

## CMA working papers

### Response from RCVS Knowledge, February 2025

1. RCVS Knowledge is the charity that empowers and supports veterinary teams to provide quality animal healthcare. Among our activities, we provide practical support and tools to veterinary teams to help them deliver evidence-based veterinary care, we translate and disseminate the latest research from across the globe, and we champion improvements that advance the quality of veterinary care for the benefit of animals, the public and society.
2. As an independent charity, we are a distinct legal entity to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), with our own leadership and governance.
3. We would like to make some brief points in response to the working papers published on 6 February 2025, particularly regarding measuring quality in veterinary care, and the practice of contextualised care.
4. The working paper *Regulatory framework for veterinary professionals and veterinary services* (p54) references the National Audit for Small Animal Neutering (NASAN) and the Canine Cruciate Registry (CCR). These initiatives are developed and run by RCVS Knowledge (the charity), not by RCVS (the regulator and Royal College) as is incorrectly implied in the working paper.
5. We agree with the statement in the working paper that the Practice Standards Scheme is the best currently available indicator of *overall* service quality of a practice. National audits and registries of specific procedures can supplement this by providing robust outcome measures for common procedures, supporting the delivery of contextualised care.
6. The working paper *Business models, provision of veterinary advice and consumer choice* highlights the information asymmetry between pet owners and veterinary professionals and how it is difficult for pet owners to evaluate the quality of service received (p46). The more widespread use of standardised ways of measuring outcomes, along with data-sharing and benchmarking via national audits and registries is a means to more robustly measure quality of veterinary care and provide information to aid consumer choice. Our experience is that clinical data-sharing cannot be universally achieved on a voluntary basis due to a number of barriers (see our response to the Issues Statement in July 2024).

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf5baf3263567d66dbe01e/RCVS\\_Knowledge.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf5baf3263567d66dbe01e/RCVS_Knowledge.pdf)).

7. We urge that any future mandatory practice regulation scheme includes a requirement for practices to participate in national audits and registries on an ongoing basis and that these tools are used for continuous improvements in practice and as a mechanism to support informed consent. Our experience of supporting vet teams to use national audits and registries suggests that this could be done in a way that is proportionate and time efficient for vet teams. Participation in these registries would signal to consumers that practices are reviewing their clinical outcomes to improve care quality. If the results were made publicly available, this would provide new information for consumers about the outcomes associated with different treatment options (often with different costs) offered for a particular condition, for example the outcomes associated with complex cruciate surgery carried out by a specialist compared to a simpler surgical technique carried out in first opinion practice. This would give consumers more transparency on the true value of different options for certain conditions and inform consumer choice.
8. We welcome the continued focus on contextualised and adaptive care in the working papers. The working paper *Business models, provision of veterinary advice and consumer choice* (p66), notes that “many vets aim to provide ‘contextualised’ care, but some find it challenging to achieve in practice”. As an independent charity with a mission to advance the quality of veterinary care for the benefit of animals, the public and society, RCVS Knowledge is uniquely placed to take a structured and evidence-based approach to understanding what is needed to support veterinary teams to deliver contextualised care. We have recently launched a national initiative to develop a ‘roadmap’ for contextualised care (see <https://knowledge.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/news-and-events/news/we-have-launched-a-pan-profession-initiative-to-develop-roadmap/>). The work will involve mixed methods research to understand the barriers and enablers to delivering contextualised care in companion animal practices, and to set out what contextualised care looks like when done well. Over the next six months, the initiative aims to draw together perspectives from across the veterinary sector and pet owners to co-design a 'roadmap' for what needs to happen to support veterinary teams to deliver contextualised care.