

# StJAMES



## VETERINARY GROUP

### Terms and Conditions Key Points

- We aim to provide high quality, compassionate care.
- We love animals, and we know how precious and special a privilege it is to own a pet, and how strong the emotional bond you feel for your pet is. We are entirely committed to treating your pet as one of our own, and strive to treat both the pet and their dedicated owner compassionately and professionally, to the best of our combined abilities.
- We aim to provide the very best facilities, equipment and expertise possible, and are fully committed to doing our very best for you and your pet.
- We are very proud to continue to run our own 24-hour emergency service 365 days a year, with a full team of our own excellent vets and nurses.
- Whilst we continually strive to deliver value, our charges must be proportional to our investment in our facilities and team, to enable us to continue to be here for you. Please consider Pet Insurance to help cover the costs of any treatment that may be required (please see our 'Insurance Small Print' document for guidance).
- All consultations are by appointment only and all consultations are chargeable.
- We strongly recommend having arrangements in place to transport your pet to the surgery, especially in an emergency. We can provide Pet Taxi numbers to help with this.
- We can offer direct insurance claims in most situations. Where treatment is not being covered by a direct insurance claim, payment is required at the time of treatment or on discharge if your pet is hospitalised.

### Terms and Conditions

Thank you for entrusting the care of your pet to St James' Veterinary Group. This document details the terms and conditions of the Practice. Should you require clarification on any aspect then please feel free to contact us.

#### Consulting Hours and Appointments:

All consultations are by appointment only. Please contact the branch of your choice to book an appropriate consultation time. All consultations are chargeable, please ask for current fees. Standard appointments for sick animals are 15-20 minutes and for vaccinations 15 minutes. Should you be unable to attend your appointment please give us as much notice as possible so that it can be offered to another client. We will always endeavor to keep our clinics running on time. However, due to circumstances that we are not always able to control, please be aware that appointments can run over. Please aim to arrive a few minutes before your scheduled appointment time. If you are late and miss your appointment you will be offered the next available appointment. If all appointments are full you may be asked to rebook or to wait the end of the current consultation period to be seen. We encourage clients to try and see one or two vets to maintain a consistent approach to treatment of their animals. Unfortunately, this may not always be possible out of hours or in an emergency situation.

#### Control of animals

It is a practice requirement that all cats must be housed in a cat carrier in the waiting room and dogs that can't easily be handled should be muzzled. We reserve the right to ask you to muzzle your dog should it be necessary to control your dog.

#### Operations

All operations are booked in advance where possible. Routine operations are carried out at all branches. More complicated procedures are usually performed at our main Hospital where we have more advanced medical and

surgical facilities and overnight hospitalisation and care available. It is your responsibility to transport your pet between branches.

**Emergency Service:**

Emergencies during normal opening hours.

Please call ahead if possible to let us know your pet needs to be seen as an emergency. You may be directed to another branch where better care can be given. Inform the reception team when you arrive and they will make sure you are seen as soon as possible. There is an additional charge for daytime emergencies seen outside of normal consultation hours.

**Emergencies outside of normal opening hours.**

St James Veterinary Group is proud to be one of the few remaining practices in the area to still offer its own out of hours cover and provide a 24-hour emergency service to our clients. This is performed by our own staff (nurses and veterinary staff) from our hospital branch in Sketty. Should you require the emergency service please contact the main branch to discuss your requirements. (Telephone 01792 205000). Please note there is an extra charge for this service in addition to our standard consultation fees. This is in line with other emergency service providers in the area. Whilst we hope that you never need to make use of this service, please consider how you might transport your pet to us out of hours.

**Hospitalisation:**

At the Hospital facility a minimum of two members of the nursing team are on site throughout the night to personally care for your pet. Your pet will be checked at least every two hours and more often if necessary. A Veterinary Surgeon is available on call to attend the Practice, 24 hours a day, should the nurse have any cause for concern. Routinely the vet will check your pet in the early evening (6pm-8pm), again before bedtime (10pm-12am) and as often as necessary throughout the night. There is a second Veterinary Surgeon on call each night should they be required to assist with your pet or other emergencies.

Any medications required will be given whenever needed; optimising your pet's treatment/recovery and ensuring they are kept comfortable throughout the night. We will endeavour to keep you updated of your pet's condition on a daily basis and as soon as possible should a significant or unexpected deterioration occur. Please ensure your contact details are up to date when your pet is admitted to the hospital.

**House Visits:**

We generally recommend your pet is brought to the Surgery for examination and treatment as we have the facilities, equipment and staff available to give a better level of care. If a house visit is preferred and considered practical then we will make every effort to accommodate this. Wherever possible this should be arranged in advance during normal working hours. Unfortunately, we are unable to guarantee a house visit outside of normal working hours or in an emergency situation, and it remains the client's responsibility to ensure transport to the Practice is possible.

**Referrals/Second Opinions:**

Whilst we are able to provide a large range of services and facilities within the Practice, sometimes it may be in your pet's best interest to consider referral to an alternative or more specialist Practice. If such care is considered appropriate this will be discussed with yourself. If you would prefer referral or a second opinion within the St James' team then please feel free to discuss this with us.

**Fees and Estimates:**

All fees, medication and product charges are available upon request. VAT is chargeable at the current rate. Fee levels are based upon expertise and time taken to perform a procedure. We are able to provide a written estimate of costs for a procedure or course of treatment. However, any estimate given can only be approximate, taking into consideration the probable course of treatment. Unforeseen complications and individual variation in response to treatment may mean that the final invoice is different to the original estimate. We will do our best to keep clients updated of ongoing costs and anticipated costs during the course of treatment. Please ensure that you have an understanding of the costs prior to treatment commencing and also during the course of treatment.

**Payment:**

Payment is required at the time of treatment or upon discharge of your pet unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance, such as a direct insurance claim. Should an account not be settled then a reminder will be sent later that month. Should it be necessary to send further reminders then additional administration costs may be incurred. Failure to settle accounts or make suitable arrangements with the Practice will result in referral of the account to a debt management agency. Further charges will be incurred due to the costs involved of such action. If payment terms are not met, then following due notification, the practice reserves the right to withdraw the provision of services and request that you make alternative arrangements for the veterinary care of your pet.

**Inability to Pay:**

If you are unable to pay for the treatment necessary then please discuss this prior to treatment as alternative options may be available. If you are unable to settle an existing account then please speak to Laura Evans, our accounts manager, as soon as possible to discuss possible arrangements.

**Insurance:**

We actively recommend Pet Health Insurance and are happy to discuss this topic generally, but under the terms of the Financial Conduct Authority we are unable to recommend any individual provider or policy. It remains the client's responsibility to select an Insurance provider and level of cover that suits their circumstances. Insurance claims may be processed with the insurance provider either paying the Practice directly (a "direct claim"), or the client reclaiming the cost of treatment after they have paid the Practice. Direct claims will require the completion of a 'Direct Claim Eligibility Form' before or at the time of treatment, and the Practice reserves the right to make a charge for such claims.

The agreement between the insurer and the client is independent of St James Veterinary Group Ltd, and it is the client's responsibility to initiate and monitor the progress of any claim made. We are happy to help, and can often process claim forms on behalf of clients, but the overall responsibility for this remains solely with the client. We advise clients to check the terms and conditions of their insurance policy, as there is often a time-frame within which a claim must be made. It is the client's responsibility to submit a claim form as soon as possible after treatment, and **as an absolute maximum within 30 days of the start of treatment**. It is also the client's responsibility to pay any excesses or deductions made by the insurance company, and should the claim be declined, the outstanding account remains the responsibility of the client. Details of clinical history may be passed to insurance companies as a routine part of the claim's procedure.

**Medications:**

In line with legal requirements, prescription only medications may only be dispensed to animals under our care. This will require your pet being seen by a veterinary surgeon before the medication can be provided. The timeframe in which your pet must have been seen will depend upon the medication and condition being treated, varying from every 3-12 months. A consultation charge is made for these re-examinations, please ask for details of the current price.

Repeat prescriptions require a minimum of 48-hours notice as not all medications are kept in stock. If your pet has not been seen within the required time period for the medication being requested, then an appointment may be necessary. It is the client's responsibility to request any medication with sufficient time to arrange such appointments.

Whilst we endeavour to be competitive in terms of the price of medication, you may choose to buy medication from alternative sources. Written prescriptions are available upon request to do so. A charge is payable for this service, please ask for details of the current price. Written prescriptions are subject to the same re-examination requirements as dispensed medication.

In accordance with the Medicines Act we will always endeavour to use a veterinary licensed product to treat your animal. However, this may not always be possible/appropriate, in which case we will follow the 'cascade system' to select the next appropriate drug. Any use of an off-licence drug is based upon a risk-benefit analysis. In dispensing an unlicensed medication, the veterinary surgeon involved may require you to sign an "off license" or "cascade use" consent form. Please speak to a veterinary surgeon should you have any concerns about this issue. Due to government legislation we are unable to refund any unused medications. You may return unwanted or unused medication to us for disposal.

**Ownership of Records:**

All clinical records, including radiographs and similar documents remain the property of St James' Veterinary Group. Any charges are made for the interpretation of such records rather than the documents themselves. We will of course provide copies of clinical histories and other documents (including radiographs), by request or to another Veterinary Practice should this be necessary.

**Registration with the practice**

For new clients that do not have any animals registered with the practice, that do not require vaccinations, a registration consultation is necessary. This includes a full clinical examination of your pet, a weight check and a discussion about pet insurance, flea and worming treatment and a discussion about your pet's teeth, body condition and any other concerns about your pet's health that you may have. As a new client you will be required to provide ID and a utility bill from the last 3 months to confirm your address.

If you have rehomed or rescued a dog from Europe, in particular Eastern Europe, it is practice policy to blood sample your dog for Brucella Canis. Brucella is a zoonotic disease that causes disease in humans. More information can be found at: - <http://apha.defra.gov.uk/documents/surveillance/diseases/Canine-Brucellosis-Summary-Final-260421.pdf>

Sadly, we cannot register or treat any dogs that are positive for Brucella Canis.

Please be aware that some specialist referral practices require Brucella testing in dogs that have travelled abroad to Europe prior to referral.

**Audio/visual recording:**

We have CCTV cameras in operation around the building for the safety and security of staff and clients. No personal audio recording, video recording or photography may take place within the practice without the express consent or permission of the practice manager or practice director. No conversations with any members of staff may be recorded without their consent.

**Vaccination Reminders and Export Certificates:**

The Practice will attempt to contact you to remind you that your pet's vaccination is due to be performed. However, this is a complimentary service and it remains the client's responsibility to ensure vaccinations are up to date. During the completion of export procedures and overseas travel, it remains the client's responsibility to ensure that all requirements are satisfied.

**Training practice**

St James Veterinary Group is an accredited Veterinary Nurse Training Practice. As part of their training student nurses may be involved in the care of your pet. If you do not wish for this to happen please inform the Practice in advance of any treatment being provided.

**Post operative complications**

Complications are uncommon, but unfortunately, they do occur in a small number of cases. A combination of patient factors, environmental factors and occasionally surgical or medical factors can play a role. As a practice, we will always do our best to successfully resolve any complications, and aim to take as helpful a stance as possible on charging for the required treatment. This will need to be discussed with a manager on an individual case basis.

**Complaints Procedure:**

We sincerely hope that you will never feel the need to complain about the services and care provided by St James Veterinary Group. However, should you be dissatisfied with the treatment of your pet then we initially advise that you discuss this with the veterinary surgeon involved.

Should this not be appropriate or unsuccessful then we advise you contact the Practice at the earliest opportunity so that the issue can be resolved 01792 205000. All complaints should be directed to the Client Care Manager, Ms Catherine Rogers ([cath@stjamesvet.co.uk](mailto:cath@stjamesvet.co.uk)) in the first instance. We may request that you put your complaint in writing so that it can be recorded and dealt with appropriately.

No addition or variation of these conditions will bind the Practice unless specifically agreed in writing and signed by one of the Partners. No other agent or person has the authority to alter these conditions.