Ethics and Welfare Advisory Panel

Terms of reference

AUTHORITY

1. The Ethics and Welfare Advisory Panel is a committee of Council under Article 94 of the Articles of Association: “Committees of Council may be appointed and dissolved by the Board.”

TITLE AND OBJECT

2. A standing committee shall be created called ‘Ethics and Welfare Advisory Panel’ (EWAP) and it shall exist to advise the Policy Committee (PC) and policy working groups on ethical and welfare issues to consider in the development of policy on all veterinary policy matters, including animal health and welfare, public health, and veterinary professional issues.

ROLE

3. The role of EWAP shall be to:
   - advise the PC on ethical and welfare issues relating to proactive and reactive policies under development
   - advise working groups at the start of their work programme on ethical issues to consider, and provide ongoing ad hoc advice throughout the policy development process
   - advise the PC on ethical issues relating to reactive policy development
   - review draft proactive policies and provide comments for consideration by the working group, the PC and Council, as appropriate
   - ensure policy positions have been developed taking into account relevant ethical issues and in line with the BVA animal welfare strategy
   - identify issues for proactive policy consideration by the PC

COMPOSITION

4. EWAP shall be composed of a total of eight members including:
   - at least 5 independent MRCVS members appointed via the Nominations and Awards Group (NAG) – see paragraph 7 (criteria for members)
   - at least 1 RVN appointed via NAG
   - at least 1 lay member appointed via NAG

5. All Officers are entitled to attend EWAP meetings and contribute to discussions but none are full members.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS

6. The appointment of eight members of EWAP (including MRCVS, RVN and lay members) is by application to NAG, which selects from the applications in accordance with the criteria and balance of skills required for EWAP and submits those names to Council for approval.

CRITERIA FOR MEMBERS

7. NAG will be tasked with selecting members for EWAP that meet as many of the following criteria as possible:
Knowledge, skills and experience
All members of EWAP should have demonstrable experience/expertise and/or qualifications in one or more of the AWSEL disciplines:

- animal welfare science
- veterinary and animal ethics
- animal welfare law

Across the membership of EWAP, NAG will be looking for a mix of the following:

- Animal welfare scientists
- Accredited animal behaviourists (ABTC, APBC, CCAB)
- Veterinary ethicists
- Named veterinary surgeons
- Individuals with postgraduate qualifications in AWSEL
- Experience in various veterinary roles (clinical practice, academia, research, policy, industry, charity, public health, wildlife/conservation, etc)

Not all of these are essential for each individual but across the whole committee we require a mix of:

- Committee experience
- Policy development skills and experience
- Strategic thinking
- Evidence gathering and research
- Analysis and evaluation
- Excellent oral communication skills and ability to engage positively in debate and discussion
- Decision making
- Team work
- Problem solving
- Understanding of the political and cultural climate in which BVA seeks to influence policy makers
- Understanding of the current veterinary landscape

Other
Across the committee we are looking to ensure a range of expertise, interests, and backgrounds.

EXPERT ADVICE
8. It is expected that EWAP will take advice from appropriate external sources and may co-opt experts as required.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR
9. A BVA Officer shall chair the meeting until a Chair is elected from amongst the independent members. The Chair must be MRCVS. The election shall be carried out by way of candidate’s statements (written and/or oral) and a ballot of all members of EWAP to a simple majority. In the event of a tie the Officer in the chair shall have an additional casting vote.

10. The Deputy Chair does not have to be MRCVS. He/she shall be elected in the same manner as the Chair.

ROLE OF CHAIR
11. The Chair will set the meeting agendas in collaboration with the BVA secretariat based on the work programmes for the PC and policy working groups. They will chair debates and summarise EWAP advice.
12. The Chair is a full member of the PC and can appoint an alternate (usually, but not restricted to, the Deputy Chair)
13. The Chair attends Council meetings as a non-voting member in order to take part in policy debates to reflect, and take question on, the advice of EWAP.

ROLE OF DEPUTY CHAIR
14. In the absence of the Chair the Deputy Chair will carry out the functions of the Chair, including chairing meetings of EWAP and attending PC and Council meetings.

ACCOUNTABILITY
15. Members of EWAP are accountable to the Chair for their work for EWAP and the Chair is accountable to Council for the work of EWAP.
16. All committees of Council are ultimately financially accountable to the Board.

TENURE
17. All members of EWAP shall nominally serve for a term of up to three years. Members will have the option of serving for a second term of up to three years (subject to NAG recommendation and Council approval) but may not serve for three successive terms. Members may seek re-election for a third term following a break in service of at least one year.

EWAP MEETINGS
18. EWAP shall normally meet three times per year (NB these are currently being held via Zoom) spaced whenever possible at times to ensure its advice can be effectively incorporated into PC and Council discussions.

PROTOCOL
19. All members of EWAP are expected to contribute to the work of the committee, both in and outside meetings, including reading papers, contributing to discussions in person and via the online discussion forum for committees.
20. Members of EWAP are not permitted to represent or present the Association’s views on any veterinary policy matters to the media or the general public (for example at events) without prior approval of the Chair and Officers.
21. Where advice is provided to the PC or working groups it shall be the agreed advice of the committee determined by a simple majority.

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