



THE KETTERING  
**VETS**

Terms of Business

# Terms of Business

Thank you for entrusting your pet's care to the team at The Kettering Vets. We are committed to providing high standards of care for our patients and to communicating fully with you.

This document sets out the terms of the contract established between The Kettering Vets Limited and yourself, which comes into being when you register your pet with our practice or ask us to provide veterinary services.

If there is anything that you feel unsure about, please feel free to contact us directly and we will be happy to help.

## 1. Consultations

We run an appointment-only system for consultations. Appointments can be made by telephoning the practice on 01536 722 555.

## 2. Client waiting area

Owners are responsible for keeping their pet under control whilst in the waiting room area. Dogs must be kept on appropriate leads; cats in secure cat baskets; and rabbits, ferrets and guinea pigs in secure containers. We ask that dogs are kept away from cats and other small animals to help minimise stress.

Please note that some pets, (dogs in particular), need space and this may be indicated by the pet owner. In the interests of personal safety, clients should not attempt to approach animals that they do not know without the express permission of the owner.

We have separate dog and cat waiting areas in our waiting-room in order to minimise dog/cat interactions. We also provide covers for cat baskets. These can be found in the cat waiting area and should be returned during your consult in order to be laundered.

## 3. Home visits

Where necessary, (excluding at night-time between 8pm-8am), we can arrange to visit your pet at home. This will incur an additional charge based on the time taken to travel to and from the property, the number of employees required to attend, and the timing of the visit. Whilst we will endeavour to come out at your convenience, we ask that you give us as much notice as possible, so that we can arrange this around our on-site duties.

Please note that it is the owner's responsibility to ensure that a plan is in place should their animal require transporting. As an example, in the case of an emergency, it is often in the best interests of your pet to travel to the practice where a wider range of equipment and treatment options are available. Remember also that we do not offer home visits between the hours of 8pm-8am for safety reasons. We recommend that you investigate local pet transport services in case of these circumstances.

## 4. Emergencies

Emergencies during normal opening hours will be seen as soon as possible. Please call our usual telephone number for advice, and to let us know that you are on your way so that preparations can be made.

We operate our own out-of-hours emergency service for our clients at our practice on Polwell Lane. Please call the normal practice number and you will be put through to the vet on duty.

Please be aware that there is a surcharge for out-of-hours emergencies. We will be happy to provide an estimate for the costs of any examination, tests or treatments that your pet may need.

## **5. Inpatients**

We are able to house and monitor patients. If your pet has to be hospitalised overnight, the duty vet will determine how frequently assessments or treatments are needed according to your pet's condition, (up to continuous monitoring if required). These checks may be performed by a vet or by a qualified veterinary nurse depending on your pet's needs.

Please note that there is not a member of staff routinely stationed at the practice overnight unless continuous care is clinically indicated.

## **6. Consent**

As part of the ongoing treatment of an animal, our team will recommend treatment plans and courses of action to promote your pet's welfare. Wherever possible, we will obtain your consent before undertaking any procedure or course of treatment.

In exceptional circumstances, we may need to provide emergency treatment. In this event, we will take reasonable steps to contact you to obtain your prior consent but you acknowledge and consent that we are authorised to take all such steps as deemed necessary to prevent pain or suffering in your pet should the need arise. You will be responsible for the costs incurred in taking such steps, whether or not your consent has been obtained. We will provide you with the full details of the treatment provided as soon as we reasonably can.

## **7. Fees**

All fees for services and prices for goods, (including food, accessories and drugs) are subject to VAT at the current rate. Fee levels are determined by the time spent on a patient's case and according to the drugs, materials and consumables used. You will receive a detailed statement for every consultation, investigation, surgical procedure or other transaction with us. Queries regarding invoices should be raised within 7 days.

## **8. Payment**

You must pay for all goods (including drugs) at the point of purchase.

You must pay for all services as they are received. You will be advised exactly when payments are due depending upon the nature of the services that we provide to you, but you should expect to make payments at the end of each consultation and upon the discharge of your pet from our care.

The main exceptions to this are:

### **a) Emergencies outside of normal working hours -**

A 50% deposit will be required prior to commencement/continuation of the agreed treatment plan, or full payment upfront for caesarean sections.

b) For hospitalisation -

We may require part payment in advance of any period of hospitalisation and/or staged payments for longer periods of hospitalisation.

If your pet is hospitalised, we will try to phone you each day to discuss the progress of your animal and the fees incurred.

We accept payments by cash or by credit/ debit card, excluding American Express. We do not accept cheques or instalments/ part payment of any account unless express permission has been given by the Practice Principal.

Please note that if a pet is registered with our practice, we will assume that any person other than the registered pet owner who may bring the pet in for treatment is duly authorised by the registered owner to seek treatment for the pet and to incur costs for which the registered pet owner will be liable. When a pet is not registered with our practice, we will assume that the individual requesting treatment accepts liability for all costs incurred.

**9. Estimates of treatment costs**

Upon request, we are happy to provide a written estimate regarding the expected costs of investigations, a surgical procedure or course of treatment. Please be aware that due to the unpredictable nature of clinical work, any estimate given can only be approximate. The final invoice may be above or below the original estimate, depending on the clinical circumstances.

We will endeavour to keep you updated if costs are likely to exceed the given estimate; however, as described previously, in an emergency, this may not always be possible. By signing the practice consent forms in relation to animals undergoing in-patient procedures, services or operations, it is deemed that consent has been given for administration of immediate treatment to prevent pain or suffering should the need arise where a client cannot be contacted.

**10. Settlement terms**

If you become unable to pay your account according to the standard terms, this must be discussed with the practice as soon as possible.

If an account is not settled within 30 days, then a reminder will be sent. After due notice to you the client, we shall take such action as we consider appropriate to recover our fees, which may include engaging third part debt collection agencies to recover the outstanding fees, and/ or instigating proceedings against you in the county court. In such cases, any costs levied by the debt collection agency will be added on to the outstanding balance owed by you and/or we will seek to recover any legal expenses from you.

Note also that 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 in respect of bank charges.

In either case above, we shall be entitled to suspend the provision of any further goods and/ or services to you until you have paid any outstanding sums in full. Where we consider it appropriate to do so, we may require payment on account before goods and/or services are provided.

## **11. Insurance**

We strongly support the principle of insuring your pet against unexpected illness or accidents. This will provide peace of mind should your pet need considerable veterinary treatment. Please be aware that as the policyholder, it is your responsibility to settle our account and reclaim your fees from your insurance company. We make no charge for completing the vet section of claim forms and for providing the relevant documentation.

In exceptional cases, where a larger bill is involved (over £500) the practice may, at your request, submit a direct claim to the insurer, subject to satisfactory insurance. You must discuss this with the veterinary surgeon prior to any treatment. Please note that agreement of a direct claim does not transfer liability of fees incurred to The Kettering Vets Limited. If at any point the insurer refuses payment for a direct claim, the owner will still be fully liable for all costs incurred. The insurance policy is a private agreement between the owner and the insurer. The Kettering Vets Limited cannot be involved in disputes over non-payment of insurance claims. In the event that an insurer fails to acknowledge our claim or respond to communications from us within 30 days, we will treat this as a refused claim and seek to recover the full cost from you.

## **12. Prescriptions**

Prescriptions are available from the practice. You may obtain POM-Vs (Prescription only Medicine—Veterinarian) from the practice, or ask for a written prescription and obtain these from another veterinary surgeon or pharmacy. We can only prescribe POM-Vs for animals under our care. A written prescription may not be appropriate for an inpatient or where immediate treatment is required.

A fee will be charged for the issue of written veterinary prescriptions. This covers the professional time taken for one of our vets to authorise the requested medication, provide dosage advice and maintain the required medical records for your pet.

Animals requiring repeat medications will need to be reassessed periodically by the responsible veterinary surgeon. It is practice policy for this period to be a maximum of 6 months; however, in some cases, a shorter interval may be deemed more appropriate. This is dependent upon your animal's condition and stage of disease, together with specific requirements set out by manufacturers for monitoring certain medications. There will be a consultation fee for medication reviews.

Please note that we require 48 hours' notice to prepare written or repeat prescription requests.

## **13. Refunds for returned medications**

Unfortunately, the practice cannot give refunds for returned medications because these cannot be accepted back into our dispensary. However, we can assist with the safe disposal of medication that is no longer needed.

## **14. Collection of orders**

Any goods that have been ordered from us, (including goods, drugs and diets), will be held for 7 days, unless agreed otherwise in writing.

## **15. Collection of ashes**

In the case of pet cremation, we will notify you when your pet's ashes have been returned ready for collection. Any ashes that remain uncollected after 60 days will be disposed of by us, unless agreed otherwise in writing.

## 16. Data Protection

We are committed to ensuring that your personal data is protected. Full detail of the information we collect and how we use it can be found in our Privacy Notice.

We reserve the right to modify our Privacy Notice at any time. We will publish these changes online. This may be necessary, for example, if the law changes, or if we change our business in a way that affects personal data protection. .

## 17. Ownership of records

Case records, including radiographs and similar documents, shall remain the property of The Kettering Vets Limited. Copies may be passed, on request, to another veterinary surgeon taking over the case.

The care given to your animal may involve making some specific investigations, for example, taking radiographs or performing ultrasound scans. Even though we make a charge for carrying out these investigations and interpreting their results, ownership of the resulting record, for example a radiograph, will remain with the practice.

As part of our ongoing commitment to the development of the veterinary profession, from time to time the practice may share anonymised data with research institutions. Please contact us if you require further information on this.

## 18. Complaints

The Kettering Vets is committed to providing a quality service. We hope that you never feel cause to complain; however, should we not meet your expectations on any aspect of our service, please let us know. We hope that you will give us the opportunity to address your concerns, which in many cases may be resolved quickly and easily at the time they arise with the person concerned.

Alternatively, if you wish to raise a formal complaint, please phone, email or write to our Practice Manager within 3 months of the complaint event using the details below:

- 01536 722 555
- [complaints@theketteringvets.com](mailto:complaints@theketteringvets.com)
- The Practice Manager, 89 Polwell Lane, Barton Seagrave, Kettering, NN15 6TD

It is always best to alert us to your concerns as soon as possible for investigation purposes. In order to help us to help you, please provide as much detail as possible with regards to dates, times, personnel involved, the nature of the complaint and the outcome you are hoping for.

All formal complaints will be acknowledged within five working days, detailing the proposed actions, how we will keep you updated and the timescales involved. The time from complaint to resolution can vary depending on the individual circumstances, availability of personnel and complexity of the problem. We hope we can ascertain what went wrong and why, provide an opportunity to discuss the problem with those concerned if you wish, provide an apology where appropriate, and make sure the problem doesn't happen again.

Please note that to maintain a quality service, we may monitor or record phone calls.

## **19. Acceptable behaviour**

We are committed to providing a work environment that is free from harassment, bullying, intimidation, violence or abuse and we will not tolerate any behaviour which is contrary to this. If our staff reasonably believe that you are acting in an inappropriate manner, we reserve the right to:

- (a) require you to leave the practice
- (b) suspend the provision of services
- (c) contact the relevant authorities to ensure the safety and security of our staff, other clients, animals and property
- (d) terminate your account

## **20. Disclaimer**

No addition or variation of these conditions will bind the practice unless it is specifically agreed in writing and signed by the Practice Principal. No agent or person employed by, or under contract with the practice, has the authority to alter or vary these conditions in any way.