



# Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS)



## **Guide for Animal Owners**

[www.vetmediation.co.uk](http://www.vetmediation.co.uk)



## About the Veterinary Client Mediation Service

The Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS) service is a voluntary independent and free service for providing mediation if an animal owner is dissatisfied about the care/service their animal has received from a veterinary practice.

The service is funded by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons which regulates all veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses in practice within the UK.

All veterinary practices should have their own internal complaints procedure to deal with any complaints raised by animal owners. Most issues are resolved informally within the practice.

However we recognise that some complaints can escalate resulting in strong emotions where you are no longer able to communicate effectively, or when you feel dissatisfied with the response from the practice.

# Advice for Animal Owners

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## What We Can Do to Help:

We can help resolve complaints about the customer service or animal care you have received.

We will help you with your concern by listening to your concerns, understanding what has happened and why you are dissatisfied. We acknowledge that any complaint concerning an animal can be a stressful and emotional time, so we are here to support you and the veterinary professional to help reach a fair solution.

The VCMS is a mediation service so we do not judge or penalise either party. By a mediation process, the VCMS seeks to help resolve your concerns, whether that is by for example, an apology, refund or other means.

## We Promise To:

- Listen attentively and ask questions in order to understand the complaint clearly
- Review the complaint quickly and efficiently and advise you as soon as possible if the complaint falls within our remit. If it falls outside our remit, we will refer you to the relevant organisation that will be able to assist you
- Provide independent mediation to help you and the practice find a resolution

## Professional Misconduct

The service cannot assist with the most serious concerns that the veterinary professional has acted in a way that amounts to professional misconduct. In these circumstances, we may refer you to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). The RCVS can be contacted on Tel: **020 7202 0789**.

If you are unsure whether the service can accept and mediate your complaint, please call us on **0345 040 5834** for advice.

## What do You Need to do to Raise a Complaint?

Your first step is to raise the complaint in writing with the practice. Every practice should inform you of their complaints procedure. You can ask for the complaints procedure or you may find this on the practice website. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, or you receive no response, even to a reminder, within a reasonable timescale, please contact us.

To raise a complaint with us, please visit our website **[www.vetmediation.co.uk](http://www.vetmediation.co.uk)** and complete the online

complaint form and consent form, which allows us to contact the practice and request details from them. Or you can contact us by phone or in writing - details overleaf.

## What Happens Next?

When we have the details of your complaint:

- We will contact the practice advising them that you have contacted us concerning a complaint involving their practice
- We will ask them to send us a copy of your records and any relevant information
- When we have received all the necessary information, we will review the complaint to ensure it is within the VCMS remit
- We will contact you and the practice to discuss possible solutions for resolving the complaint
- If a solution is found, we will help this to be implemented and conclude the complaint
- If a solution cannot be found or accepted by both parties, the complaint will be referred to a senior mediator within VCMS
- The involvement of VCMS will be concluded either when the senior mediator's suggestion for resolution is accepted by both parties or it is acknowledged that resolution cannot be achieved
- Please note that mediators do not have the power to enforce a solution on either party

When your complaint is finalised, we will also ask you how we have done and listen to your feedback to continuously improve the mediation service. As well as a complete mediation service, we can also provide you with assistance where you do not feel confident or able to raise the complaint on your own.

## **Contact Us**

Telephone us on 0345 040 5834

Monday - Friday, 8am - 6pm

Email us:

[enquiries@vetmediation.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@vetmediation.co.uk)

Visit us:

[www.vetmediation.co.uk](http://www.vetmediation.co.uk)

## **Our Address**

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The Veterinary Client Mediation  
Service is operated by:  
Nockolds Solicitors