



Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, Secretary of State BEIS
Rt Hon George Eustice MP, Secretary of State Defra
Rt Hon Alister Jack MP, Secretary of State for Scotland
Rt Hon Simon Hart MP, Secretary of State for Wales
Rt Hon Brandon Lewis CBE MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

23 March 2020

Urgent Support for Veterinary Businesses

As the representative body for those working in leadership and management roles in the veterinary sector, we wish to express our strong support for the call from our colleagues at the British Veterinary Association (BVA) to ensure that the importance of the UK's veterinary businesses is fully recognised within the Government's emergency measures to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UK's veterinary sector delivers essential medical care for animals; protects the human food chain and supports the human/companion animal bond by protecting our precious relationships with companion animals. These relationships are even more important at a time when we are being asked to limit our contact with other people. For many, particularly those in remote or rural areas, their companion animals may be the only company they have.

Members of the veterinary profession are resourceful, expert in biosecurity and deeply committed to caring for animals. They are also preparing to support their human health colleagues in a range of practical ways. Despite this and the efforts they are making to adapt to the emergency at this vital time, we are already hearing reports of difficulties they are facing as they try to keep their teams safe and their businesses open for emergency cases.

We call on the Government to implement the measures already called for by the BVA, most importantly, the classification of veterinary practices as 'critical businesses.' This will ensure that they can remain open to treat the most urgent and emergency cases, in the event of further government restrictions on businesses and public movement during the emergency.

Our members need urgent support in order to ensure that they can continue to protect animal welfare and support animal keepers and owners, both during the crisis and, critically, once we finally emerge from it. If we lose many of our veterinary practices during the next few months, the consequences for human well-being and animal welfare will be significant, not to mention the personally disastrous implications for so many dedicated and caring people.

I look forward to hearing from you. You can contact me at president@vetmg.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Casey', written in a cursive style.

Yours sincerely
Richard Casey
President, Veterinary Management Group

Cc Daniella Dos Santos, President, BVA
Cc Christine Middlemiss, Chief Veterinary Officer, UK