

Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP  
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5 October 2022

Dear Chancellor

### **Impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the veterinary profession**

As President of the British Veterinary Association (BVA), I am writing on behalf of over 19,000 veterinary professionals, to highlight the detrimental impact that the cost-of-living crisis is having on their ability to deliver the essential services on which so many rely.

Veterinary practices have experienced sharp rises in their energy costs over recent months, from 1.5% to 3% of turnover in some cases, combined with increased costs for equipment and medicines as a result of the cost-of-living crisis. This increased expenditure will place further pressures on the profession, which is already struggling as a result of workforce shortages and is on the Shortage Occupation List, with employment costs now reaching 50% of turnover for some practices, rather than the historic 40-42%. It is likely that these combined cost pressures will result in some veterinary practices having to close, while others will be forced to increase the cost of veterinary services, leaving some pet owners unable to afford essential care, with serious implications for animal welfare.

Vets play an essential role in monitoring and enhancing animal health and welfare, and food safety in UK agriculture, from the farm-gate through to trade certification and border checks, as well as providing vital veterinary care for the nation's pets. It is therefore essential to the UK economy, to our food supply chains, and to the health and wellbeing of our animals, that they are able to continue their work through the challenges we are currently facing.

While we welcome your announcement in the Growth Plan that the GB Energy Bill Relief Scheme will be in place for six months for non-domestic customers, we are extremely concerned that the subsequent increase in costs after this period will result in more practices being forced to close, further exacerbating the workforce shortages facing the profession, increasing the cost of veterinary services and having a devastating impact on the economy.

With this in mind, we urge you to extend the GB Energy Bill Relief for essential businesses, like veterinary practices, beyond March 2023. In addition, we would be extremely grateful for your urgent consideration of further support measures which may be provided to assist veterinary practices, such as additional relief on business rates and a reduction in VAT.

**British Veterinary Association**  
Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

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Given the serious implications for the veterinary profession, animal welfare and the wider economy if additional support is not made available, I look forward to your response on this important matter, ideally in a format which I can share with our members.

I can be contacted at [president@bva.co.uk](mailto:president@bva.co.uk) or via our Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Alison Ramsay at [AlisonR@bva.co.uk](mailto:AlisonR@bva.co.uk).

Your sincerely



**Malcolm Morley**  
President BVA

cc Professor Christine Middlemiss, Chief Veterinary Officer