

# TERMS AND CONDITIONS



Thank you for entrusting the care of your pet to our Practice. This letter details our Practice Terms & Conditions. There are separate Terms and Conditions for use of our website which can be found on the bottom of each page of the website. Some aspects of the Terms may not be relevant to you. If anything is unclear, please ask for further explanation or clarification.

## OUR PRACTICE

We, Independent Vetcare Limited (trading as Southern Counties Veterinary Specialists), aim to provide the highest standards of veterinary care. Southern Counties Veterinary Specialists is dedicated to providing a cutting edge service for your pets. We encourage all members of the Practice to fulfil this through extensive further education, and constant consideration of their client and their pets; our facilities and equipment are updated and maintained to the highest standards. Independent Vetcare Limited are a group of leading veterinary practices across the UK who have come together to pool resources, skills and knowledge.

## OUR STAFF

We undertake to provide veterinary care of the highest standards for your pet. Our veterinary surgeons are all members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the British Veterinary Association and the British Small Animal Veterinary Association, amongst others. They also have additional qualifications and specialise in different areas of veterinary medicine and surgery. They are all covered by Professional Liability Insurance and the practice is covered for Public Liability.

We are fortunate that the vast majority of clients we deal with are a pleasure to help. However, we will not tolerate any physical or verbal assaults on our staff, and will involve the Police if necessary. We reserve the right to refuse treatment on these grounds, although will always pass on any patient medical records we have to another veterinary surgeon.

## OPENING HOURS & EMERGENCIES

Our normal opening hours for consultations are 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm on Saturday. These times may change from time to time. All animals are seen by appointment only, and all are seen by referral from your usual veterinary surgeon only. We run an emergency veterinary service out of normal hours, which is available 24 hours a day for 365 days of the year, but animals are only seen after referral from your usual veterinary surgeon. Therefore, in emergency, your own veterinary surgeon should be called first, and they should contact us if necessary. Please leave routine enquiries for normal office hours. Our fees out of hours will be higher than normal to reflect the appreciable extra costs incurred in providing this service.

## REFERRAL

We only see animals by referral from their usual veterinary surgeon. We will expect to see all relevant clinical history and results of diagnostic tests, and will freely share our clinical notes and test results with your veterinary surgeon. We will be responsible for passing the relevant information back to them. Our aim is to work closely with them to achieve a favourable outcome for you and your pet. We will not become your new vet, but we will assist your usual vet. Follow-up checks will usually be necessary with us, although we will try to ensure that, for your convenience, your vet carries out as much of the treatment as possible. Please note there is always a charge for follow-up consultations.

## HOSPITALISATION

All animals which need to be kept on our premises are cared for by a qualified Veterinary Surgeon and Veterinary Nurse at all times of the day and night. These members of staff are up and working all night, and are available to give medication, check intravenous drips, and monitor all in-patients at all times. Several specialist veterinary surgeons are available at short notice 24 hours a day. For security reasons, the nurses are not allowed to open the doors out of hours, unless a vet is also present. The hospital is protected by alarm.

## FEES

A sample of our fees is available in our client packs, on our website or on request. Please ask if you would like to know the cost of anything else. We would encourage you to discuss costs of procedures in advance with our vets. They are used to doing this, and are happy to provide estimates of costs at any time. Please bear in mind that estimates can only be approximate. Pet's illnesses will often not follow a conventional course. However we do undertake to attempt to discuss any changes in costs before continuing, unless treatment is essential for your pet's welfare.

All fees are due for settlement at the end of the consultation, the discharge of your pet after hospitalisation and upon collection of drugs and diets. You may settle your account using cash, cheque, or most Credit and Debit cards. We do not accept American Express.

## CONSENT FORMS

You will be asked to sign a consent form if your pet is left with us for diagnostic tests or treatment. The form covers treatment and tests we plan to carry out, as well as an estimate (not a quotation) of fees we feel likely to be incurred. Our vet will go through this with you, and answer any questions you may have. This is an important legal document, so please be sure that you read it carefully before signing. Signature may be by the owner of the pet or their Agent. The person signing the consent form must be 18 years old or above. Agents should note that they, personally, are legally liable for any document they sign.

## PET HEALTH INSURANCE

We strongly support the principle of insuring your pet against unexpected illness or accidents, and understand how important this can be for clients who may otherwise be unable to pay our fees. We are happy to complete Pet Insurance claim forms, and will claim directly with your insurance company as long as you have provided us with the necessary policy details before treatment commences.

Most policies have an excess which you have to pay and we will ask for this as a deposit at the beginning of treatment. If a signed claim form is not passed to us, or the excess we require is not paid at the time of treatment, we will be unable to claim directly and the full fees will become due immediately. In this case the settlement terms will apply (see Settlement Terms below). We undertake to complete all claim forms within a few days to ensure that your payment is not delayed.

Please remember that the insurance policy contract is between you, the client, and the insurance company. We cannot be held responsible for any matters which result in a claim being refused, and in these cases you will be responsible for settling our account in full – see Settlement Terms below.

## SETTLEMENT TERMS

### Uninsured or standard insurance claims

Should an account not be settled, an administration fee of 1% of the total outstanding will be added one calendar month after the end of the month in which the fee was produced & a statement will be sent. After this, administration fees will be added at a rate of 1% per month of the new total outstanding. After due notice to the client, overdue accounts will be referred to a Debt Collection Agency; and an administration charge of £25 will be charged immediately. In addition, any costs incurred by us in collection of the debt will be passed on to you. These will include the commission charged by the Debt Collection Agency, as well as any fees charged by the Court, and costs to us of correspondence, attendance at Court, phone calls, and home visits.

Examples of these fees at 1 May 2014 are:

Court fee	£80.00	
Debt collector fee	up to £1000	20% of total
	£1000+	15% of total

Fees will be subject to variation, and these figures are given as guidelines only. Any cheque that is returned by our Bank as unpaid, 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 and administrative costs.

### **Direct Insurance Claims**

If the signed claim form is not provided to us or excess due to us is not settled at the time of treatment, the fees will be due immediately and the settlement terms above will apply.

In the case of an insurance claim being refused by the Insurance Company, we will help if we can. However, all fees will become payable by the client immediately. These will be subject to the settlement terms laid out in the paragraphs above, and administration fees will be due from one calendar month after the end of the month in which treatment took place.

If fees covered by a direct insurance claim are not settled by the insurance company and/or the client by two months, after the end of the month in which treatment took place, then our settlement fees will apply.

In all of the above, if a direct claim is not settled because of an error made in completing the insurance claim form by SCVS staff, then settlement fees will be due two months after the end of the month in which a corrected claim form was sent to the insurance company to their satisfaction.

### **INABILITY TO PAY**

If for any reason, you are unable to settle your account as specified above, we ask you to discuss the matter as soon as possible with a member of staff. Please note that instalments or part payments can only be sanctioned with the express permission of a Clinical Director or Practice Manager. These will always be subject to an administration fee of 1% of the outstanding amount per month, calculated from one calendar month after the end of the month in which the treatment took place.

### **USE OF YOUR DETAILS & CONFIDENTIALITY**

Southern Counties Veterinary Specialists is registered under the Data Protection Act. Your details will not be passed on to any third party. However, we may from time to time contact you for follow up on your pet's progress. We follow the guidelines of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, which require us to keep patient files confidential; unless to do so would, in our opinion, compromise your pet's welfare.

### **TELEPHONE CALLS**

Telephone calls may be monitored for the purpose of staff training.

### **OWNERSHIP OF RECORDS**

Case records are the property of, and will be retained by Southern Counties Veterinary Specialists. Copies will be passed, on request, to your usual veterinary surgeon, or to the client following written request. Ownership of radiographs, ultrasound, CT and MRI scans and similar data will remain with the Practice. Any fee which has been paid will be for the preparation of these images and their interpretation only and does not imply your ownership. However, we can provide clients with copies of these images. A small charge may be made to cover our costs.

### **COMPLAINTS AND STANDARDS**

We hope that you never have recourse to complain about the standard of service received. However, if there is something which you are not happy about, we would encourage you to let us know, so that appropriate action can be taken. Please contact the Practice manager in the first instance. We will reply to all instances promptly.

### **REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS**

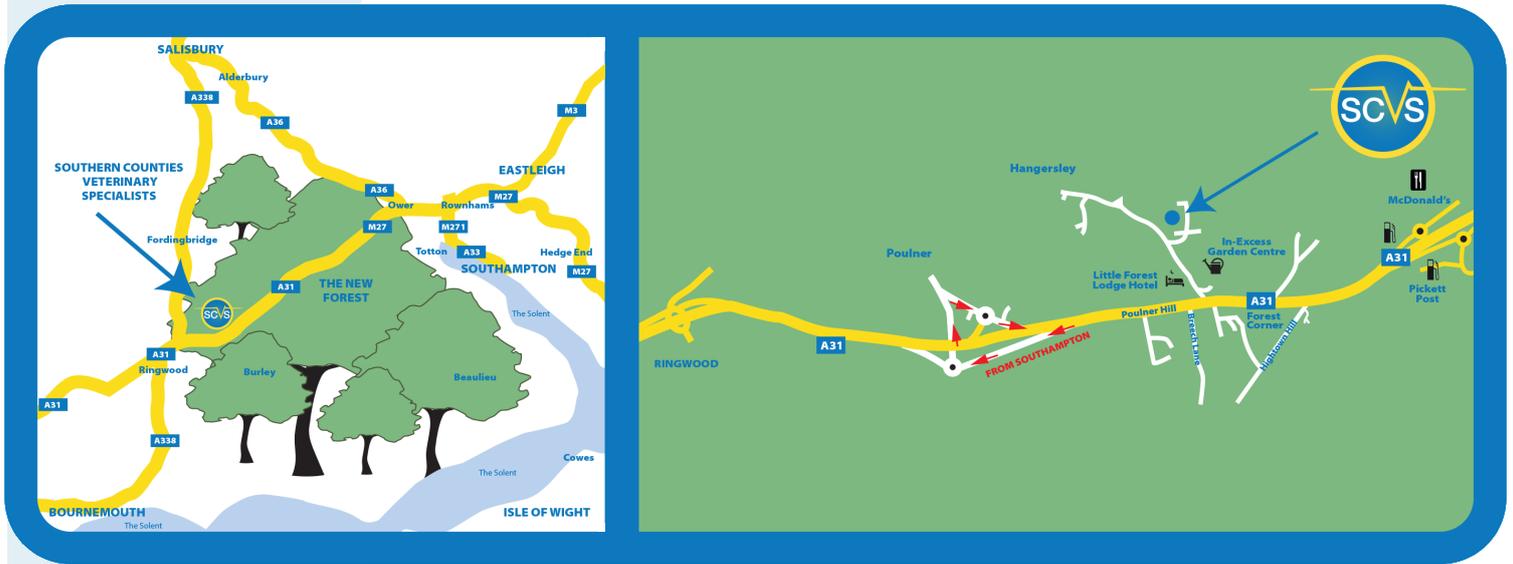
Your usual veterinary surgeon will usually arrange for repeat prescriptions for your pet. This will usually be more convenient for you, and enables your vet to keep up to date with you're your pet's current medical status. They may occasionally ask us to do so if, for example, they do not normally stock a particular medicine. We are happy to provide a Prescription for you to have medications dispensed elsewhere. We do charge a fee for each Prescription written. Please note we cannot take responsibility for medications purchased elsewhere that has been stored incorrectly or have incorrect labels. Please also note that it is a criminal offence to use medications that do not have a UK Licence (e.g. from some foreign internet sites).

### **RETURN OF MEDICINES**

We are unable to re-sell medications for legal reasons, and therefore are unable to give a refund for any returned to us. However, we are happy to dispose of any medications for you free of charge.

September 2015

# HOW TO FIND US



## From the East:

Approach via M27 Southampton and onto the A31.

Go past the Picket Post underpass with the Shell garages either side of the motorway. Continue down the hill and take the next slip road left signposted to Poulner. See red arrows on map. →

At the mini roundabout turn right and go over the motorway bridge. →

Take the next exit right and at the roundabout go straight over and re-join the A31. →

Continue up the hill and take the next slip road left signposted to Hangersley.

In-Excess garden centre will be ahead of you as you turn left.

Continue down the road as it bears left.

Forest Corner Farm is the next right hand turn signposted SCVS on the fence.

Go over 2 speed bumps and our car park is directly in front of you, with the entrance to reception on the left.

## From the North:

Approach via the A338 from Salisbury.

At the Ringwood roundabout take the 1<sup>st</sup> exit left onto the A31, signposted to Southampton.

Continue up the hill

Take second slip road on your left signposted to Hangersley.

In-Excess garden centre will be ahead of you as you turn left.

See approach from the east for directions from here.

## From the West:

Approach via the A31 from Dorset.

Stay in the outside 2 lanes and go past the Ringwood town centre turnoff.

Continue up the hill

Take second slip road on your left signposted to Hangersley.

In-Excess garden centre will be ahead of you as you turn left.

See approach from the east for directions from here.

NB Directions were correct at time of printing and should only be used as guidance.

**Southern Counties Veterinary Specialists**  
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Hangersley  
RINGWOOD  
Hampshire

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