

BVNA Animal Welfare Policy

Definition of animal welfare

The BVNA believe that animal welfare relates to both the physical health and mental wellbeing of the animal, as encapsulated by the five welfare needs:

- the need for a suitable environment
- the need for a suitable diet
- the need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- the need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
- the need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

There is a legal duty of care placed upon all animal keepers and owners under UK animal welfare legislation (Animal Welfare Act 2006, Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011) and in line with this, we believe that the five welfare needs are essential to the welfare of any animal.

The BVNA recognises role of the veterinary profession in relation to animal welfare and that the veterinary profession is part of an interdisciplinary community seeking to promote the best interests of animals and improve their treatment, wherever they are used or impacted on by people.

The BVNA consider that improving animal welfare should be the profession's primary aim and motivation and we have opportunities and responsibilities to advocate for animals' best interests at a national level by formulating policies, lobbying and through representation of the veterinary nursing profession. In addition, registered veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons in the UK must adhere to a professional code of conduct whereby they must make animal health and welfare their first consideration when attending to animals.

The BVNA recognise that animals are capable of experiencing positive and negative feelings such as pain, frustration and contentment and so deserve consideration and respect. Where animals are used for human benefit, including for teaching purposes, food, clothing, entertainment, sport, scientific research, transport and companionship, we believe that this should be exercised with responsibility, and with consideration and compassion for the animals concerned.

The BVNA will always reduce the need to utilise animals for teaching purposes, however recognise that in some circumstances the use of animals may be essential to meet and assess learning objectives and associated practical skills. In such circumstances a full assessment will be conducted to ensure the health and welfare needs of the animals are fully met.