

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' (RCVS)'purpose, as stated in their charter, is to set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and the wider public.

It is our view that RCVS' members have specific responsibilities in relation to their clients and we therefore call on the RCVS to recognise and implement a UK Animal Owners' Charter with respect to their members as follows:

UK Animal Owners' Charter

Clients (the animal owner or carer) of RCVS Members shall have the following rights:

1. to be fully informed of the benefits and risks of prescriptions and treatment options and to have given their written consent **before** treatment of their animal commences;
2. to choose a treatment plan for their animal in line with their preferences. In the event the owner is unhappy with their primary vet's proposed treatment plan, the owner shall have the right to refuse the plan and to seek secondary opinion(s) without the need for direct referral;
3. that the choices of owners in regard to their animal's health treatment are treated respected by all RCVS' members;
4. to be provided with full and timely support from RCVS' members in accessing help from veterinary professionals with specialist qualifications, including those in complementary and/or alternative modalities. The RCVS shall ensure that the details of vets offering these additional services shall be made easily available on the RCVS' website "Find A Vet" section;
5. that their animal's health is prioritised over commercial gain and that treatment plans are drawn up with a focus on **minimising** medications and procedures to those that are fully justifiable;
6. to receive transparent and fair pricing for all veterinary services including regular services, out of hours services, emergency and specialist services;
7. that all complaints made against RCVS' members are **FULLY** and **PROMPTLY** investigated in an unbiased, mutually acceptable way and, where appropriate, RCVS' members are suitably disciplined. In the event that the complainant is not satisfied with the RCVS' investigation, there is automatic and timely access to an **INDEPENDENT** mediator who has sufficient authority to decide the outcome and to award meaningful penalties where appropriate.

It is recognised that such rights will always be exercised within the then-current regulatory framework including prescribed welfare standards and that emergency situations may limit the extent that prior consent for treatment can be obtained.

As a responsible and caring animal owner I fully support the addition of these rights to the RCVS Charter and add my name in calling for these changes.

Signed:

Printed name:

