in the proportion of people who wished not to disclose their ethnicity compared to the 2019 survey, and a small proportion preferred to self-describe. Within this group, self-described ethnicities included Irish, Turkish, Cymru and Balkan. When those who preferred not to say are removed from the calculation, around 96% were white, a similar percentage to 2019 and 2014 and a little lower than 2010.

2.2 Relationship status

More than half (57%) of respondents selected their relationship status as married. This was followed by single (16%) and co-habiting (13%). Of the small proportion who preferred to self-describe their relationship status, most indicated they were either in a long-term relationship or engaged. A full breakdown is displayed in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Relationship status

	2024 N	2024 %
Married	3,200	56.7
Single	899	15.9
Co-habiting	744	13.2
In a civil partnership	192	3.5
Divorced	146	2.6
Widowed	64	1.1
Separated (but still legally married/in a civil partnership)	55	1
Dissolved civil partnership	4	0.1
Prefer to self-describe	54	1.0
Prefer not to say	287	5.1
Total	5,645	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

2.3 Pregnancy and parental leave

At the time of responding to the survey, just under 3% were pregnant, on maternity/paternity leave, shared parental or adoption leave (pregnancy or parental leave); a further 24% said they had previously taken pregnancy or parental leave whilst working in the veterinary profession. The majority (71%) said this did not apply, either currently or previously. A full breakdown of responses is displayed in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Pregnancy and parental leave status

	2024 N	2024 %
Previously pregnant or taken maternity/shared parental/adoption leave	1,087	19.7
Previously taken paternity/shared parental/adoption leave	242	4.4
Currently pregnant or taking maternity/shared parental/adoption leave	130	2.4
Currently taking paternity/shared parental/adoption leave	7	0.1
Prefer to self-describe	13	0.2
Prefer not to say	147	2.7
None of the above	3,921	71.1

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

2.4 Responsibility for dependants

Two-fifths (41%) of respondents indicated they had dependent children or provided care to an adult dependant. A total of 36% said they had dependent children. This figure remains unchanged from the 2019 survey and is slightly higher than in 2014 when it was 33%. Participants who indicated they had dependent children were asked to indicate the age(s) of their children (by selecting all age categories that applied). This is displayed in

Table 3.5 with comparison to 2019 data; this shows that respondents' dependent children appeared to be older than in 2019, in that 64% were aged 12 or over, compared with 48% in 2019.

Table 2.5: Age categories of dependent children, with comparison to the 2019 survey

	2024 %	2019 %
0-4	27.6	39.2
5-11	39.9	44.1
12-18	40.8	31.0
Over 18	22.9	17.8

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

A much smaller proportion (8%) indicated they provided care to an adult dependant or dependants. Despite being generally low, this was a notable increase on previous years. A comparison between years is displayed in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Proportion who provide care for adult dependants, with comparison to 2019 and 2014 surveys

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
Yes	444	8.1	5.4	5.5
No	5,019	91.9	94.6	94.5
Total	5,436	100	100	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

2.5 Health condition and disabilities (physical and mental)

Overall, slightly less than one fifth (17%) of respondents indicated that they had a mental or physical health condition or disability that had a substantial and long-term effect on their everyday activities (Table 2.7). Further, 14% of participants considered themselves to have a neurodivergent condition.

Table 2.7: Proportion who have a physical or mental health condition that has a substantial and long-term effect on their everyday activities

	2024 N	2024 %
Has a health condition/disability	945	17.4
Does not have a health condition/disability	4,487	82.6
Total	5,432	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

2.6 RCVS membership category

Table 2.8 provides a breakdown of respondents' membership category, with a comparison to the 2019 and 2014 surveys. While the percentage breakdown is fairly similar across different years, the trend of an increasingly higher percentage selecting 'UK practising' is continuing, and the percentage practising outside the UK was considerably lower.

Table 2.8: RCVS membership category, 2024, 2019 and 2014

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
UK-practising	5,805	83.1	76.2	72.3
Practising outside the UK	398	5.7	10.2	10.5
Non-practising	392	5.6	7	7.9
Non-practising (70 years plus)	371	5.3	4.8	6
Southern Irish	17	0.2	1.6	3.3
Temporary registration	4	0.1	0.1	-
Total	6,987	100	100	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

2.7 Year of qualification

The largest proportion of respondents qualified between 2010 and 2019, accounting for 25% of all respondents. This was closely followed by vets qualifying between 2000 and 2009 (22%). The median year (the year by which half of respondents qualified) was 2010, while the modal year of qualification was 2013. A full breakdown of responses by decade is displayed in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9: Year of qualification by decade

	2024 N	2024 %
2020 - present	725	10.4
2010 - 2019	1,759	25.2
2000 – 2009	1,521	21.7
1990 – 1999	1,300	18.6
1980 – 1989	987	14.2
1970 – 1979	452	6.4
1960 – 1969	223	3.2
Before 1960	20	0.3
Total	6,987	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

2.8 Qualification country

Around three-quarters (76%) of respondents qualified in the UK (73%) or the Republic of Ireland (3%). Notably lower than in 2019, 15% qualified in an EU/EEA/EFTA country. The remaining respondents qualified from both EU and non-EU countries, including Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. A full breakdown of qualification countries, with a comparison to the 2019 and 2014 surveys, is displayed in Table 2.10.

Table 2.10: Country of qualification, with comparison to 2019 and 2014 surveys

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
UK	5,114	73.2	63.9	70.8
Other EU/EEA/EFTA country*	1,016	14.5	21.8	13.5
Republic of Ireland	205	2.9	4.7	6.2
South Africa	186	2.7	2.9	2.5
Australia	128	1.8	2.6	2.6
Europe outside EU/EEA/EFTA*	74	1.1	1.1	1.4
New Zealand	44	0.6	0.7	0.9
Canada	25	0.4	0.4	0.3
USA	31	0.4	0.8	0.7
Other	164	2.3	0.9	1.1
Total	6,987	100	100	100

*The 2014 and 2019 numbers and percentages are not strictly comparable here, as in 2014 the categories were 'Other EU' and 'Europe, outside EU'.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

Of those qualifying in EU/EEA/EFTA countries other than the Republic of Ireland, most qualified in Spain (19%), followed by Italy (13%), Poland (11%) and Romania (10%).

2.9 Degree course

Respondents were asked whether, before studying veterinary medicine/science, they had undertaken a degree course in a different subject. Most (85%) respondents reported that they went straight into a veterinary medicine/science degree course. Table 2.11 presents respondents' different answers to this question.

Table 2.11: 'Before studying veterinary medicine/science, did you undertake a degree course in a different subject?'

	2024 N	2024 %
No, I went straight into a veterinary medicine/science degree course	5,870	84.6
Yes, as a stepping-stone into veterinary medicine/science	553	8.0
Yes, not intended as a stepping-stone into veterinary medicine/science but became so	326	4.7
Yes, but in a subject not relevant to veterinary medicine/science	192	2.8
Total	6,941	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

2.10 Veterinary school

The six oldest veterinary schools accounted for almost all respondents, with the Royal Veterinary College London having the highest percentage (24%). Almost 5% had graduated from the schools at Nottingham and Surrey. Table 2.12 presents the response breakdown for this question.

Table 2.12: Veterinary school respondents graduated from?

	2024 N	2024 %
Royal Veterinary College London	1,205	23.7
University of Liverpool	813	16.0
University of Edinburgh	791	15.5
University of Bristol	728	14.3
University of Glasgow	718	14.1
University of Cambridge	589	11.6
University of Nottingham	183	3.6
University of Surrey	53	1.0
Other	13	0.3
Total	5,093	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

2.11 Social mobility

The majority of respondents (71%) mainly or entirely resided in the UK up to the age of 18. These respondents were asked a series of questions that aimed to assess the social mobility of individuals. The questions are endorsed by the government and recommended for use by professional bodies, in line with their responsibility to ensure fair access to professions and the best use of talent. These were also asked in the 2019 and 2014 surveys. Responses to these questions were explored by age, gender and disability.

Where differences between groups were identified as significant, these have been reported.

2.11.1 Occupation of main household earner

Almost half (48%) said the occupation of their main household earner was ‘modern professional and traditional profession occupations’. Table 2.13 displays a full breakdown of main household earner occupations.

Table 2.13: Occupation of main household earner when aged about 14

	2024 N	2024 %
Modern professional and traditional professional occupations	1,958	48.1
Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators	832	20.5
Small business owners who employed fewer than 25 people	368	9.0
Technical and craft occupations	320	7.9
Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations	277	6.8
Clerical and intermediate occupations	182	4.5
Long-term unemployed (more than one year)	19	0.5
Total	3,956	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

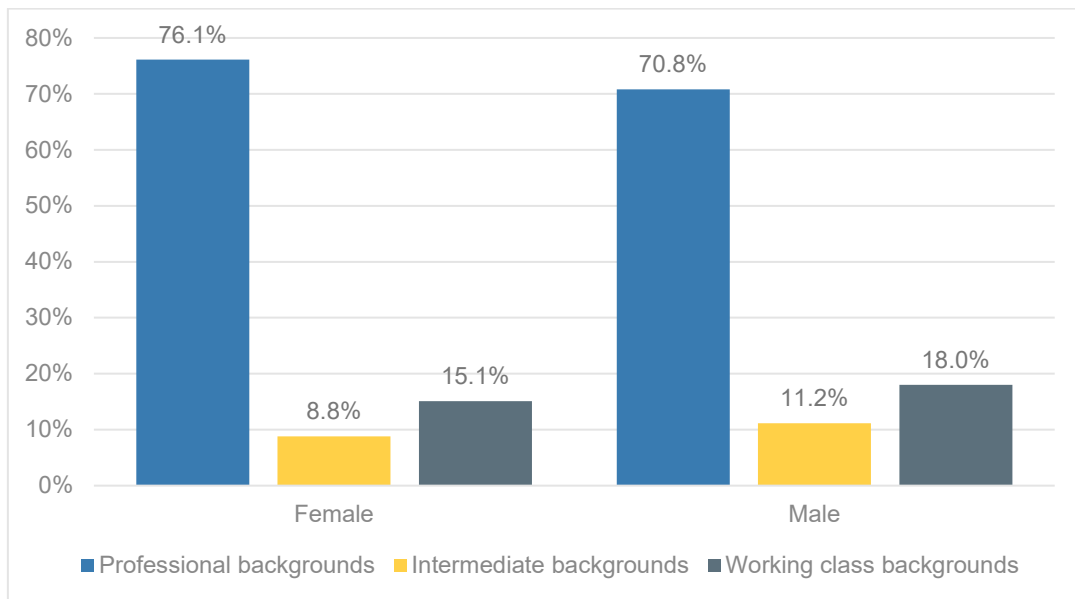
To conduct analysis by participant demographics, the professions listed in Table 2.13 were collapsed into professional backgrounds, intermediate backgrounds, and working-class backgrounds, following guidance from the Social Mobility Commission¹.

The analysis highlighted that:

- Females were slightly more likely than males to indicate that the occupation of the main earner in their household was of a professional background, as displayed in Figure 2.3.
- Figure 2.4 shows that the largest proportion coming from a professional background were aged 40-49 (81%), while those from a working-class background had the highest proportion among those aged 50-59 (20%).
- Respondents with a physical and/or mental health condition were more likely to be from a working-class background (20%) compared to those with no physical and/or mental health conditions (15%), as indicated by Figure 2.5.

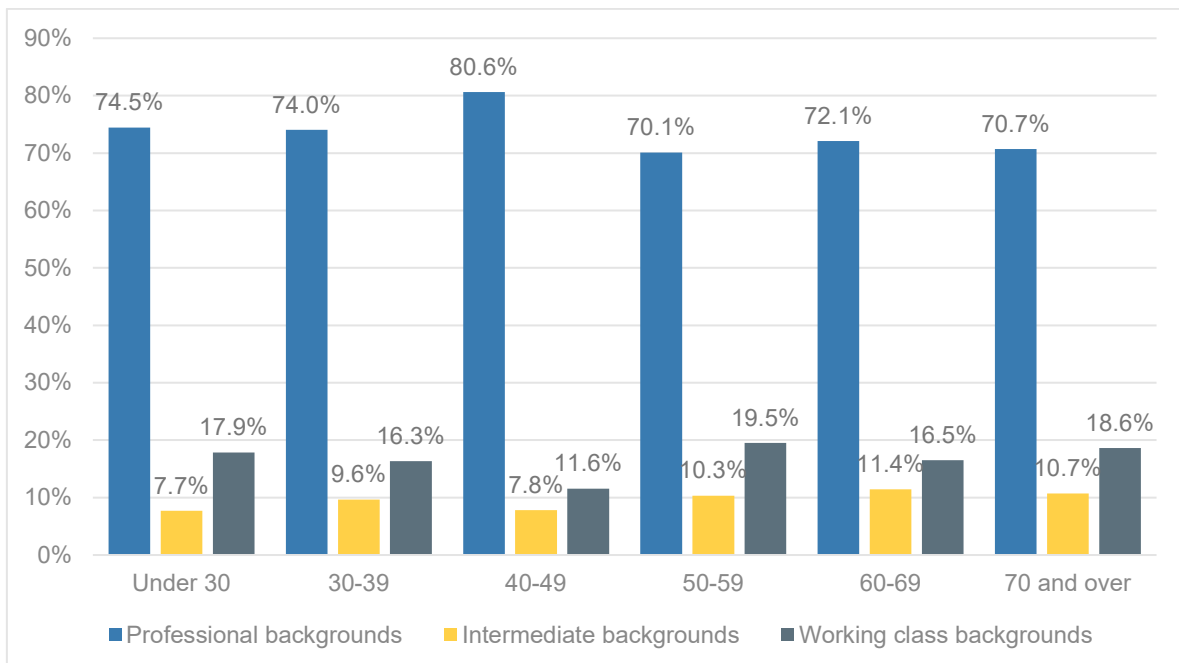
¹ Social Mobility Commission - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/socio-economic-diversity-and-inclusion-employers-toolkit/employers-toolkit#socio-economic>

Figure 2.3: Occupation of main household earner when aged about 14 by respondent gender



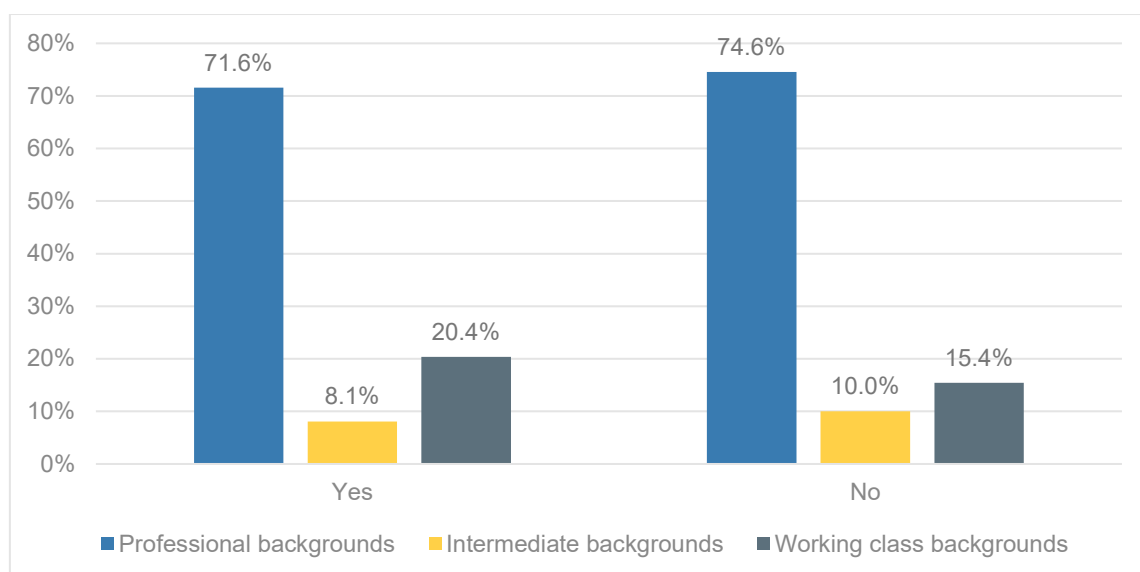
Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Figure 2.4: 'What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were aged around 14?' by respondent's age



Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Figure 2.5: Occupation of main household earner when respondent was aged around 14, by whether the respondent has a physical and/or mental health condition



Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

2.11.2 Schooling

Two-thirds (66%) had attended a state-run or state-funded school between the ages of 11 and 16. Twenty-nine per cent had attended independent or fee-paying schools; this is considerably higher than what is observed nationally, where 7.5% of the total UK population attends independent or fee-paying schools (Table 2.14).

Table 2.14: Type of school attended for the most time between the ages of 11 and 16

	2024 N	2024 %
A state-run or state-funded school	3,252	66.0
Independent or fee-paying school	1,630	33.1
Attended school outside the UK	49	1.0
Total	4,931	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Further analysis also indicated that there were some statistically significant differences between groups:

- 69% of females attended a state-run or state-funded school, as opposed to 62% of males.
- Younger respondents were more likely to have attended a state-run or state-funded school, with 73% aged under 30 and 71% of those aged 30 to 39 having attended a state-run school, compared to 58% of those aged 70 and over.

- 71% of respondents with a physical and/or mental health condition had attended a state-run or state-funded school, compared to 65% without a physical and/or mental health condition.

2.11.3 Eligibility for free school meals

Respondents who finished school after 1980 were asked whether they were eligible for free school meals (FSM) at any point during their school years, with 13% saying that they were. This is slightly lower than the national average, where around 15% of the total UK population has been eligible for FSM at some point during their school years.

The analysis highlighted some statistically significant differences between respondents:

- 15% of males were eligible for FSM during their school years, compared to 12% of females.
- 20% of participants with a physical and/or mental health condition had been eligible for FSM, compared to 11% of those without a condition or disability.

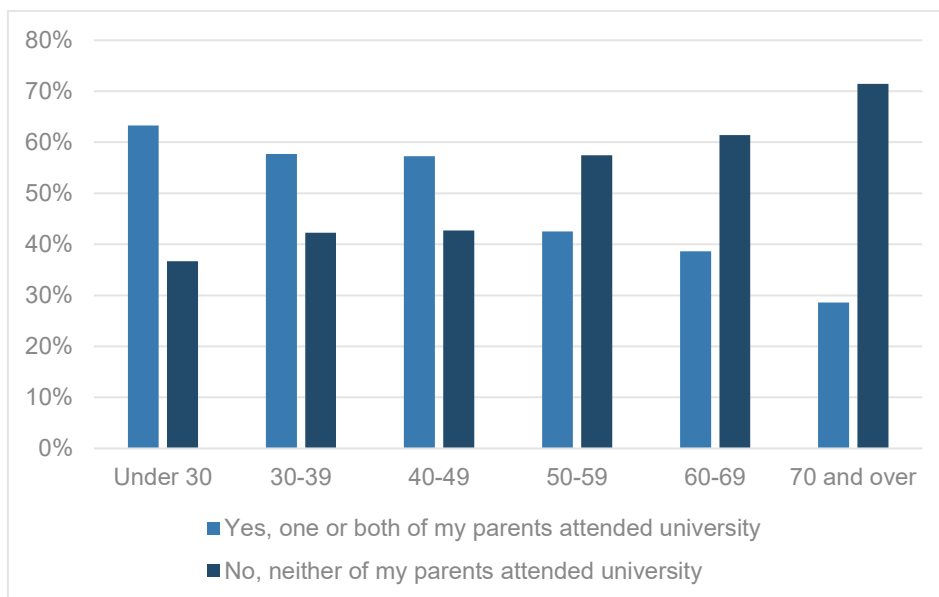
2.11.4 Parents' or guardians' level of education

Respondents were asked whether any of their parents or guardians had completed a university degree course or equivalent. Responses were evenly split, with 50% saying that one or both of their parents or guardians had attended university. These figures are similar to national data, which suggests that 49% of graduates are the first in their families to attend university.²

Analysis showed a significant difference in responses between participants from different age categories. Respondents in younger age categories were more likely to report that at least one of their parents had attended university and gained a degree by the time they were 18. This is displayed in Figure 2.6.

² The Bridge Group (2021). *Socio-economic diversity and inclusion. Employers' toolkit: Cross-industry edition*. Social Mobility Commission.

Figure 2.6: Parental university attendance by age of respondent



Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

2.11.5 One-year access course

Finally, a very small number (2%) of respondents indicated they had done a one-year Access course to enable them to access a veterinary degree.

3 Work status

This chapter provides an overview of respondents' current employment and work status, including those who were currently unemployed, taking a career break, considering leaving the profession or recently retired.

Chapter summary

- 61% were working full time and 27% part time; this compares to 64% and 23% respectively in 2019. Women were more likely to work part time than men (34% compared to 17%).
- Full-time working decreases in line with age, with 91% under 30 working full time compared to 35% of those aged 60 to 69.
- 2% were taking a career break, and one-third of these were doing so because they were considering leaving the profession or changing the work they did, most commonly due to poor work-life balance and chronic stress.
- 9% had retired; of these, 35% had retired from 2020 onwards, 36% between 2010 and 2019, and 23% between 2000 and 2009.

3.1 Employment status

Respondents were asked to indicate their employment status at the time of completing their survey. Table 3.1 shows that:

- 61% were working full time.
- 27% were working part time.
- The proportion working full time has decreased over the years, while part time working has increased correspondingly.

Table 3.1: Main current employment category with comparison to 2019 and 2014 surveys

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
Full time work	4,248	60.8	64.1	65.4
Part time work	1,864	26.7	23.4	19.2
Retired	628	9.0	8.3	10.2
Taking a career break	148	2.1	2.4	2.5
Unemployed	60	0.9	1.0	1.5
Voluntary work	39	0.6	0.8	1.2
Total	6,987	100	100	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

Analysis by sub-group shows that:

- Females were more likely to be working part time, with around 34% working in this way compared to 17% of males.
- There is a clear reduction in the proportion of people working full time as respondents move into older age categories, with around 91% under 30 working full time compared to 35% of those aged 60 to 69 and 8% of those 70 and over.
- Individuals with caring responsibilities were much more likely to be working part time compared to those without, with 37% and 21% of these groups, respectively, working part time.
- 61% of respondents without a physical and/or mental health condition were working full time, compared to 55% of those who do have one.

3.2 Unemployment

Sixty respondents reported being unemployed: they had been unemployed for an average of 20 months with a range of 0 to 144 months (12 years). The modal number of months unemployed was one. Of those reporting being unemployed:

- 50% had been unemployed for five months or fewer at the time of the survey.
- 53% said that they were seeking work.
- Of those seeking work, most (94%) were seeking veterinary work.
- 34% were also seeking non-veterinary work.
- As to the type of work these respondents were seeking, the thematic analysis highlighted that most respondents were seeking any type of work.

3.3 Career breaks

A small proportion (2%) of respondents said that they were taking a career break. Table 3.2 shows that within this:

- One third (33%) were deciding whether they wanted to leave the profession or change the type of work they did.
- 18% were taking parental leave or looking after children, a much lower proportion than in previous years.
- 12% were ill and unable to work.

A small percentage of respondents selected that they were leaving the profession for 'other' reasons, including stress and burnout.

Table 3.2: ‘For what main purpose have you taken your career break?’

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
Deciding whether to leave the profession/change work type	49	33.3	-	-
Parental leave/looking after children	27	18.4	48	47.3
Illness (self)	17	11.6	13	10.7
Study	13	8.8	8	8.9
Sabbatical	10	6.8	5.3	4.1
Leaving the profession	9	6.1	-	-
Travel	8	5.4	12.7	8.9
Looking after an adult dependant	5	3.4	4.4	0.6
Other	9	6.1	13.3	19.5
Total	147	100	100	100

‘-’ Denotes that this option was not presented in previous years.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

The mean average estimated number of months respondents expected their career break to last was 34, while the mode was 12 months. Responses, however, ranged from 0 to 360 months (30 years). In more detail:

- Slightly more than a quarter (28%) expected their career break to last up to 12 months.
- Almost two-thirds (62%) said their career break would be between 12 and 60 months long.

3.4 Leaving the profession

Of the 148 individuals taking a career break, a total of 49 said they were currently deciding whether to leave the profession or change their work type. Table 3.3 shows that:

- The most common reason for considering leaving was poor work-life balance, which over 53% selected.
- This was closely followed by chronic stress, which was selected by 47% as a reason they were considering leaving the profession.
- Not feeling rewarded or valued in a non-financial sense was another common reason for considering leaving the profession, which almost two-fifths (37%) selected.
- Other common reasons included wanting a career change or a new challenge, long or unsocial hours, the burden of bureaucracy or legislation, and taking a career break.

Chapter 6.2.3 presents a breakdown of responses to this same question when asked to all respondents currently working within the profession and planning to leave the profession.

Table 3.3 Reasons why respondents are planning to leave the veterinary profession (multiple response)

	2024 N	2024 %
Poor work-life balance	26	53.1
Chronic stress	23	46.9
Not feeling rewarded or valued (non-financial)	18	36.7
Burden of bureaucracy/legislation	17	34.7
Career change/new challenge	17	34.7
Long/unsocial hours	17	34.7
Career break	16	32.7
Dissatisfaction with career opportunities	14	28.6
Workplace culture	13	26.5
Pay	12	24.5
Lack of flexibility in hours	10	20.4
Lack of support from management	10	20.4
Health issues (mental)	9	18.4
Unfulfilling work	9	18.4
Bullying and unfair treatment	8	16.3
Care of dependants/to have family	6	12.2
Leadership practices	6	12.2
Brexit	4	8.2
Emigration	4	8.2
Health issues (physical)	4	8.2
Discrimination, victimisation or harassment	2	4.1
Lack of adjustments/support for mental health issues	2	4.1
Travel	2	4.1
Lack of adjustments/support for physical health issues	1	2.0
Lack of adjustments/support for disclosed neurodivergent condition	0	0.0
Study	0	0.0
Other	10	20.4

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Ten respondents said there was another reason why they were planning to leave the veterinary profession. These included the changes currently taking place in the veterinary profession, and respondents having reached retirement age.

Similarly, respondents who were planning to leave due to bullying and unfair treatment were asked to explain the unfair treatment they had experienced, which included conflict with management, staff and clients.

Section 7.11 presents data on respondents' experiences of bullying and harassment.

3.5 Retirement

Table 3.4 indicates that of the respondents who had retired, 35% retired since 2020. The earliest reported year of retirement was 1958, and the modal year was 2023.

Table 3.4 Retirement year

	2024 N	2024 %
2020 - present	218	35.3
2010-2019	225	36.4
2000-2009	142	23.0
1990-1999	28	4.5
Up to 1989	5	0.8
Total	618	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

4 Work in the UK

This chapter reports the results of the questions on work location and citizenship, including gaining a better understanding of those who have moved to the UK to work in the veterinary profession.

Chapter summary

- The large majority (91%) were working entirely or mainly in the UK or Republic of Ireland, an increase from the 86% recorded in 2019 and more in line with 2014 (89%).
- 75% said they were British citizens by birth. Of those who were not British by birth, 36% had indefinite leave to stay in the UK and 20% had become British citizens after birth; 8% were Irish citizens.
- When those who had come to the UK were asked why, the top four reasons were the same as in 2019: to work abroad, to gain experience, to access better career opportunities and for better pay and working conditions.
- When those who had come to the UK were asked how long, from the time of the survey, they intended to stay in the UK, 49% said indefinitely, 15% up to five years, and 15% more than five years but not indefinitely; however, 21% were unsure.
- 80% worked from premises such as a practice or office, 8% worked from home and 11% said their working arrangements were hybrid. In general women and younger respondents were more likely than average to work from premises, while those with caring responsibilities were more likely than average to have adopted hybrid working.
- 70% said they typically spent no days in their working week working remotely.
- 90% of those who were working at the time of the survey said they were working entirely within the veterinary profession; a further 8% said they worked partly within and partly outside the profession. Only 2% worked entirely outside the profession, a decrease compared to 2019 and 2014 when between 4 and 5% worked entirely outside.

4.1 Country of employment

When asked about the country they worked in, the large majority (91%) said they worked entirely or mainly in the UK or the Republic of Ireland; this was largely similar to findings from the 2019 survey, although the percentage has increased somewhat from 86% and is closer to the 89% recorded in 2014. Table 4.1 shows that of those working outside the UK:

- The highest proportion worked in Australia (1%).
- A handful of respondents were working in EU, EEA and/or EFTA countries other than the Republic of Ireland.

- A small proportion were working in New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, Hong Kong and the USA.

Table 4.1: Country worked in, or mainly worked in if more than one

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
UK	5,580	91.4*	86.3*	88.9*
Other EU/EEA/EFTA country	150	2.5	4.3	2.9
Australia	65	1.1	2	2.3
New Zealand	35	0.6	0.9	1
Republic of Ireland	39	0.6	-	-
South Africa	32	0.5	0.9	1
Canada	24	0.4	0.5	0.6
Europe outside EU/EEA/EFTA	20	0.3	0.6	1
Other	160	2.6	4.7	2.2
Total	6,105	100	100	100

*2024 and 2019 numbers and percentages are not strictly comparable to 2014, as in 2014 the categories were 'Other EU' and 'Europe, outside EU'. 'UK' and 'Republic of Ireland' were also presented as a combined option in previous surveys.

'-' Denotes that this option was not presented in previous years.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

Respondents working in countries other than those listed indicated they were working in countries including the USA, Hong Kong, Qatar and United Arab Emirates.

4.2 Citizenship

In a question new to the 2024 survey, three-quarters (75%) of respondents shared that they were British citizens by birth. Table 4.2 shows that of those who were not British citizens by birth:

- More than one-third (36%) had indefinite leave to remain in the UK.
- One-fifth (20%) became a British citizen after birth.

Table 4.2: Citizenship status

	2024 N	2024 %
Have indefinite leave to remain in the UK	504	36.2
Became a British citizen after birth	272	19.5
Applying or intending to apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK	185	13.3
Applying or intend to apply for British citizenship	123	8.8
Citizen of the Republic of Ireland	107	7.7
Not intending to apply for British citizenship or indefinite leave to remain	90	6.5
Have a different type of British nationality	33	2.4
Other	79	5.7
Total	1,393	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Around 6% selected 'other' as their citizenship status. These respondents were asked to indicate what their citizenship status was. Responses included holding a skilled worker visa, pre-settled status, or dual nationality.

4.3 Moving to the UK

4.3.1 Motivations for moving

Those who indicated they had moved to the UK for work were asked to give the reasons that motivated their move. Table 4.3 shows that the main reasons people chose to move to the UK were:

- To work abroad.
- To gain experience.
- To access better career opportunities.
- Because of better pay and working conditions.

Comparisons to previous years, displayed in Table 4.3, generally show a slight decline across most reasons for moving to the UK. There were a few exceptions:

- The proportion of people moving to the UK because of marriage or partner increased from 10% in 2019 to 12% in 2024.
- The proportion who stayed in the UK after studying grew from 5% in 2019 to 7% in 2024.
- More respondents also selected 'other' in this survey than in 2019.

Only three reasons saw increases in responses in the 2024 survey. These were:

- Better pay and conditions, which increased from 41% in 2019 to 42% in 2024.

- Marriage/partner, which increased from 10% in 2019 to 12% in 2024.
- Stayed here after studying, which increased from 5% in 2019 to 7% in 2024.

Table 4.3: Reasons for coming to the UK (multiple response)

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
To work abroad	685	49.5	51.4	48.7
To gain experience	618	44.6	50.3	38.0
Better career opportunities	585	42.2	47.4	-
Better pay and conditions	584	42.2	41.3	31.9
Veterinary work has a higher status in the UK	389	28.1	31.2	-
Better attitude to animals in the UK	316	22.8	24.9	-
To study/obtain a further qualification	269	19.4	21.2	16.8
I like British culture	208	15.0	17.9	-
Lack of work in home country	208	15.0	19.8	22.8
I like the British way of life	203	14.7	17.5	-
Marriage/partner	170	12.3	10.1	18.0
I like British people	157	11.3	13.5	-
To learn English	138	10.0	18.7	12.8
Family/friends in the UK	129	9.3	9.8	-
Stayed here after studying	94	6.8	4.6	4.6
Parents/family moved to the UK	74	5.3	-	-
Travel	-	-	1.1	1
Other	15	5.3	0.2	5.5

‘-’ Denotes that this option was not presented in previous years.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

Other free-text responses included being able to travel and for safety.

Respondents indicated that they moved to the UK between 1960 and 2024, with the modal year being 2023.

4.3.2 Intentions to remain

Respondents who had moved to the UK for work were asked to share how long they intended to stay in the UK from the time of completing the survey. To this:

- Almost half (49%) said they were planning to stay indefinitely.
- A fifth (21%) said they were unsure or did not know how long they would remain in the UK.

Table 4.4: ‘For how long, from now, do you intend to stay in the UK’

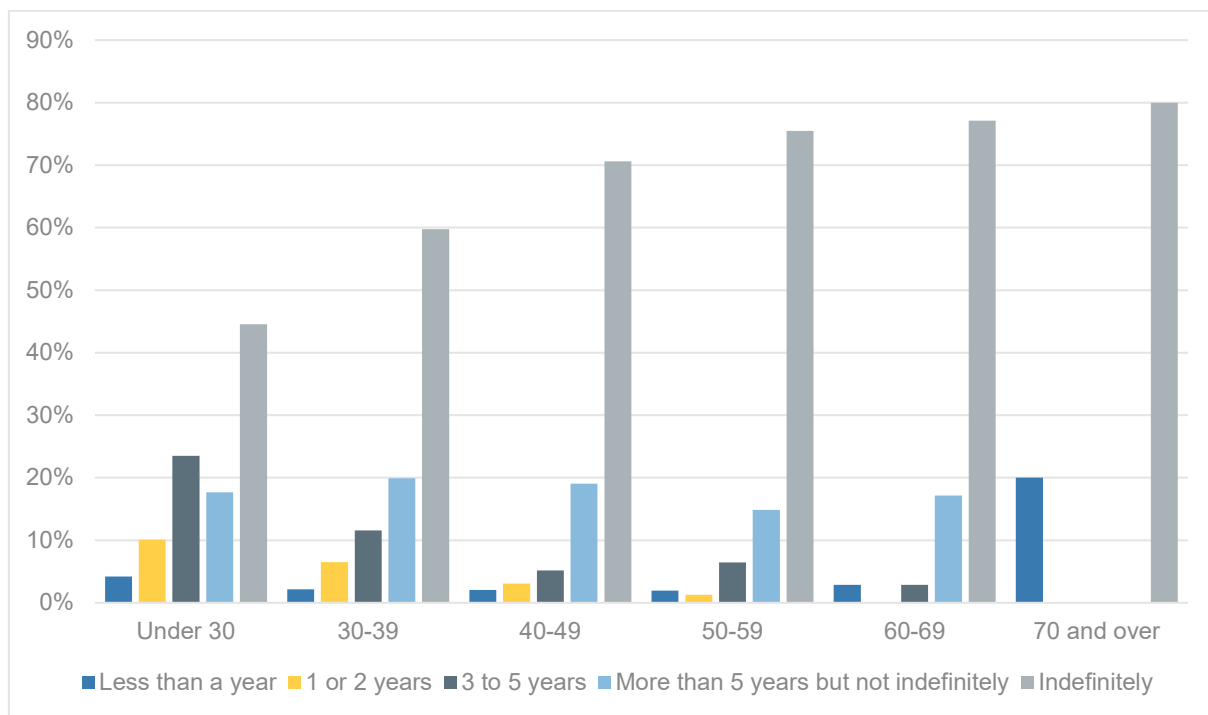
	2024 N	2024 %
Less than a year	33	2.4
1 or 2 years	58	4.2
3 to 5 years	116	8.5
More than 5 years but not indefinitely	205	14.9
Indefinitely	666	48.5
Don't know/unsure	294	21.4
Total	1,372	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Subgroup analysis revealed that there were some statistically significant differences in responses across different groups:

- As seen in Figure 4.1, the proportion of respondents intending to stay in the UK indefinitely increased with age.
- 78% of those who qualified in the UK were planning to stay in the UK indefinitely, compared to 59% of those who qualified abroad.

Figure 4.1: ‘For how long, from now, do you intend to stay in the UK’ by age groups



Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

4.4 Primary place of work

Table 4.5 shows that four-fifths (80%) of respondents worked from workplace premises, such as a practice or an office.

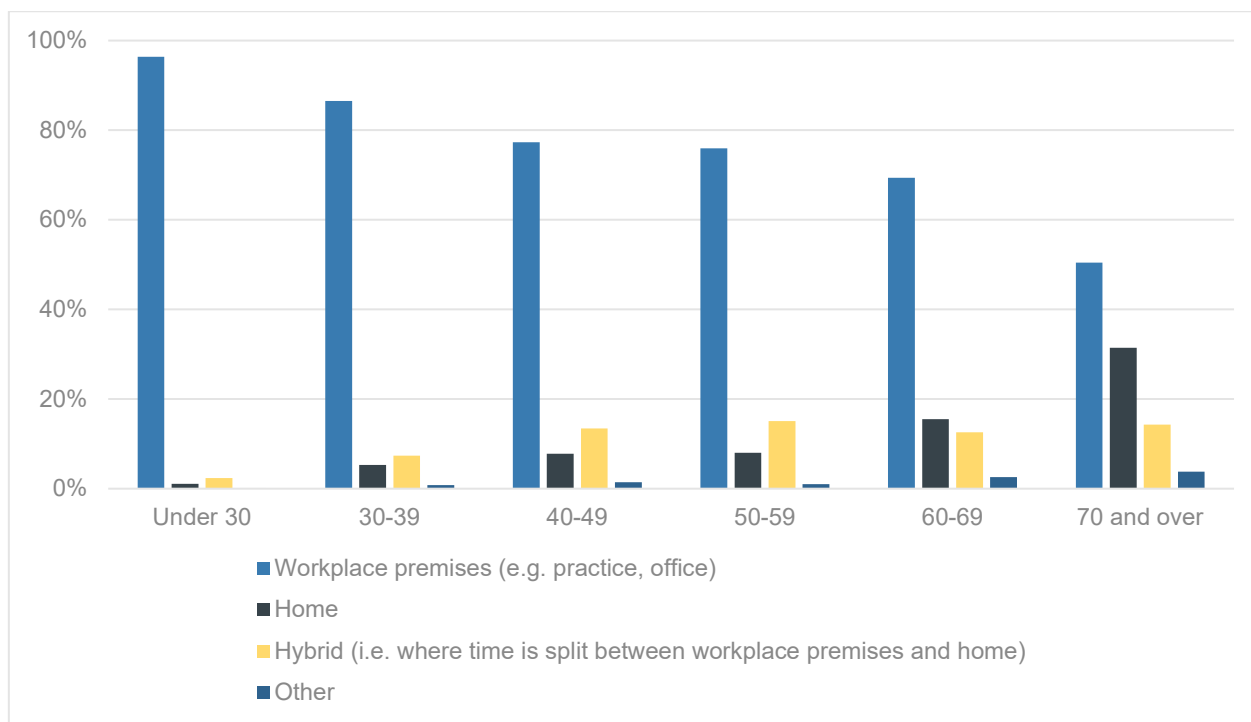
Table 4.5: Primary place of work

	2024 N	2024 %
Workplace premises (e.g. practice, office)	4,824	79.7
Hybrid (i.e. where time is split between workplace premises and home)	666	11.0
Home	486	8.0
Other	78	1.3
Total	6,054	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Analysis revealed some statistically significant differences across sub-groups:

- Females were slightly more likely to work from workplace premises than men (81% compared to 76%, respectively).
- A much larger proportion of younger respondents indicated working from workplace premises, as shown in Figure 4.2.
- Respondents with caring responsibilities were more likely to have hybrid working arrangements, where their time is split between workplace premises and home.
- 80% of respondents working in the UK reported working from workplace premises, compared to 74% of participants who work outside the UK.

Figure 4.2: Primary place of work by age group

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

A large proportion (70%) said they typically spent zero days per week working remotely. Of those who did spend at least one day per week working remotely:

- 19% worked remotely between one and three days per week.
- 7% worked remotely for between four and seven days per week.
- 4% said that the number of days they worked remotely varied too much for them to be able to say.

4.5 Working within or outside the profession

The majority (98%) of vets who were in work at the time of the survey were working entirely within the veterinary profession, with a small minority (8%) working partly within and partly outside the veterinary profession. When only those working entirely within or entirely outside the veterinary profession are included, analysis indicates that almost all vets currently in work were employed within the veterinary profession. Table 5.6 shows that the proportion of vets working outside the profession has decreased since 2019.

Table 5.6: proportion working within or outside the veterinary profession with comparison to 2019 and 2014 surveys

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
Within the profession	5,921	97.8	95.5	95.2
Outside the profession	133	2.2	4.5	4.8
Total	6,054	100	100	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession 2024, 2019 and 2014

Analysis showed some statistically significant differences across groups:

- Younger respondents were more likely to work within the veterinary profession.
- Respondents who qualified overseas were slightly more likely to work within the veterinary profession.
- Respondents working in the UK were more likely to be working within the veterinary profession.

5 Work outside the veterinary profession

This chapter focuses on the very small number of respondents (133) working outside the veterinary profession, that is not using a veterinary qualification: understanding what type of work they were doing at the time of the survey, whether they had ever worked in the profession, and any intention to re-enter the profession.

Chapter summary

- A very small minority (2%) of respondents worked entirely outside the veterinary profession. The majority (69%) were female, and overall just over half (55%) were aged 50 to 69.
- Similar to previous surveys, the areas of work where the majority were working were professional, scientific and technical (27%), human health and social work (20%), education (17%) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (15%).
- The percentage of those working in the private sector (49%) has decreased compared to 2019 (58%) and 2014 (57%), with corresponding increases in the public and third sectors.
- The large majority (82%) had worked in the veterinary profession for at least five years, with clinical practice being the most commonly-cited area.
- However, it is clear that most of those working outside the profession do not intend to return to it; the proportion not intending to re-join has significantly increased over the years, from 50% in 2014 to 68% in 2024.

5.1 Vets working outside the veterinary profession

Just 2% indicated that they worked entirely outside the veterinary profession.

Within this group, analysis showed that:

- 69% were female.
- The largest proportion (30%) of those working outside the profession were aged 50 to 59, followed by respondents in the 60-69 age group (25%).
- 85% had qualified in the UK.
- Four-fifths (81%) worked in the UK.

Due to the small number of those working outside the profession, it was not possible to conduct robust sub-group analysis in further sections of this chapter.

5.2 Type of work

Around three-quarters (76%) of respondents were doing non-animal-related work. Table 5.1 shows the nature of respondents' work, using standard industrial classifications, with comparison to the 2019 and 2014 surveys. In a similar pattern to previous surveys, the areas of work where the majority were working were professional, scientific and technical (27%), human health and social work (20%), education (17%) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (15%).

Table 5.1: Nature of work outside the profession

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
Professional, scientific and technical	35	27.3	27.7	17.1
Human health and social work activities	26	20.3	13	14.2
Education	22	17.2	16.3	12.7
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	19	14.8	18.7	11.6
Administrative and support services	12	9.4	4.9	4.4
Other service activities	8	6.3	8.6	19.3
Accommodation/food services	7	5.5	2.9	3.6
Real estate activities	6	4.7	2	-
Manufacturing	5	3.9	4.5	2.5
Financial and insurance activities	5	3.9	2	3.6
Arts, entertainment and recreation	4	3.1	3.5	-
Public administration and defence	4	3.1	2.6	3.3
Information and communication	3	2.3	4.5	-
Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies	1	0.8	-	-
Wholesale and retail trade	1	0.8	1.8	4.7
Construction	-	-	0.8	1.5
Don't know	3	2.3	3.9	-

'-' Denotes that this option was not presented in previous years.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

As Table 5.2 indicates, the percentage of those working in the private sector has decreased compared to 2019 and 2014. There has been a corresponding increase in those working in the public and third sectors. Note that respondents could select more than one response option for this question.

Table 5.2: Sector of work in 2024, 2019 and 2014

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
Private sector	64	48.9	57.6	56.7
Public sector	47	35.9	29.2	25.5
Third sector (charities)	26	19.8	13.2	17.8

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

5.3 Ever worked in the profession?

5.3.1 Length of time in the profession

The vast majority (96%) of respondents currently working outside the veterinary profession have at some time throughout their career undertaken veterinary work. These respondents were asked about the length of time they had spent working within the veterinary profession, with results displayed in Table 5.3. The large majority (82%) had worked in the veterinary profession for at least five years.

Table 5.3: Length of time worked within the veterinary profession

	2024 N	2024 %
Less than a year	4	3.1
One or two years	5	3.9
Three or four years	14	11.0
Five to nine years	28	22.0
10 to 19 years	34	26.8
20 years or more	42	33.1
Total	127	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

5.3.2 Roles held in the profession

The most common area within which respondents had worked was clinical practice, where 95% had worked at some point in their careers. The full breakdown is presented in Table 5.4 (note that respondents could select all areas of work that were applicable).

Table 5.4: Area worked in within the veterinary profession (multiple response)

	2024 N	2024 %
Clinical practice work	120	94.5
Academia	30	23.6
Research	24	18.9
Industry (e.g. animal health, insurance)	20	15.7
Government department or agency	18	14.2
Animal charity	14	11.0
Other	10	7.9

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

'Other' work included racing regulation, NGO work, and management and consultancy.

5.3.3 Reasons for leaving/not joining the profession

Reasons for leaving the veterinary profession included pursuing a career in a different sector, retirement, caring responsibilities and poor work-life balance. Other less common reasons included pay, burnout, poor progression opportunities, and health conditions.

The 4% who had not ever worked in the profession explained that this was because they went into academia and because they did not have a driver's licence which they needed for a full-time veterinary position.

5.4 Lost to profession?

Respondents not working in the profession were asked if they intended to seek employment as a vet in the future. Table 5.5 shows that:

- Around two-thirds (68%) said they would not do so.
- 27% were unsure if they would re-join the profession.
- The proportion of vets not intending to re-join the profession has significantly increased over the years, from 50% in 2014 to 68% in 2024.

Table 5.5: Intentions to seek employment in the veterinary profession in future

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
No	88	67.7	53.7	49.8
Unsure	35	26.9	31.5	24.4
Yes, within the next year	4	3.1	7.9	16.5
Yes, longer-term	3	2.3	6.8	9.3
Total	130	100	100	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

6 Working within the profession

This chapter focuses on respondents working entirely, mainly or partly within the veterinary profession, including their organisation, area of work, working hours, qualifications and future career plans.

Chapter summary

- 90% worked entirely or mainly within the profession, with a further 8% working partly within the profession.
- Overall, 90% of those working in the profession worked within clinical practice and 25% worked outside clinical practice (note that respondents working in more than one area selected all that applied).
- Within clinical practice, working in a small animal practice continued to rise (from 49% of all respondents in 2010 to 58% in 2024), while working in a mixed practice markedly decreased (from 22% in 2010 to 10% in 2024). Around 25% worked outside clinical practice where, as in 2019, the most common areas were veterinary schools (7%), commerce and industry (4%), and charities and trusts (4%).
- Overall, the mean average number of contracted hours was 33, while that of actual hours worked was 37. Overall younger respondents, males, those without caring responsibilities and those working in clinical practice had higher contracted and actual hours than average.
- Full-time workers, on average, worked 43 hours per week when they were contracted an average of 38 hours. Part-time workers only worked, on average, one additional hour, at 24 hours worked compared to 23 hours contracted per week.
- Within clinical practice, the biggest difference between contracted and actual hours was in equine-only practices, where respondents on average worked an additional seven hours a week. Outside clinical practice, the biggest difference was in veterinary schools, where respondents also on average worked an additional seven hours per week.
- A relatively low 13% worked on-call hours on the premises; of those, only 16% were required to be awake when on-call.
- An analysis of hours worked on- and off-premises indicated that the three areas of work with the highest average number of hours worked on-call off-premises were equine-only practice (26.5), mixed practice (17.9), and farm-animal-only practice (16.2). Those in equine-only practices also had a high number of on-call on-premises hours (7.7).
- When asked to identify the benefits available via the workplace, the most commonly-selected benefits were financial support for training and/or CPD (80%), RCVS retention fees (73%), discounts (70%), paid time off for training/CPD (68%) and professional indemnity insurance (65%).
- A relatively low 12% had an additional job or jobs outside their veterinary work. Mostly, these were self-employed or voluntary/unpaid positions. Those with additional jobs tended to be older and working outside clinical practice.

- When asked about career plans, 75% said they intended to stay in the profession for more than five years, 15% intended to retire within the next five years, and 10% intended to leave the profession for reasons other than retirement.
- The most common reasons given for planning to retire were reaching an appropriate age, being financially able to retire, and wanting to pursue other interests.
- The most common reasons given for planning to leave the profession were poor work-life balance (56%), chronic stress (54%), and not feeling rewarded or valued in a non-financial sense (47%).
- 12% provided support to a graduate or returning vet as a VetGDP at the time of the survey, and 10% had done so in the past.
- A larger 42% provided support to students in extra mural studies, and 32% had done so in the past.
- Around two-thirds of respondents (66%) said they had received an appraisal or performance review in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- An analysis by ownership type shows that vets who worked within clinical practice for a charity (84%) or veterinary school (82%) were more likely to have received an appraisal than those working for a corporately-owned (67%) or independently-owned (53%) practice.

6.1 Area of work, hours, benefits and additional jobs

As indicated in Table 6.1, 98% of respondents were, at the time of the survey, working in the veterinary profession.

Table 6.1: Proportion working within the veterinary profession

	2024 N	2024 %
Entirely within the veterinary profession	5,457	90.1
Partly within the veterinary profession	464	7.7
Total	5,921	97.8

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

6.1.1 Area of work

Table 6.2 provides a breakdown of respondents' area of work: note that respondents working in more than one area were asked to select all that applied. Overall, 90% worked within a clinical practice area, where it was evident that the percentage working in small animal practices was continuing to rise (from 49% of all respondents in 2010 to 58% in 2024), while the proportion of people working in mixed practices was markedly decreasing (from 22% in 2010 to 10% in 2024). Around 25% worked outside clinical practice where, as in 2019, the most common type of organisation in which respondents were working were veterinary schools (7%), commerce and industry (4%), and charities and trusts (4%).

Table 6.2: Area of work (% of the number of respondents), 2024, 2019, 2014 and 2010 (multiple response)

Type of organisation	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %	2010 %
Small-animal-only (including exotics)	58.3	56.4	53.6	48.9
Mixed practice	9.9	13.4	15.8	22.1
Referral practice/consultancy	9.3	9.5	8.1	6.7
Veterinary school	6.8	6.6	7.2	5.9
Equine practice	6.3	6.3	5.5	7.6
Farm animal practice/production animal practice	4.2	3.7	3.7	3.8
Charities and trusts	3.7	3.1	4.2	2.7
Commerce and industry	3.6	3.6	4.0	3.9
Other university/educational establishment	2.0	2.2	2.2	1.2
Zoo/wildlife/conservation	1.7	1.7	-	-
Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)	1.6	1.7	-	-
Telemedicine vet-to-client	1.4	0.3	-	-
Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)	0.3	0.4	0.5	1.6
Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA)	-	-	2.4	2.4
Food Standards Agency (FSA)	0.8	1.0	-	-
Food Standards Scotland (FSS)	0.2	0.2	-	-
Meat hygiene/official controls	0.8	1.5	-	-
Other UK government	-	-	2.5	3.6
Scottish Government	0.1	0.1	-	-
Welsh Government	0.0	0.1	-	-
Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA), Northern Ireland	0.6	0.7	-	-
Home Office	0.1	0.3	-	-
Ministry of Defence	0.1	0.2	-	-
Overseas government	0.5	0.8	0.1	1.6
Other first-opinion practice	0.7	0.9	0.9	1
Research Council	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2
Portal (contracted or employed)	0.4	0.2	-	-
Telemedicine vet-to-vet	1.1	0.3	-	-
Tele-triage	0.5	0.1	-	-
Other	3.8	3.6	2.3	2.3

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could select more than one category

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019, 2014 and 2010

Those who provided further details after selecting the 'other' area of work indicated that the most frequently specified other areas were research, consultancy, working for a

corporate group, or working for a government department, government agency or local authority not specified in the list.

Table 6.3 shows the **main** area of work for vets working in more than one area within the profession, where small animal practice is still the most common main area of work.

Table 6.3: Main area of work for vets working in more than one area

Type of organisation	2024 %
Small animal (including exotics) practice	27.3
Referral practice/consultancy	17.8
Veterinary school	10.7
Mixed practice	5.4
Equine practice	4.9
Charities and trusts	4.9
Farm practice/production animal practice	4.8
Commerce and industry	4.0
Zoo/wildlife/conservation	2.5
Other university/educational establishment	2.5
Telemedicine vet-to-client	2.0
Telemedicine vet-to-vet	1.4
Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)	1.3
Other first-opinion practice	0.7
Food Standards Agency (FSA)	0.7
Meat hygiene/official controls	0.7
Overseas government	0.5
Tele-triage	0.5
Food Standards Scotland (FSS)	0.4
Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)	0.4
Research Council	0.4
Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA), N Ireland	0.2
Home Office	0.2
Portal (contracted or employed)	0.2
Scottish Government	0.2
Welsh Government	<0.1
Ministry of Defence	<0.1
Other	4.4
Total	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession 2024

6.1.2 Working hours

Respondents working in the profession were asked to provide information on their contracted hours and the actual hours they worked. Overall, the mean average number of contracted hours was 33, while that of actual hours worked was 37. The modal number of both contracted and actual hours worked per week was 40.

The average number of contracted hours for full-time workers was 38 hours, but the average actually worked was 43 hours per week. For part-time workers, the average number of contracted hours was 23 hours per week, with 24 hours per week the average actually worked.

Table 6.4 shows that, apart from meat hygiene/official controls, Home Office and portal, all areas of work had a higher mean number of actual hours worked than mean basic contracted hours. Within clinical practice, the biggest difference between contracted and actual hours was in equine-only practices, where respondents on average worked an additional seven hours a week. Outside clinical practice, the biggest difference was in veterinary schools, where respondents also on average worked an additional seven hours per week.

Table 6.4: Basic contracted hours with comparison to actual hours worked

	Contracted hours		Actual hours	
	2024 Mean	2024 N	2024 Mean	2024 N
Equine-only practice	36.61	314	43.73	320
Food Standards Agency (FSA)	36.61	41	38.10	39
Farm-animal-only practice	34.45	214	38.35	216
Mixed practice	34.08	502	38.34	509
Overseas government	33.86	21	35.41	22
Small-animal-only practice (including small animal practices that treat exotics)	33.15	3117	36.03	3105
Scottish Government	32.83	6	34.00	4
Ministry of Defence (MOD)	31.25	4	38.75	4
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA – Northern Ireland)	31.20	30	33.45	31
Home Office	30.50	8	29.75	8
Referral practice/consultancy	30.47	449	35.67	457
Commerce and industry	29.30	192	33.39	195
Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)	28.65	82	31.61	80
Portal (contracted or employed)	28.64	14	27.40	15
Veterinary school	28.34	335	35.60	333
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)	26.65	17	28.58	19
Meat hygiene/official controls	26.16	32	24.76	33
Food Standards Scotland (FSS)	25.56	9	28.56	9
Other first-opinion practice	23.87	23	27.61	23
Other university/education establishment	22.89	88	27.87	93
Charity or trust	20.82	178	22.73	186
Research council	16.33	6	17.63	8
Tele-medicine vent-to-vet	14.92	48	15.82	49
Zoo/wildlife/conservation	13.15	74	15.56	77
Tele-medicine vent-to-client	12.08	73	13.78	69
Tele-triage	8.00	22	8.91	22
Association, professional or regulatory body (RCVS, BVA, etc)	7.31	62	8.94	65
Other	25.18	168	28.58	178

Note: where responses are low, the mean might be skewed and therefore not representative of the most common response provided

Note: means and counts are only displayed for categories where there were more than three responses for both contracted and actual hours.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Further analysis was conducted to investigate differences in the number of hours worked by respondent characteristics, and it highlighted the following significant differences:

- On average, males worked more actual hours than females.
- Respondents with caring responsibilities worked fewer contracted and actual hours.
- The average number of actual hours worked and overtime was higher for respondents working overseas compared to those working in the UK.
- Respondents working within clinical practice reported, on average, a higher number of actual hours worked than those working outside clinical practice.
- The average number of contracted and actual hours worked decreased as participants' age increased.

Respondents working overseas worked, on average, a higher number of basic as well as actual hours compared to respondents working in the UK. Further analysis was also conducted separately on those working in the UK and overseas to explore how an individual's country of work interacts with their demographic and work characteristics. It showed that, of those working in the UK:

- Males worked more actual hours than female respondents.
- Respondents with no caring responsibilities worked more contracted as well as actual hours than those with caring responsibilities.
- Those working in clinical practice worked more contracted as well as actual hours than those working outside clinical practice.

In terms of vets working overseas:

- Male respondents worked more actual hours compared to female respondents.
- Respondents with no caring responsibilities worked more actual hours compared to those without such responsibilities.
- Respondents working within clinical practice reported working more actual hours than those working outside clinical practice.

The analysis explored whether, when looking at respondents working full time and part time separately, there were any significant differences in their contracted and actual hours by different characteristics. It showed that, of vets working full time:

- Respondents with caring responsibilities worked slightly fewer contracted hours than those with no caring responsibilities.
- Vets working outside clinical practice worked fewer contracted as well as actual hours.

As to part-time workers:

- Females worked more actual hours than males.
- Respondents with caring responsibilities worked more actual hours than those who did not have caring responsibilities.

- Respondents working within clinical practice worked more actual hours than those working outside clinical practice.

6.1.3 Working on-call

Around a third (35%) of respondents indicated that their work required them to be on call, with 13% working on-call on-premises and 30% off-premises. Table 6.5 shows that within this group, the majority were normally asleep when not working.

Table 6.5: Working on-call requirements

	2024 N	2024 %
Asleep when not working	694	84.0
Required to be awake all night	132	16.0
Total	826	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Similar to contracted and actual hours, respondents who said they worked on-call were asked to share the number of hours they worked on call on and off their premises of work. Table 6.6 shows that:

- Respondents working on-call generally worked fewer hours on-premises than off-premises.
- The three areas of work with the highest average number of hours worked on-call off-premises were equine-only practice, mixed practice, and farm-animal-only practice.
- Two areas of work reported no off-premises hours working on-call, while five areas of work reported no hours on-call on-premises.
- The areas of work with the largest difference between off- and on-premises hours worked on call were equine-only practice, farm-animal-only practice, and mixed practice.

Table 6.6: On-call hours off-premises and on-premises

	Hours on-call off-premises		Hours on-call on-premises	
	2024 N	2024 Mean	2024 N	2024 Mean
Scottish Government	5	52.80	4	0.00
Equine-only practice	310	26.48	267	7.74
Mixed practice	487	17.93	430	3.27
Farm-animal-only practice	212	16.12	184	0.84
Zoo/wildlife/conservation	70	15.86	66	8.21
Other first-opinion practice	23	14.13	22	1.36
Referral practice/consultancy	407	13.75	372	3.69
Other university/education establishment	75	11.21	73	1.73
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)	16	6.25	16	0.00
Veterinary school	306	5.73	292	2.33
Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)	72	4.50	68	3.00
Food Standards Scotland (FSS)	7	4.29	7	2.57
Tele-triage	19	4.21	19	0.11
Charity or trust	162	3.85	159	1.00
Commerce and industry	176	3.81	177	2.47
Research council	6	3.17	5	2.40
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA – Northern Ireland)	29	3.07	22	2.27
Small-animal-only practice (including small animal practices that treat exotics)	2,861	2.96	2,807	1.77
Overseas government	19	2.58	19	2.95
Telemedicine vet-to-vet	40	2.18	38	2.74
Food Standards Agency (FSA)	33	1.52	31	1.42
Telemedicine vet-to-client	57	1.46	55	1.04
Portal (contracted or employed)	14	0.57	13	0.00
Meat hygiene/official controls	28	0.36	27	0.19
Association, professional or regulatory body (RCVS, BVA, etc)	54	0.11	53	1.58
Home Office	8	0.00	8	0.00
Ministry of Defence (MOD)	4	0.00	4	0.00
Other	132	3.48	132	1.81

Note: means and counts are only displayed for categories where there were more than three responses for each on-site and off-site on-call working.

Note: where responses are low, the mean might be skewed and therefore not representative of the most common response provided

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Further analysis by respondent characteristics highlighted that:

- The average number of hours on-call both off-premises and on-premises was higher for males than for females.
- Respondents with caring responsibilities worked fewer hours on-call on-premises.
- Respondents working within clinical practice worked, on average, more hours on-call, both off- and on-premises.

Respondents working overseas worked on average, more hours on-call on-premises compared to respondents working in the UK. The analysis then explored whether, when looking at respondents in the UK and overseas separately, there were any significant differences in their contracted and actual hours by different characteristics. It showed that, of vets working in the UK:

- Males spent more hours working on-premises than female respondents.
- Those with no caring responsibilities spent more time working on-premises.
- Respondents working in clinical practice worked more hours on-premises compared to those who work outside clinical practice.

When looking at respondents working overseas, those working within clinical practice work more hours both off- and on-premises.

Analysis of on-call hours was conducted to explore the intersection between respondent groups and whether an individual is working full time or part time. It showed that of those working full time:

- Males worked more hours off-premises than females.
- Respondents working within clinical practice worked more hours off- and on-premises than those working outside clinical practice.

When it came to part-time workers:

- Males worked more hours on-premises than females.
- Those working outside clinical practice worked fewer hours on-premises compared to respondents working within clinical practice.

6.1.4 Work-related benefits

Respondents were asked to select the benefits available to them through their employer. Table 6.7 illustrates that:

- The three most commonly selected benefits were financial support for training and/or CPD, RCVS retention fees, and discounts.
- Conversely, the three benefits selected the least were shares in the business, additional RCVS fees, and other benefits.

A small proportion of participants indicated that they have access to benefits other than those presented to them in the survey. Open-text responses included housing/accommodation support, work phones, gym memberships and private healthcare.

Table 6.7: Workplace benefits (multiple response)

	2024 N	2024 %
Financial support for training/CPD	4,050	79.5
RCVS retention fees (whole or part)	3,715	72.9
Discounts (employee discount schemes, reduced price for treatment/products)	3,589	70.4
Time off (paid) for training/CPD	3,486	68.4
Professional indemnity insurance	3,302	64.8
Professional subscriptions (e.g. membership of a veterinary association)	2,756	54.1
Access to scientific literature and research papers	2,190	43.0
Insurance (health/medical, life and travel)	2,004	39.3
Travel costs (cycle to work schemes, car/van/fuel allowances)	1,601	31.4
Employee assistance programme	1,166	22.9
Pensions that are additional or not part of the standard workplace pension scheme	1,102	21.6
Membership of a technical/scientific library	1,022	20.1
Time off (unpaid) for training/CPD	491	9.6
Additional RCVS fees	454	8.9
Shares in business	389	7.6
Other	116	2.3

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

6.1.5 Additional jobs

The majority (88%) of respondents indicated they did not have an additional job. Of the 12% who did have an additional job, most were self-employed or had an unpaid/voluntary position, as indicated in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8: Type of additional job

	2024 N	2024 %
Unpaid/voluntary position	308	44.8
Self-employed	335	48.8
Paid employed position	98	14.3

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could select more than one category. Response options selected by fewer than three respondents are not displayed.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Those who said they did have an additional job were asked to explain what their additional job involved. The most commonly cited positions were farmer, volunteer, charity trustee, director of a company, property landlord or investor, and member of a board.

Further analysis, displayed in Table 6.9, presents statistically significant differences in responses to whether an individual has an additional job across different groups. This analysis shows:

- Younger respondents (those aged 39 and under) were less likely to have an additional job than those aged 40 and over.
- Respondents working outside clinical practice were more likely to have an additional job.

Table 6.9: Proportion of respondents with an additional job by characteristics

		2024 %
Gender	Female	11.5
	Male	14.3
Age	Under 30	4.2
	30-39	7.1
	40-49	13.8
	50-59	16.7
	60-69	20.6
	70 and over	19.4
Caring responsibilities	Yes	15.0
	No	10.7
In/out of clinical practice	Within clinical practice	11.3
	Outside clinical practice	20.5

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

6.2 Career plans

6.2.1 Career

Table 6.10 shows the career plans of respondents working within the veterinary profession.

Table 6.10: Career plans of vets currently working within the veterinary profession

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
Stay in the profession for the foreseeable future	-	-	-	82.9
Stay in the profession for more than 5 years (including partial retirement)	4,213	75.3	79.2	-
Fully retire within the next year	88	1.6	1.3	1.1
Fully retire within the next 1 to 2 years	219	3.9	2.9	-
Fully retire within the next 3 to 5 years	503	9.0	7.3	-
Fully retire within the next 5 years	-	-	-	6.8
Leave the profession as soon as possible (for reasons other than retirement)	-	-	-	1.6
Leave the profession within the next year (for reasons other than retirement)	67	1.2	1.3	1.2
Leave the profession within the next 1 to 2 years (for reasons other than retirement)	144	2.6	2.4	-
Leave the profession within the next 3 to 5 years (for reasons other than retirement)	359	6.4	5.7	-
Leave the profession within the next 5 years (for reasons other than retirement)	-	-	-	6.5
Total	5,593	100	100	100

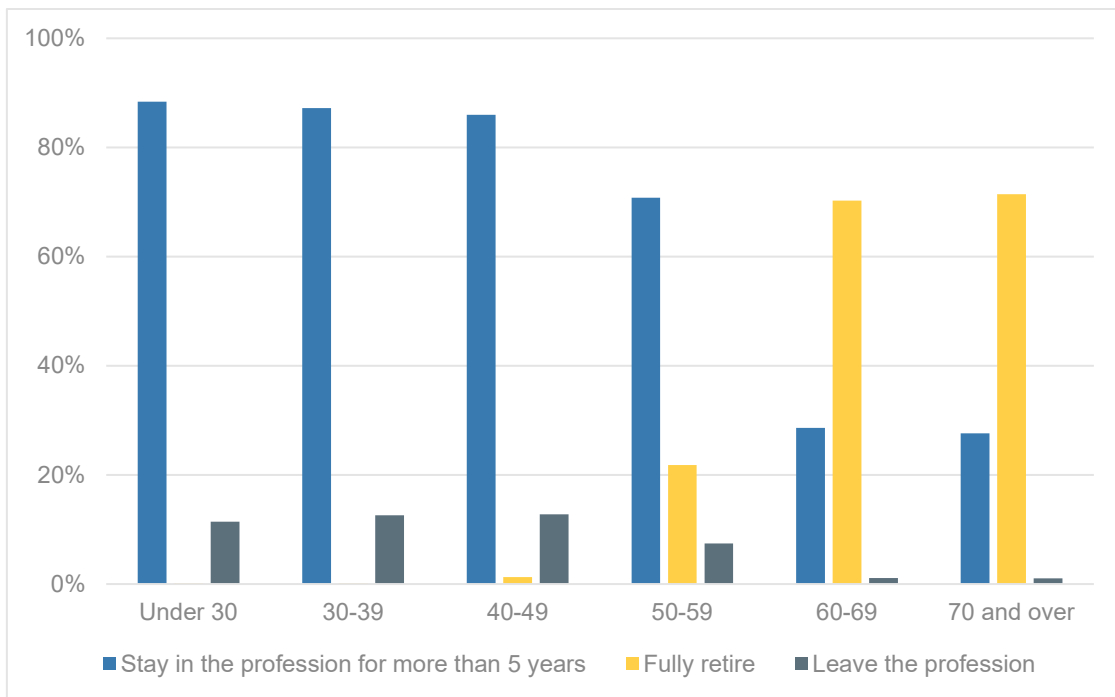
Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

Further analysis showed that there were some statistically significant differences between groups:

- 80% of females indicated they were planning to stay in the profession for more than five years, compared to 68% of males.
- As seen in Figure 6.1, younger respondents were more likely to be planning to stay in the profession for more than five years than older respondents, who were more likely to plan to retire.
- 81% with caring responsibilities were planning to stay in the profession for more than five years, compared to 71% of those with no caring responsibilities.
- Participants with a physical or mental health condition were more likely to be planning to leave the profession.
- Respondents working within clinical practice were more likely to be planning to stay in the profession for more than five years, while a larger proportion of those working outside clinical practice were planning to fully retire.
- In terms of role in practice, those working as a principal/director or as independent/locum were more likely to be planning to fully retire, compared to respondents working as employed assistants.

- 82% working full time were planning to stay in the profession for more than five years, compared to 60% of those employed part time.
- Looking at the intersection between age and gender, among those aged 70 and over, 31% of males were planning to stay in the profession for more than five years, compared to 18% of females.

Figure 6.1: Career plans by age

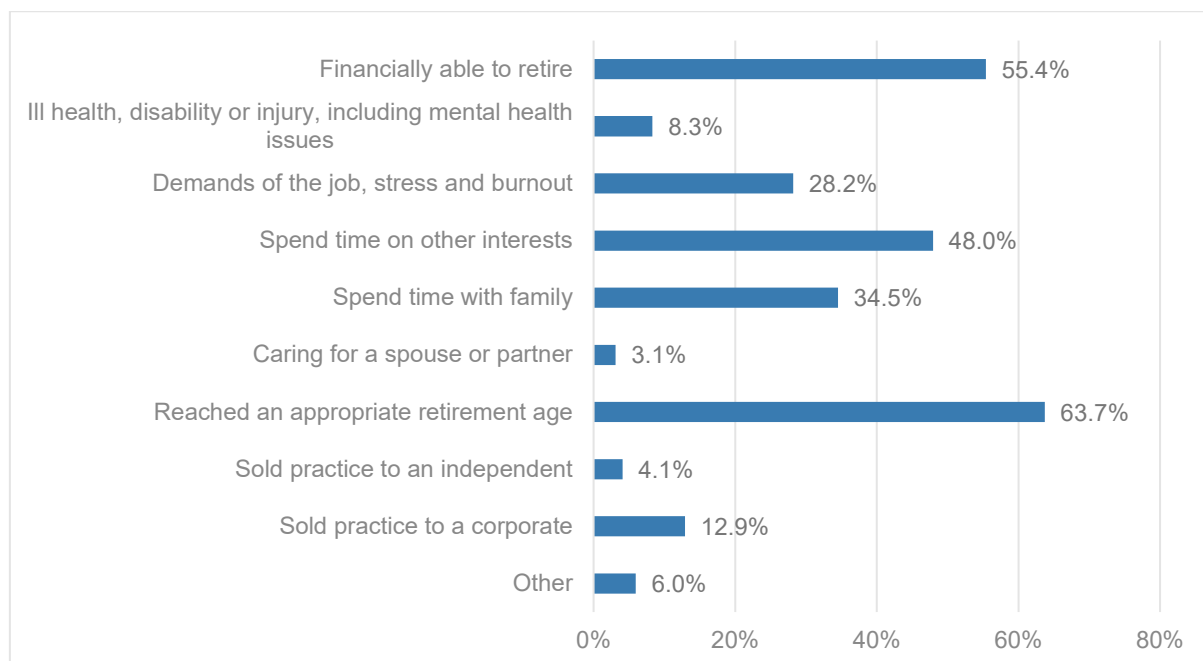


Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession 2024

6.2.2 Plans to retire

The small number of respondents who indicated they were planning to retire in the next five years were asked about their reasons for doing so. Figure 6.2 presents responses and illustrates:

- Reaching an appropriate retirement age, being financially able to retire, and wanting to spend time on other interests were the main reasons provided by respondents.
- The options that were selected by fewest respondents were included to care for a spouse or partner and selling a practice to an independent.

Figure 6.2: Reasons for retiring

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

'Other' was selected as a response option by 6% of respondents. Reasons included retiring because of an illness or due to the profession changing, making them not enjoy it anymore.

6.2.3 Reasons for leaving the profession

Table 6.11 displays participants' reasons for leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement, with comparisons to 2019 and 2014, illustrating that:

- The most commonly selected reasons for leaving the profession were poor work-life balance, chronic stress and not feeling rewarded or valued.
- Reasons for leaving with the highest percentage point increase on 2019 data are the burden of bureaucracy/legislation and chronic stress.
- The reasons for leaving with the largest percentage point decrease on 2019 data are pay, not feeling rewarded and career change/new challenge.

Some respondents selected there were other reasons for planning to leave the veterinary profession. These included:

- Poor treatment from clients
- No longer enjoying the work or the industry
- Corporate takeover
- Lack of emotional support

■ Burnout.

Table 6.11: Reasons for planning to leave the veterinary profession (multiple response)

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
Poor work-life balance	320	56.3	60	-
Chronic stress	306	53.9	49	-
Not feeling rewarded/valued (non-financial)	267	47.0	55	59
Long/unsociable hours	266	46.8	49	-
Dissatisfaction with career opportunities	221	38.9	38	36
Pay	201	35.4	44	47
Unfulfilling work	198	34.9	-	-
Career change/new challenge	185	32.6	43	40
Lack of support from management	162	28.5	-	-
Lack of flexibility in hours	160	28.2	33	-
Workplace culture	149	26.2	-	-
Burden of bureaucracy/legislation	147	25.9	17	26
Leadership practices	92	16.2	-	-
Health issues (mental)	88	15.5	16	-
Lack of adjustments/support for mental health issues	79	13.9	-	-
Care of dependants/to have family	65	11.4	10	12
Health issues (physical)	56	9.9	8	-
Bullying and unfair treatment	55	9.7	-	-
Brexit	52	9.2	9	-
Career break	51	9.0	-	-
Lack of adjustments/support for physical health issues	36	6.3	-	-
Discrimination, victimisation or harassment	34	6.0	6	-
Travel	30	5.3	5	-
Lack of adjustments/support for disclosed neurodivergent condition	22	3.9	-	-
Emigration	17	3.0	3	-
Relocation	17	3.0	-	-
Study	16	2.8	5	7
Visa expiry	3	0.5	-	-
Other	69	12.1	7	9.0

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could select more than one category. Response options selected by fewer than three respondents are not displayed.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

6% (N = 34) of respondents reported that they were planning to leave the profession due to experiences of discrimination, victimisation and/or harassment, and a further 10% (N = 55) were planning to leave due to bullying and/or unfair treatment. Table 6.12 shows that:

- Discrimination related to respondents' ethnicity was most commonly reported.
- 'Other' subjects included nationality, English being their second language, illness, and general harassment from the public.

Table 6.12: Subject of discrimination, victimisation and/or harassment

	2024 N	2024 %
Ethnicity	18	54.5
Gender	12	36.4
Age	9	27.3
Religion or belief	7	21.2
Sex	7	21.2
Relationship status	5	15.2
Other	12	36.4

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could select more than one category. Response options selected by fewer than three respondents are not displayed.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Those who said they had experienced bullying and/or unfair treatment were given the opportunity to disclose their experiences in their own words. These included exclusion and marginalisation, verbal harassment from colleagues and clients, criticism and lack of support from management, sexism and xenophobia. Below are some illustrations given by respondents:

I have been mistreated by clients for not being British.

One of the senior vets repeatedly shouted at me without good reason/cause.

Comments were made about women not being up for the job, being too young, and joking about my religion. Having different assessment standards from colleagues and other bosses have commented about discriminating behaviour towards me from certain individuals.

Management does not support us when clients just harass or bully us for the sake of it.

6.3 Learning and development

6.3.1 Study plans

To understand the qualifications vets hold that are related to their role in the profession, respondents were asked to identify which qualifications they held or planned to study, in addition to their primary veterinary qualification, in the next five years.

Table 6.13 illustrates that generally, respondents did not plan to study additional qualifications relevant to their role in the veterinary profession.

Table 6.13: Respondent study plans

	Holds		Studying for		Plans to study for		No plans to study for	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Certificate (RCVS)	1,165	33.2	290	8.3	439	12.5	1,387	39.6
Certificate (non-RCVS)	728	23.9	216	7.1	257	8.5	1,568	51.6
Diploma (European or American college)	558	19.2	116	4.0	161	5.5	1,815	62.4
PhD or other professional doctorate (veterinary-related)	445	16.2	51	1.9	105	3.8	1,894	68.9
Master's degree (veterinary-related)	686	23.5	112	3.8	151	5.2	1,728	59.2
Business qualification relevant to running or managing a business	165	6.4	31	1.2	187	7.3	1,906	74.0

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% as respondents could select categories that were relevant to them.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Table 6.14 displays the percentages of those who held, were working towards, or planned to work towards over the next five years, different types of professional veterinary status.

Table 6.14: Further forms of veterinary status (% of number working within the veterinary profession)

	Hold		Working towards		Plan to work towards		No plans to obtain		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Advanced Practitioner status	435	12.9	399	11.9	594	17.7	1,932	57.5	3,360	100
RCVS Fellowship	164	5.8	43	1.5	183	6.5	2,426	86.2	2,816	100

Specialist status (RCVS, European or American College)	368	12.2	149	4.4	248	7.4	2,251	74.6	3,016	100
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Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Further analysis exploring responses by different groups found that:

- Males were more likely to hold, be working towards, or be planning to work towards, obtaining an RCVS Fellowship. They were also more likely to hold Specialist status.
- Females were more likely to be working towards, or planning to work towards, Advanced Practitioner status.
- Older respondents were more likely to hold Advanced Practitioner status, Specialist status and RCVS Fellowship, compared to respondents under 40.

6.3.2 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

In response to a question about the funding of their CPD over the last 12 months, respondents indicated that more than half of their CPD is paid for (by any means). Table 6.15 shows that:

- The average proportion of paid-for CPD (65%) was higher than free-of-charge CPD (46%).
- The modal response had greater variation, with the modal proportion of paid-for CPD at 50% and the modal proportion of free CPD being 100%.
- Both had similar standard deviations from the mean response.

Table 6.15: Funding of CPD (average %)

	Mean	Mode	Std dev
Paid for	65.1	100	29.8
Free of charge	46.2	50	30.6

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Further analysis, displayed in Table 6.16, shows that:

- Those working within clinical practice had a higher proportion of paid-for CPD compared to respondents working outside clinical practice.
- Respondents working in corporately-owned practices had the highest mean proportion of paid-for CPD at 67%.
- Those working part time had a higher proportion of CPD free of charge than those working full time, but a lower proportion of paid-for CPD.
- Respondents working as locums had the lowest proportion of paid-for CPD.

Table 6.16: CPD funding by job role characteristics (%)

		Mean %	
		Paid for	Free of charge
In/out of clinical practice	Within clinical practice	65.7	44.8
	Outside clinical practice	59.8	56.2
Type of practice	Independent practice	63.1	46.4
	Part of a corporate group	67.2	43.8
	Charity	65.7	43.0
	Veterinary school	66.4	44.1
Full/part time	Full time	67.4	44.1
	Part time	60.2	49.9
Role	Principal/Director/Partner	68.5	41.0
	Employed Assistant	65.1	44.4
	Independent/Locum	61.5	51.5
	Other	65.5	47.3

Note: Respondents were asked to provide answers totalling 100%. Due to variations in responses across the sample, the means displayed in this table do not total 100%

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Exploring CPD funding streams, respondents were asked how their paid-for CPD had been funded over the 12 months prior to completing the survey. Table 6.17 illustrates that:

- The highest mean proportion of CPD funding comes from employers or practices, at around 84%, significantly increasing beyond 2014 levels after a fall in 2019.
- The lowest mean proportion came from grant funding (5%).
- Both self-funding and 'other' funding streams increased compared to previous years, with the average proportion of self-funded CPD exceeding 50% for the first time.

Table 6.17: CPD funding streams (%)

	2024	2019	2014
Employer or practice	83.9	50.7	65.8
Self-funded	53.7	32.8	25.2
Commercial sponsorship	13.4	7.9	6.6
Grant	4.6	4.2	1.3
Other	12.1	4.3	1.1

Note: Respondents were asked to provide answers totalling 100%. Due to variations in responses across the sample, the means displayed in this table do not total 100%

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

'Other' CPD funding streams included free online CPD, and through invitations to speak at conferences and webinars.

6.3.3 Supporting graduates and students in extra mural studies

Respondents were asked whether in their role they provided support to a graduate or returning vet as a VetGDP (Veterinary Graduate Development Programme) and whether they supported students in extra mural studies (EMS). Table 6.18 shows that:

- The majority have never provided support to graduates or returning vets.
- Conversely, around three-quarters of respondents have supported students in EMS at some point in their career, with 42% providing support at the time of the survey.

Table 6.18: Vets support for graduates and EMS

	Support graduates	Support EMS
Yes, currently	12.1	42.3
Yes, in the past	10.4	32.2
No	79.7	32.7

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Around two-thirds of respondents (66%) said they had received an appraisal or performance review in the 12 months prior to the survey, while the remaining third had not.

Further analysis, presented in Table 6.19, indicates that:

- Respondents working for a charity or a veterinary school were most likely to have received an appraisal in the past year.
- A higher proportion working full time received an appraisal, compared to those working part time.

- Those working in ‘other’ roles, and employed assistants were the most likely to have received an appraisal.

Table 6.19: Appraisal received by job role characteristics

		Yes	No
Type of practice ownership	Independently-owned practice	53.4	46.6
	Part of a corporate group	67.2	32.8
	Charity	83.6	16.4
	Veterinary school	81.8	18.2
Full/part time	Full time	68.7	58.8
	Part time	58.8	41.2
Role	Principal/Director/Partner	55.3	44.7
	Employed assistant	67.9	32.1
	Independent/Locum	43.8	56.2
	Other	73.4	26.6

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

7 Work in clinical practice

This chapter focuses on respondents working within clinical practice. It covers the following: working location, working activities (including clinics and areas of expertise), role within the practice, practice ownership structure, working as a locum, working time spent on different animals, remote services provided to clients, how practices cover 24/7 commitments, out of hours working, bullying and harassment, rest periods and holidays, and practice staffing.

Chapter summary

- 88% of respondents worked within clinical practice, 75% entirely and 13% partly. Working within clinical practice decreased in line with age, from 98% of those aged under 30 to 79% of those in their 60s and 72% of those aged 70 and over.
- The large majority (84%) of those working in the UK worked in England, with 13% in Scotland, 9% in Wales, 3% in Northern Ireland and 2% in the Republic of Ireland (note that some vets worked in more than one country).
- Of the nine regions in England, the highest percentage worked in South East England (21%) and South West England (19%)
- 43% worked in an area that was a mixture of urban and rural, 34% in an urban area and 22% in a rural area.
- Over half (54%) gave their position in practice as employed assistant, higher than 2019 (52%) but lower than 2014 (57%).
- 51% worked in a practice that was part of a corporate group or a joint venture with a corporate group, and 40% worked in an independently owned practice.
- 72% said they worked in a practice that was accredited by the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme (PSS).
- 48% said they typically worked for more than one practice over a month; the mean average number of practices was 2.9, and the mode was two.
- Those working as a locum or independent practitioner in their main role (11%) or in addition to their main role (20%) were asked why. The top reasons were to gain additional experience/expertise (46%) and because it suited their circumstances (35%).
- The largest proportion of clinical practice respondents' working time, excluding on-call time, was spent working on dogs (50%) and cats (32%). Vets spent most of their on-call time on dogs (45%) and horses (excluding OV) (43%). On average, 11% of working time, excluding on-call hours, was spent on practice management, 7% on people management, and 6% on mentoring and training others.
- 45% said they personally carried out routine visits to clients, down from 53% in 2019 and 65% in 2014.

- 19% provided remote services to clients; of these, 86% provided consultations/advice, 56% tele-triage, and 46% remote prescribing. These services were mostly (65%) only provided to clients in the local area rather than more widely.
- When asked how the practice provided 24/7 emergency cover, 42% said that a dedicated provider was used and a further 42% covered its own out-of-hours, using its own vets or with locum help.
- 46% of respondents personally did out-of-hours work; within this group, 50% said this included visits to clients.
- 34% had experienced harassment or bullying from clients, and 13% had experienced this from colleagues. More than half (53%) of incidents from clients, and a lower 40% of incidents from colleagues, were reported to the practice; 7% of incidents from clients were reported to the police.
- Two-fifths (41%) always had a minimum rest period of 11 hours every 24 hours; however, this means that half were not always receiving this rest (42% usually received and 12% seldom or never received this time off).
- A larger majority always (69%) or usually (23%) had two days rest every 14 days.
- When asked about practice staffing numbers (expressed as full time equivalents), the mean averages were 7.9 vets, 6.8 vet nurses and two vet nurse students, broadly similar to previous years. However, the modal averages were much lower, at two vets and two vet nurses.

To begin a series of questions about work in clinical practice, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they worked in clinical practice. Table 7.1 shows that:

- Three-quarters (75%) worked entirely in clinical practice, and a further 13% worked partly within clinical practice.
- The remaining 13% worked outside clinical practice.

Table 7.1: Participant involvement in clinical practice

	2024 N	2024 %
Entirely within clinical veterinary practice	4,101	74.8
Partly within and partly outside clinical veterinary practice	692	12.6
Entirely outside clinical veterinary practice	693	12.6
Total	5,486	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Further analysis exploring involvement in clinical practice found that some respondent groups were more likely to be working within clinical practice than others. Table 7.2 shows that:

- Female respondents were slightly more likely to be working within clinical practice than males.
- The proportion working within clinical practice decreased with age, with respondents aged under 30 being most likely to be working in clinical practice.

- Respondents who qualified overseas were slightly more likely than UK qualifiers to be working in clinical practice.

Table 7.2: Involvement in clinical practice by respondent characteristics

		Within clinical practice	Outside clinical practice
Gender	Female	88.5	58.8
	Male	84.9	41.2
Age	Under 30	97.8	2.2
	30-39	91.5	8.5
	40-49	88.3	11.7
	50-59	82.5	17.5
	60-69	78.7	21.3
	70 and over	72.4	27.6
Ethnicity	White	87.2	12.8
	Ethnic minority	92.1	7.9
Qualification country	UK	88.3	11.7
	Overseas	85.0	15.0

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

7.1 Regional breakdowns

Respondents working in the UK and/or the Republic of Ireland were asked to give more detail about the location of their workplace(s). The data were collected at a standard geographic classification used across Europe, known as the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)³. Data were collected at both the NUTS1 and NUTS3 levels⁴, which enables the mapping of responses.

Respondents working in the UK and/or the Republic of Ireland were asked to give more detail about the location of their workplace(s); see Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Main country of work, UK and/or Republic of Ireland (multiple response)

	2024 N	2024 %
England	3,694	83.9
Scotland	553	12.6
Wales	397	9.0
Northern Ireland	134	3.0
Republic of Ireland	70	1.6

³ For more detail see: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts>

⁴ For more detail see: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/eurostat>

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could select more than one category. Response options selected by fewer than three respondents are not displayed.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

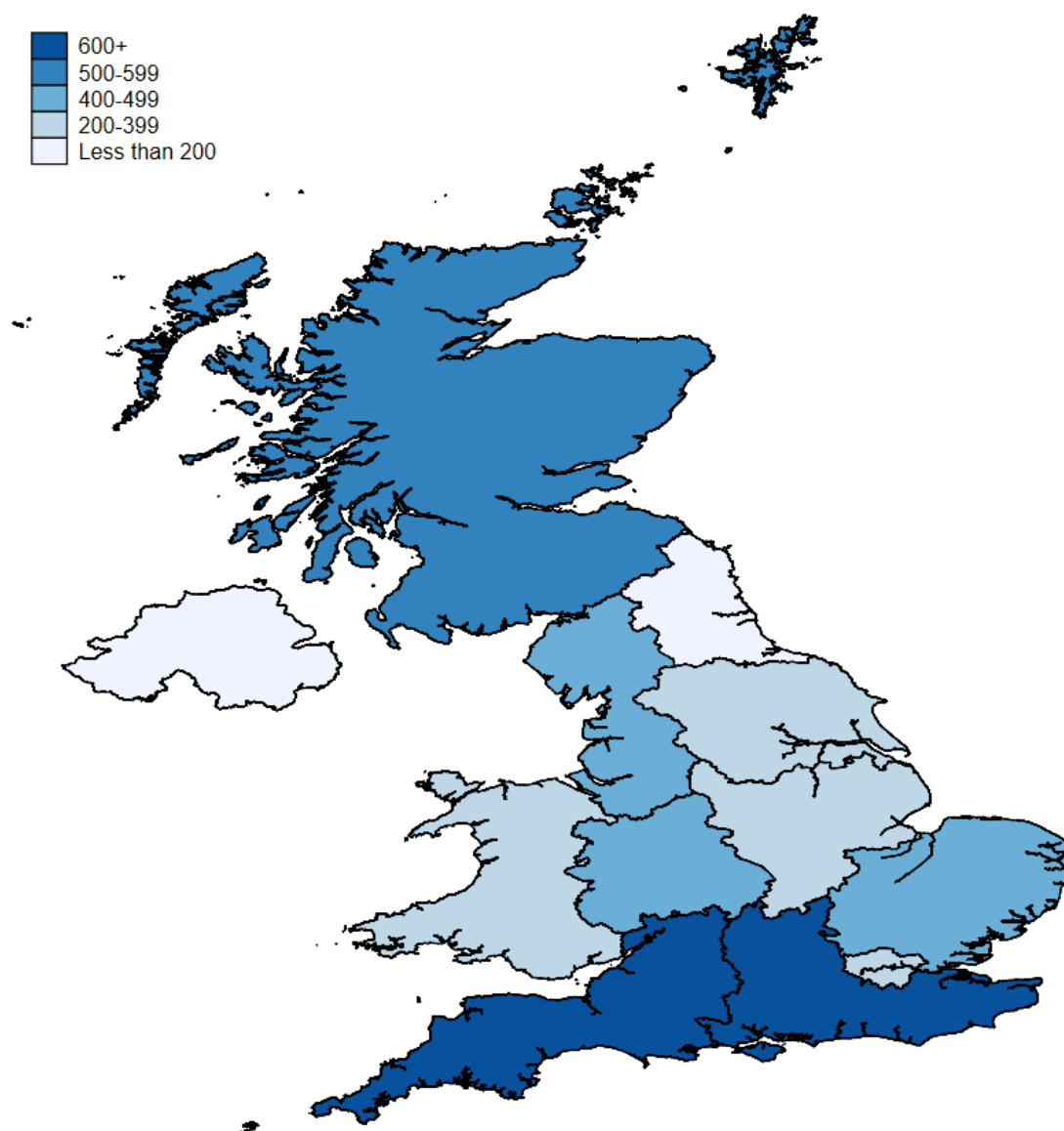
A regional breakdown of responses of where vets worked in England is displayed in Table 7.4 and Figure 7.1 and shows that:

- The regions in which the highest percentages worked were South-East England and South-West England.
- North-East England and London were the least frequently-chosen regions in which vets worked.
- A small proportion said they worked throughout England.

Table 7.4: Region of work in England

	2024 N	2024 %
South-East England	757	20.6
South-West England	710	19.4
North-West England	480	13.1
East of England	427	11.6
West Midlands	419	11.4
East Midlands	340	9.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	318	8.7
London	239	6.5
Throughout England	209	5.7
North-East England	186	5.1

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Figure 7.1: All vets working in the UK (NUTS1)

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

7.2 Rural or urban

When asked whether they were working in a rural or urban area, over two-fifths (43%) indicated they were working in a mixture of urban and rural areas, and around a third (34%) were working entirely in an urban area. The remaining 22% were working entirely in rural areas.

7.3 Position in practice

Table 7.5 provides information on respondents' position in their main practice, and shows that:

- Over half (54%) of respondents working in clinical practice were employed assistants, a slight increase from 2019.
- The proportion working as equity partners continues to decrease over the years.

Table 7.5: Position in practice, with comparison to 2019 and 2014

	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
Employed assistant*	54.3	52.1	57
Equity Partner	1.7	2.9	6
Director (of a limited company)	12.4	11.5	13
Locum	8.9	9.6	8
Sole Principal	4.8	6.7	5
Independent veterinary service provider	3.8	3.3	-
Salaried Partner	2.4	3.1	2
Joint venture Partner (JVP)	2.1	1.9	-
Independent consultant/peripatetic specialist	1.7	2.1	3
Vets working as a vet nurse	0.7	0.3	0.2
Other	7.2	6.4	4

*In the 2014 survey, this position was described as 'Assistant (or employee of a limited company)'

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

'Other' categories (using a random sample of 20% of those who selected 'other' and gave further details) included: salaried veterinary surgeons, academic positions (lecturers, fellows, scholars and vets employed by veterinary schools or universities); clinical or veterinary directors; and interns.

Further analysis by demographic characteristics highlighted some statistically significant responses to this question:

- Males were more likely to be employed as principals/directors/partners, while female respondents were more likely to be working as employed assistants.
- Respondents with no caring responsibilities were more likely than those with such responsibilities to be employed as a locum or independent practitioner.

7.4 Practice ownership

7.4.1 Business model

Table 7.6 shows the business model/ownership structure of the clinical practice environment in which respondents worked in their only or main role, in comparison to 2019. Half (51%) worked in practices that were part of a corporate group or joint venture with a corporate group, while 40% of respondents worked in independent, stand-alone practices or independent practices that are part of a larger group. The percentage of

respondents working as part of a corporate group has increased by 11 percentage points, while the proportion of those working for an independent practice decreased by eight percentage points.

Table 7.6: Business model of clinical practice veterinary workplaces, with comparison to 2019

Business model	2024 %	2019 %
Part of a corporate group	46.0	35.5
Independent, stand-alone practice (e.g. a partnership)	34.5	41.6
Independent practice that is part of a larger group (with some shared centralised function)	5.2	6.4
Part of a joint venture with a corporate group	5.0	4.6
Veterinary school	3.6	4.6
Charity	3.4	3.4
Don't know	0.6	0.9
Other	1.7	2.0

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019

'Other' types of business models included working for multiple practices with different business models, working for a government, or not-for-profit.

7.4.2 Number of practices

Slightly less than half (48%) of respondents said they typically worked for more than one practice over the course of a month (excluding branch premises), with the remaining 52% saying they do not. The average number of practices that respondents worked for over the course of a month was 2.9, with the most common response being two.

7.4.3 Accreditation

The majority (72%) worked in a practice that was accredited by the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme (PSS). Less than a fifth (18%) do not work in an RCVS PSS accredited practice, while a fairly large 10% did not know whether their practice was accredited or not.

7.5 Locum

As well as the 13% who worked as a locum or independent practitioner as their main role, one-fifth (20%) of respondents worked as a locum or independent practitioner in addition to their main job. These respondents were asked why they worked as a locum/independent in either their main or additional job, with responses presented in Table 7.7.

Table 7.7: Reasons for working as a locum/independent

	2024 %
To gain additional experience/expertise	46.0
Because it suits my personal circumstances	34.5
Because it fits with my professional expertise	5.2
Due to not being able to find a permanent position	5.0
Because of not being able to find a permanent position offering the flexibility I need	3.6
For financial reasons	3.4
Other	1.7

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

‘Other’ responses included helping friends who are unable to find cover, to keep in touch with private practice, to maintain skills, and because of the better flexibility and/or pay.

Subgroup analysis showed the following significant differences in responses:

- Those aged 30-39 and 70 and over were more likely to be working as a locum or independent practitioner, with the under 30 group having the lowest proportion saying they work as a locum.
- Respondents with caring responsibilities were slightly less likely to be working as a locum or independent practitioner.
- Vets working for a charity were most likely to work as a locum, while those working for an independently-owned practice were least likely to do so.
- Employed assistants were slightly more likely to be working as a locum, compared to principals/directors/partners.

7.6 Allocation of working time

Table 7.8 provides a breakdown of the proportion of time respondents spend on different animals and other activities, firstly during their working hours excluding on-call hours, and secondly during their on-call hours. It shows that:

- Respondents spent the largest proportion of their working time excluding on-call time working on dogs, cats and horses (excluding OV⁵).
- Working on dogs and horses (excluding OV) took up most of on-call time.
- On average, 11% of working time excluding on-call hours was spent on practice management, 7% on people management, and 6% on mentoring and training others.

⁵ Official Veterinarian

Table 7.8: Percentage of working time

	Working time (excluding on-call)		On call time	
	2024 N	2024 %	2024 N	2024 %
Dogs	3,688	50.2	1,466	44.9
Cats	3,647	32.2	1,422	24.8
Horses (excluding OV)	1,073	30.3	675	42.9
Dairy cattle (excluding OV)	795	14.8	518	20.0
Practice management/administration	1,128	10.5	314	5.7
Beef cattle (excluding OV)	861	9.1	572	16.2
People management	904	6.6	291	4.9
Sheep (excluding OV)	845	6.2	563	10.0
Mentoring and training others, including spending time as a VetGDP adviser or supporting students on EMS	1,158	5.9	316	5.3
Small animals (e.g. rabbits, mice, gerbils, hamsters, rats, chinchillas)	2,917	5.6	780	3.9
Official Veterinarian (OV) work	1,114	5.5	277	1.7
Pigs (excluding OV)	571	3.3	307	4.8
Exotics (including non-production birds)	1,243	2.5	399	2.7
Wild animals	856	2.0	358	2.4
Poultry	633	2.0	280	1.9
Laboratory animals	475	1.9	255	3.5
Zoo animals	677	1.6	299	3.9
Meat hygiene/official controls	462	0.6	245	0.0
Fish for food	451	0.6	248	0.8
Other	507	6.0	316	16.6

Note: Figures for working time and on-call time do not add up to 100% as they were calculated by averaging percentages for each option across all respondents.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

7.7 Routine visits

Respondents were asked if they personally carried out routine visits to clients. Table 7.9 shows that, for the first time in 2024, less than half (45%) said they carried out routine visits to clients.

Table 7.9: Proportion providing routine visits to clients, with comparison to 2019 and 2014

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
Yes	1,913	45.3	52.5	65.2
No	2,311	54.7	47.5	34.8
Total	4,224	100	100	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

Further analysis identified that respondents working in independently-owned practices were more likely to carry out routine visits to clients than those working for practices that are part of corporate groups.

7.8 Remote services

Slightly less than two-fifths (19%) said they provided remote services. These respondents were asked further questions about the remote services they provided. Table 7.10 illustrates that:

- The majority of these respondents (86%) provided remote consultations or advice, over half (56%) provided tele-triage and just under half (46%) provided remote prescribing services.
- One-fifth provided other remote services, including behaviour consultations, administering medicine, home euthanasia, medicine administration, and taking payments.

Table 7.10: Remote services provided to clients (multiple response)

	2024 N	2024 %
Remote consulting/advice	698	88.5
Tele-triage	445	56.4
Remote prescribing	365	46.3
Other	46	5.8

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Further analysis identified that respondents working for charities were significantly more likely to provide remote services to clients.

Those providing remote services were asked to indicate what proportion of their clinical veterinary work they provided remotely. Table 7.11 shows that the majority (85%) provided none to one-quarter of their clinical work remotely.

Table 7.11: Proportion of clinical work provided remotely

	2024 N	2024 %
None to one-quarter	668	84.5
Between one-quarter and one-half	42	5.3
Between one-half and three-quarters	18	2.3
Between three-quarters and all	63	8.0

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

To understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on remote services, respondents were asked to indicate how the proportion of their clinical veterinary nursing work compared to before and during the pandemic. Table 7.12 shows that:

- 43% of respondents provided more or much more remote services now than before the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Around two-thirds (66%) provided less or much less remote support now than during the pandemic.

Table 7.12: How remote working now compares to before and during the Covid-19 pandemic

	Before		During	
	2024 N	2024 %	2024 N	2024 %
Much less now	37	4.9	336	43.8
Less now	27	3.5	174	22.7
No difference	370	48.6	189	24.6
More now	268	35.2	51	6.6
Much more now	59	7.8	17	2.2

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

In a final question exploring remote services, respondents were asked in which locations they provided remote services. Table 7.13 shows that:

- Around two-thirds (65%) said they provided remote services within their local area, and a further 9% said they provided remote services in the county in which they were based.
- 10% provided remote services across the whole of the UK.

Table 7.13: Locations where vets provided remote services

	2024 N	2024 %
The local area	515	65.2
The UK county in which I'm based	71	9.0
The wider UK region in which I'm based	50	6.3
The whole UK country in which I'm based	31	3.9
The whole UK	79	10.0
Internationally including the UK	26	3.3
Internationally excluding the UK	1	0.1
Anywhere in the world	12	1.5
Other	5	0.6

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

7.9 Emergency cover

Respondents were asked to outline their practice's approach to providing 24/7 emergency coverage. Table 7.14 shows that:

- More than two-fifths (42%) of practices use a dedicated out-of-hours service provider.
- A further 42% cover their own working hours, with 39% of these using their own vets and the remaining 3% using locum help.
- 2% of practices were primarily or wholly out-of-hours service providers.
- The proportion of practices using a dedicated out-for-hours service provider increased in 2024 but decreased compared to 2019 for using their own vets for out-of-hours work.

A small proportion (2%) of respondents said their practice had other approaches to providing 24/7 emergency care. These were mostly a combination of the approaches provided as response options.

Table 7.14: Practice approaches to emergency cover

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %
Practice uses a dedicated out-of-hours service provider	1,792	42.2	34.5
Practice generally covers its own out-of-hours work, using its own vets	1,670	39.3	51.1
A mixture	278	6.5	-
Practice generally covers its own out-of-hours work, with locum help	105	2.5	2.1
Practice is primarily or wholly an out-of-hours provider	86	2.0	2.4
Practice co-operates with other local practices to share out-of-hours work	81	1.9	4.0
Don't know	29	0.7	1.7
Other	91	2.1	4.2
Not applicable – practice doesn't provide an out-of-hours service	116	2.7	-

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024 and 2019

The 3% who said that their practice did not provide out-of-hours service explained that this was because they were a locum or did not work for a practice.

7.10 Out-of-hours working

Slightly less than half (46%) of respondents indicated that they personally did out-of-hours work (Table 7.15). Within this group, 50% said this included visits to clients.

Table 7.15: Respondents' out-of-hours work

		2024 N	2024 %
Do you personally do any out-of-hours work?	Yes	1,951	45.5
	No	2,238	54.5
Does this include visits to clients?	Yes	970	49.7
	No	981	50.3

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Table 7.16 illustrates that:

- Respondents attended considerably more emergencies in person, away from the practice, than at the practice or remotely.
- Individuals who attended emergencies in person at the practice reported a higher average number of cases per month.
- Responses to all three options have very large differences in range.

Table 7.16: Typical number of out-of-hours cases in a typical month

	N	Mean	Mode	Range
In-person, away from the practice	893	7.8	1	120
In person, at the practice	716	10.7	0	160
Remotely	550	6.1	0	300

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

7.11 Rest periods and holiday

Around two-fifths (41%) of respondents said that they always received a minimum rest period of 11 hours in each 24-hour period, in line with the working time regulations. A further 42% said they usually received this minimum rest period. A small proportion (12%) said they seldom or never received this rest period. Responses are displayed in full in Table 7.17.

Table 7.17: How often respondents receive a minimum rest period of 11 hours

	2024 N	2024 %
Always	1,611	41.4
Usually	1,619	41.7
Seldom	317	8.2
Never	158	4.1
Total	3,887	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Further analysis identified that respondents working for a charity were the most likely to always receive a minimum rest period of 11 hours. On the other hand, those working for an independently-owned practice or veterinary school were most likely to say they seldom had this rest period.

The majority of respondents also said they always had at least two days' rest every 14 days. Table 7.18 shows that:

- 69% always had at least two days rest every 14 days, and 23% usually had this rest time.
- A small proportion (4%) seldom or never had two rest days every 14 days.

Table 7.18: How often respondents have at least two rest days every 14 days

	2024 N	2024 %
Always	2,894	69.2
Usually	948	22.7
Seldom	108	2.6
Never	64	1.5
Not applicable	167	4.0
Total	2,509	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Those working for independently-owned practices were slightly more likely to say they never had two days' rest every 14 days, with a larger proportion of respondents working for a veterinary school saying they seldom had two days' rest every 14 days.

Respondents were also asked whether they had either signed up for or discussed a workforce agreement with their employer that provided compensatory rest. Table 7.19 shows that:

- Only a small proportion (4%) have signed up to a workforce agreement.
- Similarly, only 5% have discussed a workforce agreement with their employer.

Table 7.19: Signed up to or discussed a workforce agreement

		2024 N	2024 %
Signed up to a workforce agreement	Yes	184	4.4
	No	2,300	54.8
Discussed a workforce agreement	Yes	228	5.5
	No	2,949	70.6

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Respondents working for a charity or for a corporate practice were more likely to both have signed up for a workforce agreement and to have discussed one with their employer.

Finally, four-fifths (83%) said they received at least 20 days of paid holiday per year, including bank holidays (pro rata for part-timers), with 12% saying the question did not apply to them, and 5% saying they did not receive 20 days' paid holiday per year. Respondents working for a charity or veterinary school were more likely than those working for an independently- or corporately-owned practice to have at least 20 days' paid holiday per year.

7.12 Practice staffing

Table 7.20 shows that the average number of full-time-equivalent vets per practice decreased slightly compared to 2019 but was higher than in 2014. The average number of full-time-equivalent vet nurses has remained similar to 2019 but lower than in 2014. However, the mean average has been influenced by large numbers in some big practices and veterinary schools; the modal average was much lower.

Table 7.20: Practice staffing levels (full time equivalents)

	Mode	2024 Mean	2019 Mean	2014 Mean
Veterinary surgeons	3	7.9	8.1	7.1
Veterinary nurses	3	6.8	6.7	7.5
Veterinary nurse students	0	2.0	2.0	-

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

The analysis also indicated that veterinary school practices/hospitals had a considerably higher number of full-time-equivalent vets, vet nurses and vet nurse students than other types of practices.

7.13 Harassment and bullying

Over half of respondents (56%) said that they had not experienced harassment or bullying from either clients or colleagues in the past 12 months. However, more than a third (34%)

said they had received harassment or bullying from clients, and 13% from colleagues (a small number had experienced both). These results are presented in Table 7.21.

Table 7.21: Harassment and bullying

	2024 N	2024 %
From clients	1,444	34.2
From colleagues	541	12.8
None of the above	2,352	55.7

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Respondents were asked to share the number of times they experienced physical, verbal and other types of abuse from either clients or colleagues in the 12 months prior to the survey. Table 7.22 shows that:

- On average, participants experienced a higher number of incidents of harassment or bullying from clients than they did from colleagues.
- Respondents experienced verbal harassment or bullying most frequently from clients, whereas other types of bullying and harassment were more frequent from colleagues.

Table 7.22: Types of bullying and harassment received from clients and colleagues

	From clients			From colleagues		
	N	Mean	Mode	N	Mean	Mode
Physical	93	2.4	1	25	17.6	1
Verbal	1,356	12.2	2	442	9.0	2
Other	275	7.6	1	136	9.5	1

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Table 7.23 shows that when asked how bullying or harassment had been reported:

- Over half (53%) of respondents reported bullying or harassment from clients to the practice, while a lower 40% did so for incidents of bullying or harassment from colleagues.
- Around half (50%) did not formally report incidents of bullying or harassment from clients, and 63% did not do this when the incidents were from colleagues.
- Incidents involving clients were more likely to be reported to the police than incidents from colleagues.

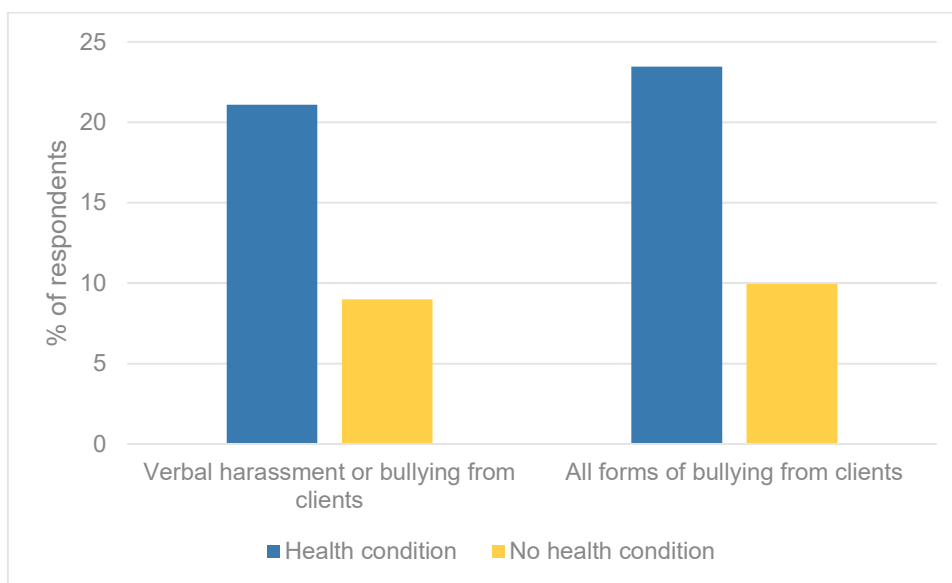
Table 7.23: Reporting bullying or harassment

	From clients		From colleagues	
	2024 N	2024 %	2024 N	2024 %
Reported to the practice	758	53.4	211	39.9
Reported to the police	103	7.3	3	0.6
Not formally reported	702	49.5	332	62.8

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Further analysis found that:

- As seen in Figure 7.2, respondents with a health condition reported a higher average number of both verbal harassment or bullying from clients, and of all forms of harassment or bullying from clients combined.
- Those working as employed assistants were considerably more likely to report physical harassment from colleagues than those in other roles.

Figure 7.2 Bullying and harassment from clients, by presence of a health condition

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Harassment and bullying were also raised as reasons for leaving the profession in Chapters 4.4 and 7.2.3.

8 Recently qualified vets

This chapter focuses on recently qualified vets (2019 onwards) working in the veterinary profession, covering their first role since qualifying, any appraisals or reviews received by them, and how their university experience prepared them for work in the profession.

Chapter summary

- Of the 878 respondents who had qualified since 2019, 79% were female and 20% male.
- 72% were familiar with VetGDP, 25% had heard of it but were not familiar with it, and 3% had not heard of it.
- 58% were, or had been, on the VetGDP, while 30% had been on the Professional Development Phase (PDP) in the past; however, 12% were not, and had not previously been, on either the VetGDP or the PDP.
- 83% went straight into clinical practice after graduating, an increase compared to 2019 (73%) and 2014 (52%).
- The 703 respondents who had worked in the profession since graduating took a mean average of 1.47 months to find their first position, compared to 1.86 months in 2019; however, the modal average was 0 months.
- When asked about the extent to which their time at university had prepared them for seven aspects of working in the profession, respondents returned a very positive score (4.2 out of 5) for knowledge and understanding, and clearly positive scores for professionalism and professional integrity (3.8), clinical decision making (3.7), communication, collaboration and empathy (3.7) and clinical skills (3.6). However, respondents were neutral about their ability to deal with uncertainty and change (3.1) and negative about financial and business management (2.4).
- A further question about how well, overall, the curriculum had prepared respondents for the veterinary profession yielded a positive score of 3.5 out of 5.

8.1 Respondent profile

In total, 878 respondents had qualified since 2019. Around four-fifths (79%) were female, 20% were male, and the remaining 1% selected either the non-binary or gender-fluid response options. The higher proportion of females within this group compared to the overall respondent profile (where 60% were females) suggests that the proportion of females working in the profession will continue to increase in the coming years.

8.2 Awareness of VetGDP and PDP

The first question asked recent qualifiers about their awareness of the Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP), which became mandatory in the summer

of 2021. Around three-quarters (72%) had heard of and were familiar with the programme, with 25% having heard of it but not being familiar with it. The remaining 3% had not heard of the programme.

Respondents were then asked whether they were, or had been, on the Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) or the Professional Development Phase (PDP). Results, displayed in Table 8.1, show that:

- Almost two-fifths (37%) were, at the time of the survey, on the VetGDP.
- Most respondents who took part in the PDP did so in the past, as only a small minority (<1%) were currently on that programme.

Table 8.1: Proportion of recent qualifiers on the VetGDP or PDP

	2024 %
Yes, VetGDP currently	37.1
Yes, VetGDP in the past	20.6
Yes, PDP currently	0.7
Yes, PDP in the past	30.1
No, neither	11.5
Total	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

8.3 After graduation

Table 8.2 presents graduates' activities after graduation, and indicates that:

- More than four-fifths (83%) of recent graduates went straight into veterinary clinical practice, either in a permanent position (82%) or as a locum (1%), an increase from both 2014 and 2019.
- The proportion of graduates who took some time off as they were unable to find a veterinary job continued to decrease, with only 1% of respondents having to do this.
- Compared to 2019 and 2014, a lower proportion indicated that they began a veterinary internship, or worked abroad for a charity or other practice.

Table 8.2: Activities following graduation

	Post-2019 qualifiers (%)	Post-2015 qualifiers (%)	Post-2011 qualifiers (%)
Went straight into practice in a permanent position	82.0	71.2	-
Began a veterinary internship	5.6	10.6	10.0
Took some time out to travel	2.8	3.8	6.5
Went straight into a veterinary position outside clinical practice	1.4	2.4	-
Went straight into practice as a locum	1.1	2.2	-
Began postgraduate studies	1.1	1.1	1.4
Took a job in a non-veterinary area of work	1.1	1.7	-
Took some time out as unable to find a job	1.0	2.2	17.8
Worked abroad for a charity or other practice	0.8	2.6	7.6
Went straight into practice	-	-	52.0
Other	2.9	2.5	4.7

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

Most of those who went into 'other' activities explained they took time off due to health reasons. Respondents who went into a veterinary position outside clinical practice worked in meat hygiene/official controls.

8.4 Time to find first position

Respondents who had worked in the veterinary profession since graduating (80%, N=703), were asked how long it had taken them to find their first position.

- The average time was 1.47 months, a slight decrease from 2019 when it was 1.87.
- The modal response was 0 months.

The analysis did not identify any statistically significant differences in responses to this question between different groups.

Of the small minority (2%, N=15) who had never worked in the veterinary profession since graduating:

- Around two-thirds (67%) had been looking for their first job in the profession.
- The average time that respondents had been looking for their first veterinary post was 7.3 months.
- The modal number of months respondents had been looking for their first veterinary post was six.

Due to the small sample size of this group, sub-group analysis did not produce any robust findings and has therefore not been reported

8.5 University preparedness

The final questions presented to new graduates asked respondents to score their level of agreement with a series of seven statements related to how well they felt their time at university prepared them for their current role.

Table 8.3 shows that:

- The area new graduates felt their course had best prepared them for was *'knowledge and understanding'*, with over 90% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that their course had prepared them for this.
- *'Communication, collaboration and empathy'* and *'Clinical decision making'* also had high mean scores.
- *'Financial and business management'* had the lowest mean score, with over 60% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that their course prepared them for this.

Table 8.3: Level of agreement that university prepares for a role in the profession

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
Knowledge and understanding	0.9	3.6	4.6	57.2	33.7	4.2
Professionalism and professional integrity	3.4	8.1	14.4	49.8	24.3	3.8
Communication, collaboration and empathy	5.0	12.6	15.7	43.0	23.6	3.7
Clinical decision making	2.9	12.8	16.2	47.9	20.1	3.7
Clinical skills	5.1	15.3	14.0	45.3	20.3	3.6
Ability to deal with uncertainty and change	10.1	23.4	22.9	31.9	11.6	3.1
Financial and business management	23.0	38.1	19.0	16.1	3.8	2.4

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Further, Table 8.4 shows that over 60% of new graduates felt the curriculum had prepared them for work in the veterinary profession. The mean score was 3.5.

Table 8.4: How well participants felt their curriculum prepared them for the veterinary profession

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
I felt the curriculum prepared me for the veterinary profession	4.0	15.1	16.3	53.9	10.8	3.5

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

9 Views about the profession

This chapter reports respondents' views about their profession and their workplaces, covering working conditions, scientific research and quality improvement, standards and learning, and the value and recognition of vets.

Chapter summary

- Vets were asked about the extent to which they agreed with a series of 16 attitudinal statements about the veterinary profession.
- The statements attracting the strongest level of agreement were that veterinary work was stressful (scoring 4.4 out of 5) but gave job satisfaction (4), that vet nurses were valued by the profession (3.7), that the respondent had participated in scientific research over the past five years (3.7), that clients valued the work of vets (3.5) and that the respondent was familiar with the concept of quality improvement (3.5).
- The statements attracting a clearly negative response overall were that newly qualified vets had the necessary skills required for clinical practice employment from day one (2.4) and that the profession paid sufficient attention to the development of leadership skills (2.5) and its environmental footprint (2.5).
- The other seven statements about the profession attracted neutral scores, between 2.9 and 3.2.
- A further set of 13 statements asked for views about their work within the profession, including their workplace. Only one of these statements, relating to the respondent's satisfaction with their salary/remuneration levels, attracted a negative response (2.5 out of 5). All the other statements attracted a positive to a very positive response. Respondents were familiar with the concept of evidence-based medicine (4.6) and actively used this in their decision-making; they also actively used quality improvement in their practice (3.6). They believed that their workplace allowed them to exercise their clinical freedom (4.1) and to deliver the best possible outcomes to their patients (3.8). They were satisfied with both the support given by their line manager (3.5) and others in the practice (3.9) and felt comfortable reporting and sharing mistakes (3.9). About the provision of emergency first aid and pain relief, they agreed strongly that they should be obliged to provide this to animals according to their skills and the situation (4.2), but much less strongly that, when on call, they should provide this only to animals registered with the practice (3.3); finally, they agreed that when on call, they should be obliged to attend an emergency away from the practice only if necessary (3.5).
- There were some differences among different respondent groups, for particular statements and overall. In general, males were more positive than females, those with a disability or chronic condition were less positive than those without, and those working for an independently-owned practice were somewhat more positive than those working for a corporately-owned practice. There were also some differences when statements were analysed by age, with the youngest and oldest respondents tending to be more positive and agreement, within age groups following on from the youngest group, increasing with age (see

Table 13.5 in the Appendix). Additional analysis was conducted to see if there was any difference in agreement with statements by age group and practice type, focusing on independently- and corporately-owned practices. Overall, regardless of age, respondents working in independently-owned practices were more positive than those working in corporately-owned practices for 12 of the 29 statements, while those working in corporately-owned practices were more positive than those working in independently owned practice for two of the 29 statements (see Table 13.6 in the Appendix).

- Although the responses of vet respondents overall were broadly similar to those of vet nurse respondents, there were some notable differences. In particular, vet nurses gave a score of 4.0 to the statement about clients valuing the work of vets, compared to vets themselves, who scored the statement at a lower 3.5. Similarly, although vets had a neutral view of clients valuing the work of vet nurses (3.1), vet nurses themselves gave this statement a clearly negative score of 2.7. Vets were also more positive that vet nurses were valued by the veterinary profession (3.7 compared to 3.1). Vet nurses were notably less likely to agree that their workplace offered them clinical freedom (3.3, compared to 4.1 for vets). A further interesting difference was that vet nurses agreed, although not strongly, that newly qualified vet nurses had the necessary skills from day one (3.3), while vets clearly disagreed that newly qualified vets had the necessary skills from day one (2.4).
- When asked if, should they have the opportunity to start their career again, they would still choose to work within the profession, 47% of vet respondents said yes (higher than vet nurses, of whom a lower 42% said yes) and 25% no; 29% were uncertain. These percentages were similar to those given by vets in 2019 and 2014.
- When asked to choose up to five best things about being a vet, the most frequently chosen were working with animals (chosen by 73%), challenge/stimulus (57%), job satisfaction (51%) and making a difference (50%).
- The top challenges facing the profession were considered to be client expectations/demands (chosen by 54%), stress levels (47%) and the affordability of veterinary services (46%), the last experiencing a significant increase since 2019. These were somewhat different to the top challenges chosen by vet nurses: poor financial reward, stress levels, and staff shortages.
- Finally, when asked to identify things that would improve the veterinary profession, the top two answers were better financial reward (47%) and less workload pressure (43%).

9.1 General views about the veterinary profession

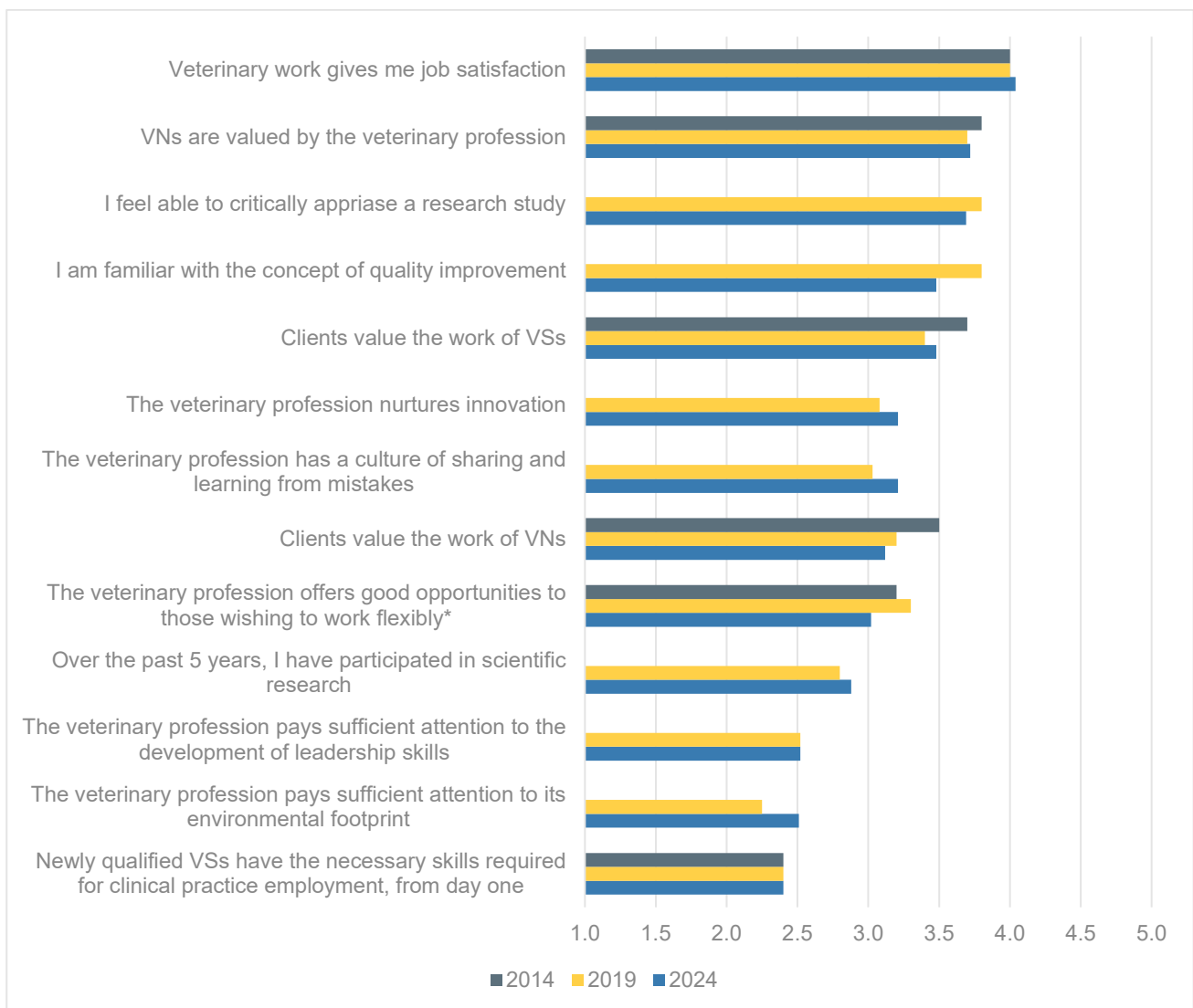
Respondents were asked to share their views on the profession by indicating the extent to which they agreed with a series of 16 attitudinal statements. Each statement used a five-point scale to capture responses ranging from 'strongly disagree' (scoring 1) to 'strongly agree' (scoring 5), with a mid-point score of 3. Six of the statements also featured in both the 2019 and 2014 surveys. Within this chapter, views have been grouped, where appropriate, into themes. Appendix Table 14.1 provides the full results for these 15 statements, including the number of responses, the percentage spread across responses and the mean score for each statement.

9.1.1 Comparison to previous years

Figure 9.1 provides the mean scores for the statements that featured in 2019 and, in some cases, for 2014. For the six common statements across all three surveys:

- Only one statement, relating to clients valuing the work of vets, saw an increase in its mean score compared to 2019.
- In 2024, views were more negative around clients valuing the work of vets and around the veterinary profession offering good opportunities to those wishing to work flexibly.
- Scores around vets being valued by the veterinary profession and around veterinary work giving job satisfaction remained the same.

Figure 9.1: General views about the veterinary profession: mean scores, 2024 compared to 2019 and 2014



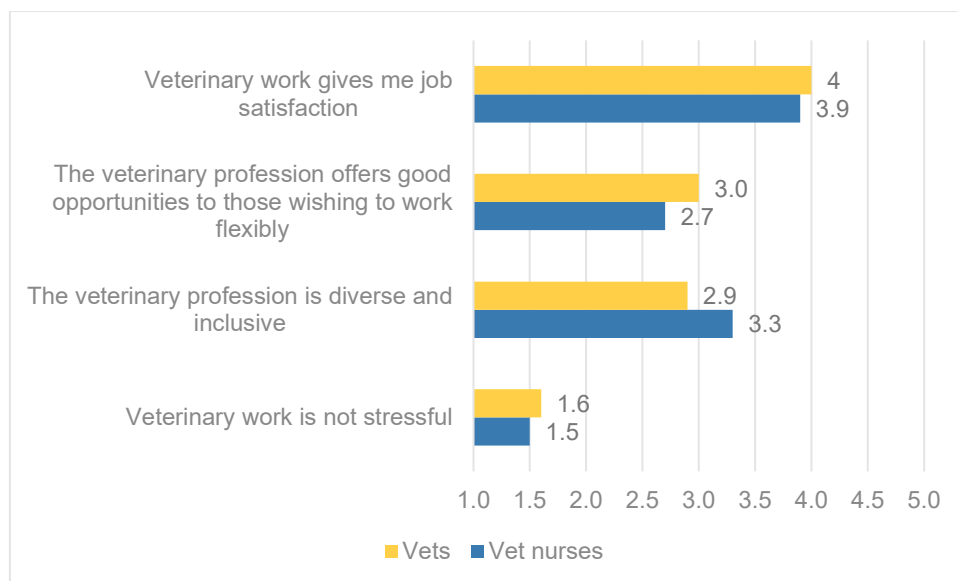
* in previous years this has been framed as 'for those wishing to work part time'.

9.1.2 Views on working conditions

Figure 9.2 displays the mean responses to statements presented to respondents related to their views on the working conditions within the veterinary profession, with comparison to vet nurse responses. This shows that:

- Vet respondents received a great degree of job satisfaction from working in the veterinary profession, with a mean score of nearly four and 81% agreeing or strongly agreeing.
- However, they were much less sure about whether the profession offered good opportunities for those wishing to work flexibly, or whether the profession was diverse and inclusive, with responses to each of these statements averaging at around the mid-point.
- There was a strong level of disagreement that the profession was not stressful.
- Vets agreed to a slightly greater extent than vet nurses that their respective profession offered good opportunities to those who want to work flexibly; however, they were slightly less in agreement than vet nurses that their respective profession was diverse and inclusive.

Figure 9.2: Views about working conditions in the profession: mean scores, with comparison to vet nurses



Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession and RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession, 2024

Further analysis of vet respondents indicated differences between groups.

- Males had more positive views on all statements around working conditions.
- Respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds gave a lower mean level of agreement that veterinary work gave them job satisfaction.

- Respondents with no health conditions agreed to a larger extent that the veterinary profession offered good opportunities for those wishing to work flexibly.
- Individuals with health conditions agreed less that the profession was diverse and inclusive.
- Respondents with health conditions agreed less that veterinary work was not stressful.
- Respondents with health conditions were less likely to agree that the profession provided them with job satisfaction.
- Those with caring responsibilities had a lower level of agreement with the statement that the veterinary profession was diverse and inclusive.
- Respondents working outside clinical practice agreed more that the profession offered good opportunities for those wishing to work flexibly.
- Those working within clinical practice were more likely to agree that veterinary work was stressful.
- Respondents working outside clinical practice were slightly less likely to agree that veterinary work gave them job satisfaction.
- Full-time workers agreed less that the profession provided good opportunities for flexible working.
- Those working part time were less likely to agree that the profession was diverse and inclusive.
- Full-time workers agreed more that veterinary work gave them job satisfaction.
- Respondents aged between 30 and 39 agreed less that the veterinary profession offered good opportunities for those wishing to work flexibly. Agreement with the statement increased with age (see Appendix table 13.5).
- Respondents aged over 70 were more likely to agree that the profession was diverse and inclusive than any other age group, and agreement slightly increased with age overall (see Appendix table 13.5).
- Compared to those working in independently-owned practices, respondents who worked for a corporately-owned group agreed to a larger extent that veterinary work was stressful (see Appendix table 13.6).
- Compared to individuals working for an independently-owned practice or a charity, those working for a corporately-owned group had a lower mean score on the statement regarding veterinary work giving them job satisfaction.
- Respondents working for an independently-owned practice or a corporately-owned group agreed to a greater extent that the veterinary profession was diverse and inclusive, compared to those working for a charity or a veterinary school.
- Compared to employed assistants and those working independently or as a locum, respondents working as a principal/director/partner had more positive views on all statements regarding working conditions.

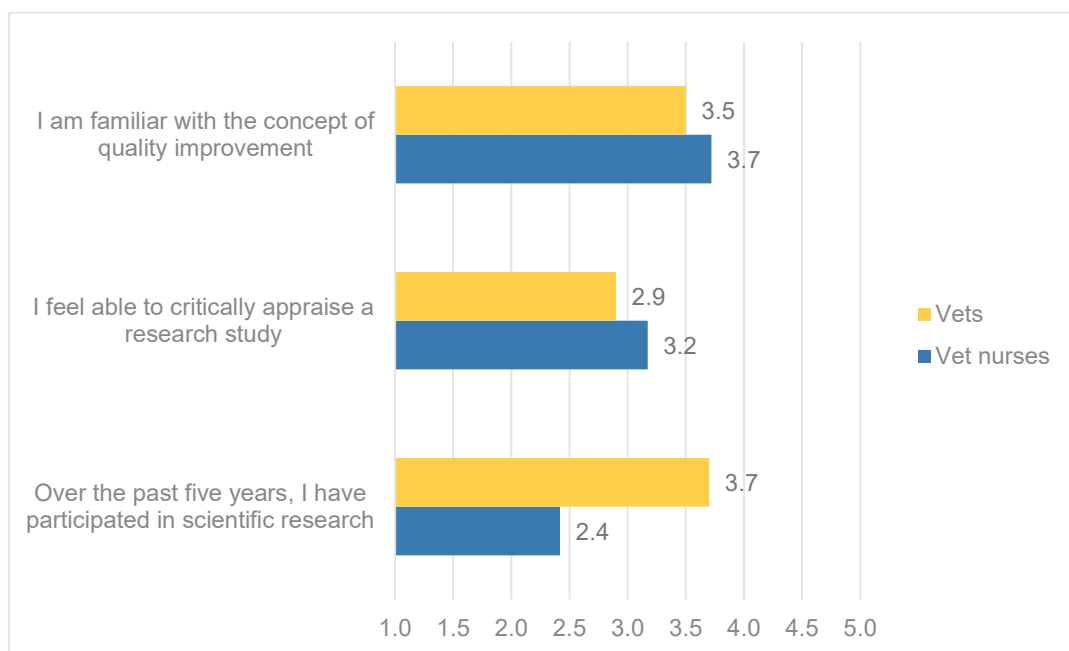
- Those working as a locum had more negative views of veterinary work giving them job satisfaction.
- Respondents who qualified since 2019 agreed more that veterinary work was stressful.
- Respondents planning to leave the profession had more negative views on all four statements around working conditions.
- Those who qualified overseas had more positive views about the profession being diverse and inclusive.
- Respondents who qualified in the UK agreed more that veterinary work gave them job satisfaction.

9.1.3 Views about scientific research and quality improvement

Three statements explored views on scientific research and quality improvement. These are displayed in Figure 9.3, which compares the responses of vets and vet nurses and indicates:

- Vet and vet nurse respondents agreed that they were familiar with the concept of quality improvement.
- Vet and vet nurse respondents were neutral about their ability to critically appraise a research study.
- Vets were much more likely than vet nurses to have participated in scientific research over the past five years.

Figure 9.3: Views about scientific research and quality improvement: mean scores, with comparison to vet nurses



Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession and RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession, 2024

Further analysis was conducted to explore responses by group.

- Males were more likely to agree with all three statements about scientific research and quality improvement.
- Respondents with caring responsibilities were slightly more likely to agree that they were familiar with the concept of quality improvement.
- Those working outside the profession agreed more with all the statements about scientific research and quality improvement.
- Those working for a charity were least likely to agree to all statements about scientific research and quality improvement.
- Principals/directors/partners were more familiar with the concept of quality improvement compared to employed assistants and locums.
- Full-time respondents agreed more with all three statements around scientific research and quality improvement.
- Respondents who had worked as a locum or independent service provider felt slightly more able to critically appraise a research study.
- Individuals who qualified since 2019 were slightly less likely to be familiar with the concept of quality improvement and to feel able to critically appraise a research study, compared to those who qualified pre-2019.
- Respondents who said they were planning to leave the profession were less likely than both those planning to retire and those planning to stay in the profession for more than five years to be familiar with the concept of quality improvement.
- Individuals planning to stay in the profession were more likely to have participated in scientific research in the past five years, compared to those planning to leave the profession.
- Respondents planning to retire were less likely to feel able to critically appraise a research study when compared to individuals planning to leave the profession or to those wanting to stay in the profession for more than five years.

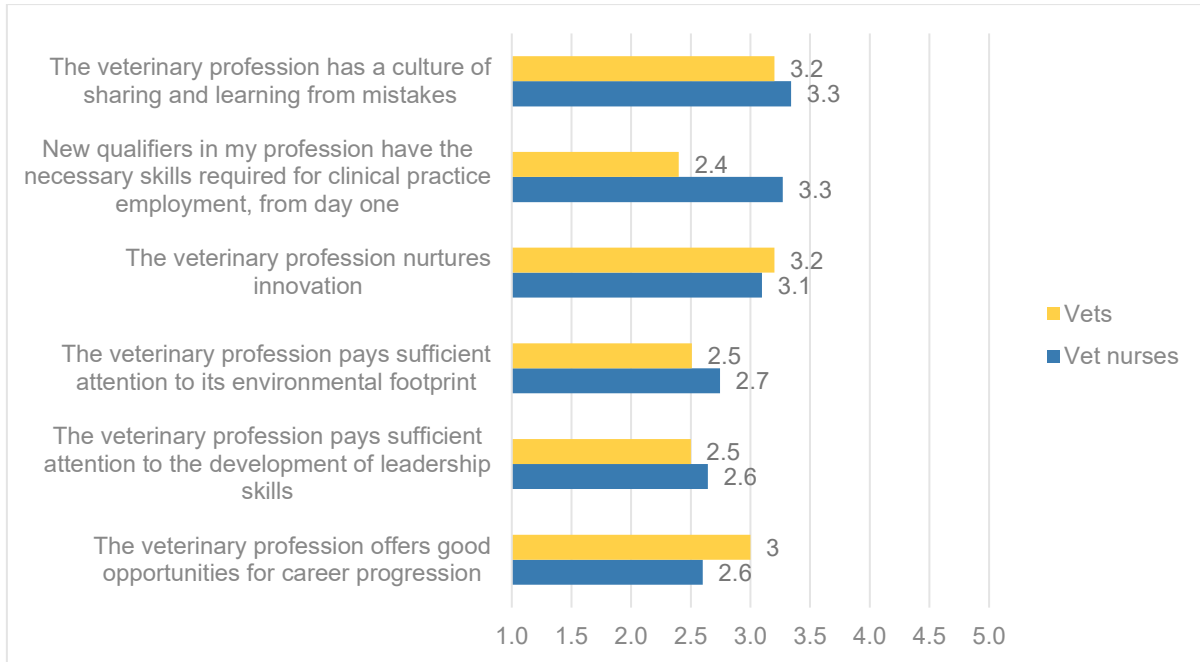
9.1.4 Views on veterinary standards and learning

Figure 9.4 displays mean scores from vet and vet nurse respondents to statements focused on standards within the veterinary profession, and ongoing learning. This shows:

- Vet and vet nurse respondents both returned negative scores for the statements relating to the profession paying sufficient attention to the development of leadership skills and to its environmental footprint.
- Vet and vet nurse respondents were both slightly positive that the profession nurtured innovation and had a culture of sharing and learning from mistakes.
- Vet respondents were neutral about the profession offering good career opportunities, while vet nurse respondents were negative.

- Vet respondents clearly disagreed that new qualifiers had the necessary skills from day one, while vet nurse respondents agreed.

Figure 9.4: Views on veterinary standards and learning within the profession: mean scores, with comparison to vet nurses



For the second statement, vet nurses were asked 'Newly qualified veterinary nurses have the necessary skills required for clinical practice employment, from day one' and vets were asked 'Newly qualified veterinary surgeons have the necessary skills required for clinical practice employment, from day one'

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession and RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession, 2024

Analysis exploring the differences in vet's responses by groups found that:

- Males were more positive on all statements around veterinary standards and learning within the profession.
- Respondents who were part of an ethnic minority were more likely to agree that newly qualified vets had the necessary skills required for clinical practice employment from day one.
- Respondents with caring responsibilities had more negative views on the profession having a culture of sharing and learning from mistakes, on the profession nurturing innovation, paying sufficient attention to the development of leadership skills, and offering good opportunities for career progression.
- Respondents with no health conditions had a higher mean level of agreement with all six statements around veterinary standards and learning within the profession.
- Respondents working within clinical practice scored more positively on the statement regarding the profession having a culture of sharing and learning from mistakes.

- Individuals working outside clinical practice had more positive views on newly qualified vets having the necessary skills required for clinical practice employment from day one, and on the profession paying sufficient attention to its environmental footprint.
- Compared to respondents working for an independently-owned practice or for a corporate group, those working for a charity had more negative views of the profession having a culture of sharing and learning from mistakes.
- Respondents working for a veterinary school had more positive views on newly qualified vets having the necessary skills for clinical practice employment from day one, compared to respondents in all three other groups (independently-owned practice, part of a corporate group, and charity).
- Those working for a corporate group were also slightly more likely to agree that newly qualified vets had the skills needed for clinical practice compared to those working for an independently-owned practice.
- Individuals working for a charity had more negative views on the profession paying attention to its environmental footprint and to the profession offering good career progression opportunities, compared to those working for either independently- or corporately-owned practices.
- Compared to those working as a principal/director/partner, employed assistants had more negative views about the profession having a culture of learning from mistakes.
- Locums scored more negatively than both employed assistants and principals/directors/partners on the profession having a culture of learning from mistakes and on the profession nurturing innovation.
- Locums had more negative views on the profession paying sufficient attention to the development of leadership compared to principals/directors/partners. However, their views on this statement were more positive than those of employed assistants.
- Principals/directors/partners were less likely to agree that newly qualified vets had the skills required for clinical practice employment from day one, compared to both employed assistants and locums.
- Principals/directors/partners were more likely to agree that the profession offered good opportunities for career progression and that it paid sufficient attention to its environmental footprint, compared to employed assistants and locums.
- Full-time respondents gave a higher mean level of agreement on all statements around veterinary standards and learning within the profession.
- Respondents over 70 were more likely to agree that the profession paid sufficient attention to its environmental footprint and that the profession nurtured innovation than younger respondents. Agreement with these statements increased with age (see Appendix table 13.5).
- The youngest (under 30) and oldest (over 70) respondents were more likely to agree that the profession had a culture of learning from mistakes and offered good opportunities for career progression than the other age groups (see Appendix table 13.5).

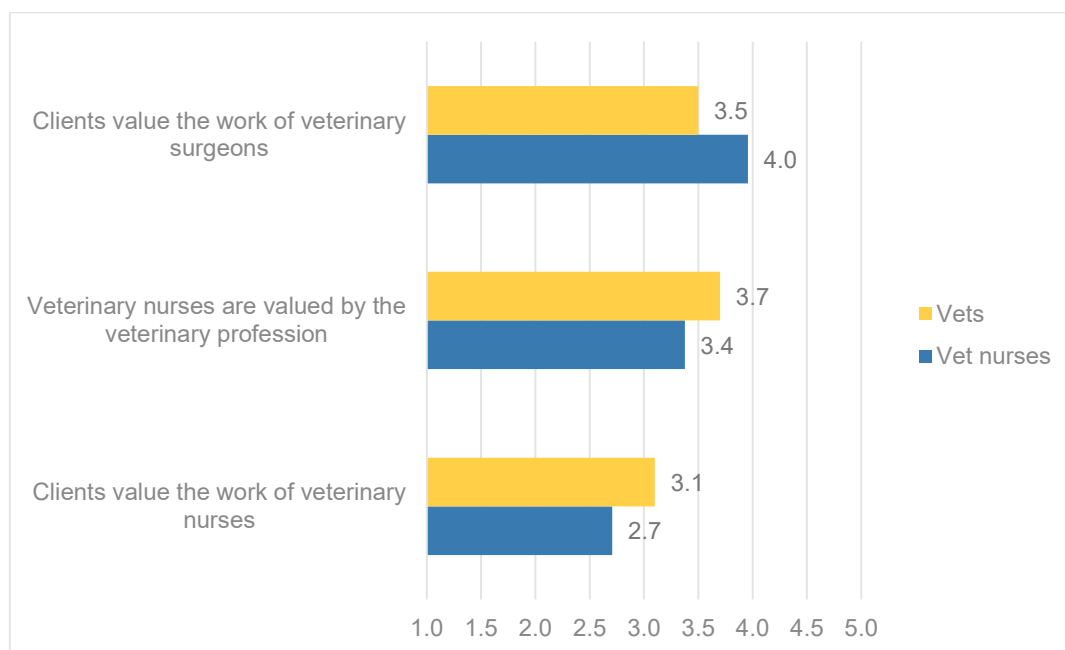
- Locums and independent service providers returned lower mean scores across all statements related to veterinary standards and learning.
- Respondents who qualified since 2019 had more positive views on all statements exploring views on veterinary standards and learning. The only exception was their views on the profession paying sufficient attention to its environmental footprint, where those who qualified before 2019 scored more positively.
- Respondents who qualified overseas were more likely to agree that the profession nurtured innovation and that it offered good opportunities for career progression.
- Those who qualified in the UK agreed to a larger extent that newly qualified vets had the necessary skills required for clinical practice from day one.
- Excluding views on newly qualified vets' skills, those planning to leave the profession reported more negative views on all other statements around veterinary standards and learning, compared to those planning to retire and to those wanting to stay in the profession.
- Those planning to leave the profession and retire provided lower average scores on newly-qualified vets' skills compared to those planning to stay in the profession for more than five years.

9.1.5 Views on value and recognition

The final remaining statements focused on value and recognition within the profession. Figure 9.5 shows that:

- There was a considerable difference between views on clients valuing the work of vets and clients valuing the work of vet nurses, with vet nurse respondents returning mean scores of 4.0 and 2.7 respectively in comparison to the scores of vet respondents (3.5 and 3.7).
- Vet respondents were also more positive than vet nurse respondents about the veterinary profession valuing vet nurses.

Figure 9.5: Views on value and recognition within the profession: mean scores, with comparison to vet nurses



Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession and RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession, 2024

Further analysis exploring views on value and recognition within the profession found significant differences between some vet group responses.

- Females tended to agree most that clients valued the work of vet nurses, while males tended to agree more that vet nurses are valued by the profession and that clients valued the work of vets.
- White respondents had more positive views on clients valuing the work of vets.
- Respondents with health conditions had lower mean levels of agreement on all three statements around recognition within the profession.
- Individuals working within clinical practice had more positive views on vet nurses being valued by the profession and on clients valuing the work of vets.
- Those working outside clinical practice gave a higher mean level of agreement that clients valued the work of vet nurses.
- Individuals working for an independently-owned practice had a higher level of agreement that vet nurses are valued by the profession and that clients valued the work of vet nurses, compared to those working for a corporately-owned practice (see Appendix table 13.6).
- Those working for an independently-owned practice had more positive views on clients valuing the work of vets, compared to respondents working for a corporate group or a charity.

- Those working as a principal/director/partner had more positive views on all statements around recognition from the profession, compared to employed assistants and locums.
- Respondents working part time provided higher mean levels of agreement that clients valued the work of both vet nurses and vets.
- Respondents aged over 40 were more likely to agree than all other age groups that clients valued the work of vets and vet nurses, with agreement increasing with age (see Appendix table 13.5).
- Those who were not working as locums or independent service providers provided higher mean levels of agreement on all three statements around recognition within the profession.
- Respondents who qualified before 2019 gave higher levels of agreement on all statements around recognition within the profession.
- Vets who qualified in the UK had more positive views on all statements around recognition within the profession.
- Individuals planning to leave the profession had more negative views on all three statements around recognition within the profession, compared to both those planning to retire and those wanting to stay in the profession
- Conversely, respondents planning to retire had more positive views on all statements than both respondents planning to stay and leave the profession.

9.2 General views about veterinary work

Similar to general views about the veterinary profession, respondents were asked to score their level of agreement with a series of 13 statements aiming to capture views on veterinary work. This was captured using the same five-point scale as the previous statements. See Appendix Table 14.2 for full results for these 13 statements, including the number of responses, percentage spread across responses and the mean score for each statement.

9.2.1 Comparison to previous years

Figure 9.6 displays a comparison between 2019 and 2024, showing that the mean scores either stayed more or less the same, or improved, for every statement between 2019 and 2024; it also shows positive scores (higher than the midpoint of 3) for all statements.

Figure 9.6: General views about veterinary work, 2024 with comparison to 2019

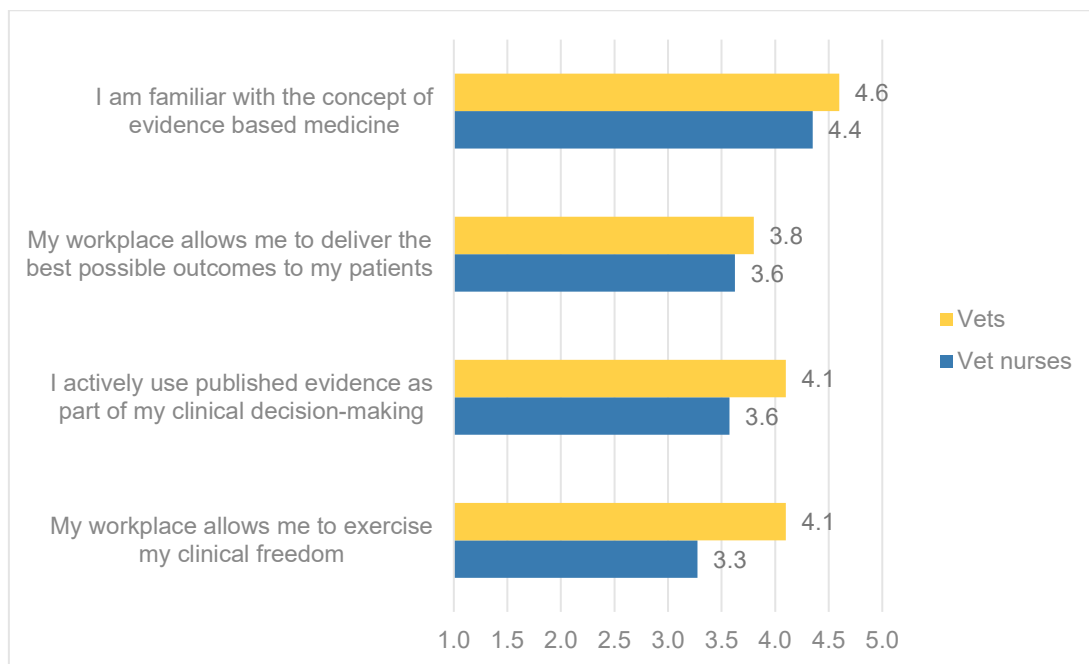


Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024 and 2019

9.2.2 Delivering outcomes, using evidence, and clinical freedom

The first series of statements exploring views on veterinary work focused on delivering outcomes to clients, using evidence in practice, and clinical freedom. Figure 9.7 shows that both vet and vet nurse respondents were positive about all aspects, vets particularly so. However, vet nurses were notably less in agreement that their workplace allowed them to exercise clinical freedom.

Figure 9.7: Views on delivering outcomes, using evidence and clinical freedom, vets compared to vet nurses



Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession and RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession, 2024

The analysis highlighted significant differences among vet respondents to statements around outcomes, evidence and clinical freedom when exploring by respondent characteristics.

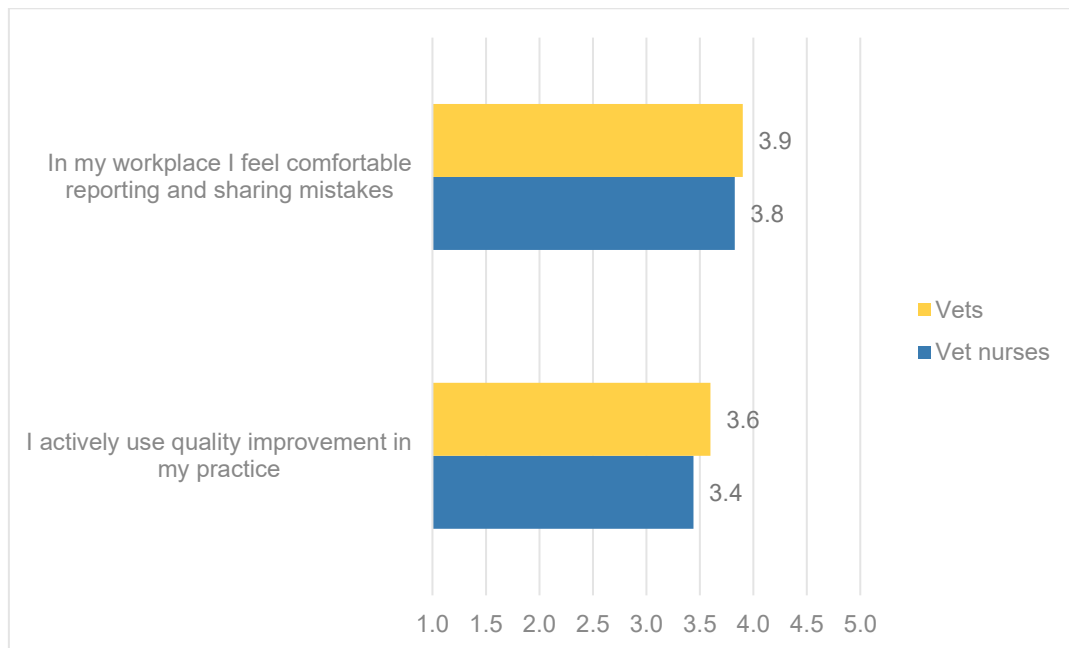
- Males had slightly more positive scores on the statements around their workplace allowing them to deliver the best possible outcomes to patients, exercise their clinical freedom, and use published evidence as part of their clinical decision-making.
- Respondents from ethnic minority groups provided slightly lower scores on their workplace allowing them to exercise their clinical freedom.
- Individuals with a health condition had more negative views on their workplace allowing them to deliver the best outcomes for patients, and to exercise their clinical freedom.
- Respondents with caring responsibilities returned a slightly higher mean score than those without caring responsibilities to their workplace allowing them to deliver the best possible outcomes to patients and to exercise their clinical freedom.
- Respondents working in clinical practice had more positive views on their workplace allowing them to deliver the best outcomes for patients and to exercise their freedom.
- Conversely, those working outside clinical practice agreed more than they actively used published evidence as part of their clinical decision-making.
- Vets working full time reported higher mean scores for all four statements focusing on outcomes, evidence and clinical freedom.

- Individuals working as independent practitioners or locums reported lower mean agreement that their workplace allowed them to deliver the best outcomes to their patients and to exercise their clinical freedom.
- Those who qualified before 2019 had lower levels of agreement that their workplace allowed them to deliver the best outcomes to their patients, that they actively used published evidence as part of their clinical decision-making, and that their workplace allowed them to exercise their clinical freedom.
- Respondents who qualified in the UK had more positive scores for their workplace allowing them to deliver the best possible outcomes for patients, and allowing them to exercise their clinical freedom, and on them being familiar with the concept of evidence-based medicine.
- Conversely, those who qualified overseas had higher levels of agreement that they actively used published evidence as part of their clinical decision-making.
- Respondents working for an independently-owned practice agreed more than those working for a corporately-owned practice that their workplace allowed them to exercise their clinical freedom (see Appendix Table 13.6).
- Those working for a veterinary school gave the highest mean scores around being familiar with the concept of evidence-based medicine and around their workplace allowing them to deliver the best possible outcomes to their patients.
- Respondents working for an independently-owned practice agreed more than those working for a corporately-owned practice that their workplace allowed them to deliver the best possible outcomes to their patients (see Appendix Table 13.6).

9.2.3 Improving practice

The next group of statements focused on improving practice within veterinary work. Figure 9.8 shows that vet and vet nurse respondents returned fairly similar positive scores for both statements.

Figure 9.8: Views on improving practice within the veterinary profession, with vet comparison



Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession and RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession, 2024

Detailed analysis exploring vets' responses by respondent characteristics highlighted significant differences.

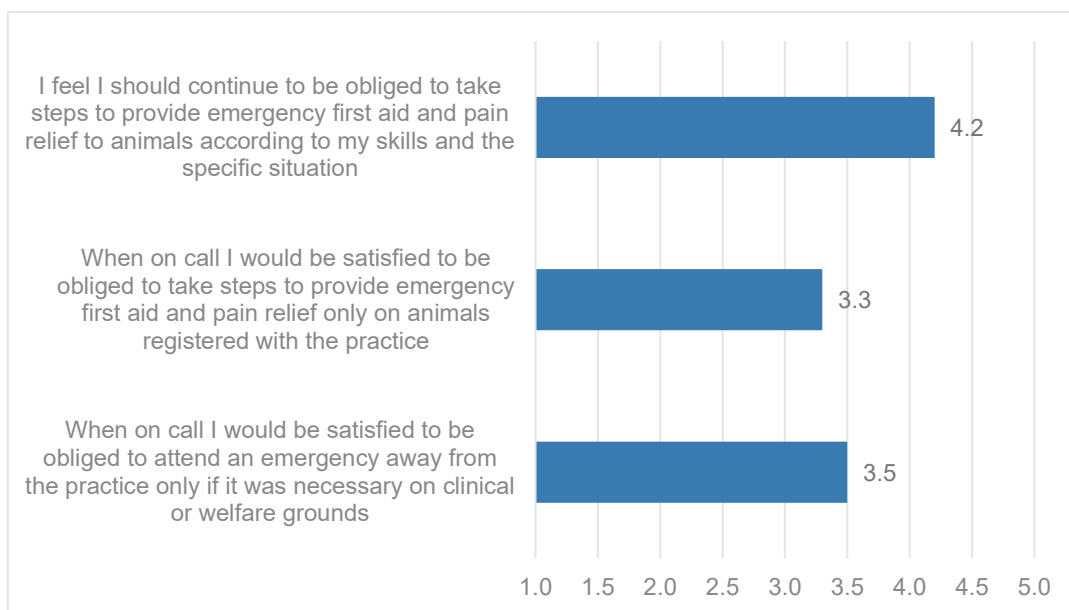
- Male respondents indicated a higher level of agreement with both statements.
- Respondents from white backgrounds were more likely to agree that they actively used quality improvement in their practice.
- Respondents with caring responsibilities provided a higher level of agreement on both statements around improving practice within the veterinary profession.
- Individuals with health conditions reported a lower agreement that they felt comfortable reporting and sharing mistakes.
- Respondents working outside clinical practice were more likely to agree that they actively used quality improvement in their practice.
- Respondents working full time provided higher mean scores for both statements on improving practice.
- Those working as a locum or independent practitioner agreed less that they felt comfortable reporting and sharing mistakes in their workplace.
- Respondents who qualified before 2019 agreed more with both statements.
- Individuals who qualified overseas agreed more strongly that they actively used quality improvement in their practice.

- Respondents who qualified in the UK were more likely to agree that they felt comfortable reporting and sharing mistakes.
- Vets working for a veterinary school gave higher mean scores to the statement about actively using quality improvement in their practice, compared to respondents working for all other types of practices.
- Compared to respondents working for a veterinary school or an independently-owned practice, those working for a corporate group felt less comfortable reporting and sharing mistakes.

9.2.4 Views about emergency first aid provision

A group of three statements, presented in Figure 9.9, asked about respondents' views on emergency first aid provision. Vets agreed relatively strongly that they feel they should continue to be obliged to take steps to provide emergency first aid and pain relief to animals according to their skills and the specific situation. To a lesser extent, they also agreed with the two other statements about first aid provision.

Figure 9.9: Views about emergency first aid provision



Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Further analysis highlighted that there were significant differences between groups:

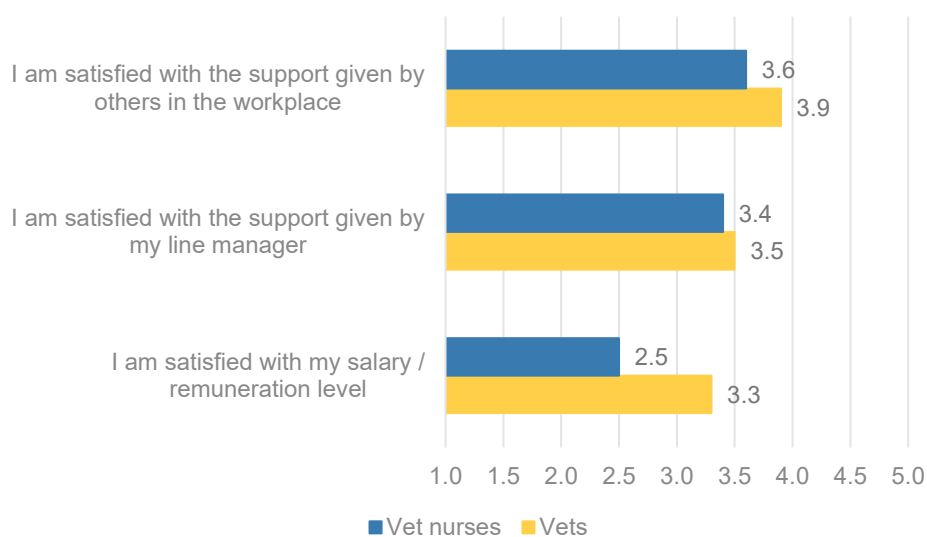
- Females agreed more that they should continue to be obliged to take steps to provide emergency first aid to animals according to their skills and the situation.
- Males agreed more that when on call they would be satisfied to be obliged to take steps to provide emergency first aid and pain relief only on animals registered with the practice.

- Those with no caring responsibilities agreed more that they should continue to take steps to provide emergency first aid to animals according to their skills and the situation.
- Those with caring responsibilities were more likely to agree that when on call they would be satisfied to have to take steps to provide first aid and pain relief only on animals registered with the practice.
- Respondents with no health conditions agreed that when on call they should only provide first aid to animals registered with the practice.
- Respondents working outside clinical practice agreed more that when on call they would be satisfied to be obliged to attend an emergency away from the practice only if it was necessary on clinical or welfare grounds; those working within clinical practice agreed more with the two other statements around first aid provision.
- Full-time workers agreed more that when on call they would be satisfied to take steps to provide emergency first aid and pain relief only on animals registered with the practice.
- Those working as a locum were less likely to agree that when on call, they should take steps to provide emergency first aid and pain relief only on animals registered with the practice. They also agreed less that when on call, they would be satisfied to attend an emergency away from the practice only if it was necessary on clinical or welfare grounds.
- Respondents working for a veterinary school agreed more that they should take steps to provide emergency first aid and pain relief to animals according to their skills and the specific situation.
- Compared to those working for a corporate group or a charity, vets working for an independently-owned practice agreed more that when on call they would be satisfied to be obliged to take steps to provide emergency first aid and pain relief only on animals registered with the practice.

9.2.5 Support and remuneration

The final group of statements collected views on support and remuneration within veterinary work. Figure 9.10 displays the results, showing that vet respondents scored higher overall than vet nurse respondents.

- Overall, vets agreed more than vet nurses that they were satisfied with their salary or remuneration level.

Figure 9.10: Views on support, delegation and remuneration, with vet nurse comparison

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession and RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession, 2024

Analysis exploring responses by sub-groups identified significant differences within respondent characteristics.

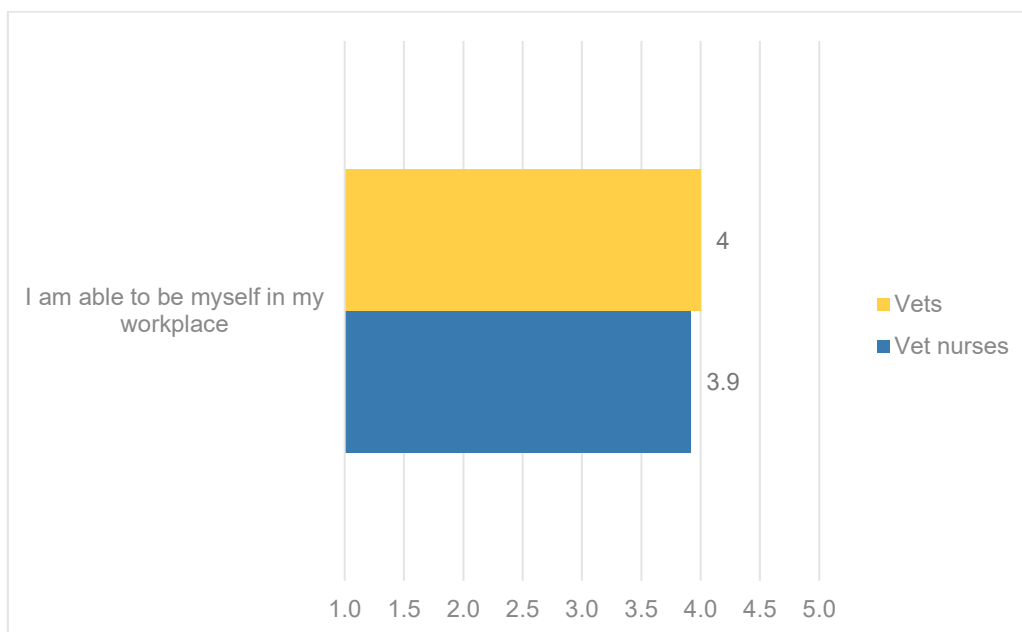
- Females provided slightly more positive views on all three statements around support and remuneration.
- White respondents were, on average, more satisfied with their salary/remuneration level than those from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- Respondents with health conditions reported lower mean scores across all three statements around support and remuneration.
- Respondents working within clinical practice were less satisfied with their salary/remuneration, but more satisfied with the support given by their line manager, compared to those working outside clinical practice.
- Respondents working full time were slightly less likely to be satisfied with their salary/remuneration level.
- Vets working part time agreed less that they were satisfied with the support given by their line manager.
- Respondents aged under 30 agreed less than older respondents that they were satisfied with their salary/remuneration, where agreement increases with age (see Appendix Table 13.5).
- Independent service providers/locums were less satisfied with all three statements around support and remuneration.
- Respondents who qualified since 2019 had lower mean scores around their satisfaction with their salary/remuneration.

- Respondents who qualified before 2019 were less satisfied with the support given by others at work.
- Respondents who qualified in the UK were more satisfied with all three statements around support and remuneration.

9.2.6 Able to be myself

A standalone statement, asking the extent to which respondents felt they can be themselves in their workplace, received encouraging results. Both vet nurses and vets tended to agree with the statement, providing a mean score of around four (Figure 9.11).

Figure 9.11: Views on the ability to be oneself in the workplace, with vet nurse comparison



Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession and RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession, 2024

Further analysis of vets' responses explored this statement by participant characteristics:

- Males agreed more that they could be themselves in their workplace.
- Respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds agreed least that they felt able to be themselves in their workplace.
- Individuals with health conditions felt less able to be themselves in their workplace.
- Those working as independent service providers and locums provided lower mean scores to the statement.
- Respondents who qualified in the UK agreed most that they could be themselves in the workplace.

9.3 Analysis by practice ownership structure

Further analysis was conducted to look at whether there was a difference in views between vets who work in independently-owned and corporately-owned practices, regardless of age. This showed that there were such differences for 14 out of the 29 attitudinal statements, in that for these statements, the average (mean) score was consistently higher (suggesting higher agreement) for those working in independently-owned compared to corporately-owned practices. The mean scores for each statement can be found in Table 13.6 in the Appendix.

Across all age groups, respondents working in corporately-owned practices returned higher mean scores than those in independently-owned practices for two statements: that the veterinary profession offers good opportunities for flexible working, and that they were familiar with and used quality improvement in their practice.

Across all age groups, respondents working in independently-owned practices returned higher mean scores than those in corporately-owned practices for 12 statements, namely that: their work gave them job satisfaction, vet nurses were valued by the profession, clients valued the work of vets, clients valued the work of vet nurses, their workplace enabled them to deliver the best possible outcomes to patients, their workplace enabled them to exercise their clinical freedom, veterinary work was not stressful, they were satisfied with the support given by their line manager, they were satisfied with support given by others in their practice, they were satisfied with their salary/remuneration level, they were able to be themselves in the workplace, and when on call they would be satisfied to be obliged to take steps to provide emergency first aid and pain relief only on animals registered with the practice.

9.4 Reflections on career choice

Vets responding to the survey were asked if, given the opportunity, they would still choose to work within the profession. Responses, displayed in Table 9.1, show that:

- The proportion of respondents saying they would remain in the profession slightly decreased compared to 2019 but remained marginally higher than in 2014.
- Similarly, the proportion saying they would choose not to work in the profession if starting their career again increased by around 1% from 2019.
- The percentage of those saying they are unsure has remained relatively stable through the years.

Table 9.1: Reflections on career choice, with comparison to 2019 and 2014

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2014 %
Yes	2,791	46.9	47.8	46.2
No	1,461	24.5	23.3	25.2
Unsure	1,700	28.6	28.9	28.6
Total	5,952	100	100	100

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

Further analysis identified significant differences by respondent groups. Table 9.2 shows that:

- Male respondents were slightly more likely to say they would become a vet again.
- Vets aged 30-39 and 40-49 were the least likely to say they would become a vet again.
- Respondents with health conditions were less likely to indicate they would opt to become vets again if restarting their career.
- Compared to those working outside clinical practice, those working within it were more likely to say they would opt to become a vet again.
- Respondents planning to stay in the profession for more than five years and those planning to retire, were more likely to say they would go into the profession again, compared to those planning to leave the profession for reasons other than retirement.

Table 9.2: Career reflections by respondent characteristics

		2024 %		
		Yes	No	Unsure
Gender	Female	46.1	23.8	30.2
	Male	49.8	24.2	25.9
Age	Under 30	54.6	17.1	28.3
	30-39	40.1	28.6	31.3
	40-49	42.0	29.1	28.9
	50-59	48.5	23.3	28.2
	60-69	56.0	19.2	24.8
Health conditions	70 and over	60.9	14.5	24.6
	Yes	39.7	31.2	29.1
Within/outside clinical practice	No	49.1	22.7	28.2
	Within	48.0	24.1	27.8
Career plans	Outside	41.4	27.6	31.0
	Stay in the profession for more than 5 years	51.4	19.2	29.4
	Fully retire	52.0	22.0	26.0
	Leave the profession	9.0	67.6	23.4

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

9.5 Best things, challenges and improvements

9.5.1 Best things about being a vet

Respondents were asked to select up to five of the best things about being a vet from a list of options. Table 9.3 shows that:

- Working with animals remains the best thing about working in the profession, selected by 73%.
- This was followed by challenge/stimulus (57%), job satisfaction (51%) and making a difference (50%).
- Work-life balance (4%), working hours (1%) and other (2%) were the three response options selected by the fewest respondents.

Table 9.3: Best things about being a vet (multiple response)

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %
Working with animals	4,313	73.1	67.7
Challenge/stimulus	3,373	57.2	45.4
Job satisfaction	3,003	50.9	51.0
Making a difference	2,966	50.3	30.8
Workplace relationships/colleagues	2,277	38.6	20.3
Client relationships	2,221	37.7	31.0
Opportunities for learning	1,933	32.8	-
Ability to choose working location	950	16.1	10.0
Diversity of career opportunities	930	15.8	-
Autonomy	856	14.5	9.6
Status	553	9.4	4.8
Financial reward	494	8.4	6.0
Work-life balance	226	3.8	2.1
Working hours	69	1.2	0.5
Other	99	1.7	1.7

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024 and 2019

9.5.2 Challenges facing the profession

Similar to the best things about being a vet, respondents were asked to select the five main challenges facing the profession. Table 9.4 illustrates that:

- Client expectations/demands (54%) and stress levels (49%) remained in the top two main challenges facing the profession.
- The affordability of veterinary services (46%) saw a large increase compared to the percentage of respondents who selected this option in 2019.

- Changes in training (2%), technology (2%), and discrimination (2%) were the three least commonly selected challenges.

Table 9.4: Challenges facing the profession (multiple response)

	2024 N	2024 %	2019%
Client expectations/demands	3,197	54.3	54.9
Stress levels	2,912	49.4	47.3
Affordability of veterinary services	2,728	46.3	30.0
Staff shortages	2,471	41.9	-
Changing structures in veterinary practice ownership	2,366	40.2	30.3
Difficulty in recruiting veterinary surgeons	2,307	39.2	25.7
Poor financial reward	1,711	29.0	25.8
Misinformation/bad PR	1,222	20.7	17.6
Staff turnover	1,189	20.2	-
Poor support for the profession	1,179	20.0	11.0
Economic climate	1,065	18.1	12.7
Training of newly qualified veterinary surgeons	955	16.2	
Brexit	904	15.3	13.6
Expectations of employees	852	14.5	-
Animal welfare issues	524	8.9	-
Decline in farming	501	8.5	11.8
Underutilisation of skills	385	6.5	-
Lack of diversity within the profession	341	5.8	-
Discrimination	125	2.1	-
Technology	122	2.1	-
Changes in training	107	1.8	1.6
Other	275	4.7	-

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024 and 2019

9.5.3 Improvements to the profession

Finally, respondents were asked to select up to five improvements that could be made to the profession. Table 9.5 shows that:

- As in 2019, the options selected by the largest amount of respondents were better financial reward (47%) and less workload pressure (43%).
- A significantly larger proportion said that less regulation/bureaucracy would improve the profession in this survey compared to 2019.
- Relatively small numbers opted for more responsibility and more variety as things that would make the profession better.

Table 9.5: Improvements that could be made to the veterinary profession (multiple response)

	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %
Better financial reward	2,746	47.0	53.9
Less workload pressure	2,499	42.8	30.1
Managing client expectations	2,330	39.9	-
More respect/recognition from the public	2,304	39.4	24.6
Less regulation/bureaucracy	2,100	35.9	21.3
Better management/leadership	1,945	33.3	-
More flexible working	1,605	27.5	18.2
Better opportunities for career progression	1,595	27.3	19.7
Shorter hours	1,495	25.6	13.8
Less out-of-hours/on-call	1,099	18.8	20.7
More professional support	926	15.8	-
A more open culture	903	15.5	-
More support staff	820	14.0	11.2
Greater variety of business model opportunities	712	12.2	-
Improved CPD processes	593	10.1	-
More personal support	574	9.8	-
More variety	128	2.2	2.2
More responsibility	80	1.4	1.5
Other	339	5.8	3.2

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019

10 Wellbeing

This chapter reports the results of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), which asks about respondents' feelings about their lives in general, not just at work.

Chapter summary

- The average WEMWBS score across all vet participants was 47.5 out of 70, slightly lower than 2019 (47.7), notably lower than 2014 (49) and significantly lower than the UK average score nationally of 51.
- Females reported a lower score than males (46.7 and 49.1).
- The score increased with age, from a low 46.2 for those under 40 to 50.2 for those in their 60s and 51.4 for those aged 70 and over.
- White respondents scored higher than those in an ethnic minority group (47.7 and 45.8).
- Those with a disability or health condition scored significantly lower than those without (42.5 and 48.8).
- Those working within the profession scored notably lower than those working outside (47.3 and 50.7).
- Those working in an independently-owned practice had somewhat higher scores than those working for a corporately-owned practice (48.1 and 46.4).
- Graduates since 2019 had a lower score than those who qualified earlier (45.6 and 47.7).

10.1 Background to the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS)

The WEMWBS asks respondents about their experiences, thoughts and feelings over the past two weeks through 14 attitudinal statements. Individual items are scored from one (none of the time) to five (all of the time) and a total scale score is calculated by summing the 14 item scores. The minimum score is 14 which indicates poor wellbeing, while the maximum score is 70, representing high levels of wellbeing. The average score nationally is 51.0.

10.2 Response to WEMWBS

The average WEMWBS score across all vets was 47.5. Table 10.1 indicates that the trend observed in previous years, of the overall WEMWBS score decreasing, has continued in 2024.

Table 10.1: Mean WEMWBS score of vets in 2024, compared with 2019 and 2014

	2024 N	2024 Mean	2019 Mean	2014 Mean
Mean score	5,342	47.5	47.7	49.0

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024, 2019 and 2014

Further analysis, presented in Table 10.2, highlighted some differences by demographics:

- Females reported a significantly lower score than males (46.7 and 49.1 respectively).
- Mean WEMWBS scores are lower for younger participants, with those under 39 presenting a mean score of 46, whilst those over 70 scoring an average of 51.
- Respondents from an ethnic minority presented a mean WEMWBS score of 46, compared to white respondents who scored 48 on average.
- Respondents who indicated that they had a disability or health condition reported a significantly lower mean score than those who did not.

Table 10.2 Mean WEMWBS score by demographic characteristics

		2024
Gender	Female	46.7
	Male	49.1
Age	Under 30	46.2
	30-39	46.2
	40-49	47.0
	50-59	47.9
	60-69	50.2
	70 and over	51.4
Ethnicity	White	47.7
	Minority ethnic group	45.8
Health conditions	Yes	42.5
	No	48.8

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession 2024

Table 10.3 presents further intersectional analysis by demographics and shows that:

- When looking at the intersection between age and gender, females under 39 reported the lowest mean score, followed by males aged 30-39.
- White males presented the highest wellbeing score, whilst females from ethnic minority backgrounds reported the lowest average score.
- Respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds aged 30-39 reported the lowest mean scores when looking at the intersection of age and ethnicity; this was similar for

respondents from white backgrounds, where those aged under 39 had the lowest average scores.

- Female respondents with a health condition reported lower mean scores than males with a health condition.
- Of those with a health condition, respondents aged 30-39 and 40-49 averaged the lowest wellbeing scores.

Table 10.3: Breakdown of WEMWBS scores by intersectional demographics

		Male	Female	Under 30	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 and over
Age	Under 30	47.2	46.1						
	30-39	46.7	46.1						
	40-49	47.3	46.9						
	50-59	49.2	46.8						
	60-69	51.2	49.0						
	70 and over	51.8	49.4						
Ethnicity	White	49.2	46.8	46.3	46.3	47.0	48.0	50.2	51.4
	Minority ethnic group	47.3	45.1	45.7	44.5	44.8	46.6	-	-
Health condition	Yes	44.4	41.9	42.1	40.4	40.8	43.0	44.5	49.4
	No	49.9	48.0	47.4	47.5	48.2	49.1	51.4	52.2

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession 2024

Similar analysis found significant differences across several work-related characteristics, as seen in Table 10.4:

- Respondents working in the profession had a lower mean WEMWBS score than those working outside the profession (47.3 and 50.7 respectively).
- Individuals working as part of a corporate group or for a charity had lower mean scores than those working for an independently-owned practice or veterinary school.
- By role, employed assistants reported the lowest mean WEMWBS scores, whilst principals/directors/partners had the highest mean scores.
- Those who qualified since 2019 (and were therefore younger on average) had a lower mean score than those who qualified before 2019 (45.6 and 47.7).

Table 10.4: Mean WEMWBS score by type of work

		2024
Profession	Within the veterinary profession	47.3
	Outside the veterinary profession	50.7
Practice ownership type	Independent practice	48.1
	Part of a corporate group	46.4
	Charity	46.8
	Veterinary school	49.0
Role type	Principal/director/partner	48.5
	Employed Assistant	46.6
	Independent/locum	47.3
	Other	47.4
Qualification year	Before 2019	47.7
	Since 2019	45.6

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

11 Views about the RCVS

This chapter summarises respondents' views about the RCVS, notably its values, communication, purpose and various initiatives.

Chapter summary

- When asked to rate their agreement with nine aspects of the RCVS, respondents returned a clearly positive mean score for 'It has a good international reputation' (3.55 out of 5), positive scores for 'It is highly professional' (3.4) and 'I respect the RCVS' (3.27), and a neutral score for 'It supports the development of the professions' (3.02). For all other aspects, scores were slightly negative; the lowest scores were returned for 'It is empathetic and understanding' (2.61) and 'RCVS registration provides good value for money' (2.62).
- When asked about how well the RCVS met its behaviour aspirations, the greatest agreement was with the 'diverse and inclusive' aspiration (50% thought this was totally or mostly met) while the lowest agreement was with the 'compassionate' aspiration (33% thought this was totally or mostly met).
- The 22% who had made contact with the RCVS in the previous 12 months were asked to rate the RCVS on six aspects. All six received positive scores between 3.2 and 3.8 out of 5, with 'professionalism' (3.8) and 'tone when addressing you' (3.7) scoring the highest.
- When all respondents were asked about their general views about RCVS communication, views were uniformly neutral; all five aspects scored between 2.9 and 3.1.
- 43% overall were aware of the RCVS Academy, and 37% of these had accessed it; of those who had accessed it, 37% had completed one course and 16% more than one.
- Awareness of RCVS initiatives was highest for Mind Matters (73%) and Vet Futures (55%), and lowest for ViVet (31%) and Diversity and Inclusion (34%). The highest level of use/engagement was with Mind Matters, in that 10% of respondents had engaged with this.
- When asked about the extent of their agreement with 17 statements about the RCVS purpose and mission, respondents tended to return mostly neutral to slightly negative mean scores. The highest scores were for 'Upholds standards within the profession' (3.49 out of 5) and 'Sets appropriate standards within the profession' (3.27), while the lowest were for 'Supports me in my work as a veterinary professional' (2.49) and 'Is compassionate' (2.57).
- When asked to rate the RCVS overall, the mean score was 5.5 out of 10. The most commonly allocated scores were seven (18% of respondents), five (17%) and six (15%).
- Finally, respondents were asked what they would like the RCVS to do more of and less of. The main 'more of' themes were to listen to and consult stakeholders, to support vets and the veterinary profession generally, and to regulate corporates. The main 'less of' theme was to lessen the administrative burden of bureaucracy and regulation.
- Respondents were, at the end of the survey, given the opportunity to make general comments and suggestions. The most frequent theme was corporate ownership and the

increase in corporate practices taking over smaller ones; other themes were the need for change in the profession and the challenges posed by increasing rules and regulations.

11.1 Perceptions

Respondents were presented with a series of nine statements aiming to collect their views on the RCVS. Similar to other statement questions throughout the survey, respondents were asked to score their agreement with each using a five-point scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree), with three being a neutral midpoint. Appendix Table 13.3 shows a full breakdown of results, including the number of responses, the spread of responses across the scale, and mean responses.

Figure 11.1 displays the mean score for the nine statements, and shows that:

- Responses to statements tended to be slightly below the neutral point, with three leaning more toward a positive level of agreement.
- Vets agreed least that the RCVS was empathetic and understanding and that RCVS registration provided good value for money.
- Conversely, vets agreed most that the RCVS had a good international reputation and that it was highly professional.

Figure 11.1: Perceptions of the RCVS



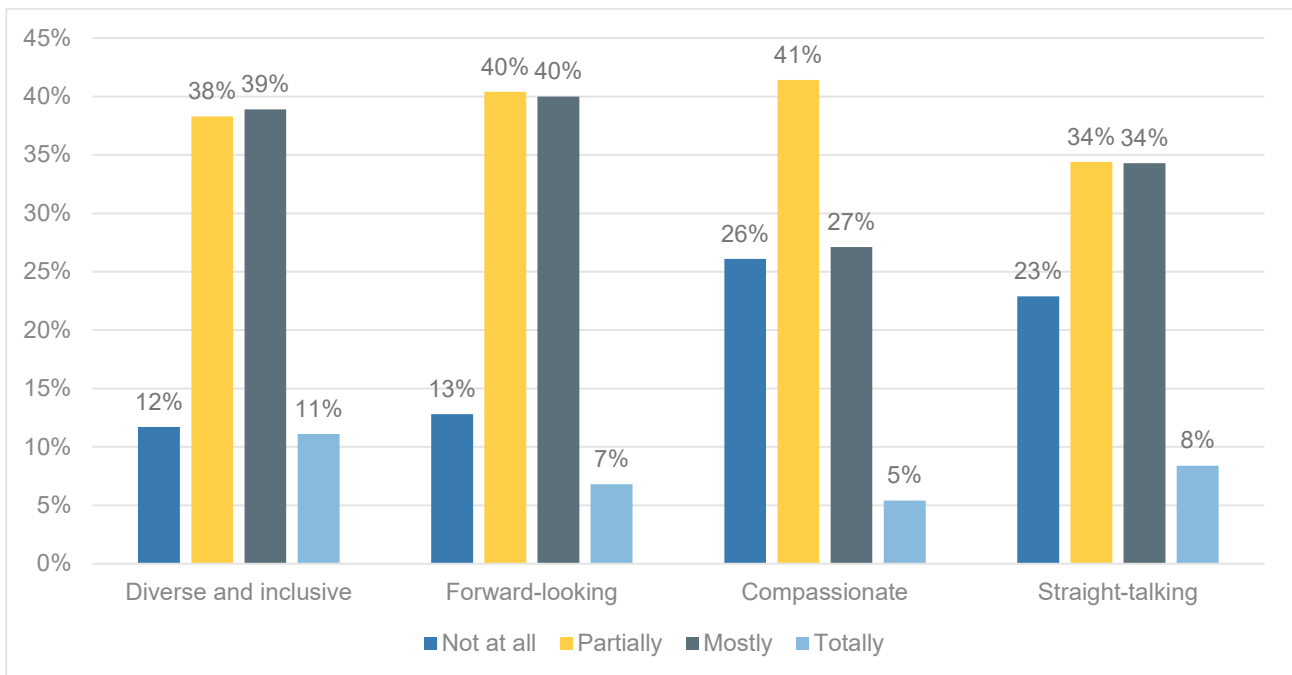
Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

11.2 Values

Respondents were presented with four behaviour aspirations of the RCVS (diverse and inclusive, forward-looking, compassionate, straight-talking) and asked to state how well they feel the organisation meets these behaviours. Figure 11.2 shows that:

- Vets generally felt that the RCVS was ‘partially’ or ‘mostly’ meeting their behaviour aspirations.
- Respondents indicated that the RCVS was meeting its aspiration to be diverse and inclusive most, with 50% of respondents saying this was either mostly or totally met.
- Compassion was the aspiration considered to be met the least, with two-thirds (67%) saying this was either only partially met or not met at all.

Figure 11.2 How well the RCVS meets its behaviour aspirations



Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

11.3 Contact and communications

The majority (78%) had not contacted the RCVS within the previous 12 months, while the remaining 22% said they did make contact.

Those who said they had cause to contact the RCVS were asked for feedback on their experiences of communicating with the RCVS. Firstly, focusing on experiences of communicating with RCVS staff, Table 11.1 shows that:

- Almost two-thirds (65%) of respondents said the professionalism of RCVS staff was either good or excellent, and this was the highest-rated quality.

- This was followed closely by tone when addressing you, which 63% rated as good or excellent.
- Compassion and ability to solve your issue/answer your question had the lowest mean scores, however, more than 40% still rated these as either good or excellent.

Table 11.1: Views on communication with RCVS staff

	2024 %					2024 Mean
	Very poor	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent	
Professionalism	3.5	6.2	25.0	37.7	27.7	3.8
Tone when addressing you	4.3	8.9	23.8	38.6	24.4	3.7
Helpfulness	8.4	15.5	22.7	31.0	22.4	3.4
Approachability	5.3	11.7	29.0	34.0	20.0	3.5
Compassion	9.6	19.2	29.6	26.8	14.8	3.2
Ability to solve your issue/answer your question	14.2	19.4	21.0	24.7	20.7	3.2

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Following this, respondents were asked to rate their experiences of communication more generally. Table 11.2 illustrates that:

- Mean scores were similar across statements and were centred around the mid-point of the five-point scale.
- Vets generally felt that their experiences of communication with the RCVS were satisfactory, as this was the option that received the majority of responses on all statements.
- The aspect that respondents seemed to be most positive about was the speed of response, with 38% of respondents rating this as good or excellent.
- Understanding your point of view received the lowest mean score, with almost two-fifths (39%) rating this as poor or really poor.

Table 11.2: General views on communication with the RCVS

	2024 %					2024 Mean
	Very poor	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent	
Clarity of communication	7.1	17.5	39.0	28.1	8.3	3.1
Transparency of communication	8.4	20.2	37.5	26.0	7.9	3.1
Speed of response	9.0	16.3	36.9	27.4	10.4	3.1
Implementing agreed decisions in a timely manner	10.3	19.2	39.0	23.7	7.8	3.0
Understanding your point of view	13.1	25.7	32.5	21.2	7.6	2.9

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

11.4 RCVS Academy

Following contact and communication, respondents were asked about their awareness of the RCVS Academy, and for those who were aware, whether they had accessed the Academy. Table 11.3 shows that:

- Less than half were aware of the RCVS Academy.
- Of those who were aware, more than a third (37%) had accessed the RCVS Academy.

Table 11.3: Awareness and access of the RCVS Academy

	Yes		No	
	2024 N	2024 %	2024 N	2024 %
Are you aware of the RCVS Academy	2,466	42.8	3,301	57.2
Have you accessed the RCVS Academy	908	37.1	1,537	62.9

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Respondents who had accessed the RCVS Academy were asked to report if they had accessed any Academy courses. Table 11.4 shows that:

- Almost half (48%) had not completed a course before.
- Over one-third (37%) had accessed one course, and 16% had accessed more than one course.

Table 11.4: Completed an RCVS Academy course?

	2024 N	2024 %
Yes, one	332	36.6
Yes, more than one	144	15.9
No	432	47.6

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

11.5 Awareness of initiatives

Respondents were presented with a list of RCVS initiatives and asked to indicate whether they were aware of the initiative, had used or engaged with the initiative, or were not aware of the initiative. Responses, displayed in Table 11.5, illustrate that:

- Respondents were most aware of the Mind Matters initiative (73%), followed by Vet Futures (55%) and VN Futures (44%).

- Respondents were least aware of ViVet, with under a third (31%) having heard of the initiative.
- Mind Matters had the most engagement, with 10% of respondents.
- The proportion of respondents who were aware of RCVS initiatives has decreased since 2019, with use decreasing for all except for Mind Matters.

Table 11.5: Awareness of RCVS initiatives

	Aware			Used/Engaged with			Not aware of	
	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2024 N	2024 %	2019 %	2024 N	2024 %
Mind Matters	4,071	72.8	91.5	579	10.4	12.7	942	16.8
Vet Futures	3,034	55.1	92.9	205	3.7	11.0	2,271	41.2
VN Futures	2,376	43.7	-	57	1.0	-	3,003	55.2
RCVS Leadership	2,224	40.5	89.2	220	4.0	13.7	3,043	55.5
Diversity and Inclusion	1,857	34.0	-	48	0.9	-	3,559	65.1
ViVet	1,680	31.1	90.0	67	1.2	11.0	3,652	67.6

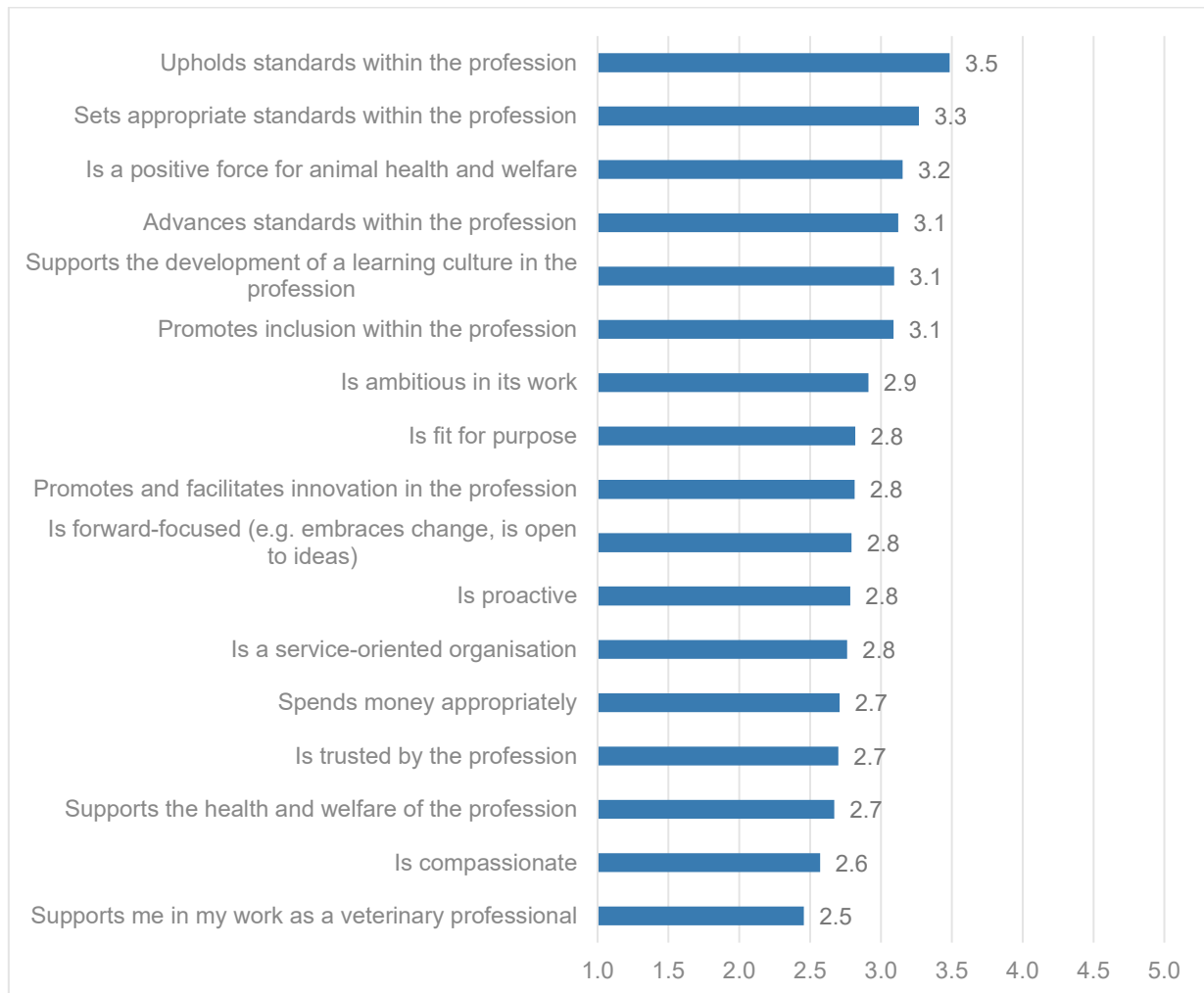
Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2019 and 2024

11.6 Purpose

To understand vets' views on the RCVS's purpose and mission, respondents were presented with 17 statements and asked to score the extent to which they feel the RCVS delivered on each. The scale for scoring ranged from one (not at all) to five (totally), with three being the mid-point. Appendix Table 13.4 outlines the full response to this series of statements, including the number of responses, the spread across scores, and the means.

Figure 11.3 also displays the mean score provided by all respondents to this series of statements, and shows:

- Statements generally averaged slightly lower than the mid-point.
- The two statements that received the highest score were around the RCVS upholding and setting appropriate standards within the profession.
- The statement around the RCVS supporting respondents in their work as a veterinary professional received the lowest mean score.

Figure 11.3: Views on the purpose of the RCVS, mean scores

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

The analysis highlighted statistically significant differences in responses to all 17 statements depending on whether an individual had been in touch with the RCVS in the 12 months prior to completing the survey. Those in touch with the RCVS provided lower average scores for the following statements on the RCVS:

- It advances standards within the profession.
- It is a positive force for animal health and welfare.
- It is a service-oriented organisation.
- It is fit for purpose.
- It is forward-focused (e.g. embraces change, is open to ideas).
- It is trusted by the profession.
- It promotes and facilitates innovation in the veterinary profession.
- It sets appropriate standards within the profession.

- It spends money appropriately.
- It supports the health and welfare of the profession.
- It upholds standards within the profession.
- It is proactive.
- It is ambitious in its work.

Further analysis exploring responses to two statements, *'promotes inclusion within the profession'* and *'supports the health and welfare of the profession'*, by protected characteristics highlighted significant differences in how respondents scored some statements depending on their personal characteristics.

- On average, male respondents gave higher scores than females to both statements.
- Respondents with a physical and/or mental health condition averaged lower scores on both statements.

11.7 Overall views

To gather an overall understanding of the perceptions of the RCVS, respondents were asked to rate the organisation using a scale ranging from 1 to 10, where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent (with a midpoint of 5.5). Vet respondents returned an overall mean score of 5.5, somewhat lower than the score of 6.6 out of 10 in 2019. Table 11.6 displays a breakdown of responses across the scale and shows:

- Scores of five and seven received the highest proportion (17% and 18%).
- Around one-third (31%) selected scores of four and below.
- More than half (52%) gave scores of six and over, indicating positive attitudes towards the RCVS.

Table 11.6: Respondent ratings of the RCVS (mean=5.5)

Score	2024 N	2024 %
1	262	5.0
2	311	6.0
3	551	10.6
4	496	9.5
5	900	17.2
6	793	15.2
7	932	17.8
8	675	12.9
9	203	3.9
10	99	1.9

Further analysis identified that:

- Respondents working outside clinical practice gave a higher mean score than those working within clinical practice.
- Individuals who qualified since 2019 had more positive views on the RCVS overall when compared to respondents who qualified before 2019.
- British citizens rated the RCVS slightly more negatively compared to those who did not have British citizenship.
- Retired respondents gave a higher average score compared to those currently working.
- Those who had had contact with the RCVS over the past year had slightly more negative views than those who had not had contact.

11.8 Do more, do less?

Toward the end of the survey, respondents were provided an open space to share things they would like the RCVS to do more and less in the future. Given the number of open-text responses, a random sample of around 20% of responses (N=1,734) was selected for review to inform suggestions.

11.8.1 Do more

Free-text responses to this question focused on respondents' views that the RCVS should listen better and be more supportive; views were also expressed about the RCVS's regulatory role within the profession. It is worth noting that some suggestions may not be legally possible or appropriate for a regulator.

Listen to stakeholders

The most common theme that emerged revolved around a need for the RCVS to listen and consult more with all stakeholders, particularly vets working in clinical practice. Respondents explained that they would like to be consulted on changes that will be implemented and that they felt the RCVS should listen to all stakeholders' opinions.

Consult all stakeholders when making decisions regarding animal welfare/provision of veterinary care especially in 'remote' locations.

Listen more to vets on the front line in clinical practice before implementing decisions that affect them.

Support

Many respondents expressed they would like the RCVS to generally support vets and the veterinary profession more. Others said they would want more proactive mental health support from the RCVS, explaining that the public often is not aware of the challenges the job poses in terms of wellbeing.

Practical support protecting the mental health of members rather than just advice when we are broken.

Protect veterinarian's mental health by strict regulations on work-life balance.

Many respondents highlighted that they would want increased support from the RCVS over complaints and abuse they receive from clients.

Supporting vets more when faced with unjust client feedback on social media or newspapers.

To be on our side rather than focusing on taking the public's side against us.

Similarly, another theme that emerged was around educating the public and clients on the profession, the issues it faces, and the services available, to better manage expectations.

A more proactive approach to explain the developing structure of the profession (GP, Advanced practitioner, Specialists) to the public to enable the differences in each part to be clearly explained.

More education of the public regarding laws to which the veterinary profession has to abide by.

Respondents also expressed they wanted the RCVS to more proactively encourage diversity and inclusion.

Active participation in diversity/inclusion efforts, e.g. school outreach, bursaries/funding, work experience/EMS support, etc for BAME children/students.

Support (with funding and role models) diversity (physical disabilities and neurodiversity) in the profession.

Regulation

Another frequent theme was the need for the RCVS to regulate corporate ownership of practices, with respondents discussing the impacts this was having on rising fees for clients as well as vets' stress levels and salaries.

Address the corporatisation of veterinary medicine so that vets regain control of their careers/salaries/mobility.

Stop corporates ruining the veterinary profession and making it impossible for vets to buy a practice.

11.8.2 Do less

Many respondents said that there was nothing they would necessarily want the RCVS to do less of. Others shared suggestions for future changes, but consideration must again be taken to note that some suggestions may not be legally possible or appropriate for a regulator.

- The perception of additional regulation and bureaucracy was the most frequent theme, with respondents saying these added an administrative burden which increased workload pressure: *'unnecessary bureaucracy and paperwork which hinders us being able to do our jobs and affects patient welfare.'*
- Others would like the RCVS to send fewer communications: *'Sending out newsletters with links to lengthy articles we never have time to read. Summaries of the key points are better.'*
- Some respondents said they would like less emphasis on CPD requirements that they perceived to be bureaucratic and unhelpful: *'Reflective CPD - Seems very much like a tick-box exercise in its current form rather than a method to improve practice standards.'*
- Another issue raised by some respondents was that they would like the RCVS to do less of making changes about which they perceived they had not been consulted: *'Making policy and rule changes without consulting veterinary practitioners.'*
- Perhaps unsurprisingly, raising membership fees also emerged as something respondents would want the RCVS to do less of.

11.9 Final thoughts

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked whether they had any additional comments on the veterinary profession, their role, the RCVS or the survey. Vets provided feedback on a range of topics including the need for change within the profession, changes to standards and regulations with regards to the RCVS, and the survey itself.

The veterinary profession

The most frequent theme was corporate ownership and the increase in corporate practices taking over smaller ones. Some respondents also discussed the negative effects they perceived this to be having on training and development opportunities, as well as staff wellbeing.

I have very real concerns about the corporatisation of the veterinary profession and the owning of practices by unregulated individuals/companies. I feel that this has the potential for professional staff to be in positions where they have limited control over case management with the resulting increase in stress and risk of moral injury which this brings. As regards small animal practice, we are very much in danger of making even contextualised veterinary care unaffordable for a large number of people.

Other respondents also suggested a need for change within the profession to improve its reputation.

[...] I would also suggest that over-treatment and overcharging in many referral practices have contributed to the poor reputation of the sector.

Improved opportunities for training and development, to better prepare students and those early in their careers, were also discussed.

It is extremely stressful being a vet and I feel nothing really prepared me for this even though I did more than enough EMS in a very supportive practice. There should be a structure for EMS for every practice to follow and for every student to complete to make them ready to go into practice.

The RCVS

Some respondents commented on the increase in rules and regulations, which is posing new challenges to veterinary surgeons, questioning the RCVS's role in this.

Current regulation is making it extremely difficult in practice. The new legislation around prescribing paras is damaging relationships with clients and causing stress to all staff. I would like to see RCVS campaigning on behalf of the profession and promoting our work and costs positively to the general public.

The survey

Lastly, a few veterinary surgeons left positive feedback on the survey, highlighting the importance of this research being conducted.

The fact that this survey is being sent is a good thing! Thank you!

I love the profession and think it offers great opportunities. Thanks for taking the time to conduct the survey - I believe it really matters.

12 Conclusions

12.1 Context

The veterinary profession has experienced considerable change and upheaval in the five years since 2019, as several surveys carried out by IES on behalf of the RCVS during this period⁶ have shown. During the Covid-19 pandemic, vets and vet nurses working in clinical practice had to manage difficult, innovative and often unusual ways of seeing and treating animals, while also being mindful of their own safety and that of their clients; in addition, there was a big increase in remote engagement with clients, necessitating further changes in ways of working. In the aftermath of lockdown, veterinary practices had to cope with a large backlog of demand, including from first-time pet owners. Vets working outside clinical practice also faced challenges, for example adopting remote working and, for those working within veterinary schools, engaging remotely with students. These difficulties were exacerbated by staff shortages of both vets and vet nurses. EU Exit, for example, led to a significant decline in European vets coming to the UK to work, while some vets and vet nurses cited stress and workload pressure as reasons for departing from the profession. Vets in clinical practice reported an increase in verbal abuse from frustrated and angry clients during and after lockdown, although it is probably fair to say that vet nurses, often the first point of contact for clients, often bore the larger share of such abuse.

While the 2024 survey was underway, respondents were experiencing the cost of living crisis, increased energy bills, and political instability at home and abroad (e.g. Ukraine); these challenges perhaps impacted particularly strongly on clinical practices, their staff and their clients. A further challenge for veterinary practices is that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) launched a review into the UK's veterinary sector in September 2023, and this review was still happening during the period when the 2024 survey was live⁷. Discussions on the heated topic of RCVS governance reform, and new guidance on the prescription of ecto- and endoparasiticides were also both live at the time of the survey being issued.

Despite these issues, vets responding to surveys over the past five years have displayed a continuing willingness and commitment to rise to the challenges and to work with their

⁶ RCVS Covid-19 survey 2020; European veterinary professionals working in the UK: the impact of Brexit – third and final survey 2021; Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on veterinary surgeons 2022; Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on veterinary nurses 2022

⁷ More recently (May 2024), the CMA announced it would proceed with a formal market investigation into the UK's veterinary sector, due to the initial investigation revealing concerns about transparency and client choice.

colleagues within the profession to maintain high standards, including doing their best for clients and their animals.

12.2 Evidence of trends

The **demographic profile** of vets has undergone one substantial change since IES first started running surveys of vets on behalf of the RCVS in 2002. In 2002, 37% of vets were female, while in 2024, the percentage had increased significantly; given that 79% of those who qualified since 2109 were female, this trend of 'feminisation' looks likely to continue. By contrast, the vet nursing profession has always been overwhelmingly female. Some other demographic characteristics have seen far less change. There has been little movement in the ethnicity profile, for example, in that when those who preferred not to give their ethnicity were removed from the calculation, around 96% of respondents were white, a similar percentage to 2019 and 2014 and just a little lower than 2010⁸. The mean age of vets has also not changed much over the years, being just a little higher compared to earlier surveys: 47 in 2024, 45 in 2019 and 44 in 2014⁹. By contrast, although vet nurses remain younger, on average, than vets, the mean age of vet nurse respondents has been steadily increasing, from 30 in 2008 to 37 in 2024.

Another difference between vets and vet nurses is that a relatively low 66% of vets had attended a state school between the ages of 11 and 16, while 93% of vet nurse respondents had done so; 29% of vets had attended independent or fee-paying schools, considerably higher than the national statistic of 7.5%.

Two aspects have experienced somewhat more notable changes for both vets and vet nurses. The first relates to the percentage with a disability or chronic condition. In 2006, 8% said they had a disability or medical condition that limited what they could do at work, whereas in 2024, 17% said they had a mental or physical health condition or disability that had a substantial and long-term effect on their everyday activities. Although these percentages are not strictly comparable due to the wording of the question being different, the increase is considerable, and was even higher among vet nurse respondents (29%, compared to 3% in 2008). Second, the percentage of vet respondents with adult caring responsibilities has increased notably, from 5% in 2014 and 2019 to 8% in 2024; a similar increase is apparent among vet nurse respondents, from 3% in 2014 and 2109 to 7% in 2024. In contrast, the percentage of vets with child dependants, at 36%, has remained unchanged since 2019.

Work trends observed in previous surveys have continued. Broadly in line with the increasing percentage of women in the profession, part-time working has continued to rise steadily from 11% in 2000, 19% in 2014 and 23% in 2019 to 27% in 2024; however, it should also be noted that part-time working is very common in the older age brackets. As in previous surveys, the majority of vets (90%) worked for at least part of their time in

⁸ The RCVS database shows a similar picture, where 93% of registered vets were white.

⁹ The average age of vets on the RCVS database was 40 years old, slightly lower than the average age of survey respondents.

clinical veterinary practice, with most of these being entirely within clinical practice. Two **clinical practice** trends noted in previous surveys have continued. First, there has been a steady increase over the years in the percentage working in small animal practice, and a decrease in mixed practice working. In 2006, 45% of all respondents worked in small animal practice, while 25% worked in mixed practice; in 2024, 58% worked in small animal practice and 10% in mixed practice. Second, the rise in corporate ownership has continued. In 2024, 51% of respondents in clinical practice worked in a practice that was corporately owned or a joint venture with a corporate, while 40% worked in independently-owned practices; this represents a substantial change from 2019, when 40% worked in corporately-owned practices and 48% in independently-owned practices.

12.3 Implications for the future

The 2024 survey has identified a variety of issues that are likely to impact vets' personal experiences of, and attitudes to, their work in the future. In addition, it has highlighted a number of concerns about the future of the profession. These are presented as bullet points below, although it will be apparent that many are interrelated and contribute towards some vets experiencing a degree of weariness in their work and anxiety about the profession, despite the clearly positive aspects such as working with animals, challenge and stimulus, making a difference and having clinical freedom.

12.3.1 Personal aspects

- Although more than half (56%) had not experienced harassment or bullying at work in the last year, 34% had received harassment or bullying from clients, and 13% from colleagues. These percentages are lower than those returned by vet nurses, but still a cause for concern, and suggest that veterinary practices may need to put more policies and processes in place to tackle client and colleague abuse. Vets with a disability/clinical condition were more likely than average to report incidents of bullying and harassment.
- The survey suggests that stress levels and workload pressure, apparent during and immediately after the Covid-19 pandemic, are still very prevalent within the profession. A very high 91% of vet respondents agreed/strongly agreed that veterinary work was stressful, and 49% identified stress levels as one of the top five challenges to the profession (in position 2). It seems that staff shortages were contributing to stress and workload pressure, in that 'staff shortages', identified by 42% of respondents, was the fourth of the top five challenges. On a personal level, constant pressure at work may be a negative influence on vets' overall views about their day-to-day experiences and career intentions.

12.3.2 Concerns about the future of the profession

- Retention remains an issue within the profession. Although 75% of vet respondents said they intended to stay in the profession for more than five years, 10% intended to leave the profession for reasons other than retirement. The most common reasons

were poor work-life balance (56%), chronic stress (54%), and not feeling rewarded or valued in a non-financial sense (47%). The percentage of vet nurses planning to leave for reasons other than retirement was even higher, at 25%. Some vet respondents also regretted choosing their profession; when asked whether, if they could start their career again, they would still become a vet, around 25% said no, although this is similar to 2109 and 2014 and lower than the 29% reported by vet nurses.

- An important cause for concern is that the average WEMWBS score across all vet participants was 47.5 out of 70. Although this was higher than the score returned by vet nurses (44.1), it was notably lower than 2014 (49) and significantly lower than the average score nationally of 51. Women, younger respondents and those with a disability or medical condition tended to score lower than men, older respondents and those without a disability/medical condition. A further interesting finding is that those working within the profession scored notably lower than those working outside (47.3 and 50.7), and those working in an independently-owned practice had somewhat higher scores than those working for a corporate group (48.1 and 46.4). These WEMWBS findings suggest that the RCVS's focus on mental health remains very appropriate.
- An interesting finding about new qualifiers is that although nurses agreed that newly qualified vet nurses had the necessary skills from day one (3.3 out of 5), vets clearly disagreed that newly qualified vets had the necessary skills from day one (2.4 out of 5). This is despite recent vet qualifiers agreeing that their vet school curriculum overall had prepared them for their profession (3.5 out of 5). It may be appropriate to consider investigating further this discrepancy between vets and vet nurses about the training of their newly-qualified colleagues.
- Another issue that is very apparent throughout the survey is the differing perceptions of vets and vet nurses about the value accorded to them by clients, the general public and the profession. Only 28% of vet nurses, for example, agreed/strongly agreed that they were valued by clients, while 45% of vets agreed/strongly agreed that vet nurses were valued; in addition, 80% of vet nurses agreed/strongly agreed that vets were valued by clients, compared to a notably lower 60% of vets. This suggests that understanding of what vets and vet nurses do, and the different roles they can have, needs to be raised not only among the general public but within the veterinary profession.
- One big cause for concern among many vets is the continuing trend for veterinary practices to be owned by corporate groups rather than independents. Changing ownership structures featured within the top five challenges to the profession, with 40% identifying it as a concern compared to a notably lower 30% in 2019. Some vets, in their comments, relate the changes in ownership structure to higher charges to clients; indeed, 46% of respondents said that affordability of veterinary services was one of the top challenges to the profession, a big increase from 2019 (30%). Many vets will doubtless await the findings of the CMA's investigation with interest.

12.3.3 On a more positive note

It is very easy to focus on the more worrying survey results, but of course there were also many positive survey findings. Vets returned positive scores for many aspects, especially relating to job satisfaction, stimulus/challenge, working with animals, being able to make a difference, clinical freedom and feeling supported by colleagues; in addition, although some may regret their career choice, 47% said they would choose to be a vet again, and 75% said they planned to stay in the profession for the next five years. The high levels of engagement many vets have with their profession is reflected in many free-text comments, suggesting ways in which the profession could be improved and the actions that the RCVS could consider to raise the understanding and appreciation of the sector among the general public.

13 Appendix

Table 13.1: Attitude statements about the veterinary profession, percentage spread and mean scores

	N	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	% agree	2024 mean	2019 mean	2014 mean
Veterinary work gives me job satisfaction	5,792	2.2	6.3	10.7	46.7	34.2	80.9	4.0	4.0	4.0
Vet nurses are valued by the veterinary profession	5,776	3.1	14.1	12.9	47.3	22.6	69.9	3.7	3.7	3.8
I feel able to critically appraise a research study	5,650	5.4	13.2	13.5	42.6	25.3	67.9	3.7	3.8	-
Clients value the work of vets	5,877	4.4	15.4	20.1	48.6	11.6	60.2	3.5	3.4	3.7
I am familiar with the concept of quality improvement	5,730	4.2	18.8	18.1	42.2	16.7	58.9	3.5	3.8	-
The veterinary profession has a culture of sharing and learning from mistakes	5,945	5.9	23.2	22.2	41.2	7.5	48.7	3.2	3.0	-
The veterinary profession nurtures innovation	5,918	4.3	20.2	32.2	37.1	6.2	43.3	3.2	3.1	-
Clients value the work of vet nurses	5,691	7.9	22.7	24.9	38.2	6.3	44.5	3.1	3.2	3.5
The veterinary profession offers good opportunities for those wishing to work flexibly	5,935	9.2	29.7	19.0	33.5	8.5	42.0	3.0	3.3	3.2
The veterinary profession offers good opportunities for career progression	5,913	9.0	28.4	25.2	30.8	6.6	37.4	3.0	-	-

The veterinary profession is diverse and inclusive	5,879	8.9	29.0	27.9	28	6.2	34.2	2.9	-	-
Over the past five years, I have participated in scientific research	5,033	19.3	32.2	7.7	22.5	18.3	40.8	2.9	2.8	-
The veterinary profession pays sufficient attention to the development of leadership skills	5,896	11.9	42.7	28.2	15.4	1.8	17.2	2.5	2.5	-
The veterinary profession pays sufficient attention to its environmental footprint	5,878	14.8	38.1	30.2	15	1.8	16.8	2.5	2.3	-
Newly qualified vets have the necessary skills required for clinical practice employment from day one	5,822	20.6	39.6	20.6	17.6	1.6	19.2	2.4	2.4	2.4
Veterinary work is not stressful	5,912	55.8	35.5	5.2	2.8	0.7	3.5	1.6	1.7	-

Note: 'Veterinary work is not stressful' has been recoded from the question 'Veterinary work is stressful' to reflect the response direction of other statements.

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Table 13.2: Attitude statements about veterinary work, percentage spread and mean scores

	N	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	% agree	2024 mean	2019 mean
I am familiar with the concept of evidence-based medicine	5,638	0.4	0.4	1.6	35.9	61.7	97.6	4.6	4.3
I feel I should continue to be obliged to take steps to provide emergency first aid and pain relief to animals according to my skills and specific situation	5,075	2.2	4.2	7.9	48.0	37.7	85.7	4.2	4.1

I actively use published evidence as part of my clinical decision-making	5,149	1.0	4.6	11.7	52.8	29.9	82.7	4.1	4.1
My workplace allows me to exercise my clinical freedom	4,927	1.4	4.7	9.7	49.0	35.1	84.1	4.1	-
I am able to be myself in my workplace	5,366	3.0	7.4	10.4	48.2	30.9	79.1	4.0	3.8
In my workplace I feel comfortable reporting and sharing mistakes	5,228	2.5	8.1	12.9	53.0	23.5	76.5	3.9	3.6
I am satisfied with the support given by others in the workplace	5,153	2.9	7.1	14.0	48.6	27.5	76.1	3.9	-
My workplace allows me to deliver the best possible outcomes to my patients	4,902	2.2	11.4	13.4	48.7	24.3	73.0	3.8	-
I actively use quality improvement in my practice	4,629	1.9	10.6	33.0	38.7	15.8	54.5	3.6	3.6
When on call I would be satisfied to be obliged to attend an emergency away from the practice only if it was necessary on clinical or welfare grounds	3,984	9.1	15.4	12.6	42.8	20.2	63.0	3.5	3.6
I am satisfied with the support given by my line manager	4,571	8.1	13.8	17.1	38.7	22.4	61.1	3.5	-
When on call I would be satisfied to be obliged to take steps to provide emergency first aid and pain relief only on animals registered with the practice	4,031	10.2	23.7	12.1	33.4	20.5	53.9	3.3	3.2
I am satisfied with my salary/remuneration level	5,322	9.6	21.6	16	38.2	14.6	52.8	3.3	3.1

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Table 13.3: Perceptions of the RCVS

	N	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	% agree	2024 mean	2019 mean
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It has a good international reputation	5,744	2.3	4.0	41.4	40.6	11.7	52.3	3.6	3.8
It is highly professional	5,736	4.7	9.3	35.4	42.0	8.5	50.5	3.4	3.7
I respect the RCVS	5,789	7.6	15.7	27.7	40.1	9.0	49.1	3.3	3.4
It supports the development of the professions	5,752	10.4	17.4	36.2	32.3	3.7	36.0	3.0	3.4
It is good at communicating with vets	5,762	13.3	25.8	32.4	26.3	2.2	28.5	2.8	3.2
I feel I can approach the organisation	5,754	12.1	26.4	30.7	27.5	3.3	30.8	2.8	3.2
It is in touch with the issues facing vets and vet nurses	5,751	16.7	26.5	32.8	21.7	2.3	24.0	2.7	3.2
RCVS registration provides good value for money	5,783	15.1	26.4	41.3	15.3	1.9	17.2	2.6	2.9
It is empathetic and understanding	5,738	14.3	27.8	42.2	14.3	1.4	15.7	2.6	2.9
The RCVS Council members understand the challenges of modern veterinary work	5,750	16.8	25.0	37.4	18.9	1.9	20.8	2.6	3.1

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Table 13.4: Views about the purpose of the RCVS

	N	1 - Not at all	2	% 3			4	5 – Totally	2024 mean	2019 mean
Upholds standards within the profession	5,350	4.5	10.8	31.3	38.4	14.9		3.5	3.8	
Sets appropriate standards within the profession	5,361	6.5	14.4	34.9	34.2	10.0		3.3	3.7	
Is a positive force for animal health and welfare	5,401	7.0	18.5	35.7	29.8	9.0		3.2	3.6	
Advances standards within the profession	5,422	7.5	16.4	40.0	28.6	7.5		3.1	3.6	
Promotes inclusion within the profession	5,306	6.0	18.4	42.9	26.0	6.7		3.1	-	

Supports the development of a learning culture in the profession	5,324	7.7	18.0	38.3	29.3	6.7	3.1	3.5
Is ambitious in its work	5,248	9.0	21.1	45.2	19.1	5.6	2.9	-
Is a service-oriented organisation	5,324	12.0	25.9	40.4	17.2	4.5	2.8	3.1
Is fit for purpose	5,375	12.5	23.9	37.5	21.7	4.5	2.8	3.5
Is forward-focused	2,438	8.5	18.0	39.6	25.1	8.7	2.8	3.2
Promotes and facilitates innovation in the profession	5,331	9.4	25.8	42.4	18.7	3.6	2.8	3.3
Is proactive	5,264	10.5	24.8	44.1	17.2	3.4	2.8	-
Is trusted by the profession	5,400	17.5	28.1	27.3	21.2	5.9	2.7	3.4
Spends money appropriately	5,181	12.5	20.6	52.8	11.7	2.4	2.7	3.2
Supports the health and welfare of the profession	5,325	16.8	25.6	35.5	18.1	4.0	2.7	3.2
Is compassionate	5,281	17.0	27.7	39.4	13.2	2.7	2.6	2.5
Supports me in my work as a veterinary professional	5,256	21.9	29.4	32.9	12.7	3.1	2.5	-

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Table 13.5 Attitude statement means by age group

	Under 30	30- 39	40- 49	50- 59	60- 69	70 and over	Total
The veterinary profession offers good opportunities for those wishing to work flexibly	2.97	2.69	2.91	3.25	3.36	3.57	3.04
The veterinary profession has a culture of sharing and learning from mistakes	3.51	3.15	3.12	3.18	3.24	3.52	3.23
The veterinary profession nurtures innovation	3.39	3.10	3.10	3.21	3.30	3.59	3.22
The veterinary profession pays sufficient attention to the development of leadership skills	2.77	2.31	2.39	2.61	2.66	2.92	2.53
The veterinary profession pays sufficient attention to its environmental footprint	2.37	2.38	2.42	2.57	2.68	3.06	2.51
The veterinary profession is diverse and inclusive	2.87	2.86	2.86	2.94	3.05	3.48	2.95
Newly qualified veterinary surgeons have the necessary skills required for clinical practice employment, from day one	2.70	2.42	2.38	2.33	2.35	2.41	2.42

Veterinary work gives me job satisfaction	4.07	3.86	3.96	4.12	4.27	4.42	4.05
Veterinary nurses are valued by the veterinary profession	3.60	3.58	3.73	3.80	3.90	4.01	3.73
Clients value the work of veterinary surgeons	3.26	3.20	3.38	3.68	3.85	3.97	3.48
Clients value the work of veterinary nurses	2.68	2.74	3.03	3.37	3.62	3.81	3.11
The veterinary profession offers good opportunities for career progression	3.34	2.85	2.90	2.96	3.06	3.38	3.01
I am familiar with the concept of quality improvement	3.30	3.39	3.50	3.62	3.56	3.45	3.48
Over the past five years, I have participated in scientific research	2.89	2.82	2.92	2.88	2.96	2.70	2.88
I feel able to critically appraise a research study	3.60	3.77	3.73	3.63	3.65	3.60	3.69
Veterinary work is not stressful	1.39	1.44	1.51	1.58	1.78	2.04	1.57
My workplace allows me to deliver the best possible outcomes to my patients	3.78	3.75	3.89	3.87	3.90	3.92	3.83
I actively use published evidence as part of my clinical decision-making	3.90	4.09	4.06	4.07	4.10	4.14	4.06
I feel I should continue to be obliged to take steps to provide emergency first aid and pain relief to animals according to my skills and the specific situation	4.41	4.23	4.03	4.08	4.16	4.14	4.16
When on call I would be satisfied to be obliged to take steps to provide emergency first aid and pain relief only on animals registered with the practice	3.34	3.39	3.30	3.23	3.43	2.97	3.32
When on call I would be satisfied to be obliged to attend an emergency away from the practice only if it was necessary on clinical or welfare grounds	3.63	3.40	3.46	3.54	3.72	3.72	3.52
My workplace allows me to exercise my clinical freedom	4.03	4.10	4.17	4.10	4.21	4.24	4.12
I am familiar with the concept of evidence-based medicine	4.64	4.68	4.61	4.57	4.49	4.28	4.59
I am satisfied with my salary/remuneration level	3.01	3.17	3.31	3.38	3.48	3.55	3.27
I actively use quality improvement in my practice	3.35	3.45	3.61	3.70	3.62	3.76	3.55
In my workplace I feel comfortable reporting and sharing mistakes	3.77	3.81	3.94	3.91	3.95	3.98	3.88
I am able to be myself in my workplace	4.01	3.91	4.00	3.93	4.16	4.17	3.99
I am satisfied with the support given by my line manager	3.61	3.48	3.61	3.51	3.63	3.61	3.55
I am satisfied with the support given by others in the workplace	4.04	3.86	3.93	3.89	4.02	4.08	3.93

Source: RCVS Survey of the Veterinary Profession, 2024

Table 13.6 Attitude statement means by age group and practice ownership type (independently- or corporately-owned)

	Under 30		30-39		40-49		50-59		60-69		70 and over	
	Independent	Corporate	Independent	Corporate	Independent	Corporate	Independent	Corporate	Independent	Corporate	Independent	Corporate
The veterinary profession offers good opportunities for those wishing to work flexibly	2.94	3.05	2.68	2.77	2.98	2.97	3.26	3.27	3.40	3.38	3.56	3.75
The veterinary profession has a culture of sharing and learning from mistakes	3.55	3.56	3.24	3.20	3.18	3.19	3.39	3.27	3.32	3.25	3.41	3.08
The veterinary profession nurtures innovation	3.45	3.42	3.08	3.15	3.13	3.13	3.27	3.22	3.32	3.24	3.24	3.33
The veterinary profession pays sufficient attention to the development of leadership skills	2.80	2.78	2.31	2.32	2.42	2.43	2.74	2.64	2.76	2.66	2.90	2.67
The veterinary profession pays sufficient attention to its environmental footprint	2.27	2.43	2.36	2.41	2.39	2.48	2.66	2.55	2.66	2.60	2.90	2.58

The veterinary profession is diverse and inclusive	2.76	2.97	2.76	2.93	2.91	2.86	3.03	3.00	3.05	3.16	3.31	3.17
Newly qualified veterinary surgeons have the necessary skills required for clinical practice employment, from day one	2.63	2.75	2.38	2.39	2.22	2.39	2.26	2.22	2.16	2.29	2.10	1.75
Veterinary work gives me job satisfaction	4.16	4.07	4.08	3.78	4.06	3.94	4.30	4.06	4.35	4.20	4.21	4.08
Veterinary nurses are valued by the veterinary profession	3.68	3.59	3.72	3.57	3.80	3.71	3.93	3.85	4.04	3.84	3.80	4.17
Clients value the work of veterinary surgeons	3.35	3.29	3.48	3.13	3.49	3.38	3.92	3.63	3.95	3.95	3.68	3.33
Clients value the work of veterinary nurses	2.81	2.65	2.93	2.69	3.12	2.97	3.53	3.25	3.67	3.61	3.68	3.33
The veterinary profession offers good opportunities for	3.46	3.33	2.87	2.87	2.94	2.92	2.91	2.96	3.04	2.98	3.17	2.83

career progression

I am familiar with the concept of quality improvement	3.04	3.49	3.16	3.52	3.35	3.60	3.38	3.72	3.42	3.49	3.55	3.36
Over the past five years, I have participated in scientific research	2.69	2.85	2.64	2.69	2.54	2.73	2.64	2.63	2.71	2.60	2.72	2.73
I feel able to critically appraise a research study	3.51	3.56	3.73	3.70	3.56	3.65	3.38	3.55	3.44	3.50	3.39	3.67
Veterinary work is not stressful	1.46	1.33	1.52	1.42	1.57	1.47	1.69	1.58	1.85	1.81	2.17	2.58
My workplace allows me to deliver the best possible outcomes to my patients	3.81	3.78	4.01	3.69	4.12	3.77	4.18	3.77	4.15	3.77	3.95	3.55
I actively use published evidence as part of my clinical decision-making	3.77	3.98	4.03	4.07	3.97	4.04	4.00	4.03	4.02	4.00	4.02	4.10

I feel I should continue to be obliged to take steps to provide emergency first aid and pain relief to animals according to my skills and the specific situation	4.34	4.48	4.22	4.27	4.01	4.07	4.04	4.12	4.18	4.27	4.23	3.80
When on call I would be satisfied to be obliged to take steps to provide emergency first aid and pain relief only on animals registered with the practice	3.52	3.17	3.59	3.36	3.57	3.20	3.51	3.13	3.53	3.59	3.17	3.88
When on call I would be satisfied to be obliged to attend an emergency away from the practice only if it was necessary on clinical or welfare grounds	3.77	3.58	3.44	3.39	3.43	3.45	3.56	3.40	3.75	3.78	3.48	3.63
My workplace allows me to	4.23	4.00	4.41	4.06	4.41	4.11	4.45	3.97	4.52	4.14	4.38	3.73

exercise my clinical freedom												
I am familiar with the concept of evidence-based medicine	4.60	4.67	4.69	4.66	4.58	4.62	4.54	4.57	4.46	4.51	4.26	4.42
I am satisfied with my salary/ remuneration level	3.25	2.91	3.45	3.15	3.54	3.30	3.66	3.34	3.68	3.44	3.69	3.50
I actively use quality improvement in my practice	3.16	3.44	3.39	3.47	3.55	3.61	3.63	3.68	3.59	3.49	3.73	3.50
In my workplace I feel comfortable reporting and sharing mistakes	3.76	3.83	3.93	3.78	4.11	3.88	4.02	3.94	4.04	3.95	4.00	3.73
I am able to be myself in my workplace	4.10	4.00	4.09	3.88	4.12	3.95	4.19	3.89	4.31	4.13	4.33	3.92
I am satisfied with the support given by my line manager	3.67	3.58	3.59	3.42	3.82	3.46	3.76	3.39	4.00	3.53	3.58	3.00
I am satisfied with the support given by others in the workplace	4.06	4.05	4.04	3.78	4.10	3.87	4.09	3.84	4.19	4.02	4.32	4.17