



Annual Report **2024**

Veterinary Council of Ireland



Trusted and Effective Veterinary Regulation

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Rachel Brown
MVB CertCHP

A note from the President

I am delighted to present the 2024 Annual Report of the Veterinary Council of Ireland.

I commenced my term as President of the Veterinary Council of Ireland ("VCI") in January 2024 and the VCI also welcomed four new Council members to the table, Niamh Hogan, Catherine Lawler, Paul McDermott and Alan Rossiter.

As part of our new Corporate Strategy for 2024-2027, the VCI, along with a number of stakeholders, have been carrying out analysis on our Registers and the rich data we hold on veterinary registered persons and practices across the country over recent months, with a view to producing a Workforce Report to inform and influence policy into the future.

With a number of draft recommendations, the VCI convened a Workforce Review Focus Group to discuss these recommendations with stakeholders in the Alex Hotel on 23 October 2024. The purpose of the focus group was to consider and discuss potential policy recommendations prepared by the Workforce Review Working Group to counter challenges in recruitment and retention in veterinary and inform planning for the veterinary professions in the decades ahead. The Workforce Report was published in early 2025 and I would like to thank all the external members of the Working Group for their time, energy and ideas they brought to our Working Group meetings.

The VCI commissioned a survey by independent firm Ipsos Behaviour and Attitudes on levels of trust in the veterinary professions as part of an omnibus survey conducted across the country from 1 to 13 August 2024, with results indicating that the veterinary professions are the most trusted professions in Ireland. These results endorse the high standards of practise of veterinary medicine and veterinary nursing across the country enjoyed by Irish society, and a source of pride for all veterinary professionals.

On 12 September 2024, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine signed the Veterinary Medicinal Products Regulations into law. These regulations contain a protocol for the prescribing of antiparasitic medicines, absent a Client Patient Practice Relationship, offering an alternative definition of proper assessment and required knowledge to that contained in the VCI Code of Conduct.

This will regrettably require the VCI to revisit parts of our Code of Conduct, as we cannot have a binding Code of Conduct departing from a position in national legislation. It is understood that these regulations will come into effect in June 2025, and the VCI will keep all of our registrants informed as we progress our considerations this year.

Members of VCI Council and executive team had the pleasure of attending the graduation ceremonies for UCD in June 2024 and many of the veterinary nursing programmes which took place during the month of October 2024, to include the Cork College of Further Education & Training, Atlantic Technical University, Dundalk Institute of Technology, and Technical University of the Shannon. The VCI also conducted a routine accreditation visit of the veterinary nursing programme at University College Dublin in October 2024.

The Registrar and I attended at the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons office in London for an annual officers meeting, enabling in person engagement and discussions on topics such as our Mutual Recognition Agreement with the RCVS, and affording an opportunity for the RCVS to provide an update on the Competition and Markets Authority market investigation into veterinary services for household pets in the UK.

I would also like to thank my esteemed Council colleagues who continue to give their time, knowledge and commitment to Council policy matters so generously, driven by public interest and commitment to animal health and welfare.

Lastly, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Registrar and the Executive team for their support, enthusiasm and devotion in delivering on Council's strategic objectives.

Rachel Brown
MVB CertCHP
President



A note from the Registrar

I am pleased to share an update on progress and achievements delivered by the VCI in our Annual Report for 2024.

The ambitious work of the VCI continues at pace as we regulate and manage the veterinary professions in the interests of animal health, welfare and public health.

We saw a further increase of the number of veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses on our Register in 2024 which is welcome at a time when demand for veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses remains high.

Cognisant of the rich data we alone hold on veterinary professionals, and acknowledging veterinary recruitment and retention challenges, the VCI established a Workforce Review Working Group in 2024. This workforce review working group worked with our executive in analysing the register data on the registers of vets, vet nurses and veterinary practices. We looked at the factors impacting recruitment and retention of veterinary professionals on our Registers and undertook some national and international research and trend analysis, recognising many of the challenges are common to health professions across the globe. A focus group with stakeholders to sense check and seek support for these recommendations was convened in Autumn 2024, with 22 stakeholder organisations endorsing and contributing to the recommendations. The Workforce Report will be published in Spring 2025, sharing the information and register analysis, alongside context in a society with growing human and animal populations. We hope that this Workforce Report will inform and influence public policy into the future.

Collaboration and engagement with our international veterinary regulatory colleagues are ongoing, with VCI membership of the International Veterinary Regulatory Network, and active engagement in the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe. The President and I visited the RCVS offices in London for an annual officers meeting of our respective organisations, enabling in person engagement and discussions across a range of topics to include the CMA Market Analysis underway in the UK and discussions on the Mutual Recognition Agreement.

Veterinary Medicine education capacity in Ireland came into focus in 2024 with the announcement of funding for two new veterinary medicine schools. Government announced funding to support two new programmes of veterinary medicine in the Atlantic Technological University and South East Technological University in September 2024. The VCI, as the competent authority and accrediting body for programmes of veterinary education, will be pleased to apply our accreditation processes to any new programmes of veterinary medicine.

In collaboration with the National Office for Suicide Prevention, the VCI provided listings of the Safe Talk Training sessions which took place throughout 2024 and across the country. This specialist training enables awareness, support and signposts for health assistance within veterinary teams.

The VCI successfully obtained planning permission for a new purpose-built pavilion Council chamber in December 2023, alongside refurbishment of our period offices at 53 Lansdowne Road. Plans for the refurbishment and commission of a new purpose-built Council chamber will enable continued efficient and informed Council meetings, to support the determinations of the Council, as an independent body with quasi-judicial functions. The required works for 53 Lansdowne Road will be funded from capital reserves, held by the Council, confined for use for purposes such as this. These works commenced in January 2025.

As we continue with our Corporate Strategy 2024-2027, we reflect on the progress achieved which includes ongoing stakeholder engagement, the positive impact of the revised Code of Professional Conduct, with notable reduction in antimicrobial medicines use in 2023 following introduction of our new Code, and a new website. The VCI, as an independent regulator acting in the interests of animal health and welfare and public interest, is increasingly aware of the importance of our role and influence in the wider sphere of animal health and welfare, food production, and sustainability in the interests of animal health and welfare and public health.

I remain most grateful to our Executive team in Lansdowne Road, who show drive and commitment to the Veterinary Council purpose and values, with whom I am fortunate to work alongside.

I express my sincere gratitude to the President Rachel Brown and all members of the Council for their support and dedication alongside their insight and expertise in the focus and delivery of our strategic objectives in the public interest.

Niamh Muldoon

Registrar / Chief Executive Officer

Our Vision

Trusted and effective regulator of the veterinary professions.

Our Mission

Our mission is to ensure the standards of education and practice among the veterinary professions, enhances animal health and welfare, and benefits society.

How veterinary regulation makes a difference:

- ▶ Safeguarding the Registers of veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses
- ▶ Ensuring high standards of practice through education programme accreditation and continuing professional development
- ▶ Promoting high professional and ethical standards through the Code of Professional Conduct
- ▶ Promoting standards through the inspection and certification of veterinary premises and the service they provide
- ▶ Taking disciplinary action in cases of professional misconduct





Our Strategic Objectives

- 1** Ensure professionalism and quality in veterinary medicine.
- 2** Be an effective organisation, ensuring confidence and respect of the public and veterinary professions in our processes.
- 3** Regulate effectively and proportionately ensuring high standards in veterinary medicine.
- 4** Influence through collaboration and engagement with stakeholders.
- 5** Support health and wellbeing in the veterinary professions.
- 6** Promote the importance of economic, social and environmental sustainability in the veterinary professions.

Who we are and the role we play

About the Veterinary Council

The Veterinary Council is an independent statutory body set up under the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, as amended. For public accountability purposes, the Veterinary Council operates under the aegis of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

The principal function of the Veterinary Council is to regulate the practise of veterinary medicine and veterinary nursing in Ireland, in the interest of animal health and welfare, and public health. The Veterinary Council acts in the public interest, as an independent statutory body promoting optimal animal health, food safety and supporting sustainability in line with the principles of One Health, One Welfare.

History

The Veterinary Council was originally established under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1931. Under the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, the Veterinary Council came into force on 1 January 2006 when this legislation was enacted. The Veterinary Council is the independent statutory body in perpetuity, responsible for the regulation and management of the veterinary professions in Ireland.

The Council

The Veterinary Council is a statutory board comprised of 19 members, comprised of appointed and elected members, including veterinary practitioner members, veterinary nursing members and non-veterinary members. The membership includes:

The Executive

The Veterinary Council is supported by an Executive team of 12 people, headed by a Chief Executive Officer, named in the Veterinary Practice Act as the Registrar.

Independently funded

The Veterinary Council is funded through income from registration fees and practice premises accreditation fees, which it sets in respect of veterinary practitioners, veterinary nurses and veterinary practice premises.



What we do

The functions of the Veterinary Council include public protection through maintenance of standards in the practise of veterinary medicine and veterinary nursing through the accreditation and supervision of veterinary education, safeguarding and maintenance of the register of veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses, certification and registration of veterinary practice premises, standards for veterinary medicine and veterinary nursing required in a binding Code of Professional Conduct and through disciplinary action in cases of professional misconduct.

In order to work as a veterinary practitioner or veterinary nurse in Ireland, an individual must first be registered with the Veterinary Council of Ireland and be associated with a Certificate of Suitability (COS) granted by the Veterinary Council in respect of a registered veterinary premises. Registrants working at a state premises or exempted place are exempt from the requirement to be associated with a veterinary premises the subject of a Certificate of Suitability.



The Veterinary Council of Ireland

Gender breakdown of Council members

The Veterinary Council promotes an equal opportunities policy and a socially inclusive culture.

The Council has a breakdown of 58%:42% female to male ratio.

Rachel Brown
President

Kevin McConnell
Deputy President

VCI Council Members:

Paula Barry Walsh
Rachel Brown
Catherine Lawler
Nuala Dormer
Vivienne Duggan
Alan Rossiter
Joanne Gallagher
Caroline Garvan
Kevin McConnell
Paul McDermott
John Matthews
Edward Joseph Moffitt
Emily Murray
Ailís ní Riain
John O' Brien
Niamh Hogan
Bert Stewart
Joseph Walsh
Annetta Zintl

Veterinary Council Membership 2024

Currently the Council is composed of eleven female and eight male members.



Paula Barry Walsh



Rachel Brown



Caroline Garvan



Paul McDermott



Catherine Lawler



Vivienne Duggan



Joanne Gallagher



Emily Murray



Kevin McConnell



John Matthews



Edward Joseph Moffitt



Ailís ní Riain



John O'Brien



Nuala Dormer



Annetta Zintl



Joseph Walsh



Bert Stewart



Alan Rossiter



Niamh Hogan

2024 in Numbers

Throughout 2024, there were 10 Council meetings and 61 Committee meetings to support the work of the VCI. All meetings were convened as per the meeting schedule agreed at the outset of the year.

MEETINGS



7 Audit, Risk and Finance Committee meetings

6 Legislation, Ethics and Monitoring Committee meetings

9 Practice Premises Committee meetings

7 Veterinary Education and Training Committee meetings

6 Veterinary Nursing Committee meetings

3 Conjoint Committee meetings

24 Preliminary Investigation Committee meetings to consider complaints

6 Sanction Hearings



3,689 Veterinary Practitioners on the Register

1,290 Veterinary Nurses on the Register

11 

The Council held eleven **Fitness to Practise** inquiries throughout 2024

5 Authorised Officer investigations carried out 

1 Veterinary Nursing Course re-accredited 

9 Freedom of Information requests received 

14 Parliamentary questions responded to 

182 revisits premises inspections carried out including **7 unannounced inspections** 

46 complaints received and **49 complaints** in total were determined 

495 CVE courses approved 

A Year in Review 2024



Council Elections and Appointments

The VCI elected Rachel Brown as President and Kevin McConnell as Deputy President at its meeting on 25 January 2024. The VCI also welcomed four new Council members, appointed by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.



New Guidance on Canine Surgical Artificial Insemination

The VCI published new guidance on Canine Surgical Artificial Insemination and the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Practitioners was amended.



Workforce Review Report

A Workforce Review Working Group was established to produce analysis of the VCI's Registers, to identify and quantify key trends and factors related to the recruitment and retention of veterinary professionals in Ireland, and to assess the demand for veterinary services currently and into the future.



Controlled Drugs Guidance Document

The Controlled Drugs Guidance Document developed by the VCI was published and is now available for download on the website.



Memorandum of Understanding HPRA

The VCI signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Health Products Regulatory Authority.



Public Survey carried out on the level of trust in the Veterinary Professions

The VCI commissioned a survey to assess trust levels in the Veterinary Professions.



Veterinary Sustainability Network Ireland

The Veterinary Sustainability Network Ireland is a voluntary group of veterinary professionals aiming to engage, empower and collaborate with veterinary professionals on improving sustainability practices in the profession. Commencing in 2024, they aim to do this by developing guidelines and resources supporting individuals and businesses during this transition to greener practices. The VCI continues to engage and work on developing sustainability commitments.



Training and Induction

The VCI provided training and tailored induction to all board members throughout the year.



Refurbishment of VCI Offices 53 Lansdowne Road

Works commenced to 53 Lansdowne Road following procurement for design and construction team, following planning permission awarded by Dublin City Council in December 2023.



Information Leaflet - "Doing the Best for your Pet"

The VCI published new information aimed at providing guidance to animal owners in their interactions with veterinary professionals.



New Website

The VCI launched its new website at the end of 2024.

Veterinary Council of Ireland Workforce Review

The Veterinary Council of Ireland has been gathering an increasing level of data on its Register of Veterinary Practitioners, Register of Veterinary Nurses and Register of Veterinary Practice Premises, with each annual renewal process.

The Veterinary Council of Ireland established a Workforce Review Working Group under the aegis of the Veterinary Council of Ireland's Practice Premises Committee to consider the Register data collected and to consider and propose recommendations to support the delivery of veterinary services into the future for the betterment of animal health and welfare, enrichment of society and public health.

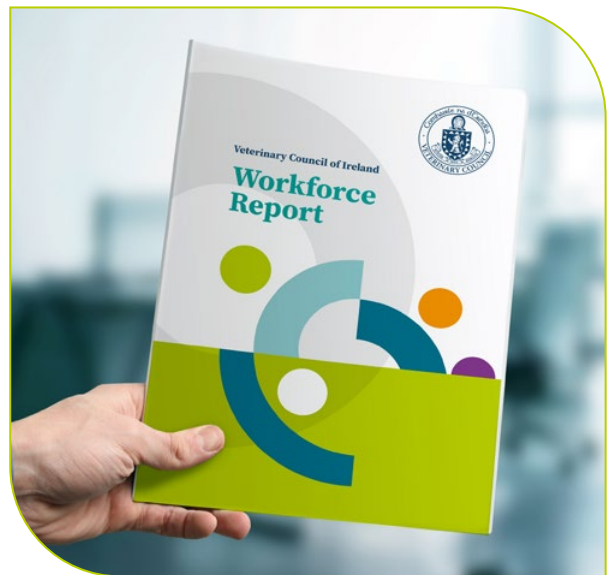
Purpose & Objectives

The overall goal of the workforce review was to produce analysis of the Veterinary Council of Ireland's Registers, identify and quantify key trends and factors related to the recruitment and retention of veterinary professionals in Ireland, and to assess the demand for veterinary services currently and into the future.

The main objectives of the Workforce Review Working Group included:

- ▶ Analysing data garnered from VCI Registers.
- ▶ Determine factors which influence the challenges to recruitment and retention in the veterinary professions in Ireland.
- ▶ Review research and workforce reports produced in other jurisdictions regarding veterinary workforce challenges that may have relevance to the Irish situation.
- ▶ Develop policy recommendations and potential actions to stem and resolve the rising challenges in veterinary workforce matters.
- ▶ Consider the potential engagement with any other agencies to conduct research, analysis, and to conduct a capacity review of veterinary services to inform public policy.

By enabling a deeper understanding of the veterinary workforce in Ireland and identifying key challenges it faces, the review aims to support evidence-based recommendations to veterinary industry stakeholders and policymakers.



Workforce Review Stages

The Workforce Review Working Group consisted of members connected to veterinary practise, including Registered Veterinary Practitioners, Registered Veterinary Nurses, veterinary representative bodies, veterinary medicine and veterinary nursing course providers, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and members of the Veterinary Council of Ireland.

This initial group was responsible for the preliminary analysis of the available data, recognising any additional data or information required and developing potential policy recommendations. The Workforce Review Working Group met a total of 5 times in 2024.

Following the initial considerations and analysis, additional members were invited, in the form of a focus group, to broaden discussions and to assist with potential policy recommendations. The focus group brought input, insight and expertise from a range of stakeholders gathered around a table to sense check and contribute to the draft recommendations.

Finally, the report was reviewed by the Veterinary Council of Ireland's Practice Premises Committee and then finalised and endorsed by the Veterinary Council of Ireland at its meeting on 5 December 2024.

Recommendations

Following analysis of the Register data collected, seven recommendations were developed with the aim of supporting the delivery of veterinary services into the future for the betterment of animal health and welfare and public health. The recommendations are:

1. Promoting the Role of the Veterinary Nurse

Registered Veterinary Nurses are an integral part of the veterinary team, working alongside veterinary practitioners to provide high levels of care for animals. Due to their varied skills, employing veterinary nurses offers numerous benefits to veterinary practices, enhancing both the quality of care provided to animals and the overall efficiency of the practice.

2. Veterinary Council of Ireland to Host Public Stakeholder Consultation on Out of Hours Emergency Care

The availability of 24-hour emergency care is a mandatory requirement to ensure that animals always have access to emergency veterinary care, in the interest of animal health and welfare. It is recommended that the VCI conducts a public consultation, open to all stakeholders, to gather views regarding out of hours emergency animal care and the current requirements in place.



3. Actions to Support Registrants and Improve Work Life Balance

During its review, the Workforce Review Working Group agreed that it must look at the areas of retention and possible factors which would entice and enable people to return to the VCI Register, as a sustainable and effective workforce is integral to delivering safe, high-quality care. A number of recommended actions to support Registrant have been prepared.

4. Financial Supports and Subsidies

It may be prudent for the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine to consider making some financial provision and/or alternate supports or subvention of veterinary services in remote or vulnerable areas of the country, in the interests of animal health and welfare and public health.

5. Increased Engagement with the Public and Service Users

As an independent body, acting in the public's interest, it is important that the VCI engages with the public and service users. By doing so, the VCI can create more effective, fair, and practical regulations that better serve the public interest and adapt to changing circumstances.

6. Increased Veterinary Engagement across State Agencies, Government Bodies and Other Relevant Stakeholders

Increased engagement and cooperation between veterinary practitioners, veterinary nurses, state agencies, and other stakeholders can benefit public health, animal welfare, One Health initiatives, food safety, economic development, sustainability, and environmental protection.

7. Economic and Social Research Institute Further Analysis

Commissioning an independent research institute like the Economic and Social Research Institute to examine current supply of, and demand for, veterinary services, would assist the VCI, and other relevant stakeholders, in formulating policy around veterinary services into the future, for the public good.

The Veterinary Council of Ireland Workforce Report will shortly be available on the VCI website.

Strong Trust in the Veterinary Professions

90%
persons have
strong trust in their
veterinary
practitioner and
nurse



The Veterinary Council commissioned Ipsos Behaviour & Attitudes, an independent research firm, to conduct a survey in August 2024, to assess levels of trust in the veterinary professions among other matters.

According to the survey, 94% of adults expressed trust in veterinary nurses, while 93% trust veterinary practitioners. These trust levels surpass those of doctors and teachers, underscoring the high regard in which veterinary professionals are held across Ireland.

The findings also indicate that 80% of respondents agree that veterinary practitioners are educated to a high standard, with 79% expressing the same confidence in veterinary nurses. 97% of people who have engaged veterinary services in the past year agree that veterinary practitioners are educated to a high standard.

Some of the key findings of the survey include:

- ▶ **94%** trust veterinary nurses
- ▶ **93%** trust veterinary practitioners
- ▶ **80%** agree veterinary practitioners are educated to a high standard
- ▶ **77%** agree vets play an important role in public health, including disease control, antibiotic resistance and managing emerging diseases
- ▶ **64%** agree that the Veterinary Council of Ireland increases trust in the veterinary professions
- ▶ **80%** of adults who engaged veterinary services in the past year were very satisfied with the overall experience
- ▶ **30%** were unaware of veterinary practitioners' role in food safety.

The survey gathered face-to-face responses from 1,014 adults across the country at 63 randomly selected locations nationwide using quotas reflecting Ireland's adult population in terms of gender, age, social class, and geographic region.

2024 in Colour



↑ Kevin McConnell, Deputy President, Veterinary Council of Ireland and Niamh Muldoon, Registrar, Veterinary Council of Ireland congratulated veterinary graduates of University of Veterinary Medicine Budapest, 28 February 2024.



↑ Veterinary Council of Ireland Executive with Cork College of FET veterinary nursing programme students, Careers Day in Cork College of FET, 14 March 2024.



↑ VCI Executive at the Technological University of the Shannon CVE Event 2024, 9 February 2024.



↑ Dr Margaret Cullen, Governance Advisor for the Institute of Directors and members of the Veterinary Council and Executive, Veterinary Council of Ireland Training and Development Day, 17 April 2024.



↑ Dr Tony Holohan, former Chief Medical Officer of Ireland and members of the Veterinary Council and the Registrar, Veterinary Council of Ireland Training and Development Day, 17 April 2024.



↑ Séamus McManus, Chair Conjoint Committee, Veterinary Council of Ireland; Mark McCarthy, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Finola McCoy, Animal Health Ireland; Aideen Neylon, Veterinary Council of Ireland Executive; Sean O'Laoide, Conjoint Committee, Veterinary Council of Ireland, the Federation of Veterinarians in Europe Conference, 12 – 15 June 2024.



↑ Federation of Veterinarians in Europe Conference Delegates, 12 – 15 June 2024.



↑ Members of the Veterinary Council of Ireland and the Registrar in the academic profession, University College Dublin Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing Graduation, 24 June 2024.



↑ Dr Martin Blake, Chief Veterinary Officer, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Kevin McConnell, Deputy President, Veterinary Council of Ireland, University College Dublin Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing Graduation, 24 June 2024.



↑ Professor Rory Breathnach, Dean and Head of the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine; Cara Crudden, UCD Veterinary Medicine Freeman Memorial Medal Winner 2024; Rachel Brown, President, Veterinary Council of Ireland, University College Dublin Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing Graduation, 24 June 2024.



↑ Rachel Brown, President, Veterinary Council of Ireland; Ellen Walsh, University College Dublin Veterinary Nursing Student of the Year 2024; parents of Ellen Walsh, University College Dublin Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing Graduation, 24 June 2024.



↑ Professor Rory Breathnach, Dean and Head of the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine; Ellen Walsh, UCD Veterinary Nursing Student of the Year 2024; Rachel Brown, President, Veterinary Council of Ireland, University College Dublin Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing Graduation, 24 June 2024.



↑ Rachel Brown, President, Veterinary Council of Ireland, Liam and Aiden Macken, Veterinary Medicine Graduates, University College Dublin Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing Graduation, 24 June 2024.



↑ Professor Orla Feely, President, University College Dublin; Mike Magan, awarded an honorary degree in recognition of his contribution to animal health in his previous office as chair of Animal Health Ireland; Rachel Brown, President, Veterinary Council of Ireland, University College Dublin Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing Graduation, 24 June 2024.



↑ Niamh Muldoon, Registrar, Veterinary Council of Ireland; Dr Joanne Gallagher, Veterinary Council of Ireland; Alan Manahan, Veterinary Council of Ireland Executive; Dr Bill Cashman, Cork College of FET; Paraic MacNamara, Veterinary Practitioner and Premises Assessor, Veterinary Council of Ireland; Sharon Bergin, Veterinary Council of Ireland Executive, National Ploughing Championships, 17-19 September 2024.



↑ Kevin McConnell, Deputy President, Veterinary Council of Ireland, speaking to iRadio, National Ploughing Championships, 17-19 September 2024.



↑ Pippa Hackett, Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity, Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine, National Ploughing Championships, 17-19 September 2024.



↑ Niamh Muldoon, Registrar, Veterinary Council of Ireland; Patrick O'Donovan, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; VCI Executive, National Ploughing Championships, 17-19 September 2024.



↑ Claire O'Leary, Interim CEO, CORU; Justice David Barnville, President of the High Court of Ireland; Joanne Kissane, CEO and Registrar, Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland; David O'Flynn, CEO and Registrar, Dental Council of Ireland; Yvonne Clancy, Interim CEO, the Medical Council; Carolyn Donohoe, Interim CEO, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland and Niamh Muldoon, CEO and Registrar, Veterinary Council of Ireland, The Case for Reform in Fitness to Practise Matters Conference, 27 September 2024.



↑ VCI Executive at the Dundalk Institute of Technology Careers Event, 8 October 2024.



↑ Hazell Mullins, President Veterinary Ireland; Rachel Brown, President Veterinary Council of Ireland; Rory Breathnach, Dean and Head of School of Veterinary Medicine, University College Dublin; Martin Blake, Chief Veterinary Officer, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Vet24 conference, 11-13 October 2024.



↑ Anne O'Callaghan, Cork College of FET Veterinary Nursing Student of the Year 2024, Rachel Brown, President, Veterinary Council of Ireland, Cork College of FET Veterinary Nursing Graduation, 22 October 2024.



↑ Catherine Lawler, Veterinary Council of Ireland; Dr Kim McFadden, Head of Department of Life and Physical Sciences at Atlantic Technological University; Bethany Rose McMonagle, Atlantic Technological University Nursing Veterinary Nursing Student of the Year 2024, Atlantic Technological University Veterinary Nursing Graduation, 30 October 2024.



↑ Sharon Bergin, Veterinary Council of Ireland Executive; Danielle Curran, Technological University of the Shannon Veterinary Nursing Student of the Year 2024, Technological University of the Shannon Veterinary Nursing Graduation, 30 October 2024.



↑ Kevin McConnell, Deputy President Veterinary Council of Ireland; Ciara McGuinness, Dundalk Institute of Technology Veterinary Nursing Student of the Year 2024, Dundalk Institute of Technology Veterinary Nursing Graduation, 31 October 2024.



↑ Niamh Muldoon, Registrar, Veterinary Council of Ireland; Dr Sandra Faeh, American Veterinary Medical Association President; Dr Mike Topper, Director of International Affairs; Dr Tracy Fisher, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association President, The Federation of Veterinarians in Europe Conference, 28 – 29 November 2024.



↑ Finola McCoy, Senior Programme Manager CellCheck, Animal Health Ireland; Brian Kilgallen, Deputy Head of Unit Secretariat General, European Commission; Aileen Neylon, Veterinary Council of Ireland, The Federation of Veterinarians in Europe Conference, 28 – 29 November 2024.



↑ Niamh Muldoon, Registrar, Veterinary Council of Ireland; Prof. Dr. Pierre Lekeux, Director of European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training, European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education; Dr Finola McCoy, Senior Programme Manager CellCheck, Animal Health Ireland, The Federation of Veterinarians in Europe Conference, 28 – 29 November 2024.



↑ Niamh Muldoon Registrar VCI; Dr Gabriel Beechinor, Director of Veterinary Sciences at the HPRA; Dr Lorraine Nolan, CEO of the HPRA.

VCI Sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA)

On 4 November 2024, an MoU was established between the HPRA and the VCI. This MoU is intended to assist and support both the VCI and the Health Products Regulatory Authority in performing their individual regulatory functions and to enable the sharing of information as relevant between the two organisations, in the public interest. This MoU covers areas of common interest and enables meaningful collaboration between the bodies.

Objectives of the agreement include:

- ▶ to promote an understanding between the bodies of each other's regulatory roles, requirements and processes;
- ▶ to facilitate the exchange of information and documentation relating to the regulation of Veterinary Medicinal Products and areas of common interest;
- ▶ to facilitate collaborative activities between the parties;
- ▶ to enhance the ability of the bodies in the provision of their respective roles relating to or in connection with animal or public health.

VCI Induction, Training and Development 2024

The Veterinary Council welcomed a number of speakers throughout the year who participated in discussions and provided training.



Dr Margaret Cullen

Governance Advisor at the Institute of Directors provided risk and governance training.



Dr Tony Holohan

Former Chief Medical Officer of Ireland and Director of UCD's One Health Centre, held a round table discussion with Council members on One Health.



Jasmine Gartner

PhD, Independent Consultant delivered a presentation and training in unconscious bias, diversity and inclusion.



Patricia Dillon

Senior Counsel delivered training on Sanctions.



Joanne Sweeney-Burke

CEO of Digital Training Institute, a digital marketing consulting and training agency. She provided an overview and training on digital media.



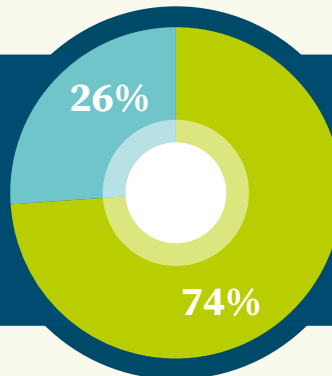
Brendan Lenihan

Managing Director of Navigo Consulting provided training to the Council on Fiduciary Duty and Conflicts of Interest. He is a management consultant, Chartered Accountant, professional non-executive director and accredited mediator.

VCI Register Statistics 2024

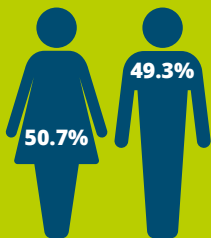
Total Registrants

4,979

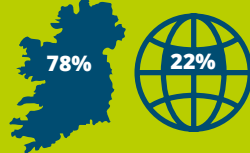


● Veterinary Practitioners
● Veterinary Nurses

Total Veterinary Practitioners 3,689



By Gender
Female: **1,873**
Male: **1,816**

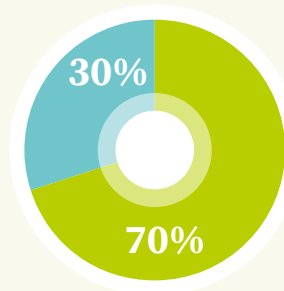


By Nationality
Irish: **78%**
EU/Non-Eu: **22%**

Registered Veterinary Specialists: **62 (1.7%)**

Registered with Limited Registration Under Section 45 of the Act: **2**

Total New Entrants to Registers in 2024 427



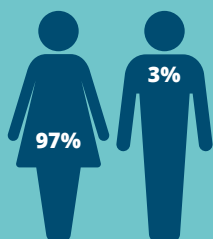
● Veterinary Practitioners **298**
● Veterinary Nurses **129**



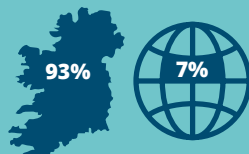
Number of Registered Veterinary Premises 2024 770

- 193** Registered Veterinary Offices
- 426** Registered Veterinary Clinics
- 138** Registered Veterinary Hospitals
- 9** Registered Veterinary Facilities
- 4** Registered Mobile Veterinary Units (Charities)

Total Veterinary Nurses 1,290



By Gender
Female: **1,247**
Male: **43**



By Nationality
Irish: **93%**
EU/Non-Eu: **7%**

Registered with Limited Registration Under Section 96B of the Act: **0**

Continuing Veterinary Education Overview 2024

CVE is any further education or training which is intended to further develop or to refresh a Registrant's professional knowledge, skills and abilities in relation to their practise of veterinary medicine or veterinary nursing.

It is the duty of every registered veterinary practitioner and veterinary nurse to provide the best possible service and to maintain their professional competence in the interests of both public and animal health. The VCI Codes of Professional Conduct place a professional obligation on registrants to participate in CVE. In addition, S.I. No 577 and 578 of 2020, the Veterinary Council of Ireland Continuing Veterinary Education for Veterinary Practitioners and Veterinary Nurses Regulations legally require that Registrants participate in CVE and comply with annual CVE requirements.

A veterinary practitioner must obtain either a minimum of 20 CVE Credits in a CVE Year (1 January - 31 December), or a minimum cumulative total of 60 CVE Credits over the current CVE Year and the preceding two CVE Years.

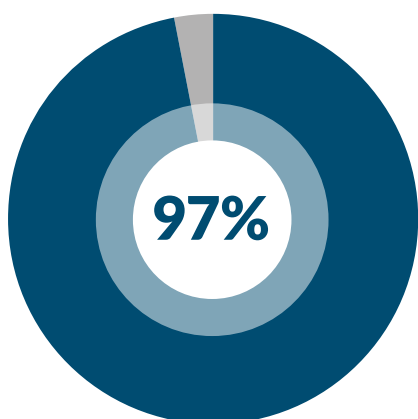
A veterinary nurse must obtain either a minimum of 12 CVE Credits in a CVE Year (1 January - 31 December), or a minimum cumulative total of 36 CVE Credits over the current CVE Year and the preceding two CVE Years.

Results

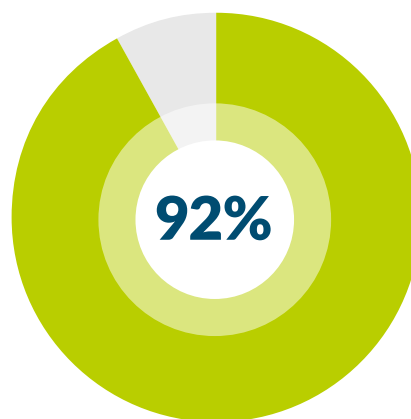
The Veterinary Council of Ireland audited 5% of the Register of Veterinary Practitioners and 5% of the Register of Veterinary Nurses for the CVE year 2023.

To confirm their compliance with the CVE requirements, the randomly selected Registrants were asked to complete a CVE Audit questionnaire and to provide documentary evidence, such as CVE certificates, to confirm whether they had obtained the required number of CVE credits.

A note of thanks to all those selected for the 2024 CVE Audit for their prompt engagement and response, which endorses the high levels of compliance and the continued commitment of the veterinary professions in continuing veterinary education.



● **97%** of Veterinary Practitioners were compliant.



● **92%** of Veterinary Nurses were compliant.

Committees of Council 2024

Preliminary Investigations Committee

Joanne Gallagher
Annetta Zintl
Joseph Walsh
Kevin McConnell

Fitness to Practise Committee

Ailís ní Riain
Nuala Dormer
John O'Brien
John Matthews
Catherine Lawler
Paul McDermott
Simon Murphy
(External Member)
Frank Beatty
(External Member)

Legislation, Ethics and Monitoring Committee

Joseph Walsh (Chairperson)
Nuala Dormer (Deputy Chairperson)
Rachel Brown (Ex Officio)
Vivienne Duggan
Caroline Garvan
Niamh Hogan
Catherine Lawler
Ailís ní Riain
Paul McDermott
Laura McKay (co-optee)
Edward Joseph Moffitt
Emily Murray
Alan Rossiter
Bert Stewart

Practice Premises Committee

Kevin McConnell (Chairperson)
John Matthews
Bert Stewart
Rachel Brown
Niamh Hogan
Vivienne Duggan
Deirdre Lynch
(External member)

Audit, Risk & Finance Committee

Paula Barry Walsh (Chairperson)
John O'Brien
Joanne Gallagher
Rachel Brown
Caroline Garvan
Adrienne Wynne
(External member)
Joan O'Connor
(External member)

Veterinary Education & Training Committee

Joanne Gallagher (Chairperson)
Paula Barry Walsh (Deputy Chairperson)
Ailís ní Riain
Bert Stewart
Vivienne Duggan
Annetta Zintl
Catherine Lawler
Emily Murray
Edward Joseph Moffitt
Paul McDermott

Veterinary Nursing Committee

Emily Murray (Chairperson)
Catherine Lawler
Annetta Zintl
Bert Stewart
Gina Burke
(External member)
Laura McKay
(External member)
Deirdre Lynch
(External member)
Niamh O'Donoghue
(External member)

Conjoint Committee

Séamus McManus (Chairperson)
Paula Barry Walsh
Rachel Brown (ex officio)
Caroline Garvan
Edward Joseph Moffitt
Peter Bishton
(External member)
Danny Holmes
(External member)
Finbarr Murphy
(External member)
Finola McCoy
(External member)
John O'Roarke
(External member)
Mark McCarthy
(External member)
Donal O'Mahony
(External member)

Committee Reports



Veterinary Education and Training Committee



Membership of Committee

Joanne Gallagher (Chairperson), Rachel Brown (ex officio), Paula Barry Walsh, Vivienne Duggan, Edward Joseph Moffitt, Emily Murray, Ailís ní Riain, Annetta Zintl, Bert Stewart, Paul McDermott, Catherine Lawlor.

This report summarises the main activities, actions and decisions of the Veterinary Education and Training Committee ("VETC") during 2024 including the re-accreditation of an undergraduate programme of education in veterinary nursing as well as the consideration of veterinary medicine and veterinary nursing qualifications for registration.

The VETC was also responsible for procedures and regulations in respect of Continuing Veterinary Education ("CVE"). The VETC met a total of seven times in 2024.

International Applicants for Eligibility to Join Veterinary Practitioner Register (Section 44)

In 2024, in accordance with Section 44 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, as amended, 22 applications were received and assessed for eligibility to join the Register of Veterinary Practitioners. Having assessed these applications, 16 were deemed eligible for entry onto the Register of Veterinary Practitioners and 5 were deemed ineligible. There was 1 applicant invited to sit the veterinary medicine registration examination.

International Applicants for Eligibility to Join Veterinary Nurses Register (Section 96a)

In 2024, in accordance with Section 96A of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, as amended, 13 applications were received and assessed for eligibility to join the Register of Veterinary Nurses. Having assessed these applications, 10 were deemed eligible for entry on to the Register of Veterinary Nurses and 3 were deemed ineligible.

Veterinary Specialist Register

A Veterinary Specialist is a veterinary practitioner registered with the VCI who has a higher degree of skill and/or knowledge above that of a general veterinary practitioner in the same discipline. In accordance with Section 47 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, as amended ("the Act") the Committee reviewed five applications for entry onto the Veterinary Specialist Register in 2024. Having reviewed these applications, all five veterinary practitioner specialists were added to the Specialist Register in 2024 in the areas of Small Animal Surgery, Equine Reproduction, and Bovine Health Management.

Limited Registration (Section 45)

Persons who hold primary qualifications in veterinary medicine may apply to the VCI for registration with limited registration under Section 45 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, as amended ("the Act"). The need for registration under Section 45 must be for one of the following purposes:

- i) To participate in a disease eradication programme (being measures operated by or on behalf of a Minister to prevent, reduce risk of, control or eradicate a disease defined in Section 2 of the Diseases of Animals Act 1966).
- ii) To participate in the provision of approved programmes of education or further education.

In 2024, no applications for limited registration were received.

Registration Examination Veterinary Medicine

In 2024, four candidates sat Part One of the Veterinary Medicine Registration Examination. One of these candidates passed the examination successfully, and proceeded to sit Part Two of the Examination, being a clinical skills exam. This candidate successfully passed the Part Two examination and was subsequently successful in their application to be entered onto the Register of Veterinary Practitioners.

Accreditation

University College Dublin (UCD) Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Nursing.

The Committee considered the Accreditation Report for the 2024 re-accreditation visit to the Veterinary Nursing Programme in UCD which took place in October 2024.

The Committee also reviewed and approved the 2022-2023 annual report for the Veterinary Medicine Programme at UCD.

Research Grant

The VCI offers a research grant annually, following open competition, to enhance and progress the practise of veterinary medicine and/or veterinary nursing. A grant to the value of €6,000 was awarded in 2024 for a research proposal entitled "Veterinary ethics teaching: How does it help new graduates navigate the challenges and pressures of clinical practice in Ireland, UK and Australia?".

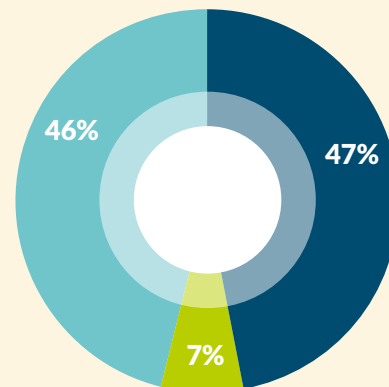
CVE Audit - Compliance with CVE Requirements in 2023 CVE Year

The Committee oversaw the 2023 CVE compliance audit. The audit outcome reflected a 96% overall compliance rate with CVE requirements in the 2023 CVE year.

Continuing Veterinary Education (CVE)

In 2024, a total of 495 CVE Course applications were received and approved by the Veterinary Council of Ireland.

Target Professions of CVE Courses:



- Veterinary practitioners
229 courses being **47%** of the total
- Veterinary Nurses
25 courses being **7%** of the total
- Both VP and VN
228 courses being **46%** of the total

In 2024, there were more CVE programmes targeted towards veterinary practitioners than at veterinary nurses.



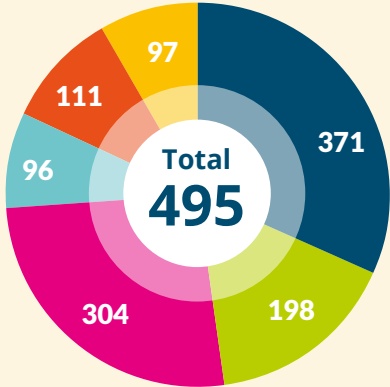
CVE Courses Focus:

Course Providers, when submitting CVE application forms are asked to indicate one or more areas of focus that the content of their course relates to.

The areas of focus that can be selected are:

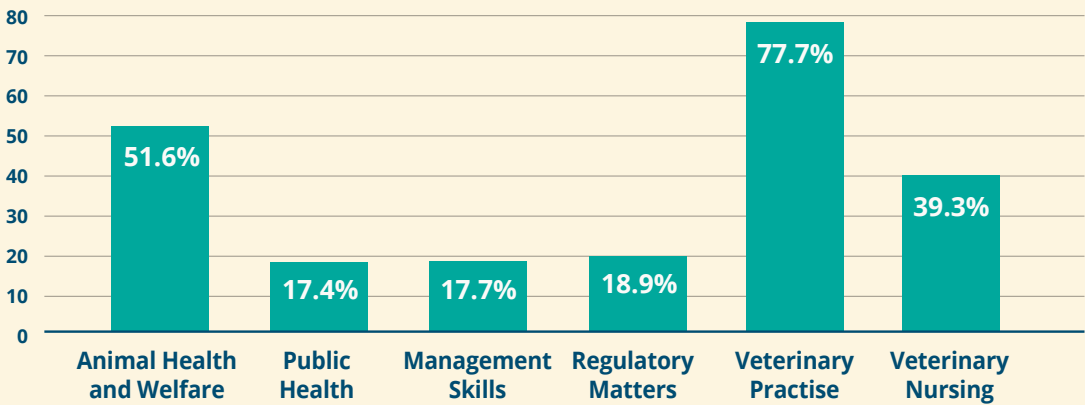
- ▶ Veterinary Practise
- ▶ Veterinary Nursing
- ▶ Animal Health and Welfare
- ▶ Public Health
- ▶ Regulatory Matters
- ▶ Management Skills

Of the 495 CVE courses approved in 2024:



- **371** applications had content relating to veterinary practice.
- **198** applications had content relating to veterinary nursing.
- **304** applications had content relating to animal health and welfare.
- **96** applications had content relating to public health.
- **111** applications had content relating to regulatory matters.
- **97** applications had content relating to management skills.

The below chart reflects the Breakdown of CVE course focus:



Veterinary Nursing Committee



Membership of Committee

Emily Murray (Chairperson), Rachel Brown (ex officio), Annetta Zintl, Bert Stewart, Catherine Lawler, Laura McKay (external member), Gina Burke (external member) Niamh O' Donoghue (external member) Deirdre Lynch (external member).

This report summarises the main activities, actions and decisions of the Veterinary Nursing Committee ("VNC") during 2024 including reviewing annual reports of Veterinary Nursing Course Providers and the role of the veterinary nurse in ultrasonography. The VNC held six meetings in 2024.

Veterinary Nursing Course Provider Meeting

The VCI convene a meeting of all veterinary nursing course providers annually to enable a neutral forum for engagement and collaboration between veterinary nursing education providers. The Veterinary Nursing Course Provider Annual Meeting hosted by the VCI took place on 11th June 2024 on the campus of University College Dublin. The VCI thanked the Course Providers for their development of webinar training for clinical work placement supervisors in 2024.

Veterinary Nursing Assessment of Competencies and Skills

The VNC further considered the procedures to be adopted for the delivery of an assessment of competence and skill, to determine eligibility to join the Register of Veterinary Nurses, for graduates from veterinary nursing programmes delivered outside of Ireland, not recognised by the Veterinary Council. It is anticipated that the assessment will be available in 2025.

Veterinary Nursing Course Provider Annual Reports

In 2024, the veterinary nursing course provider annual reports received for the 2022-2023 year were reviewed by the designated panel of assessors. The VNC reviewed the comments detailed in the reports provided by the panel and this feedback was shared with the course providers to review and address.

Veterinary Nursing Committee - The Role of the Veterinary Nurse in Ultrasonography

The VNC considered the increasing use of ultrasonography in veterinary practices, referring the matter for consideration by the Legislation, Ethics and Monitoring Committee, in the circumstance where further guidance was required from the VCI in relation to the role of a veterinary nurse in the carrying out of ultrasonography at veterinary practices.



Practice Premises Committee



Membership of Committee

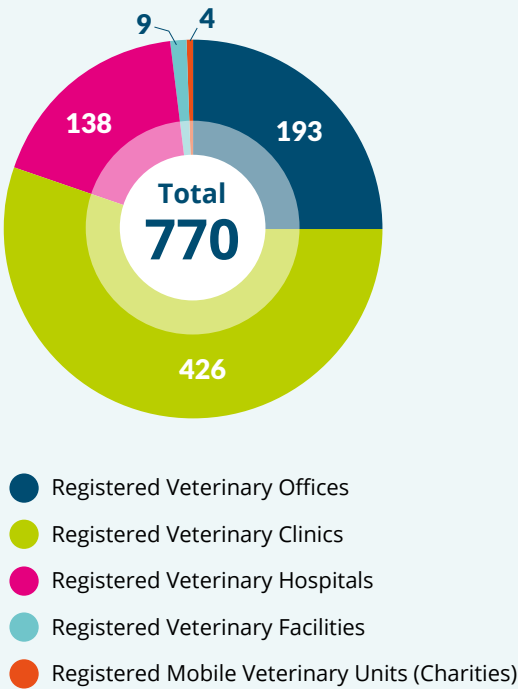
Kevin McConnell (Chairperson), Rachel Brown (ex Officio), Vivienne Duggan, Niamh Hogan, Deridre Lynch (co-optee), John Matthews, Bert Stewart.

The Practice Premises Committee consists of six Veterinary Council of Ireland members and one co-opted member from the Council's Veterinary Nursing Committee. The Practice Premises Committee ("PPC") met a total of 9 times in 2024.

The work of the PPC involves the oversight of the VCI's Premises Accreditation Scheme ("the PAS"). The PAS is a mandatory scheme introduced to regulate veterinary premises in the State in accordance with Part 9 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, as amended. Under the PAS, all veterinary premises in the State must be registered and certified by the VCI. When a veterinary premises has been registered by the VCI, a Certificate of Suitability ("COS") with a unique registration number for the premises is issued to the Registrant who made the application. Through the PAS, the VCI regulates and maintains standards of veterinary premises in the State in the public interest by carrying out premises inspections of new veterinary practice premises as well as routine revisit inspections of existing veterinary practice premises.

In addition to reviewing COS applications, COS revocation requests and other applications for changes to the COS Register, the PPC is committed to improving the standards of veterinary practice in Ireland through the PAS and to dealing with all matters related to the PAS, its related procedures, and regulations.

No. of Registered Veterinary Premises 2024:



Registered Veterinary Premises Practice Profile 2024					
	Companion Animal	Farm Animal	Equine	Mixed	Other
Registered Veterinary Office	5	109	46	31	2
Registered Veterinary Clinic	154	34	17	217	4
Registered Veterinary Hospital	80	0	7	51	0
Registered Veterinary Facility	0	1	0	0	8
Registered Mobile Veterinary Unit (Charities)	4	0	0	0	0

Breakdown of Certificate of Suitability Applications 2024				
	Registered Veterinary Office	Registered Veterinary Clinic	Registered Veterinary Hospital	Registered Veterinary Facility
New Premises	14	4	2	0
Classification Change	2 (2 prev. RVC)	18 (14 prev. RVH) (4 prev. RVO)	1 (1 prev. RVC)	1 (1 prev. RVO)
Relocation of Existing Premises	1	5	1	0
Renewal	0	1	0	0

Certificate of Suitability Applications

The PPC consider and review all COS applications received before making its recommendations to the VCI. The PPC considered 50 COS applications in 2024, with 49 applications being successful. The applications considered included 20 new veterinary premises, 22 classification changes for existing premises, 7 existing veterinary premises relocating to a new address and 1 Certificate of Suitability Renewal application.

Premises Closing

The PPC review all COS Revocation requests received in respect of veterinary premises which are closing. In 2024, a total of 17 registered veterinary premises closed. Of these 17 closures, 7 practices relocated to a new premises.

COS Revocations Received 2024	
Registered Veterinary Office	7 (1 relocated)
Registered Veterinary Clinic	9 (5 relocated)
Registered Veterinary Hospital	1 (1 relocated)

Premises Revisit Inspections

To ensure that premises registered by the VCI are maintaining the required PAS Standards, the VCI carries out routine revisit premises inspections each year. In 2024, 182 revisit inspections took place. Of these 182 revisits inspections, 7 were unannounced inspections.

Veterinary Council of Ireland Workforce Review

Maintaining a sustainable and effective veterinary workforce is integral to delivering safe, high-quality care to the animal population of Ireland. Accordingly, the Veterinary Council of Ireland established a Workforce Review Working Group, under the aegis of the Practice Premises Committee, to analyse data collected from the Register of Veterinary Practitioners, Register of Veterinary Nurses and Register of Veterinary Practice Premises, and to consider and propose recommendations to support the delivery of veterinary services into the future.

The Workforce Review Working Group met a total of 5 times in 2024. The VCI also held a focus group in October 2024 to broaden discussions and to assist with potential policy recommendations.

Finally, the Workforce Report was reviewed by the Veterinary Council of Ireland's Practice Premises Committee and then finalised and endorsed by the Veterinary Council of Ireland at its meeting on 5 December 2024.

Further information on the VCI's Workforce Review is available on pages 13 and 14 of this report. The Veterinary Council of Ireland Workforce Report will shortly be available on our website.

Controlled Drugs Guidance Document

In 2024 the Practice Premises Committee continued its work to develop a Controlled Drugs guidance document for use by veterinary premises registered with the VCI. The aim of the document is to increase awareness on the risks surrounding controlled drugs, and the importance of implementing safety measures in relation to the storage, use and recording of controlled drugs, in the public interest.

To ensure that the document is fit for purpose and reflects best practice, the VCI engaged with the relevant authorities during the preparation of the document including, An Garda Síochána, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Health Products Regulatory Authority, and the Department of Health.

The Controlled Drugs Guidance document was finalised and published on the VCI's website in 2024.

Premises Accreditation Scheme Review

In 2024, the Practice Premises Committee continued its review of the Premises Accreditation Scheme in advance of the next PAS Accreditation Cycle starting on 1 January 2026. This is to ensure that the PAS remains fit for purpose in the interest of maintaining proper standards as regards veterinary premises in the State, effective regulation, and the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of animals, the public, and registered persons engaged in the practise of veterinary medicine or veterinary nursing.

As the review is ongoing and to promote clarity and consistency in the Certificate of Suitability application process, while also assisting in maintaining standards of existing Registered Veterinary Offices, the VCI prepared interim guidelines in respect of premises in the Registered Veterinary Office classification providing companion animal services. The guidelines are in place until the end of the current PAS Accreditation Cycle on 31 December 2025 and are subject to change on completion of the VCI's review of the PAS.

Following a public consultation in 2023, the VCI determined to adopt the new mandatory requirement for all premises registered in the Registered Veterinary Hospital classification to have at least one Registered Veterinary Nurse available to provide veterinary nursing care at the premises. This new requirement was implemented for all new Registered Veterinary Hospitals from 1 January 2024 and will become mandatory for all existing Registered Veterinary Hospitals from 1 January 2026.

The Practice Premises Committee will continue its review of the Premises Accreditation Scheme in 2025.

Premises Assessor Training

The VCI contracts a team of independent authorised officers, or "Premises Assessors", to carry out inspections at registered veterinary premises in the State. Premises Assessors are trained by the VCI to ensure competency and consistency in carrying out inspections on behalf of the VCI. Premises Assessor training took place in May 2024. The training included presentations from La Touche Training regarding effective report writing and from the Environmental Protection Agency regarding its Veterinary Code of Practice.

External Practice Premises Committee Members

The Practice Premises Committee Terms of Reference state that members may include persons who are not members of the VCI. The Practice Premises Committee noted the positives of including external members, such as strategic and operational benefits to an organisation, increased diversity of skills and knowledge and improving governance.

At its meeting on 7 November 2024, the VCI endorsed the recommendation that external members be appointed to the Practice Premises Committee in 2025.

Legislation, Ethics and Monitoring Committee



Membership of Committee

Joseph Walsh (Chairperson), Nuala Dormer (Deputy-Chairperson), Rachel Brown (ex-officio), Caroline Garvan, Vivienne Duggan, Niamh Hogan, Catherine Lawler, Ailís ní Riain, Paul McDermott, Laura McKay (co-optee), Edward Joseph Moffitt, Emily Murray, Alan Rossiter, and Bert Stewart.

The Legislation, Ethics and Monitoring Committee ("the LEMC") met on six occasions in 2024 to consider a number of important legal and ethical issues. The Committee is currently monitoring conditions attached to four Registrants following inquiries into their fitness to practise veterinary medicine.

Codes of Professional Conduct

The LEMC used the newsletter and website to provide guidance to the public and the professions on specific sections of the Codes of Professional Conduct.

Update to the Code of Professional Conduct

The Veterinary Council decided, in the interest of dog health and welfare, to update the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Practitioners and provide guidance to veterinary practitioners and the public on the matter of Canine Surgical Artificial Insemination, namely, to prohibit canine surgical artificial insemination by veterinary practitioners in Ireland. While the Council determined that the ban on canine surgical artificial insemination should encompass all breeds of dogs, it recognises that there is legislation in place that permits surgical artificial insemination in greyhounds. The artificial insemination of greyhounds is regulated under the Artificial Insemination of Greyhounds Act 2005.

This update and amendment to the Code of Professional Conduct was pre-empted by a substantial process of research and engagement by the Veterinary Council on canine surgical artificial insemination. The updated position was arrived at following consideration of the information and views received in our public consultation, hosted in November 2023, seeking feedback from the public, relevant experts, and stakeholders.

The Veterinary Council, in considering canine surgical artificial insemination, agreed that the ethical and welfare issues arising from this procedure stem from the fact that the dogs undergo a highly invasive surgery to ensure pregnancy, and this presents an unacceptable level of risk for dogs. The Veterinary Council considers there is no justifiable reason for this procedure in circumstances where a non-surgical, minimally invasive, and effective alternative exists. The risks and discomfort associated with undertaking surgical insemination are unnecessary with transcervical insemination now available.

The Veterinary Council also determined that trans-cervical artificial insemination is an act of veterinary medicine. In respect of trans-vaginal artificial insemination, a public consultation was carried out in 2024 and the Council is currently considering the information and views received with a view to developing a position on who is legally entitled to undertake the procedure. The LEMC appreciates the valuable input of those who took time to provide feedback on the consultation.

Amendments to the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, as amended

The LEMC continued with its review of the Veterinary Practice Acts. The purpose of the review was to provide assurance that the legislation that regulates the veterinary professions is adequate in the interest of animal health and welfare and veterinary public health.

The LEMC reviewed the Act from a regulatory policy perspective and is committed to working in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine on the subject. Proposed amendments to the Act were approved by the Veterinary Council and submitted to the Department of Agriculture to inform our continued discussions with the Department on this important matter. The proposed amendments indicate why significant legislative reform is needed and the challenges we experience with the Act in practice.

The LEMC looks forward to continuing our discussions on the proposed amendments with the Department in 2025 and to progressing agreed next steps in advancing reform of the Act.

Draft Regulations on procedures that may be carried out by non-registered persons

There are regulations envisaged under the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 that have yet to be determined, formally enabling the provision of certain ancillary services to veterinary practice. In the absence of such ancillary animal related services being expressly enabled under regulations, these services may be deemed to fall under the practise of veterinary medicine. The LEMC has been proactive in engaging with the various parties active in the area of these services, with a view to seeking consensus and agreement for the introduction of regulations allowing such services, supported by membership associations or bodies, structured training programmes, and on-going learning to support good practice in the interest of animal health and welfare. The LEMC looks forward to continuing our discussions with stakeholders and the Department of Agriculture in 2025, and to advancing the regulations.

Veterinary Medicinal Products Legislation

The LEMC considered the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2019/6 on veterinary medicinal products and the rules around the prescribing and use of veterinary medicines. This regulation has now been given effect in Irish law by the Veterinary Medicinal Products Medicated Feed and Fertiliser Regulation Act and the Veterinary Medicinal Products Regulations 2024 (S.I. No. 462/2024). The LEMC will start the process of reviewing its Code of Professional Conduct in early 2025 to ensure that it complies with the new legislation.

Information Leaflet – “Doing the Best for your Pet”

The LEMC published new information aimed at providing guidance to animal owners in their interactions with veterinary professionals. The ‘Doing the Best for your Pet’ advice is a guideline for animal owners, outlining expectations from their veterinary team and their own responsibilities in ensuring the health and welfare of their animals and pets. The leaflet highlights the significance of a combined approach to animal care, clarifying the roles and duties of both veterinary professionals and animal owners. The leaflet also highlights the correct usage of terminology, such as “specialist” within the veterinary field, as only those who have been registered with the VCI’s register of specialists can use the title.

Laser therapy in veterinary practice

The LEMC continued to consider the use of laser therapy in veterinary practice. In this regard, a public consultation is planned to take place in 2025.

Advisory

The LEMC responded to a number of queries from members of the public and the veterinary professions on various legal and ethical issues. These queries related to veterinary certification, veterinary telemedicine, procedures which can be carried out by a veterinary nurse, prescribing of veterinary medicines, animals under veterinary care, complementary therapies, disbudding of calves, use of title, the XL Bully ban and the practise of veterinary medicine by non-registered persons. The ‘Ethical Ethel’ column in the newsletter has proved to be a useful and informative tool for the professions when solving ethical dilemmas.

The Conjoint Committee



Membership of Committee

VCI: Séamus McManus (Chairperson), Paula Barry Walsh, Rachel Brown (ex officio), Caroline Garvan and Edward Joseph Moffitt.

Veterinary Ireland: Peter Bishton, Danny Holmes, Finola McCoy, Finbarr Murphy, and John O'Roarke.

Veterinary Officers Association: Mark McCarthy and Donal O'Mahony.

The Conjoint Committee met on three occasions during the year to discuss the agendas of the FVE and agree positions on the main areas of interest. The Committee includes representatives from the Veterinary Council of Ireland, Veterinary Ireland and the Veterinary Officers Association. Members of the Conjoint Committee attended the FVE meetings held in 2024.

The Committee made a submission to an FVE position paper on the ongoing contribution of the veterinary profession to the prevention and control of animal and zoonotic diseases in the context of One Health One Welfare and pandemic preparedness for the future.



Preliminary Investigation Committee



Membership of the Committee

Joanne Gallagher, Kevin McConnell, Joseph Walsh and Annetta Zintl.

The Preliminary Investigation Committee ("PIC") is made up of four members consisting of:

- (i) Two registered persons who are members of the Council; and
- (ii) Two non-registered persons who are members of Council.

The PIC considers complaints made against veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses. The PIC held 24 meetings throughout 2024.

Complaints can be made in writing to the VCI concerning veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses. Once the VCI receives a complaint, it is brought to the PIC for consideration in accordance with the route set out in legislation. Each complaint is considered by two PIC members; one registered person and one non-registered person.

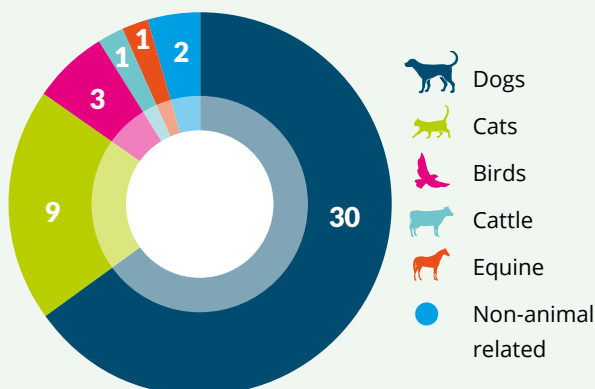
The PIC, upon reviewing the complaint, decides whether there is sufficient cause to warrant further disciplinary action being taken in relation to the complaint. The complaint can relate to the conduct, practice, behaviour, registration or health of a registered person.

Dealing effectively with complaints is at the heart of our commitment to protecting animal welfare and the public and maintaining public confidence in the veterinary professions.

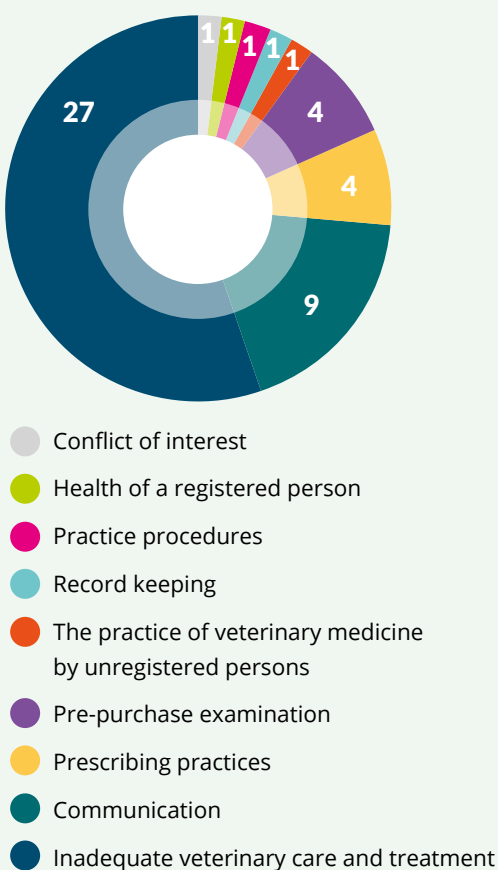
46 complaints were received in 2024, representing a 17% decrease from the number of complaints received in 2023 in which 55 complaints were received.

The PIC considered a total of 49 complaints in 2024. Of the complaints considered, the PIC decided 10 warranted further action by way of referral to the Fitness to Practise Committee.

Category of complaints received in 2024:



Category of complaints considered in 2024:



* Please note the figures in this chart represent activity levels. They do not correlate with each other. For example, some complaints received by the VCI in late 2023 were considered by the PIC in 2024.

Fitness to Practise Committee



Membership of Committee

Simon Murphy (Chairperson), Frank Beatty (Deputy Chairperson), John Matthews, Paul McDermott, Catherine Lawler, Ailís ní Riain, John O'Brien and Nuala Dormer.

Five members of the Fitness to Practise Committee ("the FTP Committee") sit to hear an inquiry consisting of:

- (i) Two registered persons who are members of the Council.
- (ii) Two non-registered persons who are members of Council; and
- (iii) An independent chair who is either a practising solicitor nominated by the Law Society of Ireland or a practising barrister nominated by the Bar Council of Ireland.

Mr Simon Murphy is the Chairperson of the FTP Committee and Mr Frank Beatty SC is the Deputy Chairperson.

A total of 11 inquiries in respect of 10 registered persons were heard by the FTP Committee in 2024 over a total of 9 days. Findings were made in respect of 4 of the concluded inquiries. The FTP Committee also held 5 call-overs in 2024 to consider preliminary applications relating to the hearing of an inquiry in public or in private or in part private/part public.

Where an inquiry concludes, the VCI's Council considers the Report of the FTP Committee and can impose one or more sanctions on a registered person. In 2024, the Council considered 6 reports from the FTP Committee.

Fitness to Practise Reports

- (1) At its meeting on 6 November 2023, the Council considered a report from the FTP Committee relating to Mr Stephen McGrath DVM, Curraghaboy, Ballynacargy, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, Registration No: 12/17.

It was alleged that Mr McGrath falsely declared on his Registration Application form and Annual Renewal Form that he had not been convicted of an offence. It was also alleged that he had not complied with the conditions set out in Form ER4 under the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine's Bovine Tuberculosis and Brucellosis Eradication Programmes, failed to test adequately or at all one or more animals when conducting

tuberculosis test on herds, recording tag numbers and skin measurements for one or more animals in a tuberculosis test when they had not been tested adequately or at all, recording that one or more animals had been tested when they had not been tested adequately or at all, and certifying to the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine that he had completed the tuberculosis test as required.

The Fitness to Practise Committee made findings of professional misconduct in respect of the proven allegations and the Council directed that under section 80(1)(b) of the Act Mr McGrath be suspended for a period of twelve months in relation to his professional misconduct.

- (2) At its meeting on 30 January 2024, the Council considered a report from the FTP Committee relating to Dr William Timothy McCartney MVB MRCVS CertSAO, North Dublin Orthopedic Animal Hospital, 38 Warren House Road, Baldoyle, Dublin 13, Registration No. 35/87.

The allegations against Dr McCartney are that, in a referral case, he failed to arrange a consultation with the dog's owner for the purpose of obtaining an account of her dog's history and condition, failed to inform the owner that he decided to change a surgical plan for her dog and failed to obtain informed consent for surgery.

The FTP Committee made findings of professional misconduct in respect of the allegations which were found proven and the Council directed under section 80(1)(b) of the Act that Dr McCartney be suspended for a period of two months in relation to his professional misconduct.

Dr McCartney appealed the sanction imposed by the Council to the High Court. The High Court, in a judgement delivered on 6 June 2024, held that the decision to impose a suspension was within the Council's ordinance and was justifiable; however, the suspension was reduced by one month.

- (3) At its meeting on 11 July 2024, the Council considered a report from the FTP Committee relating to Mr Hendrik Willem Offereins DVM, Kestrel Lodge, Lissyclearig, Kenmare, Co. Kerry, Registration No: 5/05.

The allegations against Mr Offereins related to the importation of unauthorised animal remedies contrary to the Animal Remedies Regulations.

The FTP Committee made findings of professional misconduct in respect of the allegations which were found proven and the Council directed that under section 80(1)(b) of the Act Mr Offereins be suspended for a period of six months in relation to his professional misconduct.

- (4) At its meeting on 11th July 2024, the Council considered a report from the FTP Committee where the Committee did not make any findings of professional misconduct. The Council accepted the decision of the Committee and did not impose any sanction. The registrant has not been identified as no findings were made and no sanction imposed.

- (5) At its meeting on 24 September 2024, the Council considered a report from the FTP Committee relating to Miss Donna McCarthy BScVN, Bahaghs, Cahersiveen, Co. Kerry, Registration No: 11429/19.

The allegations against Miss McCarthy related to forging the signature of a veterinary practitioner on pet passports and issued those passports without that veterinary practitioner's knowledge.

The FTP Committee made findings of professional misconduct in respect of the allegations which were found proven and the Council directed that under section 81 of the Act Miss McCarthy be censured in relation to her professional misconduct.

- (6) At its meeting on 24th September 2024, the Council considered a report from the FTP Committee relating to Mr Alexander Brian Hamilton MVB MRCVS, 1 Church Road, Bantry, Co. Cork, Registration No: 63/70.

The allegations against Mr Hamilton related to the assault of a member of the public, producing a knife contrary to Section 11 of the Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act, 1990, and driving while intoxicated contrary to Section 4(2)(a) and (5) of the Road Traffic Act, 2010.

The FTP Committee made a finding of professional misconduct in respect of the proven allegations and the Council directed that under section 81 of the Act Mr Hamilton be censured in relation to his professional conduct with conditions attached to his registration.

- (7) At its meeting on 12th November 2024, the Council considered a report from the FTP Committee where the Committee did not make any findings of professional misconduct. The Council accepted the decision of the Committee and did not impose any sanction. The registrant has not been identified as no findings were made and no sanction imposed.
- (8) At its meeting on 16th December 2024, the Council considered a report from the FTP Committee where the Committee did not make any findings of professional misconduct. The Council accepted the decision of the Committee and did not impose any sanction. The registrant has not been identified as no findings were made and no sanction imposed.

Disciplinary Sanctions imposed by the Veterinary Council in 2024

When a Fitness to Practise oral inquiry concludes, the Council then considers the Report of the Fitness to Practise Committee and may impose one or more sanctions on the veterinary practitioner or veterinary nurse under sections 80 and 81 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, as amended.

The Council can impose a range of sanctions on a veterinary practitioner or a veterinary nurse. These include:

1. Advice, Warn or Censure
2. Conditions on Registration
3. Suspension of Registration
4. Removal of Registration

In 2024, the Council considered nine reports from the Fitness to Practise Committee, some of which had related to inquiries which were heard in 2023. The Council imposed a total of five sanctions following consideration of the reports and in one case, the Council imposed one or more sanctions on a registrant.

Of these nine Fitness to Practise Committee Reports considered by the Council for sanction, three included suspensions from the Register for a defined period (3), one involved the imposition of conditions (1), two involved a censure (2) and three resulted in no sanction being imposed, in the absence of a finding of professional misconduct.

There were no sanctions in respect of removal of registration.

In accordance with the Act, four applications were made to the High Court to confirm any sanction involving suspension and conditions.



Audit, Risk and Finance Committee



Membership of Committee

Paula Barry Walsh (Chairperson), Rachel Brown (ex officio), Joanne Gallagher, Caroline Garvan, John O'Brien, Joan O'Connor and Adrienne Wynne.

The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee met on six occasions during the year.

Overview of The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee

The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee fulfils an important role by assisting the Council in monitoring the internal control environment, risk management and financial reporting and internal and external audits. The Committee assesses the risks that the Veterinary Council may be exposed to and agrees on how to mitigate those risks that have been identified. In addition, the Committee maintains oversight of and assesses the adequacy of risk management, internal control systems and the adequacy of sources of assurance to the Veterinary Council, and as detailed in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, 2016.

Risk Management

At each of its meetings, the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee receive a detailed report from the Risk Officer. This update is supported by the Committees interrogation of the VCI Risk Register, which reflects the risks, mitigations and controls for risks across all sectional registers. The Risk Report also includes the Corporate Risk Register, which reflects the high-level risks impacting the whole organisation. The Committee oversees the risk management processes in place for business planning and operational day to day matters. The Committee oversees the enactment of the Veterinary Councils risk appetite, reflected in the risk management processes in place. The Committee also carries out "horizon scanning" during the year, to identify new or pending risks. The Committee also monitor the management, development and categorisation of risks, overseeing the mitigations and controls in place.

The Risk Register is reported to The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee at every scheduled meeting, five times a year, and thereafter, Risk is reported directly to the Council twice a year, as per the Risk Management policy which the Council and Audit, Risk and Finance Committee oversee.

Internal Audit

The Committee received reports from the annual internal audit programme which was carried out by Grant Thornton for 2024 as part of the VCI's assurance framework. Grant Thornton completed internal audit reports and presented these to the Committee for consideration and approval.

The Committee considered the following three specific areas for internal audit reviews in 2024:

- ▶ Freedom of Information;
- ▶ Corporate Governance; and
- ▶ Registration Process.

The Committee received regular reporting updates from the Executive team that enhanced procedures, as recommended by the internal auditors, were implemented.

Budget and Financial Statements

The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee reviewed the proposed annual budget and recommended it to the Veterinary Council of Ireland for approval. The Committee received frequent reporting from Executive management and ensured that the appropriate budgeting system was kept under review and aligned with the annual budget.

The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee reviewed the draft financial statements before recommending their approval and adoption by the Veterinary Council of Ireland. The Committee considered whether accounting policies were followed and that accounts items were properly recorded and accounted for in the financial statements and that issues raised by the external auditor had been comprehensively and appropriately dealt with. The Committee was satisfied that the internal controls are robust and its governance channels, including risk management, are adequate.

Charting the Progress of the Corporate Strategy

The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee receives regular updates on the progress and status of the strategies that have been set, as outlined in the Veterinary Council's Corporate Strategy.

The Committee ensures that the progress of each strategy is charted in the annual business plan by receiving regular reports from the Executive team.

Building refurbishment/extension project 53 Lansdowne Road

The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee received regular status updates with respect to the refurbishment and renovation project of the VCI office building at 53 Lansdowne Road, including reports from the Working Group for 53 Lansdowne Road Building Extension and Refurbishment Work ("Working Group").

The Working Group is tasked with monitoring progress on this project and informing the project as it progresses following planning permission, with periodic reports being made to the ARFC, as required. The Working Group allows for suitable governance and oversight of this project through finalisation of design specification, planning permission application, construction tendering, construction phase and final handover. The Working Group is a conduit for information to flow to the ARFC and to Council, who have direct involvement in and oversight of progress.

Preliminary construction work commenced on site at 53 Lansdowne Road in December 2024 and construction work is underway in 2025.

Policies and Legislation

At its meetings, the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee oversees certain policies to include Protected Disclosures, Fixed Asset Management Policy, Investment Policy, Procurement Policy, Risk Management Policy and Procedures and Expenditure on Hospitality, Entertainment and Gifts Policy ensuring its alignment with the Code of Governance for State Bodies and public body legislation.

Risk Management

At each of its meetings, the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee reviews the VCI Risk Register, including a report summarising any significant changes to the Risk Register, including strategic and corporate risks, for reporting to Council. The Committee also carries out "horizon scanning" during the year, to seek to identify new, as yet unidentified risks.

Registration fees

The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee review and approve the annual renewal of registration fees for Veterinary Practitioners and Veterinary Nurses. The proposed registration fees are recommended to the VCI for adoption.

Audited Accounts

The audited accounts for 2024 are appended to this Annual Report. Income in 2024 amounted to €2,491,701. Administrative expenditure in 2024 amounted to €2,490,107. There was an operating surplus of €1,594. There was a surplus for the financial year of €135,663, after taking into account an increase in the value of financial assets. There are capital reserves of €5,864,048 being brought forward into 2025.

Risk Management 2024

The Veterinary Council Risk Appetite Statement:

The Veterinary Council, as any organisation, must accept an element of risk across its activities. However, as a public interest organisation, the Veterinary Council seeks to mitigate risk as far as possible. The Veterinary Council acts in the best interests of animal health and welfare, and public health in all its activities and its risk appetite is generally low.

The VCI recognises, however, that to successfully deliver on its mission, to enhance its public service role and provide a greater example to key stakeholders, it must be prepared to avail of opportunities where the potential reward justifies the acceptance of a certain level of additional risk.

In recognition that risk may arise at multiple levels (from taking strategic decisions, to implementing supporting actions) and take many forms, the Veterinary Council has formulated detailed risk appetite statements to guide the organisation in actions and support its ability to accept and/or manage risks. The Veterinary Council periodically (at least annually) reviews the risk appetite in light of changing circumstances in its wider environment and in its organisational capacity to bear risk.

As part of its risk management procedures, the Veterinary Council maintains a corporate level risk register reflecting organisation wide risks, which currently includes such risks as per the sample below with resulting vulnerabilities/exposures, along with mitigations in place/actions being taken to manage the risks.

1. Compliance

Vulnerability/Exposures: Failure to comply with applicable legislation or inability to enforce required regulatory compliance as a result of inadequate structures.

Mitigations/Actions:

- ▶ In-house legal expertise.
- ▶ Specialist external legal advice sought where necessary.
- ▶ Oversight by VCI Council and Committees.

2. Finance and Funding

Vulnerability/Exposures: Failure of budgeting system leading to loss of control of expenditure.

Mitigations/Actions:

- ▶ Budget process linked to Business Planning, underpinning Strategic Objectives.
- ▶ External and internal audits in place.
- ▶ Regular financial reporting and Audit Risk and Finance Committee / VCI Council oversight.

3. Reputational

Vulnerability/Exposures: Fraud or Corruption.

Mitigations/Actions:

- ▶ Internal management controls on spending approvals.
- ▶ Financial Audit by external auditor and internal management controls audited by VCI's internal auditor.
- ▶ Oversight by Audit, Risk and Finance Committee / VCI Council.

4. Operational

Vulnerability/Exposures: Loss of essential information technology infrastructure (IT).

Mitigations/Actions:

- ▶ External IT supports in place for website/case management system security.
- ▶ New case management / registry system is to be put in place with VCI's service provider which has very strong security features.
- ▶ New public facing website now built by website design firm, which has very strong security features.

5. Operational

Vulnerability/Exposures: Loss of Corporate Knowledge in any loss/absence of key personnel.

Mitigations/Actions:

- ▶ Personal development supported in training/role review within Executive team.
- ▶ Performance Management system in place to support engagement and development of team members.

6. Operational

Vulnerability/Exposures: Business Continuity
– Threats to usual manner of conducting our business, such as pandemic or other unforeseen circumstances.

Mitigations/Actions:

- ▶ Statutory duties were discharged without disruption through Covid.
- ▶ Remote Council & Committee meetings procedures are in place and work effectively.
- ▶ Health & safety protocols in place for office presence.

7. Strategic

Vulnerability/Exposures: Failure to deliver expected results.

Mitigations/Actions:

- ▶ Strategic objectives underpinned by business planning with progress tracking and constant management oversight.
- ▶ Oversight by Council and Committees.

8. Operational / Reputational

Vulnerability/Exposures: Refurbishment of 53 Lansdowne Road and extension to provide new Council room.

Mitigations/Actions:

- ▶ Regular scrutiny of all the related processes by 53 Lansdowne Road Working Group and ARFC and VCI Council mitigates risks.
- ▶ Appointment of external project management and quantity surveyor firm to oversee progress and expenditure.



Refurbishment and Extension to the Veterinary Council offices

The Veterinary Council are fortunate to own its offices on 53 Lansdowne Road, thanks to the generosity and foresight of members of the profession Mr McGeady and Mr Mullaney, who purchased the property in 1962 and gifted the premises to the Veterinary Council.

The Veterinary Council, acknowledging the requirement for maintenance and upkeep of the existing period building, and acknowledging the requirement for a larger boardroom in the aftermath of the COVID19 pandemic, considered on several occasions over recent years for the potential of a new boardroom in the premises at 53 Lansdowne Road.

The Veterinary Council were successful in obtaining planning permission, granted by Dublin City Council in December 2023 for works to the VCI offices at 53 Lansdowne Road, for the maintenance and refurbishment of the existing period offices, with the addition of an extension to provide a single story purpose built accessible Council meeting chamber.

This will enable Council meetings and other meetings to be convened in 53 Lansdowne Road once again, offering privacy, accessibility, security of tenure and fit for purpose facilities for Council in discharging our statutory duties.

The required works for 53 Lansdowne Road will be funded from capital reserves, held by the Council, confined for use for purposes such as this.

Following the issue of a commencement notice on 20 November 2024, the necessary works on 53 Lansdowne Road will commence in January 2025 and continue throughout the year.



↑ Architects image of the rear of Lansdowne Road once the Council chamber has been added.

Governance

As an independent statutory body, the VCI complies with a range of legislation and Government directives. This section of our report provides information about how we comply with those requirements.

Section 42 Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Our policies, charter statements, employee handbook, values and culture ensures equality and dignity to all persons, including employees, board members, committee members, stakeholders, including all members of the public, from complainant individuals to respondent registered professionals, being treated with equality and dignity, fair procedures and natural justice.

We are an equal opportunities employer and welcome diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work. All vacancy advertisements for our current executive team of 12 persons, are publicly advertised with a commitment to equal opportunities promoted in all vacancy advertisements.

As part of our commitment to further meet this duty, all staff have completed the IHREC eLearning course and we continue to take a consultative approach.

Disability Act 2005

In accordance with the Disability Act 2005, we have appointed an Access Officer to provide or arrange for and coordinate assistance and guidance to people with disabilities as and when it is required. One of the key objectives of the proposed refurbishment of the VCI office is to enhance physical access and supports within the office for those with disabilities.

Protected Disclosures

The Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022 provides for the protection of workers from being penalised because of disclosures they make that they believe are in the public interest. In 2024, we received two protected disclosures in relation to the Registrar's role as the prescribed person under section 7 and 10. The information disclosed was reviewed and dealt with in accordance with our policy and procedures and in compliance with the Act. We did not disclose any information that might identify those who made protected disclosures in accordance with the Act. Under section 6 of the Act, we did not receive any protected disclosures in relation to our role as an employer.

Customer Charter

Governance

Our Customer Charter sets out the nature and quality of service that customers can expect when they interact with us. This is based on the twelve principles of quality customer service.

Data Protection

We are a data controller in relation to the personal information that we hold about Registrants, our employees, and other parties. We use personal information to enable us to meet our responsibilities in the public interest as the regulatory body for veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses in Ireland. All personal information provided to us is treated in the strictest of confidence, maintained securely and treated in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018, the General Data Protection 46 Regulation (GDPR), and the Veterinary Practice Act 2005. We did not receive any subject access requests in 2024.

Freedom of Information

The VCI is a prescribed organisation under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2014. We publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a regular basis on our website, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency, and accountability. There were nine Freedom of Information requests received in 2024.

Ethics in Public Office Act

Under the provisions of the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act 2001, Council members and some VCI staff members are required to disclose material interests. Annual statements of interests are requested from all Council members.

Official Languages Act

As per the Official Languages Acts 2003 to 2021, the VCI publishes job role vacancies in Irish. We continue to increase and improve, over a period of time, the quantity and quality of services provided for the public through Irish in accordance with the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021.

Communications



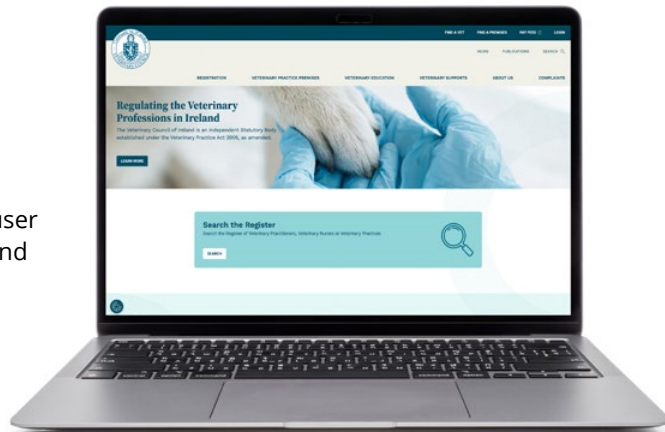
Pet Owing Responsibility

The VCI published a new information leaflet to support client and veterinary relationships and understanding, in the public interest. The leaflet titled "Doing the best for your Pet" advises what is expected of veterinary teams to provide to clients and highlights the responsibilities a pet owner has in order to help protect their pet.

There is also some additional specific information and guidance to assist pet owners seeking veterinary services for the health and wellbeing of their animals.

New Website

The VCI was pleased to introduce our newly designed website at the end of 2024. This was developed to enhance user experience with improved navigation and enhanced features and accessibility.



Health Training Initiative

The Veterinary Council partnered with the Health Service Executive (HSE) National Office for Suicide Prevention to promote awareness, supports and training related to mental health and wellbeing for veterinary teams, through free of charge training titled SafeTALK.

SafeTALK is an internationally recognised half-day training programme that prepares participants to recognise and engage with people who may be having thoughts of suicide and to connect them to suicide first aid resources.

SafeTALK training sessions took place nationwide in 2024 with lists of upcoming SafeTALK training sessions included in our quarterly newsletter to subscribed Registrants and distributed to veterinary premises too.





Appendices

Appendix 1

Financial Statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2024

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Council members and other information

President

Rachel Brown

Deputy President

Kevin McConnell

Registrar

Niamh Muldoon

Council members

Paula Barry Walsh

Rachel Brown

Nuala Dormer

Vivienne Duggan

Joanne Gallagher

Caroline Garvan

Niamh Hogan

Catherine Lawlor

John Matthews

Kevin McConnell

Paul McDermott

Edward Joseph Moffitt

Emily Murray

Ailís ní Riain

John O'Brien

Alan Rossiter

Bert Stewart

Joe Walsh

Annetta Zintl

Registered office

53 Lansdowne Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4

External Auditors

Coyle & Coyle
Chartered Accountants
Statutory Audit Firm
30 Botanic Avenue
Drumcondra
Dublin 9

Business address

53 Lansdowne Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4

Bankers

Bank of Ireland
87-89 Pembroke Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4

Solicitors

Field Fisher Ireland LLP
45 Mespil Road
Dublin 4

Report of the Council

for year ended 31 December 2024

The Members of the Council present their annual report and the financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2024.

Principal activity and Council review

The Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) is a body established in law to regulate and manage the veterinary professions in the public interest and in the interest of animal welfare.

Results

The total assets of the Council decreased by €219,509, and the total liabilities decreased by €355,172, resulting in an increase in net assets of €135,663.

Important events since the year end

There have been no significant events affecting the Council after the end of the year.

Statement of relevant audit information

In the case of each of the persons who are committee members at the time this report is approved:

- (a) so far as each council member is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Council's statutory auditors are unaware, and
- (b) each Council member has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken as a committee member in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Council's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

Accountants

The auditors, Coyle & Coyle, have expressed their willingness to continue in office.

On behalf of the Council



Rachel Brown
President



Kevin McConnell
Deputy President

Statement of Internal Financial Control report

for year ended 31 December 2024

Statement of Internal Financial Control

Section 29 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 and the Veterinary Practice (Amendment) Act 2012 requires the Council to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the Council and of the income and expenditure for that year. In preparing these financial statements, the Council is required to:

- ▶ select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- ▶ make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- ▶ state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- ▶ prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Council will continue in business.

The Council is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Council which will enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with Section 29 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 and the Veterinary Practice (Amendment) Act 2012. The Council is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Council and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Veterinary Council of Ireland I acknowledge our responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated.

The system can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely period.

The following procedures have been put in place by the Council and are designed to provide effective internal financial control:

- a) An appropriate control environment is ensured by clearly defined management responsibilities and procedures to identify and react to control failures;
- b) A formal process to identify and evaluate organisational business risks is in place;
- c) A comprehensive planning and budgetary system is in operation and expenditure trends are reviewed on a quarterly basis;
- d) Procedures for addressing the financial implications of major business risks include financial instructions and notes of procedures, delegation practices such as authorisation limits approved by Council and segregation duties between processing and approval on payments;
- e) The procedure for monitoring the effectiveness of internal financial control include an Audit, Risk & Finance Committee who report at least quarterly to the Council and the work of our external auditors.

The Council's monitoring and review of the system of internal financial control is informed by the work of the management team and the Audit, Risk & Finance Committee within the Veterinary Council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the financial management system and are informed by the work of our external auditors in their management letters and reports.

On behalf of the Council



Rachel Brown
Chairperson

Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies

I wish to confirm that the Veterinary Council are complying with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. In accordance with the Code of Practice I wish to confirm that:-

- ▶ All appropriate procedures for financial reporting, procurement and assets' disposals are being carried out;
- ▶ A statement on the system of internal financial control is included with the financial statements in this report;
- ▶ Codes of Conduct for Council members and employees have been put in place and are adhered to;
- ▶ Government policy on the pay of the Registrar is being complied with;
- ▶ The Council reimburses travel expenses in accordance with public sector guidelines;
- ▶ There are no significant post balance events to report;
- ▶ The Guidelines for the Appraisal and Management of Council Expenditure Proposals are being complied with;
- ▶ The Council's obligations under taxation laws are being complied with.

On behalf of the Council



Rachel Brown
Chairperson

Independent Auditor's Report

to the members of Veterinary Council

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Veterinary Council of Ireland (the 'Council') for the financial year ended 31 December 2024 which comprise the income and expenditure account, statement of comprehensive income, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 3. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- ▶ give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Council as at 31 December 2024 and of its surplus for the financial year then ended;
- ▶ have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Council in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and the provisions available for small entities, in the circumstances set out in note 20 to the financial statements, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which ISAs (Ireland) require us to report to you where:

- ▶ the Council's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- ▶ the Council have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Council's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other Information

The Council are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- ▶ in our opinion, the information given in the Council's report is consistent with the financial statements; and
- ▶ in our opinion, the Council's report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion the accounting records of the Council were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, and financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the Council and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Council's report.

Respective responsibilities

Responsibilities of Council for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Council's Statement of Internal Financial Control Report, the Council are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Council determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Council are responsible for assessing the Council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the management either intends to liquidate the Council or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- ▶ Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- ▶ Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal control.
- ▶ Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Council.
- ▶ Conclude on the appropriateness of the Council's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Council's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Council to cease to continue as a going concern.
- ▶ Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

Our report is made solely to the Council's members, as a body, in accordance with section 29 of the Veterinary Practice Act of 2005. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Council's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Council and the Council's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Hugh McGowan

For and on behalf of

Coyle & Coyle

Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm

30 Botanic Avenue

Drumcondra

Dublin 9

13 March 2025

Income and Expenditure Account

for year ended 31 December 2024

	Notes	2024 €	2023 €
Income	4	2,491,701	2,338,994
Administrative expenses		(2,490,107)	(2,322,506)
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	5	1,594	16,488
Gain on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss		196,203	105,654
Gain on disposal of financial assets	9	72,006	7,472
Deposit interest income	10	1,568	397
Surplus/(Deficit) on ordinary activities before taxation		271,371	130,011
Tax on surplus/(deficit) on ordinary activities		(135,708)	(37,433)
Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year		135,663	92,578
Retained surplus/(deficit) brought forward		4,853,385	4,760,807
Retained surplus/(deficit) carried forward		4,989,048	4,853,385

All the activities of the Council are from continuing operations.

The notes on pages 60 to 68 form part of these financial statements.

Balance sheet

as at 31 December 2024

	Notes	2024		2023	
		€	€	€	€
Fixed assets					
Intangible assets	12	28,640			
Tangible assets	13	590,654		409,223	
Financial assets	14	3,201,142		3,061,742	
			3,820,436		3,470,965
Current assets					
Debtors	15	36,773		7,853	
Cash at bank and in hand		3,549,649		4,147,549	
		3,586,422		4,155,402	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(1,542,810)		(1,897,982)	
Net current assets			2,043,612		2,257,420
Total assets less current liabilities			5,864,048		5,728,385
Net assets			5,864,048		5,728,385
Capital and reserves					
Contingency Reserves			875,000		875,000
Profit and loss account			4,989,048		4,853,385
Shareholders funds			5,864,048		5,728,385

The notes on pages 60 to 68 form part of these financial statements.

These financial statements were approved by the Council on 13 March 2025 and signed on behalf of the Council by:



Rachel Brown
President



Kevin McConnell
Deputy President

Statement of Changes in Equity

for year ended 31 December 2024

	Contingency Reserve €	Profit & Loss Account €	Total €
At 1 January 2023	-	4,760,807	4,760,807
Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year	-	92,578	92,578
Contingency reserves	875,000	-	875,000
Total comprehensive income for the financial year	875,000	92,578	967,578
At 31 December 2023 and 1 January 2024	-	4,853,385	4,853,385
Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year	-	135,663	135,663
Contingency reserves	875,000	-	875,000
Total comprehensive income for the financial year	875,000	135,663	1,010,663
At 31 December 2024	875,000	4,989,048	5,864,048

Cash flow statement

for year ended 31 December 2024

	2024 €	2023 €
Cash flows from operating activities		
Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year	135,663	92,578
<i>Adjustments for:</i>		
Depreciation of tangible assets	31,811	27,902
Amortisation of intangible assets	5,054	-
(Gain)/loss on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(196,203)	(105,654)
Income from other financial assets	(72,006)	(7,472)
Other interest receivable and similar income	(1,568)	(397)
Tax on unrealised gains	135,708	37,433
Accrued expenses/(income)	(135,557)	143,996
<i>Changes in:</i>		
Trade and other debtors	(28,920)	5,447
Trade and other creditors	(243,606)	42,151
Cash generated from operations	(369,624)	235,984
Interest received	1,568	397
Tax paid	(7,642)	(131)
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	(375,698)	236,250
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of tangible assets	(213,242)	(79,200)
Purchase of intangible assets	(33,694)	-
Purchase of other investments	(1,067,573)	(3,401,800)
Proceeds from sale of other investments	971,835	3,405,568
Dividends received	6,100	-
Net cash used in investing activities	(336,574)	(75,432)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Proceeds from borrowings	1,168	(316)
Net cash from/(used in) financing activities	1,168	(316)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(711,104)	160,502
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	4,284,769	4,124,267
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	3,573,665	4,284,769

Notes to the financial statements including Statement of Accounting Policies

Financial year ended 31 December 2024

1. General information

The Veterinary Council of Ireland is the statutory body established under the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, with a registered address at 53 Lansdowne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.

2. Statement of compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102 1A, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

3. Accounting policies and measurement bases

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and liabilities and investment properties measured at fair value through profit or loss. The financial statements are prepared in Euro, which is the functional currency of the entity.

Turnover

Turnover is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable for goods supplied and services rendered, net of discounts.

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the significant risks and rewards of ownership have transferred to the buyer, usually on despatch of the goods; the amount of revenue can be measured reliably; it is probable that the associated economic benefits will flow to the entity and the costs incurred or to be incurred in respect of the transactions can be measured reliably.

Foreign currencies

Foreign currency transactions are initially recorded in the functional currency, by applying the spot exchange rate as at the date of the transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the exchange rate ruling at the reporting date, with any gains or losses being taken to profit or loss.

Operating leases

Lease payments are recognised as an expense over the lease term on a straight-line basis. The aggregate benefit of lease incentives is recognised as a reduction to expense over the lease term, on a straight-line basis.

Intangible assets

Intangible assets are initially recorded at cost, and are subsequently stated at cost less any accumulated amortisation and impairment losses. Any intangible assets carried at a revalued amount, are recorded at the fair value at the date of revaluation, as determined by reference to an active market, less any subsequent accumulated amortisation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Intangible assets acquired as part of a business combination are only recognised separately from goodwill when they arise from contractual or other legal rights, are separable, the expected future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value can be measured reliably.

Notes to the financial statements continued

Financial year ended 31 December 2024

Amortisation

Amortisation is calculated so as to write off the cost of an asset, less its estimated residual value, over the useful life of that asset as follows:

If there is an indication that there has been a significant change in amortisation rate, useful life or residual value of an intangible asset, the amortisation is revised prospectively to reflect the new estimates.

Research and development

Research expenditure is written off in the financial year in which it is incurred.

Development expenditure incurred is capitalised as an intangible asset only when all of the following criteria are met:

- ▶ It is technically feasible to complete the intangible asset so that it will be available for use or sale;
- ▶ There is the intention to complete the intangible asset and use or sell it;
- ▶ There is the ability to use or sell the intangible asset;
- ▶ The use or sale of the intangible asset will generate probable future economic benefits;
- ▶ There are adequate technical, financial and other resources available to complete the development and to use or sell the intangible asset; and
- ▶ The expenditure attributable to the intangible asset during its development can be measured reliably.

Expenditure that does not meet the above criteria is expensed as incurred.

Tangible assets

Tangible assets are initially recorded at cost, and are subsequently stated at cost less any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

Any tangible assets carried at revalued amounts are recorded at the fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

An increase in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of a revaluation, is recognised in other comprehensive income and accumulated in capital and reserves, except to the extent it reverses a revaluation decrease of the same asset previously recognised in profit or loss. A decrease in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of revaluation is recognised in other comprehensive income to the extent of any previously recognised revaluation increase accumulated in capital and reserves in respect of that asset. Where a revaluation decrease exceeds the accumulated revaluation gains accumulated in capital and reserves in respect of that asset, the excess shall be recognised in profit or loss.

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost or valuation of an asset, less its residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Premises	- 2.5% Straight Line
Fixtures & Fittings	- 15% Straight Line
Computer Equipment	- 25% Straight Line

If there is an indication that there has been a significant change in depreciation rate, useful life or residual value of tangible assets, the depreciation is revised prospectively to reflect the new estimates.

Financial assets

Financial assets are initially recorded at cost, and subsequently stated at cost less any provision for diminution in value. Listed investments are measured at fair value with changes in fair value being recognised in profit or loss.

Notes to the financial statements continued

Financial year ended 31 December 2024

Impairment

A review for indicators of impairment is carried out at each reporting date, with the recoverable amount being estimated where such indicators exist. Where the carrying value exceeds the recoverable amount, the asset is impaired accordingly. Prior impairments are also reviewed for possible reversal at each reporting date.

When it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, an estimate is made of the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs. The cash-generating unit is the smallest identifiable group of assets that includes the asset and generates cash inflows that are largely independent of the cash inflows from other assets or groups of assets.

Financial Instruments

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the company becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the transaction price, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where it is recognised at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Debt instruments are subsequently measured at amortised cost.

Where investments in non-convertible preference shares and non-puttable ordinary shares or preference shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably, the investment is subsequently measured at fair value with changes in fair value recognised in profit or loss. All other such investments are subsequently measured at cost less impairment.

Other financial instruments, including derivatives, are initially recognised at fair value, unless payment for an asset is deferred beyond normal business terms or financed at a rate of interest that is not a market rate, in which case the asset is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Other financial instruments are subsequently measured at fair value, with any changes recognised in profit or loss, with the exception of hedging instruments in a designated hedging relationship.

Financial assets that are measured at cost or amortised cost are reviewed for objective evidence of impairment at the end of each reporting date. If there is objective evidence of impairment, an impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss immediately.

For all equity instruments regardless of significance, and other financial assets that are individually significant, these are assessed individually for impairment. Other financial assets are either assessed individually or grouped on the basis of similar credit risk characteristics.

Any reversals of impairment are recognised in profit or loss immediately, to the extent that the reversal does not result in a carrying amount of the financial asset that exceeds what the carrying amount would have been had the impairment not previously been recognised.

Defined Contribution Plans

The Council operates a defined contribution scheme which is funded annually from contributions payable by the Council and from contributions deducted from staff salaries. This pension scheme is administered by independent trustees and is financially separate from the Council. Contributions by the Council are charged to the profit and loss account in the financial year in which they fall due.

The regular cost of providing retirement pensions and related benefits is charged to the profit and loss account over the employee's service life on the basis of a constant percentage of earnings.

Notes to the financial statements continued

Financial year ended 31 December 2024

4. Income

The whole of the income is attributable to the principal activity of the Council which is wholly undertaken in Ireland.

5. Operating Surplus/(Deficit)

Operating Surplus/(Deficit) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2024	2023
	€	€
Amortisation of intangible assets	5,054	-
Depreciation of tangible assets	31,811	27,902
Foreign exchange (gain)/loss in Davys investment	(67)	176
Fees payable for the audit of the Financial Statements	<u>7,380</u>	<u>7,380</u>

6. Administrative expenses

6.1 Travel & Subsistence

Expenses to Council members, Committee members and staff members are paid in respect of travel to Council and other related meetings from a member's place of residence or place of work. The majority of meetings for the year took place in Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Other than travel and subsistence expenses, there are no other fees paid to a member of the Council.

An analysis of Travel & Subsistence expense is as follows:

	2024	2023
	€	€
National Travel & Subsistence	55,632	48,843
International Travel & Subsistence	<u>13,953</u>	<u>14,232</u>
	<u>69,585</u>	<u>63,075</u>

6.2 Legal Costs

An analysis of Legal Costs is as follows:

	2024	2023
	€	€
Legal fees	<u>896,679</u>	<u>711,169</u>
	<u>896,679</u>	<u>711,169</u>

Legal costs include solicitors' fees, barristers' fees, stenography fees, expert fees and expenses, legal assessor fees, fees of the Chairperson of the Fitness to Practise Committee and Deputy Chairperson of the Fitness to Practise Committee and all fees associated with any court proceedings.

Legal costs does not include expenditure incurred in relation to general legal advice received by the Veterinary Council of Ireland which is disclosed in consultancy costs in note 6.3 below. The majority of these fees are incurred in relation to the disciplinary processes conducted by the Veterinary Council of Ireland, as the independent regulator of the veterinary professions and further to its statutory obligations under the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, as amended. There were 40 cases in 2024 where solicitors' fees were incurred (2023: 29 cases).

Notes to the financial statements continued

Financial year ended 31 December 2024

6. Administrative expenses continued

6.3 Consultancy Costs

Consultancy costs include the cost of external advice to management and exclude outsourced “business-as-usual” functions.

	2024	2023
	€	€
Behaviour and attitudes survey	16,790	-
Building refurbishment consultancy	3,360	3,600
Council effectiveness review	-	6,089
General legal advice	28,240	64,328
Information technology	-	12,323
Procurement advice	1,218	-
Property valuation advice	3,075	-
Scientific advice	-	3,500
Statistical analysis	4,200	-
Public relations	36,552	33,548
	<u>93,435</u>	<u>123,388</u>

6.4 Offsetting Emissions Associated with Official Air Travel

In 2024 the Veterinary Council of Ireland complied with Circular 01/2020 issued by the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform in January 2020, relating to the procedures for offsetting greenhouse gas emissions associated with official air travel. This circular requires carbon tax to be paid and a summary to be prepared which notes the total kilometres travelled via flights, the tonnes of CO₂ applicable and the amount of carbon tax being remitted.

7. Staff costs

The average number of persons employed by the Council during the financial year, including the Council Registrar, was as follows:

	2024	2023
	Number	Number
Registrar	1	1
Administration	11	10
	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>

The aggregate payroll costs incurred during the financial year were:-

	2024	2023
	€	€
Wages and salaries	688,732	611,181
Social insurance costs	75,980	67,381
Other retirement benefit costs	35,147	33,051
	<u>799,859</u>	<u>711,613</u>

Notes to the financial statements continued

Financial year ended 31 December 2024

7. Staff costs continued

There were 4 employees who received in excess of €60,000 per annum as follows:

Salary	Number
€60,001 - €70,000	1
€70,001 - €80,000	1
€80,001 - €90,000	-
€90,001 - €100,000	1
€100,001 - €110,000	-
€110,001 - €120,000	-
€120,001 - €130,000	1

8. Registrar's Remuneration

The Registrar's aggregate remuneration was as follows:-

	2024	2023
	€	€
Emoluments in respect of qualifying services	130,000	121,634

9. Gain on disposal of financial assets

	2024	2023
	€	€
Dividends - listed	6,100	-
Gain on disposal - listed	65,906	7,472
	72,006	7,472

10. Deposit interest income

	2024	2023
	€	€
Bank interest received	1,568	397

11. Appropriations of income and expenditure account

	2024	2023
	€	€
At the start of the financial year	4,853,385	4,760,807
Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year	135,663	92,578
At the end of the financial year	4,989,048	4,853,385

Notes to the financial statements continued

Financial year ended 31 December 2024

12. Intangible assets

	Website €	Total €
Cost		
At 1 January 2024	-	-
Additions	33,694	33,694
At 31 December 2024	33,694	33,694
Amortisation		
At 1 January 2024	-	-
Charge for the financial year	5,054	5,054
At 31 December 2024	5,054	5,054
Carrying amount		
At 31 December 2024	28,640	28,640
At 31 December 2023	-	-

13. Tangible assets

	Freehold Property €	Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment €	Computer Equipment €	Total €
Cost				
At 1 January 2024	665,179	130,631	113,765	909,575
Additions	170,008	10,334	32,900	213,242
At 31 December 2024	835,187	140,965	146,665	1,122,817
Depreciation				
At 1 January 2024	269,133	126,134	105,085	500,352
Charge for the financial year	17,854	2,680	11,277	31,811
At 31 December 2024	286,987	128,814	116,362	532,163
Carrying amount				
At 31 December 2024	548,200	12,151	30,303	590,654
At 31 December 2023	396,046	4,497	8,680	409,223

Notes to the financial statements continued

Financial year ended 31 December 2024

14. Financial Assets

	Total €
Cost	
At 1 January 2024	2,868,994
Additions	1,067,573
Disposals	(905,929)
At 31 December 2024	3,030,638
Provision for increase in value	
At 1 January 2024	70,818
Cash at Davys	24,016
Revaluations	75,670
At 31 December 2024	170,504
Carrying amount	
At 31 December 2024	3,201,142
At 31 December 2023	2,798,176

15. Debtors

	2024 €	2023 €
Trade debtors	3,368	-
Prepayments	33,405	7,853
	36,773	7,853

Notes to the financial statements continued

Financial year ended 31 December 2024

16. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	€	€
Amounts owed to credit institutions	3,801	2,633
Trade creditors	127,937	92,936
Pension contributions	7,905	12,968
Other creditors	1,252,526	1,528,440
Tax and social insurance:		
PAYE and social welfare	19,202	16,832
Corporation tax	25,289	2,466
Accruals	106,150	241,707
	<u>1,542,810</u>	<u>1,897,982</u>

17. Employee benefits

The amount recognised in profit or loss in relation to defined contribution pension plans was €35,147 (2023: €33,051).

18. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1st January 2024	Cash flows	At 31st December 2024
	€	€	€
Cash and cash equivalents	4,147,549	(573,884)	3,573,665
Debt due within one year	(2,633)	(1,168)	(3,801)
	<u>4,144,916</u>	<u>(575,052)</u>	<u>3,569,864</u>

19. Events after the end of the reporting period

There have been no significant events affecting the Council after the end of the year.

20. Ethical standards

In common with many other organisations of our size and nature we use our auditors to provide tax advice, prepare and submit returns to the tax authorities and assist with the preparation of the financial statements.

21. Approval of financial statements

The Council approved these financial statements for issue on 13 March 2025.

Appendix 2

VCI Council Members' Expenses 2024

Expenses to Council Members are paid in respect of travel to VCI Council related meetings from Members' place of residence or place of work. Some Council Members attend international conferences as representatives of the VCI, and expenses are paid for any such travel conferences. Other than travel expenses, there are no other fees paid to Council Members.

Name	Amount €
Paula Barry Walsh	0
Rachel Brown	6,173
Nuala Dormer	0
Vivienne Duggan	83
Joanne Gallagher	2,145
Caroline Garvan	0
Niamh Hogan	2,425
Catherine Lawler	3,372
John Matthews	947
Paul McDermott	2,574
Kevin McConnell	544
Edward Joseph Moffitt	2,115
Emily Murray	0
Ailís ní Riain	1,499
John O'Brien	4,772
Alan Rossiter	608
Bert Stewart	0
Joseph Walsh	2,652
Annetta Zintl	0
Total	29,909

Appendix 3

Council Meetings Attendance 2024

Name	Date of Appointment	25/01/24	14/03/24	18/04/24	23/05/24	24/06/24 Virtual	25/07/24	26/09/24	07/11/24	05/12/24	Total Meetings (9)
Paula Barry Walsh	06/02/18	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	7
Rachel Brown	01/01/18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Nuala Dormer	01/01/22	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	5
Vivienne Duggan	06/02/18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Joanne Gallagher	01/01/18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Caroline Garvan	01/01/22	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	7
Niamh Hogan	01/01/24	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Catherine Lawler	01/01/24	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
John Matthews	10/10/19	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	8
Paul McDermott	01/01/24	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	7
Kevin McConnell	01/01/18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Edward Joseph Moffitt	01/01/18	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Emily Murray	01/01/22	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Ailís ní Riain	01/01/22	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
John O'Brien	06/02/18	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	4
Alan Rossiter	01/01/24	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	7
Bert Stewart	06/02/18	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	7
Joseph Walsh	01/01/22	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Annetta Zintl	01/01/22	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	7

Appendix 4

Obituaries

The Veterinary Council extend their condolences to the families of all those members of the Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing professions who passed away in 2024.

Throughout 2024, the Veterinary Council learned of the death of a number of persons on the VCI Registers, as detailed below. The Veterinary Council extend its sincere condolences to the families of all the deceased.

Name	Registration No.
Charles Henry McElroy	30/73
Bernard Patrick Senan Keating	40/63
Roderick Joseph Crehan	21/89
Bryan Patrick Hennessy	56/60
Kenneth Derek Long	35/74
Patrick McGinnity	37/89
William Larkin	73/64
Donal Brady	19/67
Ascinta Kilroy	34/74
Finbarr Murphy	53/75
Orla Mairéad Mullany	47/87



Veterinary Council of Ireland

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