

Member Leaflet

Questions clients may ask and how to respond...

Q1. How do I know how much things cost at your practice?

A. On our website you will find an up-to-date list of common procedures and prices (if you don't have this consider putting this on and ensuring it is updated with any price changes). This includes consult charges, vaccination charges and neutering charges. For more detailed information please speak to one of our vets who can give a full estimate for you for any more complicated procedures.

(Don't be worried about putting your charges on your website with regards to influencing direct competitors. Clients will come to your vets to see you and value your standard of care. All the staff need to be on board with pricing and be happy justifying costs when needed and comfortably talking about how much things cost).

Q2. Why does it cost so much to spay my dog when it's such a routine procedure?

A. Actually, we do all our neuterings at a discounted price to encourage owners to take this procedure up. Although many people think this sort of operation is routine, despite doing it regularly it is far from routine. The cost involves an initial pre op check, an admit appointment with the nurse on the day of the operation to go over any further concerns, full anaesthetic monitoring throughout the procedure and during recovery, pain relief throughout the procedure and during recovery (both systemic and local) and as many post op checks as you need. The procedure itself varies depending on the species and sex of the animal but we use the best anaesthetic and surgical techniques to ensure your pet is in the best hands.

Q3. Why have your prices gone up this year?

A. As we all know, the cost of living increases every year. The property costs, electric, gas, water bills, cost of medications and consumables, costs of phones, computer systems, equipment, training of staff, staff wages all contribute. We maintain a fair price for the work we do. We are also able to run an out of hours service, manned by our own staff (or we use an out of hours provider which comes at a substantial cost) which is costly to run but we want to be able to offer this to our clients.

Q4. Do you offer any payment plans

- A. We don't offer payment plans. There may be an alternative method of treatment we can try (explain cost implications and medical implications of this).
Alternatively, there is a loan company we can put you in touch with that deal specifically with veterinary clients (your practice may already be affiliated with a veterinary loan company).

Q5. Are you part of a corporate group

- A. Either yes (speak about where this is displayed and which other vets are part of this group in your area) or No, we are independent. (which means we are not part of a corporate)

Q6. What does your out of hours cost ? Why is it so much?

- A. Be clear what a call out and consult will cost. Be clear if there are any extra charges if a nurse is called in. Advise that after the initial consult the vet can give a more detailed estimate of any further costs for any further treatment. Many people feel the cost of our of hours is expensive. We have to pay for a vet and nurse to be on site at our hospital from when the doors close at 7am to when they open at 8am. This is a 13 hour shift for each so I am sure you will appreciate just to cover their cost is a substantial amount. In fact, this is why many vets have had to move to using separate out of hours providers because it is not financially viable to do their own ooh. On top of this it is really tricky to get staff to work these unsociable hours and for them to maintain a good work/life balance.

Q7. I am worried I can't afford the treatment you are suggesting. Do you have any other alternatives?

- A. There are always alternatives treatment so please don't feel awkward for asking. The vet can go through alternative options with you and the cost implications of this. Again, we do have a veterinary specific loan company we work with if there really is no other option but 99% of the time there are other options.

Q8. Can I take a prescription to buy my medication on line?

A. You absolutely can. The cost of this is £x. Just be careful you are happy with the source. At the vets we are regulated for the transport, storage and content of our medication so you always know you have the correct drug in the correct form. On line sources do not have the same regulations. We have the drugs on the shelf now if you would like or like I said, we are happy to write you a prescription if you prefer.

(It may also be worth offering to send the prescription directly to the chosen pharmacy. This is mainly to prevent any fraudulent activity which is happening more frequently when prescriptions are handed out to clients).

Q9. I am worried about my/another member of staff's mental health as we have all found navigating this quite tricky. Where can we get some help?

A. Go onto this website: <https://www.vetlife.org.uk/> This gives independent, confidential advice to help give support with finances and health. They are open 365 days a year, 24 hours a day on 0303 040 2551.

For further details, please contact: office@spvs.org.uk