



Veterinary
Client Mediation
Service (VCMS)



Guide for Veterinary Professionals

www.vetmediation.co.uk



About the Veterinary Client Mediation Service

At the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS), we appreciate that as professionals you are committed to providing excellent treatment and care to animals, whilst delivering an excellent service to their owners. The VCMS is funded by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and administered by Nockolds Solicitors.

In all areas of our society, despite our best efforts, complaints do arise and the veterinary sector is no different. Where a complaint cannot be resolved within the practice, we are an email or phone call away to help achieve a solution which will satisfy both you and your clients.

The VCMS team has considerable complaint resolution experience and understands the challenges of operating in a regulated sector whilst providing a professional and profitable business.

The VCMS is an alternative to action through the civil courts or consideration by the RCVS Preliminary Investigation Committee which is primarily concerned with breaches of the Code of Professional Conduct rather than issues better described as consumer care matters.

Advice for Veterinary Professionals



What We Can Do to Help:

We are here to offer help and guidance to resolve complaints in a fair, timely, cost-efficient and independent manner.

Mediation by the VCMS is voluntary and both the client and practice must be willing to engage. The VCMS will discuss the benefits of mediation with the practice and invite them to participate.

We understand when communication has become too emotional, when you have reached an impasse and may no longer be able to communicate effectively. We also appreciate when you feel your practice has responded fully to a complaint received, but the client remains dissatisfied.

We Promise To:

- Listen carefully and mediate so that both sides have the opportunity to provide details of the complaint
- Investigate the complaint quickly and efficiently, using advisors from a veterinary panel where

needed

- Reposition complaints as a positive learning tool to further develop excellent animal and client care, and enhance practice standards

We Are Here to Facilitate and Mediate:

- We have a third party independent mediator available to diffuse anger and frustration and facilitate effective communication
- Our aim is to provide a satisfactory and fair resolution which enhances the public perception of good customer care
- Feedback will be given in a constructive and supportive way which assists professional development

What Happens When We Receive a Complaint?

1. We ask the client to provide full details of the concern and to complete a consent form allowing us to contact the veterinary practice concerned
2. We ensure the practice has first been given the opportunity to resolve the complaint
3. We call the veterinary practice to inform them that a complaint has been made and listen to their view of the situation. If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, we will follow up the call with a letter requesting all records and relevant information concerning the complainant. We will also discuss the need and benefit of contacting your professional indemnity insurer for advice and to ensure you do not compromise your policy conditions

4. When we have received all the necessary information we will review the complaint to ensure it is within the VCMS remit and seek a review from a veterinary advisor where necessary
5. We will contact both parties to discuss possible solutions for resolving the complaint
6. If a solution is found, we will help this to be implemented and conclude the complaint.
7. If a solution cannot be found or accepted by both parties, the complaint will be referred to a Senior Mediator within the VCMS
8. The involvement of the 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. The involvement will cease if the Senior Mediator's suggestions for resolution are not agreed

What We Will Not Do:

- Force either party to accept a solution
- Investigate any professional conduct issues, although we may assist with complaints arising within a professional conduct investigation

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.

Contact Us

Telephone us on 0345 040 5834

Monday - Friday, 8am - 6pm

Email us:

enquiries@vetmediation.co.uk

Visit us:

www.vetmediation.co.uk

Our Address

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The Veterinary Client Mediation
Service is operated by:
Nockolds Solicitors