



Corporate Social Responsibility Policy

1.0 Introduction

Larkmead Veterinary Group (Larkmead) aims to be a good veterinary practice and corporate citizen. Larkmead has a responsibility to its clients, staff, suppliers and owners and also to the wider community within which it operates.

This Corporate Social Responsibility policy brings together existing principles and policies to define a common approach to how Larkmead should conduct its business.

2.0 Compliance, Monitoring and Reporting

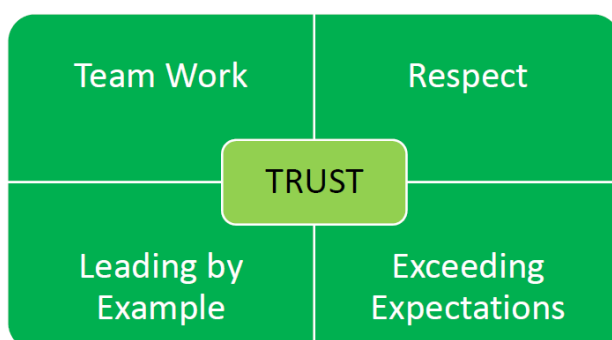
- The Larkmead Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for this policy. It will be continuously monitored and reviewed.
- Each team leader and function manager within the organisation is responsible for ensuring that the principles set out in this policy are communicated to their teams and working colleagues, that the policy is understood and they are compliant in all areas relating to their remit.
- Employees who suspect a breach in this policy must report it to their line manager, or any member of the SMT. Breaches in this policy will result in an investigation in line with the Larkmead grievance policy as detailed in the staff handbook.

3.0 Code of Ethics

3.1 Basic Standards

Larkmead will conduct every aspect of its business with honesty and integrity. Respecting all stakeholders and operating in the interest of its owners, employees, customers, suppliers and the wider farming and pet owning communities.

Larkmead's core values are based on mutual trust and respect:



3.2 Employees

Larkmead is committed to:

- Developing a vibrant working environment free from bullying and harassment where everyone feels part of the organisation
- Recruiting employees on the basis of merit, with a qualification and competency based specification for each role
- Maintaining good internal communications
- Providing training and supervision for staff to realise their potential
- Ensuring privacy of employees' personal information
- Respecting employee rights to join a trade union
- Ensuring the grievance policy is adhered to
- Providing a safe working environment

3.3 Business Integrity

Larkmead aspires to develop strong relationships with all stakeholders and build relationships based on honesty and trust. It will comply with the laws and regulations applicable to its business and the standards set out by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and its Practice Standards quality assurance scheme.

3.4 Personal Conduct

All Larkmead employees are expected to behave in accordance with this policy, the Larkmead core values and the staff handbook.

3.5 Bribery

No employee or business working for or on behalf of Larkmead will accept bribes or encourage the acceptance of bribes and they must act in accordance to the Bribery Act 2010.

All gifts over the value of £50 must be declared to the SMT.

3.6 Conflicts of interest

All potential conflicts of interest for members of staff must be reported to a member of the SMT. This includes any personal relations, activities and financial interests that may conflict with their role and responsibilities at Larkmead.

3.7 Confidentiality

Information gained whilst working for Larkmead must not be used for personal gain or for any purpose other than what permission has been granted for.

Larkmead will comply with the Data Protection Act and the codes of conduct laid down by the RCVS.

Employees working/dealing with business sensitive information must respect the confidentiality that this type of work involves.

3.8 Customers

Larkmead operates a non-discrimination policy in the supply of goods and services to clients.

The Group is committed to providing high quality, caring, consistent, value for money, safe and accessible services to all its customers. Larkmead particularly will deal with the euthanasia of pets and animals with the utmost sensitivity.

In order to safeguard the businesses and livelihoods of its clients, Larkmead will deal with all business and personal information it comes into contact with, with confidentiality and discretion.

3.9 Suppliers

Larkmead likes to establish business relationships with those businesses that have a similar business ethos to its own.

The Larkmead Veterinary Group is part of the XLVets Group, an association of like-minded, independent practices, and as such wishes to build long term relationships with suppliers through this organisation to help Larkmead resource high quality, competitively priced goods and services.

3.10 The Environment

Larkmead will take into account environmental considerations during all of its business activity. Larkmead aims to continue to improve its environmental impact.

3.11 Community Involvement

Larkmead is committed to being part of the local communities that it serves.

It aims to foster good relationships within the local community including customers, neighbours, suppliers, residents, community groups and local businesses.

Community communications/sponsorship will take place under the criteria laid out in business plans, which are reviewed annually.

3.12 Health & Safety

Health & Safety (H&S) is an important consideration at Larkmead. H&S applies to all areas of the Larkmead business, it ensures the safety of our employees, customers and stakeholders.

H&S is the responsibility of every employee working at Larkmead. The SMT and the Practice Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that the Larkmead H&S policy is complied with at all times and that Larkmead members of staff working on client premises also respect the H&S policies of those clients.

H&S management responsibility includes ensuring that:

- 1) injury prevention is properly organised and resourced

- 2) staff are given information, instruction and training on H&S
- 3) all Larkmead and relevant client H&S policies are followed and full compliance with the law is adhered to

Employees must report H&S breaches to either a member of the SMT or one of the Practice Coordinators.

4.0 Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Larkmead conforms to all legislation relating to Human Rights and Equal Opportunities.

Larkmead is committed to equality both in the provision of its services and as an employer. It believes that all people have the right to be treated with respect and commits that Larkmead:

- 1) will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, disability, nationality, religion, age, sexual orientation, personal status or trade union activity
- 2) will not tolerate prejudice, discrimination, bullying or harassment of any kind

Recruitment will be carried out with regard to fairness, consistency and merit, including competency based assessment. Recruitment will incorporate the Equal Opportunities and Diversity statement.

Failure to adhere to Larkmead's equal opportunities policy by members of its staff is a disciplinary offence.

5.0 Complaints

If an employee feels he/she has ground for complaint in relation to bullying, discrimination, harassment or victimisation they have the right to do so through the grievance procedure detailed in the staff handbook. If a customer feels they have grounds to complain they can do so through the complaints procedure published on the Larkmead website.

6.0 E-Communications

Larkmead embraces e-communications, but will only enter into these communications if they are relevant to Larkmead and will benefit its stakeholders.

All employees must comply with the e-communications policy in their personal use of electronic media both during working hours and, as applied to Larkmead related communications, in their own time. Notified breaches in the policy will result in an investigation in line with the grievance procedure.

Larkmead will comply with UK and EU data protection legislation and act in accordance with its own data protection policy.