



## The Aces – Client Complaints Procedure

**Practice:** The Aces

**Address:** Pitsea Hall Lane, Pitsea, Essex, SS16 4UH

**Contact Number:** 01268 435988

**Website:** [www.theaces.vet](http://www.theaces.vet)

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### 1. Our Commitment

At The Aces, we are committed to providing high standards of clinical care and client service. We take any concerns raised by our clients seriously and aim to resolve them promptly, fairly, and transparently in accordance with guidance from the **Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)**.

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### 2. Stage One – Informal Resolution (Verbal Concern)

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, we ask that you raise your concern directly with the practice in the first instance.

This may be done by:

- Speaking to the attending veterinary surgeon or nurse, or
- Asking to speak to the Practice Manager.

Many concerns can be resolved quickly and informally at this stage.

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### 3. Stage Two – Formal Written Complaint

If you do not feel that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily following discussion with the clinic, you are invited to submit your complaint in writing.

Written complaints should include:

- A clear description of your concerns,
- The date(s) of the incident(s),
- The names of those involved (if known), and
- The outcome you are seeking.

Complaints may be sent by email or post to:

**Practice Manager**

The Aces.Vet

Pitsea Hall Lane

Pitsea

Essex

SS16 4UH

✉ [reception@theaces.vet](mailto:reception@theaces.vet)

#### 4. Acknowledgement of Complaint

All written complaints will be acknowledged within **five (5) working days** of receipt.

At this stage, we may request further information or clarification to ensure a full and fair investigation can take place.

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#### 5. Investigation Process

From the date of acknowledgement, the practice will undertake a thorough review, which may include:

- Detailed review of the patient's clinical records
- Discussion with all staff members involved
- Review of relevant policies or procedures
- Consultation with our professional indemnity advisers if appropriate

We aim to provide a formal written response within **ten (10) working days** of the acknowledgement date.

If the investigation requires additional time due to complexity, we will inform you and provide an updated timeframe.

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#### 6. Outcome

Our written response will:

- Summarise the complaint
  - Outline the findings of our investigation
  - Clarify whether any shortcomings were identified
  - Explain any corrective actions or learning points
  - Confirm our final position
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#### 7. Appeal Process

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may request a review of the decision. This request should be made in writing within **14 days** of receiving our formal response.

A secondary review will be conducted by the Clinical Director or another senior decision-maker not directly involved in the initial investigation.

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## 8. External Resolution

If you remain dissatisfied after completing our internal complaints process, there are two external organisations that may be able to assist, depending on the nature of your concern.

### Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS)

The Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS) administers the RCVS-approved Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) scheme.


VCMS may be able to assist if your concern relates to:

- The service you have received from a veterinary practice
- The fees you have been charged
- Alleged negligence

VCMS may also help where you are seeking:

- An apology
- A refund
- Corrective or further treatment
- A goodwill payment

If you believe your concern falls into one of these categories, you may contact VCMS directly:

 0345 040 5834

 [enquiries@vetmediation.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@vetmediation.co.uk)

 [www.vetmediation.co.uk](http://www.vetmediation.co.uk)

Please note: The VCMS scheme is voluntary, which means the veterinary surgeon must agree to VCMS involvement.

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### Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)


The RCVS regulates veterinary surgeons and can only deal with the most serious concerns relating to professional conduct.

These include:

- Serious departures from the standards set out in the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct
- Fraud or dishonesty
- Criminal convictions or cautions
- Physical or mental health problems affecting a veterinary surgeon's ability to practise safely

The RCVS does not generally investigate fee disputes or customer service issues unless they raise concerns about professional misconduct.

If you believe your concern falls within these categories, or you are unsure which organisation is appropriate, you can contact the RCVS directly:

 020 7202 0789

 <https://animalowners.rcvs.org.uk/concerns/i-want-to-raise-a-concern-about-a-veterinary-surgeon/>

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## **9. Confidentiality and Records**

All complaints are handled confidentially and in accordance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Records of complaints will be retained securely as part of our clinical governance and quality assurance process.

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## **10. Continuous Improvement**

We view complaints as an opportunity to improve our services. Where appropriate, lessons learned will be shared with the team to enhance patient care and client experience.

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## **Policy Review**

This policy is reviewed annually and updated in accordance with RCVS and regulatory guidance.