**DRAFT template letter to PPCs: manifesto pledges**
Details of prospective parliamentary candidates in your constituency can be found at: <https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/>

Dear *[insert name]*

**Pledges to enhance animal health and welfare, support the veterinary profession, and protect public health**

I am writing to you as a veterinary surgeon in [name of constituency] and a member of the British Veterinary Association (BVA), which is the leading representative body for the veterinary profession in the UK.

The UK veterinary profession is made up of over 26,000 veterinary surgeons and over 11,000 veterinary nurses, working to improve the health and welfare of animals, to monitor and control the spread of diseases, and to assure the safety of the food we eat. The profession is relatively small, but our reach is significant, and our role is critical to the health and welfare of not only animals, but the rest of society too. As such the profession is in a unique position from which to offer the next Government informed advice on animal health and welfare.

BVA has called on all major political parties to include [ten pledges](https://beta.bva.co.uk/media/3112/bva-manifesto-for-animals-vets-and-public-health10-19.pdf) in their manifestos for the upcoming General Election. The pledges are based on BVA animal welfare campaigns, including on animal sentience, non-stun slaughter, illegal puppy imports, BVA’s commitment to evidence-based disease control, and the ongoing drive to improve recruitment and retention in the veterinary profession.

I would ask you as a prospective parliamentary candidate to consider and support the following pledges that resonate strongly at a personal and/or local level:

***[Please choose the pledges from the list below that are most important to you]***

***Reject a no-deal Brexit***

*Our analysis of a no-deal Brexit shows there could be serious consequences for animal health and welfare, trade, and our veterinary workforce. Although a lot of work has been done by Defra and others to prepare, we’re not convinced that enough has been done to mitigate the potential negative impacts.*

***Boost the veterinary workforce***

*We are facing a veterinary workforce crisis. We’re working hard to increase retention in the profession, but we need government to boost supply. We need an immigration system that ensures qualified vets can live and work in the UK, ongoing mutual recognition of qualifications, increased funding for vet school places, post-study work visas, and attractive salaries for vets undertaking government work.*

***Protect all animals in law***

*Animal sentience must be enshrined into UK law as a priority, covering all animals. This principle, captured in the Lisbon Treaty, recognises that animals are sentient and puts a duty on the state to have due regard for animal welfare in the development and implementation of policy.*

***Protect UK welfare standards in future trade deals and agri policies***

*Animal health and welfare underpins the reputation of UK PLC and our standards must not be compromised by future trade deals. The government mustn’t accept chlorinated chicken or products from systems where standards are lower. Public money to replace CAP should incentivise and support animal health and welfare outcomes as public goods.*

***Protect the welfare of animals at slaughter***

*Slaughter without pre-stunning compromises the welfare of millions of animals. Ultimately, we want to see an end to non-stun slaughter, but in the short term we want a limit on the number of animals affected through, for example, a system to match supply and demand and a ban on the export of non-stun produce.*

***Strengthen legislation against illegal puppy imports***

*Criminal gangs are exploiting legislative loopholes to import puppies for sale so we need to strengthen controls. We want to see an increase to the waiting time for entry to the UK and tapeworm treatments to protect all pets. The government should introduce mandatory health testing for stray dogs entering the UK to prevent these ‘Trojan dogs’ introducing new diseases.*

***Commit to evidence-based disease control***

*Poor animal health leads to welfare problems. It also results in economic costs for UK agriculture and can contribute to climate change as reduced productivity lengthens the production cycle. Programmes to tackle bovine TB and other endemic diseases must use all the available tools in the toolbox, whilst funding research into more effective options.*

***Introduce a single database for microchip registration***

*Vets trying to rehome lost or stolen dogs have to grapple with around 14 different databases to find the owners. Individual pets are registered on more than one database leading to heart-breaking ownership disputes. A single microchip database would mean pets could be reunited with their owners quickly and safely.*

***Ban primates as pets***

*Primates are long-lived, intelligent, and socially complex animals. It is almost impossible for private owners to meet the requirements for care that primates need as defined under animal welfare legislation. The government should ban the keeping of primates as pets.*

***Put animal welfare on the national curriculum***

*UK animal welfare legislation puts a duty of care on individuals to provide for the five welfare needs of animals. It is essential that children learn about the welfare needs and the concept of a duty of care to ensure animals have good health and welfare and a life worth living.*

We were pleased to see some of our recommendations captured in your party’s own manifesto, but we need to see a real commitment to action and I hope I can count on your support.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or the BVA Public Affairs team at publicaffairs@bva.co.uk if you would like further information on this subject.

Yours sincerely

*Include your name and contact details and/or your practice address if you are in practice within the constituency.*