



# ACCREDITATION REPORT

**Garston Veterinary Group**

**September 2025**





## Executive Summary

Garston Veterinary Group (Garston), part of the Linnaeus group with locations across Somerset and Wiltshire, have continued to advance and strengthen their environmental management system. The commitment of the practice is truly evident in the achievements and performance seen during the 2024 data set.

This year has presented challenges, notably a rise in patient numbers and procedures following the closure of a nearby practice. This placed added pressure on resources and impacted the time available for sustainability efforts. Despite this, Garston achieved impressive resource reductions in 2024 compared to 2023.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has also joined the green team, strengthening the influence and communication of the team across the practice. Garston's waste auditing process was recognised by the wider Linnaeus group as a model of best practice, helping to improve waste segregation and encourage overall waste reductions.

Looking ahead, Garston should consider re-baselining using 2025 data to enable more accurate and consistent data analysis and to support meaningful target setting. Anaesthetic use and waste saw a rise in total amounts this year. Whilst this was predominantly due to higher patient volumes, these remain priority areas for Garston to improve performance in the coming year.



## Highlights

- Resource reductions have been realised in 2024 compared to 2023: Electricity -11%, Gas -13%, Water -12%, Business travel (Fleet) mileage -62%, and Grey fleet mileage -87%.
- A -25% reduction in the overall carbon footprint was recorded this year.
- A range of physical and behavioural measures have been implemented to drive reductions, supported by extensive education and change management efforts.
- Garston's periodic waste audits are comprehensive and have been showcased by Linnaeus as a best-practice example to educate other practices in the group. The audits have supported improved waste segregation practices and encouraged the procurement of sustainable alternative products.
- Garston has delivered several impactful projects this year, promoting staff wellbeing, biodiversity, and resource efficiency. In particular, the staff walk-and-talk is a great example of Garston's commitment to wellbeing and getting out in nature.

## Improvements

- It would be beneficial to re-baseline next year using 2025 data, as it marks the first year with a complete and reliable dataset across all resources—providing a more solid foundation for setting meaningful targets and tracking long-term performance.
- Consider formalising the analysis of resource data as a monthly practice by tracking performance, documenting any factors or events that may have positively or negatively influenced results, analysing against normalisation metrics, and assessing progress against targets.
- Consolidating and reformatting the general, travel and anaesthesia action plans into a spreadsheet or management tool would be beneficial.
- Consider developing a formal procurement policy and process to ensure that opportunities are identified for products to be replaced with more sustainable alternatives on the suppliers' list.



## Score

Investors in the Environment is pleased to confirm that, having recently completed the audit process, Garston Veterinary Group has achieved the Green level accreditation with a score of 85%.



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 26/10/25, with final evidence submitted on 1/10/25

Evidence submitted included:

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

## Summary Results Table

<b>Audit category</b>	<b>Score</b>
Section 1 - Leadership and Governance (Policy)	<b>86%</b>
Section 2 - Resource Use, Data, & Monitoring	<b>86%</b>
Section 3 - Performance, Action, & Targets	<b>84%</b>
Section 4 - Carbon Management	<b>71%</b>
Section 5 - Waste Management & Materials	<b>75%</b>
Section 6 – Transport & Travel Planning	<b>100%</b>
Section 7 - Environmental & Social Projects	<b>100%</b>
Section 8 – Communication & Engagement	<b>100%</b>
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>85%</b>



## 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.

<b>Fail</b>	<p><b>0 Points:</b> 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>
<b>Action Needed</b>	<p><b>1 point:</b> 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>
<b>Pass / Compliant</b>	<p><b>2 points:</b> 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>
<b>Outstanding</b>	<p><b>3 points:</b> 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

- A member of the SLT has joined the green team, enhancing the team's visibility, position, and communication across the practice.
- Garston have introduced Stickerbook to staff inductions to complement the induction presentations. This helps to embed awareness of sustainability and promote sustainable practices among staff from the outset.

### Actions for review

- To consolidate the current procurement projects managed by staff, consider developing a formal procurement policy and process to ensure that opportunities are identified for products to be replaced with more sustainable alternatives on the suppliers' list.
- Update the policy on the Garston website to reflect the most recent environmental policy update.
- It would be beneficial to consider developing a legal compliance register and regularly monitoring the applicable updates. iiE membership includes access to the [Croner-i](#) legal compliance knowledge database, which will help Garston Vets to remain up to date with the latest legal developments.

## 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

- The dataset has continued to improve this year, making the analysis of the data more accurate and detailed. It reflects the team's persistence in overcoming historic data access challenges.
- Data is reviewed regularly in meetings to identify opportunities for further reductions or actions in resource use. This supports informed decision-making and drives continuous performance improvement.

### Actions for review

- Conduct an energy and heating audit across all sites to enable further resource reduction opportunities and improved efficiencies.
- Request access to half-hourly data from smart meters to support energy analysis across all sites.
- Consider formalising the analysis of resource data as a monthly practice by tracking performance, documenting any factors or events that may have positively or negatively influenced results, analysing against normalisation metrics, and assessing progress against targets. This approach will support consistent, comprehensive monitoring and provide valuable insights to inform future action planning.
- Normalise resource use against relevant business activity to ensure that effective monitoring can continue when data is more difficult to compare like-for-like. It is also beneficial for comparison between sites, as they are not all of equal size and staffing.

## Performance, Action & Targets



84%

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

- Resource reductions have been achieved in 2024 compared to 2023: Electricity - 11%, Gas -13%, Water -12%, Business travel (Fleet) mileage -62% and Grey fleet mileage -87%.
- A range of physical and behavioural measures have been implemented to drive reductions, supported by extensive education and change management efforts. Garston staff have demonstrated adaptability and flexibility in embracing the changes necessary to reduce resource use and support environmental sustainability across the organisation.

### Actions for review

- It would be beneficial to re-baseline using 2025 data, as it marks the first year with a complete and reliable dataset across all resources—providing a solid foundation for setting meaningful targets and tracking long-term performance.
- This year saw increases in total anaesthetic use and total waste amounts, primarily driven by a rise in patient numbers. These will continue to be priority areas for improvement as part of targeted resource reduction initiatives.
- Consolidating and reformatting the general, travel and anesthesia action plans into a spreadsheet or management tool would be beneficial. This would serve as a one-stop sustainability hub for those overseeing the ongoing and future work of the Green Team, while enabling more specific and consistent tracking of actions and progress.

## Carbon Management



71%

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.

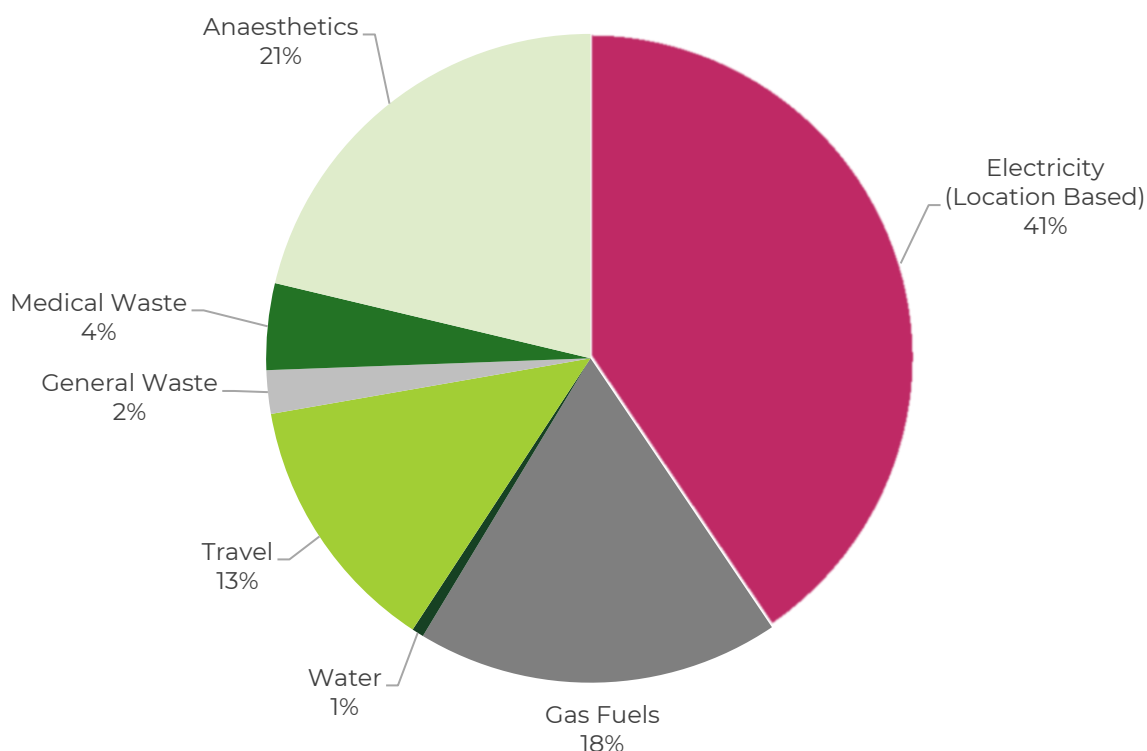
In accordance with the [GHG Protocol](#), iiE encourages the dual reporting of an organisation's carbon footprint, which results in the provision of two outputs for those organisations on a renewable energy tariff, a 'location-based' and a 'market-based' carbon footprint.

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.

Any electricity purchased and distributed through the National Grid is 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 using location-based reporting 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.

## Total tCO2e 2024 86.96



Electricity makes up 41% of Garston's total Carbon footprint. Under market-based reporting, Garston's electricity emissions would be 0, as 100% renewable electricity is purchased. This would make gas, travel, and anaesthetics the largest contributors to the overall carbon footprint. It remains important to make reductions across all resources where efficiencies can be made; however, efforts should be focused on shifting away from fossil fuels and the use of non-renewable resources at the practice.

### Strengths

- A brilliant -25% reduction in overall carbon footprint was recorded this year.
- Clinical waste has been reintroduced into the carbon footprint assessment this year to accurately reflect the impact of waste produced by the core function of the organisation.

### Actions for review

- Begin setting targets and tracking performance towards carbon reduction annually. This can be absolute or normalised – or both and should focus on the reduction of Scope 1 and easier to manage Scope 3 emissions resources.
- Scope 1 emissions increased by 1% this year, due to increased total anaesthetic use. Continued focus on low-flow techniques and reduction actions may support reduced usage going forward.
- There are still opportunities to expand the fullness of the carbon footprint to include elements such as commuter mileage, paper usage, digital emissions, and upstream delivery mileage to Garston.

## 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

- An extensive waste project has been conducted, including staff training, updated bin infrastructure and clear signage to improve waste management practices.
- Garston's periodic waste audits are comprehensive and have been showcased by Linnaeus as a best-practice example to educate other practices in the group. The audits have supported improved waste segregation practices and encouraged the procurement of sustainable alternative products.

### Actions for review

- Waste volumes have increased this year, likely due to the rise in patient numbers. However, waste should remain a key action area alongside the implementation of a new procurement policy aimed at reducing products with excessive packaging and encouraging reusable products, to work towards lowering waste amounts and continuing to improve recycling rates.
- Consider engaging with other vet practices in the Linnaeus group, via the existing Teams channels, to gather recommendations for further reusable or low packaging products that are available in the preferred suppliers list.

## Transport & Travel Planning



100%

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

- The travel plan is detailed and offers guidance for both business and commuter travel, including resources for more sustainable travel options and how to access them.
- The practice now offers a variety of incentives to encourage staff to take up low-carbon or active travel, such as the Cycle to Work Scheme and an EV salary sacrifice scheme. The green team are doing all they can to encourage uptake and listen to feedback, including presentations and emails as well as discussions in team meetings.
- Business travel (Fleet) has been optimised and reduced through the reduction in ambulance trips between sites from 6 a week in 2023 to only 2 in 2024.

### Actions for review

- Incorporate commuter travel data into the 2025 carbon footprint to present a fuller and more accurate picture of the mileage undertaken and its environmental impact.
- Consider new actions to continue a downward trajectory for business and commuter travel emissions, such as zoning clients/deliveries, and consider staff shift scheduling to reduce commuter mileage where possible.

## 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

- Garston has delivered a number of meaningful projects this year, promoting staff wellbeing, biodiversity, and resource efficiency. In particular, the staff walk-and-talk is a great example of Garston's commitment to wellbeing and getting out in nature!
- The practice has also chosen to reinvest their Green practice of the year 2024 award prize money, as well as rewards points earned through insurance, to encourage staff engagement with sustainability initiatives with small prizes and rewards. As a result, there is a great deal of positive engagement with changes introduced and team consultations.

### Actions for review

- Building on the success of this year's waste project, it may be beneficial to implement additional resource-focused projects in 25/26 to further drive down usage.

## Communication & Engagement



100%

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

- Quarterly SLT reports are produced to ensure that everyone has visibility of the progress and needs of the green team and the sustainability journey of the practice.
- Internal communications are frequent and varied, including presentations, meetings, and emails that promote ongoing actions, and provide education on new initiatives.

### Actions for review

- Consider implementing opportunities for different sites to share best practice, knowledge, or lessons learned on topics such as anaesthetic usage, or any resource performance, where one site has performed well compared to others.
- Consider sharing the sustainable achievements of the practice with clients and the wider veterinary industry via social media to inspire others.



## Next steps

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

- It would be beneficial to re-baseline next year using 2025 data, as it marks the first year with a complete and reliable dataset across all resources—providing a more solid foundation for setting meaningful targets and tracking long-term performance.
- Consider formalising the analysis of resource data as a monthly practice by tracking performance, documenting any factors or events that may have positively or negatively influenced results, analysing against normalisation metrics, and assessing progress against targets.
- Consolidating and reformatting the general, travel and anaesthesia action plans into a spreadsheet or management tool would be beneficial.
- Consider developing a formal procurement policy and process to ensure that opportunities are identified for products to be replaced with more sustainable alternatives on the suppliers' list.
- Enter the iiE awards! Garston's performance this year has taken a broad approach, which means that a variety of categories would be suitable, as many reductions have been made, as well as inspiring actions undertaken. Garston would be a strong candidate for Overall Achiever.





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