Client Complaints Procedure

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1. Purpose

This procedure provides a fair, timely and transparent route for clients of The Hampshire Vet to raise concerns or make complaints. It is designed to meet the complaints and redress requirements in Part 7 of the Veterinary Services Market Investigation Order 2026, which has a compliance date of 22 March 2027 for both large and small veterinary businesses.

2. Our commitment

At The Hampshire Vet, we aim to provide compassionate, high-quality veterinary care and clear communication. We recognise that clients may sometimes feel dissatisfied with the service, communication, care, treatment, fees or another aspect of their experience.

We welcome feedback and take complaints seriously. We will listen carefully, investigate fairly, communicate clearly and use learning from complaints to improve our service. Making a complaint will not affect the care, respect or attention that you or your pet receive from The Hampshire Vet.

3. How to make a complaint

The quickest and easiest way to make a complaint is to complete our online complaints form: https://www.thehampshirevet.co.uk/find-contact-us/

When you submit the form, a copy of your complaint is sent directly to our Complaints Team at complaints@thehampshirevet.co.uk. We will confirm that we have received it and explain the next steps.
If you would prefer not to use the online form, you can also make a complaint:

- By email: complaints@thehampshirevet.co.uk
- By telephone: Call 01256 639707 and ask to speak to a member of the Complaints Team.
- In person: Speak to a member of our reception team, a veterinary nurse, a veterinary surgeon or a manager.
- In writing: Write to: The Complaints Team, The Hampshire Vet, Shortwood Copse Lane, Basingstoke, RG23 7NL.

Please include, where possible:

1. Your full name and preferred contact details.
2. Your pet's name.
3. The date or dates of the events you are concerned about.
4. The practice location and any team members involved, if known.
5. A description of what happened and why you are unhappy.
6. Any documents, photographs or correspondence you would like us to consider.
7. The outcome you would like us to consider.

Please make your complaint within 12 months of the event, or within 12 months of becoming aware of it — whichever is later.
If you are unsure whether something is a complaint, please contact us. We will listen and help you raise your concerns.

4. What happens next

Stage	What happens
Day 0	We receive your complaint and try to resolve it informally.
Within 10 working days	We aim to resolve the concern.
If unresolved	It moves into our formal complaints process. Under the CMA Order, this is called an "Actionable Complaint".
Within 5 working days after this	We acknowledge it in writing and provide a named contact.
Within 8 weeks	We aim to send our full written response.
By 12 weeks at the latest	We send the final response, unless an applicable lawful exception applies.
If still unresolved	You may seek mediation through the Veterinary Client Mediation Service.

5. Informal resolution

We will try to resolve concerns promptly and informally wherever possible. This may involve clarifying what happened, arranging contact from an appropriate team member, reviewing records, explaining a clinical decision or fee, correcting an administrative error, or discussing an appropriate remedy.

Our aim is to resolve concerns fairly and in good faith within 10 working days of receiving them. A working day excludes weekends, bank holidays, Christmas Day and Good Friday.

6. When a complaint becomes formal

If we cannot resolve your complaint within 10 working days, it will move into our formal complaints process. Under the CMA Order, this is called an "Actionable Complaint". We will then:

- Assign a named Complaints Lead as your point of contact.
- Acknowledge the complaint in writing within five working days of it becoming an Actionable Complaint.
- Explain what will happen next, the anticipated timetable and any information we need from you.
- Ask what outcome you are seeking, where this is not already clear.
- Investigate the concerns fairly and proportionately.

7. Investigation

A senior member of the leadership team, who was not directly involved where possible, will investigate your complaint. Depending on the concerns raised, we may review clinical records, estimates, invoices, consent forms, laboratory results and relevant communications; take factual accounts from team members; obtain a clinical review; and consider our policies and processes.

If we need further information from you, we will explain what we need and why. If we cannot obtain information that is necessary to investigate, we may be unable to complete the investigation.

8. Timescales

We aim to provide a full written response as soon as reasonably possible and, in any event, within eight weeks of the date the complaint became an Actionable Complaint.

If we cannot send our full response within eight weeks, we will write to you before that deadline to explain why, confirm what work remains outstanding and give a date for our full written response. Our final response will be issued no later than 12 weeks after the complaint became an Actionable Complaint.

9. Our final response

Our written final response will confirm that we have understood your complaint, summarise the issues investigated, explain how we investigated where appropriate, set out our findings and reasons, address each material concern, and confirm any remedy or improvement action we consider appropriate.

Where we find that we could have done something better, we will explain what we will do to put matters right, where appropriate. This may include an explanation, apology, correction of records, refund or fee adjustment, review of care, staff coaching or a change to our systems or processes.

Our final response will also provide the current RCVS Decision Tree and explain how you may seek mediation if you remain dissatisfied.

10.Mediation and independent redress

If you remain dissatisfied after receiving our final response, you may ask to refer the complaint to mediation through our nominated alternative dispute resolution (ADR) provider:

Item	Details
ADR provider	Veterinary Client Mediation Service
Website	www.vetmediation.co.uk
Contact details	Tel: 0345 0405834; enquiries@vetmediation.co.uk
Cost to clients	Free at the point of use

The Hampshire Vet will participate in mediation in good faith where the relevant requirements are met. You should normally request mediation within 12 months of our final response or, if we do not issue a final response, within 12 months and eight weeks after the complaint became an Actionable Complaint.

Mediation may not be available where the ADR provider reasonably considers the complaint frivolous or vexatious, where court proceedings are ongoing, or where the same complaint has already been addressed through another voluntary ADR process in which both parties participated in good faith.

11. Raising a concern with the RCVS

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (**RCVS**) regulates veterinary surgeons and registered veterinary nurses. You should contact the RCVS if you have serious concerns about a veterinary professional's ability to practise safely or professionally—for example, serious breaches of professional standards, fraud or dishonesty, or health issues affecting safe practice.

The RCVS does not normally deal with routine customer-service complaints or disputes about the level of fees. It cannot resolve negligence claims, award compensation, or require a practice to apologise, refund fees or provide treatment. Service and fee disputes are usually best addressed through our complaints procedure and, if unresolved, the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS).

To raise a concern, or ask whether your concern falls within the RCVS's remit, contact its Professional Conduct Team:

- Telephone: 020 7202 0789.
- Online guidance and enquiry form: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/animal-owners/concerns-about-veterinary-care.

12. Confidentiality, records and learning

We treat complaints sensitively and keep information confidential, subject to legal, regulatory, insurance, professional and safeguarding obligations. We maintain a record of Actionable Complaints, investigation, correspondence, outcome and improvement actions. Records are retained for at least 12 months after resolution.

We review complaint themes regularly to identify and make reasonable improvements to our services and processes.

13. Accessibility and support

If you need this procedure in a different format, need help making a complaint or would prefer us to communicate in a particular way, please tell us. We will make reasonable efforts to support you.