

## Code of conduct for BVA volunteers

Last updated: September 2018

Our members are at the heart of everything we do. We could not fulfil our mission to be the leading body representing, supporting and championing the whole UK veterinary profession without the support and dedication of you, our volunteers.

### Who are BVA volunteers?

Our volunteers give us their time, expertise and experience in a range of ways, most commonly through serving on BVA Council, committees and working groups. Our volunteers include:

- Council members
- Members of standing committees (Policy Committee, Ethics and Welfare Advisory Panel, Member Benefits Committee, and CPD Committee)
- Branch officers and Branch council members in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Members of ad hoc working groups
- Members of Electoral College
- Young Vet Network coordinators

### Rights and responsibilities as a BVA volunteer

As a volunteer, you will be an ambassador for BVA, and as such you have certain rights and responsibilities, relating to your conduct, your interactions with colleagues, and your role in protecting and enhancing BVA's reputation. **This code of conduct sets out the rules and policies which apply to being a volunteer.**

In carrying out your role as a volunteer you should be guided by **BVA's values**:

- We are **responsive** to members' needs and put our members at the heart of everything we do
- We believe the veterinary profession is **stronger** when we speak with one voice and so we work **collaboratively** with our divisions and branches to **represent** the interests of the whole UK veterinary profession
- We seek to **influence** public policy and debate by being **proactive** in our campaigning and we strive to develop and promote **evidence-led** policies
- We are **open, honest** and **transparent** in our dealings with our members, staff and stakeholders, and we respect **diversity** and promote **equality** in everything we do
- We are **innovative** in providing benefits and services to support our members and provide **value for money**
- We demonstrate **leadership** within the veterinary profession and in representing the profession in wider society

British Veterinary Association  
Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

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Volunteers must at all times act in such a way as to promote the aims and objectives of BVA. All volunteers are expected to:

1. work collaboratively with members of BVA Officers and staff to help deliver our strategic aims, and in doing so, benefit our members and the wider veterinary profession, and advance animal health and welfare.
2. uphold BVA's values and challenge attitudes and behaviours which are not consistent with our values.
3. communicate clearly, effectively, and with courtesy. Volunteers must listen to and respect the views of staff, officers and fellow volunteers and must avoid language or behaviours which may be interpreted as offensive or aggressive.
4. adhere to BVA policies on equality and diversity, meeting attendance, email loop use, social media, and data use/sharing.
5. respect the confidentiality of materials and/or privileged information shared with you through your involvement with BVA, giving particular regard to commercially sensitive information.
6. use BVA resources responsibly. The BVA member expenses policy sets out clearly what members can and cannot claim for, in order to use members' money responsibly. Volunteers are not allowed to incur costs to BVA (other than travel/subsistence expenses) without prior written agreement.
7. be clear about when you are officially representing BVA to external audiences and act accordingly. For example, volunteers are not allowed to undertake media interviews or give public talks as a BVA spokesperson without prior agreement from BVA.
8. be careful about expressing views publicly, including on social media, that could contradict or discredit BVA. It is accepted that volunteers' personal views will not necessarily be in line with every BVA policy, but the manner in which views are expressed should not damage BVA's reputation or bring BVA into disrepute.
9. declare any interests in writing and notify BVA of any potential conflicts of interest that arise through the course of your BVA activities.

BVA members are also encouraged to promote BVA membership and activities within the profession, and support to do so (including information and materials) is available from BVA staff.

**All volunteers have the right to:**

1. be treated with respect by members of staff, officers and fellow volunteers.
2. challenge and debate BVA policies and positions in a polite, constructive and respectful manner.
3. receive the information and/or tools required to undertake your role effectively.
4. receive payment of expenses promptly.
5. raise any questions or concerns confidentially with BVA staff or officers.

Any complaints or concerns about the level of service and support you receive from BVA should be raised, in the first instance, with the individual member of staff responsible. If necessary, concerns can be escalated to members of the senior management team (the Chief Executive and Executive Directors).

## Equality and diversity

BVA's [equality and diversity policy](#) sets out our commitment to respecting and promoting equality and diversity in all of our activities through an inclusive culture and working practices.

We are committed to ensuring equality and the fair and respectful treatment of all individuals in connection with our work. **We will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.**

### Checklist

If at any time you are unsure whether a decision or action you are planning to take will breach the code of conduct, please contact a member of BVA staff. This checklist may be helpful:

- Could what I am intending to do, say or write cause worry or concern to others or be considered as intimidation, harassment or bullying?
- Am I acting in BVA's best interests?
- Do I have any interests that should be declared?
- Is what I'm doing in line with BVA policies (for example on data use and expenses)?
- Do I need permission before undertaking this task or committing to this expense?

### Questions or concerns and failure to comply

If you have any questions about your role or responsibilities as a BVA volunteer please contact:

Sally Burnell  
Director of Policy, Media & Strategy  
020 7908 6341 or [sallyb@bva.co.uk](mailto:sallyb@bva.co.uk)

Amelia Findon  
Head of Policy and Governance  
020 7908 6355 or [ameliaf@bva.co.uk](mailto:ameliaf@bva.co.uk)

If you have any concerns about the actions or behaviour of members of BVA staff or fellow BVA volunteers please contact Sally or Amelia in the first instance, or David Calpin, BVA Chief Executive, on [davidc@bva.co.uk](mailto:davidc@bva.co.uk)

BVA members who, in the opinion of the BVA Officers and Chief Executive, fail to comply with the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Nominations and Awards Group (NAG). NAG will consider (usually via email or teleconference) the best course of action, which may include requiring a volunteer to step down from their role. A serious breach of the Code of Conduct may result in immediate suspension.

An appeal may be made to BVA Council (for members of Council, Policy Committee, Ethics and Welfare Advisory Panel, Branch Councils, and working groups) or BVA Board (for members of Member Benefits Committee, CPD Committee, Electoral College and Young Vet Network coordinators).