

Veterinary Medication Costs for Pet Owners who are Our Clients

The Competitions and Marketing Authority (CMA) has examined the business activities of the veterinary industry. Their investigation focussed almost entirely on the activities of the Large Veterinary Groups, corporate veterinary practices not run locally by local veterinary surgeons.

The CMA Ruling

The CMA has ruled that practices owned by Large Veterinary Group-owned were often charging excessively for medication. This ruling was based on figures from the Large Veterinary Groups. Smaller independent practices both my own and elsewhere, which do not charge in such a way, were never consulted by the CMA.

The Effect of CMA Findings on Pets and Their Owners

If the recommendations become mandatory in their current form, pet owners will be expected to pay **prescription charges of £16 plus VAT (£19.20) per item** to buy a written prescription from their vet. They will then have to **buy the prescription on the internet from an on-line pharmacy** owned by the same Large Veterinary Groups who are currently condemned for profiteering.

These medications will take up to 1 week to arrive and will be of similar or greater cost than the same medications can be bought from vets locally, but those vets will be forbidden to supply long term medications to your pet.

The effects will be:

- The cost of paying for a veterinary prescription and then buying on-line will impact clients unequally especially impacting those whose pets are on medications which cost little to supply. This group includes many of our poorer clients.
- At the moment the on-line pharmacies are offering cheaper 'special offer' prices. This will not continue once the competition from veterinary practices is removed and we can no longer supply long term medicines. Once the 'special offer prices' stop almost all medications will cost pet owners more.
- If a pet owner who currently buys medication on-line happens to run out because their medications did not arrive on time we can supply enough to 'tide them over'. That will not be the case if the current proposals come into being.

- Animals will suffer and may even die as a result. Think what would happen if an animal with serious heart disease has to go without their meds for even as little as 24 hours. What about old arthritic dogs who don't get their pain meds on time?

Cost Comparison of Buying Locally or On-line for Long Term Treatments

The examples below are very common long term treatments which local pets take to keep them healthy and comfortable.

Despite the CMA's recommendations, this document provides evidence from a real independent practice that buying locally is not only a great service, because pet owners can pop in and collect their treatment the very next day, rather than having to remember to order days in advance, but also cheaper for many long term medications than on-line pharmacies, even at the 'special offer' prices which those sources are advertising today.

Costs For Veterinary Prescribing

Prescribing costs are mandatory 'under the care' examinations and prescribing practices specified by the Veterinary Medicine Directorate.

Costs For On-Line Medications

Examples taken from real clinical records of Grimsby pets are included below. These show that the CMA is wrong in their findings, at least as far as independent veterinary practices across the UK, such as this one, are concerned.

Forcing people to buy medication for their pets on-line will increase the cost of long term treatment for many pets as well as risking those medications running out and the pet being left in pain or discomfort. The evidence below demonstrates that **independent veterinary practices are a more convenient and more cost effective option than on-line pharmacies for many of these medications.**

Even on 'special offer', the on-line are consistently more expensive than local independent vets for many common long term medications.

The on-line pharmacies only compete by offering special offers which will undoubtedly end once they have secured a monopoly to supply these. This monopoly will be entirely thanks to the CMA's recommendations. This is essentially handing profits to the very same LVGs which are currently accused of profiteering in their charging practices to veterinary clients.

Breakdown of Costs to Pet Owners with Real Life Examples

These are real examples taken from anonymised clinical records to protect the identities of pets and their owners.

1. 10kg dog with allergic skin disease controlled on alternate day prednisolone:

Cost if a prescription is supplied and these are acquired from an on-line pharmacy:

Prescription is for 2 months at a time (as advised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate) = 30 Prednisolone 5mg tablets

Veterinary legally required under care check-ups and prescription fees (as advised by CMA) = £134.28

Pet drugs on-line 10p per tablet plus 3.99 delivery = £3.00 + £3.99 every 2 months
= £41.94

On-line Total = £176.22

Cost if these are supplied at our veterinary practice

	2	Consult 6 mth Tablet Check	✓	39.95	47.94	79.9	95.88	<input type="checkbox"/>	HCP Excluded	Date	04 November 2025	
	6	Dispensing Fee (up to 2 items)	✓	5.79	6.95	34.74	41.69	<input type="checkbox"/>	HCP Excluded	Date	04 November 2025	
	30	Pred Tablets 5mg (Medical Anti-Inflammatory)	✓	0.07	0.08	2.1	2.52	<input type="checkbox"/>	HCP Excluded	Date	04 November 2025	
	30	Pred Tablets 5mg (Medical Anti-Inflammatory)	✓	0.07	0.08	2.1	2.52	<input type="checkbox"/>	HCP Excluded	Date	04 November 2025	
	30	Pred Tablets 5mg (Medical Anti-Inflammatory)	✓	0.07	0.08	2.1	2.52	<input type="checkbox"/>	HCP Excluded	Date	04 November 2025	
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	30	Pred Tablets 5mg (Medical Anti-Inflammatory)	✓	0.07	0.08	2.1	2.52	<input type="checkbox"/>	HCP Excluded	Date	04 November 2025	

Practice Price Total = £164.69

2. 15kg cocker spaniel with arthritis on Loxicom, Pardale and Gabapentin.

Gabapentin is a schedule 3 medication which can only be supplied one month at a time by online pharmacies but can if we wish be supplied in longer lasting amounts to maintain treatment directly (at least under current regulations).

Cost if a prescription is supplied and these are acquired from an on-line pharmacy:

Prescription for Loxicom is for 2 months at a time (as advised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate) = 1 x 32ml Loxicom

Prescription for Pardale is for 2 months at a time = 90 tablets

Prescription for Gabapentin is for one month at a time = 84 capsules

Veterinary legally required under care check-ups and prescription fees (as advised by CMA) = £403.08

Pet drugs on-line for 2-months' supply

Loxicom (special offer price) = £75.84

Pardale (special offer price) = 42p each = £41.79 incl. delivery
= £705.78 per year

Gabapentin has to be acquired elsewhere as it is a human medication

Hyperdrug = £9.24 plus £3.49 delivery each month = £152.76 per year

On-line Total for a year = £1,261.62

Cost if these are supplied at our veterinary practice

Practice Price Total = £738.22

3. 6kg Chihuahua with Hydrocephaly on Prednisolone, Furosemide & Omeprazole

Cost if a prescription is supplied and these are acquired from an on-line pharmacy:

Prescription is for 2 months at a time (as advised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate) =

Prednisolone 1mg tablets : three tablets every other day = 90 tablets

Furosemide 20mg tablets: half a tablet 2x daily = 60 tablets

Omeprazole 10mg: Half a tablet daily = 30 tablets

Veterinary legally required under care check-ups and prescription fees (as advised by CMA) = £211.08

Pet drugs on-line:

Prednisolone 1mg: 8p per tablet = £7.20 per 2 months

Furosemide 20mg: 10p per tablet = £6.00 per 2 months

(Omeprazole 10mg tablets not available from that source)

plus £3.99 delivery = £17.19 every 2 months
= £103.14 per year

Cloud Pharmacy:

Omeprazole 10mg tablets which can hopefully be halved
On-line only in 28 packs cost = £8.49 with typical delivery of £3.11
= £11.60 or so every 2 months
= £69.60 per year

On-Line Total for the year = £383.82

Cost if these are supplied at our veterinary practice





Practice Price Total = £328.66

4. 20kg Border Collie on Epiphen tablets for seizures

Epiphen (Phenobarbitone) is a schedule 3 medication which can only be supplied one month at a time by online pharmacies but can if we wish be supplied in longer lasting amounts to maintain treatment directly (at least under current regulations).

Cost if a prescription is supplied and these are acquired from an on-line pharmacy:

Assuming a consultation and blood sample is taken 6 monthly safety monitoring and prescriptions supplied

	2	Blood Venepuncture Consultation	✓	34.17	41	68.34	82.01	<input type="checkbox"/> HCP Excluded
	2	Blood Phenobarbitone Test	✓	44.14	52.97	88.28	105.94	<input type="checkbox"/> HCP Excluded
	2	Vet Telephone Consultation	✓	20.27	24.32	40.54	48.65	<input type="checkbox"/> HCP Excluded
	12	Vet Presc Decision for Each Medication Prescribed	✓	16	19.2	192	230.4	<input type="checkbox"/> HCP Excluded

Prescription is for Epiphen 60mg tablets at a dose of 1 tablet 2x daily = 56 tablets per prescription

Veterinary legally required under care check-ups and prescription fees (as advised by CMA) Total = £467.00

Pet drugs on-line: 22p each (again on special offer) = £16.31 per month including delivery = £195.72

On-Line Total for 12 months = £662.72

Cost if these are supplied at our veterinary practice






Practice Price Total for 12 months = £551.00

5. Cat with Hyperthyroidism and Renal Failure on Vidalta 15mg and Semintra liquid

Cost if a prescription is supplied and these are acquired from an on-line pharmacy:

Assuming a consultation and blood sample is taken 6 monthly safety monitoring and prescriptions supplied

Vidalta prescriptions 2 monthly as above plus Semintra prescriptions 3 monthly as this is how long 100ml will last.

	2	Blood Venepuncture Consultation	✓	34.17	41	68.34	82.01	<input type="checkbox"/> HCP Excluded
	2	Thyroid (T4)	✓	42.86	51.43	85.72	102.86	<input type="checkbox"/> HCP Excluded
	2	Vet Telephone Consultation	✓	20.27	24.32	40.54	48.65	<input type="checkbox"/> HCP Excluded
	2	Biochem Pre-GA + SDMA with Coagulation Profile	✓	85.73	102.88	171.46	205.75	<input type="checkbox"/> HCP Excluded
	4	Vet Presc Decision for Each Medication Prescribed	✓	16	19.2	64	76.8	<input type="checkbox"/> HCP Excluded

Veterinary legally required under care check-ups and prescription fees (as advised by CMA) Total = £516.07

Vidalta tablet dose = One 15mg tablet daily

Prescription is for 2 months at a time (as advised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate) = 60 tablets per prescription

Semintra dose is one ml twice daily

Prescription is for 3 months at a time (as advised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate) = 1 bottle per prescription.

Pet drugs on-line

Vidalta per year = either £290.34 if the special offer price remains in place or £650.34 if full price

Semintra = £84.98 (special offer price) or £157.97 (full price) plus £3.99 delivery every three months

= £355.88 or £647.84 depending on whether on 'special offer' or not.

On-Line Total (special offer) = £1,162.29

Or

On-Line Total (full price) = £1,814.25

Cost if these are supplied at our veterinary practice

Practice Price Total = £1,185.75

6. 15kg Crossbred dog with Arthritis on Meloxicam

Cost if a prescription is supplied and these are acquired from an on-line pharmacy:

Prescription is for 2 months at a time (as advised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate) = 1 x 32ml Loxicom

Veterinary legally required under care check-ups and prescription fees (as advised by CMA) = £134.28

Pet drugs on-line £8.65 (special offer) plus £3.99 delivery every two months = £75.84
(Pet drugs on-line full price £23.06 plus £3.99 every 2 months = £162.30)

On-Line Total = £210.12 (at special offer price)

Or

On Line Total = £296.58 (full price)

Cost if these are supplied at our veterinary practice

Practice Price Total = £225.11

7. 10kg Cavalier king Charles Spaniel with MVD (heart valve disease) taking Furosemide and Cardisure

Cost if a prescription is supplied and these are acquired from an on-line pharmacy:

Assuming the dog remains well enough to go for 6 months without a check up and a change of medication. Many pets with cardiac disease need more veterinary help than this.

Veterinary legally required under care check-ups and prescription fees (as advised by CMA) = £172.68

Medication:

Cardisure 10mg : half a tablet 2x daily = 60 tablets every two months

Furosemide 40mg : one tablet 2x daily = 120 tablets every two months

Pet drugs on-line

Cardisure per year: £520.74 (special offer price) or £970.74 (full price)

Furosemide per year: £95.94

On-Line Total = £789.36 (at **special offer** price)

Or

On Line Total = £1,239.36 (full price)

Cost if these are supplied at our veterinary practice

Practice Price Total = £1,177.18