

[REDACTED]  
Veterinary Surgeon  
[REDACTED]

4<sup>th</sup> August 2026

Dear Competition and Markets Authority,

I am writing in response to the Competition and Markets Authority's recent recommendations and the proposed Veterinary Services Market Investigation Order 2026. I support the aim of improving transparency and consumer confidence, but I am concerned that some proposals may be impractical unless they are carefully refined to reflect the realities of clinical veterinary work.

I am particularly concerned about the proposed definition of a "treatment pathway" as the basis for written estimates. This appears to imply that practices may need to estimate any likely costs over a 12-month period. In many cases, this is clinically impossible: diagnosis and treatment evolve according to examination findings, test results, patient response, complications, owner preferences, and welfare considerations. Estimates must be useful to clients, but they should not be required to predict an extended clinical course that cannot yet be known.

I am also concerned that this could unintentionally encourage simplified "protocols" to make estimates easier to produce. Protocols may support consistency, but they should not replace individual clinical judgement or reduce flexibility in recommending care for an individual animal.

I am also concerned about the proposed client notices on medications and written prescriptions. Clients should know they can request a written prescription and source medicines elsewhere, but the language must be balanced and clinically accurate. I feel that graphical or simplified visual representations are inappropriate and potentially misleading, particularly if they imply that dispensing medicines through a veterinary practice is merely a price-based decision rather than part of a regulated clinical service involving advice, governance, monitoring, emergency availability, and professional accountability.

More broadly, the final Order should protect clinical independence and ensure transparency requirements do not create pressure to prioritise price comparison over clinical suitability, continuity of care, or animal welfare. Implementation timescales, monitoring duties, and any compliance costs should be proportionate, especially for smaller practices already working under significant workforce and financial pressures.

I encourage the CMA to work closely with veterinary professionals and representative bodies to ensure the final Order is practical, clearly worded, and aligned with high standards of animal welfare and professional practice.

Yours faithfully,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the Veterinary Surgeon.

Veterinary Surgeon