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Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Reform of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966

Supporting and modernising the veterinary sector  
through a robust regulatory framework.

January 2026

We are responsible for improving and protecting the environment. We aim to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. We also support our world-leading food, farming and fishing industries.

Defra is a ministerial department, supported by 34 agencies and public bodies.



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# Annexes

## Video script: licence to practise

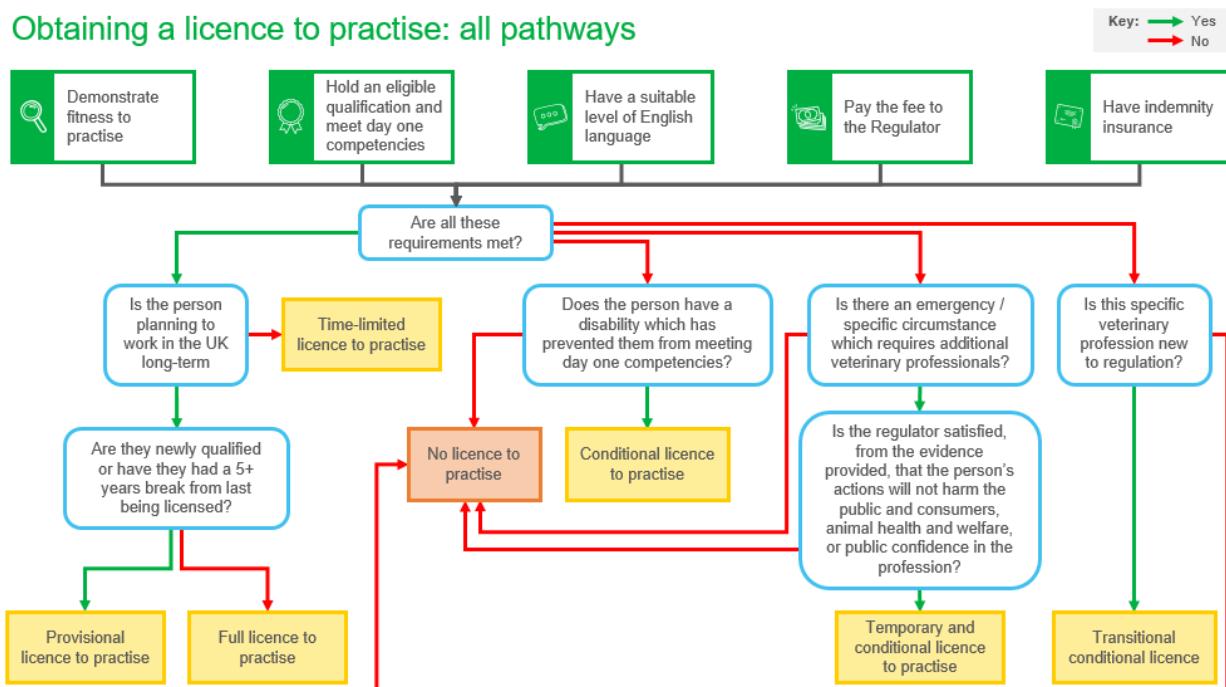
### Introduction

A licence to practise scheme is a regulatory framework used in the UK to ensure that professionals in certain fields are legally authorised and competent to carry out specific activities. It is important for protecting the public, providing a mechanism for ongoing oversight by a regulator, and helps employers and consumers to verify if professionals are legally authorised to work.

Currently only veterinary surgeons are permitted to carry out acts of veterinary surgery unless there is a specific exemption put in place. This places a lot of pressure on veterinary surgeons rather than using the full breadth of expertise available from within the broader veterinary team

The proposed way forward is that anyone who is conducting veterinary acts will need a licence to practise unless there is an exemption in place. It will be a criminal offense, resulting in a fine and/or prison sentence, for anyone to carry out a veterinary act without holding the relevant licence to practise.

### Obtaining a licence to practise: all pathways



There are five steps that applicants must meet to apply for a licence to practise. They must:

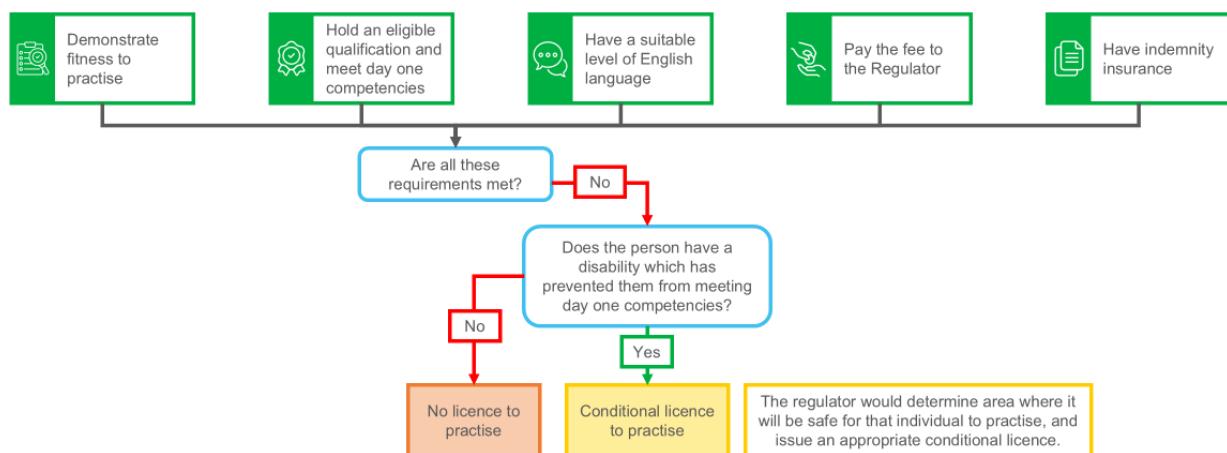
1. Demonstrate that they are fit to practise – self declaration of skills, character, health, and any criminal convictions.

2. Hold an eligible qualification – This will include regulator approved University degrees, diplomas, courses and other qualifications, and will be used as evidence that the individual can meet their Day One Competencies
3. Have a suitable level of English language – this will be assumed to be the case if the person is fluent in English/it is their native language, or they studied for their qualification in English. If these are not the case, the regulator will define the level of English language required, based on the profession.
4. Pay a fee to the regulator.
5. Have the minimum required level of indemnity insurance.

What happens next following the application process?

- The regulator will assess the application and if approved the applicant will receive a full licence to practise for their specific profession.
- If the applicant does not meet the requirements that are required to gain a licence, then their application is not approved.
- Except for the following circumstances

#### Conditional licence to practise (disability)

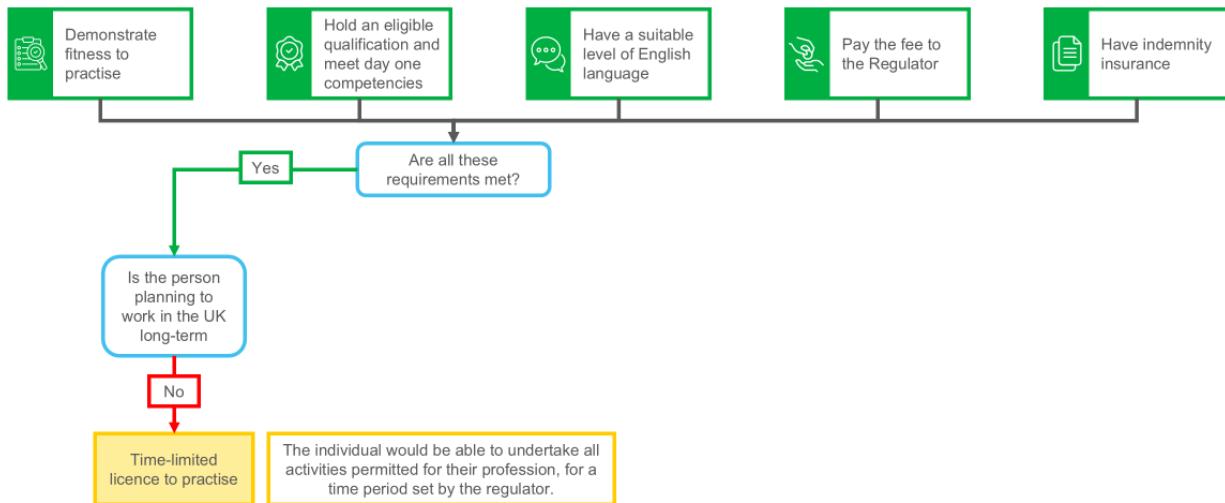


In order to comply with the [Equality Act 2010](#), an individual who is not able to demonstrate all of the day-one competencies due to a disability or long-term health condition, even with reasonable adjustment to assessment methods, may still be given a licence to practise under certain conditions.

The regulator would determine the areas in which it will be safe for that individual to practise, and issue an appropriate conditional licence.

These conditions would remain on the professional's licence (unless they are subsequently able to demonstrate all day-one competencies as assessed by a regulator-accredited qualification provider).

## Conditional licence to practise (time-limited)

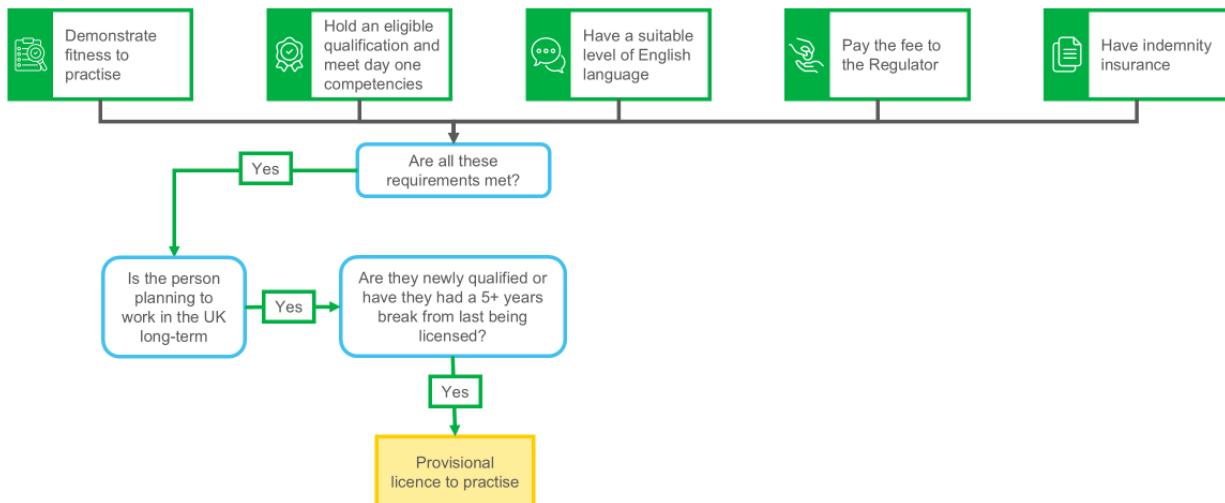


Where someone is looking to work as a veterinary professional in the UK for a limited timeframe, such as if they are part of a delegation from an international equestrian team, then a time limited licence to practise could be issued.

The individual would be able to undertake all activities permitted for their profession, for a time period set by the regulator.

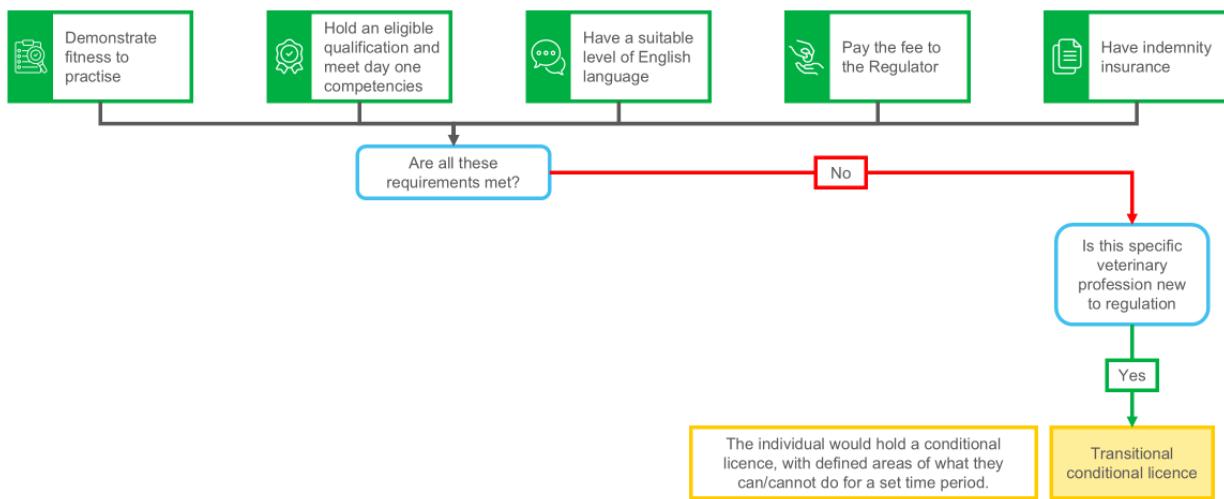
The process completed would be the same as for a full licence to practise

## Conditional licence to practise (newly licensed conditions)



A professional gaining their first licence to practise, or if they have had a break of 5+ years since they previously held a licence to practise, would have newly licensed conditions. These could include requirements similar to VetGDP or VNGDP.

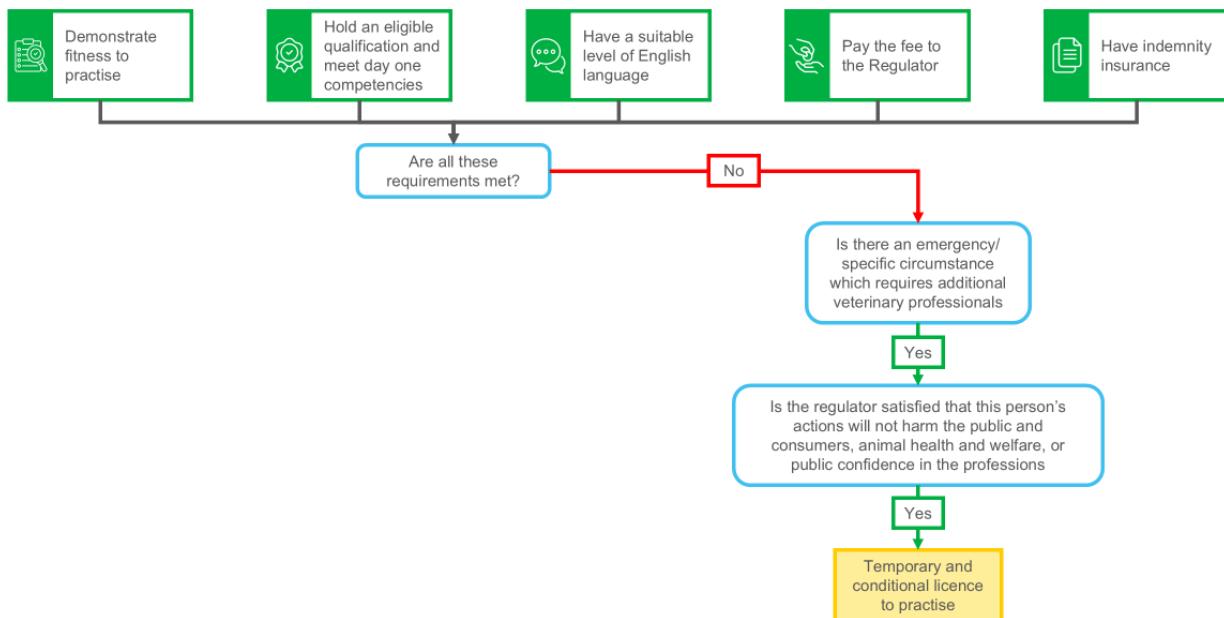
## Conditional licence to practise (transitional arrangements)



When a new profession is being brought into regulation, there may be a conditional licence due to transitional arrangements.

In this instance someone with a legacy qualification would hold a conditional licence which would define what they can or cannot do for a set time period. Once that time period is up, they would need to meet the regulator's qualification requirements for the profession in order to maintain their licence to practise.

## Temporary and conditional licence to practise



In exceptional or emergency circumstances, the requirements for gaining a licence to practise could be altered to allow people to practise in specific scenarios

## Video script: fitness to practise

### Introduction

The fitness to practise process is not about punishing individuals. It is about protecting the public and animals by making sure that professionals are currently fit to carry out their roles. If there is concern about a professional's ability to carry out their role then a concern can be raised with the regulator which then kickstarts the fitness to practise process.

This process is built on the principles of;

- fairness – treating professionals with respect and impartiality.
- transparency – ensuring decisions are clear and evidence-based.
- proportionality – responding appropriately to the level of concern.

In assessing a case, the central question will always be whether current impairment can be established on the balance of probabilities—the standard of proof in regulatory proceedings. If, at any stage, it becomes clear that this threshold cannot be met, or there is little evidence of a current impairment, the case is closed.

The term 'current impairment' refers to whether a professional is fit to work in their role. Current impairment can be;

- serious professional misconduct; when someone does something which goes against the Regulator's Code of Professional Conduct,
- professional performance is seriously below what is expected,
- committing a serious criminal offence which means they are unfit to work in their profession, or
- a physical or mental health condition (including substance abuse/alcoholism) or disability where the professional continues working in areas where they can no longer work safely and competently with reasonable adjustments in place.

### Overview of the fitness to practise stages

Anyone can raise a concern to the regulatory body. Once this concern has been submitted to the regulator it will start the fitness to practise process.

The fitness to practise process consists of three key stages:

1. Triage Assessment
2. Case Examiner Review
3. Tribunal Hearing

Finally, if they feel necessary, the professionals can challenge decisions to ensure fairness and accountability.

## Triage stage

Anyone can raise a concern about a veterinary professional's performance, behaviour, or their ability to practise safely with the regulator.

Once this concern arrives with the regulator, the triage stage begins.

Here, the regulator asks: Does this concern suggest a likely case of current impairment?

They consider:

- the seriousness of the issue.
- whether it involves a breach of professional standards.
- whether the concern falls within the regulator's remit.

If a concern is not serious enough, falls outside the regulator's scope, or does not appear to relate to a likely current impairment being present, the case is closed.

This triage stage plays a crucial role in ensuring that regulatory resources are directed appropriately by swiftly assessing the information provided and focusing attention on cases warranting further scrutiny.

## Case examiner stage

If there is the potential for current impairment being present, the case moves to the Case Examiner stage.

The case examiners ask all involved to submit further evidence, if required. The case examiners then conduct a thorough review of all available evidence. This may include:

- witness statements
- veterinary medical records from the animal or animals relating to the concern
- professional conduct reports
- statements from any professionals involved, and, if relevant,
- medical evidence can also be presented. This may be from their medical records, letters from the health professionals or following an assessment from an independent medical professional.

If the case examiners find no current impairment, the case is closed. If it is found that there has been some unacceptable actions or behaviour, the regulator may record them the professional's file, where it could be used as evidence in a future case.

If impairment has been agreed, Case Examiners seek to agree an appropriate sanction with the licensed professional. Sanctions are not intended to be punitive; rather, aim to protect the public, safeguard animal health and welfare, and uphold the reputation of the profession. In line with these objectives, Case Examiners must consider the full range of sanctions necessary to achieve adequate public protection, while ensuring they have the

least impact on the professional's ability to safely work in their field, when appropriate. Sanctions may include:

- having conditions placed on their licence to limit what they can do to ensure they can safely work (for example, not being able to work alone, or not being able to physically work with large animals, usually due to health reasons)
- temporary actions (known as undertakings, which are a formal, written and signed, promise) under which a professional must practice, such as supervision, gaining mentoring, and undergoing additional training.
- requirements to provide blood, urine or hair samples to test for substances
- suspension of their license from the register
- permanent Removal of their license to practise.

Importantly, Case Examiners can only give out sanctions that the professional agrees to. If agreement is reached, the case does not go to tribunal.

### Tribunal stage

If no agreement can be reached, the case proceeds to a Fitness to Practise Tribunal.

This is a formal hearing conducted by an independent panel which ensures that cases are examined thoroughly and fairly.

The tribunal follows a structured process:

1. fact-finding – are the allegations proven based on the evidence?
2. impairment assessment – is the professional's fitness to practise currently impaired?
3. sanction decision – what action, if any, is necessary to protect the public, safeguard animal health and welfare, and uphold the reputation of the profession?

Tribunal hearings may involve:

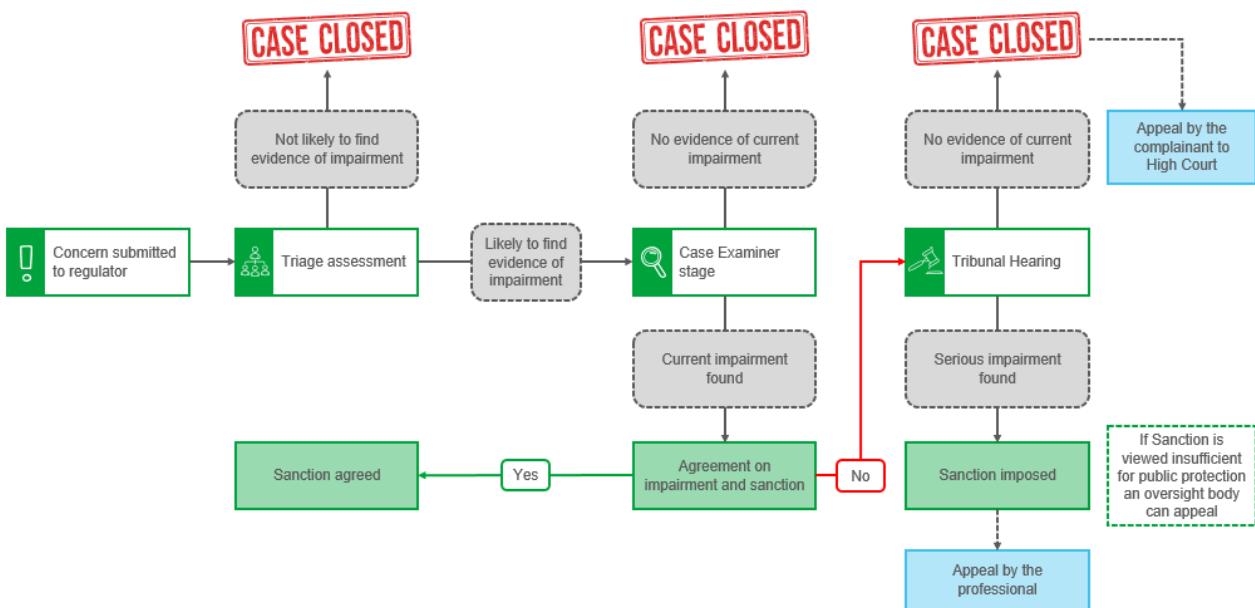
- presentation of evidence
- witness testimony and cross-examination
- legal submissions from both sides

Unless there is a compelling reason, tribunals and their outcomes will be a matter of public record, to ensure clarity for the public and maintain public confidence in the regulator.

For a tribunal to place a sanction on a professional it must be found, on the balance of probabilities, that a current impairment is present. If none is found, the case will be dropped.

Unlike Case Examiners, if it is found that a current impairment is present, the tribunal can impose sanctions even if the professional disagrees.

## Fitness to Practice



## Appeals

Appeals are a vital safeguard in the fitness to practise process.

They are an integral part of the fitness to practise process, providing professionals with the opportunity to challenge decisions. Grounds for appeal may include:

- new evidence that wasn't available earlier
- procedural errors or unfair treatment

Disagreement with the outcome or sanction alone is NOT a grounds for appeal

An appeal against a tribunal decision by the professional will be made to the High Court.

Appeals ensure that the process remains accountable, fair, and open to correction. They are an essential part of maintaining trust in the regulatory system.

There may be an oversight body which would look over the tribunal decisions, along with the running of the regulator. If this body feels that a sanction is "insufficient to protect the public" (i.e. it is not severe enough) then they can ask for the case to be reviewed.

## Duties and powers

Area	Current duties	Proposed objectives and duties	Associated powers
<b>Restrictions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restriction of veterinary practise to qualified individuals (Section 19)</li> <li>• Prohibition of use of veterinary titles by unqualified persons (Section 20)</li> </ul>	<p>Protect, promote and maintain the health and wellbeing of animals and public</p> <p>Promote and protect public confidence in the veterinary professions</p> <p>Promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for members of veterinary professions.</p> <p>Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veterinary acts cannot be completed by those who do not hold the appropriate licence to practise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Including those actions that can only be completed by certain professions</li> <li>◦ Including areas that are appropriate for exemptions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Protection of titles for all regulated veterinary professions</li> <li>• Determine what activities can be conducted by people with a licence to practise</li> <li>• Determine what activities can be completed by which profession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set what activities can be conducted by people with a licence to practise</li> <li>• Set what activities can be completed by which profession</li> <li>• Prosecute/sanction people for conducting veterinary acts without an appropriate licence</li> </ul>
<b>Qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right of holders of UK veterinary degrees to be registered (Section 3)</li> <li>• Examination of students from certain universities (Section 4)</li> <li>• Recognition of Commonwealth and foreign qualifications (Section 6)</li> <li>• Temporary registration for specific purposes (Section 7)</li> </ul>	<p>Protect, promote and maintain the health and wellbeing of animals and public</p> <p>Promote and protect public confidence in the veterinary professions</p> <p>Promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for members of veterinary professions.</p> <p>Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the qualifications that will be required to be able to gain a licence to practise, for each of the professions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set qualification standards and Day One Competencies for each profession</li> </ul>

Area	Current duties	Proposed objectives and duties	Associated powers
<b>Registration/ Licensing (professionals)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation and maintenance of the Register of Veterinary Surgeons (Section 2)</li> <li>• Lists within the register: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ General list</li> <li>◦ Commonwealth list</li> <li>◦ Foreign list</li> <li>◦ Temporary list</li> <li>◦ Visiting European list</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Power to make regulations regarding the register (Section 11)</li> <li>• Removal of deceased or non-practising individuals from the register (Section 13)</li> <li>• Correction of fraudulent or incorrect entries (Section 14)</li> </ul>	<p>Protect, promote and maintain the health and wellbeing of animals and public</p> <p>Promote and protect public confidence in the veterinary professions</p> <p>Promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for members of veterinary professions.</p> <p>Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run a licence to practise scheme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Determine some standards related to this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Qualification (see below)</li> <li>▪ Setting of Day One Competencies</li> <li>▪ Fitness to practise (see below)</li> <li>▪ Fees</li> <li>▪ English language requirements</li> <li>▪ Indemnity insurance requirements</li> </ul> </li> <li>◦ Restoration of licence to practise after removal, where appropriate</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Determine standards for professionals, including codes of conduct and actions to be completed by different professions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ And appropriate rules and guidance</li> <li>◦ Including consultation with professions/public, where appropriate</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Maintain a list of those with licences for the different professions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Veterinary surgeons</li> <li>◦ Veterinary nurses</li> <li>◦ Allied veterinary professionals</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Maintain a list of the type of licence held: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Full licence</li> <li>◦ Conditional licence</li> <li>◦ Temporary and conditional licence</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set standards for registration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Qualification (see below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Setting of Day One Competencies</li> </ul> </li> <li>◦ Fitness to practise (see below)</li> <li>◦ Fees</li> <li>◦ English language requirements</li> <li>◦ Indemnity insurance requirements</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Set codes of professional conduct for licensed professionals</li> <li>• Set standards for what conditions are permitted under what circumstances</li> <li>• Obtain appropriate documentation to ensure standards are met</li> </ul>

Area	Current duties	Proposed objectives and duties	Associated powers
<b>Regulation &amp; Discipline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervisory functions of the Council (Section 5)</li> <li>Preliminary Investigation and Disciplinary Committees (Section 15)</li> <li>Removal of names for criminal or disgraceful conduct (Section 16)</li> <li>Appeals process for disciplinary decisions (Section 17)</li> <li>Restoration of names after removal or suspension (Section 18)</li> </ul>	<p>Protect, promote and maintain the health and wellbeing of animals and public</p> <p>Promote and protect public confidence in the veterinary professions</p> <p>Promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for members of veterinary professions.</p> <p>Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have an independent fitness to practise process/committee, with no overlap on membership from other committees/the Board</li> <li>Define current impairment</li> <li>Run a fitness to practise process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determining processes, rules and guidance for professionals when assessing current impairment</li> </ul> </li> <li>Application of sanctions if fitness to practise is currently impaired</li> <li>Removal of licence to practise if fitness to practise is currently impaired or an automatic barring offence has been committed</li> <li>Appeals on the fitness to practise processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set standards for “current impairment”</li> <li>Investigate fitness to practise scheme</li> <li>Apply sanctions on fitness to practise</li> <li>Removal licence to practise</li> <li>Obtain appropriate documentation to determine fitness to practise, including health reports</li> </ul>

<b>Registration/ Licensing (businesses)</b>	N/A	<p>Protect, promote and maintain the health and wellbeing of animals and public</p> <p>Promote and protect public confidence in the veterinary professions</p> <p>Promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for members of veterinary professions.</p> <p>Protect consumers (a consumer duty), where this does not contradict animal welfare requirements</p> <p>Ensure fair competition within the market (a competition duty)</p> <p>Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run a licensing scheme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Determine how to interpret standards which are set out in legislation</li> <li>◦ Determine risks of businesses based on scope of the business' activities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Maintain a list of licensed businesses/premises</li> <li>• Inspections</li> <li>• Provide notice, except for exceptional circumstances</li> <li>• Publish results</li> <li>• Investigations</li> <li>• Provide a receipt on items taken</li> <li>• Sanctions</li> <li>• Ensure named responsible person is completing their role appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Powers of entry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Including warranted entry, where required</li> </ul> </li> <li>◦ Charge for the cost of inspections</li> <li>◦ Information gathering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Including complaints, clinical outcomes, training etc for monitoring compliance</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>◦ Additional powers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Search and seizure</li> <li>▪ Observation</li> <li>▪ Require explanations</li> <li>▪ Information/records access</li> <li>▪ Review compliance</li> <li>▪ Bring people/equipment</li> <li>▪ Survey/test</li> <li>▪ Examine/investigate</li> <li>▪ Direct premises to be undisturbed</li> <li>▪ Take measurements</li> <li>▪ Take photographs/recording</li> <li>▪ Take samples</li> <li>▪ Take possession of and detain substances or articles found</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Investigations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Power of entry</li> <li>◦ Powers to seize appropriate information</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Sanctions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Fines</li> <li>◦ Improvement notices</li> <li>◦ Suspension of licence</li> <li>◦ Removal of licence</li> <li>◦ Sanction against named responsible person</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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Area	Current duties	Proposed objectives and duties	Associated powers
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment and composition of the RCVS Council (Section 1)</li> <li>• Election of President and Vice-Presidents</li> <li>• Appointment of lay members and veterinary nurses to the Council</li> </ul>	<p>Protect, promote and maintain the health and wellbeing of animals and public</p> <p>Promote and protect public confidence in the veterinary professions</p> <p>Promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for members of veterinary professions.</p> <p>Protect consumers (a consumer duty), where this does not contradict animal welfare requirements</p> <p>Ensure fair competition within the market (a competition duty)</p> <p>Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run a Board</li> <li>• Have additional committees for other matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The fitness to practise committee should be independent from other committees</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Set out corporate strategy and expenditure plan every 3-5 years</li> <li>• Split of the regulatory/professional leadership functions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set a corporate strategy and expenditure plan</li> <li>• Raise fees in line with corporate strategy (consultation for professional leadership activities)</li> <li>• Recommend appointments to Privy Council</li> </ul>

Area	Current duties	Proposed objectives and duties	Associated powers
<b>Oversight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Default powers of the Privy Council (Section 22)</li> <li>• Exercise of powers by the Privy Council (Section 23)</li> </ul>	<p>Protect, promote and maintain the health and wellbeing of animals and public</p> <p>Promote and protect public confidence in the veterinary professions</p> <p>Promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for members of veterinary professions.</p> <p>Protect consumers (a consumer duty), where this does not contradict animal welfare requirements</p> <p>Ensure fair competition within the market (a competition duty)</p> <p>Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountable to Parliament and Devolved Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Annual reports</li> <li>◦ EfraCom scrutiny</li> <li>◦ How policy is being applied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stats on fitness to practise process</li> <li>▪ Stats on powers of entry</li> <li>▪ Stats on sanctions for businesses</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Oversight from Privy Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Approval of Board/Committee appointment recommendations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Accountable to an oversight body, who will review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Fitness to practise processes</li> <li>◦ Transparency and fairness of fee setting</li> <li>◦ Review appointments process</li> <li>◦ Assess performance</li> <li>◦ Conduct audits</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Subject to legally-binding steers from Defra Secretary of State</li> </ul>	

## Appeals

Regulation area	Appeal	Who to?
<b>Licence to practise</b>	Appeal against not having a licence to practise granted or renewed, or conditions being placed on someone's licence where this is not as a result of a fitness to practise process	An individual can appeal to the regulator  If the person can provide evidence of failure by the regulator, they can appeal to the High Court
<b>Fitness to practise</b>	Appeal against case examiner agreed sanctions	As these sanctions have to be agreed by the licensed professional, an individual can only appeal these if they can provide evidence that the process was not properly followed by the regulator
<b>Fitness to practise</b>	Appeal against tribunal imposed sanctions. (For example, removal from the register)	A licensed professional or a pet owner can appeal this to the High Court, if they can provide evidence that the regulator has failed in its duty and/or not followed the process properly
<b>Fitness to practise</b>	Appeal against not being allowed to regain a licence to practise after renewal	An individual can appeal to the regulator  If the person can provide evidence of failure by the regulator, they can appeal to the High Court
<b>Fitness to practise</b>	Appeal for failure to adequately protect the public	The regulator can appeal a decision made by case examiners or at tribunal to the oversight body, if they can provide evidence that the outcome is insufficient for public protection
<b>Veterinary/animal healthcare business</b>	Appeal against not being granted a licence	A business can appeal to the regulator  If the business can provide evidence of failure by the regulator, there would be a

		statutory right of appeal through HM Courts and Tribunals Service.
<b>Veterinary/animal healthcare business</b>	Appeal against the prior notice given for an inspection visit	A business can appeal to the regulator  If the business can provide evidence of failure by the regulator, there would be a statutory right of appeal through HM Courts and Tribunals Service.
<b>Veterinary/animal healthcare business</b>	Appeal against the results of an inspection	A business can appeal to the regulator  If the business can provide evidence of failure by the regulator, there would be a statutory right of appeal through HM Courts and Tribunals Service.
<b>Veterinary/animal healthcare business</b>	Appeal against the sanctions imposed upon a business	A business can appeal to the regulator  If the business can provide evidence of failure by the regulator, there would be a statutory right of appeal through HM Courts and Tribunals Service.
<b>Veterinary/animal healthcare business</b>	Appeal against the use of Powers of Entry	A business can appeal to the regulator  If the business can provide evidence of failure by the regulator, there would be a statutory right of appeal through HM Courts and Tribunals Service.

## **Glossary**

### **Act**

A law passed by Parliament. In veterinary context, the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 is the primary legislation regulating the profession.

### **Automatic Barring Offence**

A serious criminal offence (for example, child abuse, sexual offences) that results in automatic inclusion on the DBS barred list, preventing individuals from working with vulnerable groups, including in veterinary settings if relevant.

### **AVPs (Allied Veterinary Professionals)**

Allied Veterinary Professionals are individuals who work alongside veterinary surgeons to support animal health and welfare

### **Bill**

A proposal for a new law or a change to existing law. It becomes an **Act** once passed by Parliament.

### **Case Examiner**

A professional (often employed by the regulator) who assesses concerns about veterinary professionals to determine whether there is a case of **current impairment**.

### **Code of Professional Conduct**

Published by the **regulator**, this sets out the ethical and professional standards expected of veterinary professionals.

### **Commencement Regulations**

**Statutory instruments** that bring into force part or all of another piece of legislation at a date later than the date it became law.

### **CMA Order**

Legally binding directives that can be imposed on businesses to address issues related to competition, markets, and consumer protection in the UK.

### **CPD (Continuing Professional Development)**

Ongoing learning required by the regulator to maintain professional competence. Currently veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses must complete an annual minimum of 35 hours and 15 hours, respectively.

## **Current Impairment**

A concept in fitness to practise proceedings referring to a veterinary professional's present inability to practise safely, effectively, or ethically due to issues related to health, conduct, or competence.

## **Day One Competencies**

The essential skills, knowledge, and behaviours expected of veterinary professionals on their first day of professional practice.

## **Defra**

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs: the UK government department overseeing animal health, welfare, and veterinary public health.

## **Disciplinary Committee**

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Disciplinary Committee is the formal tribunal of the RCVS. It functions as the veterinary profession's equivalent of a court, responsible for hearing and adjudicating serious allegations against veterinary surgeons and registered veterinary nurses

## **Exemption Order**

A legal provision allowing non-veterinary surgeons to perform certain procedures (for example, physiotherapy, blood sampling) under specific conditions.

## **Fit to Practise**

A general term indicating that a veterinary professional has the skills, knowledge, character, and health to practise safely and effectively.

## **Fitness to Practise**

A formal regulatory process assessing whether a veterinary professional meets the standards required to maintain a **licence to practise**.

## **Government**

Refers to UK central government, which enacts legislation and oversees regulatory bodies. It is made up of multiple departments and agencies.

## **Legislation**

Laws and legal instruments, including **Acts, statutory instruments**, and regulations.

## **Licence to Practise**

A process and associated documentation, ensuring that only those who have met certain standards carry out veterinary acts in the UK.

## **Privy Council**

A formal body advising the monarch, which approves certain legislation and regulations. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) is the UK's highest court of appeal. It acts as the final court for veterinary professional appeals.

## **Professional Judgement**

The application of a veterinary professional's knowledge, experience, and ethical standards to make decisions in the best interest of animal welfare, often in complex or uncertain situations. It underpins clinical decision making and should be utilised when discerning a person's area of competence.

## **Regulator**

An organisation responsible for overseeing professional standards. This is currently the RCVS.

## **Royal Charter**

A Royal Charter is a formal legal document issued by a monarch that grants rights, powers, or status to an organisation.

## **Royal College**

A Royal College is an organisation that holds a **Royal Charter**.

## **Secretary of State**

A senior **government** minister responsible for a specific department.

## **Statutory Instruments**

Secondary legislation used to implement or amend **Acts**.

## **Undertaking**

A formal promise or agreement, often given during **fitness to practise** proceedings, to carry out specific actions, comply with conditions or cease certain activities.

## **Veterinary Acts**

A veterinary act is an activity that can only be undertaken by a veterinary professional.

## **Voluntary Removal**

The process by which a licensed professional agrees with the regulator to rescind their licence to practise once a fitness to practise case has been opened.