

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Thank you for entrusting the care and attention of your horse to Durham Equine Practice. This document details our Practice Terms and Conditions. By registering your horse/horses with the practice you agree that you have read and understood our conditions of business and agree to be bound by them, should you require any clarification of any aspect of the terms then please ask.

FEE LEVELS

All fees, diets and drug charges are available on request and are subject to VAT at the current rate. Fee levels are determined by the levels of expertise and time spent on a case and according to drugs, consumables and materials used. A member of staff will be happy to discuss any queries you may have.

SETTLEMENT TERMS

Payment is due at the time of treatment or discharge unless alternative arrangements have been agreed in advance. Should an account not be settled a reminder will be sent. Should it be necessary for further reminders to be sent, administration charges will be incurred. After due notice, unpaid accounts will be referred to our debt collection agency and further charges, such as for the production of reports, correspondence, court fees, attendance at court and phone calls will be levied in respect of costs incurred in collecting the debt. While it is our policy to co-operate with our clients whenever possible, if payment is not made in accordance with our terms, then debts will be escalated for further action and may include to the County Court to issue proceedings. Any cheque or credit/debit card transaction not honoured or any cash tendered that is found to be counterfeit will result in the account being restored to the original sum with further charges added to cover bank charges and administrative costs.

If the debt is a business to business debt, then we will pursue payment of all charges and interest to which we are entitled under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 including our Administrative costs. If outstanding accounts are referred for legal proceedings the Court Fees and Legal Costs will also be claimed.

INABILITY TO PAY

If for any reason, you are unable to settle your account as specified, we ask you to discuss the matter with a member of staff, as soon as possible and before treatment takes place. Please note that instalments or part payment of any account may be sanctioned with the express permission of a senior member of staff, but any such arrangement must be agreed before treatment takes place. Emergency treatment to alleviate suffering will always be given irrespective of ability to pay.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

Accounts are due for settlement at the end of the consultation, the discharge of your horse or upon collection of drugs and/or diets. You may settle your accounts using cash or credit/debit cards. Card payments can be taken over the phone for your convenience. BACS payments are to be paid to the bank account shown on the foot of your invoice and should include as an account's reference your surname and postcode. If you can't find it, please call your local practice.

ESTIMATES OF TREATMENT COSTS

We will have provided you a written estimate as to the probable costs of a course of treatment or surgical procedure. Please bear in mind that any estimate given can only be approximate and

additional costs which cannot be predicted at the outset may occur as treatments progress. We will make every reasonable effort to discuss any such additional costs wherever possible. Written estimates are valid for one month and as they are estimates only, they may not reflect the final costs incurred.

HORSE HEALTH INSURANCE

Durham Equine Practice strongly supports the principle of insuring your horse against unexpected illness and accidents. Please ask for details about insurance from any member of staff but be aware though that with any insurance company it is your responsibility to determine your level of cover and then to reclaim any fees you have paid the practice. It is also your responsibility to pay any excess that may be set according to your policy and to have knowledge of any condition exclusions. In certain instances, when clients do not have the funds to make payments in full, arrangements can be made for your insurer to make their payment directly to us but this only applies to particular insurance companies and even then, when sums involved are high enough. Please ask for details if you would like to be considered for this facility.

Agreement of a direct claim does not transfer liability of fees incurred to the practice. 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 insurer. The practice cannot be involved in disputes over non-payment of insurance claims. We allow 30 days from completion of claim form to receiving settlement. Should the insurer not settle within that time period, the owner may be required to settle the outstanding fees in full.

VACCINATION REMINDERS

Whilst we make every reasonable effort to send out reminders for annual vaccinations, the responsibility to keep them up to date remains with you.

HOME VISITS

In an emergency, it is usually in the best interest of your horse to be seen at the surgery where facilities and a full range of drugs are available. It is not normally possible to carry out home visits. Where an estimate is given, a 50% deposit may be required prior to commencement/ continuation of the proposed treatment plan. Full payment of the estimate is required for caesarean sections.

PHARMACEUTICALS

- A. Prescriptions are available from the practice. The current charge for a written prescription is displayed in our reception areas or you may ask a member of staff for this information. You may obtain Prescription Only Medicines, Category V, (POMVs) from your veterinary surgeon or ask for a prescription and obtain these medicines from another veterinary surgeon or a pharmacy. Your veterinary surgeon may prescribe POMVs only for animals under his or her care. A prescription may not be appropriate if your animal is an in-patient or immediate treatment is necessary. You will be informed, on request, of the price of any medicine that may be prescribed for your animal. The policy of this practice is to re-assess an animal requiring prescriptions every three months, but this may vary with individual circumstances. The charge for this re-examination is our standard consultation fee. Flea and worm treatments can however be dispensed without examination as part of a health plan agreed

at the annual health assessment. Clients are requested to give 24 hours' notice for repeat prescriptions.

- B. We strongly advise the regular use of routine anti-parasitic medication. Many of these products are POMVs and legally we are only able to dispense such products without the need of an examination when an animal has been examined by a Veterinary Surgeon in the last 12 months. We may therefore be required to examine your horse prior to dispensing. To assist our clients, when the patient is just examined for the purpose of dispensing routine anti-parasitic treatment there is no charge for a consultation. Should clinical matters or a skin condition for which treatment is necessary arise out of that examination then a consultation fee will be incurred at this time.
- C. In accordance with the Medicines Act we will always use a veterinary licenced product. Should this not be available we will then use veterinary products licenced for use in other species and failing that a human medical product. Any use of off-licence medication will be based upon or knowledge of its use in animals and an assessment made of the risk and benefits involved. This is particularly common in species other than dogs and cats for which few licenced products are available. Please speak to a veterinary surgeon if you have any concerns about this issue.

EMERGENCY COVER

In an emergency call your normal practice and you will be directed to the appropriate emergency provider.

OWNERSHIP OF RECORDS

The care given to your horse may involve undertaking some specific investigations, for example taking radiographs. The ownership of the resulting radiographs and all other records will remain at all times with the practice as part of the complete and comprehensive records. Charges made for x-rays are for the production and interpretation of them. If required, we can arrange copies of the x-rays but this would be at your expense.

Radiographs and copies of all laboratory results, with a summary of the history will be passed on, by request, to another Veterinary Surgeon should the need arise. You may view your horse's clinical notes on request by appointment only. Please note it is your responsibility to provide us with accurate contact details.

COMPLIMENTS/FEEDBACK

We are always pleased to receive compliments/feedback on the service we provide.

COMPLAINTS AND STANDARDS

We hope to ensure you never have recourse to complain about the standards of service received from us. However, if you feel that there is something you wish to raise, please direct your comments within 28 days in writing, to **[INSERT DETAILS]**. An acknowledgement will be sent by return and then a period will elapse while the case is investigated and reports collated from those staff involved. A reply in writing will follow, usually within 28 days although the period may be longer if the Practice Manager or staff involved are temporarily unavailable or delayed.

We will not tolerate any aggressive, or abusive behaviour to any staff member, at any time. Any client behaving in such a way will be asked to leave the premises immediately and will then be notified in writing that they must find alternative veterinary cover.

VARIATIONS IN TERMS AND CONDITIONS OR BUSINESS

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