

Heritage Vets

Impartial Advice Policy

Issued in accordance with the Competition and Markets Authority Veterinary Services Remedies Order 2026

Practice Name	Heritage Vets
Practice Address	4 Thornybank, Dakeith
Policy Owner	Becky Keeble
Version	1.0
Date Issued	10 th June 2026
Next Review Date	10 th June 2027
Approved By	Sara Murray and Becky Keeble - Directors

PART 1

Regulatory Compliance Statement

This policy is issued in response to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Final Report into Veterinary Services (March 2026) and the associated CMA Veterinary Services Order (the Order), which comes into force on 23 September 2026.

The Order requires all veterinary practices operating in the United Kingdom to maintain a written impartiality policy demonstrating that clinical advice and treatment recommendations are made solely on the basis of clinical need, free from commercial influence or financial incentive.

Heritage Vets confirms full commitment to the requirements of the Order and to the principles set out in this policy.

1.1 Policy Purpose

This policy sets out how **Heritage Vets** ensures that:

- All clinical advice given to clients is impartial, evidence-based, and free from commercial pressure.
- The practice has taken active and documented steps to separate clinical decision-making from financial incentives.

- Clients have access to an independent, third-party advice channel that has no commercial interest in the outcome of any consultation.
- All relevant interactions are recorded and auditable, providing a transparent record that can be produced to the CMA or any other regulatory body on request.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All clinical and client-facing staff employed by or contracted to **Heritage Vets**
- All advice given to clients, whether in person, by telephone, in writing, or through any digital channel including VidiVet.
- All treatment recommendations, diagnostic referrals, and product recommendations made by the practice.

1.3 Policy Statement on Clinical Independence

Heritage Vets confirms that:

Clinical decisions are based on clinical need alone

Treatment recommendations, diagnostic tests, and referrals are made solely on the basis of the clinical presentation and welfare needs of the patient. No clinician employed by or contracted to this practice is incentivised, directly or indirectly, on the basis of revenue generated from individual treatment plans, product sales, or diagnostic volumes.

No undisclosed commercial relationships influence clinical advice

Heritage Vets will not allow undisclosed commercial arrangements with product suppliers, pharmaceutical companies, or any other third party to influence clinical recommendations. Where any commercial relationship exists that could be perceived to influence advice, this will be declared to clients on request.

Clients are actively supported to make informed decisions

Clients are provided with clear, honest information about treatment options, including the option to seek a second opinion. Clients are never pressured into accepting treatment, and all advice is given in a manner that supports informed consent.

Complaints about perceived commercial bias are taken seriously

Any client who believes that advice they have received was influenced by commercial interest rather than clinical need may raise a concern with **The Practice Directors** at contact@heritagevets.co.uk. All such concerns will be investigated and responded to in writing within 10 working days.

1.4 Governance and Accountability

This policy is owned by **The Directors** and will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if:

- There is a material change to the CMA Order or associated regulatory guidance.
- A complaint is upheld relating to perceived commercial bias.
- There is a significant change to the practice's ownership, structure, or commercial arrangements.

A log of all policy reviews will be maintained and available for inspection.

PART 2

Independent Advice Layer: VidiVet

As a further step to demonstrate and deliver impartial advice, **Heritage Vets** has partnered with VidiVet, a UK-based veterinary telehealth platform operating independently of this practice.

2.1 Independence of VidiVet

VidiVet operates as a fully independent third party. **Heritage Vets** confirms that:

- VidiVet has never sold a product to a pet owner. It has no commercial interest in the outcome of any advice it gives.
- VidiVet veterinary surgeons are UK-registered (RCVS) and are not employed by or financially incentivised by this practice.
- VidiVet does not receive referral fees, commissions, or any other payment linked to the clinical outcome of its advice.
- VidiVet does not recommend specific branded products, endorse commercial suppliers, or sell any product or service. Where a type of product may be clinically appropriate, such as a probiotic, clients are directed to discuss this with their own veterinary practice.

These conditions mean that advice given through VidiVet is structurally free from the commercial pressures identified by the CMA as a source of perceived bias in the veterinary sector.

2.2 Role of VidiVet Within the Client Journey

VidiVet provides clients of **Heritage Vets** with **OOH access** to professional veterinary advice before, during, and between in-person consultations. Its role is to:

- Provide impartial triage and clinical guidance based solely on the welfare needs of the patient.
- Help clients understand their pet's condition and what to expect before an in-person visit.
- Reduce the perception that advice is driven by the commercial environment of the practice.
- Give clients confidence that the guidance they receive is genuinely independent.

VidiVet is not a replacement for physical examination and cannot prescribe Prescription Only Medicines (POM-V) under UK law, which requires physical examination by the prescribing vet. It is a clinical support and triage tool.

2.3 Documentation and Audit Trail

Every interaction between a client and a VidiVet veterinary surgeon is:

- Recorded and timestamped within the VidiVet platform.
- Summarised and shared with this practice, with the client's awareness, to support continuity of care.
- Retained in a format that can be produced to the CMA or any regulatory body on request.

This creates a documented, auditable record of independent advice given to clients, consistent with the CMA's expectation that practices maintain transparent and accountable communication processes.

2.4 Client Access to VidiVet

Access to VidiVet is provided to all registered clients of Heritage Vets at no additional charge. Clients can access the service as follows:

1. Visit **the practice website** to activate your account.
2. Download the VidiVet app from the App Store or Google Play.
3. Log in using the email address registered with this practice.
4. Submit a text, photo, or video of your concern. A response will be provided by an RCVS-registered veterinary surgeon, typically within 10 minutes.

If your pet is experiencing a life-threatening emergency, contact our out-of-hours provider immediately rather than waiting for a digital response. Details of our out-of-hours provider are available at reception and on our website.

2.5 Limitations of the Service

Clients should be aware that:

- VidiVet provides advice and triage only. It cannot conduct physical examinations or diagnostic tests.
- Under UK law, Prescription Only Medicines (POM-V) can only be prescribed by a vet who has physically examined the animal. VidiVet cannot issue prescriptions.
- In the event of a life-threatening emergency, clients should not wait for a VidiVet response and should contact the emergency out-of-hours service immediately.

PART 3

Staff Responsibilities and Training

3.1 Staff Obligations

All clinical and client-facing staff are required to:

- Act in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Base all clinical recommendations solely on the welfare needs of the patient.
- Not accept personal incentives, gifts, or benefits from product suppliers or pharmaceutical companies that could be perceived to influence clinical advice.
- Disclose to The Directors any commercial relationship or potential conflict of interest that could affect impartiality.
- Direct clients to VidiVet where appropriate, and never discourage clients from seeking independent advice.
- Cooperate fully with any review or investigation relating to a complaint about commercial bias.

3.2 Training

All clinical and client-facing staff will receive induction training on this policy and on the principles of impartial advice as required by the CMA Order. Refresher training will be provided annually and whenever this policy is updated.

Training completion will be recorded and maintained as part of the practice's compliance documentation.

PART 4

Review, Version Control and Sign-off

4.1 Version History

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
1.0	10.6.26	Becky Keeble	Initial issue.

4.2 Sign-off

This policy has been reviewed and approved by:

Signed: Becky Keeble Director	Date: 10.6.26
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This policy is issued in partnership with VidiVet.

For guidance only. Does not constitute legal advice. Seek independent legal advice if in doubt.