RCVS REVIEW OF THE USE OF TELEMEDICINE IN VETERINARY PRACTICE – BVA
INITIAL RESPONSE

1) BVA is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the United
Kingdom and has over 16,000 members. Our primary aim is to represent, support
and champion the interests of the veterinary profession in this country, and we
therefore take a keen interest in all issues affecting the profession, including animal
health and welfare, public health, regulatory issues and employment matters.

2) We support the principle of consultation with the profession on this important issue,
particularly given the commitment as part of the Veterinary Futures Action Plan to
review the regulation of new veterinary technologies. Although it is natural that there
will be some concerns amongst practitioners regarding the potential impact of
telemedicine on the structure of traditional veterinary practice it must be recognised
that innovation and the growth of new technologies is inevitable and should, as far
as is reasonable, be embraced.

3) Any discussion on the way forward for telemedicine must hold animal welfare at its
heart and this should remain the primary consideration when developing any
potential changes to the Code or supporting guidance. With that in mind, we are
concerned that the way in which the consultation is worded does not necessarily
allow for the various nuances and scenarios which present themselves within the
vet/client/patient relationship and for that reason further work might be required on
the detail of how telemedicine could play out in practice.

4) We understand that the consultation survey has elicited a very high response rate
from the profession and, given the evidence base that this will generate, we reserve
the right to await those outcomes before developing our position further. RCVS has
indicated an intention to meet with organisations and individuals to discuss the key
issues in depth once the Standards Committee has reviewed the findings from the
survey. We fully support this approach and believe it is essential that we have the
opportunity to contribute at each stage of the decision-making process on this
important issue. We would also urge full and open further consultation if any
changes to the Code or supporting guidance are proposed.

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