

Complaints Policy

Making a complaint

We constantly strive to provide the best possible patient care and client experience; however, on occasion there may be circumstances where you feel we have not met your expectations. We are grateful for your feedback and are committed to learning and continual improvement.

This Complaints Policy explains what you need to do if you want to make a complaint, and what you can expect from us.

Who can make a complaint?

Any member of the public who has had direct interaction with one of our team or the practice as a whole. This includes suppliers, other members of the veterinary profession, members of the public and, of course, our clients. It is best if the person who experienced the service directly is prepared to liaise with us, as only they themselves can describe exactly what happened and how that affected them. An exception to this would be where a third party or representative of a client has attended the clinic on behalf of a registered client – in this situation we would want to involve the client themselves especially when discussing details about a patient.

How to complain

Complaints can be made in several ways including (but not restricted to):

- **By telephone:** Please call 01752 858636 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday, except bank holidays. The person you speak to will give their name, so you have a point of contact.
- **In writing by post:** Please write to: Dr Larissa Bruce MRCVS, Clinic Director, It's the VETS, Plympton, 12 Newnham Road, Plymouth, PL7 4AW
- **In writing by email:** Please write to contact@itsthevets.co.uk marking your email for the attention of the Clinic Director.

To help us to help you

To help us deal with your complaint more effectively, please:

- Mark your letter or email 'Complaint' and keep a copy
- Give your full name and full postal address, including post code
- Provide a daytime telephone number where we can call you if we need to

- Outline your complaint clearly, including relevant dates. Set out the facts in the order in which they happened
- Tell us clearly what you would like us to do as a result of your complaint, and what you are expecting to help resolve the issue
- Enclose copies of documents if these are relevant, keeping the originals
- Include any further information you think we may need to know.

What happens next?

If we feel we can address your concerns fully within five working days of receiving your complaint, we will respond in writing to detail our findings and decisions. If we consider we will need more than five working days, then we will send you an acknowledgment confirming that we are dealing with your complaint.

To investigate your complaint, we may need to contact other people and if we need to do this we will seek your permission.

After we have investigated your complaint, we will write to you explaining the outcome.

Who will deal with your complaint?

Your complaint will be investigated by one of the Clinic Directors and we will let you know who is dealing with the matter, so you have a contact point.

How long will the investigation take?

For issues only involving one person at this clinic rest assured your complaint will be dealt with swiftly – within 3 weeks of receiving the complaint you will have a full outcome, it may be sooner.

For more complex issues, especially where multiple team members are involved or other practices are involved, we would expect to complete an investigation within 8 weeks of receipt of your complaint, although it may be sooner. We will update you on our progress regularly during this time. If we cannot complete our investigation within 8 weeks, we will write to you to explain the delay.

When we have completed our investigation, we will write to you with a summary of what you have told us and the results of our investigations into what you experienced. We will detail the outcome decision we have made and the reasons why we have reached that decision. Where appropriate, we will include details of any redress or other settlement we are prepared to offer.

What if am unhappy with the outcome?

If you are not satisfied with our decision, you may be able to refer your complaint to an external body such as the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (www.vetmediation.co.uk) or the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/home/>).

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is the professional body which regulates the conduct of all registered veterinary surgeons. Their aim is to act in the public interest by safeguarding the health and welfare of animals and ensuring proper standards of conduct in veterinary practice. You can telephone them on 0207 2273509 or e-mail them at profcon@rcvs.org.uk. Your query will be answered by a case manager or solicitor in the Professional Conduct Department. Alternatively on the RCVS website there is a link to a [Concerns form](#) which you can complete.

The VCMS was set up by the **Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons** to develop an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) scheme and it is administered by an independent firm of solicitors.

Please note that only concerns raised by individual owners (rather than commercial clients) are eligible to be considered by VCMS.

You can learn more about VCMS by visiting [the VCMS website](#), or by contacting them directly on **0345 040 5834** or enquiries@vetmediation.co.uk.