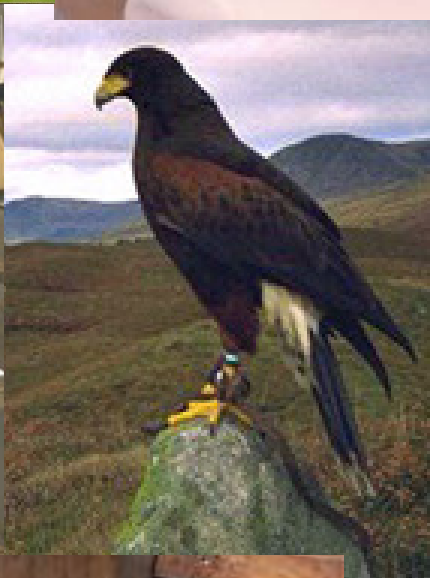


AVIAN STRATEGY FOR HOBBYIST LIVESTOCK AND PET BIRDS

Compiled by
THE COMMITTEE FOR BIRD STRATEGY



AVIAN HEALTH AND WELFARE STRATEGY FOR HOBBYIST LIVESTOCK AND PET BIRDS

This is the Draft document

Compiled by

The committee for Bird Strategy working for
Stakeholders with encouragement from
The England Implementation Group.

This Document is intended to cover all birds kept for
recreational purposes in captivity in Great Britain.

This document is the starting point that will build into ‘The Health
and Welfare Strategy for Birds’, setting recommendations and Good
Practice Guidelines for the future of bird keeping in England.

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FOREWORD

Avian health and welfare is vital, not just because we owe birds a 'duty of care' as responsible owners and keepers, but because it is fundamental to the long term future of our ability to keep and breed many species of birds.

For thousands of years, man has been closely associated with birds for food, sport, entertainment and companionship. In some cases their domestication has led to the formation and development of many changes and varieties within a species, e.g. chicken, duck, pigeon and canary. Sometimes this is to a level of domestication to where they are no longer able to survive in the wild.

In Britain today our companion birds are used primarily for recreation, sport, and exhibition and also to conserve species and breeds. High standards of care are fundamental to the health and welfare of the birds and to our enjoyment of them. Good husbandry also reduces costs in the long term.

People taking on the responsibility of keeping and caring for birds quickly become aware of the commitment, time and cost involved. Many, but unfortunately not all, are also aware of the high level of knowledge and expertise needed to safeguard the health and welfare of their birds. However, it is felt that generally, the understanding of birds needs is high. Standards of health and welfare have improved enormously in Britain over the last four decades, although for some birds it still needs to be improved, and some still suffer mismanagement through ignorance, resulting in an unsuitable environment, inappropriate diet and poor parasite control.

For the Strategy to succeed, everyone involved with all aspects of bird keeping needs to engage with the issues identified in this document and work together in a pragmatic and constructive way to achieve the aims. Without this, the Strategy will fail and a real opportunity will be lost.

The publication of the Strategy represents a landmark but it is only the starting point; all companion bird keeping organisations should try to work together to achieve this 'Vision for the Future'. The Strategy and its supporting Action Plan are intended to be living documents, regularly reviewed and revised to ensure the Strategy remains effective and relevant. This will require an ongoing commitment from all concerned.

This Strategy, at its starting point has been developed by representatives from the wide variety of groups from the hobbyist bird keeping spectrum, and with the full backing of Government. This bodes well for the future.

Specialist Societies responsible for preparing this Strategy for birds.

British Waterfowl Association
Hawk Board
National Council for Aviculture
National Pigeon Association of Great Britain
Parrot Society UK
The Pet Care Trust.
The Poultry Club of Great Britain
The World Pheasant Association.

For bird keeping to continue, it is of the utmost importance that, as a whole, it is seen as a caring and responsible pastime with the birds' health and well-being paramount.

Bird keepers have taken the opportunity, offered by The England Implementation Group (EIG), to write a strategy document that highlights both good and bad practices in all aspects of the bird keeping hobby.

This draft Avian Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain when completed will be sent to numerous organisations and individuals for consultation. All respondents supported the development of the Strategy, its Vision and its broad aims. The responses were used by the Working Group to further develop and refine the Strategy.

PREPARATION OF THE STRATEGY

The Strategy aims to try and encompass all birds kept for recreational purposes. This is an extensive range including, parrots, other cage and aviary birds kept for breeding and/or exhibition purposes, pigeons, poultry, waterfowl, pheasants raptors, captive native birds and birds kept as pets. However, for the purposes of this principal document, the collective term 'bird' or 'avian' will be used.

This main document will deal with aspects of bird keeping that are common to all birds. The flow chart below indicates the various sections which will then contribute relevant details for all specific avian groups.



THE VISION

1. This Strategy aims to lead to higher standards of health and welfare for all captive birds in Britain, whatever their species, breed, type or usage. Good avian health and welfare is also vital to bird owners, for without high standards of care their birds will not give their best when breeding or being exhibited. Further it secures the many benefits to human well-being that participation in bird keeping activities brings.
2. The general view is that most owners and keepers look after their birds well and have the appropriate knowledge to do so. Bird ownership is to be welcomed and encouraged but, because new owners may not have the required background in bird care, educational opportunities need to be available. Each year we see pet birds being re-homed as a result of a new owner not understanding the full responsibilities of bird ownership. For these reasons there is no room for complacency. Methods of bird care need to be continually updated and improved.
3. This Strategy considers how far we have progressed towards achieving the aspirations of the Vision. It sets out initial priorities for action to get closer to doing so, taking account of risks, costs and benefits. It aims within three years to:
 - a. Establish a sound baseline for assessment procedures to measure the achievement of components 1 and 2 of the Vision.
 - b. Endeavour to set measurable targets for improving on the base line requirements, and identify further actions in addition to those in this document.

Overview

The Vision for Bird Health and Welfare

All birds should be healthy and treated humanely

To bring this about:

1. **Everyone responsible for bird welfare fulfils their duty of care.**
 - Owners of captive birds must understand their responsibilities
 - know how to meet them and take steps to do so.
2. **Everybody involved with captive birds including government must collectively ensure that:**
 - Health and Welfare Standards and other information necessary to bring this about are appropriate, up to date and accessible.
 - Potential health and welfare problems are monitored and addressed.

Responsibilities

Owners and keepers have always had a moral duty and now have a statutory duty to ensure the welfare of the birds they own and manage, i.e. a 'duty of care', and are responsible for their birds' health and welfare. The owner has an ongoing responsibility for a bird, even when another person is in charge of it.

Health and welfare responsibilities of owners and keepers of birds

1. To understand and provide for the specific health and welfare needs of their birds.
2. To maintain healthy birds.
3. To take steps to prevent injury and control disease.
4. To maintain appropriate standards of welfare through compliance with welfare legislation and codes.
5. To ensure their skills and competence levels are appropriate to the above.
6. To seek veterinary and other qualified advice to help discharge these responsibilities when required.

Every supplier, trader and professional provider to the bird keeper has a responsibility to safeguard health and welfare. This includes suppliers of goods and services such as veterinary surgeons, breeders, feed merchants, live bird dealers, live bird transporters, journalists and members of the many Bird Clubs and Societies in Britain.

Health and Welfare Responsibilities of all persons associated with supplying bird keepers

To support owners and keepers in their duty of care by providing appropriate education and information, and accurate, current and impartial advice.

Veterinary surgeons are required to provide appropriate treatment for birds presented to them, and may offer advice to clients, including advice on welfare and disease. This should include, where possible, the encouragement of bird owners to plan and implement preventative health care and biosecurity programmes, a vet should be prepared to ask a known expert for advice.

Bird keepers are encouraged, wherever possible, to use Veterinary Surgeons with a known interest or expertise in birds. There is a structure for additional qualifications which veterinarians can hold in bird medicine.

Central and Devolved Government should work with the bird keepers to achieve common objectives.

- Animal Health [previously SVS] intervene in bird health and welfare where necessary in the public interest.
- Protect and promote the welfare of birds.
- Protect important collections of rare breeds and endangered species.
- Ensure that keepers can move, exhibit and trade birds nationally and internationally

User groups: Issues and Risks

Many of the risks to which birds may be exposed occur regardless of species, breed or purpose. However the purpose for which the birds are used; can introduce additional risks specific to those activities. It also affects how concerns should be addressed, as levels of knowledge and opportunities for enforcement vary widely between the different user groups. These groups and the possible significant additional issues are shown in the table below.

| User Group | Issues and Risks |
|--|---|
| Bird of Prey flying demonstrations Pigeon racing Pigeon showing Parrot shows Cage bird exhibitions Poultry shows Sales and Auctions | The highest level of health and welfare and education throughout these activities, should be maintained. These activities should be monitored to upgrade practices to higher standards where necessary. |
| Captive Breeding | Birds need to be bred to ensure population numbers, with sufficient genetic diversity, for the conserving of the species and breeds in captivity. |

A good base of evidence on the health and welfare status of the bird population needs to be established. The above User Groups set out Aims and Actions to work towards this, and address the current priorities for action on the basis of the preliminary risk analysis. Many of the User Groups are self-regulated by

their respective governing bodies and have their own codes of conduct and welfare guidelines.

AIM 1:

REVIEW HEALTH AND WELFARE STANDARDS

Standards defining satisfactory avian health and welfare are required in order to gauge the extent to which birds are healthy and are treated humanely, and to assist those responsible for them to fulfil their duty of care.

The health and welfare of a bird is determined by its physical and mental state, including fitness for the purpose for which it is kept. These aspects are inextricably linked. The Farm Animal Welfare Council propounds 'Five Needs'. These have been added to over time.

The need to be Free from Hunger and Thirst - by providing ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.

The need to be free from Discomfort - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

The need to be free from Pain, Injury or Disease - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.

The need to be able to Express Normal Behaviour - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company, as appropriate.

The need to be Free from Fear and Distress - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

The need to be Free from stress or suffering when transported - by ensuring transport containers are of appropriate size and material and fit for purpose.

These 'freedoms' define ideal states, i.e. they are aspirational. They serve as a touchstone for standards which need to be expressed in terms tailored to practical application. Welfare standards for birds are currently not specified. At the time of writing each area of bird keeping has its own codes which vary considerably within its own area. Ultimately each species or group may need a more specific, sectoral 'code of practice'. These should be written by those with a high degree of experience in the particular species or group.

Bird owners and keepers are responsible for the health and welfare of their birds and should have knowledge of how to obtain information that is available for birds in their care including recognising the positive signs of health of their birds, nutrition, vaccination, parasite and disease control, and should have access to avian veterinary care when required.

Information and educational material about bird keeping including zoonotic (transmissible to humans) disease risks should be available at veterinary practices. Also bird keeping societies, breeders, traders, government

departments and pet shops should provide this and information on care and health standards via newsletters, magazines, booklets, handouts and websites. Where possible societies should stage members' training/educational meetings on a regular basis.

It is also the owner's or keeper's responsibility to be able to recognise ill health and seek veterinary assistance as required and to recognise when quality of life deteriorates and act in a responsible manner. Euthanasia should be arranged when appropriate, and thought should be given to carcass disposal and relevant legislation.

This Strategy is not intended to replace the existing guidelines and codes. There is, however, a need for a review of the current written advice on bird health and welfare standards to ensure that, taken together, they provide a sufficient, consistent and clear statement of standards.

There are a number of governing bodies which are responsible for establishing and enforcing standards for some User groups. Organisations such as the Hawk Board, National Council for Aviculture, Royal Racing Pigeon Association, National Pigeon Association, British Waterfowl Association, Poultry Club of Great Britain, Pet Care Trust and The Parrot Society UK, working alongside other bodies, do much to recommend standards of health and welfare within their areas of interest. Where it exists, this form of self-regulation, with support from veterinary and welfare organisations, works well. It must be argued that, while self-regulation may not necessarily address all health and welfare issues in a way that would satisfy everyone, it does have a significant impact on improving health and welfare standards. Written welfare guidelines should be living documents that are regularly updated by those experts in the particular field and be helpful to revise all avian welfare guidelines to a standard format for ease of understanding.

ACTION

Identified Actions 1

- 1a:** Review all statements (legislation, Codes of Practice,) relating to avian health and welfare standards within and across the user groups, including standards under development or adopted overseas;
- 1b:** Identify ways in which standards can be improved, including compliance with guidelines together with improving education and training.
- 1c:** Identify areas where there are no arrangements in place to promote health and welfare standards.
- 1d:** Consider ways of developing good practice guidelines.

AIM 2:

REVIEW HEALTH SURVEILLANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1** Currently, there are no comprehensive arrangements for assessing the health status of Britain's captive bird population. Adequate data need to be collected and maintained in order to:
 - Pinpoint problem areas, including those specific to particular user groups;
 - Assess the impact of ill health and injury;
 - Identify, and monitor improvements, tracking changes over time so that the outcomes of measures taken can be assessed and the need for any further action decided.
- 2.2** **Owner and Keepers** must be aware of the steps they can take to reduce the risk of introduction of disease. The debate needs to be ongoing with respect to measures to combat the spread of disease e.g. vaccination against NCD and AI, with both keepers and Government taking proportionate responsibility. The discussions should also take note of conservation and preservation issues, including derogation and vaccination, especially with respect to Red List species and rare breeds, but also with regard to pets.

Identified Actions 2

- 2a:** Review surveillance arrangements for bird diseases, endemic and exotic, infectious and non-infectious.
- 2b:** Assess Government and bird keepers' contingency planning arrangements for notifiable diseases, taking account of European and other international comparators.
- 2c:** Ensure that rare species and rare breeds can be identified by DEFRA and Animal Health, and be protected in the event of disease control measures being applied.

AIM 3:

REVIEW AVIAN WELFARE OBSERVATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1** Bird keepers should establish basic standards of care applicable in each specialist user group and these should be given wide publicity as Codes of Practice through their relevant groups, and in as many public outlets as possible: veterinary practices, feed stores, pet shops, garden centres, publications including magazines and government leaflets and web pages.

ACTION

Identified Actions 3

Review observation arrangements for bird welfare and consider any improvements, including standardisation of methods of welfare and publicise good Practice guidelines and care sheets.

AIM 4: REVIEW METHODS OF BIRD IDENTIFICATION

The Wildlife and Countryside Act and CITES make identification mandatory for many species of birds. The permanent identification of some birds is not possible for a variety of reasons. But where possible it should be encouraged.

Action

Identified actions 4

Monitor the development of new legislation on the identification of birds

AIM 5:

REVIEW MEDICINES NEEDS AND AVAILABILITY

In order to control disease and assist good health and welfare across all User Groups, it is essential that an adequate range of effective medicines is available to treat the spectrum of avian diseases and conditions.

Veterinary medicinal products are placed on the market under a European regulatory framework. The legislation is implemented in the UK through the Veterinary Medicines Regulations under which the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of DEFRA, is responsible for authorising new veterinary products for the UK market. In order to be granted authorisation, products must have a favourable risk/benefit balance identified through the assessment of their quality, safety and clinical efficacy and must be safe to the person administering the medicine and to the environment as well as to the avian consumer.

While this regulatory system is effective, it is highly expensive and time consuming for pharmaceutical firms to develop new products for the market that will meet these criteria and thus gain authorisation. This, coupled with the very small size of the market for many avian veterinary medicines, inevitably means

that the rate of bringing new products onto the market is low and is therefore a limiting factor in the availability of authorised avian products.

In the absence of an authorised product to treat a given bird disease or condition, veterinary surgeons may prescribe other products through a prescribing cascade. This relies on the professional abilities of individual veterinary surgeons. As well as exercising the cascade competently, the veterinary surgeon must ensure that the active substance(s) in the product proposed for administration to the bird have been entered into Annex I, II or III of European Regulation EC/2377/90, or have been listed in the 'Essential List' (Positive List) of substances not entered into Annexes I-III that can be administered to birds intended for human consumption, and, if so, set a withdrawal period between the time of the administration and the moment when the animal may be slaughtered for human consumption. If this is not possible, the bird must be declared as not intended for human consumption where applicable and marked.

These limiting factors constrain the choice and availability of an appropriate and effective range of veterinary medicinal treatments for the full spectrum of avian diseases and conditions. It is therefore proposed that a Working Group be established to consider and identify future needs in respect of avian veterinary medicines and link to British Veterinary Zoological Society to propose plans to meet those needs and to ensure the continuing availability of essential avian veterinary medicines. This Group should take a wide view and consider a European focused solution. It should include representatives from all interested parties including DEFRA's Animal Health and Welfare Directorate, the National Office of Animal Health (NOAH) to represent the pharmaceutical industry, and all interested parties in bird keeping. The VMD should be represented but as an observer since, as a regulatory authority, it cannot be involved in research and development or supply issues.

It is important that all owners and keepers of birds are aware of, and fulfil, their responsibilities with respect to the administration of medicines to avian patients, including the safe storage, safe administration, recording and safe disposal of the medicinal substances used. In addition, the industry, together with DEFRA, VMD, NOAH and Bird keeping groups, has a central role to play in owner education and provision of information to owners. It is also important that clarity is maintained about the definition of veterinary medicinal products (currently defined as products claimed to be medicinal by either 'presentation' or function') and that there is clear differentiation between these and substances without medicinal effect, including feed supplements. It is essential that the industry promotes the education of all those involved with the care and keeping of birds so that the difference between medicinal products and other products is understood. In relation to Aim 1d, the industry, VMD and veterinary surgeons each have key roles to play in maintaining awareness of these differences and the importance of appropriate use of both medicinal and non-medicinal products in the treatment and prevention of disease. Specifically, owners and keepers of birds need to be able to judge when veterinary advice and the administration of medicinal products is appropriate.

ACTION

Identified action 5

Establish a veterinary working group to determine current and likely future medicine supply needs and recommend how best to meet them.

AIM 6:

REVIEW INFORMATION PROVIDED BY USER GROUPS.

- 6.1** In order to secure good bird health and welfare, everyone involved with birds needs sufficient knowledge about the requirements of proper standards of their care. There is a need for bird keeping societies and clubs to recognise this, and produce information easily accessed for with the care of birds. A more detailed audit of skills level that exist across the companion bird keeping world should be undertaken, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing information provided by those User Groups.
- 6.2** It may be agreed that it is necessary for user groups to further develop and devise an information strategy plan. This could be tailored to different user groups and sub-groups, which, amongst other things, will help to prepare bird owners and keepers better for their role in understanding normal and abnormal bird behaviour, health maintenance and disease prevention. The information should promote, for example, appropriate feeding and nutrition, parasite control, safe transportation, housing and environment. It should have particular regard to the information required of prospective and new owners, and of owners who do not belong to any of the bird keeping

organisations. It should recognise the fundamental role of training that these organisations offer. First time bird keepers should be encouraged to join the organisation that represents the species they intend to keep, as it can offer primary advice and learning.

Action

Identified actions 6

The Committee for the Strategy of Bird Keeping to Audit information provided by clubs and societies, and Identify significant gaps and devise and introduce a resourced plan.

AIM 7:

DISSEMINATE RELEVANT RESEARCH

- 1 Britain is well served with research for the commercial poultry industry and some of this knowledge can be used in areas of companion bird keeping. However Britain does not have a particularly active research base in academic and scientific institutions for companion birds, because of the lack of funds.

Action

Identified Actions 7

The knowledge from research projects when undertaken should be disseminated to the avian veterinary profession and the broader scientific community through scientific literature and conferences. These results should also be communicated to bird keepers through meetings and 'lay' publications.

REVIEW DELIVERY AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The publication of this Strategy is a landmark step towards improving the overall standards of avian health and welfare in Britain. It is not, however, an end in itself - it is the beginning. The desired improvements will only be achieved through vigorous pursuit of the Aims, implementation of the Actions, monitoring and assessment of the resulting outcomes and further actions where appropriate

The Avian committee formed to produce 'The hobbyist bird Strategy' have volunteered to lead this process in respect of each of the Aims have, by doing this, taken on a clear responsibility for driving the various elements of the Strategy forward, but they cannot do so alone. Their role is that of facilitators and will need to be supported by their organisations and other individuals involved in the relevant Actions. Co-ordination will also be required where strands of activity overlap. Implementation will therefore be a major effort that will demand and rely on the commitment and enthusiasm of those individuals and organisations directly concerned with the achievement of these Aims, and, ultimately, of the wider bird keeping fraternity in Britain.

Effective oversight is needed to ensure that the Strategy is fully implemented and regularly reviewed.

The Action Plan will be posted on the dedicated website (www.birdhealthandwelfarestrategy.co.uk) with the clear indication of where the responsibilities lie. There will also be links to this website from bird keeping organisation websites.

Progress will be reviewed informally after six months of its launch by the Avian steering group. Two years after publication of the Plan, this group will report on what has been fully achieved, what has been partially achieved and what remains to be done.

The Actions set out in this Strategy will provide a firmer evidence base for assessing bird health and welfare and determining whether any further action is needed and, if so, what form it should take. Any further action should be proportionate and cost-effective, taking full account of costs and benefits, and be appropriately resourced.

Action

Identified action 8:

Ensure the Strategy is implemented, monitor its effectiveness, and review its content to determine whether changes are needed and if so what form they should take.

Annex A. Bird Health and welfare Strategy Action Plan

| Action | Responsibility | Current Position | Desired Outcome | Action in Progress. |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Aim 1: Review health and welfare standards. | | | | |
| Timing: Medium term. | | | | |
| Action 1a Review all strategies and codes that exist within the remit of hobbyist bird keeping. | The Avian Strategy Group The various lead groups within the bird keeping fraternity | Strategy and codes of practice within the hobby of bird keeping are very fragmented with no central location information | Defined statements of minimum health and welfare standards for user groups with a standard format. | Contact bird societies and clubs to clarify what codes and strategies exist. |
| Action 1b Identify and suggest ways in which the standards can be improved, including compliance with guidelines together with education and training. | Avian Veterinarians and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), non-veterinarian specialists The Avian Press | Information is available via printed Publications and the internet. However, this information is not verified by the appropriate bodies The quality of information given by retail outlets also is variable. | Bird keeper co-operation to compile, update, standardise and maintain all statements of advice and guidance. Statements easily accessed on a website and in PDF or booklet form. | Contact industry to clarify what codes and welfare information exist. Establish an Avian Health and Welfare Standards website. |
| Action 1c Consider ways of addressing any problems. | The Avian Strategy Group AH (SVS) RCVS | Costs and availability of methods vary nationwide. | Educate owners and keepers with a full knowledge of what is available. | Identify current advice and update as necessary. |

| Action | Responsibility | Current Position | Desired Outcome | Action in Progress. |
|---|----------------|---|---|-----------------------|
| Aim 2: Review health surveillance arrangements | | | | |
| Timing: Medium term | | | | |
| Action 1: Ensure that rare species and rare breeds can be identified by Government and Animal Health, (SVS) and be protected in the event of disease control measures being applied. | Government | Surveillance of general standards of health and welfare is provided via Bird Clubs and Bird Societies. At events and shows organised by themselves and abide by their own codes. The Animal Welfare Act will extend the responsibilities of owners. There is no co-ordinated health surveillance of birds included in the above groups.. | Current, relevant and appropriate legislation that reflects the bird keeping hobby's needs including identification of rare breeds and is responsive to changes in international avian health and emerging risks to the British captive bird population. Framework to allow regular reviews of infectious disease legislation. | No action identified. |

| Action | Responsibility | Current Position | Desired Outcome | Action in Progress. |
|---|----------------------|---|---|--|
| AIM 3: Review bird welfare observation arrangements Timing: Medium Term | | | | |
| Action 3: Review observation arrangements for bird welfare and consider any improvements, including standardisation of methods of welfare measurement | Avian strategy group | Some organisations work together. Others operate in isolation, only working with other organisations when required. No broad agreement on welfare measurement methods. | Regular meetings between organisations co-ordinated by one organisation. Establish a national standard for statistical reporting of problems. Requirement for more organisations to collect, collate and distribute information. | Encourage organisations to work together from the top. Organisations to learn about the new opportunities and possible difficulties presented by the Animal Welfare Act. Establish co-operation with local government officers, via LACORS, particularly in the field of licensing of bird events. |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Aim 4: Review methods of Bird identification Timing: Short term | | | | |
| Action 4: Monitor the development of new legislation on the identification of Birds | Avian Strategy group The various lead groups within the bird keeping fraternity The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons | Microchips/closed rings etc. used on voluntary basis, registered with manufacturer/operator. | permanent marking has been seen to be beneficial by some sectors of bird keeping and should be actively considered by other sectors in order to ascertain its suitability for their specific areas. | Promote uptake for as many birds as practical. |

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Aim 5: Review medicines, needs and availability Timing: Report within two years | | | | |
| Action 5: Establish a veterinary working group to determine current and likely future medicine supply needs and recommend how best to meet them. | Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons | No current central industry view or co-ordination. | Report and recommendations within two years. | Working Group and terms of reference to be established. |

| Action | Responsibility | Current Position | Desired Outcome | Action in Progress. |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| AIM 6: Review education, skills and training Timing: Report in two years | | | | |
| Action 6: Audit education, skill levels and training provision, and identify significant gaps and devise and introduce a resourced plan | Avian Strategy group The various lead groups within the bird keeping fraternity | Various codes, guidelines etc. are promoted by bird societies and clubs in a variety of different ways. Many charities have educational programmes but they are largely uncoordinated. | All hobbyist livestock and pet bird groups run educational courses and seminars. Owners and keepers are aware of their responsibilities. Owners and keepers recognise and exercise those responsibilities, and have the knowledge and skills to do so. | Identify those clubs that run courses on a national register. |

| | | | | |
|--|----------------------|--|---|---|
| AIM 7: Review delivery and further development Timing: Medium term | | | | |
| Action 8: Ensure the Strategy is implemented, monitor its effectiveness and review its content to determine whether changes are needed and if so what form they should take. | Avian Strategy Group | No central strategic review of health and welfare in the companion bird keeping sector. Steering Group established. | Bring the Strategy into action successfully and effectively. Pave the way for continual improvement. | The Steering Group will establish means of gathering the information that the Group requires. It will evaluate and report, including identification of sub-strategies/actions. The Group will disseminate reports and take other actions as needed to follow-up reports and achieve the desired outcomes. |

This document is intended to foster robust and sustainable hobbyist livestock and pet bird keeping. It recognises that high standards of bird health and welfare are fundamental to the sustainability of this hobby ,and vital to all of its strategic aims. These aims are firstly to ascertain estimated bird keepers and numbers of different species:

Then to:

- Bring all the hobbyist bird keepers together and develop under one umbrella a national strategy program.
- Maintain participation in bird keeping.
- Raise bird keeping skills, training and standards.
- Improve the quality and breeding of birds under hobbyist control.

The Strategy is supplemented by an Action Plan. The first action is to find the starting point from which to move on to achieve and maintain the satisfactorily standards of animal welfare throughout the companion bird keeping fraternity.

This will be achieved through:

- Successful implementation of the Health and Welfare Strategy.
- Support of the dedicated hobbyist livestock and pet bird keeping Societies and organisations.

Many of the other actions in this Strategy will benefit avian health and welfare

Examples are to:

- Produce codes of practice for good bird management.
- Campaign to educate the responsibilities of bird keeping.
- Encourage the leading bodies and societies to assist in improving communication.

Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain

This Strategy sets out what Government wants to achieve over the next decade in terms of national animal health and welfare cross-species. It recognises the need to involve individual species groups in its delivery. The Avian Health and Welfare Strategy support its implementation.

Animal Welfare Act 2006 and Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006

These Acts consolidate and modernise animal welfare legislation. They introduce a statutory 'duty of care'. They require owners and keepers to take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare of animals in their care, to the extent required by good practice. They enable preventive action to be taken before suffering occurs, and strengthen penalties and enforcement measures so as to deter persistent offenders. They introduce a power to make secondary legislation and statutory codes of practice to promote the welfare of non-farm animals.

Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2005 on the Protection of Animals during Transport and Related Operations

This Regulation replaces existing EU legislation on animal transport. It improves welfare standards for journeys and tightens enforcement arrangements.

