

## Terms and Conditions

This statement details our practice terms and conditions of business.

By accessing our veterinary services (e.g by contacting us in person or via communication networks or registration of a pet) you agree to accept our terms and conditions of business.

Some aspects of the terms may not be relevant to you, and we recommend that you ask a member of staff if further explanation or clarification is needed.

### THE CLIENT PRACTICE RELATIONSHIP

A good, professional working relationship between you and our practice is of the utmost importance.

We aim to treat all our clients fairly and with respect and expect you in response to treat our staff with politeness and respect.

Rudeness and failure to treat any of our team with politeness and respect will not be tolerated and may result in immediate termination of the service we provide to you (See Termination of Service).

### REGISTERING WITH OUR PRACTICE

When you register with us, we will ask you to contact your current practice and obtain any previous veterinary records from them. They may ask your permission to pass on the records – please grant them this permission.

### OUR 24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE

We have a formal arrangement with Eastcott Vets in Swindon which allows you to access a 24hrs emergency service. Please note that we do not have access to your pets' records if you are registered at Eastcott vets and Eastcott vets do not have access to your pet's records at Riverside.

If you require attention for your pet out of hours please ring Eastcott Out of Hours number : 01793 410874

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### PREFERRED VET, SECOND OPINIONS AND REFERRALS

We have excellent facilities and a great team at Riverside Veterinary Centre with a wide range of experience and knowledge in all things veterinary. From time to time, you or our colleague looking after your pet may want a further opinion on an issue. We will happily provide you with a second opinion from one (or more) of our team – just ask.

If you have a particular member of staff, you would like to look after your pet (or a member of staff you would prefer not to see) please just ask our team to arrange this for you.

From time to time, we may advise that patients would benefit from a procedure or opinion from a specialist. In that case we shall offer you a referral to a centre of excellence.

## VETERINARY FEES

The fees we charge consider the type of work undertaken, the experience of the team, the professional time we have committed to the work (including training), the facilities and equipment involved, regulatory costs, the quantities of materials, drugs and consumables used ( including unavoidable wastage ).

All fees, diets and drug charges are subject to VAT at the current rate. You should receive a detailed invoice / fee note / receipt for every consultation, surgical procedure and transaction with us.

## ESTIMATES OF TREATMENT COSTS

We will happily provide a written estimate as to the probable costs of a course of treatment. Please bear in mind that any estimate given can only be approximate – often a pet's illness will not follow a conventional course.

## METHODS OF PAYMENT

All fees are due for settlement at the end of EVERY consultation, discharge of your pet or upon collection of drugs/diet.

You may settle the account using Cash, Debit Card or Credit Card (Switch, Mastercard, Solo, Amex or Visa).

## SETTLEMENT TERMS

Payment is due at the time of treatment unless agreed prior to any visit by the management team. Should an account not be settled within the agreed period then reminders will be sent. Additional administration fees may be charged to your account if reminders are sent.

After due notice to you, the client, overdue invoices will be referred to our debt collecting agency and further charges will be levied in respect of costs involved in collecting the debt: such as production of reports, correspondence, court fees, phone calls, home visits, etc. Any Credit Card payment not honoured and any cash tendered that is found to be counterfeit, will result in the original account being restored to the original sum, with further charges added with respect of bank charges and administration costs, together with interest on the principal sum.

## INABILITY TO PAY

If for some reason you are unable to settle your invoice as specified, we ask that you discuss the matter as soon as possible with a senior member of staff. Please note that there is a section of an admission consent form that states that you agree to pay on collection of your pet. Please note that instalments or part payments of any invoice may ONLY be sanctioned by the Practice Manager or senior veterinary surgeon.

## PET HEALTH INSURANCE

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Riverside Veterinary Centre supports the principal of pet insurance.

Any insurance policy taken out by yourself is a private contract between you and your insurer in which we have no input or involvement. Policies vary considerably in the degree of cover provided.

In the event that you need to claim on your pet insurance policy. Our preferred approach is for you to settle your account directly with us at the time your pet is treated. Then you can submit a claim to your insurers. Unlike some practices we currently we do not charge for completing insurance claim forms for owners for treatment received at the practice.

**Our willingness to allow your veterinary fees to be paid to us directly by your insurance company in no way removes your responsibility / liability for veterinary charges resulting from attention to your animal.**

For us to consider a direct claim you have to do the following :-

You must contact your insurance company immediately and inform them you are making a claim

You must also specifically give your insurers permission to speak to Riverside Veterinary centre staff on any matter relating to your policy or claim.

You are required to present your policy certificate to our team on arrival at the practice. A copy of this certificate maybe taken and stored on our management system

You must present a claim form with the 'owners section' completed SIGNED BY THE POLICYHOLDER and dated. Many of these forms can be downloaded from the Internet. We are able to print some claim forms on site but the policyholder is still required to sign them.

You are also required to pay the policy excesses at that time. If you have a percentage excess on your policy then we would ask that you pay £100 in addition to your policy excess.

When the claim is paid we will reimburse you for any overpayment.

Our willingness to allow a 'direct claim' in no way makes Riverside Veterinary Centre liable for the outstanding fees.

Some insurers limit what they will pay for certain items and procedures. We have seen payment limits placed on the cost of consultations, laboratory fees, out of hours fees, diagnostic and surgical fees. Please be aware that if your insurer does limit what they will pay, you will be required to pay the balance.

Some insurers advise that you obtain services or medications from other suppliers.

**Please note we are unable to claim for fees / charges/ or payments that you have**

**made to third parties and you must ask your third party to complete any required claim paperwork.**

If part or all of your claim is unpaid by your insurers within a reasonable time we would ask you to settle any balance without delay. If your claim is subsequently paid to us directly we will reimburse you for any overpayment.

We regret that we cannot enter into discussions or correspondence with your insurer on your behalf. If you ask us to contact your insurer over a disputed claim we may charge you for our time involved in this process which is not likely to be reclaimable from your insurer. We will advise you of any costs before proceeding.

## REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS AND MEDICINES

The general policy of this practice is to re-examine and reassess an animal requiring ongoing medical treatment every 6 months, but this may vary with individual circumstances and depending on the type of medication we are prescribing for your pet.

The amount of drug supplied under a prescription will generally not exceed 3 months and maybe less. The amount of drug dispensed is determined by the prescribing veterinary surgeon.

You will be informed, on request, of the price of any service or medicine that may be dispensed for your animal.

You may obtain Prescription Only Medicines, Category V, ( POM-Vs) from the Practice OR ask for a written prescription and obtain these medicines from another veterinary surgeon or a pharmacy.

A prescription may not be appropriate if your animal is an in-patient or immediate treatment is necessary.

A charge will be made for each written prescription. Only one item can be prescribed on each prescription.

Written prescriptions require at least 1 working day's notice and are produced as a 'hard copy' with a unique reference identification. A copy is retained by the Practice for regulatory reasons and for inspection by the UK Government Veterinary Medicines Directorate (or its agencies). Written prescriptions must be collected in person and will not be sent electronically or by post.

We are unable to include the costs and details of medicines purchased elsewhere on any pet insurance claim. Please ask the medicines supplier to complete an insurance claim on your behalf.

Your veterinary surgeon may prescribe POM-Vs only for animals under their care

## OWNERSHIP OF RECORDS

Case records, including radiographs and similar documents, are the property of, and will be retained by, Riverside Veterinary Centre. Copies, with a summary of the

history, will be passed on request to another veterinary surgeon taking over the case.

## OWNERSHIP OF RADIOGRAPHS AND SIMILAR RECORDS

Procedures to obtain radiographs, photographs, ultrasounds, ECGs and other 'media' records are carried out to aid diagnosis in your pet.

In paying for these procedures, you are paying for our team to obtain the diagnostic information and for their opinion on the findings. All actual physical recordings or electronic versions of the 'media' remain the property of the Practice.

## PROTECTING YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Our Practice is committed to protecting your privacy while providing you with excellent customer service. We are registered with the ICO and use best practice to manage information about you and your pet.

We may obtain, use, process and disclose personal data about you in order that we may discharge our duties as your veterinary surgeon under these standard terms of business, and for other related purposes including updating and enhancing client records, analysis for management purposes and statutory returns, crime prevention and legal and regulatory compliance. You have a right of access, under Data Protection Legislation, to the personal data that we hold about you. We confirm that when processing data on your behalf we will comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Legislation. For clarification 'clinical records of a pet' that do not contain personal data about you are not subject to Data Protection Legislation.

We may use clinical and diagnostic information for study, training / research and sharing with other colleagues to improve health and welfare.

Anonimised patient information including images may be placed in the public domain to raise awareness of animal health and encourage good animal ownership.

We may with your permission place information into the public domain that may identify your or your pet.

## WEBSITE, INTERNET PLATFORMS, EMAIL AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Any information on our website or other internet platforms is for general information purposes only and while we endeavour to keep the information up to date and correct, we make no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability or availability with respect to the information, products, services, or related graphics contained on the internet for any purpose. Any reliance you place on such information is therefore strictly at your own risk.

In no event will we be liable for any loss or damage including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage, or any loss or damage whatsoever arising

from loss of data or profits or money arising out of, or in connection with, the use of our website/ internet media platforms

Through our internet platforms you are able to link to other websites which are not under our control. We have no control over the nature, content and availability of those sites. The inclusion of any links on our electronic platforms does not necessarily imply a recommendation or endorse the views expressed within them.

Every effort is made to keep our internet sites / electronic communication systems up and running smoothly. However we take no responsibility for, and will not be liable for, any platform being unavailable for any reason.

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET PLATFORMS

Even though our practice has a 'social media' presence we would request that this is not used to obtain advice for animals under our care or request urgent attention for your pet.

If you use our 'social media' space we request that all activity is courteous, good natured and positive.

Please note we are not responsible for and DO NOT endorse any advertising that maybe associated with our social media space.

We may at our sole discretion decide not to reply or act upon any 'posting' to any internet platform.

If we consider that any client is misusing email, electronic communications, website, social media or internet platforms we may terminate provision of a veterinary services to that client with immediate effect (see 'Termination of Service' below) or take any action to protect our business.

## THIRD PARTY SERVICES

From time to time, with your agreement, our practice may offer services provided (in part or in whole) by a third party. These services may include ( but are not limited to ) promotion of other service providers, microchip registration, insurance promotion, insurance claims processing, vaccination and treatment reminder services.

Services provided by some third parties may help you to meet your legal obligations (e.g. registration or updating of microchip details for your pet). It is your responsibility to check and maintain any records with the appropriate organisations and pay any associated charges or fees.

In no event will we be liable for any inability to access the service provided or any loss or damage including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage due to the inability to access the service.

In no event will we be liable for any loss or damage whatsoever arising from using a service provided by any third party or failure of any service provided by a third party (whatever the reason).

## PERSONAL ITEMS LEFT AT THE PRACTICE

We know that owners like to leave 'personal items' with their pets whilst they are admitted .

**We would ask however that owners do not leave any personal property at any of the practices with their pet.**

Personal property may include cages, carriers, leads, blankets and toys.

**Where items are left we would advise that they are left entirely at the owner's risk** and whilst a note of it maybe made on the consent form and even though our team will use their best endeavours to ensure personal items are looked after we cannot be responsible for the loss or damage to any item left with us.

If we find that your personal item has been left on our premises we will endeavour to contact you to arrange collection but please note Items left unclaimed will be disposed of after two weeks. We have no facilities for storage of personal items.

## UNHAPPY WITH OUR SERVICE

Our practice is committed to providing you with the highest level of service and customer care. We realise, however, that things can happen and that there may be occasions when you feel that the service provided has not met your expectations.

In these situations, we want to hear about it through the correct channels and have an opportunity to address the issues that you raise. We cannot remedy a problem if we do not know about it.

You may decide to place comments about our practice in the public domain on 'social media' or internet platforms. We will not respond to any issues that you raise in the public domain.

If we consider that your behaviour has the potential to damage our business, we will immediately and without notice terminate the provision of any current or future service to you (See Termination of Service).

## TERMINATION OF SERVICE

We may terminate our provision of veterinary services with immediate effect at any time for any reason at our sole discretion.

You may not be given written notice of termination of services.

You may not be given a 'reason for termination'.

Once our contract is terminated you will need to seek an alternative veterinary care provider.

Reasons for termination maybe recorded on the records we hold for you.

Records we hold for you maybe transferred to a third party

Reasons for termination include ( but are not limited to )

- failure to pay for veterinary attention
- any behaviour in the public domain that has the potential to damage our business (including reviews, posts on 'social networks')
- failure to follow the procedures laid down in our terms and conditions or the reasonable requests of any of our team members
- rudeness. For clarity this includes 'demanding' or 'uncourteous' behaviour either in person or over communication networks – including to our 'on call teams'.
- the use of bad language ('swearing', insulting remarks etc) over communication networks
- the use of bad language ('swearing', insulting remarks etc) on our premises
- intimidation of our staff. For clarity intimidation is behaviour that 'would cause a person of ordinary sensibilities' to fear injury or harm
- threatening behaviour towards our staff, their families or friends
- injury to our staff
- video and/or audio recording of interactions (including telephone calls) with our staff against their will or without their full knowledge and consent
- using another veterinary practice to provide most of your veterinary services

On termination you will be required to immediately pay all fees and settle all accounts. Any previous discounts, payment terms or arrangements will be immediately voided.

Where necessary we will involve third parties to recover unpaid fees, protect our staff and premises and address issues through the legal system.

## APPLICABLE LAW

No addition or variation of these conditions will bind the practice unless it is specifically agreed in writing and signed.

No agent or person employed by, or under contract with the practice has the authority to alter or vary these conditions in anyway.

These terms are governed by, and constructed in accordance with English law. The Courts of England will have exclusive jurisdiction in relation to any claim, dispute or difference concerning these terms and any matter arising from it. Each party irrevocably waives any right it may have to object to any action being brought in these courts, to claim that the action has been brought in an inappropriate forum, or to claim that those courts do not have jurisdiction.

If any provision in these standard terms of business, or its application, are found to be invalid, illegal or otherwise unenforceable in any respect, the validity, legality or enforceability of any other provision shall not in any way be affected or impaired.

These terms and conditions may be altered by Riverside Vets without notice.