

News & Reports

Vets are among UK's most trusted professionals

By Josh Loeb

A RECENT survey found the British public more likely to trust vets than members of seven other professions – including GPs and dentists.

Pollsters Walnut asked a nationally representative sample of 2000 UK adults about their views of vets and a range of other professionals.

A very high proportion said they either 'completely trusted' (34 per cent) or 'generally trusted' (60 per cent) vets, putting the profession at number three in a league table that was subsequently compiled of the 'most trusted' professions in the UK.

Only opticians and pharmacists were found to score more highly than vets on the metrics used. The ranking matches that which was determined in 2015 via a joint survey by the RCVS and the BVA as part of the Vet Futures initiative.

The survey, which was commissioned by marketing consultants Mo Gannon & Associates (MG&A) on behalf of the RCVS, also asked about people's satisfaction with the service provided by vets and found a similarly rosy picture. Respondents gave an overall satisfaction rate of 80 per cent (with 39 per cent of those surveyed describing themselves as being 'very satisfied' and 41 per cent saying they were 'satisfied' with the service they had received).

This represented a slight improvement on the 2015 survey, where the overall satisfaction rate was 78 per cent.

Vets were the fourth highest profession in terms of satisfaction rates – below opticians, pharmacists and dentists, but above GPs and accountants.

In terms of value for money, 32 per cent felt that vets represented



'excellent' (8 per cent) or 'good' (24 per cent) value for money, with 38 per cent thinking that veterinary fees were fair. Some 29 per cent of respondents thought vets and their services provided poor (21 per cent) or very poor (8 per cent) value for money.

These findings were similar to the findings from the 2015 survey.

The 10 professions compared as part of the MG&A/Walnut exercise were – in order of the level of public trust in the profession as a whole – opticians, pharmacists, vets, GPs, dentists, headteachers, police officers, solicitors, accountants and social workers.

The professions used as comparators were the same as those used in 2015.

Despite being ranked at the bottom of the table in terms of trust, social workers still had an overall trust level of 70 per cent, as compared with vets' 94 per cent trust level.

RCVS president Niall Connell said: 'These results clearly



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demonstrate that there is a great deal of goodwill towards veterinary professionals and the work they do in treating the nation's animals and serving their communities.

'The basis of all good relationships is trust, and it is fantastic to see that our clients continue overwhelmingly to trust our knowledge and expertise and remain very happy with the service we provide.

'The picture on value for money is clearly a bit more mixed, although clearly 70 per cent of the respondents recognise that we at least charge fair fees in terms of our time and expertise.

'There is, of course, always more work that we can do in order to help the public understand veterinary costs and fees and promote the value of veterinary care, as demonstrated by last year's joint "Pets Need Vets" social media campaign with the BVA, in which we highlighted the benefits to pet owners of being registered with a vet.' ●