Rt Hon Sir Alan Campbell MP
Lord President of the Council, and Leader of the House of Commons
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA
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25 November 2026

Dear Sir Alan,

Reform of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966

We are writing to urge you to support the inclusion of reform of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 in the next King's Speech. Reform would deliver tangible benefits across several of the Government's priorities, and we ask for your help to secure parliamentary time for this essential legislation.

The veterinary sector contributes an estimated £19.4 billion to the UK economy every year and supports more than 310,000 jobs. Veterinary practices play a vital role in local communities and provide access to quality care, while veterinary professionals support a thriving agricultural sector and rural economy. Their work spans the food supply chain: maintaining animal health and welfare on farms, supporting disease control, protecting public health and the environment, facilitating trade, and underpinning food safety and supply chain resilience. Veterinary professionals additionally contribute to education and scientific research, and were involved in the Covid-19 pandemic response.

The 1966 legislation governing this crucial sector, however, is woefully outdated. It no longer reflects the way in which veterinary services are delivered, what animal owners expect, or the roles that veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and the wider veterinary team play. The 1966 Act was designed for a different era. Sixty years on, more than half of UK households own a pet, technology has changed dramatically, and the way veterinary teams care for animals has been transformed.

The need for reform is recognised by the Competition and Markets Authority, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Reform would enable:

- **The regulation of veterinary businesses**, introducing mandatory practice standards that would better protect animal health, meet public expectations, and facilitate client choice.
- **The protection of the title of veterinary nurses**, enhancing their role as a critical member of the veterinary team and relieving pressure on the veterinary workforce.
- **The regulation and protection of titles for allied professions,** facilitating the provision of more integrated animal care, better animal health and welfare and public health outcomes.

We welcomed the Government's commitment to reform as outlined in its White Paper, *Our vision for the veterinary sector*, which is the result of years of close collaboration with Defra. Delivering that ambition now requires support across government, reflecting the profession's contribution to public health, trade, research and development, local communities and education.

We therefore ask for your support, in your role as Chair of the Parliamentary Business and Legislation Cabinet Committee, in making the case for including reform of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 in the next King's Speech and securing time for legislation in the next parliamentary session. We would welcome a meeting to discuss how reform would advance the Government's priorities and how you could help turn this shared ambition into law.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Gwen Rees FRCVS, President, British Veterinary Association

Miss Steph Worsley RVN, President, British Veterinary Nursing Association

Mr Tim Hutchinson MRCVS, President, Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

Dr Anthony Ridge MRCVS, President, Association of Government Veterinarians

Ms Ellen Heslop, President, Association of Veterinary Students

Dr Paul Burr MRCVS, President, British Cattle Veterinary Association

Dr Gareth Boyes MRCVS, President, British Deer Veterinary Association

Ms Kate Blakeman MRCVS, President, British Equine Veterinary Association

Dr Susan Little MRCVS, President, British Small Animal Veterinary Association

Dr Claire Whitehead MRCVS, President, British Veterinary Camelid Society

Dr Helen Redpath MRCVS, President, British Veterinary LGBT+ Society

Dr Charlotte Commins MRCVS, President, British Veterinary Poultry Association

Dr Sonya Miles MRCVS, President, British Veterinary Zoological Society

Dr Emma Lau MRCVS, President, Fish Veterinary Society

Dr Benjamin H Dustan MRCVS, President, Goat Veterinary Society

Dr Abigail Brown MRCVS, President, Laboratory Animals Veterinary Association

Mr Jonathan Hobbs MRCVS, President, Sheep Veterinary Society

Mr Michael Watts MRCVS, Hon. Secretary, Society of Greyhound Veterinarians

Mr Peter Orpin FRCVS, President, Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons

Dr Rebecca Robinson MRCVS, President, Veterinary Management Group

Dr Gavin Morris MRCVS, President, Veterinary Public Health Association