



Sustainability at Highcroft Vets Longwell Green

In recent years, there has been an increased awareness of the effects that the veterinary profession has on the environment. As a practice, we are committed to reducing our impact on the environment and have a dedicated green team to drive this initiative.

The veterinary profession impacts the environment in many ways, from our antibiotic usage and safe disposal of medications to gas usage during general anaesthetics.

Here are some key aims and some of the things we have already done.

What are our aims?

- Monitor our key resource use including electricity, water, anaesthetic gases etc. and use this data to set targets for energy usage reduction
- Reduce paper use and waste by continuing to email invoices, receipts, pre-operative information sheets and other documents
- Improve our recycling to include more soft plastic from medical packaging (i.e. not just from drapes, surgical kits etc. but from syringes, needles etc.)
- Explore the usage of reusable surgical textiles including reusable surgical masks, drapes and gowns
- Continue responsible use of medicines and educating clients on importance of correct disposal of medications
- Encourage more owners to switch to oral flea and worming prevention rather than spot-on products which can be more harmful to the environment and wildlife
- Improve client communication and client feedback on our sustainability initiatives
- Review our practice Sustainability Policy annually (see “Sustainability Policy Highcroft Group 1” document on our website)

Here are some of the initiatives we have already carried out to improve our sustainability and reduce our impact:

- Resource use and waste:

- Dedicated soft plastic recycling for medical equipment including surgical drape packets, surgical kit packets etc.
- Use of reusable surgical caps, surgical clogs and team all wear Sketchers uniform made from recyclable material
- Requesting food packaging companies to put the recycling instructions on their packaging, so more owners are aware of the ways they can dispose and recycle their food bags
- Signs in reception explaining how to recycle pet food packaging
- Responsible use of medicines including antibiotics and antiparasitics
 - Increasing owner awareness on the environmental issues of spot-on flea and worming products
 - Encouraging owners to return unused medications to us for safe disposal as when medications are thrown into landfill, they can contaminate the environment and harm wildlife
 - Antimicrobial audit and regular staff discussion to try and reduce unnecessary usage
 - Ear cytology prior to dispensing treatment for ear infections
- Inspiration within the practice
 - Created dedicated Green Team with Izzy van Besouw (one of our vets) as the practice environmental champion. Regularly shares information learned through environmental champion meetings, sustainability webinars and sustainability networks.
 - Produced posters in practice with a QR code that takes you to a client suggestion survey for clients to suggest ways we can improve our sustainability
 - Link to this survey if you have any ideas for us - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7KH2RP6>
 - Organised training session for our nursing team on low flow anaesthesia to reduce our anaesthetic gas usage and therefore wastage, whilst maintaining a high level of clinical care

We are always looking for ways to improve as a practice and therefore we will keep you updated regularly with what we are getting up to. We want to be a proactive and inspiring team that does everything they can to protect the environment. If you have any questions or queries for our Green Team, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Sustainability Policy 2024 – Highcroft Vets Group 1



Who we are

Highcroft Vets Group 1 (including the Longwell Green, Keynsham and Brislington branches) are a part of CVS (UK) Ltd. As a practice, we all have the same aim – to provide excellent clinical care to our patients and an outstanding client service. We also acknowledge the effects that our profession has on the environment, and therefore are motivated and committed to reducing our impact as much as possible.

Our commitment

As a company, CVS acknowledges that long-term success depends on the sustainable use of the planet's resources. CVS constantly looks for continuous improvement in sustainability, supported by a team of voluntary environmental champions within each practice.

As a practice, we are committed to minimising our environmental impact, whilst also maintaining a high standard of clinical care. We have set out key objectives, that alongside the CVS companywide objectives, we hope will improve our environmental management. Highcroft Vets Group 1 commits to the following:

- Form a “green team” of staff from all areas of the practice, to meet in person at least quarterly, to discuss and action initiatives
- Receive staff and client suggestions through a virtual staff suggestion box, and a QR code suggestion box for clients when in reception areas
- Focus on reducing soft plastic consumption and increasing soft plastic recycling
- Use medicines responsibly and encourage proper and safe disposal of medicines by staff and clients to reduce environmental contamination
- Encourage clients to switch to oral anti-parasitides instead of spot-on's where appropriate to reduce contamination and harm to wildlife and waterways
- Create “switch off” campaign for lights, computer screens and air-conditioning
- Empower the team
- Audit waste and recycling initiatives
- Reduce anaesthetic gas usage and wastage by engaging team, promoting low flow rates and ensuring correct choice of breathing system.
- Izzy van Besouw (Veterinary Surgeon) appointed as CVS environmental champion to communicate CVS policies and drive change within practice

Signed: 

Date: 7/11/2024

Role: Clinical director and
Regional clinical lead.