



Your End of Year Update from VCMS

It's been another busy year for the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS). In our last newsletter of the year, we share our annual Insight Report findings and a look ahead to our CPD programme for 2025.

A YEAR OF INCREASED RESOLUTIONS

Earlier this year, we published our annual Insight Report, sharing the data and trends gathered from the mediations conducted through the VCMS to date.

The VCMS mediated nearly 936 cases in 2024, achieving an impressive 82% resolution rate, which is an increase of 15% on the number of complaints resolved compared with the 2022-23 period.

Other key findings:

- ▶ In total, the VCMS received 3,548 enquiries in 2023/24
- ▶ Of these, 3,618 were concluded and the VCMS supported 60% to raise and resolve their complaints at a local level with the practice
- ▶ Where complaint procedures within the practice are exhausted, the VCMS invites the veterinary practice to mediate. In 2023-24, 77% of practices accepted the invitation, and engaged with the mediation process





- ▶ 93% of veterinary practices and 97% of clients indicated they would use the VCMS again

When we drill down into the reasons behind complaints handled by the VCMS, we see that standards of care are the most common complaints. Unexpected outcomes and complications make up a significant proportion of these, especially post-surgical complications, where communication and expectations were a major contributing factor.

19% of complaints related to customer service issues, with dissatisfaction with consent conversation increasing 31% year on year. A higher percentage of service-related complaints were handled with local resolution support, with less than 4% returned to VCMS. 14% of complaints related to fees, up from 9% in the previous evaluation period, which is perhaps reflective of the ongoing cost-of-living struggles of many consumers. Complaints relating to reasonableness of fees are now in the Top 5 complaint issues.

Want to know what the trends were for 2024? Stay up to date with all the latest VCMS news here

BOOK YOUR TRAINING COURSE FOR 2025

Every member of the team at your veterinary practice can play a part in complaint resolution, ensuring any negative customer feedback is handled quickly and effectively, and any disputes brought to a satisfactory resolution for all.

To help develop the skills needed for complaint handling and conflict management, we offer training to client care leaders and your wider practice team.

Led by Nockolds' own resolution specialists already working with veterinary practices through the VCMS, our CPD training sessions will provide:

- ▶ support and guidance to develop confidence
- ▶ a 'secure' space where delegates can explore and develop their own approaches to complaint handling
- ▶ develop skills on how to diffuse and manage complaint situations constructively
- ▶ support the imbedding of an open and learning culture across their teams and organisation

Whether you are looking to know more about how to establish confident client interaction or how to handle a vexatious complainant, we have a bespoke training session for you. Contact sclark@nockolds.co.uk for more information.

