

CASE STUDY

Efficiency and Consistency in a Capacity Crisis: A case study of one of the UK's largest animal charities.

Client:

Nationwide Animal Charity

Employees:

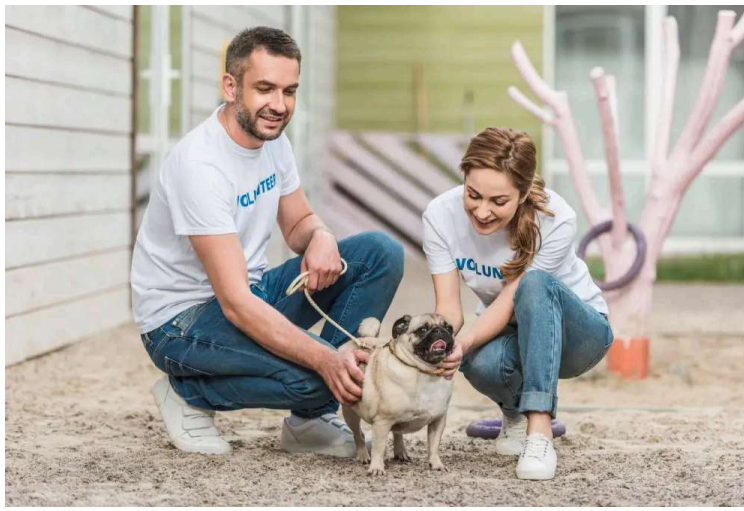
450-500+

Location:

United Kingdom

Services:

Business Improvement, Strategy Development



Our Client

We were approached by one of the UK's largest animal charities to review its entire veterinary operation.

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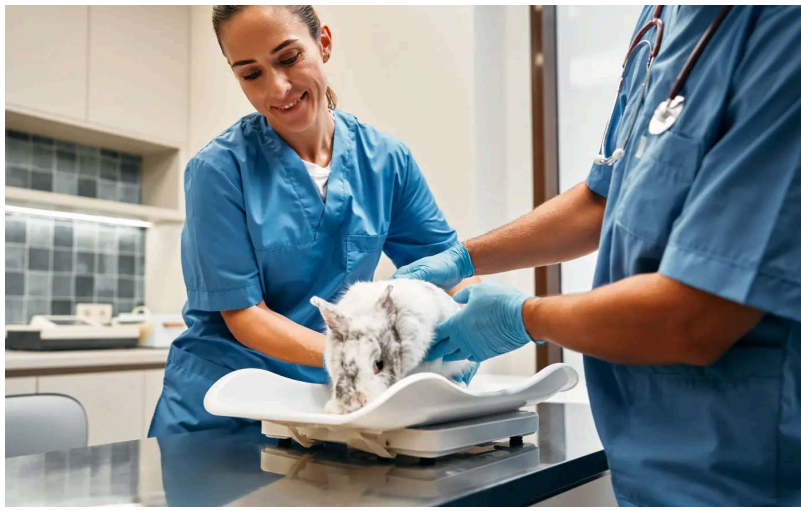
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The aftermath of the surge of pet ownership during the Covid-19 Pandemic, combined with the cost-of-living crisis in the UK, had meant that a record number of animals were arriving at the charity's centres. It was felt by the senior team that animals were not being moved through the shelter system as quickly as they could, leading to serious capacity issues. Alongside this, their use of both internal and external veterinary provisions was leading to inconsistent outcomes. Furthermore, a call from the ground for more staff and more investment in the veterinary arm of the charity led the organisation to request a full-scale report from IntrinsicVet on the current state and potential future set up of the charity's veterinary provision.



Project Objectives

Our Task:

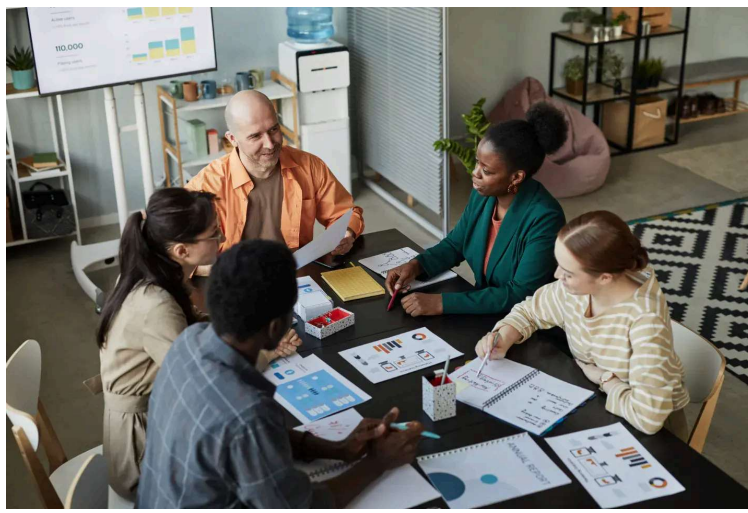
Bring clarity to the situation by way of a comprehensive and objective review of the charity's entire internal veterinary provision.

The project's objectives included a review of the veterinary provision's current structure, its systems and processes, and its capabilities in critical areas. We were tasked with conducting a comprehensive analysis of the current veterinary workflow, staffing and resource allocations, the use of two different veterinary models (dependent upon geography) and their alignment with the charity's purpose.

As always, our initial objective was to either validate or challenge the assumptions and opinions of the senior team. Once objective clarity had been gained, our goal was to provide a detailed report covering all aspects of the veterinary provision, alongside strategic recommendations to enhance the speed and quality of care for animals moving through the charity and propose options for an optimised future operating model.

Key Questions to be Answered

- ✓ How do the differing veterinary provisions perform in meeting the charity's needs?
- ✓ How joined up is the veterinary arm of the charity with the rest of the organisation?
- ✓ Is the veterinary provision structured to achieve the charity's objectives?
- ✓ Is the veterinary provision adequately staffed in key areas?
- ✓ How efficient is the operational workflow and where are the bottlenecks?
- ✓ What needs to change to alleviate capacity and provide consistent outcomes?
- ✓ What are the cost implications on the charity for the changes required?



Our Approach

Our approach to the project was shaped by IntrinsicVet's Aligned Veterinary Organisation Model[©], which provided a strategic framework for our comprehensive analysis. Given the charity's operational uncertainties, working through our bespoke model enabled us to ask critical questions and examine every facet of the veterinary operation, from the structure and systems in place, to the critical competencies and leadership behaviours essential for organisational success.

We examined how the charity's purpose manifested within the veterinary arm, whether it was structured to adequately achieve the charity's mission, what development was required in key operational areas to maximise efficiency, and critically, what veterinary provision best suited the charity's mission and goals.

Using this structured and focused approach meant we could create an organisational scenario that would allow the vision and mission of the charity to pervade the organisational and operational makeup of its veterinary provision. We were then able to compare this with the existing reality and explore the cost implications of the change.

Key Work Undertaken

01 Engagement with Leadership

Initiating the project involved a comprehensive session with the charity's senior leadership team to align on project scope, objectives, and expectations. This foundational step ensured a thorough understanding of the organisation's purpose and strategic objectives to hold at the core of the project. In-depth knowledge of the senior leadership team's perspectives and opinions on the current veterinary provision allowed us to challenge or validate these assumptions within our review.

02 Extensive Site Engagements

Integral to this project was spending time in all of the charity sites involved in the project. With the larger sites, this involved multiple visits on varying occasions to ensure a holistic and authentic understanding of the veterinary hospital operations. Multiple staged visits also allowed for exploration of potential solutions as the project progressed and anticipation of possible barriers to implementation.

03 Operational Examination and Analysis

We conducted site-specific and comparative analysis to evaluate workflow uniformity and efficiency across the provision including aspects such as the use of technology and communication channels. Through a combination of site visits, staff interviews, and data analysis, we aimed to uncover bottlenecks and inconsistencies and provide targeted, recommendations for improvement across the board.

04 Interviews with Key Stakeholders

We conducted extensive interviews across the organisation to build a holistic overview of the charity's veterinary arm. Anonymising interviewees in our reporting supported open and honest discussions, giving us critical operational insights and a clear picture of the sub- cultures present and the apparent readiness for change.

05 Clinical Review

Pivotal to identifying areas for improvement, ensuring case continuity, and enhancing the overall quality of care was a detailed review of their clinical practices. This included analysis of cases, SOPs, protocols, clinical competencies, case management practices, and interdepartmental communication relating to clinical care. Additionally, we assessed the impact of CPD, mentoring, and recruitment strategies on essential clinical skills and capabilities, vital for upholding clinical standards.

06 Charity-wide survey

Having gained initial intelligence from the ground, we were then able to create an organisation-wide survey to delve further into the issues identified. We analysed whether certain issues and opinions were department or role specific or pervasive across the organisation. Guided by our Aligned Veterinary Organisation Model© we were able to obtain and analyse quantitative and qualitative data relevant to every aspect of the charity.

07 Leadership assessment

Versatile and capable leadership underpins all successful organisations and all well executed change processes. Our review of the leadership structure, job descriptions, and roles and responsibilities sought to ascertain the key leadership behaviours present and the degree to which leaders were identified and supported to achieve the charity's operational objectives in line with its vision.



Results and Outcomes

Using the Aligned Veterinary Organisation Model© enabled us to organise all the information into a coherent whole and focus in on each aspect of the organisation's veterinary arm, providing extensive findings and detailed recommendations.

- ✓ Enabled mission realignment and improved organisational cohesion.
- ✓ Identified operational bottlenecks and recommended workflow optimisations.
- ✓ Suggested leadership role adjustments and development programs for critical competency gaps, leading to better organisational effectiveness.
- ✓ Identified a more coherent and efficient veterinary model with significant cost savings to the charity.

Addressing the immediate capacity crisis

Importantly, aside from offering a long-term solution which would require time to implement, we were able to recommend immediate operational and organisational enhancements to the veterinary provision. Implemented, these would facilitate a speedier transition through the centres for patients, making an impact in the short term while a strategic change project was designed.

Addressing the core issues

We presented a strategic solution to the senior leadership team, illustrating a pathway to increase animal rehoming by 21% whilst achieving considerable cost savings. This solution, combined with the charity's ongoing efforts to grow its fostering network, would lead to a long-term, robust resolution to the capacity crisis.

Shifting Operating Models

The engagement provided the senior leadership with the clarity and validation needed for strategic decision-making. A deep dive into the root causes of existing assumptions led to a pivotal strategic shift towards a new operating model, designed to improve consistency in operations and boost rehoming outcomes significantly.

Mission Focus

A key outcome of the project was a reorienting of the veterinary arm towards the core mission of the charity. Our intervention not only helped in identifying an improved operating model but provided the senior leadership team with renewed clarity of their mission. This also served as a reminder to use this as a reference point in all strategic decisions, regardless of department.

Leadership Development

Our review led to initiatives aimed at enhancing leadership effectiveness within the veterinary provision. We identified misalignment in leadership roles and proposed solutions for these, emphasising a need for more hands-on managerial engagement. Additionally, we recommended comprehensive leadership development programs to address training gaps, improving decision-making, mentorship, and overall operational efficiency. These strategies are designed to fortify the leadership framework, ensuring its alignment with daily operations and enhancing the provision's ability to implement the recommended changes effectively.



Client Testimonial

“Having recently worked with IntrinsicVet, they were very accommodating and easy to work with. They went above and beyond on the scope of the project, which provided us with the clarity needed to enable us to move forward and greatly benefit our organisation.

From start to finish we found IntrinsicVet to be very professional, engaging, and highly knowledgeable. I cannot recommend their services highly enough and will not hesitate to work with IntrinsicVet in the future.”

Ms. L, Director of Operations



Key Concepts

The critical importance of holistic objectivity

Within most organisations, there will be differing sources of “truth”, depending on where an individual sits on the org chart. This can make effective decision making extremely difficult. It is critical when making strategic decisions that the true status quo of an organisation is uncovered. This often requires unbiased collation of differing viewpoints and objective external analysis.

Bespoke models for data analysis

There are numerous organisational models that can be used in consulting interventions to make sense of data. However, given the clinical environment and the veterinary context of our interventions, using our bespoke model, with a clinical focus running through its core, is crucial to the success of these projects.

Purpose as a driving force for change

The importance of ensuring that all departments understand the purpose of the organisation and the part that they play in delivering it, cannot be understated. Even within organisations where the mission is clear, the day-to-day interpretation of that mission can differ. If so, it is critical to narrate to employees, especially new starters, what the mission or purpose of the organisation is and what that looks like within their role and department. Such work can help them see other departments in the context of the whole and lead to better understanding and communication throughout the organisation.

Challenging 'The Norm'

Bottlenecks and efficiency issues can arise from not challenging 'the norm', especially within a veterinary setting. Always having done something a certain way, whilst comfortable for many employees, does not guarantee efficiency. Rather, it can often reinforce poor organisational habits. Supporting new ideas and ways of improving not only engages employees but is the cornerstone of a culture of innovation.



Conclusion

Often, it takes an environmental shift to bring organisational strategy into sharp focus; a strategy that may have been fit for purpose in one scenario becomes untenable in another. The charity appeared to be at a strategic crossroads given the unprecedented circumstances it found itself. However, by seeking out external expertise from IntrinsicVet, they were able to make intelligence -driven decisions, based on solid rationale as opposed to assumption. They were able to refocus on their mission and let it guide their decision making. As a result, they found a way to be more consistent in the short-term and charted a path to better meet the needs of the new environment in the longer term.