

Schedule 5 and Schedule 6 Information for ADR Bodies

The Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015, require you to supply the competent authority (Chartered Trading Standards Institute) with your Schedule 5 (annual) and Schedule 6 (biennial) reports when they are due.

The Schedule 5 report must be supplied every year (including when you also supply your biennial report) and must be made available on your website as per the legislation. The Schedule 5 report must be supplied to the competent authority and uploaded onto the website within a month of the anniversary of your date of approval as an approved ADR body.

The Schedule 6 report must be supplied biennially and is not required to be available on your website, only sent to the competent authority. The years that you supply the biennial report, you still must supply an annual report in addition. The Schedule 6 report must be supplied to the competent authority within a month of the anniversary of your approval date. The information (data) (as per section 11.3 of the legislation) is to cover the whole (totals) of the 2-year reporting period.

All details of what must be included in the reports can be found below.

This is the minimum data required for reporting, but any other or extra data supplied would be much appreciated for further insight.

As of 1st January 2021, there have been several amendments made to the legislation due to Brexit. It is no longer a requirement of the legislation to handle cross-border disputes and report on these disputes. However, if you continue to handle cross-border disputes, we would ask that you supply any information in relation to these cases.

Additionally, if your ADR scheme's outcome is binding on either party, please provide us with the percentage of whether the outcome was ruled in the consumer or trader's favour at the end of the Schedule 5 and Schedule 6 report.

Schedule 5 - VCMS – 01.11.2024-31.10.2025

Information to be included an ADR entity's annual activity report

(a) the number of domestic disputes the ADR entity has received;

No. enquiries received (domestic)	No. enquiries received (cross-border)	No. disputes received (domestic)	No. disputes received (cross-border)	No. disputes accepted (continued to case) (domestic)	No. disputes accepted (continued to case) (cross-border)
3624	14	3624	0	3554	0

(b) the types of complaints to which the domestic disputes and cross-border disputes relate;

Types of disputes:

- Please see Appendix 1 – Nature of Complaint analysis

(c) a description of any systematic or significant problems that occur frequently and lead to disputes between consumers and traders of which the ADR entity has become aware due to its operations as an ADR entity;

The VCMS publishes a detailed annual report which is also presented to Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (the regulator of the veterinary profession).

We are currently preparing the 2024-25 annual report.

This details the trends and issues explored within the complaint mediation and resolution by the VCMS. In summary while the 2025 analysis is completed, the VCMS has seen a consistent level of complaint activity during 2025. The proportion of complaint involving diagnostics and consent conversations remain the most common complaint circumstances referred to the VCMS. The service has seen a decrease in complaints where the consumer considers the fees charged to be excessive. This was in the top 5 most common concerns in 2024, but not so in 2025. Complaints relating to concerns that the treatment plan was wrong or disputed increased, along with those involving surgical complications.

5 most common complaint circumstances 2024-25

Standard of care : diagnostic pathway insufficient
534, -4% YoY, (#2)

Standard of care : Unexpected outcome
528, -18% YoY

Customer service : Consent – service and communication
398 , +6% YoY (#3)

Standard of care : Disagree with treatment plan
248, new category

Standard of care: Surgical complication
214, not in the top 5 last year

- (d) any recommendations the ADR entity may have as to how the problems referred to in paragraph (c) could be avoided or resolved in future, in order to raise traders' standards and to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices;

We refer to the 2024 annual report which details insights and sector recommendations.

- (e) the number of disputes which the ADR entity has refused to deal with, and the percentage share of the grounds set in paragraph 13 of Schedule 3 on which the ADR entity has declined to consider such disputes;

Total no. of disputes rejected	68 - see a*
--------------------------------	-------------

Reason	No. rejected	Percentage of rejected
a) the consumer has not attempted to contact the trader first	1633	*The VCMS does not consider these enquiries to be rejected. The VCMS supports local resolution by assisting the consumer to return to the practice and raise or progress their complaint

		effectively. Less than 3% then return to the VCMS for full resolution having exhausted the local complaint process.
b) the dispute was frivolous or vexatious	0	
c) the dispute had been previously considered by another ADR body or the court	3	
d) the value fell below the monetary value	0 – VCMS does not have a financial de minimis	
e) the consumer did not submit the disputes within the time period specified	12	
f) dealing with the dispute would have impaired the operation of the ADR body	0	
g) other (enquired too early, not yet complained to trader, trader not member, advice call etc...	53 See Below	

g) Further breakdown		
Consumer is not the owner of the animal or the client of the veterinary practice	17	
Concerns referred to the RCVS – regulatory/serious professional misconduct	4	
Complaint did not relate to veterinary care	6	
Complaint did not concern a practice or professional overseen by the RCVS	4	
Complainant is a commercial animal owner (not consumer to business relationship)	5	
Other	17	
	53	
Non UK	14	

(f) the percentage of alternative dispute resolution procedures which were discontinued for operational reasons and, if known, the reasons for discontinuation;

	No. discontinued	Percentage of discontinued
Discontinued for operational reasons	0	0%

Reasons for discontinuation:

(g) the average time taken to resolve domestic disputes and cross-border disputes;

	Domestic	Cross-border
Average time taken to resolve disputes (from receipt of complaint)	35.8 days	N/A
Average time taken to resolve disputes (from 'complete complaint file')	43.8 days	N/A

Total average time taken to resolve disputes	43.8 days
----------------------------------------------	-----------

(h) the rate of compliance, if known, with the outcomes the alternative dispute resolution procedures (amongst your members, or those you provide ADR for)

As the VCMS uses mediation techniques to resolve complaints, the parties agree the resolution and therefore they comply with the resolution agreed.

(i) This point has been removed in amendments on 1 January 2021

Please add any additional information or data you think might be useful or interesting at the bottom of this report.

We refer to the 2024 annual report which details insights and sector recommendations.

Appendix 1 - Complaint categories

Clinical Fees

- Charging/invoice error
- Estimate -exceeded
- Fee - excessive
- Insurance claim related issue
- Insurance cover issue
- Medication charge
- Pet Care Plan issue
- Prescription Charge
- Unknown

Customer Service

- Complaint handling
- Consent - service/communication
- Disregarded O views or feelings
- End of life - client care
- Failed to update
- Lack of empathy
- Records issue
- Unhappy with attitude of Reception staff
- Unhappy with attitude of Veterinary staff
- Unknown

Other

- Unknown

Products

- Allergic Reaction
- Non veterinary product
- Product not working as expected
- Unknown

Standard of care

- Consent - uninformed/risk not covered
- Delay in diagnosing
- Diagnostic pathway - insufficient
- Diagnostic pathway - too extensive
- Disagree with treatment plan
- Discharge
- Elective surgery complication
- Euthanasia
- Failed to explain options
- Medication overdose
- Out of hours
- Pre-purchase examination
- Recovery - complication
- Surgery - complication
- Unexpected outcome - dental
- Unexpected outcome - other
- Unknown
- Wrong diagnosis

Unknown

- Unknown

Grand Total