



RSPCA Business Plan

**2024
2026**



**Together for
animal welfare**

Foreword from Chris Sherwood

As we move into 2024, I'm delighted to say that we are now really delivering on our bold 10-year strategy, *Together for animal welfare*. It's gratifying to see that we're on course to fulfil the ambitious priorities we set out to achieve for millions of animals by 2030. This business plan builds on the strong foundations we have laid and sets out our 2024–2026 priorities as we move towards our strategy's halfway mark in 2025. As ever, we face opportunities and challenges, but the vision, mission, beliefs and values at the heart of our strategy remain the same, as do our strategic aims.

We've already achieved so much under our five strategic priorities:

- rescue and care
- advocacy
- prevention
- support
- organisational effectiveness.

As we press on with our work in all of these areas, this plan addresses some fundamental questions.

- How do we maximise our impact on animals and their welfare?
- What is the best way to engage with our customers, communities and branches in order to maximise that impact?
- How do we grow and deepen our relationship with our supporters to drive societal change?
- How can we make the RSPCA a great place to work?

Like everyone else, we're up against challenges, such as the current economic crisis, changes in government, a fluctuating legislative agenda and the avian flu outbreak. But at the same time there are plenty of opportunities to improve animal welfare, for example through new free trade agreement negotiations. Our move to a hybrid working environment has also allowed us to release funds by selling our headquarters building. So we'll continue with our transformation programme, continue to look out for animals during the cost-of-living crisis, continue to invest in our brand and continue to grow our income. All this will allow us to have the biggest possible impact on animal welfare across England and Wales.

Over the next three years, our priorities are clear.

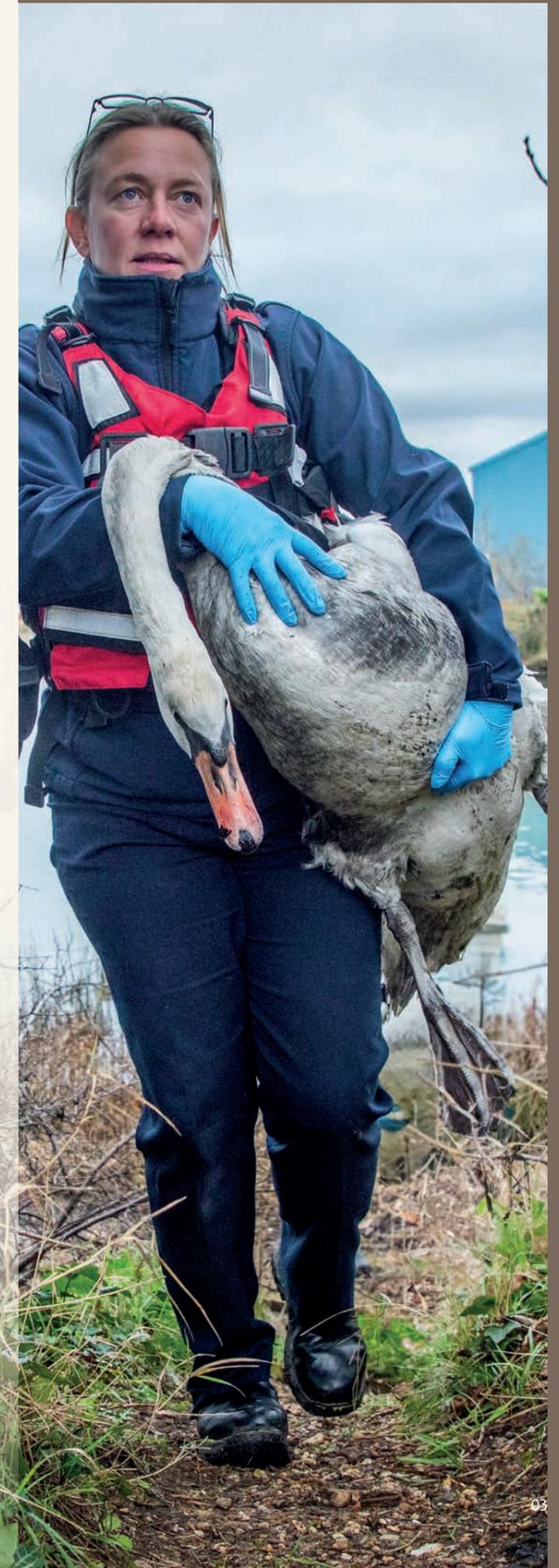
- The economic downturn has led to an **animal welfare crisis** – we are responding to this, protecting animals and supporting the public.
- We'll continue to push forward with our **advocacy and prevention** work – building our status as a thought leader and embedding prevention in all that we do.
- To become a truly community-based organisation, we'll focus on building our **volunteering partnerships**, including those with our branches.
- We will continue to grow our **support and income**, focusing on customer experience and the image people have of the RSPCA.

- Our **digital transformation plan** is driving change in our systems and developing ambitious approaches for our customers' digital experience.
- We'll continue with our **people and culture** plan to make the RSPCA the best place to work, with a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion.

I'm excited to welcome the next phase of our strategy delivery and to share this business plan for 2024–2026 with you.

Chris Sherwood

CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Our strategy at a glance

Our vision

A world where all animals are respected and treated with kindness and compassion.

Our mission

To ensure animals have a good life by rescuing and caring for those in need, by advocating on behalf of all animals and by inspiring everyone to treat them with compassion and respect.

Our beliefs

- All animals deserve a good life
- Animals' lives are important in themselves
- Animals have emotions, feelings and needs
- Animals enrich and improve our lives
- All of us can and should help to make animals' lives better

Our values

- We are compassionate
- We are inspirational
- We are committed
- We are expert
- We act with integrity

Our 8 ambitions

- 01** Reduce animal neglect and cruelty by half
- 02** Stop illegal puppy and kitten trading
- 03** See more than half of all UK farm animals reared to RSPCA welfare standards
- 04** End severe suffering for animals used in science
- 05** Secure legal protection for animals. Establish an Animal Protection Commission
- 06** Achieve statutory powers in England and Wales for RSPCA inspectors
- 07** Secure a UN declaration for animals
- 08** Inspire a one million-strong movement for animal welfare by 2030

And our 5 priorities

- 01** Rescue and care
- 02** Advocacy
- 03** Prevention
- 04** Support
- 05** Organisational effectiveness

Our business priorities for 2024–2026



01

A step change in our *advocacy and prevention* so we become a thought leader, locating our arguments in other wider debates, setting the agenda and embedding prevention in all that we do.

Prevention – the golden thread running through the RSPCA

Delivering our ambitious strategy requires a step change in prevention activity and we will achieve this by taking a whole-system, whole organisation approach to prevention. Referred to as a public health or three-tier approach, this recognises that there are opportunities for prevention even after a crisis has occurred, and that all our activities across the RSPCA have a role to play:

Tier 1 Prevention – Inspire and engage

Ensuring that the general public, beyond our supporter base, knows about the small steps they can take in their daily lives to promote positive treatment of animals.

Tier 2 Prevention – Early help and support

Providing guidance, signposting and practical support to communities that are particularly vulnerable to causing unintended neglect to animals; and to ensure that well looked after pets remain in their good homes during times of financial pressures and other difficulties.

Tier 3 Prevention – Intervene and resolve

Minimising the impact once a crisis has happened and our rescue and care services have become involved; and using education, advice and support to prevent it from recurring. Our prevention strategy is to upscale our impact and reach at Tier 1, build cross sector partnership capacity for more targeted interventions at Tier 2, in order to reduce demand for our specialist services at Tier 3.

Areas of focus in 2024 will be:

Reform and upscaling of public campaigning – this investment will begin to deliver a step change in our public campaigning, focusing on our new advocacy framework, involving the RSPCA as a whole in campaigning, and ensuring we are growing the animal welfare movement and its impact for animals.

Improving farm animal welfare standards including campaigning to end the use of fast growing breeds of broiler meat chickens, as well as encouraging people to move towards eating higher welfare animal products.

Expanding our public affairs focus on **animals in science** work to meet the ambitions of our strategy – a phasing out of the use of animals in research and an end to experiments that cause severe suffering to animals.

Working at the forefront of the emerging debates on **social licence and companion animals, and human behaviour in relation to companion and sport animals** including seeking a phase out of greyhound racing, and working towards ending brachycephalic (short nose/flat faced) animal breeding.

Beginning the journey to engage more children and young people actively in the work of the RSPCA through advocacy and campaigning.

Reviewing the current legislative framework protecting wildlife, to ensure it is streamlined, fit for purpose and adequately protects wild animals. Following the government's plans to require a licence to keep primates as pets, we will also be working on how we can improve standards and legislation to protect exotic animals being kept as pets.

02

Animal Journey – reviewing our role and how best we can help animals, embedding animal voice as the way we do things and working to change the way we prosecute.

The focus of our work rescuing and caring for animals sits within our Animal Journey transformation programme where we are reviewing our role and how best we can help animals.

This will develop and implement a sustainable ‘Welfare first’ operating model. Delivering greater impact for all animals from the moment we are aware they are in need of support, to delivering an improved animal welfare outcome for more animals, with a focus on providing the right care, at the right time, by the right organisation.

In 2024, this programme will bring greater clarity to our frontline service offer, ensuring we can prioritise incidents involving cruelty and neglect. We will cease public-facing work at Finsbury Park Animal Hospital enabling our vets to dedicate more time to support Inspectorate animals. We will pilot new, integrated IT systems to provide better quality data on animals who come into contact with us, so that we can make more evidence-informed decisions. We will continue to listen to the voice of the animal in decision-making through the ongoing development of science-based welfare assessments. We will also start to design an estate that is fit for our future.

The frontline functions of the RSPCA (control centre, Inspectorate, animal and wildlife centres, hospitals and branches) are under a prolonged and significant period of challenge due to a combination of unexpected factors that we are calling the perfect storm.

They include, but are not limited to:

- An increase in abandonment of animals (partly as a result of the boom in pet ownership during the pandemic).
- A shortage of veterinary provision as the vet industry struggles with multiple challenges including Brexit and increased ownership by private equity.
- Significant cost increases in all sectors of the economy (cost of living).
- A reduction in available animal shelter capacity, combined with an increase in demand for it.

In response to these challenges, we are focusing on shorter term responses to immediate challenges, while the Animal Journey programme develops and implements a longer term operating model. These shorter term responses include workload priority management and capacity management.

Advocacy work will focus on keeping animals in their homes, building capacity for those who have to be relinquished/removed and leading a joined-up cross-sectoral response. In addition to this we will provide effective guidance and reduce demand for services.

03

Modernising our relationship with our branch network so we support their growth and sustainability, and build a more community-based organisation, and reach more animals through developing our volunteering and partnerships.

The contribution of volunteers to the RSPCA is increasingly important. To unlock this potential, we have developed a new volunteer experience approach which aligns to the RSPCA’s strategy and gives a positive experience for all volunteers.

This will provide the foundation to enable the RSPCA to become a volunteer-centric organisation and enable it to achieve our ambition of a one-million strong supporter network with best practice volunteer management and support.

Partnership working is at the heart of our strategy and we want to transform how we work with operational partners, recognising the value of them and creating highly effective partnerships to deliver shared goals and help more animals. We will ensure a positive partner experience –

setting expectations, establishing relationships and managing agreements in the right way. How we work with partners is focused on positive relationship management and customer service – it develops, nurtures and retains a long-term relationship with the RSPCA.

We are working to strengthen the partnership between the RSPCA and our branch network so that we can continue to work together to: prevent cruelty; rescue, care, rehabilitate and rehome the most vulnerable animals; and ensure a more joined-up and coordinated ‘One RSPCA’ approach. In 2024, this programme will roll out the new governance framework for our branches.



04

Growing our support by investing in our income, customer experience, and the images our customers have of the RSPCA.

We want to inspire people from a broader network of supporters and partners, to support us with their time, money and voice and unite around a clear understanding of what the RSPCA stands for.

2024 is a landmark year. The changes we're implementing will make the RSPCA more attractive, relevant and compelling to engage with than ever before.

We'll roll out an ambitious programme of investment to grow voluntary income; offer more relevant and attractive ways for people to engage with us; improve the way supporters feel about us and understand our impact; develop volunteer pathways that will provide options for volunteers to support us while progressing in their own development. This will ensure we can resource and fund our strategy and animal welfare work in the long term.

In 2024, this programme will make sure our brand communicates a clear message to our audiences about what the RSPCA does, what we stand for, and how they can get involved to improve animal welfare, now and in the future.

05

Digital transformation with investment in systems and ambitious plans for digital experience.

We have ambitious plans to enhance our digital presence by investing in our systems.

In 2024, this programme will focus on supporting our Animal Journey programme by replacing parts of our current systems with a new, fit-for-purpose integrated digital ecosystem.

We will redesign our website to provide a more personalised, user-focused experience. We will also develop a new intranet, drawing on insights from experts across the whole of the RSPCA.

Our digital and IT teams will continue to work with our technical partners to develop a continuous, fast-moving cycle of improvement across our digital landscape in a more agile way.

By implementing an API (Application Programming Interface) layer, we will reduce the complexity of our digital communications, minimising risk and saving time across our technical landscape. We will also introduce a Digital Identity Management solution. This will help future-proof us by giving us the technology to reduce our current manual workload and improve the digital identity of all those who interact with us.

Work will continue on two new systems that pull together all the information in the RSPCA (known as single view of the truth systems):

- The Brain: an artificial intelligence-fuelled knowledge management system.
- Single View of the Customer: a data repository consolidating all our customers (supporters, volunteers, advocates, partners, etc.), and enabling greater personalisation for user journeys.

06

Making the RSPCA a great place to work through our *people and culture plan*, with a focus on equity, diversity and inclusion, and learning and talent development. We can't achieve our bold ambitions without good people, so we are proud of our commitment to make this a great place to work through our people and culture plan.

Aims of the people and culture plan:

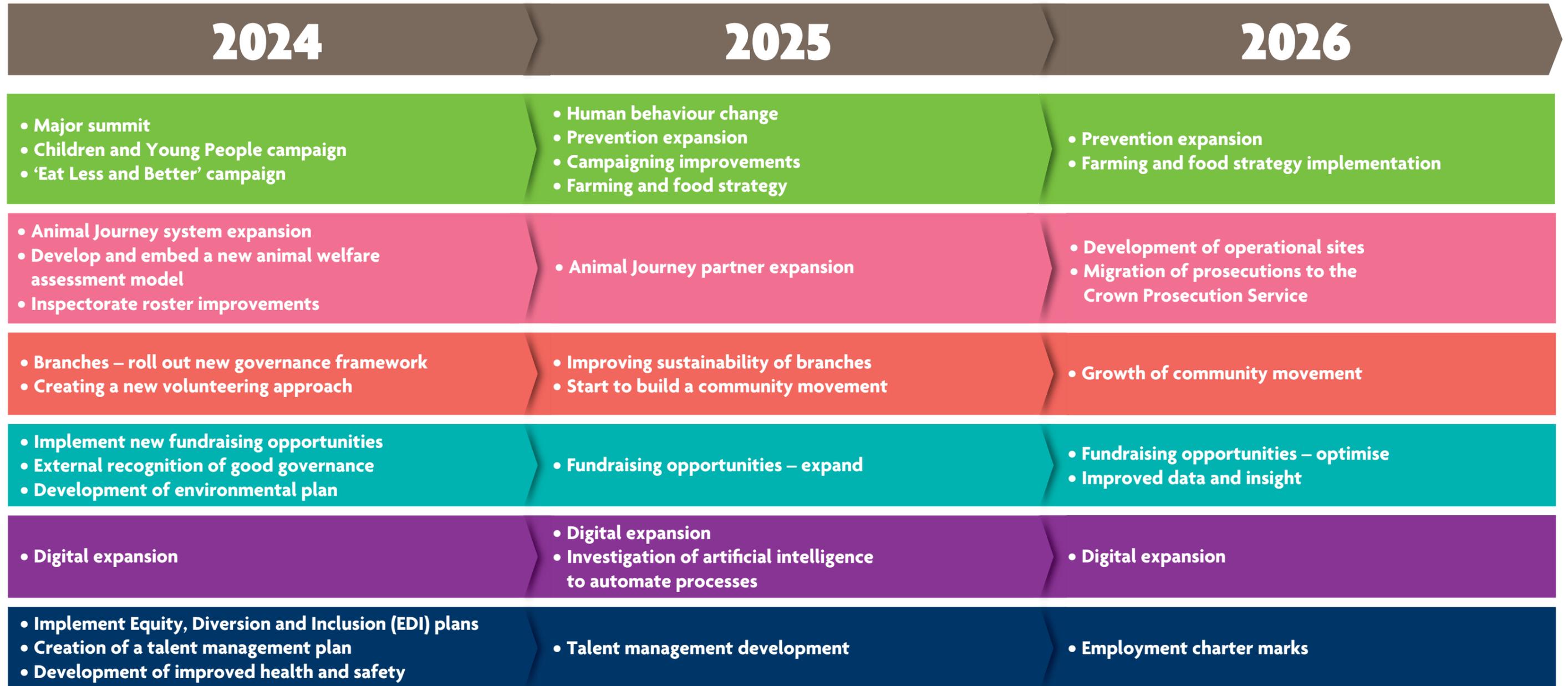
- To be a great place to work for everyone, where inclusion, trust, high performance and values-led behaviours are truly embedded.
- To recruit, grow, nurture and retain great people who connect deeply with the RSPCA's purpose and align with the organisational values and people who are diverse, talented and high performing.

In 2024 we will build:

- A great culture of trust and cross-team collaboration.
- High performance and critical skills.
- Diversity and inclusion.
- A safe and healthy work environment.
- Effective reward and recognition.



Plan on a page



- **01 Advocacy and prevention**
- **02 Animal Journey**
- **03 Branch network**
- **04 Growing our support**
- **05 Digital transformation**
- **06 People and culture plan**

Delivering the plan



We will continue to monitor our performance and delivery of the business plan, undertaking regular reviews with business leads. These reports and insights will support the leadership team to take actions and make any adjustments to the plan that are needed throughout the year. This will ensure that our plans both stay on track and can be adjusted to changing internal factors and external circumstances as needed.

**TOGETHER FOR
ANIMAL WELFARE**

**2021
2030**

#TogetherForAnimalWelfare



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rspca.org.uk

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