

Blue Cross response to draft substantive Order and Undertakings

Draft Schedule 2: Standard Written Prescription notice

What is proportional:

- Having a notice prominently displayed in the waiting room.
- Displaying the prescription fee clearly on this poster.
- Providing advice on the right to a written prescription.
- Providing guidance on when they can expect to receive a prescription.

What is not proportional

- The poster does not give a balanced picture of the benefits and disbenefits of a written prescription.
- The font and choice of words. Use of yellow highlighting and the inclusion of the word 'significantly' suggests an element of danger which does not exist in most veterinary practices. The information could be displayed without this type of embellishment without any loss of meaning.
Additionally in our model where much of our medication is subsidised, the statement is untrue
- A3 or A2 size is excessive. If it is visible and clients are adequately informed (remembering this is not the only stipulation for informing clients), there is no need to have such a large poster.
- Having the UK Government as the provider of the copy – this could come from RCVS
- The section on the cost of the prescription is tiny in comparison to the larger messaging above and does not allow for clarity on the charge being per medication prescribed, including the fee for 2nd and further medications.
- The lack of information on what detail the vet will need to provide a prescription will lead to additional discussion in the consultation. Specifically, choice of pharmacy. We cannot have clients researching prices during a consultation. If this becomes the norm consultation duration and costs will rise.
- There is no mention that a written prescription may not be an option where treatment needs to be started urgently. This may lead to a difficult conversation in the consulting room.
- No mention of postage costs from the pharmacies.

- No mention of timescales for receipt of medications obtained via prescription (in some cases delivery can take a week or more).
- The options stated are for a practice to supply a written prescription at the end of the consultation or email a copy within 2 days. It is not clear that this is a decision for the vet to make, not a choice for the client. Additionally in some consulting models it may not be possible to provide a paper copy at the end of the consultation due to time constraints and for controlled drugs an emailed prescription is not legal.

What is concerning

- Many practices, ours included are moving towards a system where prescriptions are emailed or posted directly to the pharmacy rather than providing copies to the client. This is to combat prescription fraud. We are seeing some prescriptions returned from pharmacies which have been tampered with between receipt from the vet and submission to the pharmacy.
This follows the system employed by the NHS
This approach should be actively encouraged and yet is not accounted for on the poster.

Draft Schedule 3: Standard Flyer for Ongoing Medication

What is proportional

- Provision of a flyer to deliver the information on prescriptions

What is not proportional

- The font (size/colour) and use of the word 'significantly (as described above).
- Nothing about prescription fees, postage costs, timescales for delivery.
- The graph seems unnecessary. Whilst a reference to cumulative savings is worthwhile, using the space to give more information (as in second bullet here) and local process (ie client needs to identify a chosen pharmacy in advance) would be more helpful to both client and practice.

Part 3.11 Written estimates for higher cost treatments

What is proportional

- Provision of written estimates together with an indication of prognosis to enable clients to make the best choice for their pet and finances.

What is not proportional

- The expectation on primary care practice to provide estimates for referral, other than what is available on the referral practice website. If contact with the referral practice to obtain an estimate any more detailed than what could be obtained by reviewing the website, this will extend the consulting times and potentially increase costs.

More clarity is need on the extent of any estimate for the costs of treatment at a referral practice.