

TERMS & CONDITIONS 2014

Thank you for entrusting the care and attention of your pet to Willett House Veterinary Surgeons (WHVS). In return, we will aim to provide you with a first-class service and your pet with the highest standards of treatment and care. The following details WHVS terms and conditions of business. Should you require clarification on any of the points detailed below, please do not hesitate to ask a member of the practice team.

REGISTRATION & CLIENT/PATIENT DETAILS

All new clients are required to complete a registration form and provide proof of identification and address e.g. driving licence.

It is essential that we maintain accurate client and patient records. Therefore, on occasion, we may require you to confirm the details we hold as being accurate. If your details do change, please notify us immediately so that we can ensure our database is accurate and that important information such as vaccination reminders etc can be sent to the correct address.

FEES

All fees, diets and drug charges are subject to VAT at the current rate. Fee levels are determined by the professional time spent on a case and according to the drugs, materials, consumables and diets used. Details of our fees are available on request and a detailed invoice can be provided for every consultation, procedure or transaction.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

Accounts are due for settlement in full at the end of the consultation, on discharge of your pet or upon collection of drugs/diets. You may settle the account using either cash or most credit/debit cards. We do not accept cheques.

We reserve the right to request a 50% deposit to be paid prior to any treatment being carried out on hospitalised patients. We also reserve the right to request part payment towards ongoing treatment should your account reach any specified credit limit whilst your pet is receiving treatment within the practice.

ESTIMATES OF TREATMENT COSTS

We will, upon request, be pleased to provide a written estimate as to the likely costs of any treatment your pet may require. Please bear in mind that any estimate given can only be approximate - often a pet's treatment will not follow a conventional course.

In the case of surgical procedures we endeavor to contact you if we think any estimate will be exceeded by more than 25%. Clients of hospitalised patients are requested to obtain an update of costs on a daily basis from the attending veterinary surgeon.

SETTLEMENT TERMS

If for any reason your account has not been settled at the end of consultation, on discharge of your pet or upon collection of drugs/diets, a statement of account will be issued at the end of that calendar month. In the event of non-payment within the following month, further reminders will be sent which will incur administrative costs. Overdue accounts, after due notice to you, will be referred to our Debt Collection Agency or to the County Courts and further charges will be levied in respect of costs incurred in collecting the debt, such as production of reports, correspondence, court fees, attendance at court, phone calls, home visits, etc.

Any cheque returned by our Bank as unpaid; any Credit Card, Direct Debit or Standing Order payment not honoured and any Cash tendered that is found to be counterfeit will result in the original account being reinstated with further charges added in respect of bank charges and administrative costs together with interest on the principal sum.

INABILITY TO PAY

If, for any reason, you are unable to settle your account as specified, we ask you to discuss the matter as soon as possible with a member of staff and, preferably, prior to any treatment commencing or being completed. Vets, receptionists and nurses are not authorised to sanction part-payment or instalments. These can only be authorised by a partner or a member of the management team.

CONSENT

Formal consent is required for all patients being admitted into the practice for treatment. This will require a consent form to be signed by the registered owner of the animal or a person acting as an authorised agent for the owner. In either instance, the person signing the form must be over 18 years of age and is responsible for the full costs of the treatment should the registered owner fail to pay the outstanding fees.

On occasion, to offer the best possible care to our patients, we may be required to use drugs not licensed for a particular species. In these instances, you will be requested to give your consent for the use of such medications in writing.

MEDICATIONS & REPEAT PRESCRIPTION EXAMINATIONS

A veterinary surgeon may only supply Prescription Only Medicines, Category V (POM-Vs) for animals under their care. It is, therefore, necessary to meet RCVS guidelines to re-examine animals requiring ongoing prescription medicines at regular intervals. The time between re-examinations will vary, depending on both the condition and the severity of the condition your pet may have, but will be no longer than 6 months. NB: Repeat POM-V flea and worm treatments require 12-monthly examinations which we try and coincide with your pet's annual health check and vaccination schedule. The standard charge for a repeat POM-V examination will be the current cost of a Second Repeat Consultation.

All repeat prescription and food requests should be made in advance. Normally, 48 hours is sufficient notice. However, should we not be able to meet this turn-around time, we will endeavour to contact you as soon as possible.

We will provide the details of the price of any medicine stocked or sold on request.

We are happy to accept unused medications back into the practice for disposal only. Drugs which have left the practice are no longer fit for resale and, therefore, unfortunately no refund can be given. Drugs purchased from any other supplier will not be accepted for disposal.

Written prescriptions are available on request. You may obtain POM-Vs from us or ask for a prescription and obtain these medicines from another veterinary surgeon or pharmacist. All written prescriptions will incur a prescription writing fee, the cost of which is dependant upon the number of medications included on the prescription. A written prescription may not be applicable for your pet if they are an inpatient or immediate treatment is necessary.

PET HEALTH INSURANCE

WHVS strongly recommends the principle of veterinary insurance to protect against the unexpected fees incurred following illness or accident. Please be aware that it is your responsibility to settle your account and reclaim the fees from your Insurance Company with which we will be happy to assist you. Should you require any general guidance on insurance, a member of staff will be happy to advise you.

Direct claims will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and may only be authorised by a partner. In these circumstances, preauthorisation or guarantee of full payment of the cost of the treatment must be received, in writing, from your insurance company (NB: Only a few insurers will preauthorise claims). If preauthorisation has been given, a signed claims form must be handed to reception and a minimum deposit of £150, to cover any excess or sundry fees, must be paid prior to the procedure/treatment being carried out. Once any direct claim has been settled, then any outstanding monies the practice may owe you will be settled by cheque.

We endeavour to complete our section of all insurance claims forms within 7 working days from the date we receive your signed claims form.

OUT-OF-HOURS COVER

WHVS runs its own 24-hour emergency service from its Staines branch. You will need to be able to transport your pet to this site outside of normal working hours even though this may not be the normal branch your animal attends. To ensure that we can continue this service in the future, please note costs are significantly higher than during normal hours and are payable at the time.

Animals which are hospitalised outside normal working hours are checked and treated according to their clinical needs, which are assessed on a case-by-case and daily basis. We cannot provide 24-hour continuous monitoring unless it is specifically authorised, in writing, by one of the practice partners.

OWNERSHIP OF RECORDS; RADIOGRAPHS AND SIMILAR RECORDS

Your pet's clinical records remain the property of, and will be retained by, WHVS under the terms of the Data Protection Act (1998). A copy of your pet's records will only be sent to another veterinary surgeon on request from them. Please note that pet insurance invariably confers the insurance company right of access to your pet's clinical details.

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 records, for example radiographs, blood reports or ultrasound scans remain with WHVS.

You are entitled to view your pet's records on request, and, if necessary, an appropriate appointment to view them will be made. If you require a copy for your personal use, a charge will be made at the rate for administrative work.

CLINICAL OUTCOMES

The outcome to treatment in animals can sometimes be unpredictable and unfortunately no medicine is guaranteed to be 100% effective, nor is it guaranteed not to cause side effects. Similarly operations carry with them inherent risks of complications. We aim to inform you, where possible, of potential complications involved with therapies, diagnostic procedures and surgeries. However, it is not always possible to predict or inform a client of all the potential complications. Consequently WHVS accepts no liability for lack of efficacy or side effects relating to a drug or for complications related to a procedure unless we have been negligent in our actions.

OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

We endeavour to have an excellent professional relationship with our clients and this is achieved through mutual trust and respect. We, therefore, ask you to abide by a few simple rules whilst using our service:

- Please ensure all pets are appropriately restrained when visiting the practice – dogs on a fixed-length lead and cats, rabbits and other species in a suitable basket/container.
- Children are supervised and well-behaved both in the waiting areas and consultation rooms.
- Mobile phones are switched off whilst in the consultation room.
- All staff are treated with respect and at no time subjected to inappropriate behaviour or abusive language.

All items left with your pet at the time they are admitted to the surgery (e.g. basket, leads, blankets) should be collected at the time of discharge. If for any reasons items are not collected the practice will keep these items for a period of one month. After this time they will be discarded or, if applicable, donated to a local charity. The practice accepts no responsibility for any items reported lost after a patient has been discharged from the practice.

We make every effort to notify clients when their pets are due certain healthcare treatments e.g. vaccinations. However, the ultimate responsibility is with you, the owner, to ensure that any recommended intervals are adhered to. WHVS accepts no liability for costs incurred in restarting vaccination courses or repeat blood tests for pet passports etc.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

WHVS is generally free to decide whether to accept custom from any particular client. However any refusal to accept such custom will be both lawful and non-discriminatory. Therefore, no client shall be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of any service WHVS offers on the basis of race, colour, disability, religion, sex, age or sexuality.

WHVS will take any allegation of discrimination seriously. If you feel you have been subject to discrimination please notify the practice manager or a partner. The complaint will be kept as confidential as is possible and will be dealt with promptly.

COMPLAINTS AND STANDARDS

We hope that you never have recourse to complain about the standards of service you receive from WHVS and we welcome suggestions for improving our practice in an open manner. Please feel free to discuss any concerns you may have with a member of the practice team. However, if you wish to make a formal complaint, please direct your comments in writing to the "Practice Manager". WHVS records both incoming and outgoing telephone calls for training and monitoring purposes.

VARIATIONS IN TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF BUSINESS

No addition or variation of these conditions will bind WHVS unless specifically agreed in writing and signed by one of the partners. Additionally, no agent or person employed by or under contract with WHVS has the authority to alter or vary these terms and conditions in any way.

Willett House Veterinary Surgeons is the trading name of Willett House Vets Limited, registered in England and Wales No 08482443. Registered Office: 138 Kingston Road, Staines-upon-Thames, Middlesex TW18 1BL