ACCREDITATION REPORT

Minster Veterinary Practice

February 2025

Executive Summary

Minster Veterinary Practice (MVP) is a multisite veterinary practice belonging to the VetPartners group. It offers small animal veterinary services out of five sites across York and the surrounding area. The practice has been a member of iiE since 2020, achieving Green level accreditation in 2022 which it has maintained to date. The current audit cycle that this report relates to covers the period from September 2023 to February 2025: the audit was delayed following changes to the Green Team and to better align the audit dates with full years of data. This year, the audit included a site visit to the practice's main surgery on Salisbury Road, in York.

The practice has faced several challenges this audit cycle, including the ongoing challenges of old buildings and infrastructure with lower efficiency, a large intake of new staff and the consequent need to update them on sustainability policies, and the monitoring and operational challenges faced by multisite practices. Further, the Green Champions were both new to the role and had a minimal handover. However, they should be commended for the speed at which they adapted to their roles and implemented changes.

Whilst resource efficiency fell in 2023, in 2024 the Green Champions updated performance review processes and implemented further action, exceeding most reduction targets for 2024. MVP is clearly aware of the priority actions for emission reductions and has in place a carbon reduction strategy with long term planned actions. Decarbonisation of the fleet through transitioning to an EV has demonstrated commitment to, and progress through, this. Strong waste management processes, effective communication, and impactful projects have also been highlights this audit cycle.

To maintain Green, expand the scope of the carbon footprint further through inclusion of grey fleet emission data, and target reduction in Scope 2 emissions as this has seen an increase from 2023 to 2024. Formalise sustainability training procedures for new staff and focus on low-flow training for clinical staff. Continue to facilitate waste reduction through sustainable procurement and to further engage external stakeholders with the practice's sustainability work.

Highlights

- MVP continues to demonstrate its commitment to its environmental goals and the new Green Champions are clearly committed to implementing sustainability and supporting MVP in continuous improvement of its environmental performance.
- Performance monitoring processes have improved with resource data reviewed on a monthly basis. Good resource efficiency infrastructure and processes were evident during the site visit. Further, impressive reductions have been achieved from 2023 to 2024 within both normalised and absolute resource performance.
- MVP is clearly aware of the priorities for action to achieve maximum resource efficiency, including improving the insulation of inefficient buildings. The practice continuously reviews its capacity for action and implements larger changes when possible, with planned changes captured within its carbon reduction strategy. Carbon footprints for 2023 and 2024 show a reduction of 16 tCO_2e year on year
- The practice has been involved with project DRAPE since 2023, continually reviews the potential for waste reduction via sustainable switches, and provides VetPartners and suppliers with feedback on packaging and product sustainability, supporting the reduction of environmental impact within its value chain.

Improvements

- Formalise the inclusion of sustainability in induction procedures and consider incorporating sustainability into the appraisal process. Evidence this for future audits.
- As discussed during the audit, track grey fleet mileage and include emission data from this within the carbon footprint.
- Consider implementing low-flow training and consequent regular compliance monitoring and refresher training.
- The offensive waste stream saw a significant increase from 2023 to 2024. Continue to try to reduce this through correct segregation and sustainable procurement.
- Consider how external stakeholders can be further engaged with MVP's sustainability work through communications, an annual sustainability report, and projects.

Score

Investors in the Environment is pleased to confirm that, having recently completed the audit process, Minster Veterinary Practice has achieved the Green level accreditation with a score of 79%.

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

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

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

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

The audit consisted of an examination of documentation evidence, and a site visit and an interview with key personnel on 7th February 2025.

Evidence submitted included:

- Updated EMS Reporting Pack
- Travel Plan
- Various resource measurement sheets
- Environmental Action Plan
- Environmental Policy
- Communication examples

Summary Results Table

Audit category	Score
Section 1 - Leadership and Governance (Policy)	**95%**
Section 2 - Resource Use, Data, & Monitoring	**86%**
Section 3 - Performance, Action, & Targets	**75%**
Section 4 - Carbon Management	**79%**
Section 5 - Waste Management & Materials	**88%**
Section 6 – Transport & Travel Planning	**78%**
Section 7 - Environmental & Social Projects	**100%**
Section 8 – Communication & Engagement	**83%**
Overall Score	**79%**

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	**0 Points**: A failing score means that this criterion has not been met nor is any progress demonstrated. *No progress or commitment has been made in this area.*
Action Needed	**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. *The organisation is considering developing this area, but no formal process has been established or meaningful progress has not been made.*
Pass / Compliant	**2 points**: The criteria have been met, though there may also be suggestions to improve. *The organisation is beginning or improving this area, is broadly compliant with the iiE criteria, and may be showing processes that support improvements.*
Outstanding	**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. *The organisation is succeeding with supportive target achievement and may be leading or supporting others in their sector or influence to achieve improvements.*

Leadership & Governance (Environmental Policy)

95%

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

- The two Green Champions have effectively adapted to their new roles, demonstrated clear commitment to implementing sustainability and have supported MVP in continuous improvement of its environmental performance.
- There is clear top-level support for MVP's sustainability initiative and SLT are actively involved with the Green Teram.
- MVP continues to demonstrate its commitment to its environmental goals, as outlined within its Environmental Policy. MVP's commitments to reducing impacts are specific and clear, include consideration of procurement decisions, and are supported by a sustainable procurement policy.
- Candidates' sustainability ethos is included within the interview process and a verbal induction to the practice's sustainability goals is given to new starters.

Actions for review

- To further embed sustainability as an essential aspect of all job roles, consider incorporating sustainability into the appraisal process. This could be done by including an informal question around how staff contribute towards sustainability goals or asking staff to set a sustainability related objective of their choice.
- Formalise the inclusion of sustainability in induction procedures and evidence this for future audits.

Resource Use & Data Monitoring

86%

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

- MVP's usage of resource is well understood and clearly captured within the EMS and asset list. This supports the performance analysis process and effective targeting of action.
- Strong monthly datasets continue to be collated, and the Green Champions have begun to review data on a monthly basis since 2024 after recognising a need to improve performance monitoring processes.
- The water meter for MVP's Crockley Hill site has been found, allowing a data stream for this valuable resource to be collected.
- Good resource efficiency infrastructure and processes were evident during the site visit. These included: switch off procedures, motion sensors on lights, drying

racks, a low heat cycle policy for the washing machine, laminated sheets for reuse, and using old newspaper for kennels.

Actions for review

- If data is available, consider collecting half-hourly smart meter datasets for utilities. Half-hourly electricity data can be used to create heat maps, allowing visualisation of average utility usage over a 24-hour or weekly period. Such graphs provide strong visual aids for identifying background inefficiencies and can help you to understand the minimum daily energy thresholds needed. iiE can help you in developing these – contact your support officer for further guidance.
- Continue to try to obtain data streams for water for all sites.

Performance, Action & Targets

75%

Setting targets provides an opportunity to measure performance against planned activities. Where performance is falling short of achieving targets, future or underway activity or project plans can be refined to ensure set out goals are achieved.

Targets can be set against activity metrics to analyse how annual changes to business activity have affected performance, with the aim to always improve efficiency where absolute reductions are not achievable.

Clear, relevant and well managed action plans should record intended activities and support the review of performance, with the aim to achieving the set targets.

Strengths

- Normalisation of data has improved, with the practice switching from FTE to the number of consultations as the primary intensity metric, allowing better insights into operational efficiency. Gas data has also been normalised by heating degree days, and anaesthetic gases by number of general anaesthetics.
- Impressive reductions have been achieved from 2023 to 2024 within both normalised and absolute resource performance. The EMS captures a good level of analysis with clear understanding of factors that have influenced performance. Future targets have been set at -2% as processes around data reviews and action evaluation have changed and the practice wishes to benchmark reductions against this 2%.
- MVP is clearly aware of the priorities for action to achieve maximum resource efficiency, including improving the insulation of inefficient buildings. The practice continuously reviews its capacity for action and implements larger changes when possible, so far this has included boiler replacement and reducing draughts.
- Good extensive action plans are in place, including a carbon footprint action plan.

Actions for review

- Consider the following actions to support greater resource efficiency:
    - Installing sensors on taps to support water use reductions.
    - Utilising external shading for reducing cooling needs.
    - Tracking printing quantities. Some printers have capacity to track this.

- Training on low flow procedures, monitoring of uptake, and regular refresher training.

Carbon Management

79%

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 water, travel, and finally including additional aspects of business activity, such as waste, etc.

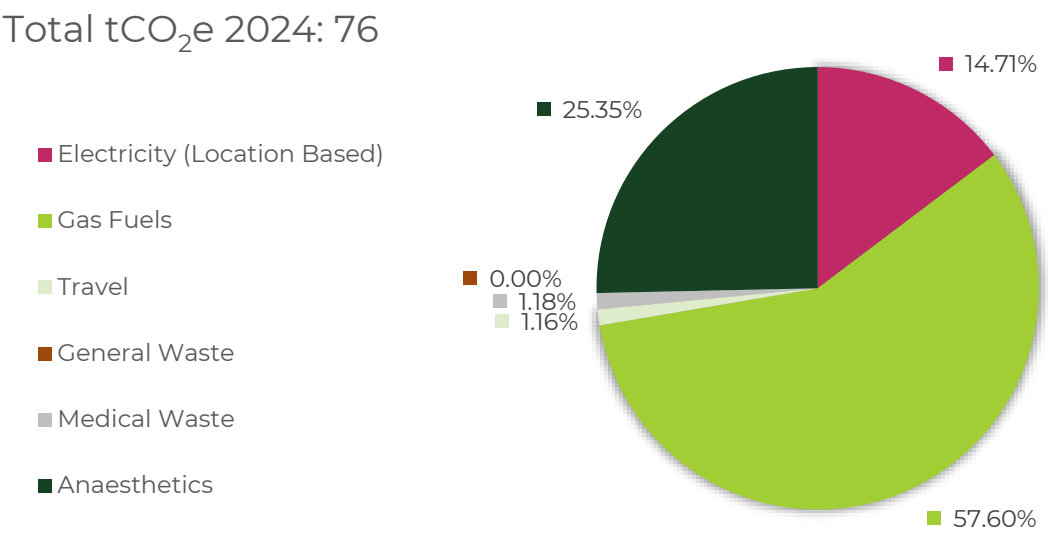
Carbon Management provides an opportunity for an organisation to consider which resources or operations need to be prioritised to decarbonise as quickly as possible, in line with Climate Science. The output from a carbon footprint calculation should be used to inform these decisions, which is another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

In accordance with the GHG Protocol, iiE encourages the dual reporting of an organisation's carbon footprint, which results in the provision of two outputs for those organisations on a renewable energy tariff, a 'location-based' and a 'market-based' carbon footprint.

The 'location-based' method reflects the impact of electricity drawn from the grid, using the UK grid's average emission factor, regardless of the tariff to which an organisation has signed up.

The 'market-based' method uses an emission factor which is either specific to the electricity tariff to which the reporting organisation has signed up or a generic 'UK renewable energy' factor, which allows electricity from renewables or low carbon sources to be reported with lower emissions than those generated through the burning of fossil fuels. An energy provider should be able to provide the emission factor for any of its tariffs.

Electricity purchased and distributed through the National Grid, with energy generated from a variety of sources, and will always have a carbon footprint as a result. Location based reporting demonstrates the organisation's awareness of the overall impact Grid sourced electricity contributes towards climate change. Direct carbon reduction can only be achieved through the installation of solar or other renewable technologies. However, the market-based reporting provides an opportunity to demonstrate an organisation's commitment to support the reduction of emissions through its purchasing decisions.



MVP's location-based carbon footprint for 2024 was 76 tCO_2e based on datasets for electricity, gas, travel, medical waste, business waste, anaesthetic gas and fugitive gas. As the practice is on a renewable energy tariff, its market-based carbon footprint for 2024 was 64.82 tCO_2e, based on the same datasets.

Strengths

- Carbon footprints for 2023 and 2024 capture all scope 1 and 2, and some scope 3 emissions and show a reduction of 16 tCO_2e year on year. This was achieved through a 19% reduction in Scope 1 emissions and an 18% reduction in Scope 3 emissions.
- MVP has used its carbon footprints to develop a carbon reduction strategy with long term planned actions. These include insulation, double glazing, solar panels and carbon offsets.

Actions for review

- A 2% reduction has been seen in Scope 2 emissions from 2023 to 2024: this should be an area of focus for action planning in 2025.
- MVP is on a green energy tariff: when calculating the carbon footprint select 'yes' for renewable energy.
- The carbon footprint action plan maps planned action for 2028, 2030 and 2035, however doesn't set specific carbon reduction targets. It may be beneficial to develop some long-term carbon reduction goals to allow performance to analysed.
- Grey fleet emissions aren't captured within the carbon footprint as travel for CPD purposes isn't currently monitored. As discussed, and as MVP is already planning, look to obtain this data stream and include within the carbon footprint to further map scope 3 emissions.,
- The practice includes offsetting within its carbon footprint action plan. When looking for reputable offset providers, consider utilising the UN offset platform. ForestCarbon, an iiE partner, may also be of interest; the organisation also delivered a webinar on offsetting for iiE, which could provide useful information for those involved with MVP's offsetting strategy.

Waste Management & Materials

88%

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

- Waste management processes are clearly captured within documentation, and good compliance with these was evidenced during the site visit. Compliance is monitored via regular bin checks and annual waste audits.
- The practice has implemented a new colour coded system for clinical waste which has had a positive impact on compliance. This is supported by good binfrastructure and signage.
- Multiple streams of recycling are in place, including PPE, pet food packaging, blister packs, flexible plastics and batteries.
- MVP has moved to orange bag disposal for clinical waste as these are processed differently and require a lower emission treatment.
- The practice has been involved with project DRAPE since 2023 and continually reviews the potential for waste reduction via sustainable switches. Reusable scrubs, gowns, incontinence sheers and hand towels are already in place.
- The practice provides VetPartners and suppliers with feedback on packaging and product sustainability, supporting the reduction of environmental impact within its value chain.

Actions for review

- The offensive waste stream saw a significant increase from 2023 to 2024. Continue to try to reduce this through correct segregation and sustainable procurement.

Transport & Travel Planning

78%

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 good Travel Plan is in place that captures the practice's travel requirements, sustainable travel goals, approach to travel and action to support sustainable travel. This has been informed by surveying staff to understand commuting habits.
- MVP decarbonised its fleet vehicles in 2023. It has moved away from the two ICE vans used before, to a single electric van. Further, an EV charger has been installed on site.
- To support mileage reduction, staff are now asked to take items to sites they are already visiting, removing the need for a team driver.
- A conference speaker is utilised to allow remote meetings and reduce travel needs.

Actions for review

- As the practice is planning to start more in-house CPD, creating a greater need for grey fleet travel, assess how mileage can be captured through expenses. Consider how people can be encouraged to choose active transport, public transport or lift sharing over solo ICE travel to CPD.
- Consider developing a travel decision tree document that can be referenced by associates when making transport decisions to decide if sustainable alternatives would be appropriate.
- Consider employing some different policies to encourage greater use of sustainable transport. These could include:
    - Promotion of the 5p per mile increase in expenses to encourage lift sharing for work related travel (and the restriction of two members of staff driving to an event or meeting in separate vehicles) and 20p per mile if staff go to a work meeting by bike.
    - Financial rewards/contributions towards travel costs for staff who make a certain percentage of their office commutes by bike or public transport.

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

- MVP has engaged with multiple projects this audit cycle, exceeding the three-project requirement for Green and earning a score of 'Outstanding'.
- Projects saw engagement across all sites and covered all three project categories. They included the purchasing of an electric van, beach litter pick walks, developing the outdoor areas for biodiversity and wellbeing and running the Great North Run for charity.

Actions for review

- Consider how client engagement with project work can be strengthened, e.g. through an antibiotic amnesty campaign and/or involvement with a biodiversity project.
- Consider engaging with projects to support staff well-being through nature connection – these could link in with the Wildlife Trusts' 'Stay Wild' campaign in June.

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

- The Green Team meet regularly to assess progress and determine next steps and are in communication through a WhatsApp group.
- SLT are actively engaged with sustainability in MVP and progress is discussed within SLT meetings.
- Good lines of communication are in place between the Green Team and wider staff. The Green Champions reported that communication is a key focus for the practice, and they are looking to further improve face-to-face communications.
- A bi-annual progress report, and the audit report, are shared internally.
- Excellent signage, including stickers and posters, was noted on the site visit.

• MVP communicate their sustainability journey with external stakeholders via a sustainability page on the website and social media, where they post sustainable pet-care tips.
Actions for review
• Consider developing an annual sustainability report that can be shared externally, with clients and suppliers. This helps aid transparency and demonstrate commitment. It could include an overview of the year's performance, the carbon footprint, project information, targets for the upcoming year and key planned action.

Next steps

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

- Formalise the inclusion of sustainability in induction procedures and consider incorporating sustainability into the appraisal process. and evidence this for future audits.
- Continue to try to obtain data streams for water for all sites.
- If data is available, consider collecting half-hourly smart meter datasets for utilities.
- Implement low-flow training and consequent regular compliance monitoring and refresher training.
- As discussed, track grey fleet mileage and include emission data from this within the carbon footprint.
- The practice includes offsetting within its carbon footprint action plan. Ensure that the key people involved with offsets are aware of how to find a reliable supplier and how to claim offsets.
- The offensive waste stream saw a significant increase from 2023 to 2024. Continue to try to reduce this through correct segregation and sustainable procurement.
- Consider developing a travel decision tree document that can be referenced by associates when making transport decisions to decide if sustainable alternatives would be appropriate.
- Consider developing an annual sustainability report that can be shared externally, with clients and suppliers.
- Consider how external stakeholders can be further engaged with MVP's sustainability work, through communications and projects.

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