



ACCREDITATION REPORT

Minster Vets

September 2023





Executive Summary

Minster Vets continue to champion sustainability, led by the senior team. As a member of Vet Partners, Minster Vets are working towards similar sustainability aims and goals set by Vet Partners. Elements of sustainability are reported within monthly development meetings, where feedback can be provided as well, but there are no formal reporting requirements.

At present, no Net Zero goals have been considered by Minster Vets. While there is presently no requirement for this, the Net Zero conversation and ambition is becoming ever more present. It was not clear what position Vet Partners had taken on this and again, how Minster Vets could align to this ambition.

The main shift in strategy is to start to consider sustainability over longer timelines, ideally the next 10 years, with a 5-year interim milestone. For this task, Minster Vets needs to consider what their priorities are, ranking the elements of sustainability from immediate focus to eventual focus, and planning what tasks, responsibilities and resources are needed to approach each element in turn. This may be guided by Vet Partners, so it is recommended that a wider sustainability conversation takes place between the two, to set clear boundaries and ambition, but also to help clarify what elements can be independent and unique to Minster Vets.

Alongside this, training is an important element of any strategy, and thought should be given to roles and responsibilities and what training or upskilling will be necessary for team members to help support and deliver upon any considered strategy.

Despite the change in Green champion and delay in resource management, the EMS developed by MV continued to operate. Data collection by branches continued and base actions and behaviours remained, which is an excellent sign of a well developed and implemented EMS. However, the process around how data was captured, where information was stored and the responsibilities of each was lost during the transition. Additionally, the review and monitoring of data was not completed as expected, as responsible staff were trying to rebuild some of the processes that were last during the change in team.

It is recommended that these processes and responsibilities are recorded and held centrally to avoid such delays should the lead Green champion change. It was reported that this has started, and processes are now being recorded accordingly. Reviews were also carried out where possible and performance was checked, and overall performance appears to be on track. Unfortunately, the audit takes place before the end of the data year so it will not be until 2024 before the final performance of data can be assessed.

It is also recommended that priorities are considered. Using carbon accounting principles to determine which resources contribute most to climate change will help to identify which resources need priority action. The same process can then be applied to environmental principles. By understanding priorities, this allows the team to focus resource and action into high impact areas, while general management continues in the background.

This will require the development of a long-term plan (referred to as a roadmap or glidepath) where longer term actions can be considered. These feed into the annual action plan managed quarter to quarter over each year but allows Minster Vets to assess how and when larger actions, which will likely require investment, investigation, or both, will be possible. This plan should feed into the wider strategy and help inform what milestone reductions are possible.



Highlights

- Excellent demonstration of leadership by the SLT, particularly at a time of change.
- Good example of a well implemented EMS with day-to-day behaviours of the wider teams and sites continuing as expected.
- Very strong examples of engagement and communication, with lots of activities for staff to get involved in, particularly around Wellbeing Projects.
- Strong representation of staff within the Green Team, with most branches and teams having a representative present within the team.

Improvements

- Ensure administrative processes and key responsibilities are documented. This should include access and location to utility meters, documents, etc. This will minimise disruption should there be further changes to Green Team membership.
- Consider longer term targets and trends with respect to resource monitoring. This should be tied to wider sustainability ambitions and priorities.
- Consider wider external reporting of both ambition and the achievements made by Minster Vets, to showcase the excellent work being undertaken.

Score

Investors in the Environment is pleased to confirm that, having recently completed that process, **Minster Vets** has achieved the **Green** level accreditation with a score of **82%**.



To achieve Green level accreditation, an organisation is required to demonstrate continual improvement through the implementation of their Environmental Management System, working towards a minimum 2% efficiency improvement year-on-year. At Green level, the organisation is focusing on driving wider sustainability development throughout and is starting to consider their value chain with the implementation of sustainable procurement practices, and associated carbon emissions.



About the audit

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

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

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

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

The audit consisted of an examination of documentation evidence, and an interview with key personnel on 26th September 2023, with final evidence submitted on 4th October 2023.

Evidence submitted included:

- Updated EMS Reporting Pack
- Travel Plan
- Various resource measurement sheets
- Environmental Action Plan
- Environmental Policy
- Biodiversity and Garden Management Plan
- Communication examples
- Half hourly data and energy data

Summary Results Table

Audit category	Score
Section 1 - Leadership and Governance (Policy)	86%
Section 2 - Resource Use, Data, & Monitoring	79%
Section 3 - Performance, Action, & Targets	83%
Section 4 - Carbon Management	80%
Section 5 - Waste Management & Materials	75%
Section 6 – Transport & Travel Planning	67%
Section 7 - Environmental & Social Projects	100%
Section 8 – Communication & Engagement	83%
Overall Score	82%



Audit Scoring

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

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



Leadership & Governance (Environmental Policy)



86%

The process of developing an environmental policy includes a review of the environmental aspects of an organisation and the impacts these have on the wider environment. This should consider material use and consumption, energy use, water management, waste minimisation, etc.

The policy is the main driver for environmental performance improvements and needs to be led by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). It should be reviewed annually, alongside environmental performance updates.

In time, wider strategies and long-term objectives should be considered by the organisation and used to inform the commitments outlined in the policy. The policy should be communicated to staff and made available for all to review, both internally and publicly.

Strengths

- Sustainability at Minster Vets is led by the senior leadership team, who have active involvement in the sustainability team and support other team members.
- The ambition of Minster Vets is clearly written within the policy, alongside actions that are being implemented to support the achievement of these ambitions. This is communicated throughout the organisation, and all sites are supported and encouraged well through the engagement process.

Actions for review

- Consider a longer-term strategy for Minster Vets and how that needs to align with Vet Partners own sustainability ambitions. This alignment should consider what is necessary and what Minster Vets may want to achieve independently of any aims set by Vet Partners.
- Thought should be given to the Sustainable Development Goals and how they could be used as a reference point to identify the sustainability focused actions Minster Vets has planned and/or implemented. More details on the SD Goals can be found here [**UN Sustainable Development Goals**](#).
- It is recommended that Minster Vets considers longer term targets. While achieving Net Zero is not yet a legal requirement, it is widely recognised that it will become necessary for all organisations to consider their contribution to climate change and align themselves to Net Zero principles. Key to these principles is the need for long-term target setting and the establishment of performance milestones. Our recommendation is to start with an initial 10-year goal and implement a 5-year interim milestone.
- It is recommended that a sustainability training programme aimed at upskilling key members of both the SLT and Green Team is established. **Carbon Literacy** training could be beneficial in terms of providing a broader context and engaging



staff. A gap analysis of required skills should be completed to identify what additional knowledge and understanding would be beneficial, for example, energy management training, sustainability skills, etc.

Resource Use & Data Monitoring



79%

Resource use and data monitoring is pivotal for any organisation to ensure good management of performance. Within this section of the EMS, an organisation is required to develop robust data recording procedures and set a process for data revision that aligns with general performance reviews – which could be monthly, quarterly, or even half yearly, depending on the measured resource and planned activity.

To support the monitoring of data, a review of operations and processes across the organisation needs to be carried out to understand how and why resources are used and where opportunities for improvement exist.

As part of resource management, prioritisation is key, to ensure activities and resources focused on efficiency gains are deployed in areas which can have the biggest impact.

Strengths

- While not formalised, data is periodically reviewed to track performance. The reviews were completed using absolute data, but also against business activity and external factors through intensity metrics (normalisation), to assess how resource management compares to business activity.

Actions for review

- Changes in responsibilities are likely in any organisation. It is strongly recommended that processes around how data needs to be collected, where information is stored, location of meters, etc., is recorded and held centrally to support any new team member in completing the required tasks. It has been noted that this has been started.
- Water is proving problematic to capture and record, particularly at the hospital, where usage data is not available. It is recommended that utility billing is used in the interim. Although this is often estimated, it will still provide data that can be utilised when planning actions to minimise water use. Water is an essential resource and is often heated before use and therefore good management of water can support reductions in energy consumption.

Performance, Action & Targets



83%



Targeting provides an opportunity to measure performance against planned activities. Where performance is short of achieving targets, it can help to refine any activities or projects underway to make improvements while they are being completed, to ensure set out goals are achieved.

Targets can be set against activity metrics to consider how annual changes will affect performance, with the aim to always improve efficiency where absolute reductions are not achievable.

Action plans should record intended activities and support the review of performance, with the aim to achieving the set targets. Organisations are required to demonstrate activity through well managed action plans, which are clear and easy to follow. Actions introduced should support achievement of set targets.

Strengths

- Very good reductions achieved between 2022 and 2023, with most exceeding 10% reductions in terms of absolute data.
- Good analysis of performance, which will help to consider what aspects of business activity are likely to impact future performance, and how to mitigate against these.
- Good development and communication of actions in place, with all staff being engaged and informed on actions relevant to them.

Actions for review

- It is recommended that the team starts to consider longer term targets, ideally over a 5-year timeframe. The aim is to manage annual performance but with a view to achieving longer term reductions, allowing for business activity and performance but also to allow for larger projects and staff engagement processes to embed.
- It was noted that target setting was more difficult because of the break in data review and that absolute reductions may be harder to achieve. The team has also looked at normalizing factors, to track use against external elements and business activity. The minimum of 2% was set (as required under iiE criteria), but with the view that from 2024 this will be an area of review for the sustainability team.
- An action plan should incorporate a mix of control (or managing) actions and minimising (or change) actions. Control actions help to consider behaviours and how staff should implement sustainability into their day-to-day activities. Minimising actions are those where actual changes are required, for example a change in technology or operational procedures. Often minimising actions require resource (time, money, etc.), and can therefore be less prevalent in action plans. However, there does need to be a clear link between targets set and actions put forward as managing actions are not likely to achieve significant reductions over longer periods, as improved behaviours will see diminished returns each year.

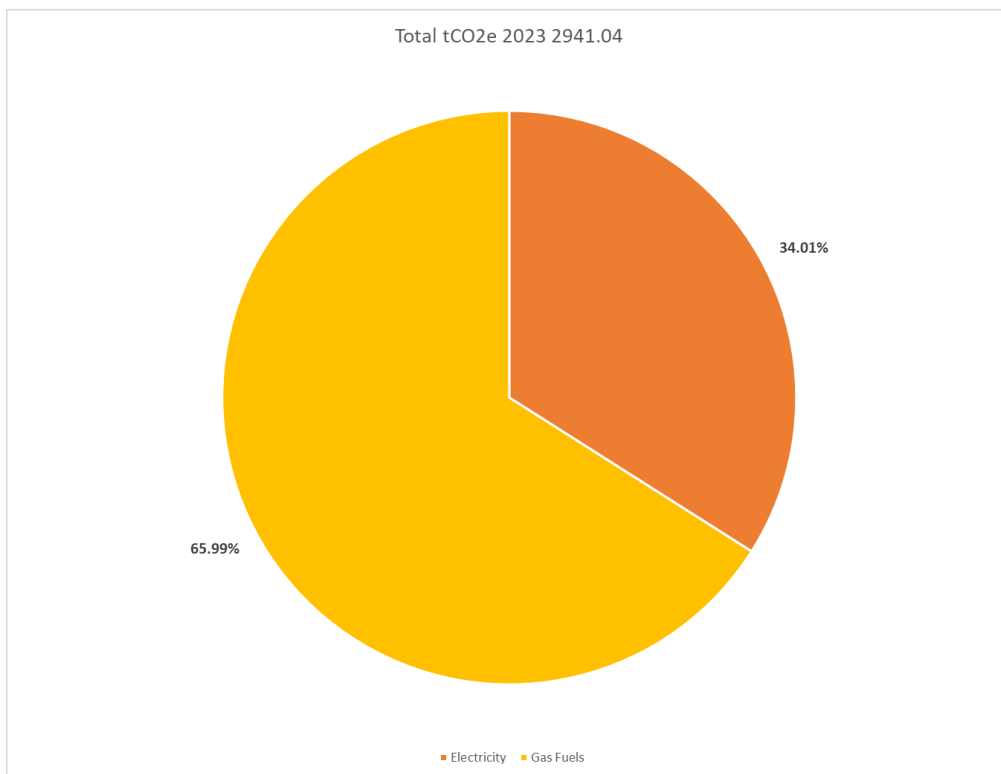
Carbon Management



80%

With increased focus on working towards Net Zero and the importance of Climate Action, carbon management is a key element of the iiE accreditation process. Organisations are required to calculate their footprint starting at buildings level (energy consumed within the buildings), then travel, then finally including additional aspects of business activity, such as waste, water, etc.

Carbon Management provides an opportunity for an organisation to consider which resources or operations need to be prioritised to decarbonise as quickly as possible, in line with Climate Science. The output from a carbon footprint calculation should be used to inform these decisions, which is another reason data capture and accurate data reporting is necessary.



Actions for review

- No Net Zero target has been set or considered. While this is not required, Minster Vets should start to consider what Net Zero means to the organisation and what information is needed to start to review and plan for this. This may require additional consultancy support, or Net Zero specific training and upskilling. IEMA has produced the [Pathways to Net Zero](#) course, aimed at individuals who will have responsibility for developing their organisations pathway to Net Zero.
- It is recommended that responsibility for carbon management becomes part of Minster Vets planning (target and action setting, as well as potential sustainability



objectives). As such, consider which members of the team would be best placed to manage this and whether specific training around how to calculate a carbon footprint and introduce a carbon management plan is needed.

Waste Management & Materials



75%

Organisations are required to review and improve upon waste management. This should start with how waste is managed on site and ultimately disposed of to ensure the correct processes are followed.

From Silver level onwards, thought should be given to procurement and how waste is generated on site, from the materials purchased that end up in the waste stream, through to the activities on site that create waste.

Finally, circular economy concepts and thinking should be introduced, with the waste hierarchy leading to decision making, opting for elimination as the priority, followed by choosing products that can be reused or repaired.

Strengths

- Minster Vets has developed an excellent waste management plan, with good principles of waste management implemented throughout, including separation of waste materials where possible, refillable containers at cleaning stations, etc.

Actions for review

- Waste audits are a useful tool and should be conducted at least every other year, if not annually. Consider setting up a waste audit process that outlines what is to be covered within the audit, and when they will be conducted. It is recommended that waste audit dates are changed frequently, and not disclosed to the wider team, as it is an opportunity to see how waste is managed on any normal day.

Transport & Travel Planning



67%

A travel plan must consider the travel needs for an organisation, including access, availability of public services, and safety of travel where relevant. Travel is the single largest contributor to UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and can be a challenging area to manage, given the need for transport within any operation.



The plan should aim to remove barriers for individuals to choose active / shared transport over single car occupancy, and then to consider electrification of vehicles over internal combustion engines.

Surveys are a useful tool to engage with individuals around travel habits and to support identification and implementation of barrier removals, to improve good travel habits.

Strengths

- A considered and well-designed travel plan has been introduced, which considers all different aspects of travel with a good range of initial considerations individuals can take to improve their travel choices.
- This is supported using an annual survey with staff.

Environmental & Social Projects



100%

All organisations need to consider their corporate responsibility, both for social, community and wellbeing impacts, and for environmental impacts through biodiversity or conservation efforts.

This section requires organisations to undertake a range of projects that not only aim to achieve impacts, but to also encourage individual participation and engagement – to raise conversation and encourage individuals to consider what they can do outside of the organisation as well.

It is strongly encouraged that organisations undertake projects in all three areas, Resource Efficiency, Biodiversity / Conservation, and Social / Community.

Strengths

- A very good range of projects introduced covering a wide range of topics, with particular focus on engagement through wellbeing projects, as well as biodiversity projects where available, subject to site.

Communication & Engagement



83%

The scheme requires that active and engaged communication happens at all levels, as sustainability cannot only happen within the Senior Team or only happen at ground level



but requires a collaborative approach. Regular and consistent communication and engagement is therefore pivotal to ensuring objectives are achieved.

In addition, regular reporting is necessary to highlight the success of activities and improvements achieved. These should be produced both for the SLT, but also for wider staff to celebrate success and recognise efforts they have made through participation.

In time, reports should be made available publicly alongside the environmental policy to further demonstrate the commitment and celebrate the achievements of the organisation.

Strengths

- Throughout, Minster Vets have demonstrated excellent engagement of staff through the range of projects and initiatives they have introduced.

Actions for review

- Consider developing an external sustainability report that shares the commitments and ambitions set by Minster Vets, alongside the performance and outcomes achieved. Presently the latest audit report is included, but without context, it is harder for those not involved to extract the necessary messaging. This report can extract highlight the fantastic work that has been achieved and put this into context of the organisation's ambition.

Next steps

To continue to develop sustainability within the organisation, the Minster Vets should consider and prioritise the following next steps.

- While Net Zero is not yet a formal requirement, it is recommended that Minster Vets starts to consider what this means to the organisation. This conversation should also consider the wider aims and strategy of Minster Vets and Vet Partners and how the two need to align.
- Consider sustainability over longer timelines, ideally the next 10 years, with a 5-year interim milestone. This will require the consideration of priorities and must also consider responsibilities; who will lead and who will deliver, as well what resources are needed to approach each element; both in terms of time and investment.
- This will require the development of a long-term plan (referred to as a roadmap or glidepath) where longer term actions can be considered. This will feed into the annual action plan managed quarter to quarter over each year but allows Minster Vets to assess how and when larger actions, which will likely require investment, investigation, or both, will be possible.



- Training is an important element of any strategy, and thought should be given to roles and responsibilities and what training or upskilling will be necessary for team members to help support and deliver upon any considered strategy.



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