

**INVESTORS
IN THE
ENVIRONMENT**



ACCREDITATION REPORT

Village Vet

April 2023



Executive Summary

Village Vet is made up of veterinary practices across London, Hertfordshire, and Cambridgeshire, with 27 practices and over 450 associates. Since the last audit in 2021, 3 clinics have closed and a further practice is no longer part of the group. In late 2022, the leadership of Village Vet was restructured from one central team to 4 regional teams, and each region will be audited separately going forwards.

Throughout the last year, Village Vet has made good progress with the development of their environmental management system, and have continued efforts to roll out actions to manage and reduce resource use across each site, despite challenges with the large number of sites included. The restructure will make it easier to implement and embed actions across each site moving forwards, and the audit call outlined exciting plans for two of the four regions (London 2 and 3).

Highlights

- There is clear commitment across the brand to improve environmental performance and reduce the organisation's impact. Restructuring the group into four regions will further support the accreditation process, with an iiE lead appointed to oversee the development and implementation of actions across each site and further support provided by the clinical director.
- Some good actions to manage and reduce waste have been rolled across the brand, including additional waste stream collections, the adoption of reusable products and use of the Linnaeus Green products list.
- An excellent 13% reduction has been achieved in Isoflurane use, which has been supported by the use of capnographs at each site and relevant staff members taking part in the low flow training. There are also further plans to ensure all relevant staff members have taken the low flow training, and the practice has set a 10% reduction target for the coming year.

Improvements

- Discussions during the audit call suggested a number of actions and initiatives have been implemented, however there is limited evidence to support this within the audit pack. In order to demonstrate compliance, present progress and highlight the work that has been undertaken, details and supporting evidence should be submitted as part of future audits.
- Implement a process for each region to obtain, record and track data for each measured resource internally. This should be supported by a process to analyse data consumption on at least a 6-monthly basis in order to set SMART targets, track progress, and develop action plans.
- Consider introducing resource 'subheadings' within regional actions plans or creating separate resource action plans, and identifying further actions to achieve reductions in targeted resources. This could also include breaking some actions down further in order to better capture progress. Ensure that regular action plan reviews and internal audits are evidenced within audit packs and/or within action plan 'notes'.

Score

Investors in the Environment is pleased to confirm that, having recently completed that process, **Village Vet** has retained the **Bronze** level accreditation with a score of **63%**.



Village Vet has retained Bronze Level certification as the organisation has restructured which will improve its EMS by enabling the organisation to better understand the practice's environmental performance and manage change more effectively. Although the process of data collection and analysis needs to be improved, Village Vet has demonstrated strong SLT engagement and commitment which is already precipitating change such as the introduction of waste reduction measures across the organisation and reduced anaesthetic gas use.

About the audit

The Investors in the Environment (iiE) accreditation requires an organisation to provide evidence that it has met a range of pre-defined criteria, set targets to reduce its environmental impact and taken action to improve its performance whilst enhancing the community in which it operates. Evidence is presented at an annual audit and this report provides an evaluation of the organisation's performance as well as offers advice on the next steps for continued improvement.

The Investors in the Environment annual audit assesses five key areas of an organisation's Environmental Management System (EMS). These areas include:

- Environmental policy
- Resource management and monitoring
- Progress against targets
- Action planning including social/ environmental projects
- Communication

The purpose of the audit is to evaluate the organisation's EMS and make suggestions relating to its performance. Future opportunities and risks to the organisation's environmental practices may also be identified as a result.

The audit consisted of an examination of documentation evidence, and an interview with key personnel from the London 2 and 3 regions, as well as the Linnaeus sustainability lead, on **20th April 2023**.

Evidence submitted included:

- Village Vet EMS pack
- Evidence of waste segregation and signage at Queens Park
- Resource data
- Village action tracker
- iiE Carbon Footprint calculation

Summary Results Table

Audit category	Percentage
Section 1 - Leadership and Governance (Policy)	76%
Section 2 - Resource Use, Data, & Monitoring	50%
Section 3 - Performance, Action, & Targets	59%
Section 4 - Carbon Management	60%
Section 5 - Waste Management & Materials	63%
Section 6 – Transport & Travel Planning	N/A
Section 7 - Environmental & Social Projects	60%
Section 8 – Communication & Engagement	67%
Overall Score	63%

Audit Scoring

Each section of the organisation's Environmental Management System (EMS) is scored as detailed below. Full reference to scoring can be found separately in the organisation's audit sheet upon request, including auditor comments against specific criteria.

Fail	<p>0 Points: A failing score means that this criterion has not been met nor is any progress demonstrated.</p> <p><i>No progress or commitment has been made in this area.</i></p>
Action Needed	<p>1 point: Action is needed to improve and should be considered in alignment with the auditor's comments and an appropriate timeline. These will be discussed during quarterly support calls to help improve.</p> <p><i>The organisation is considering developing this area, but no formal process has been established or meaningful progress has not been made.</i></p>
Pass / Compliant	<p>2 points: The criteria have been met, though there may also be suggestions to improve.</p> <p><i>The organisation is beginning or improving this area, is broadly compliant with the iiE criteria, and may be showing processes that support improvements.</i></p>
Outstanding	<p>3 points: This criterion has been exceeded as measured against the basic iiE criteria and may demonstrate a significant improvement since the previous year or may highlight best practice.</p> <p><i>The organisation is succeeding with supportive target achievement and may be leading or supporting others in their sector or influence to achieve improvements.</i></p>

Next steps

To continue to develop sustainability within the organisation and work towards the next level, each region of Village Vet should consider the following next steps below.

Leadership & Governance (Environmental Policy)



76%

Strengths

- An Environmental Policy is available and has been signed by two of Village Vet's primary care directors.
- The policy is available on the Village Vet website and discussions during the audit call suggested this is also displayed on a notice board at most sites. Evidence of this should be included in future audit submissions.
- The audit interview highlighted good SLT commitment from the two regions involved (London 2 and 3), with sustainability a focus in SLT meetings and weekly or fortnightly updates shared with the team on a branch level. Some evidence of this should be collected and included within future audit submissions.

Actions for review

- The policy identifies Village Vet's 'core environmental impacts' as Climate Change, Waste Management and Responsible Pharmaceutical and Chemical Stewardship, however it does not identify additional aspects such as travel, energy use or procurement. Consider carrying out an environmental review to identify the environmental aspects and impacts of each region, environmental legislative requirements, and opportunities for improvement. The Environmental Policy lesson on the Green Champion course could be a good starting point for this.
 - An **Environmental Impact** is the **effect** an action/activity has upon the environment e.g. climate change, air pollution or loss of biodiversity.
 - An **Environmental Aspect** is the **action/activity** that has an effect on the environment e.g. use of electricity, use of fleet vehicles and the generation of waste.
- Discussions during the audit suggested that the induction process is currently being reviewed across some of the Village Vet regions. This presents an excellent opportunity to include key sustainability information new starters should be aware of, for example the environmental policy, waste management and switch off practices and an introduction to the green team.

Resource Use & Data Monitoring



50%

Strengths

- Data availability has improved, with electricity data available for 25 sites and gas data available for 20 sites. This should continue to improve as many sites are now with preferred suppliers, and invoices are readily available by Linnaeus.

Actions for review

- While monthly data is generated by Linnaeus centrally, there is currently no process for Village Vet to obtain, record or track this internally. As understanding resource use is crucial to set targets, understand performance and support action development, a process for each region should be put in place going forwards. The iiE Resource Measurement sheet may assist with this, as it has functionality to input data for a number of sites and resources. Attending Session 2 of iiE Linnaeus' cohort training entitled 'Measuring Resources' could be a good starting point for key members of the Village Vet team in order to better understand this area.
- Once a formal process to record resource data has been implemented, this information should be reviewed or monitored periodically to identify trends and understand whether performance is below or above average. These reviews will help each region to understand progress against targets and identify where further action is required.
- Village Vet's EMS pack includes a very brief description of generic use across the brand for electricity, gas and water, however there is limited understanding due to the number of sites included in scope. As each region will now include fewer sites, a more comprehensive outline of resource use should be provided going forwards. This outline could be supported by the development of an asset list, to outline the equipment used as well as any switch off practices.

Performance, Action & Targets



59%

As data availability and validity has improved for 2022 a robust or accurate comparison against previous years can not be made for each measured resource. Performance for this year is therefore unscored, and the score of this section only includes action and future targets.

Strengths

- A 2% future reduction target has been set against electricity, gas and the brands carbon footprint, with a 10% target set against waste and anaesthetic gases. As this has been set by the Linnaeus sustainability lead, based on an understanding of what should be possible considering planned actions, this should be supported and continued by the SLT for each region.

- While robust data is not available for every measured resource, three years of accurate data has been provided for Isoflurane. This presents an excellent reduction in each year, with a 13% saving against 2021, a 9% saving against the baseline year of 2020 and an average annual saving of 4%.
- For next year, action plans have been broken down for each region of Village Vet, with a clear breakdown of key personnel, the sites included, iiE lead and Green Enthusiasts. While there is not an action plan for each measured resource, this does outline actions for all measured resources.

Actions for review

- As actions for each site will now be managed individually by each region, to support the achievement of targets create an action plan for each measured resource and consider breaking down actions further to drive progress and engagement.
- While water is not currently measured, as a core resource an action plan should be created to ensure initiatives are in place to reduce usage where possible.
- For this year's audit submission, a central tracker has been created and shared with each region to track the implementation of core actions at each site. This is useful to track progress for each action, however an activator (responsible staff member) has not been identified for each site and there are no dates for start, completion, or review.
- Going forwards, ensure all actions within the action plan are assigned a start and completion or review date even if they are 'ongoing'. Dated updates could then be provided following this review in the 'notes' section of the action plan to demonstrate progress. Alternatively, green champions or region leads could utilise an interactive platform such as Trello to track the implementation of actions and assign staff responsibilities across each site in their region.

Carbon Management

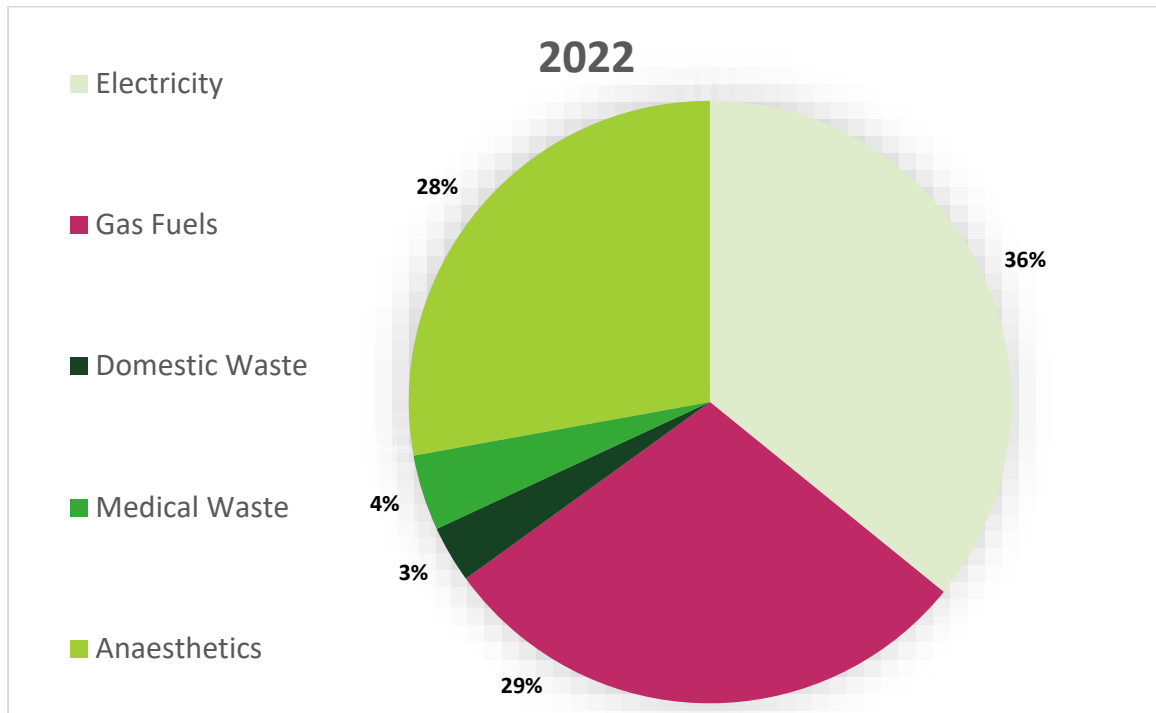


60%

iiE has **estimated** Village Vets Carbon Footprint for 2022 at **393.84** tCO₂e. This is inclusive of gas, electricity, domestic and clinical waste, and isoflurane. Fleet mileage has not been included in this calculation as data could only be provided in spend.

It is worth noting that estimates have been made where less than 12 months of data is available, and gas and electricity data is not available for each site. This is therefore **not a robust calculation** of the organisation's current measured emissions.

The pie chart below provides a breakdown of the estimated calculation.



Actions for review

- Going forwards, start to record and monitor any refrigerant gas leakage from air conditioning units, as these are a Scope 1 emission and should be included within future carbon footprint calculations. This information can usually be obtained from service records.
- Mileage from fleet vehicles is a Scope 1 emission and should therefore be included in the calculation, as it has in previous years. Review how this data is currently collected to identify any alternative methods that can provide mileage or fuel use rather than spend data.
- If working towards Silver level, additional business mileage should also be measured and included within the organisation’s carbon footprint, such as personal mileage claims (grey fleet), public transport claims and air travel.

Waste Management & Materials



63%

Strengths

- The action tracker contains some actions for waste, including implementing dry mixed recycling, food recycling, battery and cartridge recycling, ordering cardboard pharmaceutical bins and reviewing the Green Products list. Progress against some of these actions appear to have been implemented at some sites, however there is no supporting evidence for this.

- Some reusable products are being trialled at some sites, for example reusable autoclave boxes, incontinence pads, Bair hugger blankets, surgical gowns and hats, and O₂ generators.
- Evidence of clear waste segregation and signage for staff has been submitted for the Queens Park site. Similar evidence for each site should be provided in future audit submissions by each region.

Actions for review

- No formal bin checks are carried out at the moment to understaff staff compliance with the waste management system, however discussions during the audit suggested that checks are carried out and feedback is shared with staff across the London 2 and 3 regions. These actions could be formalised into the action plan for each region, with staff assigned to check bins at each site.
- Some good actions have been outlined as highlighted above, however limited evidence for any of these actions, including clear segregation and signage, has been included in the audit submission. This is needed to evidence that actions and systems are in place at each site.
- Village Vet are currently in the process of switching to a new waste contractor, and Linnaeus are looking to create consolidated waste resources which will be shared with each brand. This offers a good opportunity to review the waste system in place at each site, ensure bins are accessible, signage is in place and staff are aware of the correct segregation. Regular bin checks can then be used to monitor ongoing compliance.
- To consolidate the use of the Green Products list, consider undertaking a waste audit to identify high waste items that could be avoided or reduced. A guide on how to complete a waste audit can be found in the 'Resources' section of the iiE website.

Transport & Travel Planning



N/A

A Travel Plan is not a requirement at Bronze level; thus, it is not included within the scope of this audit. However, a Travel Plan is a requirement when Village Vet starts to work towards Silver level.

Strengths

- Some actions to encourage staff to adopt more sustainable transport options are in place centrally, such as the cycle to work scheme and EV salary sacrifice scheme.

Actions for review

- Use the iiE Travel Plan template to create a travel plan outlining each regions travel requirements as well as links to travel initiatives (e.g., Cycle to Work Scheme), sustainable transport information (e.g., local cycle routes, bus timetables), and further guidance to increase sustainable transport (e.g., eco-driving videos, and tips for maintaining cars/bikes).

- Undertake an annual Travel Survey (a template for which can be found on the iie website) to measure commuter mileage as well as identify current staff travel habits and initiatives to encourage the use of more sustainable forms of transport.
- Data should be collected for fleet vehicles and other business mileage (e.g. personal mileage claims, public transport claims and air mileage) where possible going forwards.

Environmental & Social Projects



60%

Strengths

- 25 out of the 27 sites have put up the BSAVA PROTECT poster in the practice, and in November 2022, 9 sites engaged with a national Antibiotics Amnesty, encouraging clients to return old and unused antibiotics for safe disposal in the practice.
- Some further small projects have been carried out across some sites, however an overview of this and supporting evidence is needed to verify this.

Actions for review

- As suggested in last year's report, enable each site to consider 'owning' their own environmental or One Health project. This may help to increase staff participation and encourage engagement with the practice's sustainability action.
- When projects are undertaken, ensure a description of this and supporting evidence (e.g. photographs, communication) is included as part of the EMS pack or audit submission.

Communication & Engagement



67%

Strengths

- A Village Vets Green Teams channel has been created for each region to share progress, highlight actions and encourage collaboration.
- The audit call suggested that sustainability is a standing agenda point for SLT meetings within some regions (London 2 and 3), and staff are given updates weekly or fortnightly within branches. Evidence of this communication is needed as part of the audit submission.

Actions for review

- Ensure evidence of progress updates with the senior management team is included as part of the audit submission (e.g. meeting minutes, presentation), as well as evidence of communication to staff on the ground.
- Consider other ways to encourage staff engagement, such as taking part in a campaign day or activity, which can encourage sustainable action at home as well as work. The iiE campaign calendar could be used to generate some ideas.
- Make use of the iiE communication resources, including the social media graphics included with this report to communicate Village Vet's Bronze iiE achievement.
- Consider providing the Green Champion and/or other key staff members within each region sustainability, environmental management or carbon literacy training. The iiE Training page offers more information on a number of training courses, including the iiE Green Champion Course, which each region has one free place on as part of iiE membership.
- Review ways to encourage staff engagement within each region, such as facilitating Green Team meetings, carrying out staff surveys or setting up group chats or team channels for people to suggest action and project ideas.



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